Digest of Terrorist Cases

The Digest of Terrorist Cases is a specialized tool developed by the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) of UNODC. An Expert Working Group established by UNODC and made up of judicial, prosecution and law enforcement experts in terrorism contributed to the preparation of the Digest of Terrorist Cases. It draws upon actual investigations, prosecutions and legal experiences concerning terrorist cases reviewed and commented on by national experts involved therein.

Translated into the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), the Digest supplements other technical assistance tools developed in the field of preventing and countering terrorism, which are available through the UNODC website. Its conception was made possible by extensive cooperation between UNODC/TPB staff and high level counter-terrorism practitioners thus responding to requests of Member States in General Assembly resolution 62/172 of 2007 and ECOSOC resolution 2009/21.

The Digest of Terrorist Cases is organized around seven thematic chapters, each referring to several legal cases. The themes covered are as follows: Offences for terrorist acts already committed; Offences to prevent terrorist acts; Relationship between terrorism and other forms of crime; The statutory framework for terrorism prosecutions; Investigation and adjudication issues; International cooperation; Innovation and proposals.

The Digest of Terrorist Cases aims to provide relevant policymakers in common and civil law fields, criminal justice officials and investigative police with a practical perspective based on a compilation of legal experiences relating to actual terrorist cases and ultimately contribute to building states’ ability to implement the universal legislative instruments related to the prevention and suppression of international terrorism.

This expertly annotated compilation of terrorist cases and associated “good practices” serves to illustrate how best to address the many pitfalls and challenges of conducting an efficient investigation and prosecution. It also aims to clarify counter-terrorism criminal justice areas by compiling judicial rulings in crucial areas and collecting abstracts of judicial pronouncements that will help to shed some light on relevant issues, like the links between terrorism and organized crime, or terrorist financing.

In 2011 UNODC/TPB will compliment the Digest of Terrorist Cases with a study that will focus upon judicial evidence in prosecuting the use of the internet for terrorist purposes.