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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: *the Role of the Justice System*

An UNODC TOOLKIT FOR ACTION

Developed under the UNODC Global Programme on Violence against Children

The Handbook was developed to provide coherent guidance to national authorities on the treatment of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

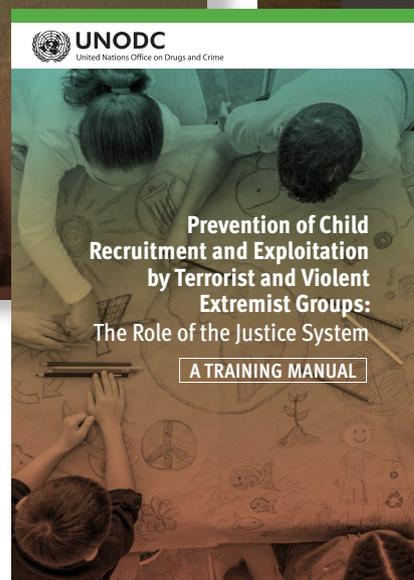
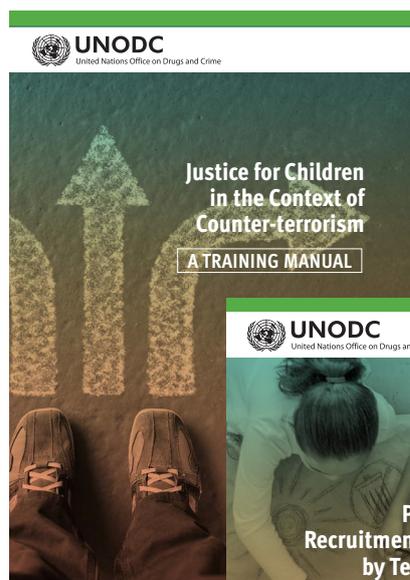
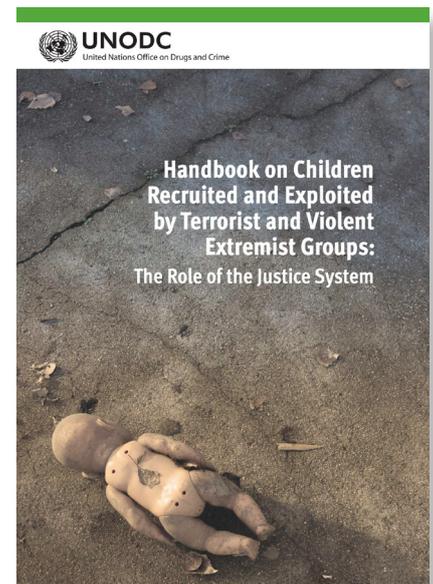
The guidance content is derived from an in-depth analysis of the complex various legal regimes that apply to this phenomenon:

- International human rights law
- International legal framework on counter-terrorism
- International humanitarian law
- International criminal law

Designed to complement and build on the Handbook, the Training Manuals aim to support practitioners and policy-makers in the design and implementation of effective interventions.

THREE TRAINING MANUALS

1. Prevention of Child Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups
2. Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims of Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups
3. Justice for Children in the Context of Counter-terrorism



Prevention of Child Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System

A TRAINING MANUAL

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims of Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups

A TRAINING MANUAL

CHALLENGE: Child recruitment takes place in all settings and includes a wide range of different activities depending on the context in which it occurs. Children are recruited for a variety of reasons, are forced or deceived in a variety of ways, may be motivated to join or to stay with a group for different reasons, and adapt to this exploitative situation in a myriad of ways. In addition, contextual factors can make children more vulnerable to recruitment and exploitation. The multilayered nature of this phenomenon complicates the task of designing and implementing effective prevention strategies.

GOALS



The overall objective of this Training Manual is to help justice professionals appreciate the role that the justice system can play, in cooperation with other systems, to protect children from being recruited by terrorist and violent extremist group. In order to do so, the content of the Manual is designed to empower professionals to understand the complex nature of child recruitment and to design comprehensive strategies to prevent it.

CONTENT

The lessons included into the Manual are structured as follows:

Part I: Preventing Child Recruitment

Reviews the problem of child recruitment by terrorist and violent extremist groups as a global and national problem and includes guidance on the basis of a comprehensive approach to prevention.

Part II: Addressing the Threat and Bringing Recruiters to Justice

Provides guidance for the justice system in their efforts to disrupt and defeat the activities of child recruitment networks and bring recruiters to justice.

Part III: Creating a Protective Environment Framework

Focuses on the key elements to create and strengthen a protective environment framework for children through individual, family, and community support.

Each lesson includes exercises, discussion topics, focus boxes and additional interactive resources to facilitate training.

CHALLENGE: Child victims of recruitment and exploitation by terrorist and violent extremist groups face a number of challenges to reintegrate into society. They often have undergone extreme violence, been separated from their families and communities, have developed serious mental and physical health issues, and may be accused of terrorism-related offences. Many of these children find themselves in a country different from that of their origin. In addition, families and communities may experience fears and resistances to welcoming back these children. Professionals have to overcome multiple obstacles, including technical and implementation challenges, to design effective rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

GOALS



The goal of this Training Manual is to empower professionals to develop and implement effective and comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, in order to support children in overcoming and recovering from the harm they have experienced as a result of their association with terrorist and violent extremist groups.

CONTENT

The lessons included into the Manual are structured as follows:

Part I: Setting the Scene

Analyses recruitment and exploitation processes and subsequent challenges faced by children in view of reintegration. It goes on to provide a framework for a shared understanding of standards to be upheld during rehabilitation and reintegration intervention.

Part II: Assessing the Situation and Planning Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Reintegration Strategies

Provides guidance to design and implement a comprehensive and effective reintegration strategy, adapted to the local context, starting with a situation analysis.

Part III: Key Components of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Strategies

Discusses practical advice on the implementation of various key components of a comprehensive reintegration strategy.

Each lesson includes exercises, discussion topics, focus boxes and additional interactive resources to facilitate training.

CHALLENGE: An increasing number of children come into contact with the justice system as alleged offenders following their recruitment by terrorist and violent extremist groups. These children are exposed to violations of their rights and secondary victimization. They are often tried in adult, military or special terrorist courts that lack specialized procedures; conditions in detention do not meet the required standards; and insufficient attention is paid to the complexity of their rehabilitation and reintegration needs. Professionals face challenges in determining the appropriate proceedings and safeguards to deal with these children, and in reconciling their status as both victims and alleged offenders.

GOALS



The overall objective of this Training Manual is to offer practical guidance to justice professionals on how to deal with children who are alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having committed terrorism-related offences. It sets out strategies and tools that are in accordance with international law and that can be used in operations and activities to ensure that:

- The rights of children are guaranteed;
- Security concerns are addressed and counter-terrorism objectives are upheld;
- Any victimization a child has experienced is identified, acknowledged and addressed throughout justice proceedings.

CONTENT

The lessons included into the Manual are structured as follows:

Part I: Setting the Scene

Introduces the most significant challenges faced by professionals concerned with justice for children in a counter-terrorism context and provides the basis for intervention to address such challenges in an effective way.

Part II: Assessing the Situation and Planning Comprehensive Responses

Examines how to undertake a preliminary situation analysis, including an assessment of the performance of the justice system at national and local levels. It goes on to clarify the role and purpose of a specialized justice system for children.

Part III: Putting Justice for Children into Practice a Counter-Terrorism Context

Looks at the practical application of this framework for action in the context of diversion, pre-trial, trial and the sentencing stages, and when children are deprived of their liberty.

Each lesson includes exercises, discussion topics, focus boxes and additional interactive resources to facilitate training.





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The UNODC Toolkit for Action was produced within the framework of the UNODC Global Programme on Violence against Children, thanks to the generous contributions of the Governments of Canada, Germany, Japan and Switzerland.

CHALLENGE

Thousands of children (individuals under the age of 18) have been abducted, recruited, used, or otherwise associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups in the past years. These children have been subjected to violence at multiple levels, and, at the same time, have the potential to become particularly dangerous instruments in the hands of those exploiting them and/or instrumentalizing them for committing criminal and terrorism-related offences. Countries are increasingly facing challenges in combining effective prevention and responses to violence perpetrated against children, while at the same time providing adequate accountability mechanisms to preserve public safety. The current wave of returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) also poses emerging threats and challenges to law enforcement and judicial authorities to deal with child returnees from conflict zones.



UNODC RESPONSE & MANDATE

Given the mandates and expertise of UNODC in the areas of violence against children, justice for children and counter-terrorism, the Office is uniquely positioned to support Member States in their efforts to provide effective responses to the complex challenges raised by children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

At the global level, UNODC provides guidance to Member States on how children involved with terrorist and violent extremist groups should be treated by national authorities. The UNODC guidance is contained in four technical assistance tools: the UNODC Handbook and the three UNODC Training Manuals.



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