The UNODC SHERLOC Databases
Information for Contributors

What is the UNODC SHERLOC Portal and its Databases?

The UNODC SHERLOC (Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws On Crime) knowledge management portal is an initiative to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its three Protocols, for which UNODC is the guardian, and the international legal framework against terrorism. The SHERLOC portal is currently host to six databases: the Case Law Database, the Database of Legislation, the Bibliographic Database, a Database on Treaties, a Database on Strategies and a Directory of National Competent Authorities designated to facilitate international cooperation. In addition thereto, the portal also hosts a Legislative Guide on the implementation of UNTOC, available in all 6 UN Official languages.

Over the years and through continuous development and expansion of SHERLOC, resources contained in SHERLOC are of relevance to fifteen different crime types, related to UNODC's mandates in the following areas: participation in an organized criminal group, corruption, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, money-laundering, obstruction of justice, cybercrime, piracy and maritime crimes, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, trafficking in cultural property, wildlife (including forest and fisheries) crimes, falsified medical products, trafficking in firearms and terrorism.

The **Case Law Database** is a comprehensive database allowing users to see how Member States are tackling organized crime and terrorism cases both operationally and in their courts. It contains jurisprudence, as well as records of successful law enforcement operations, on corruption, counterfeiting, cybercrime, drug offences, money laundering, obstruction of justice, participation in an organized criminal group, piracy, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in firearms, trafficking in cultural property, wildlife and forest crime, trafficking in persons, crimes related to falsified medical products and terrorism.

The **Database of Legislation** is an electronic repository of laws relevant to the provisions of UNTOC and the Protocols thereto, as well as relevant to the international legal framework against terrorism. It is searchable by country, UNTOC article, crime type and cross-cutting issue. While also enabling access to full legislation documents, the Database of Legislation provides extracts of laws relevant to specific UNTOC articles and crime types, allowing the user to quickly find provisions relating to their search query.

As of June 2019, the Databases include summaries and, when available, full court decisions of more than 2,990 cases on transnational organized crime and other related crimes, as well as more than 8,800 relevant legal provisions, from at least 192 countries. These can be accessed through: sherloc.unodc.org

SHERLOC also contains a **Bibliographic Database,** which is an annotated bibliography providing a synopsis of key articles that are searchable by country, research method and keyword. The database currently contains more than 1300 abstracts on fifteen different crime types.

As of 2018 SHERLOC also contains a **Database on Strategies**, which is an electronic database containing strategic instruments on the regional and domestic implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto, such as plans of actions, strategies etc. and a **Treaties Database,** providing for the status of adherence to the Organized Crime Convention and other relevant international legal instruments.

What is the purpose of the UNODC SHERLOC Databases?

Despite continuing efforts by UNODC and Member States to adopt and enforce national legislation against organized crimes, the legal provisions and mechanisms of enforcement contained within certain domestic laws remain weak, inefficient and inconsistent across jurisdictions. Such crimes continue to be under-prosecuted, and conviction rates remain low. In those cases for which prosecutions have been undertaken, very little is currently known about them internationally. By creating the different databases, among other the Case Law Database and the Database of Legislation, UNODC is working to develop internationally agreed upon legal mechanisms against transnational organized crime, while improving the visibility of successful prosecutions and promoting awareness about the devastating realities of organized crime.

The SHERLOC portal, by way of these six databases, has become a practitioner's tool for police investigators, prosecutors and judges; a monitoring tool for government policy-makers; an awareness-raising tool for the public and media; as well as an information tool for researchers, policy makers, legal drafters and all those responding to transnational organized crime and terrorism.

What Cases and Legislation are in the UNODC SHERLOC Databases?

The Databases collect cases and legislation which fall under the internationally agreed definitions of organized crimes as per UNTOC and the Protocols thereto, as well as under the international legal instruments to counter terrorism. They also reflect cases and legislation that are based upon domestic adaptations of UNTOC mandates in accordance with domestic legal systems that give effect to the meaning and concepts contained in these international standards.

The Database also includes cases and legislation that potentially fall outside the scope of the UNTOC and its Protocols, but which concern similar values or purposes contained therein. In such cases, the particular reasons for inclusion are explained in the Commentary/Significant Features section located at the bottom of the respective case summary.

Through reflecting the different approaches of States in dealing with organized crime within the context of their domestic legal traditions, the SHERLOC Databases give life to the legal standards embodied within UNTOC.

Why and how to Contribute to the UNODC SHERLOC Databases

As the only global public record of UNTOC-related case law and legislation, the Databases are a vital tool for stakeholders; however, there is a continued need for expansion and improvement of Database content. UNODC relies upon its networks and contributors to enrich the SHERLOC portal. To this end, UNODC welcomes the involvement of new contributors towards:
   a) Providing access to new cases and legislation which are not easily accessible online;
   b) Identifying landmark organized crime and terrorism cases from all over the world;
   c) Preparing summaries of new cases in English and/or other United Nations languages (UNODC will provide a template);
   d) Submitting abstracts and bibliographic information on key articles relating to transnational organized crime and terrorism;
   e) Updating existing cases to reflect subsequent decisions by higher instances; and/or
   f) Translating court decisions/case summaries into the official languages of the United Nations.

UNODC is dedicated to providing access to high-quality electronic resources by way of the SHERLOC portal's databases.

With regard to the **Case Law Database**, preference is given to official issuances of court decisions and/or official translations thereof (although court and case summaries may be unofficial in nature). The most valuable case law will reflect superior-level court decisions, landmark cases, and cases in which UNTOC-related provisions are interpreted.

Contributors to the **Database of Legislation** are requested to submit official, primary sources of law that may include: laws; constitutions; treaties and other binding international agreements; and statues as enacted and/or codified. It is requested that all translations of primary sources be official.

New contributors would join the Databases existing network of contributors who, beyond government institutions, include law schools, non-governmental organizations, United Nations Online Volunteers, and pro bono programmes of commercial law firms. The full list of current contributors is acknowledged online at: http://www.unodc.org/cld/acknowledgements/index.html.

UNODC supports the work of contributors by sending a UNODC template for the preparation of summaries, and providing detailed instructions and background information.

Where can I find more information about the UNODC SHERLOC Databases?

For more information on the UNODC SHERLOC Databases, please visit the "About Us" section of the Database at: http://www.unodc.org/cld/about-us/index.html

You are also invited to watch a video on how to use one Case Law Database in particular; the Human Trafficking Case Law Database: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpyq97aEJ54. Apart from the general information on the Human Trafficking Case Law Database, the video explains how to use the advanced multi-faceted search function of the Database, through which cases of interest can be easily selected. Cases can be browsed by country, keywords or filtered by various criteria, such as verdict date, nationality or gender of victims/defendants, legal system or sector in which exploitation takes place.

For more information on UNODC's work on transnational organized crime, please visit: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/index.html.

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