

The SHERLOC Team is pleased to share with you Issue No. 16 of our newsletter regarding our recent efforts to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, and the international legal framework against terrorism.



In this issue

FEATURED CASE: *ELYSIUM PLATFORM*

UNTOC COPI0

RECENT ACTIVITIES

MEET A CONTRIBUTOR

Today, we stand close to the many thousands victims of terrorism and their families all around the world, including those of the recent Vienna attacks, our host country and home to many of us within the team. We stand by those many victims "struggling in their solitude with the scars of trauma and injury" as "their human rights and dignity have been violated with indiscriminate violence. Only the acknowledgment of their suffering can start their healing; only information-sharing can overcome their isolation; only specialized rehabilitation and redress can help them rebuild their lives" (Laura Dolci, victim of the Canal Hotel bombing in Iraq of 2003).

Today, our prayers and thoughts go to all the victims and survivors of terrorism around the world. We reaffirm our strong commitment to facilitate information-sharing as a means to build knowledge and expertise to counter crime, in all its forms and manifestations, including terrorism.

The SHERLOC team

EDITORIAL: CYBERCRIME AND ORGANIZED CRIME

Information and communication technology (ICT) has changed conceptions of organized crime: it has impacted both the nature of organized crime activities as well as the types of individuals who can participate in organized crime. For instance, some traditional organized criminal groups are gradually moving from traditional criminal activities to cybercrime, shifting certain activities and operations online.

In addition, ICT has also transformed the way in which certain groups are structured and organized, as “new” groups and/or networks operating online have been formed. These groups often have similar behaviours to traditional organized criminal groups – particularly their use of organizational structures and special procedures which are designed to preserve the anonymity of their members and evade detection by law enforcement agencies.

Moreover, this technology removes the need for face-to-face contact between individuals and enables individuals who have never met before to work closely together and coordinate their activities from anywhere in the world.

Cyberspace provides organized criminal groups with a space within which they can conduct their illicit activities with a degree of anonymity, exploit the gaps in the legal systems around the world, conduct operations, and access clients anywhere in the world. Hence, the problem of transnational organized crime is further compounded by ever-increasing global connectivity and the borderless realm of cyberspace.

This issue of the SHERLOC Newsletter focusses on the topic of cybercrime and organized crime. It includes a feature of the German case which concerned ‘Elysium’, an online platform for child sexual abuse material on the dark web. Also included in this issue is information on the recent Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the SHERLOC team’s recent activities in the field of cyber organized crime as well as our regular ‘Meet a Contributor’ feature.

Take care, stay safe and healthy,
the SHERLOC team

FEATURED CASE: *ELYSIUM*

The Elysium platform, accessible via the darknet, has been host to a number of different forums and was used by over 110, 000 users to exchange child abuse material, to chat and to coordinate the sexual abuse of children.

The platform was run from Germany and supplied photographs and videos of child abuse around the world. It was finally taken down in June 2017 by German police in the context of a major European police operation supported by Europol and its members. Investigators found that the platform was mainly run and administered by 4 German males.



Image: Reddit

In 2019, the Regional Court of Limburg, Germany, ruled that the defendants had constructed, operated and used one of the largest sites of child sexual abuse material worldwide and that one of the defendants was found guilty of sexual abuse of two children.

This case is particularly interesting as it was the first case in Germany against German defendants accused of using the darknet to operate an online child sexual exploitation platform. The Court considered the question of whether the defendants constituted an organized criminal group. While examining the roles of the defendants and their tasks, the Court further held that the defendants as well as every single member registered on the forums or the chat rooms of the platform was to be seen as a member of an organized criminal group.

Moreover, it highlighted that the fact that the members of the organized criminal group did not know each other personally and communicate over nicknames or pseudonyms was irrelevant to their classification as an organized criminal group. The Court's findings are significant to the prosecution of cyber criminals for organized crime offences.

This feature has been adapted from the original SHERLOC case entry. To find out more about this case, click [here](#) to access it on SHERLOC.

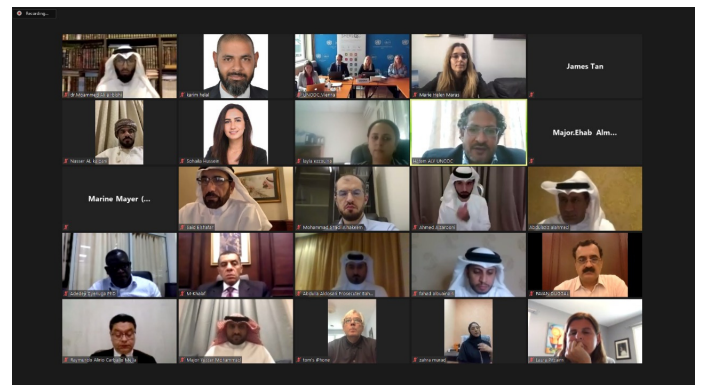
RECENT ACTIVITIES

An Expert Group Meeting on Cyber Organized Crime

From 21 to 24 September 2020, over 90 experts from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region and the broader region of the Middle East and North Africa, together with practitioners from North, Central and Latin America, Europe and Asia, gathered together to attend an informal expert group meeting (EGM) on cyber organized crime.

The meeting, organised by UNODC's Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council Region (OGCCR) in collaboration with the SHERLOC team and with the financial support of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was held online with the aim of facilitating sharing of knowledge and expertise on investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating cases of cyber organized crime. The EGM featured the presentation and analysis of cases and practical discussions on challenges and good practices in tackling those cases.

The outcomes of the meeting will be included in a forthcoming case digest on cyber organized crime and in SHERLOC's Case Law Database.



Case Digest on Cyber Organized Crime

UNODC is developing a case digest on cyber organized crime. The ultimate goal of this digest is to identify and assess the manner in which cyber organized crime has been investigated, prosecuted, and adjudicated in different areas of the world. Should you wish to contribute submitting relevant concluded cases for inclusion into the case digest, please contact us at unodc-sherloc@un.org, including any relevant court documents as attachments.

UNTOC COP 10

The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime took place from 12 to 16 October 2020 in a hybrid format. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference registered high participation, thanks to the possibility to participate both in-person and virtually: over 1,100 participants from more than 120 countries, 16 inter-governmental organizations, 146 civil society representatives took part in the session, and 60 side events were held.



[CLICK HERE FOR A SHORT VIDEO OF THE HIGHLIGHTS](#)

The COP concluded with the adoption of 7 resolutions - a remarkable record for COP - including resolutions on the topics of trafficking in firearms, trafficking in persons, falsified medical products, trafficking in cultural property, environmental crime. The SHERLOC team was busy servicing the informal consultations on these resolutions. Moreover, two resolutions focussed specifically on the Convention, also known as Palermo Convention, and aimed at launching the review mechanism of the Convention and celebrating its 20th anniversary, which will occur this year in December. For this occasion, don't miss our [#UNTOC20](#) campaign and follow us on Twitter through both [@UNODC](#) and [@UNODC_SHERLOC](#). The final adopted text of the resolutions will be made available [online](#).

This year, all COP side events were held online, which allowed for a wider attendance from around the globe while also marking the largest number of side events organised during a COP. The SHERLOC team supported the organisation of three side events on:

- the role of online intermediaries in preventing and countering organised crime;
- linkages of cyber and organised crime; and
- the tools developed by UNODC to facilitate international cooperation.

These side events provided an opportunity to discuss substantive issues, such as the latest trends and developments in organised crime as well as prevention of organized crime and responses thereto.



The team still smiling behind the masks at the end of a successful week

They also provided an opportunity to illustrate tools developed by UNODC to support practitioners in countering organised crime in all its forms and manifestations, such as SHERLOC, and allowed participants to exchange good practices and lessons learnt, as well as to share examples of how tools such as SHERLOC have contributed been used in practice.



Ms. Ianina Lipara, the Coordinator of the European Judicial Network Secretariat (EJN) mentioned during a side event, that in a recent case from Germany, prosecutors needed to send a mutual legal assistance request to Pakistan, but had trouble locating some of the relevant legislation of Pakistan. Upon advice from the EJN Secretariat, they were able to find the required legislation in SHERLOC and successfully submit the request.

To find legislation concerning mutual legal assistance, visit SHERLOC's legislation database.



Technical Assistance activities and presentations

Throughout the past months, the SHERLOC team has provided presentations and briefings to government officials and practitioners from around the globe to showcase SHERLOC and explain how it can be used in their day-to-day work.

September 2020 – the SHERLOC team contributed to two Workshops on "Targeted Financial Sanctions in Countering the Financing of Terrorism and SHERLOC", organised by the UNODC Country Office Pakistan, in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). The SHERLOC team briefed the audiences of the two workshops - a group of Pakistani female anti-terrorism prosecutors and a group investigators from the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Sindh Police – on the use of SHERLOC as a tool for legal information during investigation and prosecution of cases of terrorism and organized crime. An introduction to SHERLOC, and linkages between organized crime and terrorism, was followed by practical demonstration of the portal for the participants. To learn more, click [here](#).



Online briefing to female anti-terrorism prosecutors in Pakistan

October 2020 – the SHERLOC team participated in the 7th Interpol Liaison Officers' Conference convened by India's Central Bureau of Investigation where the team introduced SHERLOC as a key tool for investigations to an audience of 125 officials. Moreover, the briefing also focussed on the linkages between cyber organized crime and aimed at providing the audience with information on other UNODC tools to facilitate international cooperation and mutual legal assistance.

MEET A CONTRIBUTOR

This issue's featured contributor is Adelaida.

Adelaida is a graduated political scientist and anthropologist specialized in human rights, criminology, criminalistics and forensic sciences, currently working as SHERLOC Focal point on cybercrime and anti-money laundering. Before joining UNODC, she participated in the investigation of human rights violations in Northern Somalia by assisting in the collection of ante-mortem data, location of mass graves, exhumation and forensic identification of victims. Her experience in field operations also includes working at UNHCR, where she assisted the activities related to the processing of refugee claims in Cairo. She has also worked as a private detective in financial crime investigations in Spain and as a researcher in the areas of fraud, corruption, money laundering and terrorism financing in Austria.

