

DELEGATION OF ARMENIA

CCPCJ Thematic Discussions on the Implementation of the Kyoto Declaration

Vienna, 10 November 2021

Thematic session 1: Addressing the causes, including the root causes of crime; enhancing evidence-based crime prevention and promoting tailor-made crime prevention strategies.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to thank the distinguished panelists for their interesting and insightful presentations.

Armenia is committed to strengthening its efforts at national and international levels for a stronger partnership and cooperation in fighting different forms of crime.

Armenia, therefore, welcomed the adoption of the Kyoto Declaration as an important milestone and has co-sponsored the relevant resolution of the CCPCJ at its 30th session in May 2021.

We welcome the follow-up process of the Kyoto Declaration to make it a living document, as was proposed by Japan, and we would like to once again thank H.E. Takeshi Hikihara of Japan for his remarkable efforts in leading us throughout this process.

Mr. Chair

Since last year, we have faced many challenges to our individual and joint efforts for crime prevention and criminal justice, including due to the major health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those challenges have created a number of difficulties for our endeavors in countering and fighting different forms of crime – some of them being very common and conventional, some of them being quite new and emerging.

Root causes and risk factors of crime and victimization are found in social, economic and public systems that can lead to inequities and disadvantages for individuals and communities making them more vulnerable to crime. Therefore, it is important to focus on many

accompanying societal factors that can serve as enablers of crime or create a conducive environment for criminality.

However, no matter how countries organize their criminal justice responses or how they improve their institutional capacities to better understand and address the root causes for crime prevention and criminal justice, there are many traditional as well as new and emerging forms of crimes which transcend national borders and make individuals and communities across borders vulnerable to such crime.

One of the most dangerous crimes that need to be urgently addressed through genuine international cooperation is the crime of terrorism and its modern transformations, such as the smuggling of foreign terrorist fighters across international borders in order to engage them in military campaigns.

Although there are plenty of information and evidence regarding this crime and the participation of many legal, entities, non-regulated and unregistered commercial and non-commercial entities in facilitation of this crime, such as recruiting organizations, transport carriers, unofficial money transfer systems and many others, we have not seen any criminal proceedings undertaken by implicated countries to bring those who are responsible for such crimes to account. And this, Mr. Chair, obviously speaks about complacency.

Another evolving form of crime which transcends boundaries and in itself could also serve as a root cause for many other crimes is the hate crime, hate speech and the discrimination of people on the grounds of their ethnic, religious and cultural identity.

Today, in the context of enhanced technological development and the reliance of mankind on the world wide web, and the social networks phenomena, the effects of this crime have become even more dangerous and transcending the borders. Again, although there are facts and evidence of such crime, many of them available also online, we see that in some countries this kind of criminality is not prosecuted at all and, sometimes, on the contrary the xenophobic attitudes and the images of “common enemy” are fostered and encouraged at all levels, as a convenient political tool.

The ethnicity based hate crimes in some cases are also manifested in crimes against cultural property, such as destruction of cultural heritage and religious sites, misappropriation and alteration of cultural heritage through such methods as altering architectural outlooks of religious sites

or erasing of centuries old indigenous inscriptions from the cultural monuments and religious sites in order to misrepresent their origin and to substantiate highly controversial narratives about the historical, cultural and ethno-demographic origins of a particular region.

Unfortunately, we have seen a number of such cases during the last year but no criminal proceedings or a genuine attempt on the side of implicated states' authorities to bring those accountable to justice.

Mr. Chair

This is not an exhaustive list of crimes that we are facing today. But through these particular examples, we would like to highlight one common feature - the impunity and lack of the political will on the side of the state to prosecute all the above-mentioned crimes in accordance with its international obligations. Moreover, in many cases there is a clear guidance, instruction for and complacency in perpetration of those crimes on the side of the state. And this is indeed a major root cause of so many crimes that we have been witnessing for such a long time.

In order to achieve effective crime prevention, including by addressing the root causes of those crimes, a genuine international cooperation and commitment of member states to their international obligations stipulated by relevant conventions, such as the UNTOC, UNCAC, the Convention against Racial Discrimination, the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and many other similar instruments is required.

At the same time, the gravity of the mentioned crimes and the lack of state response to them leave no doubt that in some cases we cannot proceed from the assumption that the state will take its international obligations seriously and will fulfil its commitments for crime prevention. To avoid the recurrence of crime and deprive the criminals from safe havens we have to address the problem of impunity as an enabling factor for such crimes.

Thank you Mr. Chair.