



Permanent Mission of Italy
International Organisations - Vienna

**31st SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE (CCPCJ)**

**Statement by
Ambassador Alessandro Cortese**

Item 3: general debate

Vienna, 16th of May 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Mister Chairperson.

Mister Chairperson, Madame Executive Director, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

While aligning myself with the statement of the European Union, let me add a few remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, let me express our full solidarity with Ukraine and with the Ukrainian people. Italy condemns in the strongest terms Russia's unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, which is a gross violation of international law and humanitarian principles. Italy calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Italy wishes also to raise serious concerns over the spillover effects of the war on criminal activities of all sorts in Ukraine and the neighboring countries. This is something that should be taken into consideration by this Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, whose mandate is to prevent and combat crime and corruption, in the framework of the promotion of the rule of law.

Mister Chairperson,

Let me stress that, on May 23, next Monday, we will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the killing of Judge Giovanni Falcone, Judge Francesca Morvillo, his wife, and Vito Schifani, Rocco Dicillo Antonio Montinaro, police escort agents.

The Capaci bombing was indeed a shock for Italy but also a turning point of our fight against mafia. The strong reaction of our society, at all levels, from Parliament to magistrates, from government to civil society, made it possible to counter more efficiently that kind of organized crime, with many successes.

Few months before his brutal assassination, Judge Falcone had led the Italian delegation to the very first session of the CCPCJ, in April 1992, launching the idea of a high-level global political conference, which would lay the foundations for more structured international cooperation against organized crime. That idea led to the Ministerial Conference held in Naples in 1994, which opened the way for negotiation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in Palermo in 2000.

Again, that first CCPCJ session was a watershed moment in the international fight against organized crime.

Mister Chairperson,

Let me turn now to the topics of this year thematic discussion, which are digital evidence and cybercrime, including online sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

Let me recall that under the current Italian Presidency, the Council of Europe opened for signature the Second Additional Protocol of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, aimed at enhancing the co-operation and

disclosure of electronic evidence. A major step forward for the State Parties of the Convention.

Italy is at the forefront in the fight against cybercrime and is constantly working on creating more effective instruments for international cooperation in this field. We welcome, in particular, the start of the works of the Ad Hoc Committee for a United Nations Convention on cybercrime.

We need a global Convention that effectively enhances law enforcement international cooperation and provides useful tools to address the challenges posed by cybercrime, in a “technology neutral” manner and in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and association.

We need a Convention that contributes to ensure a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace.

Finally, I wish to stress the importance, in addressing cybercrime, of taking into account the special needs of children and women. These are vulnerable groups, often victims of terrible crimes perpetrated in the cyber sphere, which deserve specific policies and a targeted approach.

Mister Chairperson,

Criminal groups and criminal organizations improve every day their capabilities and strengthen their means.

They can exploit better than anyone the cyberspace. Their illegal activities affecting the environment are becoming more and more profitable. They

have already started to profit even from the funds allocated by many States to the economic recovery in the post-pandemic.

National law enforcement systems, as well as the investigation capabilities, must keep pace, upgrade and improve.

I wish to inform you, Mr. Chairperson, that Italy is currently revising its judiciary system, including the criminal justice section, with a comprehensive reform aimed at making it more efficient, fair, and respectful of the rights of all parties involved.

However, domestic improvements are not sufficient. Crime has no borders and therefore international cooperation remains key. In this respect, Italy continues to support it, in particular contributing to the work of UNODC with increasing financial allocations. In 2022, we financed projects on counterterrorism and anti-piracy in Africa, against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, for the implementation review mechanism of UNTOC and to promote the regional stabilization in Afghanistan.

Mister Chairperson

As Judge Falcone once said – and I quote – “the mafia is not invincible; it's a human fact and like all human facts it has a beginning and an ending. Instead we must realize that it is a phenomenon deadly serious and that can be won not claiming heroism of unarmed citizens, but engaging in this battle all the best forces of the institutions” – end of quote.

Mister Chairperson, strong institutions can win the battle against the most heinous crimes. Let's honor the memory of Giovanni Falcone by working

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together to strengthen our national systems and build a resilient international framework to prevent and fight crime.

Thank you.