

Ms. Simonetta Grassi is a Senior Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer and Chief of UNODC's Global Firearms Programme, currently working in the Implementation Support Section (ISS), Organized Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch (OCB), in UNODC. She joined the Un in 1996 as Associate Expert and has held several positions both at HQ and in the field: She served as Deputy Representative at the UNODC Office for Colombia and Ecuador in Bogota (1999 – 2005), and at the Caribbean Regional Office in Barbados (2004 – 2006). After her return to Vienna, in 2007 she has been working as Legal Officer at DTA, covering a wide range of topics from corruption, transnational organized crime, trafficking in cultural property, and especially firearms. Since 2011 Ms. Grassi is managing the Global Firearms Programme – a technical assistance programme that is currently supporting over 50 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Western Balkans, Central Asia and Eastern Europe in countering firearms trafficking and related crimes, and is also serving as the Secretary of the Working Group on Firearms established by the Conference of Parties to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).



Before joining UNODC, Simonetta was as Defense Attorney, an academic researcher at the Institute for Criminal Law and Criminology at the University of Urbino, Italy, and a scholar at the Ludwig Maximilian Institute in Munich, and the Max-Planck-Institute for criminal law in Freiburg, Germany. She holds a Master's degree in law from the University of Urbino, Italy, and a post university degree in international relations and diplomacy from the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, Austria.

Presentation will focus on the following topics:

- Drug trafficking does not happen in a vacuum but is linked to many forms of organized crime.
- In many cases, drug cartels and organized drug trafficking networks rely on firearms to perpetuate power, fight rivals and to enforce their supply chains at gunpoint. But often the civilian population bears the highest costs of insecurity caused by the availability of illicit firearms.
- To address the linkages between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, integrated criminal justice responses are vital. A good example for these operations includes the joint UNODC-INTERPOL operation TRIGGER VI in South America aimed at strengthening the criminal justice chain to prevent and counter illicit firearms trafficking and related crimes, especially their links to drug trafficking, from detection to prosecution and adjudication. In the operation almost 4,000 suspects across all 13 South American countries were arrested and some 200,000 illicit firearms, parts, components, ammunition and explosives were recovered. Among the arrested were individuals subject of INTERPOL Red Notices for serious drug crime. 27 cocaine labs were destructed, and 21 tonnes of cocaine, marijuana and precursor chemicals were seized.
- Through the Global Firearms Programme, UNODC supports Member States to effectively address illicit firearms as a critical link in anti-drug trafficking responses, including in countering illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and related crimes.