



UNITED NATIONS  
*Office on Drugs and Crime*



# United Nations Standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice for peacekeepers

You have signed a contract with the United Nations and are now working in one of the following fields:

- Restoring a civilian policing presence
- Developing police training programmes
- Re-establishing juridical authority and the rule of law
- Consolidating governmental institutions, including national legal frameworks and judicial and correctional institutions
- Protecting witnesses of crime
- Fighting organized crime, including trafficking in human beings



Did you know that the **United Nations** has been involved in **crime prevention, criminal justice and the treatment of offenders since 1950** through its crime prevention and criminal justice programme, now part of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime located in Vienna, Austria?



Since the United Nations was formed following the Second World War, the control and prevention of crime has been an area of its concern. Over the years, the scope of this involvement has developed considerably and, through its work, the United Nations has developed a body of standards and norms covering the whole spectrum of crime prevention and criminal justice policy issues, ranging from juvenile delinquency prevention to assistance to victims of crime, treatment of offenders and capital punishment.

# United Nations Conventions

The **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime**, which entered into force on 29 September 2003, and its three supplementary Protocols, are the first global instruments in this area. While the Transnational Organized Crime Convention focuses essentially on the activities of organized criminal groups, the three Protocols supplementing the Convention target certain types of organized criminal activity requiring specialized provisions.

The three supplementary protocols are:

- The **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children** which entered into force on 25 December 2003
- The **Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air** which entered into force on 28 January 2004
- The **Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition** which entered into force on 3 July 2005

Legislative guides have been developed for the Convention and the three Protocols. The objective of these guides is to assist States seeking to ratify and implement the Convention and its Protocols by identifying legislative requirements and various options available to States as they develop

the necessary legislation. The Legislative Guides for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols are available at website:

[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized\\_crime\\_convention\\_legislative\\_guides.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized_crime_convention_legislative_guides.html)

It is now widely accepted that effective action against corruption involves a multitude of measures that go beyond the criminal justice system. Such measures must include establishing and maintaining good governance structures, the rule of law and social and economic structures which are effective and responsive in dealing with problems, and which use available resources as efficiently and with as little waste as possible. The **United Nations Convention against Corruption** is the most comprehensive effort to date of the international community to address in a decisive manner the far-reaching impact of corruption and the need to develop effective measures against it at both the domestic and international levels. The Convention against Corruption is available at website:

[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime\\_convention\\_corruption.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crime_convention_corruption.html)

A legislative guide for the United Nations Convention against Corruption has been developed and is available at website:

[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime\\_convention\\_corruption\\_guide.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_convention_corruption_guide.html)

UNODC promotes the practical implementation of these conventions. It addresses the needs of States that have outdated legislation, are most vulnerable to criminal activity, or lack success in major prosecution and asset forfeiture casework. The Office advises States, upon request, on the drafting, adoption and application of all necessary legislation. It also helps to strengthen the skills of criminal justice professionals where legislation has already been adopted, ensuring that they have sufficient technical understanding to apply new laws. More than 140 UN Member States have received legal assistance.

## United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

UNODC also formulates and promotes internationally recognized principles in such areas as independence of the judiciary, protection of victims, alternatives to imprisonment, treatment of prisoners, police use of force, mutual legal assistance and extradition. Such principles are embodied in UN standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice, model treaties, declarations and action plans. The complete list of these can be viewed on the last page of this leaflet. All the principles are contained in the Compendium of UN standards and norms, which can be downloaded free at: [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/compendium.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/compendium.html)

### Can you answer these questions or would you know where to look for answers?

Should a pregnant female prisoner give birth in pre-natal facilities in prison? How would this affect the child's birth certificate?\*

Should law enforcement officials use firearms in the dispersal of violent assemblies?\*\*\*

Who should be protected from being cross-examined by an alleged perpetrator?\*\*\*

The answers to these and other important questions can be found in the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (see below).

\* Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners : 23. (1) In women's institutions there shall be special accommodation for all necessary pre-natal and post-natal care and treatment. Arrangements shall be made wherever practicable for children to be born in a hospital outside the institution. If a child is born in prison, this fact shall not be mentioned in the birth certificate.

\*\* Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials: 14. In the dispersal of violent assemblies, law enforcement officials may use firearms only when less dangerous means are not practicable and only to the minimum extent necessary. Law enforcement officials shall not use firearms in such cases, except under the conditions stipulated in principle 9.

\*\*\* Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime: 31. Professionals should also implement measures: (b) To ensure that child victims and witnesses are protected, if compatible with the legal system and with due respect for the rights of the defence, from being cross-examined by the alleged perpetrator: as necessary, child victims and witnesses should be interviewed, and examined in court, out of sight of the alleged perpetrator, and separate courthouse waiting rooms and private interview areas should be provided;

## United Nations Conventions

- Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea
- Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition
- Convention against Corruption
- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances
- United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

## International Instruments against Terrorism

- Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation
- Protocol on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation.
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against internationally Protected Persons including Diplomatic Agents
- International Convention against the Taking of Hostages
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
- Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation
- Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf
- Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection
- International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism
- The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear terrorism

## United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice

- The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
- The Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- The Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials
- The safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty
- The procedures for the effective implementation of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice
- The Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power
- The Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary
- The Model Agreement on the Transfer of Foreign Prisoners and recommendations on the treatment of foreign prisoners
- The Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions
- The procedures for the effective implementation of the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary
- The Guidelines for the Effective Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials
- United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency
- The United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty
- The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures
- The Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners
- The Model Treaty on Extradition
- The Model Treaty on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters
- The Model Treaty on the Transfer of Proceedings in Criminal Matters
- The Model Treaty on the Transfer of Supervision of Offenders Conditionally Sentenced or Conditionally Released





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- The Model treaty for the prevention of crimes that infringe on the cultural heritage of peoples in the form of movable property
- The Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the Field of Urban Crime Prevention
- The Model Strategies and Practical Measures for the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- The firearm regulation for purposes of crime prevention and public health and safety
- The Model Bilateral Treaty for the Return of Stolen or Embezzled Vehicles
- The Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System
- The International Code of Conduct for Public Officials
- The United Nations Declaration against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions
- The plan of action for the implementation of the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power
- The basic principles on the use of restorative justice programmes in criminal matters
- The Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime
- The Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime

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