

## ROMENA NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,



With our last Newsletter of 2020, we look back to a year without precedence resulting from the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic. During these new times for all of us, we have adapted as much as we can to the new circumstances.

We continued to reach out and interact with all our partners and people we serve, mitigated the risk for special vulnerable populations such as people who use drugs, who live with HIV, victims of crimes and violence, inmates and juveniles in institutions and supported all those officials and workers in the care and law enforcement institutions with protective measures. We have also, to a great extent, been able to continue the delivery of technical assistance using hybrid models during the ongoing pandemic.

I wish all our partners, people we serve, colleagues and friends a peaceful, healthy and joyous Festive season. We look forward to continuing working with all of you in the coming year for the wellbeing, health and justice of the people in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Cristina Albertin,  
UNODC Regional Representative  
for the Middle East and North Africa

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

---

Cinema a key tool in raising awareness of trafficking in persons (TiP)

---

Journalists' active role in addressing trafficking in persons (TiP) and smuggling of migrants (SoM) in Sudan

---

A step towards ending TiP and SoM by strengthening judicial responses in Egypt

---

Safeguarding Sports from Corruption in Egypt: UNODC & ACA, supported by IOC & FIFA, Organize Hybrid Workshop

---

Line Up Live UP Initiative Empowers Youth to #ChooseSports in Lebanon

---

"On the other side of the hotline" - Interview with the Head of Complaints Office at the Egyptian National Council for Women (NCW)

---

Egypt: Forensic Authorities Bringing Justice to Survivors of Violence against Women Interview with Doctor at the Forensic Medical Authority

---

Helping survivors of violence seek justice through forensic science in the West Bank, Palestine

---

Libya: Using forensics to hold criminals accountable and save lives

---

UNODC Supports Iraq in the Investigation, Prosecution and Adjudication of Crimes Committed by ISIL/Da'esh

---

Partnerships on the Ground: Major Cocaine Seizures in Jordan and Yemen by National Authorities and CCP Units

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## Cinema a key tool in raising awareness of trafficking in persons (TiP)



Cinema is a powerful and universal medium for communication. The personal story of an individual who was trafficked, rescued, and survived is compelling and can initiate conversation and dialogue on an area that is not fully understood by the public. Furthermore, cinema could reflect the laws and penalties enforced for the traffickers to pay for their crimes.

Due to the significant space occupied by cinema through its vast and influential role in shaping the understanding of sensitive topics, the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons (NCCPIM&TIP), UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) held an awareness-raising campaign on countering and preventing TiP during the Cairo International Film Festival (CIFF) 42nd edition.

The campaign focused on protecting and supporting victims of human trafficking through mobilizing citizens to report respective crimes committed via the hotlines assigned by various national councils. Within the campaign, an important panel supported by the European Union focused on methods of portraying traumatizing experiences such as TiP in cinema, enhancing audience empathy to improve understanding of the issue, and giving a voice to the victims – where they can tell their own stories thereby reflecting their personal experiences, the possibility of rehabilitation and reintegration as well as hope for survivors.

## Journalists' active role in addressing trafficking in persons (TiP) and smuggling of migrants (SoM) in Sudan



Journalists play a significant role in raising public awareness and providing alerts of different alarming issues. UNODC conducted a workshop with 17 journalists from Sudan to enhance their ability to report on TiP and SoM's crimes. The training was provided under the framework of the Better Migration Management (BMM) project in Sudan, implemented in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

During the training, journalists exchanged experiences on the previous reporting and researching on both crimes, learned about the global and regional perspectives to the issues, reviewed the positive and negative sides to using social media in their work concerning TiP and SoM, amongst other topics.

## A step towards ending TiP and SoM by strengthening judicial responses in Egypt



Under the regional project funded by the European Union (EU), “Dismantling Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Criminal Networks in North Africa”, UNODC ROMENA together with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the NCCPIM&TIP organized the first workshop as part of the project's Egypt country package. The event was generously hosted and coordinated with the National Center for Judicial Studies (NCJS) within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

This project is for three years (2019-2022) and is a €15 million regional joint initiative by the European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under the framework of the North Africa Window of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The project consists of a regional intervention covering Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia to support the effective dismantling of criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and human trafficking, while at the same time upholding the rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable groups.

## Safeguarding Sports from Corruption in Egypt: UNODC & ACA, Supported by IOC & FIFA, Organize Hybrid Workshop



International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) is commemorated annually on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December in recognition of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which was adopted in 2003 and entered into force in 2005. This year's commemoration of IACD marks 15 years since the Convention came into effect. To mark IACD, UNODC and the Administrative Control Authority of Egypt (ACA) — with the support of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) — organized a two-day country-specific workshop for Egypt, aimed at safeguarding sports from corruption and preventing the manipulation of sports' competitions. The hybrid workshop took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 and brought together more than 60 participants. The training opportunity raised awareness about the varied corruption risks posed to sports and highlighted effective measures to tackle these challenges in Egypt.

## Line Up Live UP Initiative Empowers Youth to #ChooseSports in Lebanon



UNODC's 'Line Up Live Up' initiative has been rolled across the world in recent years, offering a sports-

based, life skills training curriculum designed to help young people in vulnerable settings. Most recently, Line Up Live Up, part of the [Youth Crime Prevention through Sports initiative](#) under the [Doha Declaration Global Programme](#), partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) of Lebanon to organize a four-day Training of Trainers in Beirut.

This training brought together 15 women and men working in the sports, youth, and social sectors where they learned how to use sports to promote valuable life skills among youth and encourage them to make assertive and positive life choices. With the support of UNESCO, participants also held in-depth discussions on the push and pull factors leading to doping in sports and on ways to protect young people and athletes from such risky practices, in line with the International Convention on Anti-Doping and national efforts to preserve fair play.

## "On the other side of the hotline" - Interview with the Head of Complaints Office at the Egyptian National Council for Women (NCW)



Within the framework of the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#), UNODC spoke with Ms. Amal Abdel Moneim, Head of the National Council of Women (NCW) Complaint Office about the hotlines' work with women survivors of Violence Against Women (VAW) and about UNODC's support to the Complaint Office, which functions through a hotline – 15115 - to provide women with psychological and legal advice and support when facing any form of violence.

According to Ms. Amal, "UNODC is one of the first institutions who worked on strengthening the hotline 15115 as one of the key referral mechanisms and entry points in supporting women who face VAW. UNODC's support was provided in 3 important stages through funds from the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (USINL). The first stage was that of capacity building, in which all those who work in the complaints' hotline have been trained on how to receive a complaint and on how to deal with VAW survivors – socially, psychologically, and legally. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, UNODC established the infrastructure of the hotline, with all its equipment such as the central device and the laptops that the agents

would use. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, UNODC strengthened the institutional capacity of the hotline by supporting the salaries of the hotline agents for a period of one year and this transformed and pushed the capacity of the hotline from receiving 100 to 150 calls per month to 700 to 800 calls monthly”.

### Forensic Authorities Bringing Justice to Survivors of VAW - Interview with Doctor at the Forensic Medical Authority in Egypt

The Egyptian Forensic Medicine Authority (FMA) is responsible, amongst its many duties, to examine women who report a form of violent or sexual assault to the police. The availability and use of quality forensic science services, data and information is an essential element in supporting the operational work of law enforcement, effective and fair criminal justice systems, and evidence-based policymaking. For the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#), UNODC interviewed Dr. Pansee Abdel Fattah, a Forensic Doctor at the Egyptian Forensic Medicine Authority (FMA) who is responsible to carry out examinations for women survivors of VAW.

During the interview, which was made possible through the generous support of the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (USINL), Dr. Pansee stated that “UNODC has taught us a completely different way of handling patients, changed the understanding and way of treating cases or patients of violence against women in general. I also received technical trainings on using specialized devices to examine patients who are victims of sexual assault – such as the colposcopy device. I learned how to deal with the patients and how to provide the survivor with the needed trust and safety to feel reassured and allows me to examine her and provide her with the support she needs.”



When asked about what changed at the FMA since UNODC provided support on prevention or responses to VAW, Dr. Pansee reflect that “Based on the training programmes, including a training programme that I have personally participated in, where some doctors have traveled to Manchester and got trained in Saint Mary Centre, which is a specialized sexual assault

referral centre, on how to deal with patients and how to provide them with the psychological and medical support. There were also a lot of other training programmes that were developed by UNODC such as the Trainer of Trainers (ToT) programme, which enabled several doctors to become leaders and well-trained specialists within various Government bodies. These training within the different entities made things work in one circle which led to decreasing the period between the assault and the forensic examination on the case.”

### Helping survivors of violence seek justice through forensic science in the West Bank, Palestine



A vital pillar in the justice and security system, the sole forensic science laboratory in the West Bank seeks justice for survivors of violence. UNODC through the HAYA Joint Programme is training laboratory technicians to help increase the likelihood of identifying perpetrators of violence and holding them accountable. Funded by the Government of Canada and jointly implemented by UN Women, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, and UNODC, the HAYA Joint Programme seeks to eliminate violence against women and girls (VAW&G) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Twenty-nine-year-old forensic science laboratory expert Dr. Rawan Tomalieh works in the laboratory which she says plays a crucial role in achieving justice for survivors of violence. In the past year alone, the forensic science laboratory has received over 1,690 cases. “Working in the forensic laboratory has increased my confidence in the Palestinian judiciary and justice system,” states Rawan.

All forensic lab staff is members of the Palestinian Police, which is part of the Ministry of Interior (MoI). The lab works together with the investigative departments, the Public Prosecution, and the courts in the pursuit of justice. Through specialized training which started in July 2020, its forensic science laboratory experts are now better skilled in examining biological evidence and formulating opinion-based evidence for the justice sector.

Dr. Rawan added that an example of many stories demonstrating the importance of the lab’s work through the case of a woman who was killed in a shooting incident between her family and the Palestinian police.

In this case, the forensic lab proved that the bullet originated from a gun belonging to a family member, allowing the perpetrators to be caught and justice to be served. “Without the forensic lab, all cases against perpetrators of violence would be dropped,” she added. “They would escape punishment, and the rights of the survivors would be lost.”

### Libya: Using forensics to hold criminals accountable and save lives

UNODC and the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM-Libya) conducted a two-day hybrid workshop on forensic analysis. The workshop is part of continuous efforts to



enhance Libyan authorities' forensic analysis capabilities under the project “Dismantling human trafficking and migrant smuggling criminal networks in North Africa” funded by the European Union. The primary objective of this joint action was to strengthen forensic services and chain of custody in Libya and develop a strategic roadmap that identifies short, medium, and long-term priorities. Such priorities include training, standard operating procedures, and priority equipment to ensure that reliable, probative and scientifically based evidence is available to support criminal investigations in Libya.

### UNODC Supports Iraq in the Investigation, Prosecution and Adjudication of Crimes Committed by ISIL/Da'esh



In response to Iraq's growing counterterrorism needs, UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) has been delivering technical assistance to

reinforce the capacity of criminal justice and law enforcement to prevent and counterterrorism. UNODC delivered two workshops were delivered for Iraqi practitioners in Beirut, Lebanon. Participants included Iraqi investigators and judges as well as experts from international, regional, and national organizations. The main objective of the workshops was to strengthen law enforcement officials' capacity to collect judicially admissible evidence in terrorism-related cases while

complying with human rights standards, especially when interviewing women and children. The activities were delivered under the framework of a UNODC project, funded by Japan, on responding to violent extremism and terrorism which includes a tailored approach to dealing with children perceived as associated and or affiliated with ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq.

### Partnerships on the Ground: Major Cocaine Seizures in Jordan and Yemen by National Authorities and CCP Units



Since its establishment in 2004, the UNODC-World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme (CCP) has sought to assist countries seeking to improve supply chain security and counter the threat of trafficking in the containerized supply chain by building capacity within Customs and other relevant law enforcement agencies. This is achieved through the creation of multi-agency Port Control Units (PCUs) and Air Cargo Control Units (ACCU) whose officers, following weeks of progressively advanced training, can successfully identify high-risk containers from pre-arrival manifest information.

PCU members in Jordan and Yemen, two of CCP's main partner countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, managed to make two major seizures. At Queen Alia International Airport in Amman, Jordan, the CCP unit seized 48 kg of crack cocaine concealed within the inside packaging of a shipment headed to a neighbouring country. The seizure also led to the arrest of two individuals involved in the drug trafficking attempt. At the seaport of Aden, Yemen, over 25 kg of cocaine and different drugs camouflaged in sugar were seized after weeks of investigation and close cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the judiciary in Yemen.

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