



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

ROMENA NEWSLETTER

Newsletter from the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa



Dear Reader,

As we look back on the past period, we recognize that countries in the Arab region continue to undergo diverse changes in a varying degree facing many and multiple challenges towards a safe and sustainable future.

As UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, we continue to work with all countries to counter different, inter-related and associated forms of transnational organized crime, terrorism and corruption while assisting in the development of rule-of law, human rights-based and gender-sensitive responses.

With the UN reform, we are all called upon to do more in the area of prevention, promote inclusive approaches, hear the voices of and involve the youth and strive towards our shared commitment towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our Office is committed and dedicated to support League of Arab States (LAS) Member States in the implementation of all these priorities within our mandated working areas. Recently, we have been able not only to implement many activities in support of this mandate, but also to expand into new areas.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter which gives a summarized, but diverse glimpse over the activities our Office has been implementing lately. We look forward to your feedback and towards working more with you towards our common goals.

Cristina Albertin,

Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa

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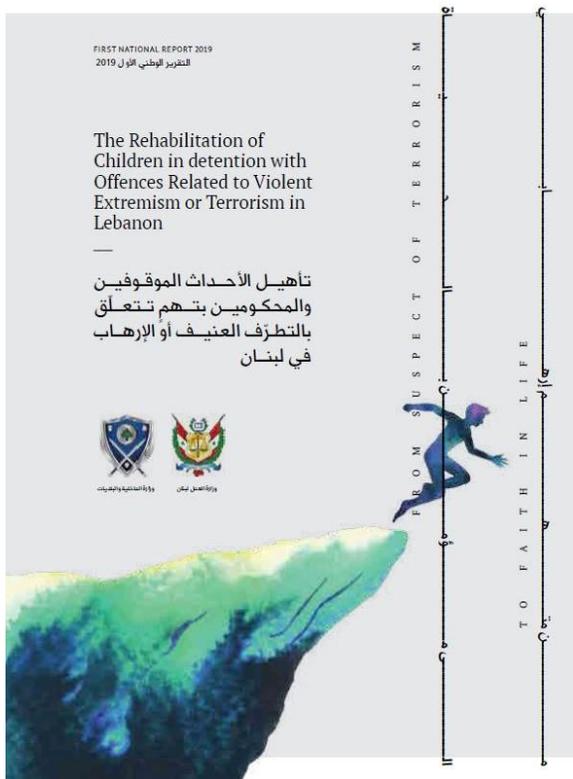
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The European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime launch a 15 million Euros 3-year project to dismantle migrant smuggling and human trafficking criminal networks in North Africa

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa have launched a three-year project aimed at supporting Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia in [dismantling migrant smuggling and human trafficking criminal networks operating in North Africa](#). The European Union has set a budget of 15 million Euros for the project, which will be implemented by the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA) under the framework of the North Africa Window of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.



From Suspect of Terrorism to Faith in Life: The launch of the First National Report on The Rehabilitation of Children in Detention with Offences Related to Violent Extremism or Terrorism in Lebanon



"When I think about what I did, I realize how blind I was. How could I have believed them and followed them without hesitation?" R-K

It is in a very specific context (2012-2016), characterized by a surge of terrorist attacks shaking the villages on the border with Syria and the southern suburb of Beirut, that an increasing number of children recruited and exploited by armed groups were arrested and transferred to the juvenile wing of the Roumieh Prison in Lebanon. In response to this new problematic of children in detention with offences related to violent extremism, including terrorism, it was necessary to establish new courses of action while maintaining the key principle of "the best interests of the child". It is in light of this paradigm, that the rehabilitation programmes developed in the juvenile wing of the Roumieh Prison aim to increase the chances of disengagement and social reintegration of children.

Based on such efforts, Lebanon produced the first national report on the results of the Lebanese experience for the rehabilitation of children with offences related to violent extremism or terrorism,

funded by Canada, titled "[From Suspect of Terrorism ... to Faith in Life](#)." The report documents the experience of the "Improved Prison Management and Rehabilitation and Reintegration of High-Risk Prisoners in Lebanon" project, which is implemented by the Ministry of Justice in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, with the technical assistance of UNODC, and funded by Canada, the European Union and Italy. Watch the "[Where are you going?](#)" documentary on UNODC ROMENA's YouTube channel to get the children's side of the story.

Taking the stage to save lives: Mock trials on migrant smuggling and human trafficking



Mock Trials are an imitation of public court hearings preparing a group of practitioners to investigate migrant smuggling and human trafficking cases under a specific legal system. These trainings typically include a simulated investigation of a crime scene, followed by the interrogation of suspects and interview of victims, case file preparation, and a simulated public court hearing. Under its regional anti-human trafficking and migrant smuggling programme for the Middle East and North Africa, UNODC has delivered several mock trial trainings in Jordan,

Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia.

The mock session in Jordan was case-based simulating a young Bangladeshi woman who travelled to Amman to work in a factory where she was exploited. Regarding Libya the activities focused on building a solid prosecution case after conducting a mock investigation of a transnational human trafficking case. In Morocco, the efforts were dedicated to examining a well-prepared crime scene, interviewing three victims and two suspects and preparing the strategies for prosecution, defence of the suspects and victims and for the hearing of the trial. The Sudan mock trials were based on a newly developed human trafficking real life scenario specifically addressing the victims' trauma. The mock trials and investigations that took in Tunisia combined a theoretical approach with regards to the international framework and differences between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

Emerging Health Challenges: Non-injecting Stimulant Drugs Use and the risk of HIV and Hep B & C infection

Since the beginning of the HIV epidemic, the focus on HIV prevention, treatment, and care among people who use drugs has concentrated on the needs of people who inject drugs, and mainly on those who inject opioids. However, data have shown that there are HIV-related risks associated with the use of non-injecting stimulant drugs, as well as with the unsafe injection of such drugs, including cocaine, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), and stimulant new psychoactive substances (NPS).

To address the current situation and to provide guidance on implementing HIV, hepatitis C (HCV) and hepatitis B (HBV) programmes for people who use stimulant drugs and who are at risk of contracting these viruses, UNODC in close coordination of the Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHRRA) organized the first regional 3-day workshop on newly developed UNODC guidelines of HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support for people who use stimulant drugs. More than 25 Community Based Organizations (CBO), service providers and decision-makers from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Lebanon, Pakistan and Tunisia participated in the event in Beirut, Lebanon.



Safe Airports for Safer Citizens: UNODC AIRCOP supports Iraq in addressing terrorism and organized criminal networks at airports



Terrorist and organized criminal operations have globally grown in complexity. As the number of air passengers are expected to double in the coming 20 years, airports and the connectivity offered by airlines are prone to exploitation by terrorist entities and organized criminal groups for their transnational criminal activities.

To support Iraq in facing such challenges, the [Airport Communication Project](#) (AIRCOP) implemented by UNODC in cooperation with Interpol and the World Customs Organization delivered its first training in Baghdad on "Frontline

identification and interdiction of suspicious passengers" from 8 to 12 September 2019. This activity is the first step of a series of activities, thereby connecting it to a network of 34 other countries (40 airports) participating in the programme.

Expert group meeting on Financial Red Flags indicators for Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants

To fully address two critical forms of organized crime, Trafficking in Persons (TiP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) crimes, a full cycle of prevention needs to be put in place to not only aim to prevent the crime but also to stop the possible profits gained from it.

According to the 2011 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) report, criminals involved in TiP and SoM are also highly engaged in the handling and movement of cash, hence financial investigation and analysis can play a significant role in the detection and investigation of such crimes. UNODC's Toolkit on Trafficking in Persons emphasizes the importance of financial investigations and analyses to uncover traffickers and smugglers (follow the money and you will find the trafficker).

UNODC held an expert group meeting (EGM) in Cairo, Egypt on Red Flag Indicators for Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. The red flag indicators incorporate a set of warning signs, prepared for financial institutions, which may help them identify suspicious financial transactions related to the crimes of TiP and SoM. When such indicators are witnessed within transactions, financial institutions would then report them to the law enforcement agencies. The EGM gathered representatives from relevant governmental institutions in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Sudan; notably the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, the Public Prosecution, the Administrative Control Authority, and the Financial Information Units of the national Central Banks.



The Launch of the Jordan's National Plan for Supporting the Capabilities of the Correction and Rehabilitation Centres

UNODC and the Government of Jordan launched the National Plan for Supporting the Capabilities of the Correction and Rehabilitation Centers, specifically the Correction and Rehabilitation Centers Directorate (CRCD), within the Public Security Directorate and. The plan comes as a continuation and affirmation of past UNODC partnership with the Jordanian Government under the "Strengthening Criminal Investigation and International Cooperation for Organized Crime cases in Jordan" project. The plan was funded by Japan and with technical assistance from Penal Reform International (PRI). Due to the increasing needs and pressure on the prisons facilities as well as the lack of adequate services and programs as a result of the then existing overcrowding and limited resources over the past few years, experts adopted a comprehensive approach and carried out an in-depth needs assessment and situational analysis aiming to develop a strategic five-years roadmap. The resulting plan introduces comprehensive solutions as well as new rehabilitation and integration programs improving the existing ones and ensures the investment in human resources in full compliance with international standards and respect of human rights.



Strengthening crime scene investigation and forensic chain of custody in Tunisia



Through forensic science expertise, services and evidence chain of custody the smallest piece of evidence can provide invaluable information and bring solid evidence to court. Forensic sciences provide extremely efficient ways to accelerate crime-solving by building cases on physical evidence rather than only on confession and testimony.

Aiming to effectively utilize the power of forensics to support Member States in criminal justice reform, UNODC has been working with the Tunisian government in implementing the "Strengthening Tunisian crime scene investigation services" programme since 2016. As part of the programme, UNODC developed a Training-of-Trainers sub-programme, approved by National Counterparts, on Crime Scene Investigation Management at the National Police Training Academy of Salammbô, Carthage. The training programme targeted first responders and support personnel, crime scene experts, and judiciary personnel with three adapted curricula. The training promoted the importance of crime scene preservation, forensic evidence chain of custody, response and communication enhancement, and coordination at and around the crime scene, in accordance to the respective role and responsibilities of each group of crime scene actors. A short [documentary](#) has been developed to reflect a white crime scene simulation, fully scaled and as close as possible to reality, where the trainees from each group had to apply their acquired knowledge, role and responsibilities, depending on their training group.

Strengthening long term cooperation in Iraq



Aiming to support Iraq's efforts to enhance the criminal justice system in wide array of thematic areas that UNODC is mandated to work on, particularly in the aftermath of the military defeat of ISIL, UNODC established a programme office in Iraq. A lot of UNODC's work in the past few years has focused on reinforcing Iraq's legal regime against terrorism. Considering the interest expressed by national partners to expand UNODC's work in Iraq, in 2018, UNODC fielded two assessment missions during which priorities for UNODC's future partnership in Iraq were identified, including in the areas of drug control, countering organized crime and corruption, prison reform and health. In early 2019, advancing the

United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform efforts, UNODC deployed a Senior Programme Coordinator to Iraq to enhance the operational capacity on the ground and build a long-term cooperation programme grounded in national priorities, focusing on the rule of law and the justice system.

Supporting Member States' stances on Violence Against Women across the region



Violence against women and girls (VAW&G) is a grave violation of human rights. In addition to the severe negative impact on women's general well-being, it prevents women from fully participating in society, thus leading to negative consequences not only for the women affected but also for their families, communities and countries at large. UNODC has been undertaking various efforts across the region to help end VAW&G in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Tunisia.

In Egypt, UNODC conducted a workshop to support judges in facing judicial challenges and providing efficient responses to VAW&G. The workshop was based on the developed UNODC Manual and in the context of the Essential Services Package Programme (ESP). Part of the UN joint project "Haya" in Palestine, UNODC conducted an awareness-raising workshop on criminal justice services for women survivors of violence. The initiative brought together justice sector institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Nablus District to discuss law enforcement, legal assistance and forensic medicine services to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors and identify challenges and ways of cooperation in this field. By targeting CSOs, UNODC seeks to reach out to the wider community and ensure that women and girls know that GBV is not tolerated and are aware of the criminal justice services they can benefit from and obtain justice.

For Tunisia, UNODC aimed to work on the role of forensic medicine expertise regarding Law 58 for the elimination of VAW. With more than 100 participants, the seminar helped highlight the possible obstacles to implementation and develop a set of recommendations to move forward. The Seminar coordinated with UNFPA, Nebras, INJED, Tunisian College of Forensic Medicine, and the Tunisian Association of the Forensic Medicine and Sciences. UNODC also expanded its work to Jordan with a three-day training for law enforcement officers on VAW in Amman. Efforts aim at supporting law enforcement bodies to provide fair and sensitive procedures in response to cases of VAW&G throughout the criminal justice process, while ensuring a victim-centred approach and preventing re-victimization.

All efforts in this newsletter directly contributes to support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda, more specifically to:



The activities and projects in this Newsletter are funded by



Website

www.unodc.org/middleeastandnorthafrica

Twitter

 @UNODC_ROMENA

Email

 unodc-egyptfieldoffice@un.org

Address

14 Road 280, Postal No. 11435, Madinet Nasr, Cairo, Egypt