



# UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## ROMENA NEWSLETTER

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Dear Reader,

Since the very first days of its operations in Palestine, UNODC has supported the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the framework of its Regional Programme for the Arab States, and the National Programme of Palestine on Drug Control, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Reform.

For more than ten years, UNODC provided support to the Government in a wide range of fields including forensic assistance, drug treatment and rehabilitation and prison reform. The PNA is actively engaged with UNODC in areas of anti-human trafficking, countering cybercrime, access to legal aid, regional drug law enforcement cooperation and drug demand and harm reduction. UNODC has been also providing support to the Palestinian Authorities as part of the Doha Declaration Global Programme.

This Newsletter walks you through the key projects, activities, and initiatives currently in progress in Palestine, as well as the plans ahead. We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Cristina Albertin,

UNODC Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa

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# UNODC IN PALESTINE



## FORENSIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Worldwide, forensic sciences are a cornerstone of criminal justice investigations used by modern law enforcement and justice services to solve all types of crime and bring justice to victims. 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. Furthermore, forensic sciences provide extremely efficient ways to accelerate crime-solving by building cases on physical evidence rather than only on confession and testimony. Forensic analysis can help create linkages with other investigations, which can help in identifying, within short time frames, criminal networks of transnational and international organized crime, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and illicit trafficking.



By building the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) institutional capacity and expanding the forensic service to provide reliable and credible evidence, UNODC contributes to the provision of an improved criminal justice system. A few key forensic services under development include drug and chemical evidence analysis, firearm and tool mark evidence examination and questioned document examination; and the establishment of a forensic science laboratory in preparation for operational casework delivery.

Recently, UNODC trained the biological screening section at the Palestinian Civil Police's (PCP) Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL). The training focused on evidence handling and transfer and persistence of biological material and was delivered to biology experts from the FSL and police officers from the Crime Scene and Family Protection Units. Since its establishment in 2016 the FSL has been working on international standards and increasing the capacity of the National Center of Forensic Medicine (NCFM). Forensics now contribute to an improved criminal justice system by increasing the analysis and presentation of evidence in courts. In 2018, the FSL helped close 1257 cases out of 1459 cases received.



## EVIDENCE BASED DRUG DEPENDENCE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION

UNODC works with the PNA to concretize a comprehensive, integrated and safe response to the problem of drug dependence. This response is put into action by integrating an inclusive system of evidence-based harm reduction and drug dependence treatment into the health care system, strengthening institutional and human capacity at the Palestine National Rehabilitation Centre (PNRC) and setting up the first drug treatment and rehabilitation center of its kind that is

science, gender and human rights-based. The opening of the PNRC provided a strong point for the Palestinian Government to respond to the rise of drug use and the need for treatment options.

UNODC strengthened the institutional and human resource capacity of the PNRC by equipping the staff with practical operational advice and support. As a result, the rehabilitation centre in Bethlehem provides a comprehensive package of drug dependence treatment and rehabilitation services, including

both in-patient and out-patient services, and is operated by 42 clinical and non-clinical staff. Since the opening of PNRC in January 2019, 300 cases were treated through the inpatient and outpatient services, in addition to 10 opioid substitution treatment cases.

UNODC is exploring the possibility to further support the Palestinian Government in developing comprehensive community and schools-based drug prevention and aftercare programmes at the PNRC and district clinics to strengthen the response services currently provided by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and ensure a proper follow-up for drug addicts who received treatment.



## UNPLUGGED FROM DRUGS

Young people's path to harmful substance use is complex and requires critical action. The road from initiation to harmful use of substances is influenced by factors that are often out of their control. Factors at the personal level (including behavioral and mental health, neurological developments and gene variations resulting from social influences), the micro level (parental and family functioning, schools and peer influences) and the macro level (socioeconomic and physical environment) can render adolescents vulnerable to substance use. To respond to the critical nature of this issue, UNODC launched the "Unplugged" programme in Palestine in 2019. Unplugged is a school-based drug prevention programme for adolescents that aims to curb initiation of

drug use and delay the transition from experimental to addicted behavior involving alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other drugs.

Through a series of trainings provided to school teachers and counselors, the programme works to integrate in the school curriculum and the educational material made available to students to encourage them to use a 'life skills' approach, to know the key facts about alcohol, drugs and tobacco and to utilize methods for problem solving and critical thinking. This enables the students to reach effective decision-making and gain communication and goal setting skills.

The project focuses on correcting misperceptions and focuses on normative beliefs (beliefs based on overestimated proportions of peers using drugs or approving drug use). In the context of precarious and fragile conditions, young people who face psychosocial insecurity and trauma may be at a higher risk of resorting to psychoactive substances as self-medication to cope with stress and dramatic psychological conditions.

With the initiation age of drug use being between 12 and 20 years, Palestinian young people represent the most vulnerable group, in need for targeted prevention at the school level.



After the series of trainings for 25 teachers and school counselors took place, UNODC piloted the school-based drug prevention programme for children aged 12-14 in 30 Ministry of Education (MoE) schools in Jerusalem and Ramallah. Unplugged is in collaboration with Mentor Arabia and Al-Sadiq Al-Taieb Association.

Initiated by the European Union Drug Abuse Prevention (EUDAP-Faculty), the Unplugged programme is based on an 'interactive' life skills educational and social approach, designed to promote positive health behavior and substance abuse prevention, essentially entailing the involvement of school students in tackling drug-related problems and their prevention through discussions, and not merely by tutoring.



## PALESTINIAN YOUTH “LINE UP! LIVE UP!” WITH SPORTS

Knowledge spreading through non-formal education and community-based approaches is instrumental for ensuring learning. In this context, sports education offers useful vehicles to enhance personal and social skills and increase knowledge amongst at-risk youth. Sport appeals to the interest of young people and encourages their engagement, therefore creating key learning opportunities.

With this in mind and through the [Doha Declaration Programme](#), UNODC developed “[Line Up! Live Up!](#)” a sport-based life skills

training programme aimed at strengthening resilience of youth aged 13-18 and reducing their engagement in risky, anti-social and delinquent behavior. Such aim is achieved by focusing on providing training of a set of key life skills, enhancing knowledge on the consequence of crime, violence, and drug use and understanding young people’s attitudes and how they are affected by their normative beliefs. Line Up! Live Up! has been launched for the first time in the Middle East and North Africa, in Palestine in cooperation with the Higher Council for Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Education and in partnership with [UNRWA](#).

The training-of-trainers (ToT) programme has been designed as a unique tool that transfers the accumulated expertise of UNODC and other partners in implementing life skills training for crime and drug use prevention to sport settings. Through Line Up! Live Up! programme, sports coaches, teachers and others working with youth in sports settings can target valuable life skills, such as resisting social pressures to engage in delinquency, coping with anxiety and communicating effectively with peers, through a set of interactive and fun exercises.



Line Up! Live Up! is currently active in 33 UNRWA schools throughout Palestine, engaging nearly 19,000 students in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho, Nablus, Qalqilia, Tulkarem, Hebron, Jenin and Birzeit. In 2018 and 2019, 145 sport trainers, coaches and youth instructors were trained to deliver the project’s material and help young girls and boys build their resilience to crime and substance abuse. In total, 3724 students benefitted from Line Up! Live Up! sessions.

## INNOVATION IN ACTION: POSITIVE DEVIANCE



UNODC previously was involved in the UN Women-led Innovation Lab’s experimental activities on PD in Palestine through its “Line Up, Live Up!” under the Doha Declaration Programme. Utilising this approach, UNODC piloted a project “Engaging and Learning from Sport Teachers and Young Women in Sport Activities,” as a behaviour change tool to promote gender equality among sport teachers and coaches, in 2018.

Positive Deviance (PD) approach is an innovative method that focuses on community engagement and learning from the successful behaviours and solutions that are already widely practiced. As a participatory approach, positive deviance offers solutions that “are already there” instead of relying on awareness and prevention exclusively. From the PD perspective, the real experts are in the communities,

equipped with the necessary knowledge and solutions to deal with the persistence of negative issues, such as the lack of female participation in the public life. Positive deviance methodology puts the local community at the heart of the implementation process, having the community ask the questions, give the answers, and identify the appropriate indicators.

## LIGHTING UP THE WAY FOR NEW BEGINNINGS: REHABILITATION OF PRISONERS PROGRAMME



Part of the Doha Declaration Programme, UNODC launched an advanced Technical, Vocation and Educational Training (TVET) programme, which taught and certified male prisoners on electrical installations in Jericho. TVET achieved through partnering with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to adapt the curriculum to the restrictions and training possibilities of the prison and to provide certificates to the trainees, post final examination, to help improve their opportunities to find a job after release, collaborating with companies to offer the trainees work placement and training selected prison officers to become trainers to guarantee the sustainability of the efforts.

UNODC provides technical guidance to the national counterparts on how to enhance existing rehabilitation programmes and promote social reintegration of prisoners into the community. As a result of this assistance, the prisoners will receive skills to help them find employment upon release or to be enrolled in an advanced TVET programme to complete the training provided. In the absence of pre- and post-release programme, as well as reinsertion programme in Palestine, the Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre Directorate (CRCDC) seeks to provide the prisoners with better opportunities to get back to the job market after release, and the project aimed to address this gap.

Nine inmates at the Jericho Correctional and Rehabilitation Centre (CRC) recently concluded their four-month training on Electrical Installations.



The inmate selection criteria included their motivation to be enrolled, general health conditions, their level of studies, the length of their sentence and date of release. To ensure the sustainability of this initiative, UNODC supported the training of two CRCDC officers who will provide the training to selected prisoners for the next four to five years. The CRCDC will manage and ensure the follow up of the rehabilitation programmes from the selection of the prisoners until the certification, in continued cooperation with the Ministry of Labour.

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## HAYA: ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS (VAW&G) IN WEST BANK AND GAZA



According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) 2011 Violence Survey, an average of 29.4% of women are victims of VAW in Palestine; in the Gaza Strip, this percentage increases to 37.5%. Women in Palestine face multiple layers of violence and discrimination.

A five-year long project, Haya is a collaboration between UNODC, UN Women, UNFPA, UN-Habitat and Palestinian

Authorities, municipalities, community associations and civil society organizations (CSOs) active on eliminating VAW&G and promoting women's human rights. Efforts under this project focus on reducing the vulnerability of women and girls to all forms of violence, eliminating the harmful practices and attitudes that perpetuate and validate VAW&G within households and communities, as well as increasing women and girls' access to gender responsive services and developing capacity to enhance and implement legal and policy frameworks.

Under the programme, UNODC is specifically responsible for enhancing the forensic capacity for cases related to VAW&G and supporting the capacity of justice institutions and the media to deal appropriately with VAW&G. UNODC helps the authorities to enhance the capacity of police, prosecutors and first responders to respond effectively to VAW&G and assists in improving healthcare and forensic services to victims.



Through cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) and the BirZeit Media Development Center (MDC), UNODC launched a two-day orientation workshop for media professionals on the public services available to prevent and respond to VAW&G.

## COUNTERING CYBERCRIME



Cybercrime has proliferated in an unprecedented way and poses a criminal justice challenge to justice systems all over the world. UNODC assists countries in this highly technical area through several targeted interventions.

Since 2019, UNODC supports the Palestinian Authorities to investigate cybercrime, to utilise digital forensics and to enhance the capacity of prosecutors and judges to make Palestine

a safer place in the face of this undeniable threat.

Throughout this project, three training have been offered to present the different aspects and cybercrime issues and generate discussions to strengthen the current capacity. In 2019, UNODC has launched a specialised training for the Anti-Cybercrime Unit under the Public Prosecution Office (PPO) in Ramallah, Palestine, and trained 25 participants appointed by the PPO.

Through this assistance, UNODC seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Specialised Unit for investigation, prosecution and judgment records related to cybercrime, in accordance with international legal instruments and UN rules and standards for crime prevention and criminal justice.

# Looking Forward

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In Palestine, UNODC has identified a number of areas for future cooperation and is continuously working to expand its work in the criminal justice and crime prevention sector in thematic areas such as human trafficking, anti-corruption, and prevention of crime, violence and drug use especially among youth.

## Technical assistance on TiP (Trafficking in Persons) legislation

Every year, many people fall victim to human trafficking. Trafficked persons often undergo multiple forms of abuse, exploitation, human rights violations, and life-threatening risks. UNODC supports Member States to investigate and prosecute both crimes through evidence-based trainings and capacity building activities.

In 2019, UNODC supported the National Programme on Drug Control, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the TiP legislation drafting. The efforts included coordination and meetings with the Ministers of Justice and Social Development, the Attorney General and other concerned stakeholders, with an awareness raising session on the UNTOC and the Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) and TiP protocols. This allowed UNODC to assess the technical needs of respective authorities in relation to the TiP legislation drafting. The TiP bill will provide further legislative guidance, additional response to TiP challenges and take into consideration the specific context of Palestine.

## Anti-corruption: capacity development and technical assistance

UNODC has been providing technical assistance to the Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) to combat corruption and money laundering. Specifically, in the field of financial investigation and analysis. UNODC conducted an assessment mission, to evaluate the previous anti-corruption strategy (2015-2018) and capacity needs of the PACC and delivered an anti-corruption training workshop for investigating cases of corruption in Palestine. Recently, UNODC supported the PACC in the review and validation process of the new national anti-corruption strategy (2020-2022).

The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission currently collaborates with UNODC to enhance prevention of corruption, law enforcement, and international cooperation, as well as through the provision of specialized software for data gathering, case management and financial audits.

## Supporting the Palestinian youth

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines the growing contribution of sports as a tool for peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect. It also highlights the contributions that sport can make to the empowerment of communities, to individuals (particularly women and young people) as well as to health, education and social inclusion.

More specifically, sports offer an important opportunity for building life skills of at-risk youth that allow them to better cope with daily life challenges and move away from involvement in violence, crime or drug use. UNODC is to take part in organizing the youth festival with the engagement of local counterparts and will also contribute to proper youth participation, in 2020, under the “Line Up, Live Up!” programme.

Building on its experience in crime and drug prevention through life skills and sports, UNODC joined the UN Thematic Group on Young People in Palestine, chaired by UNFPA, and has been working on a joint proposal to meet the needs of youth with UN partners.

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



SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries



SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

The activities and projects in this Newsletter are funded by



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