



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Conference
Support Section
of the
Organized Crime
Branch

INTRODUCTION

Organized crime threatens peace and human security, violates human rights and undermines the economic, social, cultural, political and civil development of societies around the world.

Transnational organized crime manifests in many forms, including as trafficking in drugs, firearms and even persons. At the same time, organized crime groups exploit human mobility to smuggle migrants and undermine financial systems through money-laundering. The vast sums of money involved can compromise legitimate economies and directly impact public processes by buying influence through corruption. It yields high profits for its culprits and results in high risks for individuals who fall victim

to it. Every year, countless individuals lose their lives at the hands of criminals involved in organized crime, succumbing to drug-related health problems or injuries inflicted by firearms.

Organized crime has diversified, globalized, and reached macro-economic proportions. Transnational organized crime can permeate government agencies and institutions, fuelling corruption, infiltrating business and politics, and hindering economic and social development.

Criminal networks can forge bonds across borders and overcome cultural and linguistic differences in the commission of transnational crime. Organized crime is not stagnant, but adapts as new criminal markets emerge and as relationships between criminal networks become more flexible and more sophisticated, with ever greater reach around the globe.

In short, transnational organized crime transcends cultural, social, linguistic and geographical borders, requiring a global and concerted response.



THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AND THE PROTOCOLS THERETO

UNODC is the guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the three Protocols—on Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants, and Trafficking of Firearms—that supplement it.

The Organized Crime Convention is the only international treaty that deals with organized crime. It is a landmark achievement, representing the commitment of the international community to combating transnational organized crime. The adoption of the Convention at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000, as well as the Secretariat task entrusted to the United Nations by the Convention itself, acknowledges the important role of the United Nations in supporting this commitment.

The Role of the UNODC Conference Support Section, Organized Crime Branch

To facilitate effective implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto, UNODC's Conference Support Section of the Organized Crime Branch in the Division for Treaty Affairs services the Conference of the Parties and its Working Groups.

The Section offers support and assistance to countries with:

- Ratification of the Convention;
- Assessment of laws and institutions necessary for fulfilling Convention provisions;
- The drafting and passing of new laws and legal amendments;
- Establishing international cooperation mechanisms, such as for MLA and extradition; and
- Anti-organized crime policies and strategies.

The Section also provides legislative assistance in the implementation of the international drug control framework and acts as the focal point within UNODC for the emerging crime topics of cybercrime and digital evidence, online child abuse and exploitation, as well as trafficking in cultural property.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TOOLS

In order to facilitate implementation of the Organized Crime Convention, UNODC has developed a series of model laws, handbooks, and policy guidance notes on selected provisions of the Convention. For the purposes of technical assistance, UNODC has also developed tools that provide States and criminal justice practitioners with invaluable practical assistance and information.



■ The Omnibus survey software (comprehensive self-assessment tool)

The Omnibus survey software is an efficient, interactive and user-friendly tool conceived to simplify reporting obligations vis-à-vis the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Designed as a self-assessment checklist, the Omnibus survey software enables States parties to:

- Assess national legislation for compliance with UNTOC and its Protocols;
- Identify technical and legal assistance needs; and
- Share best practices.

The survey software also includes:

- Hyperlinks to legislative guides;
- The ability to cross-reference information relevant to crime-related treaties; and
- The option to merge the responses of national officials with different expertise into a single national self-assessment report.

The Omnibus survey software is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

To access the Omnibus survey software and for further information, please visit our website:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/omnibus-tool.html>

■ The Needs Assessment Guide on the Organized Crime Convention

The purpose of the Needs Assessment Guide on the Organized Crime Convention is to provide guidance in assessing what can be done by a State Party in order to ensure that the full potential of the Convention is realized.

The Guide consists of sets of indicators and questions designed to enable experts from international organizations, civil society, national governments as well as relevant institutions, in particular policy makers and legislators, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of implementation of the Convention. This includes:

- (a) Identifying gaps in the existing legislation and its implementation;
- (b) Facilitating the formulation and development of technical assistance projects that adequately respond to the gaps and needs identified; and
- (c) Facilitating the development of performance indicators for evaluating progress in implementation.

The Needs Assessment Guide further provides a basis for bilateral and multilateral technical assistance projects, as well as other initiatives undertaken as part of efforts to promote the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its Protocols.

■ SHERLOC Knowledge Management Portal

The Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws against Crime (SHERLOC) Portal facilitates the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and its three Protocols.

The SHERLOC portal contains a database of national legislation relevant to the requirements of the Organized Crime Convention. The database is searchable by country, Convention article and crime type.

SHERLOC also hosts a case law database which contains jurisprudence on corruption, counterfeiting, cybercrime,

drug offences, fraudulent medicine, money-laundering, obstruction of justice, participation in an organized criminal group, piracy, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in firearms and related offences, trafficking in cultural property, wildlife and forest crime, and trafficking in persons. The database enables users to see how States tackle organized crime cases in their national courts.

SHERLOC also hosts a Bibliographic Database and the password-protected Directory of Competent National Authorities (CNA Directory)

■ Competent National Authorities (CNAs) Directory

The Directory of Competent National Authorities provides easy access to the contact information of competent national authorities designated to handle requests under the 1988 Drugs Convention and the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto

The Directory contains contact information of over 600 CNAs authorized to receive, respond to and process requests for:

- Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters;
- Extradition;
- Transfer of sentenced persons;
- Illegal traffic of narcotics by sea;
- Smuggling of migrants by sea;
- Trafficking in firearms;
- Trafficking in cultural property; and
- Prevention.

With a view to facilitating communication between competent national authorities at the interregional level, the Directory also contains essential information on:

- National legal and procedural requirements for making requests;
- Use of the international conventions as the legal basis for requests;
- Links to national laws and websites; and
- Indication of requests that can be made through INTERPOL.

The online Directory is continually updated and accessible to competent authorities and government agencies with a user account. Account members receive the latest publication of the Directory twice a year and can download the directory in .pdf and .rtf formats.

To request a user account and for further information, please visit our website:

<http://www.unodc.org/compauth>



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■ Mutual Legal Assistance Request Writer Tool

Mutual legal assistance is one of the most decisive tools that States have in the fight against serious international crime. Effective mutual legal assistance requests must be generated in a timely manner and comply with legal requirements of both the requesting and requested parties in order to avoid legal obstacles that can arise when criminal justice practitioners from different legal systems work together.

The Mutual Legal Assistance Request Writer Tool (MLA Tool), developed by UNODC, assists States with the drafting of MLA requests, facilitating and strengthening international cooperation in criminal matters.

The MLA Tool:

- Requires virtually no prior knowledge or experience with drafting mutual legal assistance requests;
- Helps to avoid incomplete requests for mutual legal assistance and therefore minimizes the risk of delay or refusal;
- Is easily adjustable to national substantive and procedural law;

- Enables the user to retrieve key information on treaties and national legislation; and
- Features an integrated case-management tracking system for incoming and outgoing requests.

The MLA Tool guides the casework practitioner step by step through the request process for each type of mutual assistance, using a series of templates. Before progressing from one screen to the next, the drafter is prompted if essential information has been omitted. The Tool consolidates all data entered and automatically generates a correct, complete and effective request for final editing and signature.

The MLA Tool is currently available in several languages and it is possible to translate the MLA Tool into other languages.

To request a user account and for further information, please visit our website:

<http://www.unodc.org/mla/index.html>

Please note that access to the MLA Tool is reserved for criminal justice system practitioners.

For any further information and for requests for technical assistance on the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention, please contact:

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Vienna International Centre, 1400 Vienna, Austria

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/index.html>