



# BSAMUN 2023 Combating Transnational Organized Crime

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# Introduction

Transnational organized crime is a phenomenon that thrives worldwide, it poses a significant threat to global security and stability by impacting and weakening a state's governance and authority. Transnational crime refers to criminal activities that are committed across borders and involve criminal networks and organisations that operate beyond the control of any single state. It can include a range of illicit activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, cybercrime, money laundering, and illegal arms trade.

Overtime, smaller, traditional and territorial-based criminal groups have evolved and expanded into international groups with criminal networks that spread across several states and areas. In all cases, the criminal influence of these groups have had a significant impact on the lives of the public and government; they can undermine the rule of law, disrupt legitimate economic activities, and threaten the safety of individuals and communities. Organised crime can also contribute to the spread of corruption and the erosion of democratic institutions.

In the most recent years, globalisation has resulted in easier and faster means of communication, efficient movement of finances, international travel, etc. thus criminal groups have gotten opportunities to flourish and expand their enterprises. This, in combination with the incorporation of technology, virtual assets and other online aspects, has made organised crime more harmful and present than ever.

To combat this problem, countries around the world have implemented various measures and strategies. As criminal networks span the globe, attempts to combat them must entail collaboration across borders to prevent criminal groups from simply diverting their activities to foreign regions. Combating transnational organised crime is a top priority for

the United Nations, which recognizes that the issue requires a coordinated and multifaceted approach.

## Definition of key terms

**Transnational:** Reaching beyond or transcending national boundaries.

**Illicit:** Not sanctioned by custom or law; improper or unlawful.

**Multifaceted:** Having many aspects or sides.

**Domestic:** Within one's own country; not foreign.

**Globalisation:** The process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide.

**Geopolitical:** Countries and the relationships between them.

**UNODC:** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

**EU:** European Union

**UNTOC:** United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

**ACWG:** Anti-Corruption Working Group

**Exploitation:** The use of something (in an unfair manner) in order to get an advantage from it

**Maritime:** Adjacent to the sea

**EBCGA:** European Border and Coast Guard Agency

**TOCTA:** Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment

**Extradition:** Delivery by one state or nation to another, particularly of fugitives from justice

## General Overview

The Evolution/History of Transnational Organized Crime:

In the late 60's, organised crime was mostly a domestic procedure. The networks within crime groups were usually tight-knit, and they would rarely spread beyond their city for power and profit. With the turn of the decade, there began to be a shift in the form of organised crime. This change began in the 1970's, but only began to really take off in the early 90's. Through the combination of a newly globalised world economy, a new geopolitical climate, softer borders between countries and developments of technology, crime groups shifted from being domestic and hierarchically structured, to global and transnational 'organisations' that networked with other groups.

With this, organised crime transformed into an international problem. Crime groups began to manifest themselves in multiple countries simultaneously to gain increasingly more power, influence, and profit. They utilise global criminal and illicit markets for new opportunities, network between different continents and even with each other to successfully go behind the law. The shift that began in the 90's is still present in today's world.

Results of EU's fight against organised crime (2018-2021)

- Document Fraud: 11,341 documents seized
- Migrant Smuggling: 9,862 people arrested

- Theft and Burglary: 69,426 cultural goods seized
- Drug trafficking: 171 tonnes of drugs seized
- Environmental Crime: 167,432 tonnes of waste seized
- Criminal Finances: 69,800,000 euros seized
- Excise Fraud: 2.2 billion cigarettes seized
- Firearms Trafficking: 16,607 firearms and weapons seized
- Non-cash Payment Fraud: >73,500,000 (euros) loss prevented
- Human Trafficking: 17,688 potential victims identified

#### UNODC & the EU's Organized Crime Priorities (2022-2025)

##### 1. High-Risk Criminal Networks

The EU finds it crucial to scale up their dismantling of organised crime structures, and to target groups that pose a higher risk to Europe's security. The criminal networks that are considered "high-risk" are those which entail corruption, acts of violence, firearms and money laundering.

##### 2. Cyberattacks

Cybercrimes include things such as the creation (and spreading) of malware, hacking with the intent to steal sensitive data, and attacks designed to cause financial and/or reputational damage. The amount of cyberattacks/cybercrime is increasing worldwide, and become more sophisticated specifically in Europe, making it one of the EU's biggest priorities.

##### 3. Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking involves the criminal exploitation of vulnerable people for the purpose of private gain. Sexual exploitation makes up 60% of the total trafficking, with labour trafficking taking up 15%.

##### 4. Child Sexual Exploitation

In recent years, the number of online child abuse and exploitation incidents have increased (especially during the COVID-19 pandemic). In 2021, worldwide: 85

million pictures and videos depicting child sexual abuse were reported 64% more child sexual abuse cases were reported than in 202.

#### 5. Migrant Smuggling

Migrant smuggling is a global crime that exposes migrants to life-threatening risks. The 2015 migration crisis had a significant influence on the criminal environment in Europe, with organised crime groups significantly boosting their involvement in migrant smuggling. 90% of migrants pay people smugglers to help them travel to Europe. For criminal networks, this is a very lucrative industry with little chance of getting caught. According to estimates, smuggling of migrants produced between €3 and €6 billion in revenue worldwide in 2015 and more than €200 million in 2019 through the maritime routes leading to the continent.

#### 6. Drug Trafficking

Regarding drug trafficking, the main objective is to identify, target and dismantle the criminal networks that are involved in drug trafficking; the distribution of cannabis, cocaine, heroin, synthetic drugs and newer psychoactive substances. Illicit drug markets are one of the biggest sources of income for transnational organised crime groups (around 30 billion euros in Europe each year alone).

#### 7. Fraud, Economic & Financial Crimes

Throughout the EU, there are fraud schemes that target private individuals, businesses, and vital infrastructure. Criminal groups have benefited from the COVID-19 pandemic by exploiting the uncertainty and rising demand for specific products that the crisis has brought about. The most prevalent schemes include: online fraud schemes, counterfeiting of goods, counterfeiting of money, intellectual property crime, criminal finances and money laundering.

#### 8. Organised Property Crime

Organised property crime is the most visible type of organised crime and has a direct impact on people and organisations. More than one million cases related to burglary are reported every year in the EU. Organised property crime focuses on

networks conducting organised burglaries, theft and robberies, motor vehicle crime and illegal trade of cultural goods.

#### 9. Environmental Crime

Environmental crime is one of the world's most profitable organised criminal activities, and has a major impact not only on the environment, but also on human health. Environmental crime offences include: improper collection, transport, recovery or disposal of waste illegal emission or discharge of substances into the atmosphere, water or soil the killing, destruction, possession of or trade in protected wild animal or plant species illegal trade in ozone-depleting substances.

#### 10. Firearms Trafficking

Criminals groups often rely on the availability of weapons to carry out their activities. Between 2019 and 2020, EU law enforcement authorities seized more than 11 000 firearms and weapons. With the removal of firearms and other weapons, the power of criminal groups would decrease greatly, also decreasing their success with the other 9 focuses, making this one of the most prioritised issues meant to be tackled.

### UNODC'S Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment (TOCTA)

With the aim to help generate evidence on transnational organised crime groups, the organisation UNODC developed a threat assessment (TOCTA) for Asia. The primary aims of the threat assessment is to:

- Outline the scale of the main transnational organised crimes, as well as their trends and mechanisms (who, how, what, where & when)
- Identifying key knowledge, data, and resource gaps that prevent the detection and monitoring of illegal markets impacting the Asian region
- Give recommendations to increase the accuracy, reliability, representation and quality of data collected to detect, monitor and prevent transnational organised crimes.

## Timeline of Events

2000: United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime

2003: United Nations Convention Against Corruption

2010: International Mass-Market Fraud Working Group Releases Threat Assessment

2010: United Nations Issues Threat Assessment on Transnational Organised Crime

2011: European Unions Anti-Trafficking Directive is Established

2018: Creation of the UNTOC Review Mechanism


2020: EU Council Sets Out 10 Priorities for Fighting Organised Crime (2022-2025)

2021: EBCGA Creates Handbook on Firearms for Border Guards and Custom Authorities

## Major Parties Involved

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:** UNODC is a specialised agency of the United Nations that was created to tackle the world drug problem, promote crime prevention and criminal justice, and combat terrorism. UNODC works to promote international cooperation in these areas, and provides technical assistance and training to help countries develop effective policies and programs to address these issues. Its work includes research and analysis of drug and crime trends, the development of international standards and norms, and the implementation of programs and initiatives to support the international community in their efforts to prevent and combat drug abuse and trafficking, crime, and terrorism.

**The G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group:** The G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group is a forum of the G20 countries dedicated to combating corruption on a global scale. The ACWG works to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in both public and private sectors. They provide a platform for sharing practices, exchanging information, and coordination efforts to prevent and prosecute corruption.



**Interpol:** Interpol is the world's largest international police organisation, with 194 member states. Its mission is to promote global police cooperation and assist in the prevention and suppression of international crime. Interpol works by facilitating communication and cooperation among national police forces, and by providing a range of services and resources to support law enforcement efforts. These include the issuance of international arrest warrants, the provision of forensic expertise, and the coordination of multinational investigations. Through its work, Interpol plays a vital role in fighting transnational crime, terrorism, and other global threats to security.

**International Center for the Prevention of Crime:** The International Center for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) is a non-profit organisation that focuses on crime prevention research, policy development, and program implementation. The ICPC collaborates with local, national, and international partners to promote evidence-based strategies and interventions that address the root causes of crime and violence. Its areas of focus include urban safety, violence against women and children, youth and gang violence, and the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism.

**European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust):** The European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, also known as Eurojust, is a judicial cooperation agency of the European Union (EU). Its primary mission is to improve the effectiveness of investigations and prosecutions of serious cross-border crime by fostering cooperation among national judicial authorities. Eurojust supports the coordination of investigations and prosecutions of organised crime, terrorism, drug trafficking, and other serious crimes that have a cross-border dimension. It also provides support and expertise to national authorities, including assistance with extradition, mutual legal assistance, and the coordination of joint investigation teams.

## Possible Solutions

1. Strengthening International Cooperation: This involves enhancing cooperation between countries and international organisations to share intelligence, coordinate investigations, and prosecute criminals. This can involve developing and implementing bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries.
2. Enhancing Law Enforcement Capabilities: This involves increasing the capacity of law enforcement agencies to detect, investigate, and prosecute transnational organised crime. This can involve providing training, equipment, and resources to law enforcement agencies, as well as promoting the use of technology to track and intercept criminal activities.
3. Targeting Financial Networks That Support Transnational Organized Crime: This involves identifying and disrupting the financial networks that enable transnational organised crime to thrive. This can involve implementing measures to prevent money laundering and financial crimes, as well as freezing the assets of criminal organisations and individuals involved in illegal activities.
4. Addressing The Root Causes of Transnational Organized Crime: This involves addressing the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to the spread of transnational organised crime, such as poverty, inequality, and weak governance. This can involve supporting economic development, promoting good governance, and providing assistance to vulnerable communities.
5. Increasing Public Awareness and Engagement: This involves raising awareness of the dangers of transnational organised crime and encouraging individuals and communities to take an active role in combating it. This can involve promoting education and outreach campaigns, as well as encouraging individuals to report suspicious activities to law enforcement agencies.

## Useful Sources

1. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/toc.html>  
→ Collection of many reports created by UNODC on all components of transnational organised crime (covering multiple areas)
2. <https://www.unodc.org/southasia/en/topics/frontpage/2009/combating-transnational-organised-crime.html>  
→ Many of UNODC's programs aimed at eliminating transnational organised crime (the issues listed in the top 10 priority list)

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