UN Secretary-General’s Report to the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education

Contribution by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (June 2022 – May 2024)

Executive Summary:
UNODC continued to support and promote disarmament and non-proliferation education in various thematic areas, including in relation to (1) Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism, (2) Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and (3) Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and precursor materials. The activities of UNODC ranged from awareness-raising and education for children, youth and adolescents to dedicated training and capacity building activities for criminal justice practitioners, arms control experts and policy makers.

UNODC promoted the adherence to, and effective implementation of, seven international legal instruments against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism; supported States in preventing and combatting the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition, through the effective implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the Organized Crime Convention; and strengthened the capacity of the judiciary and law enforcement to address the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and precursor materials.

UNODC Work on Recommendations 2,3,4, 21 and 23\(^1\)

Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continued to promote the adherence to, and effective implementation of, seven international legal instruments against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism\(^2\) in accordance with its relevant mandate

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(A/RES/74/175 and A/RES/78/226). Those instruments are synergistic with United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) (UNSCR 1540) and help States counter the threat of proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by non-State actors. Conducted within the framework of projects funded by the Government of Canada and the European Union, UNODC’s technical assistance comprised training activities and tools, among others.

During the reporting period, the Office carried out the following training activities aimed at promoting adherence to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and building the capacity of national stakeholders – including criminal justice officials – in relation to the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of crimes related to this Convention: an international criminal investigation and mock trial exercise; three regional workshops for countries in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and South-Eastern Europe; a national training seminar in Montenegro for judicial and prosecution training centres; four regional workshops on ICSANT and four global virtual events focusing on specific areas of ICSANT. UNODC also conducted workshops on UNSCR 1540 in a border context in Botswana, Panama, and Zambia.

The Office co-organized three cross-regional table-top exercises focused on responses to radioactive material smuggling and on good practices for detection strategies, nuclear-related forensics and coordination of subsequent criminal investigations: in 2022 (together with Italy, Morocco, the United States of America and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)), in 2023 (together with Tajikistan, the Netherlands, Romania, the United States of America and UNOCT), and in 2024 (together with the Netherlands, Romania, the United States of America and UNOCT). In 2024, the Office co-organized, together with Mongolia, Viet Nam and the United States of America, an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum workshop on strengthening legal frameworks to combat CBRN terrorism. The event helped to identify and demonstrate effective regional and international cooperation mechanisms for investigating, prosecuting and responding to CBRN crimes, and to strengthen legal frameworks’ implementation.

The Office developed and launched tools and resources related to the international legal framework against CBRN terrorism, including the Manual on Fictional Cases related to Offences under the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and an eLearning module on the Convention’s key provisions, aiming to promote awareness of the need to adhere to the Convention and incorporate its requirements into national legislation. All of those materials are available on the Office’s regularly updated ICSANT website (www.unodc.org/icsant) in all six United Nations official languages, with some also translated into Portuguese. Among other

Shelf; and 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts relating to International Civil Aviation.
resources, the website now contains submissions from 51 States parties to the Convention on their legislation to implement its criminalization provisions.

The Office continued to offer its eLearning module on the international legal framework against CBRN terrorism, available in all UN official languages and Portuguese. Since its launch in 2019, the module had been completed by over 2,600 practitioners from 128 Member States.

Throughout the reporting period, UNODC cooperated regularly with a multitude of other organizations and initiatives, including the African Union, the Caribbean Community, the European Union CBRN Centres of Excellence, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Civil Aviation Organization, INTERPOL, the International Maritime Organization, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the UN Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and its Group of Experts, the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, as well as the African Center for Science and International Security, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Stimson Center, the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, and the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, among others.

Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition

UNODC continued to support Member States in implementing the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components, and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), including to prevent and combat the trafficking, diversion and misuse of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

To bolster criminal justice responses against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, UNODC, in the reporting period, launched a global capacity building toolkit, the Guidelines on the Investigation and Prosecution of Firearms Offences. These Guidelines are currently customized for the Western Balkans and the Caribbean. As a parallel initiative, the Office developed a Digest of Firearms Trafficking and Related Crimes Cases, examining cases from around the world that illustrate challenges and opportunities in investigations, prosecutions, and adjudication. In this context relevant case law and legislation has been uploaded to the UNODC SHERLOC portal, which now gathers 211 firearms trafficking cases, and 341 pieces

3 The Guidelines on the Investigation and Prosecution of Firearms Offences are available for criminal justice practitioners upon request.
of firearms-related legislation. Both publications are available in different languages, including English, Spanish and French.

Furthermore, during the reporting period, UNODC delivered more than 80 specialized workshops and training courses to participants from 31 countries. As a result, the courses strengthened the capacities of around 1,000 criminal justice practitioners in the detection, identification and classification of firearms, crime scene management, electronic evidence, investigative techniques and firearms tracing, joint investigation teams, data collection, international cooperation, and information exchange. Mentoring support to countries in conducting investigations around firearms trafficking cases continued in 2023, leading to the submission of several Mutual Assistance Requests, the formation of two Joint Investigation Teams in Africa and two Informal Contact Groups in Latin America. With the support of UNODC, two law enforcement operations tackling firearms trafficking and related forms of crime, were organized in Africa (Operation KAFO IV) and Latin America (Operation Armstrong, jointly organized with EU EMPACT Firearms) respectively, involving more than 2,300 officers from 11 countries.

Furthermore, UNODC implemented the Education for Universities Initiative (Edu4U), which aims to promote crime prevention and promote a culture of lawfulness through education activities designed for tertiary levels. These activities help educators teach the next generation to better understand and address problems that can undermine the rule of law and encourage students to actively engage in their communities and future professions in this regard. The Teaching Module Series on Firearms (available in English, Russian and Spanish) recognizes the fundamental role of firearms in criminal and security contexts and can be included in teaching curricula at universities and academic institutions to provide students with the opportunity to better understand the scale of the illicit firearms phenomenon and its connections with crime, in particular with organized crime, terrorism and insurgency.

**Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and precursor materials**

UNODC delivered several online and in-person capacity building activities to equip professionals with the necessary skills to counter IEDs, including scenario-based exercises, and shared education and training materials reaching a wide range of officials, civil society and academics, contributing to international peace and security during this period.

Following UNIDIR’s launch of the UNIDIR C-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool (CMM SAT), UNODC successfully deployed the self-assessment tool in several countries and actively promoted its use in other member states. In the reporting period, the deployment was supported in Pakistan.
In 2023, UNODC organized national training activities, workshop and/or mentoring activities in 7 countries (Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, Uganda, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Maldives) in relation to topics such as, inter alia, crime scene management and the collection of intelligence and evidence in the context of IED attacks, domestic inter-agency coordination, and the use of international databases, international cooperation.

Moreover, to foster cross-border cooperation, when detecting and judicializing intelligence related to IEDs and IED components and strengthen exchange of experience, UNODC organized the following 4 regional trainings/workshops: one in Kenya for participants from Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Uganda; two in Cote d’Ivoire including participants from Niger and Cameroon; one, with support of the GCTF West Africa Working Group and INTERPOL, in Benin for participants from Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo.

UNODC also supported activities of and collaborated with other key organizations, for example presenting at a conference on C-IED and SALW organized by the Small Arms Survey (SAS) in Lomé, Togo in November 2022 and at the ECOWAS Annual Meeting of the National Commissions for Arms Control (SALW Division) to support the development of an ECOWAS C-IED strategy in Dakar, Senegal in December 2023. Furthermore, UNODC supported the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) Regional Meeting on C-IEDs with the NATO C-IED Centre of Excellence, US AFRICOM, UNODA, German Armed Forces Technical Advisory Group Burkina Faso, Small Arms Survey, World Customs Organization (WCO) in June 2023 Lomé, Togo.