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Integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice: other activities in support of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in particular activities of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, non-governmental organizations and other bodies

Report of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Note by the Secretary-General

The report of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was prepared pursuant to article IV, paragraph 3 (e), of the statute of UNICRI and approved by a decision of the Board taken at its meeting held virtually on 22 and 23 October 2021, for submission to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

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Results achieved by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Report of the Board of Trustees

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1086 B (XXXIX) of 1965. The Institute is an autonomous institution of the United Nations and is governed by its Board of Trustees, which provides strategic direction and contributes to the setting of priorities.
2. Within the broad scope of its mandate to develop and implement improved policies in the field of crime prevention and control, the mission of UNICRI is to advance justice and the rule of law in support of peace and sustainable development.
3. UNICRI works in specialized niches and selected areas within the fields of crime prevention, criminal justice, security governance, counter-terrorism and the risks and benefits of technological advances. The Institute provides a vital foundation for United Nations policy and operations through its specialized, cutting-edge and action-oriented research, training and capacity-building programmes. The Institute serves as a conduit for channelling innovative ideas from within and outside the United Nations system.
4. The present report of the Board of Trustees contains a summary of the work carried out by UNICRI in 2021, in line with the UNICRI Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022.

A. Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022

5. Through its research, needs assessments and analyses of evolving trends, as well as the feedback received from partners, academics, civil society actors, policymakers and practitioners, UNICRI has identified the following threats and challenges in its Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022:
 - (a) Radicalization and violent extremism: the lack of context-specific responses, weak criminal justice systems, and gaps in national and transnational cooperation;
 - (b) Transnational organized crime involvement in licit and illicit markets: shadow economies, illicit financial flows and possible links with terrorist networks;
 - (c) Weak security governance, poor rule of law and lack of accountability of institutions in post-conflict areas;
 - (d) High-tech security: encompassing global threats and solutions;
 - (e) Threats to crowded spaces and vulnerable targets;
 - (f) Vulnerabilities to criminal exploitation, gender inequalities and human rights violations against vulnerable populations;
 - (g) Emerging trends in crimes having an impact on the environment: illegal extraction, use of and trade in environmental resources and trafficking in hazardous substances.
6. The Framework contains the following six strategic priorities:
 - (a) Preventing and countering violent extremism;
 - (b) Countering organized crime and fighting all forms of trafficking and illicit financial flows;

- (c) Reinforcing the rule of law in post-conflict countries;
- (d) Security through research, technology and innovation;
- (e) Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance;
- (f) Preventing crime through the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

7. The priorities of the Institute are aligned with Goal 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) of the Sustainable Development Goals, but are also linked to several other Goals (2–6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15).

B. Tools and approaches

8. UNICRI continued to expand its multisectoral and holistic approach, through applied and action-oriented research, the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, the provision of training and technical assistance, the creation of strong partnerships and policy support.

9. UNICRI promoted research to expand the knowledge and understanding of specific problems and tailor appropriate interventions. The Institute produced multiple reports and analytical briefs on a wide range of topics, including the following:

- (a) *Dynamics of Support and Engagement: Understanding Malian Youths' Attitudes towards Violent Extremism*;
- (b) *Rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremism offenders in Mali: collecting data for the development of a costed rehabilitation plan*;
- (c) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in the Republic of Armenia”;
- (d) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in the Republic of Azerbaijan”;
- (e) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in the Republic of Belarus”;
- (f) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in Georgia”;
- (g) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in the State of Libya”;
- (h) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in the Republic of Moldova”;
- (i) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in Tunisia”;
- (j) “Illicit financial flows and asset recovery in Ukraine”;
- (k) *The Needs of Families in the Prevention of Drug Use among Young People: A Pilot Study – Report on Italy, Lebanon and Tunisia*;
- (l) *Technology and Security: Countering Criminal Infiltrations in the Legitimate Supply Chain*;
- (m) “A policy framework for responsible limits on facial recognition – use case: law enforcement investigations”;
- (n) *Countering Terrorism Online with Artificial Intelligence: An Overview for Law Enforcement and Counter-Terrorism Agencies in South Asia and South-East Asia*;
- (o) *Algorithms and Terrorism: The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes*;
- (p) *Guide on the Security of Major Sporting Events: Promoting Sustainable Security and Legacies*;

(q) *Movements of People and the Threat from ISIL and Al-Qaida Terrorism in Europe: Assessing the Potential Interplay*;

(r) “Science, technology and innovation: understanding advancements from the perspective of countering weapons of mass destruction”.

10. The research carried out by the Institute supported the formulation of targeted social and criminal policy strategies for Member States. By disseminating qualitative and quantitative data and analysing the latest trends in crime, the Institute helped Member States raise awareness of the needs and gaps in criminal justice systems and related policy frameworks.

11. UNICRI training and learning activities actively contributed to the transfer and dissemination of the Institute’s expertise acquired through the implementation of projects and programmes under its six strategic priorities. The well-developed in-house capacity of the Institute to design, deliver, manage and evaluate learning activities, together with its vast and growing network of experts and partnerships, allowed the Institute to organize numerous training activities. UNICRI continued to expand its e-learning capacity and online platform.

12. Within the framework of its projects and programmes, UNICRI implemented more than 100 training-related activities for approximately 5,000 trainees. This included, for example, the training of more than 340 representatives of law enforcement authorities and the private sector to strengthen the protection of crowded spaces, including during sporting events; 60 community members on the use of public speaking and the development of political skills as means to prevent and combat violent extremism; 1,200 stakeholders on sensitization and practical issues in relation to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19); 165 law enforcement and security officers on enhancing operational capacities to prevent and detect the illicit trafficking of radiological and nuclear materials; 75 law enforcement officers and 50 representatives of various United Nations agencies to raise awareness of the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime; and 250 law enforcement officials on how artificial intelligence can provide support in combating child sexual exploitation online.

13. In 2020 and 2021, the fifteenth Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice programme was held online in cooperation with the University for Peace; 43 students wishing to specialize in international criminal law, humanitarian law, human rights law and transnational crime were admitted to the programme during that period. As part of the Master of Laws programme, the International Criminal Law Defence Seminar – organized in cooperation with the Office of Public Counsel for the Defence of the International Criminal Court – was delivered online, upon the request of the Office of the Solicitor General of the Philippines and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

14. Additionally, several courses for post-graduate students and professionals were delivered, using dynamic training methodologies developed by UNICRI. This included six specialized online courses for young professionals and post-graduate students organized in cooperation with United Nations entities and international universities to disseminate knowledge in the areas of illicit trade, migration and human rights, cultural heritage, crime and security, and environmental crimes. Because of the high demand, many of these courses, with continuously updated content, will be included in the programme for 2022.

15. The pool of training experts consisted of UNICRI internal subject-matter experts, as well as academics, practitioners and senior United Nations officials, thereby ensuring the provision of diverse insights and perspectives. Every year, several subject matters relating to organized and transnational crime, including drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, environmental crimes and the rule of law, are taught by staff members of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

16. Applying the findings and lessons learned from its research, UNICRI continued to provide training and on-the-ground practical advice and mentoring in many highly specialized crime- and justice-related thematic areas. It also advised counterparts on crime- and justice-related issues at both the policy and operational levels, to enable them to respond more effectively to specific and emerging challenges. Serving as a platform for consultation and cooperation among Member States, local government institutions, research institutions, international organizations, private entities and civil society, UNICRI continued to play a critical role in identifying and disseminating innovative approaches.

17. Thanks to its unique position as a global platform, UNICRI shared with the international community the many good practices and lessons learned through its programmes and activities. The Institute employed various methods to enhance learning and raise awareness in the field of crime and justice, such as the holding and hosting of international online conferences, workshops, specialized courses for practitioners and the annual Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice programme. Furthermore, to promote cooperation and the sharing of experiences, UNICRI directly supported the capacity development of national stakeholders in the field. Those efforts were strengthened through publications of the Institute, including the *Freedom from Fear Magazine*, as well as through policy papers and specialized materials developed as a result of its research projects, training efforts and field activities.

18. Through its websites, activity on social media platforms and production of reports, campaigns and videos, as well as the organization of training programmes for media professionals on new and emerging threats, UNICRI contributed to reinforcing knowledge of priority issues and relevant available tools to address them.

19. The work undertaken by UNICRI in 2021 was funded exclusively from voluntary contributions. Its primary donors were Canada, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the European Union, the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Société Industrielle et Commerciale de Produits Alimentaires (SICPA) and several other private companies, foundations and international organizations.

20. The work of UNICRI had a broad impact at the national, regional and international levels, and a wide range of stakeholders benefited from its technical assistance. Its programme of activities was delivered through its headquarters, in Turin, Italy, and a network of field offices, including liaison offices in Rome and New York, a project office in Brussels, the Knowledge Centre “Security Improvements through Research, Technology and Innovation” (SIRIO) in Geneva, the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in The Hague, and the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence in Algiers, Amman, Manila, Nairobi, Rabat, Tashkent and Tbilisi. UNICRI participates in United Nations system coordination mechanisms in the locations in which it has an official presence.

II. Preventing and countering violent extremism

21. As a signatory to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, UNICRI contributed to the implementation of coordinated and coherent efforts across the United Nations system to prevent and counter terrorism. The Institute played a crucial role in supporting Member States in translating the good practices identified in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy into national policies.

22. Drawing on more than 15 years of experience in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism, UNICRI focused on the following three priority areas in support of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and related

resolutions: (a) supporting local communities and civil society organizations in preventing and countering radicalization and extremism; (b) enhancing efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders and returning foreign terrorist fighters, both inside and outside prisons; and (c) working with vulnerable populations, in particular young people at risk, to build resilience to violent extremism through empowerment and social cohesion.

A. Supporting local communities and civil society organizations in preventing and countering violent radicalization and extremist activity

23. Recognizing the critical role played by communities in combating violent extremism, UNICRI continued to support and implement programmes aimed at preventing and countering radicalization, terrorist recruitment and violent extremism.

24. Focusing on the Sahel-Maghreb region, UNICRI has piloted and evaluated interventions of a diverse nature, implemented since 2017 by a varied range of grass-roots organizations in both urban and rural communities. The interventions have helped to strengthen the resilience of local communities to radical narratives, terrorist recruitment and violent extremism, particularly among young people, and support existing research by providing empirical information on what is effective in countering violent extremism and why it has been successful.

25. Access to natural resources that have been compromised as a result of climate change is one of the main grievances reported by local communities that UNICRI has worked with since 2015 in the Sahel-Maghreb region. On the basis of this finding, UNICRI undertook research on the linkages between preventing and countering violent extremism and climate risks in the Lac, Hadjer-Lamis, Logone Occidental and Mandoul regions of Chad, including to identify good practices to address such challenges. The results will be published in 2022.

26. In cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and UNODC, UNICRI undertook an independent meta-synthesis of evaluations of initiatives conducted by entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. A total of 118 documents available from Global Compact entities, including midterm and final evaluations, end-of-project reports, special reports, syntheses, audit and oversight reports, strategic reviews and assessment reports, were reviewed and analysed using a theory of change. The process was complemented with surveys and interviews of key informants. The study, which will be published in early 2022, is expected to contribute to the accountability and learning of the Global Compact entities in relation to their support to Member States in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

B. Working with vulnerable populations, in particular young people at risk, to strengthen the prevention and countering of violent extremism through empowerment and resilience-building

27. Recognizing the importance of involving young people, focusing on Mali, since 2019, UNICRI has used numerous tools, including research, training workshops and mentoring schemes, to counter terrorists' narratives and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable groups to violent and extremist rhetoric.

28. The continuous engagement of young Malian leaders in UNICRI mentoring and training programmes focused on strengthening critical thinking skills, attitudes towards conflict management and political competencies has enhanced local communities' efforts to prevent and counter radicalization and extremist activities. The young leaders, from almost all the regions of Mali, have, with the Institute's support, transferred the knowledge they acquired to their communities of origin. This has included the organization of spontaneous peer-to-peer training sessions at the

local level, led by UNICRI-trained young leaders and involving more than 800 people.

29. Within the framework of the project entitled “Mali (Dis-) Engagement and Re-Integration related to Terrorism (MERIT)”, UNICRI collected, primary data from the field for the final monitoring and evaluation report, which included recommendations for future initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism in the country. The findings confirmed that support for or engagement in violent extremism remains a highly complex process that is very much linked to the particular situational context. Extremist groups are able to gain traction in situations where the State has long neglected to provide basic services. Findings of the report and information on the outcomes and results achieved by the project were disseminated at the national, regional and international levels through different channels and platforms. A final event was held in Bamako in March 2021 to present the project’s results.

C. Promoting the use of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism

30. UNICRI continued to sensitize the international community to the importance of sport and its values as a valid, alternative tool to promote justice, inclusion, a sense of belonging and resilience. UNICRI collaborated with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the International Centre for Sport Security, under the Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events, and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism. Through the Global Programme, UNICRI aims to efficiently provide Member States with a compendium of good practices, as well as concrete examples of policies, programmes, tools and international instruments, for integrating sports into national action plans on preventing and countering violent extremism.

31. UNICRI finalized the selection of 10 civil society organizations to receive grants to deliver innovative actions that use sport and its values to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. A total of 420 applications were received from more than 70 Member States. Following an initial evaluation, the Institute’s technical evaluation team evaluated 51 project proposals and recommended 10 for selection. The 10 grant projects will be implemented throughout 2022. Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines have been prepared and shared with grantees.

32. UNICRI finalized the “Compendium of existing policies, projects and initiatives aimed at making use of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism”, having incorporated feedback and comments received from Global Programme partners, entities of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, members of the Global Programme’s national focal point network and participants in the Youth Consultation held in January 2021. The Compendium gathers evidence from United Nations Member States, international, regional and national organizations and sports federations, with a view to presenting a comprehensive collection of policies, projects and initiatives aimed at making use of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism.

33. UNICRI organized the first European Regional Forum of National Focal Points in Malaga, Spain. The Forum brought together national focal points from all over Europe, providing them with a platform to share lessons learned and enhance Member States’ capacities to apply recognized standards when planning the security of upcoming major sporting events and developing advanced policies to prevent violent extremism that leverage on sport and its values.

34. UNICRI supported the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in the organization and holding of the first Online Youth Consultation on Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport. The event saw the participation of 48 young leaders from 40 countries and five continents, along with 20 national focal points on the prevention of violent extremism nominated by Member States to represent their

respective entities in the global network of national focal points on the prevention of violent extremism.

D. Enhancing efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders and returning foreign terrorist fighters, both inside and outside prisons

35. The experience of UNICRI in supporting Member States, including Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, the Philippines and Thailand, to build effective rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent extremist offenders and foreign terrorist fighters has highlighted the need to further enhance reintegration measures within and beyond custodial settings.

36. UNICRI continued to support Member States in translating into national policies the generalized good practices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum as contained in its Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders, which addresses the rehabilitation needs of incarcerated violent extremists. In that context, UNICRI continued its engagement with national prison officials in Mali to establish a risk assessment procedure for imprisoned violent extremist offenders. UNICRI has developed a set of documents and guidelines with the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism to encourage trained prison staff to pass on their knowledge regarding how to administer the risk assessment tool to relevant colleagues.

37. In the Central African Republic, UNICRI held two training workshops for prison personnel on how to improve the prison system by using a classification tool. The training focused on the main concepts regarding the classification of detainees, such as the difference between separation and classification, as well as the assessment of risks, the advantages of classification and the importance of regular reviews.

38. UNICRI and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Office of Counter-Terrorism jointly launched the first phase of a project on the establishment of a system for the generation and collection of data on violent extremist prisoners. The first six-month phase of the project resulted in: (a) a report on challenges facing Member States with regard to the management of violent extremist prisoners, and key trends and potential emerging threats; and (b) the development of a tailored and evidence-based methodology to understand and assess what works or does not work, and why, in terms of the management of violent extremist prisoners and the systematic collection of relevant data. Building upon the outcomes of the first phase, UNICRI and the Office of Counter-Terrorism will pilot and test the methodology in the prison facilities of selected Member States. The methodology includes a road map and corresponding package of activities, including a questionnaire designed as a flexible tool to be adapted to the different legal and operational contexts in which it will be utilized.

E. Addressing the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime

39. Member States continue to face challenges, particularly in terms of their capacity to investigate cases in which both criminal and terrorist elements coexist. UNICRI used the *Policy Toolkit on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism* as the basis for interactive capacity-building activities for policymakers and practitioners to enable them to better understand and address the nexus and related crimes. In connection with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, UNICRI developed the Toolkit to expand on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism and provided information on the nexus, its regional manifestations and recommendations on how to implement each of the 25 Good Practices. The Toolkit provides stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels with a practical

tool for applying the Good Practices in various regions and helping concerned Member States and other interested stakeholders to better understand, prevent and address the nexus.

40. UNICRI, with the support of UNODC, provided capacity-building on the Policy Toolkit in Chad, Mali and Mauritania. Inter-agency work in fighting terrorism and organized crime is crucial in those countries, in particular with regard to collaboration between law enforcement agencies, judicial officers and prosecutors. In that connection, training to be delivered in 2022 will include more judicial officers and prosecutors, as they are essential components in the fight against organized crime and terrorism.

III. Countering organized crime and fighting all forms of trafficking and illicit financial flows

41. UNICRI continued to assist Member States in strengthening their capacities to detect, investigate and prosecute all forms of illicit trafficking, including trafficking in precious metals and gemstones and counterfeit products.

42. UNICRI also identified the increasingly interlinked nature of transnational organized crime and terrorism and the use of illicit trafficking by criminals and terrorists to finance and facilitate their illegal activities. The research initiatives of the Institute have helped to identify key drivers of illicit transactions and provided government agencies with up-to-date technical expertise on how to better prevent, counter and predict organized criminal activities and better trace, freeze, seize, confiscate and recover assets linked to significant acts of corruption and other illegal activities.

A. Improving the capacity of Member States to better trace, freeze, seize, confiscate and recover assets linked to major acts of corruption

43. UNICRI continued its work on asset recovery and illicit financial flows in the Eastern Partnership countries. UNICRI produced reports on illicit financial flows and asset recovery in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine. The reports provided policymakers and other key stakeholders with specific recommendations to streamline the tracing, freezing, seizure and confiscation of assets linked to income-generating crime. The reports highlighted how each country could improve the management of seized and confiscated assets, as well as how improved seizure and confiscation of assets could lead to improved development by financing pensions and salaries for teachers, nurses and doctors.

44. In addition, UNICRI published an in-depth report on illicit financial flows and asset recovery in Libya, which provided policymakers and other key stakeholders with specific recommendations to enable Libya to better trace, freeze, seize and confiscate assets linked to high-level corruption, as well as other serious income-generating crime. The report highlighted how Libya could improve the management of seized and confiscated assets. Implementing such recommendations would likely serve to reassure foreign jurisdictions that may be unwilling to return confiscated Libyan assets over concerns that such assets might again be corruptly used.

B. Strengthening policies and mechanisms to combat illicit financial flows, illegal trafficking and organized crime

45. With a view to increasing knowledge of the various ways in which intellectual property infringements occur and improving the effectiveness of national and international responses, UNICRI continued to conduct in-depth analyses of case

studies on the infringement of intellectual property rights, in cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office.

46. UNICRI conducted in-depth analyses of the following three cases: (a) the infiltration of counterfeit trademark goods into the legitimate supply chain in Bulgaria; (b) the dissemination of copyright-infringing content through a File Transfer Protocol server located in a telecommunications company in Finland; and (c) the selling of trademark-infringing goods in conventional shops operated by a French criminal group operating in Belgium.

47. The findings from the analyses of these case studies are being applied as best practices and lessons learned by prosecutors and investigative judges in other countries to strengthen judicial proceedings and results. Webinars on each of the three cases were organized through the networks of the European Union Intellectual Property Office and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training to increase the visibility of the findings. Moreover, the 2020 version of the horizontal analysis report, which provides an analysis of cross-cutting issues among all of the completed case studies, was updated. Some of the results from the report were also used to create short training videos focused on different investigation techniques related to online and physical infringements of intellectual property rights.

IV. Reinforcing the rule of law in post-conflict countries

48. UNICRI endeavoured to strengthen sustainable development, peacebuilding and democratic processes by promoting accountable institutions and the rule of law and building strong judicial institutions in post-conflict countries.

49. To that end, the Institute worked on raising national stakeholders' awareness of the needs and gaps in counter-terrorism policies and practices, with a view to bridging the gap between international standards and national programmes related to juvenile justice and improving access to justice as a critical factor in preventing violent extremism and terrorist recruitment in post-conflict countries.

50. The Institute's support to Member States in tracing and recovering assets linked to corruption and other forms of serious crimes contributed to strengthening the rule of law and public confidence and served as a model for post-conflict countries that were considering undertaking the recovery of stolen assets.

A. Improving the capacity of post-conflict countries to strengthen their criminal justice, law enforcement and oversight institutions

51. UNICRI undertook several initiatives to help to strengthen criminal justice, law enforcement and oversight institutions in post-conflict countries. This mainly involved assisting post-conflict countries in the recovery of stolen assets and providing training for the rehabilitation of criminals and violent extremists.

B. Improving knowledge in criminal justice systems in post-conflict countries of the risk factors and links between transnational organized crime and terrorism

52. Since the publication of the *Policy Toolkit on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism*, UNICRI has advised Member States and interested stakeholders on how best to respond to the links between organized crime and terrorism, at the same time enhancing their understanding of this evolving phenomenon and providing definitions to facilitate its monitoring. UNICRI started a consultation process and liaised with relevant counterparts to address the issue of the nexus between transnational organized crime

and terrorism in Libya. A gaps and needs analysis was conducted with a view to tailoring specific training sessions to be held in 2022.

V. Security through research, technology and innovation

53. UNICRI continued to reinforce the capacity of Member States to manage the risks and opportunities offered by rapid advances in science and technology, including in the areas of artificial intelligence and robotics, augmented and virtual reality, big data analytics, supply chain security and decentralized technologies.

54. To that end, UNICRI strategically devoted its attention to increasing the understanding among law enforcement agencies of (a) risks related to the malicious use of technology; (b) innovative ideas for employing technology such as artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain and virtual reality to counter security threats and various forms of criminal activities, such as terrorism and child exploitation; and (c) the legal, ethical and social challenges associated with the use of such technology. Information and communications technologies and artificial intelligence tools can successfully advance public security and safety. However, the full potential of these sophisticated tools to efficiently prevent, detect and counter, inter alia, terrorism and related activities has not yet been completely explored, owing in large part to a lack of understanding of their practical applications, and the legal, ethical and social challenges associated with their use. For this reason, UNICRI continued to advance the policy discussion on innovation in the security sector and to facilitate the understanding among practitioners in the law enforcement and counter-terrorism communities of these constantly evolving technologies.

A. Enhancing knowledge of advances in science and technology to combat weapons of mass destruction terrorism

55. UNICRI continued to contribute to the prevention of future instances of weapons of mass destruction terrorism by identifying risks and benefits associated with relevant advances in science and technology. In that regard, UNICRI collected data and information to identify technology solutions that could fulfil the needs of Member States in preventing and combating weapons of mass destruction terrorism. Several innovative uses of big data analytics, blockchain technology, drones, virtual reality and serious gaming were identified. In a webinar delivered during the second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations, held from 24 to 30 June 2021, UNICRI launched its report entitled “Science, technology and innovation: understanding advancements from the perspective of countering weapons of mass destruction terrorism”. The webinar was attended by almost 200 representatives of Member States, international organizations and technology sectors.

B. Enhancing knowledge of advances in science and technology to counter criminal infiltration of the legitimate supply chain

56. UNICRI continued to enhance knowledge of the role of technology in countering the threats posed by the infiltration by organized crime of the legitimate supply chain. UNICRI focused on the following five main thematic areas: (a) food fraud; (b) illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; (c) counterfeit and substandard pesticides; (d) fuel fraud; and (e) illegal mining of and trafficking in precious metals.

57. UNICRI published a report on supply chain security to raise awareness of the role that technology can play in supporting the efforts of law enforcement agencies to better monitor and investigate possible breaches in supply chains. Linking existing and emerging security risks with possible technological responses, the report contributed to increasing the capacity of Member States to respond to criminal infiltrations into the legitimate supply chain, including by increasing knowledge of the available instruments and technologies that can be used to secure the market for

specific product categories and the tools that can be used to investigate breaches in the supply chain, collect forensic evidence and bring it to court.

58. UNICRI solidified its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A joint meeting on forensic science was held in Geneva to review the achievements of the IAEA Coordinated Research Project on the use of nuclear technology for forensic science and to examine how its work is integrated into UNICRI activities. A technical briefing for the permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva was also held to present the results of the work of both entities, during which a memorandum of understanding defining the framework for future cooperation in the area of technology and security was signed between UNICRI and IAEA.

C. Artificial intelligence

59. UNICRI, through its Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, produced several reports on various aspects of artificial intelligence. The report entitled *Algorithms and Terrorism: the Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence for Terrorist Purposes* was issued as a product of the Institute's ongoing collaboration with the Office of Counter-Terrorism. The report provides a knowledge base on the malicious uses of artificial intelligence, highlighting possible abuses of artificial intelligence by terrorist groups and individuals, and is aimed at supporting Member States, international organizations, counter-terrorism, law enforcement and security agencies, academia and industry in understanding and preventing potential malicious uses and abuses of artificial intelligence by terrorist actors. Another report, entitled *Countering Terrorism Online with Artificial Intelligence: An Overview for Law Enforcement and Counter-Terrorism Agencies in South Asia and South-East Asia*, analyses the methods and means through which artificial intelligence can be used to support national authorities in South and South-East Asia to combat the use of the Internet and social media by terrorists. Both reports were formally launched at the second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations.

60. In cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, UNICRI organized a series of three workshops focused on examining the human rights aspects of (a) the use of artificial intelligence to combat online radicalization and terrorist use of the Internet; (b) the use of artificial intelligence for online content moderation; and (c) the use of artificial intelligence for the screening of travellers and passenger data against watch lists. Building upon this, UNICRI is preparing a report on the human rights aspects of the use of artificial intelligence in counter-terrorism.

61. UNICRI and the European Union Intellectual Property Office completed a study on the role of artificial intelligence in the infringement and enforcement of copyright and design rights. The research contained practical examples of the uses of each type of artificial intelligence and possible investigative responses to support the work of law enforcement officials. On the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study, UNICRI and the European Union Intellectual Property Office will explore possibilities to conduct training activities targeting law enforcement agencies.

62. UNICRI, together with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), continued to strengthen its global platform on artificial intelligence for law enforcement to support law enforcement agencies worldwide in taking stock of artificial intelligence advancements, identifying practical applications of artificial intelligence for addressing crime prevention needs, and discussing practical challenges in their use, such as ensuring human rights compliance. Three discussions were held virtually on the following topics: (a) the conceptualization of artificial intelligence for cases involving its use by law enforcement officials; (b) the principles of artificial intelligence for law enforcement; and (c) the intersection of the principles of policing with the principles of artificial intelligence. A stakeholder consultation with representatives of academia and civil society organizations on the human rights

aspects of the use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement was also held to complement ongoing streams of work.

63. UNICRI organized a workshop in partnership with the World Economic Forum, INTERPOL and the National Police of the Netherlands, bringing together representatives from law enforcement, industry, international organizations and civil society to discuss a policy framework for the use of facial recognition technology in criminal investigations. In addition, the World Economic Forum, INTERPOL, the National Police of the Netherlands and UNICRI published a white paper on that topic, entitled “A policy framework for responsible limits on facial recognition – use case: law enforcement investigations”. The paper contains policy guidance and a self-assessment questionnaire for law enforcement agencies on the use of facial recognition technology in criminal investigations. Law enforcement agencies in France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Sweden will test this governance framework in the first quarter of 2022.

64. UNICRI also commenced development of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Safer Children Global Hub, a virtual platform for law enforcement agencies, containing knowledge and information about the use of artificial intelligence to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse online; the platform is foreseen to be launched in 2023. To support its work on the AI for Safer Children initiative, UNICRI established the Advisory Board for the initiative, composed of global leaders in the areas of child protection, law enforcement and artificial intelligence, and convened the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Board in March. To promote the initiative, UNICRI, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, held a side event on the margins of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly entitled “Child sexual exploitation online: the new face of the menace and how to fight it with artificial intelligence” and, in the second quarter of 2022, delivered two virtual training courses to 250 representatives of law enforcement agencies on the role of artificial intelligence in combating child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

VI. Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance

65. UNICRI developed new ideas to prevent and mitigate global security threats and promote viable strategies to address a wide variety of emerging safety risks. The Institute continued to support Member States’ efforts to improve existing policies aimed at enhancing overall preparedness for and capacity to mitigate the consequences of incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, mainly by strengthening inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

66. Concerning radiological and nuclear security, UNICRI developed capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall capabilities of law enforcement and security agencies to thwart attempts to traffic radiological and nuclear material, including through the timely exchange of information and intelligence.

A. Improved inter-agency cooperation in relation to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials

67. UNICRI continued to support the efforts of the 62 Member States currently participating in the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative to improve existing policies aimed at enhancing overall preparedness for and capacity to mitigate the consequences of incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, particularly through the strengthening of inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

68. UNICRI facilitated several targeted activities in different regions, including:

(a) The implementation of a wide range of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation activities, including needs and risk assessments, national and regional action plans, training, train-the-trainer modules, and tabletop and field exercises, including cross-border exercises;

(b) The holding of regional round-table meetings to discuss the results and activities of the Centres of Excellence Initiative, present and discuss the regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear action plans, and plan new regional projects and activities, including training and field exercises. The round-table meetings helped the national focal points to maintain a good dynamic in their respective regions, increase cooperation with international organizations, implement new regional activities and reach agreement on the regional action plans;

(c) The holding of four in-country workshops to support the national chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear teams; the finalization of one national action plan; the selection of trainees of the first African master's programme on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks and threats; and the completion of the first regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear action plan in the African Atlantic façade region;

(d) The launch in Central Asia of a new project entitled "Preparedness and response for mass gatherings and other health threats in Central Asia". In that connection, the regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear action plan for Central Asia was finalized and shared with all countries for review;

(e) The implementation in the Eastern and Central African region of online workshops within the framework of two ongoing projects, focused on maintaining the network of Centres of Excellence Initiative national focal points and national chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear team members. UNICRI signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kenya Nuclear Regulatory Authority and, jointly with the European Union and the Kenyan authorities, officially inaugurated the regional secretariat of the Centres of Excellence Initiative;

(f) The holding of an online networking meeting of national focal points from 62 partner countries. The meeting gathered approximately 150 participants involved in the Centres of Excellence Initiative. UNICRI also organized a meeting of the heads of the regional secretariats in preparation for their fourth meeting and supported the organization of the fourth meeting;

(g) The holding of technical webinars in Central Asia, Eastern and Central Africa, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the Middle East, North Africa and Sahel regions, South-East Asia and South-East and Eastern Europe to share good practices and lessons learned in the management of the COVID-19 crisis;

(h) The organization of ARZ 2021, a field exercise focusing on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism that was held in Beirut. The field exercise engaged representatives of several national agencies and international stakeholders, including from France, Italy, the European Union, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and INTERPOL, as well as a significant number of representatives of United Nations Member States working with UNICRI on the issues of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation, such as the United States and Canada.

B. Combating trafficking in radiological and nuclear material

69. UNICRI continued to support selected countries in the Middle East (Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon), the Black Sea region (Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), and South-East Asia (Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam) in improving the capacity of State security and law enforcement officials to devise, plan and carry out intelligence operations to thwart

attempts to traffic radiological and nuclear materials, and in fostering cooperation among State security and law enforcement officials of those States.

70. UNICRI organized the first regional peer-to-peer workshop for the Middle East region, with the inter-agency teams in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon gathering simultaneously in Baghdad, Amman and Beirut, respectively, connected online with the UNICRI team and representatives of other international organizations, such as IAEA, INTERPOL and the Arab Atomic Energy Agency. UNICRI organized the second peer-to-peer workshop for the Middle East region under the same logistical arrangements as the first one. The second workshop was attended by the inter-agency teams for the three countries, as well as representatives of relevant international organizations and members of the UNICRI project team.

71. After successfully holding three train-the-trainer sessions on countering trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials for intelligence and law enforcement officers in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, UNICRI focused on assisting the three countries' training teams in organizing and delivering their own training sessions for nuclear security stakeholders. Training sessions were held in Amman and Baghdad.

72. UNICRI concluded its radiological and nuclear material trafficking systems assessment missions in Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine by meeting with different agencies involved in countering trafficking in radiological and nuclear material to discuss gaps, capabilities and priorities. Furthermore, UNICRI worked with experts in those partner countries to produce three country reports. The reports provide an overview of the current state of play in nuclear security with regard to legislation, regulations, intelligence and investigation capabilities, equipment, and training systems, as well as recommendations and suggestions to better tailor upcoming project activities.

73. In that connection, UNICRI experts produced training modules in close cooperation with experts and law enforcement officers from Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The training curriculum included both subject-matter lectures on nuclear security and law enforcement operations and modules on training skills and methodology. UNICRI used the curriculum in three in-person train-the-trainer sessions for State security, law enforcement and other agencies, in close cooperation with national training centres. A regional train-the-trainer session, led by officers trained at the national train-the-trainer sessions, was subsequently organized.

74. Lastly, assessment missions were carried out remotely in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam. The assessments involved online consultations with individual agencies, including intelligence, police, customs and nuclear regulatory authorities, to identify capabilities, expertise and areas for improvement with regard to efforts to counter trafficking in radiological and nuclear material.

C. Monitoring the malicious use of social media by violent non-State actors in relation to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

75. UNICRI continued to monitor disinformation on social media related to COVID-19, in particular the attempts by violent non-State actors to jeopardize the credibility of Governments and science, instigate the violent use of COVID-19 as an improvised biological weapon and sabotage vaccination campaigns. UNICRI also collected good practices on how to detect and debunk disinformation related to COVID-19.

D. Supporting Member States in the establishment of non-invasive, integrated and holistic safety and security planning policies

76. UNICRI assisted Member States in adopting measures necessary to ensure the protection of vulnerable targets, crowded spaces and critical infrastructure. Recent

mass-casualty attacks on crowded and public places have demonstrated the need to address the vulnerabilities of so-called “soft targets”.

77. The Institute produced a comprehensive package of technical tools to promote the security of major events and identify a series of global standards to raise awareness of the risks connected to their organization. The package includes a training curriculum that has been made available to countries hosting major events that want to build their capacity in relation to event security. To increase the knowledge, expertise and capacity of government officials in protecting vulnerable targets, the Institute also delivered a series of training events on the topics of vulnerable targets, tourism and major event security, respectively. That was complemented by the Institute’s efforts to establish networks of national focal points that will bolster information-sharing and related coordination among law enforcement and other relevant agencies and help to identify tailored support needed by Member States.

78. UNICRI continued to coordinate and develop regional security policies from the 34 Member States in the Americas (North America, Latin America and the Caribbean) in cooperation with the Organization of American States and to produce technical tools to facilitate the exchange of expertise and technical assistance. That included a virtual training session on major events security in the Caribbean. A total of 50 security officers from Caribbean Community member States attended the training session, which focused on integrated security planning, public-private partnerships, venue security and biosecurity.

79. In addition, an assessment meeting was held virtually with the Institute’s national focal points in Costa Rica and government representatives to discuss needs and priorities in planning the security of major sporting events to be held in 2022. The needs assessment will be used as the basis for planning and organizing an in-person technical assistance mission in 2022.

80. UNICRI worked on the development of the web-based version of the UNICRI Security Planning Model, aimed at providing Member States with a new set of policies and benchmarks to measure and improve their preparedness for major events and the level of security of crowded spaces and public spaces. This will enable beneficiaries to access the content of the document and other relevant information through an online platform.

VII. Preventing crime through the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups

81. The protection of vulnerable groups, reduction of risk factors and promotion of positive change continued to constitute priority areas for UNICRI in 2021. As part of the implementation of its numerous cross-cutting initiatives, UNICRI paid particular attention to young people and contributed to enhancing the role of the family as a critical factor in the early detection of radicalization or various forms of addiction, including drug use.

A. Promoting and delivering crime prevention initiatives targeted at vulnerable populations

82. UNICRI published a report on the needs of families in the prevention of drug use among young people, focusing on Italy, Lebanon and Tunisia. The report includes a description of the activities carried out in the three countries with regard to preventing drug use among young people and proposes concrete actions for each country in relation to the current system of services and institutions actively working in this area, in order to enable a more effective response that is more closely tailored to the specific needs of families.

B. Enhancing the capacity of key actors to reach vulnerable individuals and populations

83. UNICRI undertook work in Mali and the Sahel-Maghreb region to integrate and, in some cases, rehabilitate young people and other vulnerable groups into society, strengthening the community's resilience to violent extremism and criminal organizations. For instance, by designing tailored training and empowerment activities and delivering them to young local leaders in post-conflict settings, the Institute effectively promoted the importance of critical thinking and conflict management skills to offer positive alternatives to incitement to violence, which is often conducive to terrorist radicalization.

VIII. Supporting the Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022

84. UNICRI implements its extensive portfolio of activities primarily through voluntary contributions from Member States, including an annual voluntary contribution from the Government of Italy, its host country. UNICRI does not receive funding from the regular budget of the United Nations. The vast majority of the voluntary contributions are received in the form of short-term, earmarked and project-specific funds. Although UNICRI actively mobilizes funds and consistently strives to expand its donor base, the receipt of such funding has been intermittent and unpredictable in nature, which has had an impact on both the stability and sustainability of its operations. In such financial circumstances, the successful implementation of the ambitious Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022 in a comprehensive manner is likely to prove challenging without the pivotal support and voluntary contributions of Member States and other donors.
