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## Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

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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

1. The report of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was prepared pursuant to a decision of the Board taken at its meeting held on 23 and 24 October 2019 to report to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The report contains information on the work of, and the results achieved by, the Institute, in accordance with its statute (Council resolution 1989/56, annex).
2. The report also contains substantive information on the implementation of the UNICRI Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022. The Framework was approved by the Board of Trustees and contains six strategic priorities and the tools and approaches used by the Institute to carry out its activities. The Commission is requested to welcome the implementation of the Framework and to invite Member States to cooperate with UNICRI on and make voluntary contributions to various activities for the implementation of the Framework.

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\* E/CN.15/2020/1.



# 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. The Board reports periodically to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
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, justice, security governance and the risks and benefits of technological advances. UNICRI provides a vital foundation for United Nations policy and operations through its cutting-edge and specialized training and capacity-building programmes. The Institute serves as a conduit for channelling innovative ideas from within and outside the United Nations system.
4. In 2019, UNICRI continued to deploy a wide range of tools through partnerships and the provision of technical assistance to multiple actors worldwide, tailoring its approach to the particular dynamics of specific countries, regions and local contexts.
5. The present report of the Board of Trustees contains a summary of the work carried out by UNICRI in 2019, in line with the UNICRI Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022.

### A. Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022

6. 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.

7. 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.
8. The responses to the criminal justice, security and governance issues highlighted in the Framework have been carefully crafted to support and contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNICRI aims to help with the achievement of the Goals by assisting intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations with its tools and expertise in research, training delivery, capacity-building, technical assistance and policy support. The priorities of the Institute are aligned in particular 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), but they are also linked to several other Goals (2–6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15).

## B. Tools and approaches

9. In 2019, UNICRI continued to develop, test and promote new and innovative measures in the field of criminal justice and policymaking in an effort to build the capacities of Member States to prevent and counter crime. In order to achieve this objective and confront the evolving array of traditional and emerging threats, UNICRI adopted a multisectoral and holistic approach, through applied and action-oriented research, the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, the provision of training and the creation of strong partnerships and policy support.
10. UNICRI promoted research to expand the knowledge and understanding of problems and tailor appropriate interventions. Specific achievements in 2019 comprised the publication and issuance of:
- (a) *Preliminary Findings: Evaluation of a Pilot Project on “Countering Violent Extremism in the Regions of Maghreb and Sahel”*;
  - (b) *Policy Toolkit on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism*;
  - (c) “Tourism security in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, 2016–2019: key findings and recommendations”;
  - (d) Reports on global biosecurity risk analysis and needs assessment in South-East Asia, the Middle East and South America;
  - (e) Case studies on issues relevant to the fight against counterfeiting and the infringement of intellectual property rights;
  - (f) “Artificial intelligence and robotics for law enforcement”;
  - (g) A forensic financial analyst’s guide on asset recovery;
  - (h) A study on the perception of the impact of artificial intelligence and robotics on social stability and crime;
  - (i) Risk scenario-based reports on supply chain security and weapons of mass destruction terrorism threats.

11. Research initiatives were aimed at providing comparative information on various policy options and their actual or potential success, thus supporting and contributing to an effective programme design and implementation process. The research carried out by the Institute supported the formulation of targeted social and criminal policy strategies by exploring how crime and violence hindered development and providing tailor-made analysis for Member States. By collecting and publishing qualitative and quantitative data and analysing trends in crime, the Institute has helped to raise awareness of the needs and gaps in criminal justice systems and related policy frameworks.

12. UNICRI training and learning activities actively contributed to the transfer and dissemination of the internal expertise of the Institute 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 the wide network of experts and partnerships available, which are constantly consolidated and expanded, allowed its training personnel to organize a number of training activities.

13. Professional training for the capacity development of judicial, legislative, law enforcement and prison personnel, psychologists, social workers and media professionals was organized under the technical cooperation projects and programmes implemented by UNICRI in pursuance of its strategic priorities. In addition, tailor-made professional training was organized upon the request of Member States, adopting modern and effective training methods.

14. In addition to professional training, UNICRI continued to design and implement master programmes and short postgraduate education courses that centred around the UNICRI mandate and focus on crime prevention, criminal justice, security, international criminal law and human rights.

15. In 2018 and 2019, the twelfth master course of laws in transnational crime and justice was organized in cooperation with the University for Peace for a group of 46 students from 44 countries wishing to specialize in the areas of internal criminal law, humanitarian law, human rights law and transnational crime.

16. In 2019, short courses for young professionals and postgraduate students were organized in cooperation with international universities and organizations based in Rome to disseminate the knowledge of UNICRI about migration, environmental crimes and food security.

17. The pool of training experts consisted of UNICRI internal subject-matter experts, as well as academics, practitioners and relevant senior United Nations officials, ensuring the provision of diverse insights and perspectives. Every year, a number of subject matters linked to organized and transnational crime, including drug trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, environmental crimes and the rule of law, are taught by staff members of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UNICRI continued to cooperate with the Education for Justice initiative implemented by UNODC through its participation in the side event on higher education entitled “Empowering students and academics to become active agents for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”, held during the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, in May 2019, and the workshop held in preparation for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, scheduled for 2020.

18. UNICRI continued to provide on-the-ground practical advice and mentoring in a multitude of highly specialized crime- and justice-related thematic areas. In addition, the Institute supported a broad range of actors in the design, planning and implementation of medium- to long-term relevant programmes. 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 challenges.

19. Serving as a platform for consultation and cooperation among Member States, local government institutions, research institutions, international organizations,

private entities and civil society, UNICRI played a crucial role in organizing and coordinating efforts to identify innovative ideas and approaches. In 2019, UNICRI once more expanded its partnerships and networking efforts in order to carry out its mandate successfully and support the overall mission of the United Nations, working closely with a variety of stakeholders, including Governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions and international organizations, as well as a range of subject-matter experts. Through participatory engagement, UNICRI brought together policymakers, practitioners and academics to ensure that programmatic efforts followed a holistic approach.

20. 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 conferences, workshops, specialized courses for practitioners and the annual Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice programme. Furthermore, UNICRI directly supported the capacity development of national stakeholders in the field, while also promoting cooperation and sharing its expertise and international good practices to increase their awareness. Those efforts were strengthened by means of the serial publications of the Institute, including the *Freedom from Fear Magazine* and the policy papers and specialized materials developed as a result of its research projects, training efforts and field activities.

21. The work undertaken by UNICRI in 2019 was funded exclusively from voluntary contributions. Its primary donors were the European Union, the Netherlands, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the United Nations, Canada, Japan, Norway, SICPA, Italy, the United States of America, South Africa, IQBit and several other private companies, foundations and international organizations.

22. 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 an extended network of offices, including the liaison office in Rome, the project offices in Brussels and Geneva and the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence in Algiers, Amman, Manila, Nairobi, Rabat, Tashkent and Tbilisi.

## II. Preventing and countering violent extremism

23. 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 key role in supporting Member States in translating the good practices identified in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy into national policies.

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

25. Moreover, throughout 2019, UNICRI worked to enhance understanding of the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism and assisted Member States in incorporating effective measures into their crime prevention and counter-terrorism strategies. Efforts in that regard included initiatives aimed at

improving policies to prevent trafficking in, inter alia, persons, drugs, arms and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, for both profit and operational purposes.

26. During the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, UNICRI and the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect of the United Nations held a side event entitled “Hate speech and violent extremism as driving factors leading to violence and atrocity crimes”. The event was aimed at enhancing knowledge of the increasingly widespread phenomena of hate speech, hate crime and violent extremism, which represent a direct threat to human rights, sustainable development and peace and security and can escalate into violence and atrocity crimes.

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

27. Recognizing the important 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.

28. Focusing on the Sahel-Maghreb region, UNICRI has been piloting diverse grass-roots projects with the aim of developing a tested methodology for the identification, selection, engagement, monitoring and evaluation of promising grass-roots interventions. These projects support existing research by providing empirical information on measures that have been effective in countering violent extremism and the reasons for their success. Through its findings, the Institute aims to maximize the impact and sustainability of its projects and activities.

29. Throughout 2019, UNICRI continued its support to countries of the Sahel-Maghreb regions, namely Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger and Tunisia, to increase the community’s resilience against terrorist and violent extremist narrative and recruitment. To carry out this task, the Institute has funded more than 80 local projects and monitored their output to evaluate the best way to meet the needs of society. Field missions to Tunisia, Mali and Chad were conducted to evaluate the progress made by partner organizations in situ. The interventions involved a wide range of target groups composed of young people, women, religious leaders, farmers, journalists and local authorities and addressed a large variety of themes, such as the promotion of human rights, conflict management, citizen participation, religious tolerance, women’s rights, media empowerment and cultural issues.

30. The recipients of grants provided by UNICRI to implement small-scale interventions produced a variety of outputs, including research papers on the key drivers of radicalization and training and audiovisual materials, as well as holding events to raise awareness about community resilience against violent extremism.

31. Support from UNICRI has empowered community actors to implement peacebuilding initiatives and increased the capacity of communities to overcome challenges related to radicalization. This support included incorporating a project-based manual on active citizenship into the elementary school curriculum, providing Qur’anic school teachers with a manual on Islamic tenets promoting peace, non-violence and civic values, and engaging imams in discussions on constitutional provisions and women’s rights.

32. UNICRI research deriving from its support to communities shows that the successful mechanisms for reinforcing community resilience need to be future-oriented. They need to incorporate a thorough analysis of conflict and stakeholders to avoid deepening existing grievances and injustices. A context analysis needs to be conducted to ensure that the intervention follows the logic of local communities’ values and practices and to understand the environment in which the communities operate.

33. The creation of an environment in which the communities themselves can discuss and agree upon the future that they want to be a part of is of critical importance. Preliminary conclusions regarding the type of interventions that are most likely to be effective in strengthening the resilience of a community suggest to focus on the analysis of the structural and perceived deficiencies, the geographical areas of interventions, the approach (participatory, with clear references to cultural specificities and investment in time and in critical thinking) and the organization that implements the intervention (which should have the trust of the community, a strong commitment and great social capital).

34. UNICRI has continued to update its repository database with new relevant material in various languages of all the deliverables produced by the grantees. This has allowed grantees and key stakeholders to be in contact with one another and to share their documents, materials and experiences.

## **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**

35. Focusing on Mali, UNICRI 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. The activities were implemented in cooperation with the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, based in The Hague, and with the involvement of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and local partners, especially non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

36. An action plan for young leaders was prepared in close collaboration with local stakeholders and a selected group of Malian young people. The action plan includes a set of activities designed for young people and aimed at promoting resilience and preventing and countering radicalization in Mali by improving young leaders' knowledge of the media and critical thinking in order to identify violent propaganda and resist radicalization and hate speech.

37. A youth mentoring programme was established to enhance the capacities of the mentees to engage in peace promotion and community engagement by connecting them with respected individuals from the national and international communities in Mali, acting as personal and professional mentors.

38. The role that young people can play as drivers of change was discussed on the occasion of the side event entitled "Youth engagement and resilience against violent extremism in the Sahel", organized by UNICRI, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism and the Global Center on Cooperative Security, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations on the margins of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

39. UNICRI also started a research on the impact of terrorism on young people in Mali through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data and defined a monitoring and evaluation strategy to assess the effectiveness of its actions.

40. The Institute also promoted the creation of alternative and diversion measures for young people to prevent their recruitment by extremist or criminal organizations, focusing on Indonesia and the Philippines. As a first step towards the development of action plans, the research provided by UNICRI has allowed local stakeholders and decision makers to enhance their knowledge of the needs and gaps in the juvenile justice and penal system to help to prevent the future recruitment of young people and inmates by terrorist or criminal organizations.

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

41. During 2019, the Institute 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. Cooperation with some Member States (Indonesia, Mali and the Philippines) was established to develop and implement tailored rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent extremist offenders and high-risk inmates in prison settings. Within that framework, support was provided to bridge the gaps between in-prison and community-based care, strengthening cooperation and information-sharing networks and increasing their rehabilitation capacities. The Institute also endeavoured to raise awareness among communities of the importance of those programmes and promote peace and social reintegration.

42. In particular, work conducted in prison settings in Mali with the engagement of the national prison administration led to the development of a risk assessment tool and the establishment of a classification and risk assessment process for imprisoned violent extremist offenders.

### **D. Addressing the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime**

43. To further strengthen the ongoing efforts to address the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime, UNICRI developed a policy toolkit with a view to translating The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism into action. The Toolkit provides local practitioners, policymakers and governmental experts with a practical tool for the use and implementation of the Good Practices in various regions, in addition to helping concerned Member States with better understanding and addressing that nexus. This enables Member States to develop and strengthen existing synergies between various government agencies and the private sector to tackle the nexus and peripheral crimes.

44. During the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, UNICRI held a side event entitled “Capacity-building initiatives and tools to address links between transnational organized crime and terrorism”. The event was co-sponsored by UNODC and the Government of the Netherlands.

45. Following the development of the Policy Toolkit, UNICRI launched the first pilot training on the Toolkit, with a focus on selected good practices, during which lessons were learned and best practices for structuring and organizing future training that could benefit practitioners at the regional and national levels were ascertained.

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

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

47. Initiatives in that area led to the enhancement and dissemination of advanced knowledge about the evolution of organized crime strategies, the connections among various forms of illicit trafficking and the illicit financial flows that they generated. UNICRI also identified the increasingly interlinked nature of transnational organized crime and terrorism (the nexus) 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 major 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**

48. During 2019, UNICRI continued to assist Egypt, Libya and Tunisia in the establishment of new mechanisms to trace and recover illicitly obtained assets effectively.

49. The assistance included peer-to-peer missions, specialized computer software training and the delivery of expert technical advice on the drafting of laws and best practices for the recovery of stolen assets. The technical advice provided by UNICRI helped the Government of Libya to establish the first dedicated asset recovery office in the Middle East and North Africa region, despite the conflict that broke out again in April 2019, and facilitated the incorporation of Libya into the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network. This has allowed the country to better coordinate with foreign jurisdictions the seizure of a larger amount of stolen assets. UNICRI also advised Tunisia on the drafting of a new civil confiscation law to improve asset recovery.

50. Moreover, UNICRI developed a forensic financial analyst's guide on asset recovery in multiple languages, which is available to authorities throughout the Middle East and North Africa region, allowing them to apply a systematic methodology for the tracing, freezing, seizure, confiscation and, ultimately, recovery of assets linked to corruption and other criminal activities.

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

51. In cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office, UNICRI continued to conduct in-depth analyses of case studies on the infringement of intellectual property rights. The research was aimed at enhancing knowledge and developing the skills of key legal stakeholders in the fight against intellectual property offences. Five case studies were compiled and presented to relevant judicial and law enforcement authorities to enhance their awareness of innovative investigative techniques or prosecution strategies to combat such infringement.

52. The case studies can be applied by prosecutors and investigative judges as a source of best practices and lessons learned from similar cases in other countries to strengthen judicial proceedings and results.

53. During the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, South Africa, in collaboration with Peru, held the side event entitled "Enhancing the security of the precious metal supply chain against organized criminal groups".

54. At its 2019 session, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2019/23, entitled "Combating transnational organized crime and its links to illicit trafficking in precious metals and illegal mining, including by enhancing the security of supply chains of precious metals".

55. In the resolution, the Council expressed concern about the growing involvement of transnational organized criminal groups in illicit trafficking and noted the efforts by the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and UNICRI to produce reports in which illicit trafficking

in minerals and precious metals and illegal mining were emphasized as growing threats and as growing sources of profits for such groups.

56. The Council took note of the findings of UNICRI and recalled the mandates of UNODC and UNICRI to provide technical assistance to Member States in order to enhance capacity-building in preventing and combating illicit trafficking in precious metals. It invited Member States to consider implementing the national precious metals action plan as prepared by UNICRI in cooperation with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and contained in the UNICRI report entitled “Strengthening the security and integrity of the precious metals supply chain”. It also invited Member States to work in cooperation with UNICRI, UNODC and other relevant international and regional organizations to identify and promote the use of solutions that utilized emerging technology and could contribute in a specific manner to preventing and combating illicit trafficking in precious metals and illegal mining by organized criminal groups, including technology that strengthened the integrity of the precious metals supply chain.

57. In 2019, UNICRI and the European Space Agency organized a workshop to showcase the benefits of space in the mining sector and discuss the use of satellite technology to improve operations along the mining supply chain, while empowering local communities and reducing environmental degradation.

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

58. In 2019, 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.

59. To that end, the Institute worked on raising national stakeholders’ awareness of the needs and gaps in counter-terrorism policies and practices, attempting to bridge the gap between international standards and national programmes related to juvenile justice.

60. The support that the Institute provided to Member States in tracing and recovering assets linked to corruption and other forms of serious crime 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. UNICRI provided technical advice in the development of appropriate legal frameworks and operational practices in order to help countries to resolve cases as quickly, transparently and efficiently as possible, ensuring that recovered assets were directed towards high-priority development needs. Such practices, which demonstrate that the rule of law prevails, also bolster the willingness of foreign jurisdictions to return seized and confiscated assets to war-torn countries or to countries that have been afflicted by rampant corruption.

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

61. UNICRI has undertaken several initiatives to help to strengthen criminal justice, law enforcement and oversight institutions in post-conflict countries. This has mainly involved assisting post-conflict countries in the recovery of stolen assets and the provision of 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**

62. In 2019, UNICRI published the *Policy Toolkit on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism*, in partnership with The Netherlands and under the umbrella of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. The Toolkit serves as a guide to practitioners, policymakers and government experts (in post-conflict countries and countries at peace alike) on how best to respond to the links between organized crime and terrorism, enhancing their understanding of this evolving phenomenon and providing definitions and watch points to facilitate its monitoring. The Toolkit is intended to be universal and to provide a non-exhaustive list of good practices to better develop policies and strategies in regard to this nexus.

## **V. Security through research, technology and innovation**

63. UNICRI supported Member States, international organizations, the private sector, civil society organizations, the scientific and academic community and other relevant stakeholders with enhancing their understanding of both the risks and opportunities created by the latest developments in science and technology. The Institute also promoted awareness of the contribution of technological advances to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Increasing the capacity of Member States to deal with modern-day security threats through research, technology and innovation**

64. In 2019, UNICRI continued to raise awareness of new technology and of how it could be used by Member States for the common good and exploited by criminals to expand and diversify their activities. These efforts included technology-related training activities, workshops and mentoring programmes to support law enforcement and guide policymakers in the drafting of new laws to respond to those new security threats.

65. On 10 July, UNICRI held an official ceremony to celebrate the launch of the UNICRI Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. The Centre had been formally established in September 2017 with the signature of an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands for the hosting of its Centre in The Hague. Since then, the Centre has fortified its position as a hub for all aspects of artificial intelligence, robotics and the broader ecosystem of related technology pertaining to the fields of crime prevention, rule of law, justice and security. Through research (including a study on the use of artificial intelligence and robotics by law enforcement authorities), the provision of advisory support for a report on national initiatives in the field of artificial intelligence, several articles, expert workshops, high-level events and conferences, the Centre has become a port of call for Member States, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, the scientific and academic communities and other relevant stakeholders to seek support for and guidance on keeping pace with technological changes.

66. The aforementioned study on the challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence and robotics for law enforcement, carried out in cooperation with INTERPOL, notably resulted in the release of a joint report. The report focused on the use of artificial intelligence and robotics by law enforcement authorities, in particular their legal, ethical and social implications, and on how machine learning in the field of enforcement works, while also considering relevant technological developments and providing recommendations to chiefs of police.

67. Solid foundations with law enforcement authorities were also laid out at the second Global Meeting on Artificial Intelligence for Law Enforcement, jointly held

with INTERPOL. As a result of UNICRI work in this domain, there has been a call from within the law enforcement community for the provision of guidance and support in the form of a toolkit on responsible artificial intelligence innovation to help law enforcement authorities to ensure that their use of artificial intelligence is lawful and that the outputs are reliable.

68. In June 2019, within the framework of the Data Science Initiative of the municipality of The Hague, UNICRI invited participants to find solutions to a “true or false” challenge on fake videos. The aim of the UNICRI challenge was to create tools for detecting manipulated videos that could be made available to support law enforcement authorities, security agencies, the judiciary, media and the general public to verify the authenticity of images and videos. More than 150 highly skilled “hackers” participated in the challenge. As a follow-up, the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics organized a workshop on fake-video detection to further refine the technology identified.

69. Together with the Dubai Judicial Institute, UNICRI held a first specialized training session to enhance judicial knowledge of artificial intelligence. The session engaged more than 100 representatives from the judiciary and legal professionals from Algeria, Belgium, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, the United Arab Emirates and the State of Palestine, and provided unique insights into the far-reaching legal ramifications of artificial intelligence, such as the dangers and realities of algorithmic and output bias and the attribution of responsibility in cases where harm is done.

70. In 2019, UNICRI has continued to coordinate the work of the International Network on Biotechnology, a global platform of academic and research institutions committed to advancing education and raising awareness about responsible life science. The main focus of activity was the use of knowledge dissemination events and workshops to disrupt efforts of non-State actors to build mobile chemical and biological weapons laboratories.

71. Furthermore, the Institute worked throughout 2019 on enhancing knowledge and awareness of cases of infringement of intellectual property rights, blockchains, supply-chain security, artificial intelligence and technology that can be used to deal with associated threats, including that of weapons of mass destruction terrorism.

72. In 2019, the UNICRI “Security Improvements through Research, Technology and Innovation” knowledge centre in Geneva produced two risk scenario-based reports, on supply chain security and weapons of mass destruction terrorism threats, respectively. In the former report, the centre developed risk scenarios related to counterfeiting and the criminal infiltration of the supply chain (e.g., food fraud or illegal fishing), while in the latter report it focused on the potential use of advances in science and technology by terrorist groups, such as the release of toxic material from drones or the launch of artificial intelligence-powered cyberattacks against nuclear facilities. Each scenario included background information on the perpetrators, such as details of their motives and capabilities, and described hypothetical events based on case studies and potential technological developments. All scenarios were reviewed and validated by security experts from Governments, the industry, academic institutions and international organizations during two workshops held in Geneva.

73. A panel of experts was convened during the Festival of Technology of the Turin Polytechnic, in Italy, to discuss the use of big data in the fight against organized crime. The panel, composed of representatives of UNICRI, the National Anti-Mafia and Anti-Terrorism Directorate of Italy and the European Organization for Nuclear Research, discussed the use of big data analytics by government authorities in the fight against organized crime, in particular by analysing and monitoring the infiltration of the legal economy by organized crime.

## **VI. Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance**

74. In response to the growing range of multidimensional, cross-cutting and cross-border threats to the stability of Member States and their populations, UNICRI contributed to the mitigation of national and transnational risks, helping to increase global safety and security. To that end, the Institute promoted and supported the development of specific and viable strategies to prevent, detect and respond to a wide variety of security threats. Through its work, UNICRI explored and tested innovative ideas and promoted good practices and lessons learned at the global level.

### **A. Improved inter-agency cooperation**

75. In 2019, UNICRI strove to enhance inter-agency cooperation to prevent and mitigate threats. In that regard, the Institute mostly focused on countering the trafficking in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials (CBRN) and weaponry.

76. Within the framework of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Risk Mitigation Initiative, partner countries continued to improve their policies, preparedness and capacity to mitigate the consequences of CBRN risks.

77. Training activities and workshops were conducted in Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Tunisia, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates, with the involvement of a number of other stakeholders from South-East Asia, the African Atlantic façade, South-East and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South America. Through this support, UNICRI helped national, regional and international institutions to identify needs and gaps in pre-existing legislation and strategies and encouraged future joint actions to impede trafficking in CBRN material.

78. Several countries requested support from UNICRI to facilitate risk assessment and, with the contribution of different partners of the Centres of Excellence, the national CBRN teams of Benin, Mauritania and Sierra Leone carried out risk assessments.

79. Ten countries received support for the development of their national action plans, namely: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Sierra Leone and Togo.

80. Countries such as North Macedonia and Viet Nam took local ownership of CBRN actions by adopting their own national action plans. Out of the 61 countries that became partners of the Centres of Excellence Initiative, 42 created a national interministerial CBRN team, comprising experts and representatives from all relevant national bodies, with the aim of coordinating activities and improving their national policies. Progress was made in improving awareness, knowledge and capabilities to respond to CBRN incidents with effective resource mobilization. In particular, Lebanon and Uzbekistan received support for the organization of a field exercise to test and improve their capabilities to respond to a chemical incident.

81. UNICRI supported those efforts and facilitated the engagement of other countries to ensure peer-to-peer exchanges and support. All those efforts contributed to enhanced and harmonized governance of and preparedness to counter CBRN risks, avoiding a compartmentalized approach to CBRN risk mitigation at the national and regional levels. A common regional approach to identifying and addressing shared CBRN risks was devised.

82. A total of 16 round-table meetings were held in 2019 to coordinate activities in the regions and identify common priorities. In each region, a meeting was held in a partner country, namely, Albania, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. A second regional round-table meeting was held for each region in La Hulpe, Belgium, in conjunction with the international

national focal points meeting. UNICRI ensured that the conclusions from the regional round-table meetings included the visions of all partner countries and led to the identification of regional priorities.

83. In 2019, UNICRI also launched new initiatives to enhance intelligence operational and investigative capacities to counter trafficking in radiological and nuclear material in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe, as well as a project to identify priorities for biosafety and biosecurity capacity-building in South-East Asia.

84. In order to identify priorities for biosecurity capacity-building in South-East Asia, the Middle East and South America, UNICRI conducted with the Public Health Agency of Canada a comparative analysis of relevant published needs assessments.

85. In 2019, UNICRI and the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States held a workshop on chemical and biological weapon mobile laboratory prevention in Geneva.

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

86. Throughout 2019, UNICRI continued to organize training activities in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean to enhance knowledge of tourism security measures and help Governments to develop holistic tourism safety and security plans.

87. The training benefited more than 300 participants from the law enforcement, judiciary and tourism government agencies, consulate staff and private sector representatives, and helped to raise awareness and knowledge of the latest trends in crime and issues related to tourism security and the protection of vulnerable targets. Eleven countries have already benefited from support from UNICRI, thereby ensuring and facilitating greater cooperation among one another.

88. As a result, a network of experts from the beneficiary countries has been established to exchange best practices and resources, thus increasing the capacity to develop crime prevention policies and the protection of tourism destinations.

89. Following the work and assistance provided by the Institute, two Member States developed and adopted a national tourism security plan. Other Member States have also begun independently to develop their own local and national tourism security plans based on the knowledge and methodology imparted to them by UNICRI.

90. A research was conducted to review key findings and recommendations on tourism security on the basis of an assessment of the support and technical training delivered since 2016. The research collated all the good practices, key findings and recommendations identified to be used as guidelines for the development of a robust tourism security framework.

## **VII. Preventing crime by protecting and empowering vulnerable groups**

91. UNICRI works to achieve a context-based understanding of challenges and gaps at the institutional and community levels for the early identification and empowerment of people considered at risk of becoming offenders or victims of crime. During 2019, special attention was given to strengthening youth resilience against violent extremism and drug use.

**A. Enhancing the capacity of key actors to reach vulnerable individuals and populations through early intervention programmes to prevent crime**

92. In 2019, UNICRI implemented programmes in Africa and Asia to prevent vulnerable people from being recruited by criminals, terrorists and violent extremist groups in prisons and juvenile justice facilities.

93. In Indonesia and the Philippines, specifically, UNICRI identified needs and gaps in the juvenile system in an effort to prevent the recruitment into criminal or violent extremist gangs of the more vulnerable group of young people suspected of being in conflict with the law who may be kept in detention facilities. Through its research, UNICRI provided key stakeholders with useful information on alternative and diversion methods that could be used at the national level to prevent young people from turning to crime or terrorism. Similarly, UNICRI undertook work in Mali and the Sahel-Maghreb region to help to integrate and, in some cases, rehabilitate young people and other more vulnerable groups into society, strengthening the community's resilience to violent extremism and criminal organizations.

**B. Promoting and delivering crime prevention initiatives targeted at vulnerable populations and improving the coordination and participation of civil society groups to protect them**

94. In 2019, UNICRI started a new initiative on the needs of families for preventing drug use among children and adolescents. The initiative includes a pilot research study carried out through the administration of questionnaires and the organization of focus groups to identify what relevant stakeholders considered to be essential policy elements in supporting and consolidating the role of families in drug use prevention and recovery. The initiative will identify the difficulties that services and institutions face in involving and accompanying families in a process of self-awareness and support with respect to their potential role. The main purpose of the investigation is to gather information on the existing needs and gaps to improve the delivery of social and health services to families, as well as to enhance family-oriented policies and tools.

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

95. UNICRI implements its extensive portfolio of activities primarily through voluntary contributions from Member States, as well as an annual 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 raises 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, successfully implementing 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.