



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CENTRAL ASIA



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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

*Regional Office for  
Central Asia*

# Acknowledgements

The UNODC ROCA Annual Report for 2023 was prepared by the UNODC ROCA team, under the close supervision of Ms. Ashita Mittal, UNODC Regional Representative for Central Asia.

The production of this 2023 Annual Report was coordinated by Mr. Sherzod Hoshimov, with contributions from Mr. Yusuf Kurbonov, Ms. Madina Sarieva, Mr. Andrey Seleznev, Mr. Aliaksandr Vadziany, Ms. Reda Sirgediene, Mr. Oleksiy Feshchenko, Mr. Vladimir Kozin, Ms. Salome Flores Sierra, Mr. Sardor Atashikov, Mr. George Abadjian, Mr. Shah Salman Khan, Ms. Aisyah Qadri Yuliani, Ms. Shakhnoza Ganieva, Mr. Azizkhon Bakhadirov, Mr. Uktam Nasirov, Mr. Mirzahid Sultanov, Ms. Olga Tkachenko, Ms. Nurangez Abdulhamidova, and programme colleagues throughout the region.

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# Context



Abbreviations



Foreword



Highlights of the Year



Common Cause Against  
Drugs and Organized Crime

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Justice and the Rule of Law



Good Health and Well-Being



Terrorism Prevention



Partnerships for Sustainable  
Development

# Abbreviations

<b>ACCU</b>	Air Cargo Control Unit
<b>AML</b>	Anti-Money Laundering
<b>BCP</b>	Border Crossing Point
<b>BLO</b>	Border Liaison Office
<b>CAPVE</b>	Central Asia Network for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
<b>CARICC</b>	Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors
<b>CASC Network</b>	The Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and Southern Caucasus
<b>CCP</b>	Container Control Programme
<b>CFT</b>	Countering the Financing of Terrorism
<b>CND</b>	Commission on Narcotic Drugs
<b>CNS</b>	Counter Narcotics Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CTIP</b>	Countering Trafficking in Persons
<b>DCA</b>	Drug Control Agency
<b>DMP</b>	Drugs Monitoring Platform
<b>EU-BOMCA</b>	European Union Border Management Programme in Central Asia
<b>FATF</b>	Financial Action Task Force
<b>FIU</b>	Financial Intelligence Unit
<b>FTF</b>	Foreign Terrorist Fighter
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>GLOBE Network</b>	Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities
<b>GPO</b>	General Prosecutor's Office
<b>IMT</b>	Interagency Mobile Teams

<b>IREN</b>	Inter-Regional Network of Customs Authorities and Port Control Units
<b>MLA</b>	Mutual Legal Assistance
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NCDC</b>	National Information-Analytical Centre on Drug Control of the Republic of Uzbekistan
<b>NPS</b>	New Psychoactive Substances
<b>OHCHR</b>	The Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>PCBT</b>	Passenger and Cargo Border Team
<b>PLWH</b>	people living with HIV
<b>PVE</b>	Preventing Violent Extremism
<b>PWID</b>	People Who Inject Drugs
<b>PWUD</b>	people who use drugs
<b>ROCA</b>	Regional Office for Central Asia
<b>SALW</b>	Small Arms and Light Weapons
<b>TADOC</b>	Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime
<b>UAV</b>	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
<b>UBRAF</b>	Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNCAC</b>	The United Nations Convention against Corruption
<b>UNCCT</b>	The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre
<b>UNDP</b>	The United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	The United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNOCT</b>	The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
<b>UNODC</b>	The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNTOC</b>	The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
<b>UTC</b>	Universal Treatment Curriculum
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# Foreword



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This Annual Report highlights key results and the impact of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime work in Central Asia (ROCA) in 2023.

The past year was marked by a series of crises that grew progressively across the globe – inequalities and uncertain economic prospects, the escalating climate change, wars and regional conflicts. As happens in every case, the most vulnerable people and communities, especially women and children, were hit hardest.

People in Central Asia continue to face the challenges posed by drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism, with implications to peace, health, economic growth, security and human rights. Widening economic and social gaps, limited access of the most vulnerable, women and young people to socio-economic opportunities and decision-making create additional risks to social cohesion and stability, leading to marginalization and potential to violence, at a time when region needs unity and solidarity more than ever.

In these times, UNODC continues to strengthen and adapt its support to the Member States in Central Asia, through fostering national and international efforts in advancing good governance, justice, health, and security.

In 2023, UNODC delivered over \$20 million in technical assistance, shaping an integrated legislative and capacity building response to the emerging needs of the states in the region. We collectively contributed to the UN Secretary-General's vision for the future of international cooperation to meet current and future challenges and intensify efforts and accelerate action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We enhanced the capacities of our counterparts, including the law enforcement, criminal justice officers, as well as health service providers and civil society actors.

UNODC continued to promote international cooperation through the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for combating the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors (CARICC), the Inter-Regional Network of Customs Authorities and Port Control Units (IREN) and the Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and South Caucasus (CASC).

With UNODC support, new collaborative regional platforms were established, namely the Central Asian Law Enforcement Network Against Trafficking in Persons (CALENTIP), and the regional Anti-corruption platform for Central Asia.

Our office inaugurated three new Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) at the Alat border crossing point (BCP) on the Uzbek-Turkmen border, Ayvaj BCP on the Tajik-Uzbek border and Gulbahor BCP on the Uzbek-Tajik border. The total number of BLOs reached 24.

A new Port Control Unit at the Batken customs post, located in Kyrgyzstan at the borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and serving trains, vehicles, and citizens was opened within the Container Control Programme.

Promoting innovative solutions and advanced technologies in combating drug trafficking was also another important area that UNODC invested in 2023. Through technological integration, legislative advancements, international cooperation, and capacity building, UNODC laid a strong foundation for sustained success in this critical field.

UNODC Information Centre for researching and analyzing transnational threats in the region related



to drugs and crime was opened in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The Centre enables UNODC to produce evidence-based and policy relevant research. A brief on methamphetamine manufacture in Afghanistan was released together with up-to-date information of trafficking trends. Further, the 2023 Afghanistan opium survey report was published, which provided information on opiate production after the ban of drugs by the de-facto authorities.

UNODC continued to support all countries in the region to strengthen their efforts in combating corruption, and maintaining their dedication to implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) through promotion of regional cooperation for fast-tracking UNCAC implementation, implementing a global resource on anti-corruption education (GRACE) initiative, and ensuring that all countries in the region benefit from Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GLOBE Network).

We supported the development and review of laws, action plans, policy documents and legislative amendments at the national level to promote adherence to and ensure consistency with UN human rights standards and norms, as well international conventions.

Phase II of the “Regional Network of Youth Organizations and Youth Champions in Central Asia for Drug Free, Healthy, Safe and Secure Societies” was launched to support young people to prevent drug and other psychoactive substance abuse.

Our efforts led to tangible results covering all thematic areas of UNODC work, including countering trafficking in persons, small arms and light weapons, cybersecurity, anti-money laundering, and others. The people-centered approach prioritized the most vulnerable groups, giving access to justice and services for all by exploring opportunities for young women and men to voice their needs and participate in decision making.

On countering cybercrime, UNODC supported the countries in developing relevant policies to prevent cybercrime, provided capacity development activities for relevant authorities, conducted awareness raising activities among key population, and provided advisory services for specific investigative tactics.

In the past year, UNODC made significant strides in promoting gender equality, human rights, and inclusion. Through targeted initiatives, we have worked to ensure that all our efforts have focused on empowering women and girls, promoting gender-sensitive policies, and addressing gender-based violence. Additionally, we prioritized the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, in our programs and activities. Furthermore, we placed a strong emphasis on engaging young people in our work. Recognizing the importance of youth voices in shaping the future, we have supported platforms for young people to participate in decision-making and contribute their perspectives to our initiatives.

We are committed to further advancing our work in the region, echoing the UNODC Global Strategy's aspirations for “a healthy, safe, and secure community, free from the threats posed by organized crime and drug use and confident in the integrity of the justice system to provide access to services for all.” We look forward to advancing our partnerships with the governments, civil society, and the private sector in achieving our shared goals.

I extend my gratitude to all our counterparts, the UN sister agencies, and other partners for their unwavering engagement. It's evident that countries in Central Asia are eager to bolster cooperation among themselves, and UNODC stands ready to facilitate collective actions.

I am thankful to our donors who have consistently shown their trust in UNODC through their voluntary contributions. In 2023, UNODC mobilized approximately \$15 million to further support our efforts in the region. I encourage Member States, donors, and partners to continue their support for the UNODC Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to my colleagues, both at UNODC Headquarters and in the region, for their continuous support, dedication, and professionalism.



Sincerely,

**Ashita Mittal**  
**UNODC Regional Representative for**  
**Central Asia**

# Highlights of the Year

## Regional

Establishment of the UNODC Information Centre in Tashkent, for researching and analysing transnational threats



UNODC establishes the first-ever Central Asian Law Enforcement Network against Trafficking in Persons (CALENTIP)

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Regional expert meeting conducted on the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and other innovative technologies



Development of a concept for establishing a Regional Information and Communication System to strengthen the existing BLO communication systems



UNODC established a Regional Anti-Corruption Platform for Fast-Tracking UNCAC Implementation in Central Asia

The Regional Conference on Post-Release Monitoring and Probation of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighter and Violent Extremist Offenders



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Study tour for high-level representatives, including senior officials, policymakers and substance use disorders clinicians, from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to United Kingdom

PCBT Regional training on gender mainstreaming within CCP Women's Network for customs officers of PCUs/ ACCU of Central Asia, organized jointly with WCO and OSCE



# Kazakhstan

Putting into technical operation the Situation Centre at the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan



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Opening of an interactive computer-based training class at the Quryq seaport

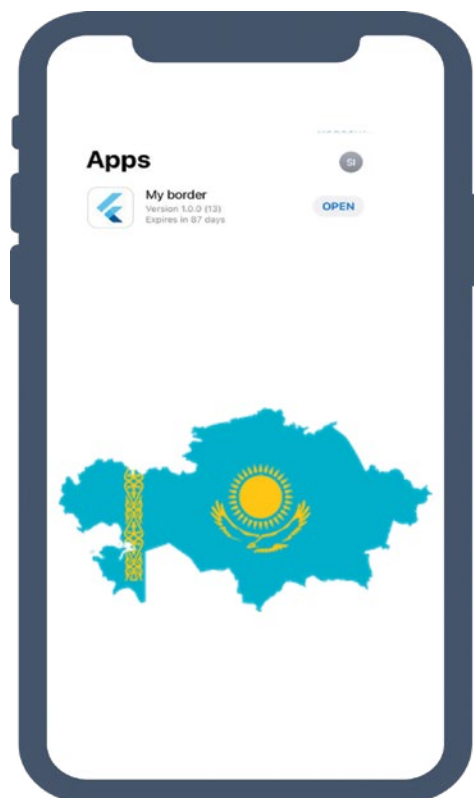




PCBT Regional workshop on prevention and detection of Intellectual Property Rights Violations and Goods Identification



Launch of the test version of the 'My Border' mobile application with the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan



# Kyrgyzstan

Opening of the Operational Management Sector of BLOs as an operational branch of the BLO Coordination Centre of the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic



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Launch of a new project to strengthen the Kyrgyz Republic's capacity in implementing supervisory activities for Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT)





Development of an internet-based Geographic Information System



Establishment of a new PCU at Batken Customs in the Kyrgyz Republic



Discussion of the draft State Program for the Development of the Penitentiary and Probation System of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2024-2028

# Tajikistan



Initiation of establishing a Situation Centre at the Customs Service under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan

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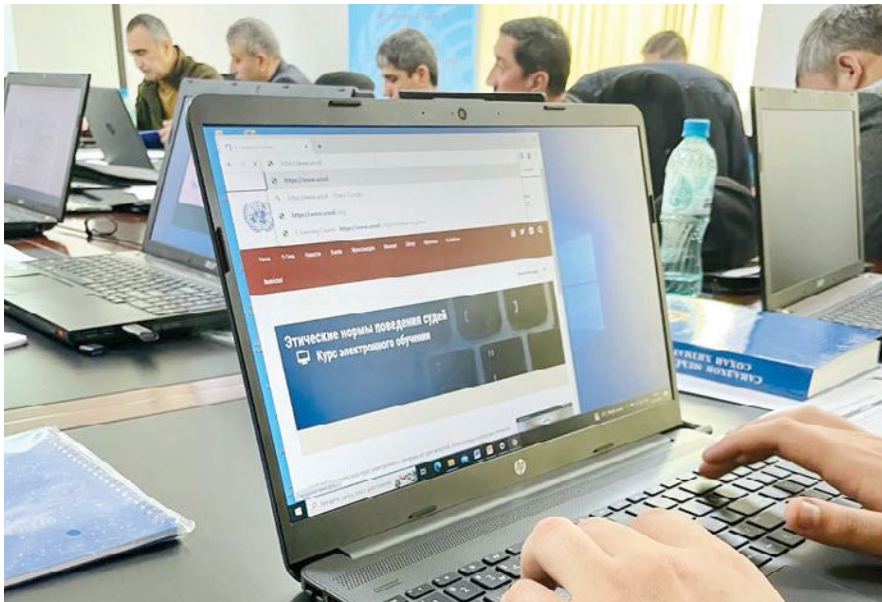
The official handover ceremony of equipment for DCA HQ and regional departments



Construction initiated at the Chaldovar strategic border outpost on the Shahritus stretch of the Tajik-Afghan border

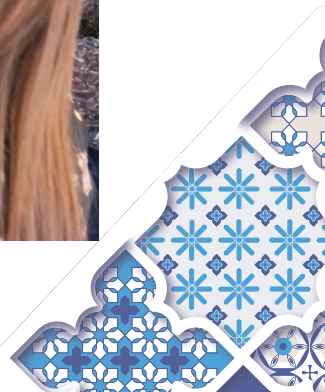


Opening of a Border Liaison Office at the Ayvaj border crossing point on the Tajik-Uzbek border



The localization and translation into Tajik of the eLearning module “Investigating Drug-Related Organized Crime”

Launch of Phase II of “Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters Detention” Programme



# Turkmenistan

Opening of five interactive computer-based training classes at the State Border Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan



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Briefing on possible Technical Assistance to Turkmenistan in the Implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Countering Terrorism for 2020-2024



The Central Forensic Bureau under the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan obtained international accreditation for complying with the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard

Hand-over of Teaching Modules on Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants and Terrorism translated into Turkmen language to the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan



The first Regional Turkmenistan Ashgabat Model UN in Ashgabat

# Uzbekistan



7th Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award Ceremony



Launch of the phase III of the project 'Improving Forensics Capacities in Uzbekistan'



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Uzbekistan initiated the development of its first National Strategy Against Organized Crime



Opening of Border Liaison Offices at the Alat border crossing point on the Uzbek-Turkmen border, and at the Gulbahor border crossing point on the Uzbek-Tajik border



Launch of Phase III of the project 'Countering Illicit Drug Trafficking through Strengthened Coordination and Enhanced Capacity of Interagency Mobile Teams'



Launch of the digitalization of international legal cooperation processes in Uzbekistan

ToT on Course 16 "Advanced Clinical Skills" and Course 19 "Enhancing Group Facilitation Skills" of the Advance Level of the Universal Treatment Curriculum for Substance Use Disorders



UNODC facilitated the Regional Workshop on International Standards and Best Practices on Adjudication of Trafficking in Persons Cases with international experts

# Common Cause against Drugs and Organized Crime

## Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Countering Drug Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime, and Terrorism

UNODC supports member states in strengthening their integrated border management to facilitate information and intelligence sharing, conducting joint operations, and strengthening border security by detecting and preventing illegal activities, such as terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, while promoting legitimate trade and travel.

The UNODC 'Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia' seeks to strengthen the capacity of border crossing points (BCPs) and improve cross-border cooperation by promoting the concept of Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) and developing information and communication networks for border agencies.

### Border Liaison Offices

Border Liaison Offices promote improved communication and cooperation between different national law enforcement agencies working along borders. They aim to foster

greater law enforcement cooperation through direct cross-border communication links at the operational level, and promote sharing of real-time information on drug traffickers to enable fast and

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effective intervention by law enforcement officers on both sides of the border.

In 2023, efforts to enhance border cooperation and communication led to the establishment of three new BLOs. These are located at the Alat BCP on the Uzbek-Turkmen border, the Ayvaj BCP on the Tajik-Uzbek border, and the Gulbahor BCP on the Uzbek-Tajik border.

In 2023, the number of UNODC-supported BLOs in the Central Asian region reached 24, including those at geographically remote and potentially vulnerable checkpoints. These offices have been equipped with necessary high-tech and specialized analytical software enabling analysis of database information, and standardizing information-sharing and reporting mechanisms for interagency and cross-border communication.

## Situation Centres



Situation and coordination centres established within law enforcement agencies are intended to enhance interagency coordination in monitoring the work of road, railway and air border crossing points, and improve the analytical capacity of operational units of law enforcement agencies. They also facilitate centralized collection, processing and analysis of intelligence and cooperation in information exchange based on intergovernmental and interagency agreements on countering narcotics, transnational organized crime, smuggling, and violation of customs regulations.





In 2023, the Operational Management Sector of BLOs as an operational branch of the BLO Coordination Centre of the State Border Service of the **Kyrgyz Republic** was opened in Osh.

The opening of the Situation Centre at the Central Office of the Customs Committee of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2021, resulted in the establishment

of a new operational unit. As confirmed by the Customs Committee, over 200 violations of customs legislation amounting to \$34 million, and the seizure of more than 500 kg of narcotic drugs and 20 tons of precursor chemicals were detected as a result of the centre's activities. The IT platform used by the situation centre integrated all software systems of the Customs Committee of the Republic of **Uzbekistan**.

Work on establishing the Situation Centre at the Customs Service under the Government of the Republic of **Tajikistan** in Dushanbe began in 2023. This centre was provided with cutting-edge equipment. Likewise, the Situation Centre at the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** became technically operational in 2023. Once it is officially opened, this latter centre will coordinate all BCPs, BLOs and computer-based training classes along Kazakhstan's state borders, and regulate all processes for data collection, analysis and exchange.



-  BLOs at road checkpoints
-  BLOs at railway checkpoints
-  Planned BLOs at road checkpoints
-  Strengthening the capacity of international checkpoints





## Interactive Computer-Based Training Classes

The UNODC Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia assisted Central Asian states in establishing interactive computer-based training (CBT) classes within BLOs and law enforcement agencies, with an interactive multimedia training programme aligned with UNODC's overall drug control and crime prevention strategies in the region, adjusted to the legal, procedural and cultural aspects of Central Asian countries.

The CBT classes contributed to the UNODC's capacity development efforts aimed at supporting national operational capacities on drug law enforcement, and maintaining legal turnover of controlled narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors under the ratified UN conventions.

In 2023, seven CBT classes were opened and equipped, including five in Turkmenistan, one in Kazakhstan, and one in Uzbekistan. UNODC provided essential equipment to Border Troops of the State Committee for National Security of



the Republic of Tajikistan required to set up a CBT class.

The Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan took a decision to set up regional training centres, based on the established CBT classes at Kordai, Saryagash and Quryq.

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## Specialized Training Courses

Four regional and two national trainings were conducted in 2023 for **165 law enforcement officers** from Central Asian states, including 8 women officers.

These trainings covered topics related to: 1) new

methods and techniques for inspecting individuals, vehicles, cargo and goods crossing road and railway border crossing points; 2) application of IBM i2 software and use of the BLO database; 3) risk analysis and detection of new psychoactive substances, and; 4) joint cross-border operations.



## Study Visits



In 2023, UNODC together with the EU-funded Border Management Programme in Central Asia (Phase 10) organized a study visit to the FRONTEX European Border and Coast Guard Agency headquartered in Warsaw, Poland, and to the Polish Border Guard, for 15 representatives of the border control authorities of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The study visit aimed to make staff of Central Asian border agencies aware of best border security practices applied by FRONTEX. On-site learning focused on information flow management, operational management based on real-time data exchange, strategic, operational and tactical risk analysis (including vulnerability assessment), and cooperation between competent agencies.

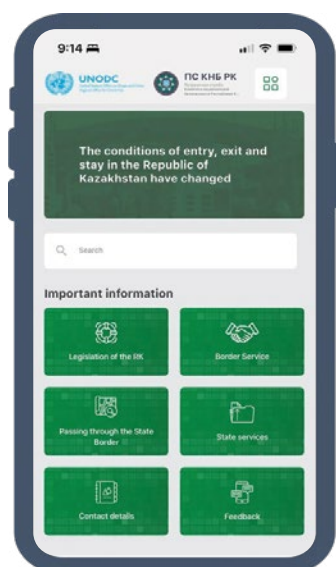
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## Regional Information and Communication System



In 2023, the project developed a concept for establishing a Regional Information and Communication System (RICS) with the aim of promptly processing data provided by border law enforcement authorities online, to ensure effective collection, storage, protection, analysis and exchange of information in combating

drug trafficking, as well as interaction between competent authorities of Central Asian states. RICS will strengthen the existing BLO communication systems, and further enhance regional cooperation in countering transborder organized crime and addressing new challenges and threats.



## The 'My Border' Mobile Application

The project supported launch of the 'My Border' mobile application with the Border Service of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan, intended for wide use by the public. This mobile application is intended to serve as a national mechanism for establishing communication between the Border Service and the general population, by providing useful and easily accessible up-to-date, first-hand information at the BCPs. The mobile application's testing started in 2023. UNODC plans to launch the application in other Central Asian countries from 2024.

## Awareness-Raising Campaigns

Thematic public awareness-raising campaigns play an important role in the fight against illicit drugs. It is crucial to inform people, particularly youth who make up more than half the population of Central Asian countries, about the risks posed by drug use and illicit drug trafficking.

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To commemorate **World Drug Day 2023**, a public outreach campaign was organized to raise awareness among persons moving through BCPs on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz and Uzbek-Tajik borders, of the different means of combating drug trafficking, and preventing use of narcotic drugs by children and young people.

During the campaign, the UNODC project team together with representatives of border and customs services in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and BLO officers working at the Kordai and Ak-Zhol border checkpoints on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border and at the Oybek and Fotehobod border checkpoints on the Uzbek-Tajik border, posted information banners at the BCPs. These banners presented information on the harm drugs cause, and preventive measures taken by UNODC together with Central Asian law enforcement agencies to counter drug trafficking. The project team conducted interviews with border and customs officials working at the border checkpoints, and with civilians crossing the border.



In 2023, UNODC conducted an annual regional meeting of steering committees established under the UNODC Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia in Almaty (Kazakhstan). The meeting aimed to present project outcomes and achievements, new initiatives and recommendations for further implementing the project. Law enforcement agency representatives updated participants on implementing the project in their respective countries. They highlighted the importance of strengthening further

cross-border cooperation and coordination of activities to more effectively address threats posed by transnational organized crime in the region. The visiting UNODC Vienna Border Management Branch delegation attended the meeting, and had a fruitful discussion with project partners.

As made evident through official information provided by beneficiaries, all actions and activities implemented within the UNODC Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation have led to the seizure of over 1,034 kg of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Central Asia in 2023.

## UNODC Initiative on Strengthening Control along the Tajik-Afghan Border



The Tajik-Afghan border is a major transit route for drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Central Asia and beyond. Implementing border control and management initiatives, including establishment of border liaison offices, construction of border posts and outposts, and promotion of interagency cooperation, has strengthened border control and combated drug trafficking in Tajikistan.

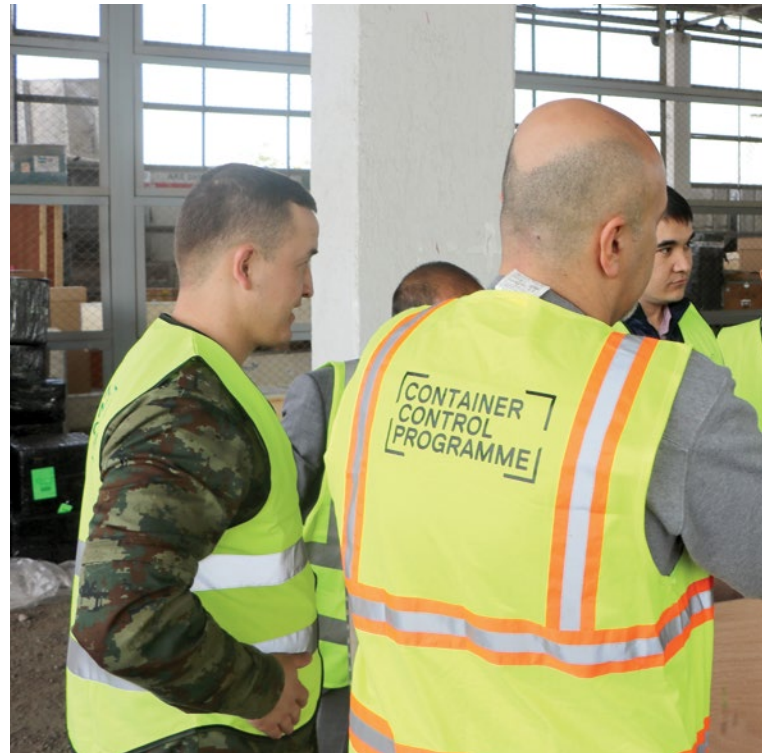
The UNODC Initiative on Strengthening Control along the Tajik-Afghan Border is one of the most important projects within the border control and management context. In 2023, this initiative continued its support in enhancing Tajikistan's border security. During the reporting period, the project launched construction of the strategic

Chaldovar border outpost with financial support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. The border outpost is located at the Shahritus stretch of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan. It will contribute to strengthening the operational capacity of 75 border officers for maintaining a 24/7 presence at the 'green line', through the establishment of quality standard living and working conditions. This will eventually enhance the border control capacity of the Border Troops of the State Committee for National Security of Tajikistan in addressing threats affecting the region, including drug trafficking, weapons and ammunition smuggling through the state border, and terrorism and radical extremism.

## Passenger and Cargo Border Team/Container Control Programme

The Passenger and Cargo Border Team (PCBT) through the UNODC-WCO Global Container Control Programme – Regional Segment for Central Asia (CCP), continued its successful implementation in 2023 in line with the workplan of activities for the Central Asia region.

The strategic vision of the PCBT/CCP to cover main transport corridors by the risk-based interdiction concept resulted in establishment of a new **PCU at Batken Customs** in Kyrgyzstan, located at the edge of the borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, simultaneously serving trains, vehicles, and people travelling on foot. The dedicated unit is established to conduct systematic profiling, selection, and inspection of high-risk consignments to prevent drug trafficking and other forms of black-market activity, whilst facilitating legitimate trade flow. A new building with 80m<sup>2</sup> of office premises (two rooms) was constructed under the CCP and handed over to Batken Customs. The PCU staff received relevant training, were equipped with drones, binoculars,



walky-talkies, laptops, printers, computers, furniture, IT equipment, and basic search-and-detection tools, and connected to the WCO ContainerCOMM secure communication platform to perform systematic profiling and inspection of high-risk consignments with minimal disruption to legitimate trade.

The PCBT pilot component on establishing a mechanism of direct pre-arrival data exchange on high-risk consignments between the PCUs Farap in Turkmenistan and Alat in Uzbekistan, launched in 2022, was successfully implemented through 2023. Two technical needs assessment missions conducted on 5-6 April 2023, followed by trainings on risk profiling and targeting and data exchange practices and cooperation promotion and delivery of special server hardware and software to the PCUs in September and December 2023, allowed both units to strengthen their mutual working contacts and trust, and establish a direct PCU-to-PCU data exchange mechanism. The pilot significantly contributed to operationalizing the bilateral protocol on data exchange, signed between the customs services of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on 5 October 2021.

**436 officers** of customs and other competent authorities (358 men and 78 women) enhanced





\$203,712, which helped the units boost their risk-informed and selectivity-based approaches.

The Central Asian countries continued benefitting from the information exchange and cooperation opportunities provided by the IREN platform, which is shining evidence of the programme's impact on boosting the efficiency of countering transnational drug trafficking. The number of high-risk cargo information and alert message exchanges in 2023 exceeded 124 cases. Such exchanges led to tangible seizures of huge amounts of opium poppy straw (3.25 tons) in a legal cargo of confectionary poppy seeds, made by ACCU Almaty in Kazakhstan in May 2023. This was followed by the detection of 8.5 tons of the same type of drug in July-August 2023, made by ACCU Tashkent in Uzbekistan, and the seizure of 6 tons of opium poppy straw by PCU Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan trafficked using a similar modus operandi. These results demonstrate the immediate impact and benefit of using mutually-trusted alerts and exchanges established by PCUs and ACCUs in the region. The seizure of 16 million pieces of illegal cigarettes by the Kyrgyz Customs Service in May 2023, following an alert message from the Customs Service of Turkmenistan, served as evidence of Turkmenistan's boosted engagement with the IREN.

their knowledge and skills across 29 PCBT/CCP capacity-building and cooperation promotion events on risk-profiling, drugs and precursors, intellectual property rights, anti-corruption, gender mainstreaming, operation of targeting centres, and other related topics. PCUs/ACCUs and CCP National Focal Points in Central Asian countries were provided with extensive infrastructural and technical equipment support. This included search and detection equipment and tools, office hardware and software, and a building for PCU Batken in the Kyrgyz Republic, all worth a total of

The PCBT continued supporting the strategic enhancement of customs information systems in Central Asia, through helping introduce









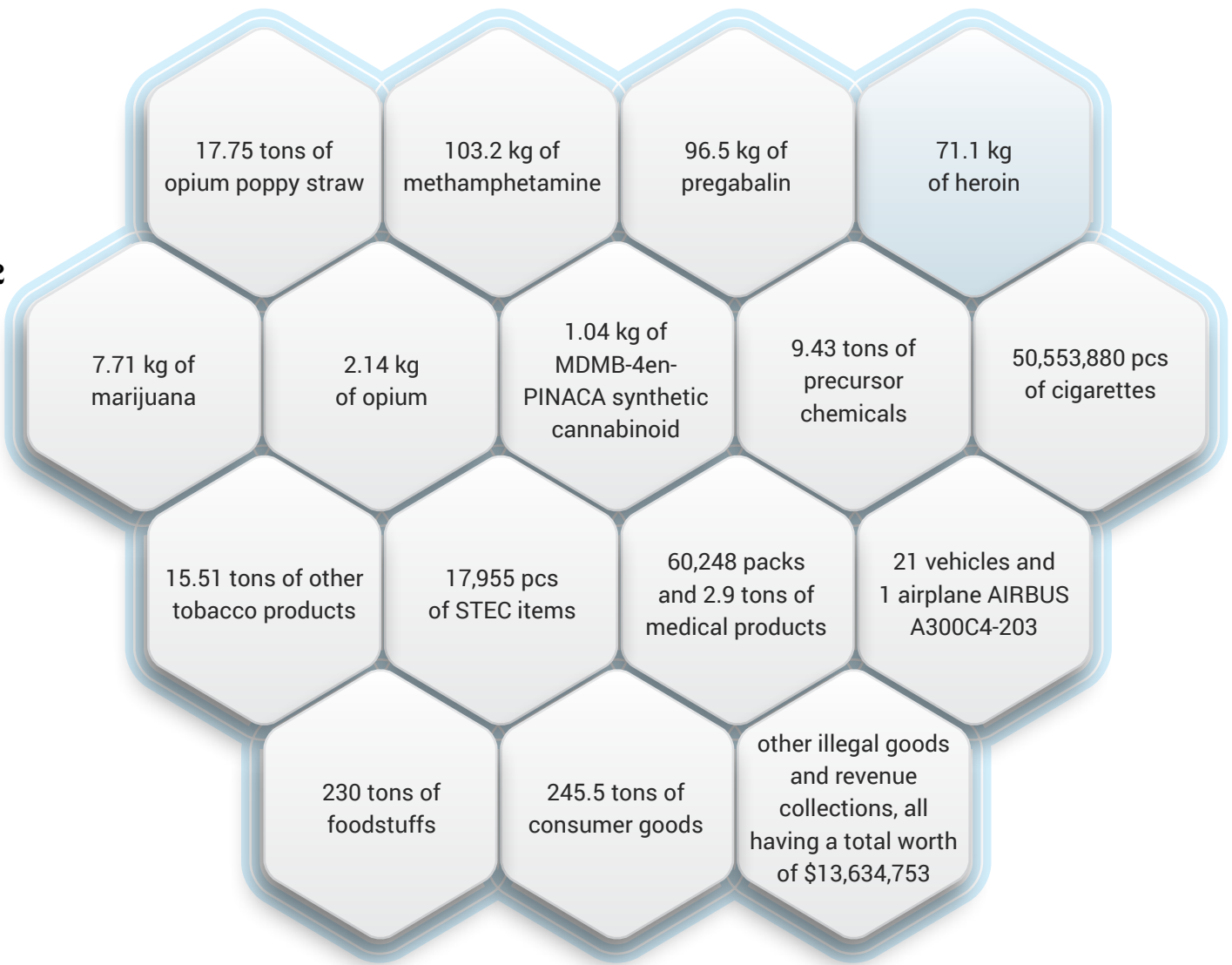
new ways of applying aggregate risk profiles and region-specific indicators into national automated risk management systems, the further digitalization of processes, and wider application of specialized software systems and communication tools. As such, customs services in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have been equipped with server and computer equipment required to utilize the WCO-owned nCEN application, as part of PCBT's RECASYS component. National train-the-trainer workshops conducted in July 2023 for instructors and future users of the nCEN application in the customs

services of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, helped equip national nCEN administrators and users with knowledge and skills on the application's use within their daily risk management work. Local instructors were also trained to sustain and share the acquired knowledge and skills with new users in the future.

The above comprehensive set of measures helped increase the units' detection efficiency, made evident through it producing a record number of 227 seizures in 2023 (compared to 123 in 2022).

**CCP seizures in 2023**

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## CARICC – The Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors



In 2023, the CARICC Information and Analytical Unit processed a request from the Gulf Cooperation Council Criminal Information Centre for Combating Drugs (GCC-CIC), and a request from the Japan Drug Control Administration. In August, negotiations were held in Almaty with representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Qatar on the initiation of a joint controlled deliveries operation of Afghan-origin drugs from Kazakhstan to Qatar. Further actions are underway to implement this operation.

CARICC established contacts with representatives of the law enforcement agencies of Japan and Spain, to organize joint counternarcotics activities. Organizational and legislative procedures have been initiated for conducting an international operation together with these countries.

In August 2023, CARICC together with the UNODC Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia, conducted the first regional working group meeting on developing a terms of reference for the Regional Informational Communication System (RICS) under CARICC. Experts reviewed the concept of RICS and the

work plan for its implementation. CARICC will also initiate developing a regulation on access, use and exchange of intelligence through RICS by competent authorities of member states.

The CARICC delegation took part in the 'For a world without drugs' international scientific and practical conference conducted at the Almaty Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

From October to November 2023, representatives of the Faculty of Commander Training of the Almaty Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, and senior investigators of the Agency for Financial Monitoring of the Republic of Kazakhstan, both visited CARICC. During the meetings, participants were provided with information about the centre's main activities and prospects for development, CARICC's analytical products, current drug situation in its participating countries, and results of work undertaken in combating transnational drug crime.

CARICC representatives took part in a meeting of the regional working group on precursors of the

UNODC Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, during which they made a proposal for implementation of activities in the next stages of operations to combat the spread of synthetic drugs – referred to as ‘Reflex’ – and stopping leakage of precursors into illicit traffic – referred to as ‘Substitution’.

A regional expert meeting of analytical unit heads of Central Asian states’ competent authorities, and a meeting of the working group of experts of CARICC member states on improving the centre’s normative legal framework, both took place in Kazakhstan in December.

Regarding strategic drug situation analysis conducted during 2023, CARICC experts prepared and shared drug situation reports, and regular information and analytical bulletins on drug seizures and the smuggling trends of organized criminal groups, including:

- 30 weekly reports on the facts of seizures of large quantities of drugs based on information from the media.
- 18 events in the anti-drug sphere based on media information.
- 8 monthly reviews of identified methods of concealing drugs.
- 4 express analyses of the facts of large drug seizures in the CARICC area.
- Quarterly information bulletins on the ‘Drug Situation in CARICC Member States’ for 2022-2023.

In 2023, CARICC continued enhancing the counternarcotic and analytical capacities of law enforcement agencies of its member states. Throughout the year, a series of comprehensive training sessions were delivered, each tailored to address specific needs and challenges faced by law enforcement personnel across the region.

One notable initiative involved a national training programme focused on equipping 10 law enforcement officers from Turkmenistan with essential skills in utilizing IBM I2 software. This training, conducted in collaboration with the Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison

Offices in Central Asia, took place in Kazakhstan. It underscored cooperative efforts implemented with the goal of bolstering regional security. Similar training was provided to law enforcement officers from Mongolia, expanding the reach of CARICC’s capacity-building efforts.

In addition, a seminar was conducted for officers of territorial divisions within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, further enhancing their operational effectiveness and strategic insights. Furthermore, a specialized training session on applying IBM I2 and ArcGIS was provided to officers of the Kyrgyz Border Service, augmenting their capabilities in maintaining border security and surveillance.

A regional training initiative focused on risk analysis and detection of new psychoactive substances, bringing together law enforcement officers from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This collaborative effort, in partnership with the Regional Project on Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation, aimed to fortify border control measures and combat trafficking of illicit substances originating from Afghanistan.

Moreover, CARICC facilitated a range of targeted training programmes, including sessions on IBM I2 utilization for the Anti-Corruption Service of Kazakhstan and joint transborder operations for law enforcement officers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These sessions equipped participants with skills needed to effectively initiate, plan, and coordinate international transborder operations, emphasizing CARICC’s pivotal role in facilitating such endeavours.

Additionally, analytical officers from Central Asian law enforcement agencies benefited from specialized training conducted by CARICC instructors, empowering them with enhanced analytical techniques and methodologies.

Through these diverse and tailored training initiatives, CARICC continued reinforcing the capabilities of law enforcement agencies across the region, fostering collaboration and resilience in the face of evolving threats posed by organized crime and illicit drug trafficking.

## The Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus (CASC Network)



In 2023, the Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus (CASC) implemented by UNODC via the Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption (GPCD) continued facilitating international cooperation in criminal matters, providing a platform for competent authorities for international cooperation from countries of Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus. Thus, the CASC network facilitated 20 regional and interregional international cooperation requests, and facilitated contacts between CASC members with central authorities within the CASC region, and with central authorities in the EU, Africa, Latin America and UK. One of the main achievements of CASC support of the central authority, was ratifying an international treaty between Uzbekistan and Italy. The agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters strengthened cooperation between the two countries in the fields of legal assistance, transfer of sentenced persons and extradition, ensuring effective cooperation in the field of criminal justice, and facilitating more effective investigation and prosecution of crimes.

The Network Secretariat conducted eight events with a focus on capacity building and strengthening network cooperation, bringing together around 180

practitioners working in international cooperation, and 20 international experts. The meetings covered topics such as the use of information technologies in the activities of prosecutors, the application of EU standards and international cooperation in criminal matters, and enhancing response to trafficking in persons, particularly in women and girls for sexual exploitation, through cross-border criminal justice cooperation mechanisms.

The Secretariat contributes to strengthening collaboration with other judicial networks, such as the European Judicial Network (EJN) and the South East Asia Justice Network (SEAJust). The CASC delegations had an opportunity to take part in the events of indicated networks. The meeting provided a sustainable discussion platform to enable concrete cooperation between judges and prosecutors, to fight crime, combat impunity and exchange with practical and legal problems encountered by member states in the context of judicial cooperation, in particular with regard to implementing measures adopted by the EU, as well as during collaboration with third countries outside the EU.

One of the 2023 highlights for CASC was the launch of a project component 'Digitalization of



International Legal Cooperation Processes in Uzbekistan'. The project aimed to enhance the technical capacity of the General Prosecutor's Office through developing IT solutions and policy tools for transmitting digital requests and trend

analysis resulting in increased criminal justice response to transnational organized crime threats, as well as capacity building of its personnel to manage international judicial cooperation requests in a more timely, productive and accurate manner.



# Strengthening National Responses for Combatting Drug Trafficking

## Support to Drug Control in the Kyrgyz Republic



In 2023, UNODC continued to foster international collaboration by promoting innovative solutions in the Kyrgyz Republic. Accordingly, the focus of the project 'Strengthening the Capacity of Mobile Operational Teams of the Counter Narcotics Service (CNS) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic' was to strengthen resilience in combating drug trafficking on both national and regional levels. Funded by the Government of the Russian Federation, this project integrated support in technological innovation, legislative reform and international cooperation, proactively dismantling networks that perpetuate this menace.

2023 was marked by a period of remarkable progress in deploying advanced technologies, such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and hyperspectral imaging, and refining legal frameworks governing the use of such

technologies. The project's accomplishments were not merely quantifiable successes, but also qualitative leaps in strengthening the capabilities of Kyrgyzstan's law enforcement agencies. The strategic utilization of innovative tools and methodologies has not only augmented the efficiency of drug interdiction operations, but also laid the groundwork for sustainable and long-term solutions to drug-related challenges. In 2023, UNODC in Kyrgyzstan supported not only combating drug trafficking in the country, but also contributed to a global effort to uphold security, justice and health, resonating with the core mission of the United Nations.

In 2023, through innovative technological integration, legislative advancements, international cooperation, and capacity building, UNODC laid a strong foundation for sustained success in this critical field.

To support innovative approaches and technological advancements, UNODC assisted the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in:

1. **Developing internet-based GIS:** A major technological breakthrough in 2023 was the development of an online Geographic Information System (GIS). This platform, developed in collaboration with scientists, contributed to strengthening data collection and analysis, enabling real-time tracking and strategic planning in counter-narcotics operations.
2. **Digital herbarium of hyperspectral images:** Another significant achievement was the completion of a digital herbarium consisting of hyperspectral images of cannabis and ephedra. This repository serves as a crucial tool for identifying and differentiating between various plant species, enhancing the precision of surveillance and eradication efforts.
3. **Utilization of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs):** UAVs were successfully incorporated in monitoring hard-to-reach areas, and providing vital intelligence for operations. The drones, equipped with advanced cameras and sensors, have enabled more effective surveillance, significantly enhancing capabilities of law enforcement agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic.



To enhance international and inter-agency cooperation, UNODC facilitated collaboration with international organizations including the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and other bodies. Furthermore, key diplomatic efforts such as bilateral meetings with the Russian Federation, the State of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea and others, have solidified international support and cooperation. These engagements have been vital in securing technical and financial support, enhancing the operational capacity of Kyrgyzstan's Counter Narcotics Service.

To develop capacities of relevant authorities, UNODC conducted a series of trainings on





In 2023, a series of field research exercises were conducted, particularly in the Issyk-Kul and Jalal-Abad regions, using hyperspectral cameras mounted on UAVs. These exercises helped detect areas of illicit cannabis and ephedra cultivation, significantly aiding in the mapping and analysis of these sites. The data collected from these UAV missions were meticulously analysed, resulting in the identification of key drug cultivation areas. This information not only facilitated targeted eradication efforts, but also contributed to a broader understanding of Kyrgyzstan's drug cultivation landscape.

Training law enforcement in new technology usage required continuous development, while integrating new technologies into existing normative documents demanded the revision of current legislation. There were legal and ethical concerns regarding privacy and compliance, particularly related to the need to balance technology usage and human rights.

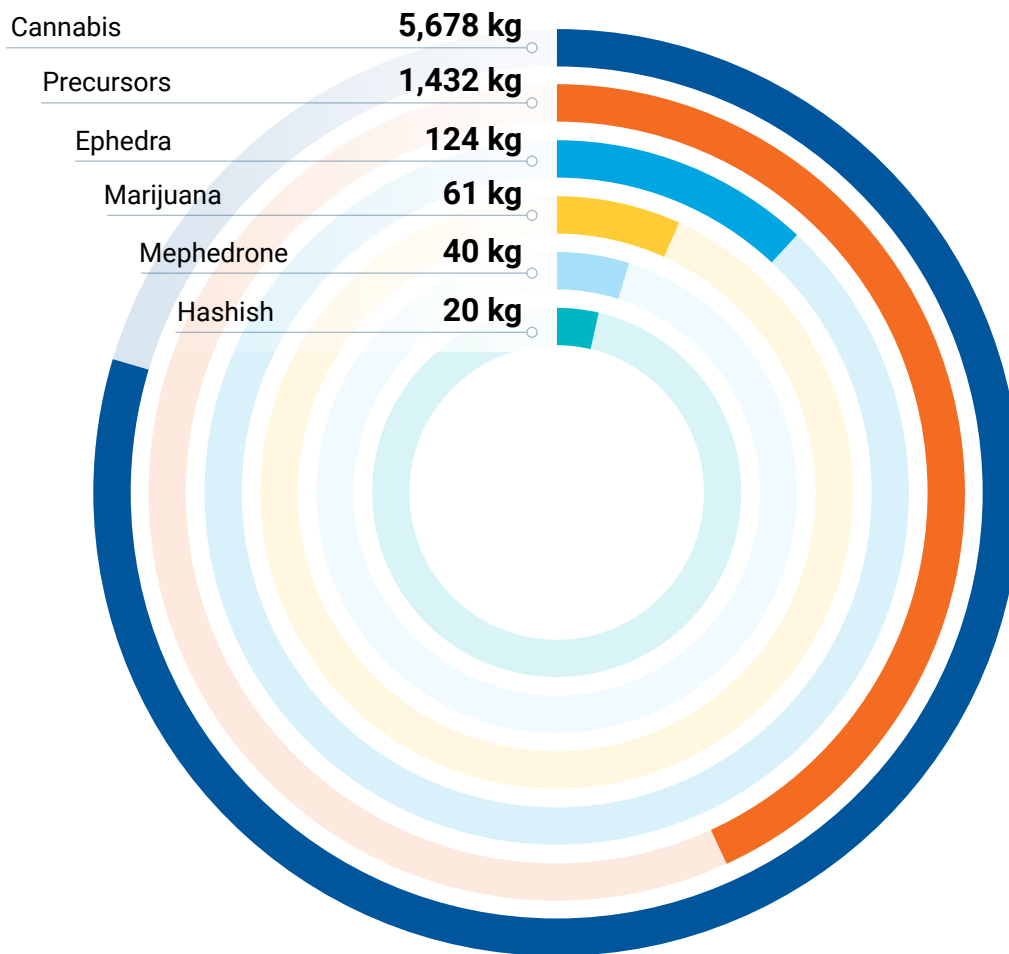


UAV operation and hyperspectral imaging, and seminars and workshops for law enforcement personnel. These training events covered the operation of UAVs, analysis of hyperspectral images, and other technical skills essential for modern counter-narcotics operations, and significantly enhanced the professional capabilities of personnel involved.

The UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia supported participation of the Kyrgyz delegation in the 66th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). This platform provided an opportunity for the delegation to engage in critical discussions, share insights, and learn from global best practices in narcotics control. During the session, the Kyrgyz Government with UNODC's support conducted a side event themed around innovative approaches to countering drug trafficking and drug abuse prevention. This side-event, attended by over 80 participants, showcased the project's progress made in and effective use of technology in strengthening narcotics control within the Kyrgyz Republic.



**Results of operations conducted in 2023 by Mobile Operational Team:**



The impact and outcomes of UNODC's initiatives in Kyrgyzstan in 2023 have been significant, marking a substantial step forward in the fight against drug trafficking. Success stories and statistical data not only attest to the project's effectiveness, but also serve as a testament to the potential of integrating technology and training in law enforcement. As the project moves forward, these outcomes will provide a strong foundation for future initiatives and continued progress made in combating narcotics trafficking and trade in Kyrgyzstan and beyond.

UAVs and hyperspectral imaging facilitated effective operations, leading to significant drug seizures and the dismantling of trafficking

networks. Case studies highlight the efficient identification and eradication of illicit drug cultivation sites. Impressive increased drug seizures, including that of cannabis, ephedra and synthetic drugs, were the result of technological advancements and better training provided to the Counter Narcotics Service (CNS) of the Kyrgyz Republic.

UNODC in partnership with the Counter Narcotics Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, and with financial support from the Government of the Russian Federation, has demonstrated that through unity, innovation and perseverance, significant strides can be made in the fight against drug trafficking, thereby contributing to a safer and more just world.

## Tajikistan Drug Control Agency Establishing the Training Academy: Phase II



In 2023, UNODC continued to strengthen the capacity of the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (DCA) in combating illicit drug trafficking in line with the National Drug Control Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan 2021-2030. The component envisaged provision of new recruit and in-service trainings, study tours, and training needs assessment, as well as establishing an eLearning system for tracking information flow on DCA capacity-building initiatives with a wide range of parameters.

Throughout 2023, UNODC supported several initiatives including an in-person training on the UNODC eLearning programme for three selected DCA instructors, which contributed to enhancing their skills and knowledge. In March the DCA Training Centre achieved standalone status

within the DCA structure, directly reporting to the DCA Director, as approved by the President of Tajikistan. The localization and translation of the 'Investigating Drug Related Organized Crime' eLearning module into Tajik was finalized. Additionally, support was extended to the DCA for their participation in the 66th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna.

This initiative aimed to support the Government of Tajikistan in achieving SDG target 16.A – “Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.” It was funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

## Capacity-Building of the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan



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The overall objective of the initiative is to build upon, sustain and develop from work previously completed to create within the DCA premier counternarcotic departments a Vetted Unit and Forensics Laboratory, through provision of equipment and required education appropriate to the agency's mission.

- A 'training of trainers' programme was delivered to members of the trainer group (instructors) formed by the DCA, including 12 officers (11 men and 1 woman), over 16-20 January 2023. The week-long interactive course had the ultimate objective of establishing a national pool of law enforcement experts that are capable of supporting delivery of the DCA's training curricula for its staff, and advising the DCA on applying relevant instruments, standards and norms, as well as good practices in the design, delivery and evaluation of training programmes.
- An intelligence analysis training for 15 operatives (all men) officers from all provinces and the DCA headquarters, was conducted over 17-21 July 2023. Through this training the participants acquired essential skills in handling diverse data sources, mastered the art of discerning and categorizing information, and familiarized themselves with methods for processing and analysing data. Additionally they were trained in using a range of open-source intelligence techniques and tools applicable to spaces such as the clear web, social media and dark web, ensuring effective intelligence utilization.
- A training on installing and using Forensics Lab equipment was provided for six DCA forensic experts (1 woman and 5 men). Participants were trained on measuring organic compounds, and using tools for qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- In-service training for 28 newly-recruited DCA officers (3 women and 25 men) was delivered to introduce guidelines and policies to recently recruited officers, which include police practices, court procedures, modern technologies and intelligence analysis. The training served to enhance their expertise in using investigative techniques, including controlled deliveries and undercover operations undertaken for countering drug trafficking.

- The translation and publication of 'Review of the Situation on Narcotic Drugs in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2022' was funded by the project.
- Support was provided to government representatives for their participation at the 66th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), and the organization of a side event on the margins of the CND to present the 'Review of the Situation on Narcotic Drugs in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2022'.

IT equipment was supplied to DCA HQ and regional departments, including a server for the DCA management system. Additionally, a gas chromatograph and scale were provided for the forensics lab, and simultaneous translation equipment was provided to the DCA training centre. The official handover ceremony took place on 13 September 2023, with participation of the DCA Director, the Director of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) of the US Embassy in Dushanbe, and the

acting head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Programme Office in Tajikistan.

UNODC also supported missions to the Mountain Badakhshan and Sugd provinces of Tajikistan, to deliver and install procured IT equipment, and arrange computer literacy training sessions on using MS Office applications (Word, Excel, PPT), as well as assessing the existing situation.

The project initiatives were conducted to support the Government of Tajikistan in achieving SDG target 16.A – Strengthening relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

The component is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). Its implementation commenced in February 2022 and will continue for 36 months, through to February 2025.



## The Interagency Mobile Teams Project in Uzbekistan



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The issue of transnational organized crime, particularly the smuggling of illicit opiates from Afghanistan and the emergence of new psychoactive substances, remains a serious concern for Central Asian states. UNODC's work in addressing these issues in the region, including in Uzbekistan, continues to be crucial.

UNODC supports the Government of Uzbekistan in enhancing its responses to the interconnected problems of drug use, transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking in drugs, persons and firearms, cybercrime and terrorism. From 2016 through 2021, UNODC in collaboration with competent authorities of Uzbekistan, implemented the project on establishing and operationalizing Interagency Mobile Teams (IMTs) and one Operations Coordination Team (OCT).

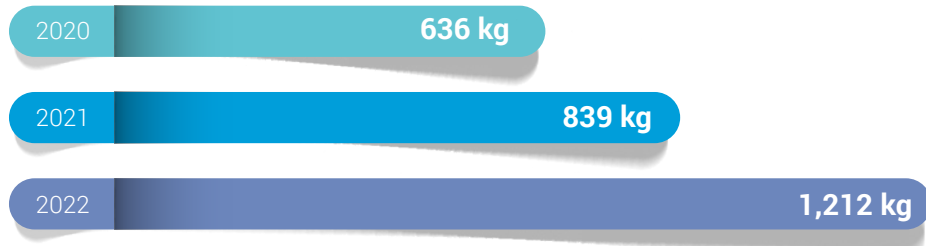
The IMT units are instrumental in enhancing interagency cooperation, streamlining intelligence sharing, and also fostering collaboration through joint operations undertaken with various agencies to maximize impact. The success of the UNODC-supported IMTs stands as a testament to cohesive collaboration among

various stakeholders. These teams comprise combined efforts of the State Security Service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Customs Committee, and the Department on Combating Economic Crimes under the General Prosecutor's Office of Uzbekistan. The National Information and Analytical Centre on Drug Control of the Republic of Uzbekistan (NCDC) lends strategic oversight, ensuring aligned coordination.

Phases I and II of the initiative achieved significant milestones, including establishing and operationalizing 13 IMT offices across Uzbekistan, training over 100 law enforcement professionals, and conducting nationwide monitoring and assessment missions. Specialized equipment worth more than \$2,000,000 has been provided. Collaborative efforts between IMTs and OCT led to a substantial increase in drug seizures, increasing exponentially from 636 kg in 2020 to 839 kg in 2021 and 1,212 kg in 2022.

Following the successful completion of IMT project Phases I and II, the Government of Uzbekistan requested the initiative's extension into Phase III. Launched in July 2023, the project

**Collaborative efforts between IMTs and OCT led to a substantial increase in drug seizures**



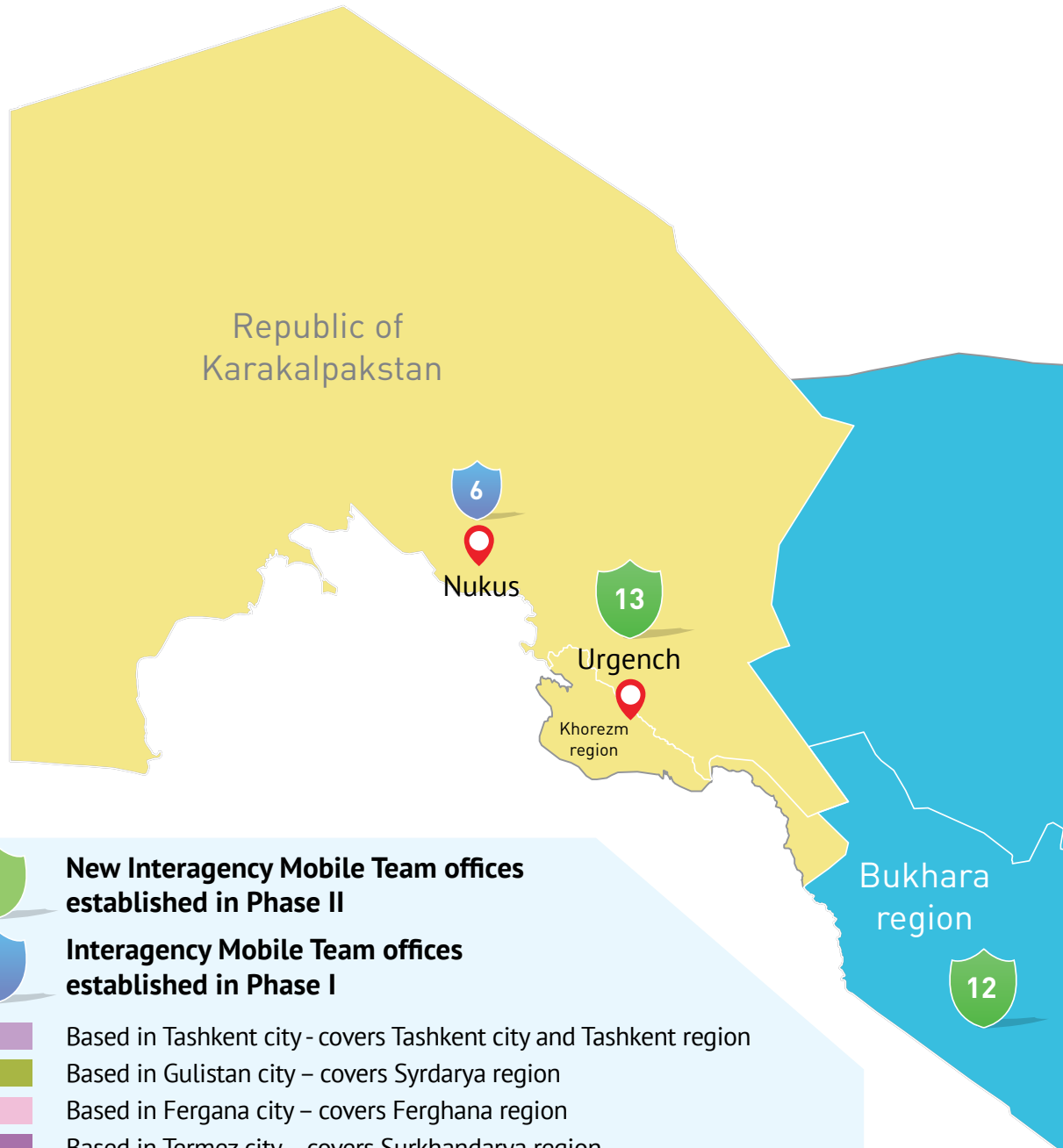
'Countering Illicit Drug Trafficking through Strengthened Coordination and Enhanced Capacity of Interagency Mobile Teams', is funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and will conclude in December 2024.

The project aims to enhance Uzbekistan's effectiveness in combating the trafficking of illicit drugs, including opiates, new psychoactive substances and synthetic drugs, precursors, and countering other criminal activities. Within Phase III, the project's key outcome is to ensure that IMTs across all 13 regions of Uzbekistan

are well-equipped with advanced investigation techniques, enabling them to efficiently intercept drugs, confiscate illegal proceeds, and prosecute drug offenders.

The project's first Working Group Meeting took place on 5 September 2023, with the participation of national stakeholders and INL representatives. During the meeting, the project's work plan for 2023-2024 was discussed and subsequently forwarded to the NCDC for finalization and confirmation. In November 2023, the Working Group Meeting was convened, during which a work plan for 2023-2024 was approved.





**New Interagency Mobile Team offices established in Phase II**



**Interagency Mobile Team offices established in Phase I**

- 1 Based in Tashkent city - covers Tashkent city and Tashkent region
- 2 Based in Gulistan city – covers Syrdarya region
- 3 Based in Fergana city – covers Ferghana region
- 4 Based in Termez city – covers Surkhandarya region
- 5 Based in Samarkand city – covers Samarkand region
- 6 Based in Nukus city – covers Republic of Karakalpakstan
- 7 Based in Urgench city – covers Khorezm region
- 8 Based in Djizak city – covers Djizak region
- 9 Based in Navoi city – covers Navoi region
- 10 Based in Bukhara city – covers Bukhara region
- 11 Based in Karshi city – covers Kashkadarya region
- 12 Based in Namangan city – covers Namangan region
- 13 Based in Andijan city – covers Andijan region



**Operations Coordination Team**

- OCT Based in Tashkent city – Overall coordination functions



# INTERAGENCY MOBILE TEAMS IN UZBEKISTAN DEPLOYMENT SITES (Phase II)



## The UNODC Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries

The UNODC Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries (RPANC) continues to serve as an important regional platform to bring the states of West and Central Asia region together to analyse problems and threats, to share information and best practices and to discuss integrated responses to the drug and crime challenges. This is done through series of capacity development interventions of forensic and law enforcement officers, support of the established regional working groups of forensic experts and law enforcement officers as well as officers of analytical units. Support under the programme was extended also to the created regional network of law enforcement officers working with seizures of precursors to conduct back tracking investigations on selected cases.

UNODC RPANC conducted needs assessment of the selected K9 services of Tajikistan,

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as part of the project Enhancing counter narcotics operations through canine activities in Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. As a result of assessment, nine narcotic detection dogs, special equipment, first aid kits and sample drugs were provided in 2023 to the K9 service of Tajik DCA, K9 service of Turkman MOI, and K9 centre of Uzbek Customs.

On 2-6 October and 9-13 October 2023, the UNODC RPANC in collaboration with the Italian State Police Scientific Center and Forensic Science Laboratory of Carabinieri Force organized two laboratory training courses: the first one for forensic experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and the second one for experts from Pakistan and Turkmenistan. During the training courses the forensic laboratory experts got acquainted with experience of Italy in forensic analysis of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), synthetic and traditional drugs.





The Regional Working Group on Precursors meeting was conducted in Dushanbe on 29-30 November 2023, with the participants from Kazakhstan I.R. Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, INCB and the CARICC. Law enforcement representatives reviewed trends in the sphere of illicit trafficking of drug precursors, reviewed the plan of next regional operation "Substitute" (The main focus of the operation is on identification and interception of smuggled consignments of acetic anhydride, acetyl chloride, ammonium chloride as well as other types of precursors destined for manufacture of narcotic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS)) and decided to conduct it simultaneously with operation REFLEX (regional operation aimed at countering the spread of new psychoactive substances and other synthetic narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances under the control of states - participants in the operation).

The working meeting of the heads of the information and analytical units of the national coordinating bodies (from MOI) and the leading narcologists of the narcological centres (MOH), of the West and Central Asian states was convened in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 19-20 December 2023. The group discussed methods through which data sharing between

member states is enhanced using CARICC as the platform for additional analysis and dissemination. Analysis of the drug situation allows for better targeted interventions by law enforcement and public health agencies. The participants agreed to continue to share information in a timely manner and further to assist CARICC in the development of the report on "The drug situation in the CARICC member states". The participants of this working group were from the regional programme member states: I.R. Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and CARICC.

The working meeting of the heads of the information and analytical units of the national coordinating bodies and the leading narcologists of the narcological centres of the West and Central Asian states was conducted in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 19-20 December 2023. The participants of this working group included the heads of the information and analytical units of the national coordinating bodies and the leading narcologists of the narcological centres from the RPANC member states: I.R. Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and CARICC. DEA expert also presented current situation related to fentanyl seizures.

# Combating Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling

UNODC has implemented a variety of activities to combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants and **to foster effective criminal justice response to trafficking in persons related criminal cases** in Central Asia. These include developing national legal and policy frameworks and training materials, undertaking capacity-building activities, promoting national, regional and international partnerships, as well as raising public awareness and building zero-tolerance in alignment with international instruments and human rights standards. These activities are implemented under UNODC's Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons and on Criminal Network Disruption and the Programme for Central Asia 2022–2025, with financial support provided by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

## Developing National Legal and Policy Frameworks and Training Materials

To ensure proper legal regulation and provide training materials in pursuant to internationally recognized standards and best practices, the region's member states were supported in developing laws and other legal acts, handbooks and standard operating procedures.

UNODC provided the Government of Turkmenistan with recommendations on enhancing national

legislation in the counter-trafficking field for its full harmonization with provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its supplementing Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. UNODC also facilitated a round table to discuss recommendations for their further submission and endorsement by the Parliament of Turkmenistan.





Besides, UNODC was actively engaged in and supported the drafting of Turkmenistan's National Action Plan to Counter Trafficking for 2024–2026, and held two working meetings of the inter-agency working group to counter trafficking in persons to discuss key objectives, priorities, timeframes and competencies of responsible stakeholders, to be stipulated in the draft action plan.

Furthermore, UNODC continued supporting development of the new draft law on combating trafficking in persons of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to align it with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its aforementioned supplementing protocol.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNODC developed a pocket handbook on preventing trafficking in persons and referring victims of trafficking to frontline police officers and juvenile inspectors. In the nation it also produced a guide on case

management in providing comprehensive assistance to victims of trafficking for pro bono lawyers and social workers, and a methodological guideline on the use of information and communication technologies in cases related to trafficking in persons for investigators of internal affairs bodies. It also supported development of the manual on detecting and investigating cases of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and standard operating procedures for detecting and investigating cases of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants for criminal justice practitioners engaged in this sector. These key documents were then disseminated among relevant actors countrywide.

In Turkmenistan, UNODC provided the national General Prosecutor's Office with an anti-human trafficking manual, specifically developed in Turkmen and Russian languages for the nation's criminal justice practitioners, for further use in on-the-job training across all five of the country's provinces.

## Capacity-building



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Capacity-building interventions remained a core aspect of technical assistance provided to member states of the Central Asian region in 2023.

UNODC organized regional workshops 'International standards and best practices in the adjudication of trafficking in persons cases', and 'Towards more effective response to trafficking in persons, particularly in women and girls for sexual exploitation, through cross-border criminal justice cooperation mechanisms: experience of Southern Caucasus and Central Asia', both conducted in March 2023. Both workshops promoted compliance with international standards, including human-rights-based, victim-oriented and gender-sensitive approaches to investigation, prosecution and adjudication processes, as well as building on the international cooperation skills and capacities required for effective interaction between countries of origin, transit and destination.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNODC trained 287 criminal justice practitioners including: 1) 159 frontline police officers and juvenile inspectors

from across the country, trained in preventing human trafficking crimes and referring victims of such crimes; 2) 47 police investigators, trained in detecting and investigating trafficking in persons crimes related to the use of information and communication technologies; 3) 56 representatives of the General Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Bar Association, trained in applying a victim-centred approach to investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in persons, and; 4) 25 pro bono lawyers, trained in improving the legal protection of victims of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced criminal activities, through the use of trauma-informed and gender-sensitive approaches.

Furthermore, UNODC continued supporting the network of lawyers and human rights activists specifically established to provide free legal assistance to victims of human trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2023, 40 victims received legal pro bono support, which extended to legal representation in court proceedings.

In Turkmenistan, UNODC strengthened

the capacities of 35 representatives of law enforcement and judiciary bodies in detecting and investigating 'trafficking in persons' crimes, across two workshops conducted in April and May 2023. An additional 230 specialists, including law enforcement officers working at border crossing points, and consular, airport, railway and transport agencies' staff, gained knowledge and skills on identifying and referring victims of trafficking.

The capacities of over 230 frontline specialists in Uzbekistan were strengthened through five training sessions on combating passport and visa fraud to prevent trafficking in persons, organized in May, June and November of 2023 at international airports of the Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Namangan and Fergana cities. These trainings

served to build the capacities of airport personnel on identifying cases of trafficking in persons, and detecting fraudulent travel documents and visas.

Furthermore, UNODC organized the Training-of-Trainers workshop 'Trafficking in Persons' for dedicated subject-matter practitioners from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Court, to train them as national instructors for further cascading their knowledge to their colleagues. This arrangement helps ensure sustainability of capacity-building activities undertaken in the counter-trafficking field in Uzbekistan. The delegated practitioners were equipped with knowledge on trafficking in persons, and adult teaching methods, and are thereby expected to cascade knowledge to their colleagues in 2024.



## Promoting National, Regional and International Partnerships



In 2023, UNODC continued providing technical assistance to member states of the Central Asia region in strengthening national, regional and international partnerships based on identified needs.

targeted law enforcement action. Through joint efforts of UNODC, member states of the region and Interpol, CALENTIP turned into a cooperation platform for strengthening regional and interregional cooperation, learning about trends and changing modus operandi through sharing and exchanging knowledge and experiences. CALENTIP meets on a regular basis, enabling learning about new and emerging trends and patterns of trafficking in persons, and establishing dialogue with participating destination countries in Europe and South Asia.

To ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach in counter-trafficking actions taken with the support of international organizations and donors, UNODC continued facilitating quarterly multi-stakeholder coordination meetings on countering trafficking in persons in Uzbekistan. These meetings bring to one table representatives of the National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labour and its Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons, the Supreme Court, the Supreme Judicial Council, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. Embassy and the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the International Organization for Migration, Winrock International, and civil society organizations.

Furthermore, UNODC facilitated the third international conference 'Strengthening National and International Partnerships to Combat Trafficking in Persons', devoted to the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, held in Astana, Kazakhstan over 27–28 July 2023. This conference's purpose was to reinforce partnerships and unite key practitioners, in order to effectively combat trafficking in persons through the implementation of systematic and coherent action. For three years in a row, the international conference has served as a platform for gaining comprehensive insights into the most recent trends and patterns of regional crimes in trafficking in persons, while allowing participants to share best practices and discuss common challenges and measures to be taken to more

UNODC supported establishing the Central Asian Law Enforcement Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CALENTIP), with the aim of strengthening the law enforcement response to trafficking in persons and related crimes in the region and beyond, by ensuring coordinated and





effectively address trafficking in persons in the region and beyond.

Over 23-26 October 2023, UNODC facilitated a visit by the delegation of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Bulgaria, to discuss the final version of a Memorandum of Understanding between the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Supreme Cassation Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, to be signed in 2024. The purpose of this MoU is to set up contacts and exchange best practices in combating trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants and other crimes, with Bulgarian prosecutors.

Over 14-16 November 2023 UNODC facilitated a visit to Uzbekistan by the Estonian delegation, led by the National Coordinator on Combating Trafficking in Persons, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Estonia. The study visit served to strengthen bilateral efforts and implement joint strategies to ensure safe migration, and effectively address labour exploitation and trafficking in persons along migration pathways



between Uzbekistan and Estonia. Related issues and effective means of cooperation were discussed at bilateral meetings and at a round table, with key actors in Uzbekistan.

Finally, over 4-8 December 2023 UNODC facilitated a study visit by representatives of competent authorities of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Lisbon, Portugal, to discuss best practices of combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and set up contacts for future cooperation. During the study visit the Central Asian delegation benefited from the opportunity to learn about Portuguese and broader European practices used in combating trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. They also shared related best practices utilized in Central Asia through a wide range of meetings conducted with key Portuguese counterpart professionals.

Learning from each-other, opening channels of communication, and facilitating direct and informal communication between practitioners at regional and international levels, are all crucial for ensuring successful investigations of cross-border crimes.



## Raising Public Awareness and Building Zero-Tolerance



1139 practitioners reached out by capacity-building activities in the region in 2023

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A region-wide awareness campaign devoted to the World Day against Trafficking in Persons was conducted over July and August, bringing public attention to the issue of trafficking in persons and related crimes, and building public zero-tolerance to this phenomenon. Information on indicators of trafficking in persons and its impact on individuals and communities, ways of avoiding becoming a victim of such crimes, available assistance and useful contacts, were all spread through TV programmes, online mass media, information sessions, roundtables, flash mobs and quizzes.

In Uzbekistan, for example, during the awareness-raising month launched on 4 July jointly with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, information in Uzbek, Russian and English languages was spread through TV (through ZO'R TV, UzReport TV, and UzA TV) and on online media (through UzDaily, Nuz.uz, Kun.uz, Tashkent Times, UzReport, UzA, BAQ.KZ, YouTube, Facebook, and Telegram).

In Turkmenistan an awareness-raising session on trafficking in persons, its threats and negative consequences targeted at youth was conducted on 31 July. The session included showings of

dedicated videos and flash mobs, as well as interactive quizzes for over 250 youngsters, including at-risk youth. Also, awareness raising among another 90 young persons through the Regional Turkmenistan Ashgabat Model United Nations was supported by UNODC. Furthermore, UNODC helped provide the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan with UNODC teaching modules on trafficking in persons, migrants smuggling and terrorism, in the Turkmen language, to be rolled out into the national educational curriculum for the purpose of raising awareness among young people.

In Kyrgyzstan, over 600 high school students and young people leaving orphanages developed their knowledge on indicators of human trafficking, and how to avoid becoming victims of trafficking, through movie screenings, interactive discussions and lectures delivered by experts.

Through its activities conducted in 2023, UNODC engaged a total of 1,139 practitioners who may have contact with the region's trafficking victims, on issues related to trafficking in persons and related crimes including migrant smuggling, through varied forms of technical support.

## Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons



In 2023, UNODC sought to address terrorism-arms-crime in Central Asia through collaborative efforts between international organizations, law enforcement agencies, and judiciaries. A professional network of practitioners was established in Central Asia that fostered trust and cooperation at a regional level.

In Turkmenistan, UNODC developed the capacity of more than twenty national experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Defence, and the Border Control Services through the 'Workshop on National Firearms Legislation: Opportunities for Updating and Harmonization'. During the two sessions, Turkmenistan authorities deepened their knowledge on normative and institutional frameworks and regulatory measures used to prevent and counter terrorist's illicit access to small arms and light weapons (SALW), in particular through illicit manufacturing, trafficking and diversion.

As Turkmenistan was subject of revision through the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention

against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, a basic introductory session was also presented to participants in preparation of a specialized workshop that will be organized for Turkmenistan by the Secretariat of the Conference of the Parties to UNTOC in April 2023.

In 2023, UNODC concluded a regional series of national trainings in Central Asia: capacity building for law enforcement, customs, and border control officers to counter international firearms trafficking and terrorism in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

A five-day national training on 'Countering firearms trafficking, terrorism and other crimes. Tools for effective investigation and prosecution' was conducted in Turkmenistan over 13-17 March 2023. The training aimed to develop the capacities of criminal justice officials, customs and border control, as well as arms control authorities. In total, the series of trainings brought together over 20 representatives from relevant state institutions. The training strengthened capacities of main actors in the field of combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW), to detect, interdict, investigate,



prosecute and effectively handle terrorism cases supported by the illegal production, trafficking, and/or diversion of SALW, and connect them with other serious crimes. A special consideration was given to gender and human rights in all relevant cases. Participants were introduced to the global dimension and the impact of illicit trafficking in firearms, with a focus on how these illicit activities connect with and support terrorism.

UNODC convened another training course on 'Operationalizing the fight against terrorism-arms-crime nexus' held over 11-14 December 2023 in Bishkek, in the Kyrgyz Republic. The event was attended by representatives of various government agencies including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prosecutor's Office, courts, the State Committee for National Security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Border Guards of the State Committee for National Security, and the Customs Service of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. The training programme provided attendees with the knowledge and skills required to address complex challenges of small arms and light weapons (SALW) trafficking, and its links to transnational organized crime and terrorism. It emphasized a holistic approach to security in Central Asia, and combined theoretical knowledge with practical exercises in interagency group work based on realistic scenarios.

The project conducted a successful regional meeting of the Community of Practitioners in Central Asia. This meeting, which focused on data collection, information sharing, and operational use in cases of small arms and light weapons (SALW) trafficking and terrorism, was held over 14-16 June 2023 at the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) in Ankara, Türkiye. The meeting brought together fifteen national representatives from prosecutorial offices, courts, and ministries of internal affairs of the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In addition, over fifteen experts from international and regional organizations, including INTERPOL and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, participated in the regional conference. The event served as an interactive forum to discuss creation of a community of practitioners skilled in preventing and combating illicit trafficking of SALW, transnational organized crime, and terrorism.

Over the reporting period, UNODC developed and completed a sub-regional study on the transnational nature, routes and modus operandi used in firearms trafficking and its link

to terrorism. The consultant hired for this study communicated with national counterparts to ensure their commitment to providing data for the study and IFAQ, and established outreach meetings in all five countries. Over September-December 2023, UNODC staff and the UNODC regional study consultant organized twenty consultation and data collection meetings with SALW and terrorism control institutions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The national counterparts shared data related to SALW and Terrorism to be used in developing the sub-regional study 'The Central Asian regional report on trafficking in firearms, parts, components and ammunition, and their relation with terrorism and other associated crimes'. This report is expected to be released in 2024.

To enhance national capacities of Central Asia and Caucasus countries in their collection and analysis of firearms-related data to monitor the trafficking of illicit firearms and diversion to terrorists, on 27 September 2023, UNODC organized an online Regional Workshop on the Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire (IAFQ) in Central Asia and Caucasus, with participants from all 5 Central Asian states along with focal points from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

UNODC initiated procurement of IT and office equipment through a bidding process for the forensic and ballistic lab of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic. Bidding was completed, resulting in selection of the best offer for delivering the requested equipment. UNODC is in contact with the national authorities of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, to determine which materials are needed to improve their national SALW and terrorism forensic capacities. By December 2023, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan detailed their needs for technical support, while Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are expected to provide inputs during the first quarter of 2024.

UNODC initialized procedures for translating, proofreading, editing and printing the FRONTEX 'Handbook on Firearms for Border Guards and Customs'. By December 2023, contractual services have been awarded for all five Central Asian countries, with Kyrgyz and Uzbek versions to be completed by February 2024, while Kazakh, Tajik and Turkmen versions are expected to be completed by March 2024. To enhance the distribution process, the project team will collaborate with OSCE to increase the quantity of printed copies, and ensure widespread dissemination at both central and border levels.



# Countering Cybercrime

In 2023, the UNODC collaborated closely with the Government of Kazakhstan, focusing on cybercrime and virtual assets. This collaboration was structured around three key areas: policy development, training, and advisory services for specific investigative tactics. The outcomes of this partnership were significant:



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## Policy Development:

Kazakhstan successfully adopted and implemented the Law on Digital Assets, establishing a legal framework for cryptocurrencies and other virtual assets.

The UNODC provided risk assessment and policy advice to the National Bank, leading to effective risk mitigation measures and the safe pilot launch of the digital tenge.

The National Academy of Sciences and Almaty Academy of Internal Affairs initiated a national strategic research project on digital development and cybercrime following a joint workshop with the UNODC.

## Case Advisory:

Kazakhstan agencies recognized UNODC assistance in seven virtual asset investigations and three cybercrime cases. Two cases have been successfully concluded, resulting in jail sentences for online drug dealers and restitution of over \$20,000 to fraud victims.

Funding for these activities came from the INL Bureau of the U.S. Department of State and

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The project also closely collaborated with the OSCE, Academy of Law Enforcement under the General Prosecutor's Office, Almaty Academy of Internal Affairs, Ministry for Digital Development and Aerospace Industry, Astana International Financial Center, Agency for Financial Monitoring, and other national agencies of Kazakhstan.



## Capacity Development Trainings:

The UNODC focused on train-the-trainers programs for cybercrime and virtual assets. National trainers were equipped to replicate these trainings, such as the Agency for Financial Monitoring (AFM), which trained over 800 officers using experts trained by the UNODC. The AFM now operates the specialized "Crypton" unit for virtual asset investigations.



## Anti-Money Laundering and Illicit Financial Flows



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In 2023, the UNODC Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) team supported Central Asian countries in enhancing their legislative frameworks and national strategies. This included a review of legislation, and delivery of expert advice complying with international standards. The initiative included facilitating 20 high-level meetings with key authorities, including heads and top management of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and law enforcement agencies, along with provision of expert assistance.

The UNODC AML/CFT Advisor proactively participated in discussions aimed at amending laws and legislative acts to further implement FATF Recommendations and UN Resolutions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This engagement included discussions and recommendations of the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Return of Illegally Acquired Assets to the State, adopted on 12 July 2023. Moreover, in line with measures outlined in the Interagency Action Plan to enhance mechanisms for identifying,

seizing, confiscating, and recovering stolen assets, competent state authorities in the Kyrgyz Republic developed instructions for parallel financial investigations.

In line with the Financial Monitoring Development Concept for 2022-2026, approved by the President of Kazakhstan in October 2022 and developed with UNODC's support, as well as initiatives of the Financial Monitoring Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the JSC Financial Monitoring Academy, the AML Academy was established in May 2023 on government order. The AML Academy's main goals include: 1) training staff of law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies, and financial monitoring entities (private sector); 2) improving and further developing AML/CFT methodology and education; 3) conducting scientific, academic, analytical and IT research, and; 4) conducting AML/CFT assessment activities and system evaluation.

The IT system for professional accreditation and development of AML/CFT specialists was



launched in test mode in Kazakhstan, and the first participants were registered in the system. Currently 25 practitioners from the Financial Monitoring Agency, the Financial Investigation Service, and the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor's Office (GPO) are registered in the system. In 2023, an action plan on further developing the technical requirements and content of education modules was adopted by UNODC, the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under GPO, and the Financial Monitoring Agency.

UNODC has provided support to the functioning of two working groups in Tajikistan, focusing on improving effectiveness of parallel financial investigations, and in Uzbekistan, concentrating on parallel financial investigations and disrupting illicit financial flows associated with organized crime and drug trafficking. The guidelines and regulations for parallel financial investigations are currently being implemented not only in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, but also in other Central Asian countries.

As part of the AML component, consultative meetings, round table, and donor gatherings have been conducted and delivered for Kazakhstan (3), Uzbekistan (3), Tajikistan (3), Kyrgyzstan (1), and Turkmenistan (1), and in the regional context (3). These events focused on parallel financial investigations and countering illicit financial flows stemming from drug trafficking. Expert support was offered, and practical recommendations were provided to government authorities.

With UNODC's assistance, the effectiveness of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan's AML/CFT systems was enhanced. In preparation for mutual evaluation by the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG), over 10 activities were conducted with UNODC's backing with the purposes of preparing state and law enforcement authorities. Kazakhstan achieved outstanding results in the mutual evaluation, attaining substantial effectiveness ratings in key areas such as IO 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9. Similarly, Turkmenistan achieved a substantial level of effectiveness in areas IO 1 and 9.



As a part of UNODC's capacity building efforts, fifteen training courses were designed and delivered, including on: 1) money laundering—financial investigation and prosecution (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan); 2) money laundering resulting from drug trafficking (regional – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan); 3) ToT on parallel financial investigations (Kazakhstan); 4) suppressing activities of networks and illicit financial flows from drug trafficking: system analysis and financial investigations (regional – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan); 5) AML/CFT typologies – Kazakhstan; and others.

UNODC coordinated the creation and development of a pool of national AML trainers (including five trainers in Uzbekistan, 15 in Kazakhstan, three in Tajikistan, and three in Kyrgyzstan) who represent the FIUs and law enforcement agencies of four Central Asian countries. Furthermore, during the reporting period more than 300 national experts were trained and participated in activities. The national AML/CFT training curriculum is continuously improved, with a focus on high-risk areas, and delivered by a team of national and international trainers. The regional capacity to detect, investigate and prosecute ML/FT, and counter illegal financial flows (including through reinforcing inter-agency cooperation) was strengthened.

UNODC, having a unique potential and long-term experience in providing technical assistance, taking into account proposals of national partners, and with the support of international experts within the framework of the global programme on criminal network disruption, developed a methodology for disrupting the activities of networks and illegal financial flows from the drug trade. The methodology was adopted for Kazakh

and Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies in June 2023.

UNODC jointly with international partners and the Law Enforcement Academy of Kazakhstan conducted the International Forum on Financial Investigations. Over 40 representatives of more than 20 competent authorities from Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus took part in the Forum. The event gathered international speakers from Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and other countries. AML/CFT specialists discussed the issue of financial intelligence, and searching for foreign assets based on open and closed sources. In line with the forum's results, UNODC and national partners developed a manual with recommendations on conducting parallel financial investigations, asset recovery and gathering financial intelligence.



# Justice and the Rule of Law

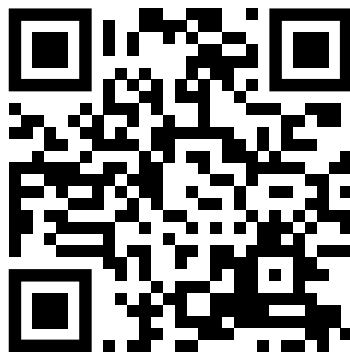
## Youth-Focused Crime Prevention Strategies



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In 2023, UNODC continued supporting youth-led initiatives across Central Asia, promoting youth empowerment, and advocating for human rights and the rule of law. Regional and national initiatives aimed to empower young individuals by providing them with knowledge on global challenges, including trafficking in persons, terrorism, illicit drugs, and organized crime.

In collaboration with its partners, UNODC broadened its outreach by organizing the Ashgabat Model United Nations (TAMUN) with generous support from the Government of Turkmenistan. TAMUN 2023 hosted 100 students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The conference aimed to promote regional cooperation, and address critical issues concerning peace and security in Central Asia. TAMUN served as a unique platform for youth to simulate the workings of various UN Committees, notably



the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), thereby enabling them to engage directly with key UNODC committees.

To further enhance participants' engagement, UNODC facilitated collaboration between TAMUN and Model UN (MUN) experts from the Students' Union of the Westminster International University in Tashkent. This joint effort served to familiarize attendees with the MUN world, including its rules and procedures. Moreover, the Tashkent Model United Nations 2023, being the largest international MUN platform, successfully convened in Tashkent in December 2023. This youth-led conference brought together over 500 young minds from 14 different countries, simulating 11 UN committees and contributing significantly to enhancing knowledge of such global threats as drugs, crime and terrorism.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNODC organized a Quiz Day dedicated to #HumanRights75 where 19 young participants were grouped into teams and were engaged in answering well-crafted, open-ended, and logical questions related to fundamental rights in the sphere of criminal justice.

In Tajikistan, UNODC fostered the participation of 84 inmates from a juvenile detention centre in recreational activities, including football and creative artistic expressions, contributing to their sense of purpose and skill development. The initiative intended to motivate these young individuals towards engaging in constructive

engagement, preparing them for successful reintegration into society following their release from incarceration. The provision of football kits, stationery, and arts equipment not only facilitated their active participation but also served as a tangible means of supporting their journey towards rehabilitation and eventual societal contribution.

As part of its commitment to promoting safety, UNODC in collaboration with the Law Enforcement Academy of the Republic of Uzbekistan produced a social video to raise awareness of road safety among young people and the broader public.

## Access to Justice



Competent authorities in Central Asia have introduced tools and mechanisms to strengthen crime prevention and community policing, including improving the judiciary's integrity, accountability and independence. In particular it has provided technical and expert support to national judiciary and forensic services, applying new technologies and digital solutions, to bring them into compliance with international standards. As a direct result, in Kazakhstan, UNODC facilitated development of a five-year Concept on Public Safety and Partnerships (2024-2028) outlining key priorities and practical strategies for policing, while supporting a sociological survey among the public, and analysing police work processes within a

pilot initiative supporting implementation of community-oriented policing.

In Kyrgyzstan, UNODC joined the 'Civic Union' civil society organization in providing technical assistance to developing a National Strategy on Crime Prevention for 2022-2028, adopted by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in December 2023. The strategy will support implementing the newly adopted Law 'On Crime Prevention' including enhanced coordination between state bodies, local self-government bodies, civil society, and the expert community.

In Kyrgyzstan, within the EU co-funded JUST4ALL project, UNODC facilitated establishing a

situation centre on the premises of the Ministry of Justice as an analytical unit for gathering digital data from ministry units, including prisons, probation offices, forensics labs and others, to conduct situational analysis, monitor statistical data and facilitate policy development and decision-making processes.

Thirty-six new judges were selected and received appointments based on the newly introduced automated Judicial Selection and Appointment System that resulted in improving the legal framework and processes surrounding the selection and appointment of judges, promoting transparency, fairness, and adherence to international standards.

The above lines of actions contributed to the reinforcing of effective, fair, humane and accountable justice systems in line with the United Nations' standards and norms of crime prevention and criminal justice.

UNODC continued its technical assistance within 'JUST4ALL' to enhance access to justice in Kyrgyzstan in the context of increased digitalization of the justice sector. Technical support was provided to further operationalize and institutionalize the Unified Registry of Offences, and the Unified Registry of Crimes and expand relevant information systems. UNODC provided guidance to national counterparts on reinforcing gender-responsive approaches and human rights guarantees through applying appropriate IT solutions.

## Penitentiary Reform and Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons

In 2023, UNODC continued to support government counterparts in strengthening management of violent extremist offenders both in detention and in the community. UNODC successfully completed the first phase of the Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Detention Programme, involving Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, and launched the programme's second phase in September 2023. As part of this second phase, UNODC gathered together frontline officers and instructors of the prison training centres from the three countries in Almaty in December 2023, to train them in enhancing the capacity of officers. Participants were able to exchange experience in conducting prison intelligence compilation.

UNODC also concluded implementation of the 'Post-release Monitoring and Probation of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighter and Violent Extremist Offenders' project in Kyrgyz Republic, marking its conclusion by bringing together practitioners and experts from Central Asia and other regions in Bishkek over 19-20 September 2023 for a regional workshop. Participants discussed issues including barriers to reintegration faced by returning foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremist offenders after their release, use of classification systems to develop

monitoring plans, use of electronic monitoring bracelets, the capacity building needs of relevant law enforcement bodies, and the role community plays in both monitoring and reintegration efforts. In 2023, UNODC developed and published several reports which include an analytical report on criminal justice information management in the Kyrgyz Republic, an analytical report on probation management – recommendations for developing sustainable probation services in Kyrgyzstan, a study on barriers to reintegration for returnees and post-release violent extremist offenders, an analytical report on the use of electronic monitoring bracelets for violent extremist offenders, and facts and figures on violent extremism and terrorism in Kyrgyzstan. These reports provide information needed to make evidence-based policy making decisions related to alternatives to imprisonment and the larger criminal justice system in Kyrgyzstan.

In Tajikistan, UNODC focused on mainstreaming human rights within workshops for over 100 prison officers through use of a multifaceted approach focused on education, engagement, and the practical application of fundamental human rights principles, international standards, and specific rights of inmates within



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prisons. Additionally, UNODC facilitated direct engagement with human rights experts and professionals, inviting them as guest speakers to provide insights, guidance and first-hand experiences, thereby deepening understanding and emphasizing the significance of upholding human rights within the prison environment. This holistic approach has instilled a culture of respect for human rights among prison officers, fostering a more compassionate, fair, and rights-oriented approach in their interactions and practices utilized within correctional settings.

Competent Central Asian authorities developed their capacities to strengthen legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks relating to prison reform, parole and probation management, through implementation of UNODC recommendations on prison security, and introduction of a risks and needs assessment tool. As a direct result, in Kazakhstan UNODC launched and institutionalized the Nelson Mandela Rules e-learning course in the Kazakh language, in partnership with the Kostanay Training Academy, as part of mandatory in-service training for prison and probation officers across the country.

In Tajikistan, modern technology was employed within the prison system to bolster security,

facilitate rehabilitation, and improve operational efficiency. This initiative included installation of advanced surveillance and monitoring systems intended to not only enhance security but also promote rehabilitation, education, and healthcare access for incarcerated individuals, ultimately contributing to their successful reintegration into society upon release.

In Kyrgyzstan, a study on the application of the electronic monitoring of untried, convicted and probation clients helped the Probation Service elaborate guidelines on the usage of electronic bracelets for probation clients as a supervision tool for high-risk offenders, including in the context of domestic and gender-based violence.

Additionally, in accordance with its recommendations and institutionalized tools, UNODC developed and institutionalized a comprehensive security audit framework in Kazakhstan. The tool utilized within the framework was developed based on the 'Assessing Compliance with Nelson Mandela Rules' handbook, localized for the Kazakhstan context.

Under the EU-co-funded JUST4ALL, in the Kyrgyz Republic, 95 probation officers (including 38

women) were trained on using a Risks and Needs Assessment Tool, piloted among 2,200 probation clients. In Tajikistan the capacity of 132 Tajik prison officers was strengthened with practical skills to foster a more conducive environment for the fair and effective rehabilitation of inmates, based on the introduced UNODC's e-learning course on the Nelson Mandela Rules. These efforts allowed for the implementation of effective and needs-based rehabilitation and reintegration

of offenders in line with an individual approach, including women, minors and offenders prone to radicalization.

The above lines of actions contributed to development and application of modern approaches to prison and probation management, in line with the compendium of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice.

## Police Reform



Throughout the reporting period, the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia continued to support ongoing regional police reform programmes.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNODC elaborated gender-transformative modules for the state institutions' educational curricula, specifically for justice and law enforcement professionals. This resulted in the institutionalization of mandatory modules (40 hours) with a particular focus placed on a survivors-centred approach and a coordinated response to GBV, covering three training institutions for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and personnel of key government institutions. Additionally, video tutorials on gender

sensitive interviewing techniques sensitized police investigators handling victims of violence, predominantly women and girls, on common mistakes and misconceptions. This strengthened their understanding of the subject matter, allowing them to avoid such pitfalls in their future work, and initiating transformative change.

In Kazakhstan, UNODC supported several initiatives taken to enhance the country's prison and probation systems. In collaboration with the Kostanay Training Academy, UNODC introduced the Nelson Mandela Rules e-learning course in Kazakh language. This course became a crucial component of the mandatory in-service training for prison and probation

officers nationwide. Furthermore, UNODC implemented a comprehensive security audit framework using a tool developed based on the 'Assessing Compliance with Nelson Mandela Rules' handbook. This tool was tailored to suit Kazakhstan's specific context.

Additionally, UNODC created a training module focused on interagency cooperation between the prison service and law enforcement bodies. This module was shared with the Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutor's Office, for including in the training curricula for senior law enforcement officers. Moreover, UNODC provided expert support for developing a comprehensive Prisoner Risks and Needs Assessment Tool. This tool included a specific component related to religious matters, particularly in assessing risks of violent extremism and the radicalization of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) prisoners leading to violence.

Furthermore, UNODC facilitated regional exchange of knowledge and practices on managing violent extremist and FTFs prisoners. This was achieved through a series of study visits conducted to the Kostanay Training Academy, with the purpose of developing an in-service training curricula for prison and probation officers. UNODC also co-organized a study visit supported by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the U.S. Department of State for 8 police officials from Kazakhstan to learn from the U.S. experience in police training and community policing.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, UNODC facilitated development of the State Programme on the Prison and Probation System in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2024-2028. Technical assistance was provided to align the programme with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners and other relevant standards, including gender mainstreaming principles. UNODC provided technical expertise to develop and pilot a Risks and Needs Assessment Toolset for probation clients. Ninety-five probation officers, including 38 women, were trained on its usage, and the toolset was piloted among



2,200 probation clients. This toolset includes gender-specific indicators and a tool to assess the comprehensive risk and needs of violent extremist clients. UNODC initiated development of a comprehensive training curriculum for the Probation Service, based on identified needs of probation officers.

UNODC also facilitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Probation Department under the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the State Probation Service of the Republic of Latvia.

Furthermore, UNODC published a study and policy guideline on the use of electronic monitoring bracelets, including for violent extremist offenders.

UNODC supported the Kyrgyz government in presenting impacts of both the 'Post-release Monitoring and Probation of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighter and Violent Extremist Offenders' and 'Support to Justice Sector Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic: Advancing Probation and Criminal Justice Information Management' (JUST4ALL) projects at an event on 'Application of Non-custodial Punishment: Experience of Probation Institutes in Kyrgyzstan and Other Countries'. This event was conducted



in the margins of the 32nd meeting of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), held at the UNODC Headquarters in Vienna on 23 May 2023. The side event was well attended, providing opportunities for experience exchange, and a follow-up meeting was conducted with the Confederation of European Probation and other Member States who were interested in learning more about probation practices used in the Kyrgyz Republic. Planning for a possible study visit to the country was initiated.

To ensure sustainability of support provided to the Probation Department of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNODC supported the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Probation Department of the Ministry of Justice with: a) the 'Zhusup Balasay' Kyrgyz National University, and; b) the State Probation Service under the Ministry of Justice of Latvia. This was done in the framework of the EU-funded JUST4ALL project.

UNODC continues to provide advisory support to the Kyrgyz government in enhancing the rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children repatriated from Syria, through its participation in the working group.

In Tajikistan, UNODC organized a series of workshops aimed at enhancing the capabilities of 132 prison officers, including four female

officers. These workshops covered various important topics such as dynamic security, prison intelligence, risks and needs assessment protocols, and human rights-compliant investigative interviewing techniques.

At the regional level, UNODC focused on mainstreaming human rights through capacity-building activities for prison and probation officers by using a multifaceted approach focused on education, engagement, and the practical application of fundamental human rights principles, international standards, and the specific rights of inmates within prisons and upon release. Additionally, UNODC facilitated direct engagement with human rights experts and professionals, inviting them as guest speakers to provide insights, guidance and first-hand experiences, thereby deepening understanding and emphasizing the significance of upholding human rights within the prison environment. Through this holistic approach, UNODC instilled a culture of respect for human rights among prison officers, fostering a more compassionate, fair and rights-oriented approach to their interactions and practices within correctional settings. Institutionalization of human rights-based approaches resulted in development of a methodology for internal monitoring of probation department activities through the human-rights dimension in cooperation with the Ombudsperson Office of Kyrgyzstan.



# United Against Corruption



UNODC provided support to all regional countries to strengthen their efforts in combating corruption, and maintaining their dedication to implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). All regional countries took steps to advance their fight against corruption, and remain committed to implementing UNCAC.

against corruption. The sectorial programme on preventing corruption within Tajikistan's transportation sector was adopted in 2023.

In **Turkmenistan**, anti-corruption measures primarily focused on establishing control over budgetary spending. At the same time the country is considering an opportunity to enhance preventive legislation and instruments, including the anti-corruption screening of legal acts.

**Kazakhstan's** Anti-Corruption Agency recovered 108 billion tenge (\$241 million) as a result of investigations. Since 2022, approximately 857 billion tenge (\$1.8 billion) worth of property assets and funds have been returned to the budget and entities of the quasi-public sector. The country adopted new Law on Asset Recovery and created a dedicated Asset Recovery Committee. UNODC supported Kazakhstan by providing technical assistance and advice to the country in the area of asset recovery, including providing comments on the draft of the new law on asset recovery.

In **Uzbekistan** numerous anti-corruption legislative initiatives were launched, such as amendments to the national criminal code on strengthening liability for corruption, and drafting of on new laws on anti-corruption screening of legal acts, and on conflict of interest with the support of UNODC. The fight against grand corruption also intensified, with the country also intending to play a bigger role in anti-corruption initiatives on a regional scale. In December 2023, Uzbekistan hosted the prestigious 7th International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award ceremony in Tashkent. This event was attended by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, of Qatar, and the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

In the **Kyrgyz Republic** it was reported that over \$1.2 billion embezzled by corrupt public officials has been recovered over the past three years. President Japarov claimed that corruption had been 90 per cent eradicated in Kyrgyzstan, resulting in growth of the state budget by up to 3 times.

In **Tajikistan**, more attention was paid to anti-corruption awareness raising campaigns, and reviewing the role of civil society in the fight

All countries in the region strengthened their cooperation in the area of countering corruption through participating in the UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Platform established in November 2023.

## UNODC promotes regional anti-corruption efforts



A series of regional workshops and training seminars were supported by UNODC in 2023 related to anti-corruption due diligence and collaboration in international investment projects, on tracing and recovering proceeds of corruption crimes, and identifying and prosecuting corruption crimes.

A remarkable event was held over 18-19 May 2023 in cooperation with the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Almaty, Kazakhstan, being the international workshop 'Enhancing Anti-Corruption Due Diligence and Collaboration in International Investment Projects'. This workshop was organized under the auspices of the Network of Anti-Corruption Practitioners along the Silk Road Economic Belt, with a particular focus placed on the experiences of countries of Central

Asia and the South Caucasus. The event sought to strengthen capacities of anti-corruption professionals within national law enforcement departments, and economic/investment policy experts of economic regulators, on identifying corruption risks that relate to investment processes, and further adjusting regulatory policy and/or investigative practices for preventing and combating corruption in the private sector, while improving the investment climate at the same time. The workshop brought together over 70 representatives and experts from law enforcement departments, economic regulators, NGOs, businesses, UNODC offices, and international organizations, from Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, France, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Montenegro, Tajikistan, and Türkiye.

### ***UNODC Promoted Regional Cooperation for Fast-Tracking UNCAC Implementation***

In 2023, in accordance with the COSP resolution 9/4 intended to strengthen UNCAC's implementation at regional levels, UNODC supported the establishment of the Platform is expected to use the benefits of shared experience in opposing the corruption present in every country of the region. On that grounds, the technical assistance will significantly improve joint actions of participating countries and the international community. The event

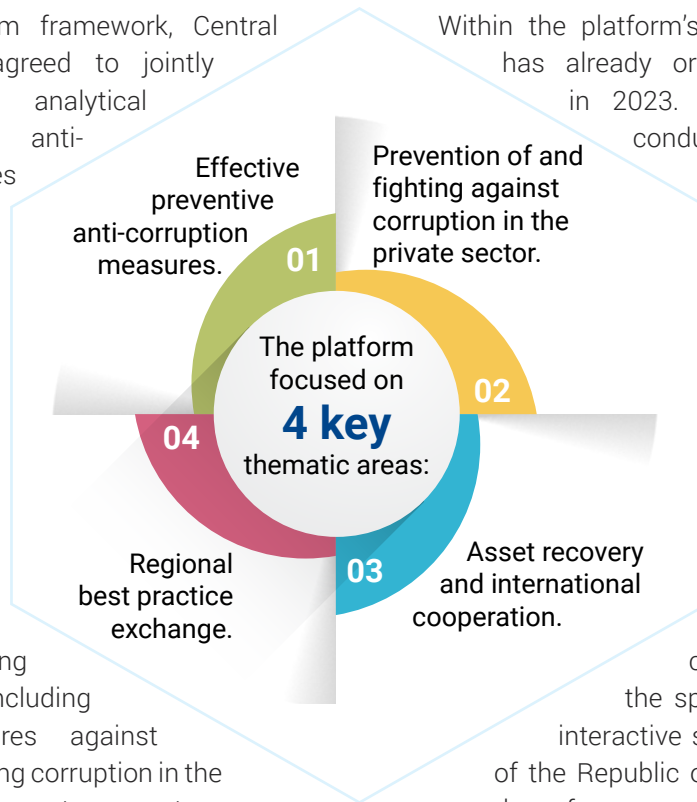
was attended by the highest leadership of anti-corruption agencies in all Central Asian countries that signified a strong political support of this initiative. The Platform not only unites experts and practitioners of anti-corruption authorities of all Central Asian countries, but also provides an opportunity for engaging public servants from other public agencies to streamline the anti-corruption agenda across the entire public sector of the region's countries.

Within the platform framework, Central Asian countries agreed to jointly perform regular analytical reviews of best anti-corruption practices utilized in the Central Asian region, that have the potential for successful replication. The founding documents of the platform contain a list of the areas identified as priorities by the participating countries, including preventive measures against corruption, combating corruption in the corporate and private sectors, asset recovery and international cooperation, criminalization and investigation of corruption offenses.

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All thematic areas will be reviewed through the prism of peer learning, civil society participation, the gender dimensions of corruption, the potential of ICT tools, and coordination of donor community support.

Within the platform's framework, UNODC has already organized two events in 2023. The first one was conducted in form of an interactive session at the 3rd Tashkent Anti-Corruption Forum, dedicated to the practice of applying methods of anti-corruption examination of regulations. Over 30 legal experts and anti-corruption practitioners from Central Asian countries attended the special session. At the interactive session, the draft law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On the procedure for suspending entrepreneurial activities after hiring a person carrying out entrepreneurial activities into the state civil service' were presented by the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan. The ministry also presented their vision on corruption risks identified in the draft law, while UNODC experts elaborated their vision on corruption risks not addressed by the ministry. Legal experts and anti-corruption practitioners



from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also contributed to the discussion, and expressed their interest in continuing joint expert work within the format provided by the regional platform.

Additionally, the special panel 'Central Asian regional initiatives on countering corruption' was conducted during the Integrity Champions Forum that followed the Anti-Corruption Excellence Award 7th ceremony that took

place over 19-20 December 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Represented on the leadership panel, the anti-corruption agencies of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as the General Prosecutor's Office of Kyrgyzstan, all shared their visions on expanding anti-corruption measures in their countries, and means of uniting their efforts on a regional scale. During the panel, UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Advisor Vladimir Kozin shared key outtakes from COSP 10.



### ***UNODC Promoted Corruption Proofing of Legislation in Central Asia***

25 officers of the region's national offices of business ombudspersons (including heads of regional divisions, and specialists of central offices of business ombudspersons) were trained in March 2023 on the use of sociological research methods to analyse corruption risks associated with imperfect legislation. They were also trained in performing anti-corruption screening and preparing analytical documents in the field of improving regulation of entrepreneurial activity and reducing corruption burden for business. In total, over 2022 and 2023 UNODC trained more than 150 legal specialists, anti-corruption practitioners, and civil society representatives in Uzbekistan,

to perform the anti-corruption screening of legal acts.

In Kyrgyzstan UNODC successfully implemented a project on enhancing the anti-corruption screening of legal acts by developing a guide for practitioners and training prosecutors on applying methods for the anti-corruption screening of legal acts.

In Kazakhstan UNODC experts actively participated in several workshops and conferences dedicated to the practice of anti-corruption screening of legal acts, providing expert views and sharing best regional practices.

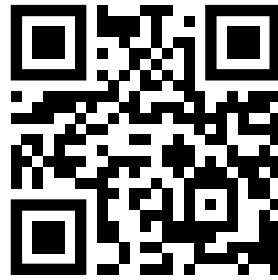
### **UNODC Supported Anti-Corruption Education Through Implementing a Global Resource on Anti-Corruption Education (GRACE) Initiative**



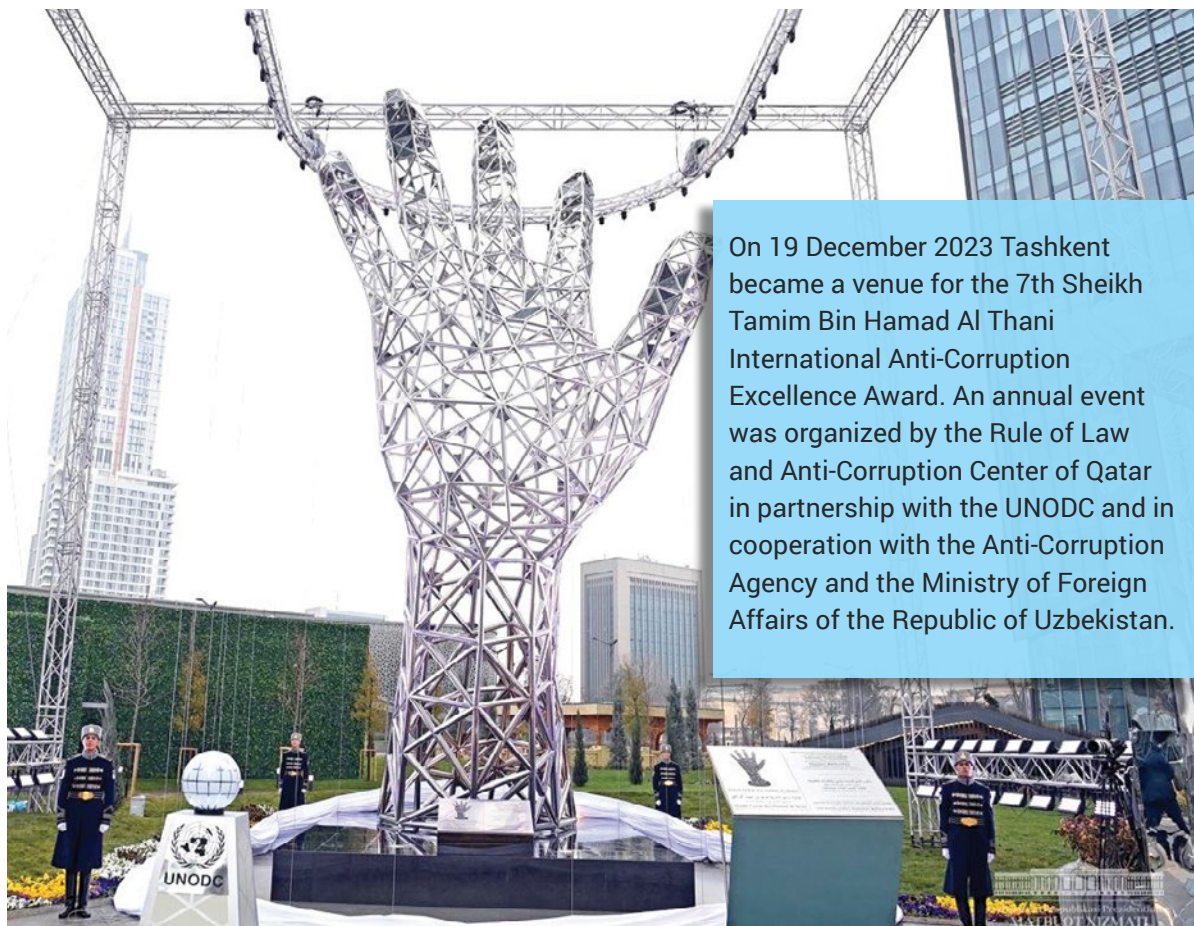
Kyrgyzstan's universities have been equipped with ready-to-use training modules on integrity, ethics in public service, and anti-corruption subjects. The 'Civil Service Professional Ethic' and 'Anti-Corruption in Public Service' training modules were developed based on GRACE materials, considering relevant domestic legislation and practices utilized in the Kyrgyz Republic. These modules are available in Russian and Kyrgyz languages.

UNODC facilitated extensive discussions involving educators, public service professionals, and anti-corruption experts, earning their endorsement. Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Education received information about the project and its products, providing a positive assessment. The training modules were officially presented on 13 October 2023, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The project received funding from the Kazakhstan Agency for International Development (KazAID).



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On 19 December 2023 Tashkent became a venue for the 7th Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani International Anti-Corruption Excellence Award. An annual event was organized by the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Center of Qatar in partnership with the UNODC and in cooperation with the Anti-Corruption Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

### **UNODC Supported Evidence-Based Anti-Corruption Policy Making and Implementation**

In 2023 an online survey of over 1,800 Uzbek businesses was conducted, in order to identify patterns of corrupt practices which exist within the interaction of businesses with Uzbekistan's

public agencies. The survey report was delivered to the nation's Anti-Corruption Agency for further consideration, and the development of targeted anti-corruption policy measures.

## **UNODC Supported Professional Training of Investigators and Anti-Corruption Practitioners**

On 28 September 2023, the 'Specificities of the investigation of the offence of bribery' educational manual was presented. The manual was developed by the General Prosecutor's Office of Uzbekistan with UNODC's support. It offers comprehensive insights into the intricacies of investigating bribery, encompassing a thorough examination of international best practices. It functions as a valuable resource by referencing stipulations outlined in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and underscores the significance of

leveraging the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (Globe Network) to ensure optimal effectiveness. 42 officers (4 women) of Anti-Corruption Agency of Kazakhstan developed their capacity on application of IBM i2 Analyst Notebook and iBase software for criminal intelligence and investigation of corruption-related crimes. Participants trained to collect, import and visualize data using both software applications for efficient implementing their day-to-day analytical and investigative work.



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## **UNODC Supported Youth Engagement in Anti-Corruption Measures**

In partnership with the Regional Dialogue NGO, the Anti-Corruption Agency and the Academy of Law enforcement of Uzbekistan, the 5th Model Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption Conference for students of Master of Law of Uzbek Universities was organized on 11 December 2023. Over 60 students of 7 universities and academies gathered to practice their skills in reviewing and analysing

the implementation progress of Article 13 of the UNCAC, based on the experiences of seven countries.



## Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment



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UNODC ROCA interventions during the reporting period contribute to both Goal A (Contribute to the delivery of global results on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through the activities of the United Nations Office at Vienna and UNODC) and objectives of the UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2022-2026).

In Kazakhstan, UNODC conducted a comprehensive desk analysis of the legislative and policy framework on gender-based violence (including domestic violence) to develop a baseline understanding of current practice and priority areas of the reform of police responses, risk assessments and referrals in domestic violence cases. The training curricula on 'Human Rights' and 'Human Rights and Protection Mechanisms' currently taught at national police training institutions were reviewed, and recommendations were provided to strengthen both the form and content of these courses.

Over 60 neighbourhood police service officers (six women) of Pavlodar city, Kazakhstan, developed their emotional intelligence skills. Additionally, eight officials from Kazakhstan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and police training institutions

learned from U.S. experience in recruiting and training police cadets, continuous professional development, and practical strategies to strengthen community-oriented practices.

The manual on 'Gender-sensitive Investigation of Crimes Against Women and Girls' supported by UNODC, received official approval by order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, marking a significant step towards enhancing investigative practices and protecting vulnerable individuals in the nation.

A practical guide for investigators is now readily available on the websites of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, offering invaluable insights and methodologies for effectively addressing domestic violence. The guide can be found at <https://mvd.gov.kg/rus/>.

A practical guide for prosecutors titled 'Prosecution of Criminal Cases on Violence Against Women and Girls' has been prepared and approved by the Educational Centre of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, equipping legal professionals with essential tools to ensure justice for victims.





There has also been significant progress made through the institutionalization of gender-transformative modules into state institutions' educational curricula, specifically for justice and law enforcement actors. Four institutions for the training of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic have improved their curricula by institutionalizing mandatory modules (40 hours) with a particular focus placed on a survivors-centred approach, and a coordinated response to GBV. UNODC, in partnership with UNDP and the 'Kyrgyz Association of Women Judges',

developed and institutionalized content through an inter-agency task force. It adapted the module available online into an accessible e-version.

A multi-sectoral response has been strengthened, as the essential services package was integrated, and service providers were equipped with knowledge and skills as well as four new standard operating procedures (SOPs) for police, forensics, prosecution and social services professionals, to be used in providing and coordinating quality and comprehensive services.



UNODC developed video tutorials on gender sensitive interviewing for the Police Academy and General Prosecutor's Training Centre. Subsequently 200 police officers (including 61 women) and 50 prosecutors (including 19 women) were trained on working with victims of violence through a gender-sensitive approach. The gender-sensitive interviewing techniques sensitized police investigators handling victims of violence, predominantly women and girls, on common mistakes and misconceptions. This strengthened their understanding of the subject matter, allowing them to avoid such pitfalls in their future work, thereby initiating transformative change.

UNODC initiated development of the 'One-Window-Centre' legal framework and technical infrastructure in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic, as a one-stop service point for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to ensure multi-disciplinary support is provided, including medical, legal counselling, and police investigation in a single location.

The package of legislative amendments to criminal legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic were introduced with regards to gender related crimes. UNODC provided expert support in developing a new law 'On prevention of domestic violence'.

UNODC developed a correctional programme for the probation department of the Kyrgyz Republic. The programme aims to address violent behaviour among individuals perpetrating domestic violence.

Under the joint UNODC-UNOCT project 'Preventing and combatting the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their illicit supply to terrorists – Supporting the implementation of SCR. 2370 (2017) and the Madrid Guiding Principles' in Central Asia, UNODC included specific modules on gender and human rights, resulting in the awareness raising of 83 national officials from all 5 Central Asian countries. The concepts of gender equality and human rights awareness were further disseminated by participants throughout national institutions, resulting in increased interest by national stakeholders in addressing these issues and achieving SDGs 5 and 16.

In Uzbekistan, UNODC delivered a lecture at the Law Enforcement Academy of Uzbekistan, engaging cadets from the International Law master's programme. Law enforcement officers, academics, police inspectors, and civil lawyers actively participated in interactive discussions on international standards for gender equality and preventing gender-based violence.



# Good Health and Well-Being

## Drug Use Prevention



Over 120 young leaders and representatives of national and international organizations dedicated to youth drug use prevention attended a series of national round tables conducted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, to launch Phase II of the project titled 'Regional Network of Youth Organizations and Youth Champions of Change in Central Asia for Drug-free, Healthy, Safe, and Secure Societies'. These events empowered leaders of the regional network to address youth challenges and develop youth-driven solutions for establishing a drug-free future. The take-aways from the round table discussions highlighted the importance of evidence-based drug use prevention programmes, strategic partnerships, and empowering the regional youth network through training and workshops.

The project's leaders also made a substantial contribution by facilitating a simulation of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) session on drug use prevention during Model United Nations (MUN) events held in Turkmenistan and

Uzbekistan. They facilitated discussions on 'Drug Use Prevention among Youth in Central Asia', and worked together to develop youth-driven solutions. As a result, a youth-driven resolution was presented to both UNODC and government organizations in Turkmenistan, highlighting key priority areas such as implementing evidence-based prevention programmes, establishing "youth-cells" in local communities and educational institutions, and empowering leaders and members of the regional network through training and workshops. The youth resolution will be presented at the CND Youth Forum in March 2024.

The above-mentioned initiatives contribute to the achievement of Target 3.5 of the 2030 Agenda by focusing on drug use prevention among youth in Central Asia, and actively involving youth in drug use prevention efforts, promoting evidence-based strategies, establishing partnerships, and empowering the regional youth network to create drug-free, healthy, safe and secure societies in Central Asia.





## Drug Treatment

The skills and capacities of more than 890 addiction professionals required to provide evidence-based treatment were enhanced through a series of advanced trainings of the UTC training package.

More than 100 addiction professionals and policy makers increased their capacities in terms of developing national quality assurance (QA) system standards aligned with UNODC-WHO International Standards for Treatment of Drug Use Disorders, through a series of national trainings on 'UNODC Drug Use Disorder Treatment Systems QA' conducted in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The trainings also supported national stakeholders conducting system QA, raised awareness of drug use and drug use disorders, promoted evidence-based responses, and enhanced national expertise in the QA of drug use disorder treatment services and systems.

16 senior officials and substance use disorders clinicians from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, learned about and observed the application of best practices in clinical governance, quality, and performance management of drug use disorder treatment services, during a professional visit conducted to London in the United Kingdom. The visiting delegates had an opportunity to identify potential collaborations with organizations in the UK, and gained insights into models of care. As a result of the study tour, all delegations developed concrete work plans to enhance national treatment and care services by implementing best practices they learned in the UK.

These initiatives have had a direct impact on approximately 2,800 patients in the region, as the trained professionals were able to apply their knowledge and share best practices on treating drug use disorders with healthcare experts and policymakers. This contribution aligns with the achievement of Target 3.5.



## HIV Prevention



In Uzbekistan, 24 representatives of the communities of people who use drugs (PWUD) and people living with HIV (PLHIV) from six regions of the country enhanced their knowledge and skills required to advocate for their right to quality medical and harm reduction services, monitor the quality of the respective services, and address stigma and discrimination issues. This outcome was achieved through their participation in the national training 'Introduction and implementation of comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care programmes, together with people who use drugs'. An important result of the training was the participants' presentation of the crucial needs of priority groups to seven representatives of state partners, who also attended the event. For purposes of further cooperation, it was agreed to hold additional meetings and develop a joint work plan.

At the national training 'Ways of cooperation and the role of law enforcement agencies in HIV programmes' 60 law enforcement officers from the Department of Behaviour and Health Crimes Prevention of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as representatives from the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the need to create partnership

between law enforcement agencies, community-led and other NGOs working with PWUD on HIV prevention and establishing clear mechanisms in the referral system. As a result of taking part in the training, the participants developed a workplan of activities on integrating best practices in their regions.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, with financial contribution from UNAIDS (UBRAF) and with UNODC support, in 2023 the NGO Istihsan implemented a project on social pre and post-release support of women who use drugs and live with HIV in the republic's only women's prison. Over 60 incarcerated women were provided with psycho-social, medical, and legal assistance, along with guidance on HIV and drug use prevention, from skilled specialists and trainers. Most of these women obtained necessary documents during their imprisonment, facilitating their access to medical and social services upon their release.

Representatives of thirty community and community-based NGOs (connected tPWHd to PWUD, and PLWHA to PLWH, SW, TG, ex-inmates and other such vulnerable population groups), from across the Kyrgyz Republic, took part in a 3-day national training on NPS and stimulants. Participants also enhanced their knowledge

on community and resource mobilization. That training helped begin a chain of national discussions of the NPS issue, and allowed participants from different key population groups to exchange their opinions and experiences, related to NPS use and the prevention of NPS use, among their population. By the training's conclusion, both short-term and long-term plans of action had been elaborated by each key population group.

A similar training was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, for 30 representatives of community-based NGOs/outreach specialists, including four participants from Uzbekistan. The training participants increased their capacity to provide evidence-based services and implement effective HIV and HCV programmes for people who use stimulant drugs. The training was based on the global UNODC training guide on NPS/stimulants, adapted for and tailored to the regional context. One focus area of the training is community mobilization, as there is great demand from service providers to understand how to attract the attention of key groups, create compelling online posts, and establish a bridge between communities and service providers. They became knowledgeable about the needs of, and issues faced by affected groups of people who use stimulant drugs, including the intersectionality among different key population groups who use

stimulant drugs. They also learnt how to apply valuable lessons from the implementation guide within their own communities or countries, thereby improving access to core HIV and hepatitis prevention, treatment, care, and support services.

A series of national-level trainings on NPS and stimulants were conducted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, where approximately a total of 80 drug treatment specialists, toxicologists, and psychiatrists expanded their knowledge, and acquired hands-on experience in treating and mitigating harm caused by stimulant drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS). A result of this training was the development of a plan to strengthen collaboration between interdisciplinary professionals, such as addiction treatment specialists, programme managers and non-governmental performers, as well as community members, to provide evidence-based treatment and effective implementation of harm reduction services for people using stimulant drugs/NPS.

To facilitate effective application of the updated comprehensive package of 15 key interventions for HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care for people in prison, a regional capacity building training was conducted for those professionals working with people living in prisons and





other closed settings. 30 participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, representing ministries of internal affairs, health and justice, along with leaders of national penitentiary systems, service and human rights NGOs, were all informed about the updated comprehensive package of 15 interventions for people in prison. This package covered matters including women's health needs in prison, and the importance of involving civil society organizations (CSOs) in delivering quality HIV services to prison populations. The training covered existing international standards and guidelines on prison health, HIV prevention and treatment, gender-responsive services, engagement of CSOs, and linkages with community health services. The participants shared their country experiences and good practices in providing health care to people in

prison, and in adopting the 15 key interventions of the comprehensive package. They also had an opportunity to develop national roadmaps on how to improve access by people in prisons to quality medical services, including harm reduction. The hybrid-format training was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, over 25-27 September.

25 Kazakhstani providers of medical and social services, including heads of province level departments of health and service, and representatives of human rights NGOs, all enhanced their capacity in planning and implementing activities needed for effective prevention, testing, treatment, care and support related to HIV in prisons and other closed institutions, through participating in the national training on prisons and HIV held in Almaty over 28-29 September.



# Terrorism Prevention

## Enhancing Border Security and Management in Response to Terrorism Threats in Central Asia



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Terrorism and violent extremism constantly evolve and adapt. Today, despite facing defeat in some parts of the world, terrorist groups are continuously expanding their reach. These groups are capitalizing on weak governance structures, fragile borders and social inequalities to perpetuate their senseless violence across countries. Terrorists take advantage of organized crime networks, and illicit trafficking, to procure weapons and finance their operations. They are also abusing technologies such as encrypted communications, the dark web, and digital currencies to plan, fund and execute attacks undetected, while spreading hateful ideologies and rhetoric online. These trends are also observed in Central Asia with potential threats caused by instability in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Effective border security is the first line of defence against terrorist travel, and prevention of illegal cross-border movement of goods and cargo. Maintaining secure air, land and maritime borders is a challenge faced by all member states.

To address the above challenges, UNODC with the support from the German government has assisted the member states bordering Afghanistan (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) to increase their capacities to detect, prevent and investigate cross-border movement of terrorists, within the framework of the project 'Enhancing Border Management and Security in Response to Terrorism Threats in Central Asia'.

During the reporting period, UNODC conducted awareness-raising workshops in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (13-14 June 2023) and Dushanbe, Tajikistan (19-20 September 2023) on 'preventing terrorist travel through collection and analysis of information, including passenger data, biometrics and international databases' for representatives of national competent bodies of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The workshops strengthened the criminal justice response to terrorism by improving national capacities to collect, process, exploit

and disseminate information relevant to border security from a variety of sources, including biometrics and international databases, watchlists, passenger data (including Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data), and other relevant instruments. Productive discussions were held on tools available to foster border security cooperation at the intra-agency, inter-agency, regional and international levels, including through cross-border investigations. Concrete methods to strengthen the capacity of countries to detect, intercept and monitor individuals involved in terrorism-related activities in border areas were identified and discussed among participants and expert speakers. Methods discussed included the need for establishing a Passenger Information Unit (PIU) as part of border management, and as part of internal and external security. Participants also examined use of Rule-Based Targeting (RBT), and Historical Search (HS) methods at border crossings, and also the use of biometrics such as facial recognition and fingerprinting.

In addition, an INTERPOL expert contributed to and presented at events held in Ashgabat and Dushanbe on available INTERPOL tools within the areas of border management, to successfully detect, intercept, and monitor individuals involved in terrorism-related activities. The workshop attendees thoroughly discussed both the

advantages and disadvantages of tools available to these organizations, their implementation of solutions, and identified gaps and opportunities for improving the border control frameworks of participating countries.

As a joint activity conducted between the UNODC projects on 'Enhancing Regional Cross Border Cooperation by Strengthening the Capacity of Border Liaison Offices in Central Asia' and 'Enhancing Border Management and Security in Response to Terrorism Threats in Central Asia', UNODC ROCA together with the Terrorism Prevention Branch and CARICC organized a regional training course for law enforcement officers from all 5 Central Asian countries on joint transborder operations held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 7-11 August 2023.

The workshop aimed to improve participants' understanding of various legal and procedural frameworks applicable to cross-border law enforcement operations, including cross-border operations countering terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking. The workshop specifically addressed use of various sources of operational information, with emphasis placed on the exchange of intelligence and information during different phases of international operations. In addition, the programme sought to familiarize participants with complex tactics and solutions employed across various types of



cross-border operations. Each training session incorporated a hands-on practical approach, with demonstrations of operational processes carried out by competent authorities through bilateral and multilateral international cross-border operations.

In addition, UNODC in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) secretariat's Transnational Threats Department Border Security and Management Unit (TNTD/BSMU) conducted a train-the-trainer course on addressing cross-border challenges faced in identifying and interviewing suspected foreign terrorist fighters and other criminals. The activity was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 5-13 October 2023.

This workshop followed an introductory session held in Tashkent on 15 -17 May 2023, which established the National Mobile Training Team (NMTT), composed of a group of mid- and senior-level officers representing Uzbekistan's border and customs services, being set up by

OSCE. During this activity the newly-selected NMTT members supported development of a tailor-made training programme for identifying suspected FTFs and perpetrators of cross-border crimes.

During this second workshop, participants completed the train-the-trainer programme, and were equipped with skills needed to identify and prevent movement of foreign terrorist fighters, prevent cross-border crimes, and identify victims of such crimes. They also received training on identity management, crisis management, combating trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and combating trafficking in human beings. Finally, the course outlined methods of teaching adults, and introduced participants to interactive presentation methodologies taught through practical exercises.

The event included contributions by experts of the OSCE-led Mobile Training Team, as well as international experts from INTERPOL, UNHCR, UNOCT and UNODC.

## Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees from Conflict Zones

Over 43,000 individuals (including family members) from approximately 110 countries are believed to have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join Da'esh and other United Nations-designated terrorist groups. While some family members joined voluntarily, many others were forced, manipulated, or coerced to travel with foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). Moreover, thousands of children were born into the conflict to foreign parents. Estimates of the numbers of fighters who have travelled from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to Syria and Iraq to join Da'esh range between 1,641 and 3,150, in addition to associated family members. Following Da'esh's loss of territory, approximately 11,200 individuals, mostly women and children, remain stranded in Al-Hawl camp in Syria and Iraq.

Recognizing these challenges, some countries have made the political decision to repatriate their citizens. Kazakhstan (through the Zhusan

and Rusafa operations) and Uzbekistan (through the series of Mehr operations), account for a large majority of repatriations, having brought back 607 and 503 of their citizens respectively. Tajikistan has also conducted two repatriation operations in April 2019 and July 2022, returning 230 citizens. In 2023 Kyrgyzstan undertook 3 operations to return 339 citizens, mainly children and women, from Syria and Iraq.

Collectively, the Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2349 (2017) and 2396 (2017) establish requirements for UN member states to develop and implement comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration (PRR) strategies for individuals who they have reasonable grounds to believe are terrorists, including suspected FTFs and their accompanying family members, including spouses and children. These PRR strategies need to be gender-responsive and human rights-based,

and address the diverse circumstances of those with links to terrorist groups, who may be women, men, boys or girls. Despite this, member states still face complex challenges in their efforts, and request UN assistance to operationalize requirements of comprehensive and tailored PRR strategies.

Under the umbrella of the Global Framework of the United Nations Support to Member States on Individuals Returning from Syria and Iraq, UNODC in cooperation with other UN agencies such as UNOCT-UNCCT, OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF supports the counter-terrorism efforts of member states by providing guidance, coordination and capacity building in the PRR of terrorist suspects, including returning FTFs and their families. Taking a whole-of-UN approach, collective efforts aim to enhance national legislative, policy frameworks and institutional capacities to ensure that rehabilitation programmes comprise an individual assessment and reintegration plan, and that such plans are developed by the international legal framework to promote child-sensitive, gender-responsive and human rights-based responses.

During the reporting period, UNODC delivered training seminars on 'Child-Sensitive

Communication and Trauma-Informed Approaches to Child Interviewing' for law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners in Tajikistan (2-5 July 2023) and Uzbekistan (v1-3 November 2023). The training focused on crucial topics such as interacting with and providing psychosocial support to children who have returned from combat zones with their families, those who have experienced challenging periods in their lives, and children and adolescents affected by violence due to difficult life situations.

UNODC organized a seminar on 'Legal and Criminal Justice Aspects of Countering Terrorism' held on 24-25 May 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The seminar followed UNODC's Counter-Terrorism Legal Training Curriculum Module 1: Counter-Terrorism in the International Law Context. The curriculum harmonizes and systematizes legal concepts, as well as relevant training materials, to maximize the impact of training activities delivered by UNODC. The seminar was delivered in response to a request made by the Law Enforcement Academy under the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan to further strengthen the academy's technical and methodological capacities to train investigators and prosecutors on counter-terrorism issues. The event aimed to provide criminal justice





practitioners with knowledge and skills required to navigate complex legal issues related to counter-terrorism in the context of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as international criminal law, cyberterrorism, and the use of the internet for terrorism purposes; and to support the academy and other training national institutions in developing and incorporating counter-terrorism elements into their curricula. Participants included members of the Law Enforcement Academy of Uzbekistan, the State Security Service of Uzbekistan, the Department of the Supreme School of Judges, the Institute of Vocational Education of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, the 'Imam Maturidi' Research Centre, and the Tashkent State University of Law.

In cooperation with the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies under the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Kazakhstan, GIZ and OSCE, UNODC supported the conducting of training seminars on 'Alternative practices in prevention of violent extremism among youth' (over 6-7 November, 2023) and on 'Rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children returned to Kazakhstan in the framework of the Zhusan humanitarian operation' (9-10 November 2023). UNODC in cooperation with the 'Barqaror Hayot'

NGO convened a national roundtable meeting on 1 December 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to present and discuss a draft technical guide for the provision of comprehensive support to women and children returned/repatriated from conflict zones, within the framework of state rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in Uzbekistan.

On 18-20 July 2023, UNODC together with UNOCT-UNCCT conducted a three-day workshop on 'Enhancing Psychosocial Support and Resilience for Returnees from Conflict Zones' in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The workshop was a part of the project 'Uzbekistan Expert Advisor and Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme,' supported by the U.S. Department of State. The event focused on addressing the psychosocial support needs of individuals returning from conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, who may have been radicalized by exposure to violent extremist ideologies, with an emphasis placed on enhancing their resilience-building skills and promoting community-based rehabilitation. The workshop provided an opportunity for 30 mental health practitioners and social workers already engaged in supporting returnees to strengthen their knowledge and skills in providing psychosocial support for rehabilitation, reintegration, and resilience-building.

# Partnerships for Sustainable Development

## Establishing a New Information Centre in Tashkent



During the reporting period, UNODC used its extensive experience in producing high-quality research to address knowledge gaps on transnational threats while supporting national institutions of countries in the region to produce better data and transform it into knowledge to inform policies and proactive responses. To further strengthen its research capacities and enhance the knowledge base available to member states, UNODC ROCA hosted the official opening of the UNODC Information Centre for researching and analysing transnational threats in the region related to drugs and crime in May 2023.

The centre works on analysing threats posed by opiate, methamphetamine and cannabis production and manufacture in Afghanistan, as well as precursor trafficking. It also analyses patterns of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, illicit trafficking including that of firearms and cultural property, illegal mining and other trafficking of natural resources, and illicit financial flows. The centre also scientifically analyses the impact of programmes implemented by UNODC and other partners to support countries in reporting progress made towards relevant indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Main Strategies used for Evidence Generation

In July 2023 a comprehensive three-day workshop was conducted for a group of colleagues at the UNODC office in Kabul, Afghanistan. The workshop's primary focus was on facilitating a smooth transition from the ArcMap software to ArcGIS Pro. This imperative change was prompted by the impending discontinuation of support for the former software. The sessions were hands-on and practical, with the aim of acquainting participants with the main functionalities of ArcGIS Pro, and providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to seamlessly adapt to the new software, while ensuring continued efficiency in their geospatial workflows.

In October 2023, the UNODC Information Centre jointly with its Research and Analysis Branch organized a dedicated webinar for countries under ROCA, on the UNODC data collection cycle regarding drugs, crime and criminal justice. The webinar's objective was to raise awareness regarding the data countries should be collecting to better understand trends and patterns of

drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, firearms trafficking and crime, and how criminal justice systems should respond to these findings.

Also in October 2023 the Information Centre jointly with the KOSTAT UNODC Centre of Excellence conducted a specialized training on crime statistics in Bishkek. Representatives from national statistical offices, line ministries/agencies responsible for producing crime statistics, and civil societies all participated in the training. Broadly speaking the training was well received with much enthusiasm and active engagement for improved crime and criminal justice statistics, in alignment with international standards. Two main challenges emerged, the first being the weak link between data and policymaking, and the second being the lack of communication between institutions, resulting in a fragmented picture of available data and statistics. This activity was organized as part of the 'Justice for ALL: Mainstreaming People-Centred Reform in the Justice Sector of the Kyrgyz Republic' project.





## Policy Dialogue with Counterparts

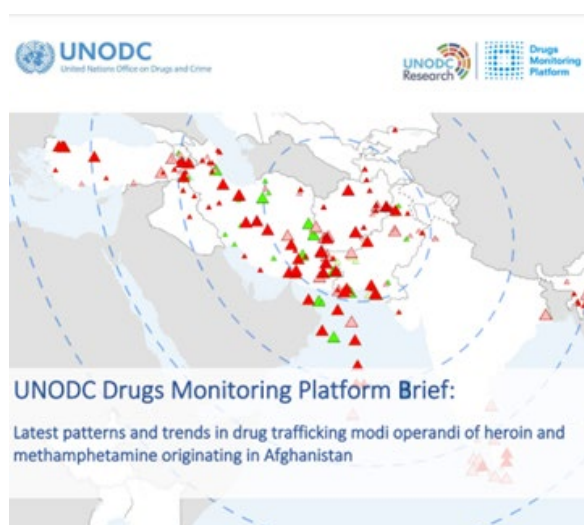


In 2023, the UNODC Information Centre actively participated in 20 events including expert group meetings, conferences, workshops, and intergovernmental processes conducted across Austria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Spain, Tajikistan, Türkiye, the U.S. and Uzbekistan. At each engagement, the information centre disseminated valuable knowledge regarding the drug problem faced in Afghanistan. This included

presenting latest trends in cultivation and production following the related ban imposed in Afghanistan, along with an exploration of its effects and implications for countries in Central Asia, and for global drug markets. Research outputs presented by the information centre served a crucial role in setting the stage for informed discussions among key stakeholders and policy makers.

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## Drugs Monitoring Platform



The UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform is a multi-source system for collecting, visualizing and sharing drug data aimed at providing access

to near real-time data on drug trafficking trends, delivering data using interactive visualizations adapted to user-specific needs, and improving early warning drug threat identification for law enforcement and analysts. The Drugs Monitoring Platform provides additional geographical insight on current drug trafficking trends, with over 627,000 geo-coded drug seizure data points obtained from countries around the world.

In 2023, UNODC issued a DMP brief 'Update on patterns and trends in heroin and methamphetamine trafficking from 2020 to 2022 for Afghanistan and neighbouring regions' which examines dimensions of seizure event data to enable early assessments of possible changes in trafficking patterns.

## Crime Victim Survey in Uzbekistan



On 19 May 2023, UNODC and the Law Enforcement Academy of Uzbekistan presented a groundbreaking report on crime and security experiences in the Fergana Valley.

The study engaged over 3,000 randomly-selected respondents.

The survey revealed prevalent issues like private sphere cheating, consumer fraud, and bribe-seeking by officials. Despite low overall crime levels reporting to the police in the Fergana Valley (Uzbekistan part) is below the international average, highlighting the need for a more service-oriented policing approach. Road accidents emerged as a significant cause of serious injury, emphasizing the need for better road safety programmes. The report recommends addressing alcohol abuse as a contributing factor to violent crime, advocating for responsible drinking patterns and evidence-



based programmes to prevent violence against women and children.

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## Forensics

During the reporting period, UNODC continued providing technical support to national forensics laboratories in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. One of the UNODC programme's important achievements in this area was obtaining international accreditation for the Central Forensic Bureau under the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, regarding its compliance with the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard for testing and calibrating laboratories.

The accreditation followed completion of UNODC technical assistance with financial support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). The

project followed a comprehensive approach to strengthening forensic services in Turkmenistan. Based on an initial needs assessment conducted in 2019, UNODC rolled out a package of interventions to develop forensic policies, introduce a new forensic quality management system, and train forensic experts. To achieve alignment with ISO requirements, UNODC provided expert support to the Central Forensic Bureau in developing and facilitating roll-out of a new management system for quality assurance. In total, 27 standard operating procedures and 85 checklists were developed to guide the entire work process of the Bureau, and ensure quality and integrity of laboratory examinations.

Over 40 Turkmen forensic experts, including 14 women, passed an intensive training programme comprised of 6 training sessions to enhance their professional expertise and skills in managing evidence and crime scenes, ensuring quality, integrity and impartiality while carrying out laboratory tests and routine work in line with ISO/IEC 17025 requirements. Topics covered by the training programme included validation of methods, the reading and interpretation of equipment metrics, use of control charts in laboratory tests and estimation of measurement uncertainty, risk management and corrective actions, internal audits, and management review. As a result of the training programme, Turkmenistan now has a pool of skilled forensic experts who are able to conduct forensic analysis in line with the new quality management system. Training materials produced by the project continue to be used during regular on-the-job training sessions.

To strengthen and ensure the validity and accuracy of the Central Forensic Bureau's laboratory examinations, UNODC supported the Bureau in acquiring certified reference materials, and obtaining glassware and measurement devices calibrated by an accredited, foreign calibration laboratory. From 2020 to 2022, the Central Forensic Bureau took part in five rounds of UNODC's International Collaborative Exercises

(ICE), and two rounds of proficiency testing exercises provided by Collaborative Testing Services (USA) and LGC Standards (UK).

UNODC supported development and implementation of an action plan to prepare the Central Forensic Bureau for accreditation. With the support of an international expert, the project conducted an audit of the Central Forensic Bureau to assess its compliance with requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2017. With UNODC's support, in March 2023 the Kyrgyz Centre for Accreditation visited the Central Forensic Bureau to carry out a necessary assessment of laboratory procedures, personnel and technical capacity. After the assessment, the bureau undertook necessary corrective actions recommended by the Kyrgyz Centre for Accreditation. This included calibration of its laboratory scales and gas chromatograph. When the process was successfully completed in October 2023, the Central Forensic Bureau received its accreditation certificate, thereby becoming the first Turkmen laboratory to achieve full compliance with ISO standards.

In Tajikistan UNODC supported enhancing the capacity of the Drug Control Agency's forensics laboratory. The gas chromatograph with mass spectral detector and scale were procured and handed over to the DCA lab to enhance their capacity in measuring organic compounds,



along with tools for carrying out qualitative and quantitative analysis. The installation of equipment and training on its use was provided in October 2023 for six forensic experts (one woman and five men) in October 2023 by the International expert of the Shimadzu Corporation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency has filled in the registration form required for participating in the International Collaborative Exercise (ICE) programme, and submitted it in order to take part. The ICE programme is an independent interlaboratory exercise in drug analysis, allowing for forensic drug and toxicology laboratories worldwide to continuously evaluate their own performance, and assess the quality of their results. Participation in such collaborative exercises or proficiency tests is one of the elements essential for implementing a laboratory quality management system, and ultimately achieving accreditation.

State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

In August 2023 UNODC launched phase III of the project 'Improving Forensics Capacities in Uzbekistan'. The project with an implementation period of 2 years is a continuation of the previous project 'Strengthening Forensic Services in Uzbekistan – Phase II' that ended in March 2022. Phase III of the project aims to strengthen the capacity and capabilities of forensics services in Uzbekistan (provided at: the 'Kh. Sulaymonova' National Centre of Forensic Expertise under the Ministry of Justice; the Main Expert and Criminalistics Centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Applied Research Centre on Forensic Medicine of the Ministry of Health, the Central Customs Laboratory of the State Customs Committee, the Expert and Criminalistics Centre of the State Security Service, and; the Centre for Development of Electronic Technologies) to deliver quality and reliable forensic examinations in a number of forensic disciplines – such as illicit drugs and precursors, biological materials (DNA), firearms and toolkits, digital forensics and crime scene investigation – all in line with international standards and best practices.

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This initiative was implemented by the 'Capacity-building of the Drug Control Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan' component of SP1, and funded by the U.S. Department of



# Advocacy, Outreach and Public Affairs



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Advocacy and communications play a vital role in UNODC programmes, supporting project activities throughout their implementation cycles. For the reporting period, UNODC ROCA maintained a proactive approach in implementing strategic communication and advocacy for its accomplishments and outcomes across various platforms, including social media, the official UNODC ROCA website, donor meetings/briefings, and high-level events. The content was provided in a targeted manner, to ensure all stakeholders received information matching their expectations.

In 2023, UNODC ROCA developed targeted stories on 135 results and events. These stories helped better deliver information about the joint achievements of UNODC and national government counterparts. UNODC ROCA's Facebook page was used to post about 250 posts, reaching more than 50,000 people. Currently, UNODC ROCA has almost 4,000 followers on Facebook and 2,400 followers on X/Twitter. These online platforms have contributed to enhancing visibility, and fostering a broader understanding of UNODC's

initiatives and impact over the reporting period.

UNODC ROCA hosted or cohosted more than ten high-level events over the reporting period, to showcase its commitment to fostering collaboration and addressing important topics. This includes the 56th Session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Trafficking and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, events that aimed to promote interagency collaboration (among prosecutors, customs authorities, border services, police, drug control agencies and other vital players), the launch of new collaborative regional platforms (CALENTIP, anti-corruption platforms), ceremonies marking the signing of significant funding agreements, several side-events on the margins of CND and CCPCJ, Steering Committee meetings, and also active participation in international conferences and forums. This engagement underscored ROCA's dedication to facilitating dialogue, sharing knowledge, and advancing collaborative efforts in addressing both existing and emerging challenges.

## Public Outreach Campaigns on Raising Awareness of Illicit Drugs

The theme of World Drug Day 2023 was 'People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention'. A region-wide awareness campaign was conducted over June and July, bringing public attention to the issues of illicit drug trafficking, and the need for countering and preventing drug abuse, specifically among youth. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, an information campaign was conducted to raise awareness among persons crossing border checkpoints on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz and Uzbek-Tajik borders, regarding means of combatting drug trafficking and preventing use of narcotic drugs by children and young people.

During the campaign, the UNODC Cross-Border Cooperation project team, together with border and customs services of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and BLO officers working at the Kordai and Ak-Zhol border checkpoints on the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border and the Oybek and Fotehobod border checkpoints on the Uzbek-Tajik border, placed banners with information on the harm caused by drugs, and preventive measures undertaken by UNODC and Central Asian law enforcement agencies

to counter drug trafficking. The project team conducted interviews and produced videos with border and customs officials working at border checkpoints, and with civilians crossing the border.

To mark World Drug Day, in Turkmenistan, UNODC joined national counterparts and the Embassy of India in Ashgabat in organizing an information campaign for children and teenagers to promote a healthy lifestyle. The campaign included a yoga session, quizzes, and a drawing contest.

To counter the stigma against people with drug use disorders, help them receive treatment and care, recover faster and reintegrate into their communities, UNODC produced a series of video interviews with people who used drugs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In addition, video interviews were conducted with Central Asian addiction care specialists covering such topics as drug addiction drivers, prevention of drug use by teenagers, addressing stigmatization of people with drug use disorders, provision of effective treatment and care, and rehabilitation and reintegration support.

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## Raising Awareness about the Human Rights of People in Detention

#PrisonersMatter was the theme of Nelson Mandela Day 2023. On this occasion, UNODC conducted several advocacy and outreach activities across the region. In Tajikistan, UNODC organized a football match between juvenile offenders in Dushanbe to mark the day. Considering the positive impact of constructive activities undertaken in detention, juveniles were provided with canvasses, paints and watercolours for art therapy sessions. A series of video messages were produced with representatives of relevant authorities and UN agencies across the region, to raise awareness of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners – the Nelson Mandela Rules – which provide member states with basic guidelines for creating safe and humane prisons.



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## Raising Public Awareness and Building Zero-Tolerance for Trafficking in Persons



A region-wide awareness campaign devoted to the World Day against Trafficking in Persons was held over July and August, attracting public attention to the issue of trafficking in persons and related crimes, and building public zero-tolerance to this phenomenon. Information on indicators of trafficking in persons and its impact on individuals and communities, ways to avoid becoming a victim of such crimes, available assistance and useful contacts were all shared through TV programmes, online mass media, information sessions, roundtables, flash mobs and quizzes.

In Uzbekistan, for example, during the awareness-raising month launched on 4 July jointly with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, information was distributed in Uzbek, Russian and English languages on TV (through ZO'R TV, UzReport TV and UzA TV), and through online media (through UzDaily, Nuz.uz, Kun.uz, Tashkent Times, UzReport, Uza, BAQ.KZ, YouTube, Facebook, and Telegram).



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In Turkmenistan, an awareness-raising session on trafficking in persons, its threats and negative consequences targeted at youth was conducted on 31 July. The awareness-raising session included a demonstration of dedicated videos and flash mobs, as well as interactive quizzes for over 250 youngsters, including youth at risk. In addition, efforts to raise awareness of another 90 young persons through the Regional Turkmenistan Ashgabat Model United Nations was supported by UNODC.

Furthermore, UNODC provided the Ministry

of Education of Turkmenistan with UNODC Teaching Modules on trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and terrorism in the Turkmen language, so they can be rolled out into the national educational curriculum.

A series of video interviews were produced in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, with representatives of relevant authorities, civil society organizations and UN agencies, to raise awareness of regional issues related to trafficking in persons.



# Fundraising and Donor Relations

In 2023, UNODC continued implementing its Resource Mobilization Strategy which was developed to fulfil commitments listed in the Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025. The Programme sets an ambitious target to deliver \$90 million in four years, being significantly higher than in the previous programme cycle. New and emerging work streams require additional resourcing.

Fundraising efforts focused on three key pillars:

- Expanding current partnerships with donors to ensure a sustainable multi-year funding framework for the programme for Central Asia.
- Diversifying partnerships through approaching new donors.
- Strengthening partnerships with other UN agencies and development organizations with an aim to have better representation in MPTF, UNSDCF thematic groups and task forces.

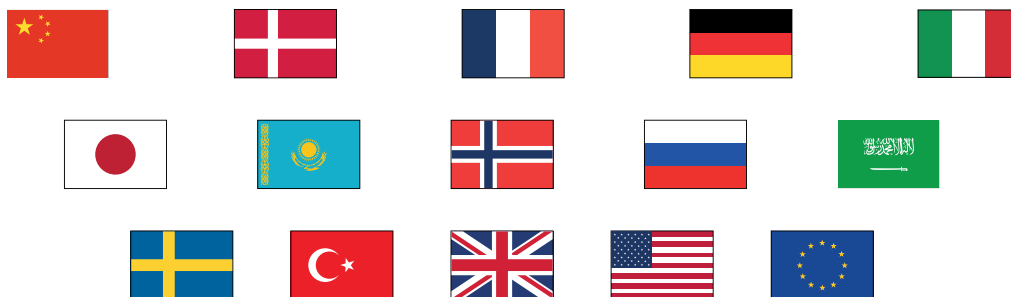
In 2023, UNODC delivered \$20,171,835 to implement and further strengthen initiatives aimed at countering transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking, enhancing crime prevention and criminal justice reform, and strengthening anti-corruption efforts, prison reform, and drug use and HIV prevention, as well

as initiatives aimed at countering firearms and human trafficking, anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.

Throughout the year, the office secured over \$15 million to continue supporting the region's member states.

UNODC expresses its gratitude to donors for supporting its activities in 2023. For instance it thanks the governments of China, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and also the European Union, the Siemens Foundation, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNOCT, and the Spotlight Initiative Fund. The regional office also expresses its appreciation for the in-kind contributions made by regional governments, required for establishing infrastructure for ongoing programmes, without which it would not have been possible to fully operate.

UNODC has made all efforts to ensure its financial commitments are honoured in a timely manner, and to address the needs and priorities of beneficiaries and people in need. This commitment made was confirmed by audit exercises, as well as regular monitoring undertaken by the ROCA team.



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