



2023 Counter-Terrorism Week SIDE EVENTS

19-23 JUNE 2023

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS • NEW YORK



The Nexus between Organized Crime and Terrorism in the Americas

21 June, 17.00 – 18.30 Eastern Daylight Time (New York)

Conference Room 9, United Nations Headquarters, New York and Zoom (Hybrid)

Concept Note

Background and Context

The linkages between terrorism and organized crime present a serious threat to international security and development and are an issue of growing concern to the international community. Terrorism and organized crime are known to have cooperated and coexisted, and each has learnt to use the tactics of the other. Member States have also expressed increasing concern that terrorists can benefit from organized crime as a source of financing or logistical support, through the trafficking in arms, persons, drugs, artefacts, cultural property, the illicit trade in natural resources and wildlife, the abuse of legitimate commercial enterprise, non-profit organizations, donations, crowdfunding and proceeds of criminal activity, including kidnapping for ransom, extortion, bank robbery, as well as transnational organized crime at sea.

The scale and types of abuses vary considerably depending on regional and economic context, targets set by terrorists in terms of their financing sources and methods. Likewise, the nature of the nexus between criminal proceeds and terrorism financing is, more often than not, defined by local context. Every continent is affected by crime and terrorism, but in some parts of the Americas the nexus between the two has become more intimately related, more proficient and more widespread. Terrorist organizations operating in the region are taking advantage of criminal activities such as drug trafficking, migrant

2023 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

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smuggling and money laundering to pursue their ideological goals. And criminal organizations are increasingly incorporating terrorist tactics – murder, extortion, attacks on infrastructure -- to reach their profit-making goals. Furthermore, as both criminal and terrorist organizations across the region continue to globalize, it is expected that they will continue to learn from different cultures, different experiences and different settings and their ability to operate in diverse regional and global theatres will grow.

This issue has long been high on the agenda of the Security Council and of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Security Council has consistently recognized and expressed concern at the connection between transnational organized crime and terrorism in several of its resolutions, including resolutions 1373 (2001), 2462 (2019) and 2482 (2019). The Council has encouraged Member States, international, regional, subregional organizations and forums to continue conducting research to better understand the nature and scope of the “terror-crime nexus”. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in the Seventh review of the United Nations Global Strategy (GA 75/291) in 2021. In the Seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly also took note of the nexus and encouraged Member States and international and regional organizations to enhance knowledge of and support initiatives to address, in the design and implementation of global, regional and national counter-terrorism strategies, the linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Under the policy guidance of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, its Executive Directorate (CTED) has undertaken a number of actions to increase its understanding of the nexus and to identify possible responses. Within the framework of the country assessment visits conducted on behalf of the Committee, CTED engages with the host States concerning their perception of the nexus, and encourages them to further enhance their efforts aimed at identifying and investigating links between terrorist and criminal activities, and to share lessons learned. Throughout this work, certain key vulnerabilities have been identified, and they are common regardless the exact nature of the nexus. Most noticeably, they include the failure to assess the relevant risks and the lack of financial investigations aimed at tracking the proceeds of illicit activities by terrorist groups.

In line with the call of the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations Crime and Research Institute (UNICRI) have undertaken to better understand the linkages between organized crime and terrorism in Latin Americas in order to help this region develop appropriate policy responses and capacity-building solutions. This research builds on UNICRI’s work of the subject since 2015 in different regions, and in particular on the GCTF Good the Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism and the related Policy Toolkit. Some key outcomes of the research on Latin America will be presented during this side-event, including the relevant historical, political and social context, as well as case studies that clearly illustrate the interconnected and interdependent nature of criminal and terrorist actions in the region. The publication also presents a series of conclusions and recommendations to help guide policymakers to formulate appropriate responses, and – mindful that governments cannot tackle this challenge alone — sets forth suggestions to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement on this issue.

2023 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

About the Side-Event

This Side-Event is organized by UNICRI, OAS and CTED, with the support of the Permanent Mission of Chile and will take place on 21 June from 17.00 to 18.30 Eastern Daylight Time (New York, GMT-4).

Objectives

This side-event will serve as a platform to share the findings of the joint OAS-UNICRI study on the linkages between organized crime and terrorism in the Americas and share highlights and key takeaways with participants. It is expected that the launch and expert panel discussion will contribute to further raising awareness of the relevance of the nexus for the Americas and trigger an ensuing dialogue that will be valuable for participating counter-terrorism agencies, as well as Member States actively engaged in the eight review the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Panelists list

- Christian Vianna de Azevedo, Undersecretary of Justice and Public Security at Minas Gerais/Brazil; Senior Fellow, UNICRI
- Juan Cruz Ponce, Deputy Executive Secretary, Financial Action Task Force of Latin America
- Raphael D. Marcus, NYPD Intelligence Bureau Team Leader, Intelligence Analysis Unit
- Esther Zubiri, United Nations Security Council Expert, ISIL (Da'esh) /Al-Qaeda / Taliban Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Logistics

The event will take place at in Conference Room 9 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York United Nations Headquarters in New York. To confirm your participation, please RSVP [here](#). Virtual participation will also be available via Microsoft Teams for those unable to join in-person. Access details for virtual participation will be shared following successful registration at the link provided above.

For any questions regarding this event, kindly contact Mr. Odhran McCarthy, UNICRI New York Liaison Officer and Programme Officer, odhran.mccarthy@un.org and Maria Fernanda Sarmiento, CICTE, OAS MFSarmiento@oas.org.

Agenda

17.00 Opening remarks

- *Mr. René Alfonso Ruidíaz Pérez, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Chile*
- *Assistant Secretary-General Ms. Natalia Gherman, Executive Director, CTED*
- *Ms. Antonia De Meo, Director, UNICRI*
- *Ms. Alison Treppel, Executive Secretary, CICTE, OAS*

17.20 Examining the linkages between organized crime and terrorism in Latin America – Findings from the UNICRI-OAS Report, by *Christian Vianna de Azevedo, Undersecretary of Justice and Public Security at Minas Gerais, Brazil; Senior Fellow, UNICRI*

17.40 Deep dive presentations

- **Organized Crime and Terrorism Financing in Light of the FATF/GAFILAT Fourth Round of Mutual Evaluations in Latin America**, by *Mr. Juan Cruz Ponce, Deputy Executive Secretary, Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT)*
- **Linkages between ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaeda, and the Taliban and transnational organized crime networks: Overview of the Monitoring Team reports**, by *Ms. Esther Zubiri, United Nations Security Council Expert, ISIL (Da'esh) /Al-Qaeda / Taliban Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team*
- **Exploring the Crime-Terror Nexus in the United States: ISIS and Beyond**, by *Mr. Raphael Marcus, Senior Analyst, NYPD Intelligence & Counterterrorism Bureau*

18.20 Questions and Answers, moderated by *Mr. Odhran McCarthy, UNICRI* and *Ms. Maria Fernanda Sarmiento, OAS*

18.25 Closing remarks, by *Ms. Alison Treppel, OAS*, and *Mr. Leif Villadsen, Senior Programme Officer and Deputy Director, UNICRI*