

UNODC ROMENA NEWSLETTER

Newsletter from the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa 2/2019



With this Newsletter, UNODC ROMENA invites you to read and reflect on the important priorities that our office has been identifying, discussing and working on with our national partners in Iraq. Aiming to support Iraq's efforts to enhance the criminal justice system in wide array of thematic areas that UNODC is mandated to work on, particularly in the aftermath of the military defeat of ISIL.

A lot of our work in the past few years has focused on reinforcing Iraq's legal regime against terrorism, this is outlined in the following section. Considering the interest expressed by national partners to expand UNODC's work in Iraq, in 2018, UNODC ROMENA fielded two assessment missions during which priorities for UNODC's future partnership in Iraq were identified, including in the areas of drug control, countering organized crime and corruption, prison reform and health. In early 2019, advancing the UNDS reform efforts, UNODC deployed a Senior Programme Coordinator to Iraq to enhance the operational capacity on the ground and build a long-term cooperation programme grounded in national priorities, focusing on the nexus between organized crime and terrorism.

Our first country-focused Newsletter provides you with an overview on how UNODC has been engaging in Iraq in the recent few years and the way ahead. It is illustrated by images of Iraqi cultural heritage, destroyed by ISIL, reminding us of our joint task and commitment to support Iraq in rebuilding its future. I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter.

Cristina Albertin,
Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa

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UNODC IN IRAQ

UNODC has had a long-standing partnership with Iraq in the field of terrorism prevention, aimed at reinforcing Iraq's legal regime against terrorism through legislative assistance, substantive training on international legal instruments and capacity-building in investigations and prosecutions of terrorism related cases. For the past years of cooperation, a wide array of capacity building targets has been achieved, few of them are listed below.

a- CAPACITY TO PROCESS TERRORIST CASES

UNODC's cooperation programme delivered through the Global Programme on Terrorism Prevention aimed at reinforcing Iraq's legal regime against terrorism through legislative assistance, substantive training on international legal instruments and capacity-building in investigations and prosecutions of terrorism related cases.

Iraq was covered by the five-year Initiative on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Emerging Terrorist Threats, including Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) in Middle East and North Africa countries. In compliance with UNSCR 2178 (2014), the initiative aimed at strengthening national legal frameworks against FTFs; training criminal justice officials on specific legal aspects related to countering FTF at the national and regional level; and enhancing international, regional and sub-regional cooperation. Partners include CTED and the Malta-based International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ).

Phase I (September 2014-October 2015, supported by the US and Japan) included two regional conferences covering Iraq (March and October 2015). Phase II (supported by the European Union and Canada) was launched in November 2015 and included sub-regional workshops and several national workshops, including for Iraq. As well as specialized training on the conversion of intelligence information into evidence.

Iraq is also one of three countries (together with Jordan and Lebanon) that have been trained in using special investigation techniques in terrorism-related cases with full respect of human rights and the rule of law. Specialised trainings for Iraqi law enforcement, criminal justice officials and lawyers were held during 2017 along with their Lebanese and Jordanian counterparts on the use of SITs in investigating terrorist crimes and the admissibility of digital evidence before courts including the functioning of the chain of custody.

b- ANTI-CORRUPTION

From 2011 until 2014, UNODC has worked with the Government to strengthen international cooperation, asset recovery, extradition and the initiation and management of litigation in foreign jurisdictions in partnership with the Commission of Integrity (CoI) and other law enforcement agencies. Capacity building training was delivered on financial investigation of corruption cases and international cooperation on asset recovery.

FACT-CHECK: UNODC IN IRAQ

LEGISLATION

4 specialized legislative workshops
1 law adopted: Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Law
1 law pending parliamentary approval: the new CT law
2 laws in process: the Digital Evidence Law and the Chemical Materials of Dual Use Law.



CAPACITY BUILDING



34 capacity building activities
660 officers trained
10 terrorism-related themes covered
198 experts shared expertise
21 recommendation documents produced

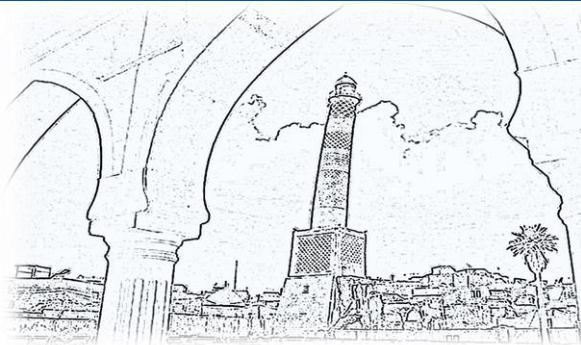
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

7 specialized meetings
56 officers trained
8 mechanisms facilitating cooperation incorporated into the legislations
2 regional networks
8 study visits to strengthen cooperation
2 Partnership-Building Missions to Baghdad and Basra



C- ADDRESSING TRAFFICKING IN CULTURAL PROPERTY

In 2016 and 2017, supported by the Government of Japan, UNODC partnered with the Government of Iraq on criminal justice responses to trafficking in cultural property on addressing the financing of terrorist groups through those activities, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2199, with the participation of representatives of INTERPOL and UNESCO.



Building on the success of the preceding areas of cooperation, a wide new number of subjects have been selected for future cooperation of which several are ongoing.

d- ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING

As of 2019, UNODC partners with Iraq to implement an initiative, supported by Japan on disrupting terrorist and organized criminal operations, including the spreading of violent extremism in the Middle East and North Africa. With regard to anti money laundering activities, and in partnership with the Financial Intelligence Unit, UNODC plans to assess the challenges facing financial institutions (FIs) and money or value transfer services (MVTs) in detecting and reporting suspicious transactions and to deliver six training sessions to selected officials from FIs and MVTs on reporting suspicious transactions.

e- TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS

Iraq is one of the five focus countries of phase II of the EU supported Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT). The project has started implementation in April 2019 in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and continues to support governmental authorities and civil society organizations in developing and implementing more effective national and international responses to trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling (in the functional areas of strategy and policy development; legislative assistance; capacity building; regional and trans-regional cooperation; protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants including children). An important partner of UNODC in Iraq in this regard is the National Anti-Trafficking in Persons High Committee, Chaired by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior. Its membership includes all line ministries at the level of Director General, in addition to a representative from the High Commission for Human Rights.

f- SUPPORTING CHILDREN RECRUITED AND EXPLOITED BY TERRORISTS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

UNODC has developed guidance to Member States on how children involved with terrorist and violent extremist groups should be treated by national authorities to ensure their treatment is in line with international norms and standards. In 2018 and 2019, funded by Japan, UNODC conducted related regional capacity-building activities that included Iraq. Specialized assistance will be provided to Iraq through a training planned for late 2019 on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

g- ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In partnership with UNWOMEN and with support from Japan, UNODC will work to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement officers to provide professional, gender-sensitive responses to women victims of violence. Training is expected to take place during 2019 in Erbil with the participation of law enforcement officers from Baghdad. UNODC will develop a comprehensive programme to improve the criminal justice response to violence against women in Iraq.

h- BORDER CONTROL

UNODC is working with the Border Commission to set up a capacity to undertake risk profiling of containerized shipments at sea ports, dry ports and land border crossings under the Container Control programme. Iraqi officials participated in two regional workshops organized in the framework of UNODC's Airport Communications project in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, UNODC will initiate a project on border control funded by Japan. The goal of this initiative is to strengthen capacities of the law enforcement agencies to detect, intercept and investigate members of criminal and terrorist groups when trying to enter and operate in Iraq.



Partnership-Building Missions to Baghdad and Basra

At the request of the Government, UNODC ROMENA fielded two partnership building missions to Iraq, led by the then Deputy Regional Representatives and supported by UNODC experts on border control, criminal information analysis, forensics, anti-corruption, crime prevention and criminal justice, with a focus on prison reform and juvenile

detention facilities, drug use and HIV prevention, treatment and care, which took place in July and November 2018. The first mission (to Baghdad and Basra) focused on border control, law enforcement and illicit trafficking, with a special attention to drugs and the second mission (to Baghdad) focused on anti-corruption and anti-money laundering, prison reform and the prevention of HIV and drug use. During these missions, UNODC met with a wide range of national partners and UN sister agencies as well as with donors and discussed how the office can support the country in the above-mentioned areas. In addition, in Basra, UNODC had the opportunity to visit a forensic laboratory and a border crossing point with Kuwait.

Unity in Diversity: Iraqi Officials Study Visit to Mechelen (Belgium)



Diversity, inclusion, tolerance, and integration are core values of the UN system, yet it remains challenging to translate them into direct action within the context of addressing terrorism and violent extremism. A possible way to address such challenges is learning from previous successful experiences. From 18th to 20th March 2019, the UNODC MENA Regional Representative, Ms. Cristina Albertin and the UNODC Regional Advisor on Terrorism Prevention, Ali Younes, accompanied an Iraqi delegation to a study visit organised by the

UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch and the city hall of Mechelen, Belgium, to enhance their capacities to address crisis situations, counter terrorism, and to prevent violent extremism.

While Belgium had 565 Foreign Terrorist Fighters, Mechelen is one of the key communities and towns that did not have any of its citizens recruited. Such results are due to the initiative and efforts taken by the town's population under the leadership of its current Mayor, Bart Somers, who received the World Mayor Prize by the City Mayors Foundation in 2016 for his efforts.

Visitors had the chance to meet the Mechelen Mayor Mr. Somers to debate on the Mechelen project "Police and Human Rights" for security cooperation. When speaking on the role of the police to promote security cooperation through integration and diversity, Mayor Somers added "The approach to fighting crime in Mechelen is seen primarily as a social policy, where the society must be engaged, and secondly, we never use our police to criminalise groups in society." By the end of the visit, a set of recommendations was formulated to identify ways to replicate the Mechelen experience in selected municipalities in Iraq.

Border control operational efforts initiated in Iraq



As part of an integrated border management approach to support Member States' efforts, UNODC has been invited by the Border Commission, together with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior and Customs, to meet in Baghdad on 18 February 2019. The meeting aimed to explore cooperation under UNODC's Container Control Programme (CCP), attended by the International Organization for Migration, the European Union, Australia and the United States.

Following this meeting, several steps were taken by the Border Commission to formalize cooperation with UNODC including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and the establishment of a steering committee. A first operational effort was the joint capacity building of Iraqi law enforcement officers at Treibil border crossing with Jordanian law enforcement officers at the Karamah border crossing (EU-funded projects and a first activity took place from 7-18 April 2019 in Amman, Jordan and will continue throughout 2019). UNODC is fundraising to expand cooperation to the Baghdad International Airport and Umm Qasr Seaport.

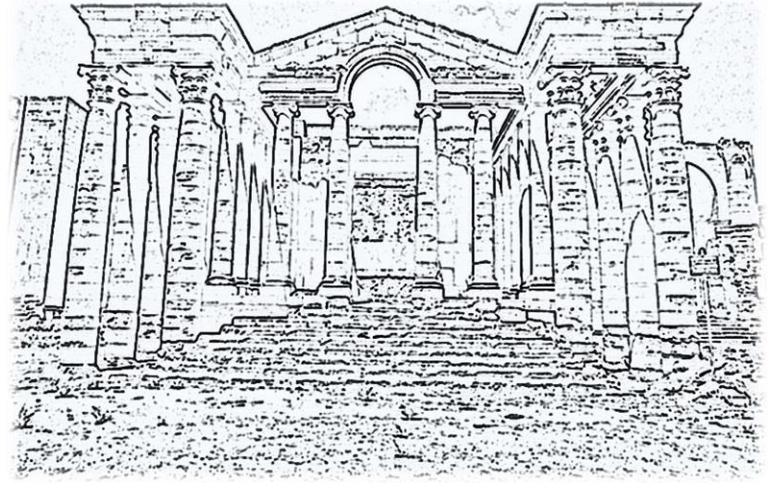
Empowering Women criminal justice officials in the national counter terrorism response



While undertaking efforts to deal with the aftermath of terrorist attacks, bringing perpetrators to justice, and providing support to victims and survivors, it has been widely acknowledged in Iraq that it is important to empower women in the ongoing peacebuilding process and the criminal justice response to terrorism offences.

On 7 March 2019, UNODC organized a large stakeholders' meeting to launch a new programme on "[Strengthening the Capacity of Women Professionals Working in the Counter-Terrorism Sector,](#)" in Erbil. The meeting brought together around 40 representatives from Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Ministries of Health, Labor and Social Affairs, Interior, Justice, and Education, parliament, judiciary institutions, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), UN Women, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and the Women Empowerment Organization to gather the views of all sectors involved in the planned programme. Throughout conducting a wide number of activities, UNODC data has shown that most of the delegations had been male, leading to the proposal of the programme. Therefore, efforts build upon past calls for further empowerment of women's indispensable role in counter terrorism efforts.

The meeting's attendees appreciated the proposals and initiatives put forward by UNODC and highlighted the past related efforts done towards women's inclusion, such as the National Action Plan developed by Iraq on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution [1325](#), on women, peace, and security. The meeting led to multiple rich discussions and encouraged stakeholders to identify some probable barriers to women accessing decision making posts and obtaining budgets for the women and peace agenda. Stakeholders further stressed to the necessity of including female perspectives and points of view while conducting studies on women.



Ceremony for the Completion of Five years of the Terrorism Prevention Branch Programme to Support Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Efforts (2014 – 2019)



UNODC cooperates extensively with the Government in preventing and countering terrorism. Achievements include the new counter-terrorism draft law currently under review by Parliament, a countering violent extremism strategy, and the establishment of an Association of Victims of Terrorism. Such achievements were celebrated in the ceremony held in Baghdad at the Prime Ministers' Guesthouse on Sunday the 14th of April 2019, with representatives from the UK, Denmark, and Japan.

UNODC announced the completion of five years of the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) Programme to Support Iraq's counter terrorism (CT) efforts regarding the Japanese and Danish supported programmes. The Global Project on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Terrorism for the years 2014 – 2015, 2015 – 2016, 2016 – 2017,

2017 – 2018 and finally after the liberation of Mosul 2018 – 2019; supported by the Government of Japan and the Strengthening criminal justice measures against terrorism and other organized crime programme in Iraq with both its phases (Phase I 2017 – 2018 and Phase II 2018 – 2019); aided by the Government of Denmark.

UNODC stands ready to continue partnerships with the Iraqi government on future cooperation in providing support in the implementation of the national strategy to combat violent extremism leading to terrorism. Such partnerships have already launched with the "Global Project to strengthen the legal regime against terrorism in Iraq after the liberation of Mosul (2018-2019)" project.

UNODC permanent presence in Iraq: Current plans and Future Targets

Following participation in several assessment missions to Iraq, Mr. Ali El-Bereir just took up his new position in Baghdad last month as UNODC Senior Programme Coordinator and Head of Office in Baghdad. His presence will be key in ensuring full UNODC engagement with the Iraqi Government at the Central and Provincial UN Country Team, UNAMI and representatives of the international community in Iraq, as UNODC prepares to take on a stronger role in addressing the nexus between organized crime and terrorism including strengthening the criminal justice and health institutions to support the country on its way forward. Since taking on the role, the Senior Programme Coordinator has held a series of fruitful meetings with various Ministries from the Government of Iraq. The meetings also included partners, stakeholders, NGOs, and interested development partners in UNODC's future work with specific attention to state-building, counter narcotics, terrorism prevention, prison reform, and the future of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups as well as countering violence against women.

Images:

Image 1 Guard at the entrance of the Palace of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud, Ancient Mesopotamia.

Image 2 The al-Hadba' Minaret from the Great Nur al-Din Mosque, 1172. Photo: Mosab Mohammed Jaseem.

Image 3 The City of Hatra. Photo: Editions Gelbert.

Image 4 Relief detail of Ashurbanipal hunting on horseback. Nineveh, Assyria, 645-635 BC.



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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The activities and projects in this Newsletter are funded by



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