



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Regional Office for the
MIDDLE EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA

2022

Annual

Report

FORWARD

2022 was an important year for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA). Some of the main areas we worked on with Member States included countering violence against women, corruption, money laundering, different forms of organized crime such as human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and terrorism.

Our efforts also included supporting mental and physical health for people in closed settings and people who use drugs, juvenile justice rehabilitation and reintegration, and youth resilience against violence, drugs and crime.

We also saw UNODC's participation at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP27) in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt through various events and activities. UNODC highlighted the need to address crimes affecting the environment and the illegal trafficking of waste.

2022 marked the sixth and last year of implementation under the Regional Programme (2016-2022), under which UNODC successfully introduced a more operational and practical approach to supporting Member States. In continuation, an important milestone for UNODC ROMENA in 2022 was the finalisation and approval of the Regional Framework for the Arab States 2023 - 2028 (henceforth Regional Framework) with the League of Arab States (LAS) and in consultation with its Member States.

The Regional Framework is the overarching strategic framework for cooperation between UNODC, 18 participating Member States and LAS. It frames how UNODC will prioritize and deliver support to the Arab region in effective response to some of the most pressing challenges faced and in connection with UNODC's mandate. It guides UNODC programming to accelerate progress towards Agenda 2030 in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UNODC ROMENA 2022 Annual Report allows you to get a glimpse of our efforts and our most important achievements.



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

OVERALL SUMMARY

In 2022, UNODC delivered technical assistance worth more than **28 US\$ million** to countries across the region.

Overall, UNODC increased the knowledge and skills of close to **7,200** criminal justice practitioners, officials, health and social workers, labour inspectors, consular staff, lawyers, and NGO staff in fields related to UNODC's mandate.

More than **26,600** children, young people, refugees, migrants, terrorism victims, children in conflict with the law, and persons in detention, as well as their families, have been assisted by UNODC in 2022.

Over **90,000** persons at-risk, people who use drugs, and people who live in prisons were supported by health services, e.g., access to Hepatitis B virus vaccine, confidential counselling and testing services, access to medical care in detention, Opioid Agonist Treatment programmes, and other outreach and care services.

In addition to the successful implementation of technical assistance, UNODC ROMENA reached more than **2 million** people on social media to raise awareness of the different mandate areas, gained the different mandate areas, gained **16,459** new followers, and was featured in **800** press articles/media coverage items.



All technical assistance provided under the Regional Programme directly contributes to supporting Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda.

2022 IN NUMBERS



28 US\$ Million in technical assistance to countries across the region



>90,000 Persons at-risk, people who use drugs, and people who live in prisons received health services



>26,600 children, young people, refugees, migrants, terrorism victims, children in conflict with the law, and persons in detention, as well as their families, have been assisted



7,200 criminal justice practitioners and other relevant stakeholders with increased the knowledge and skills in fields related to UNODC's mandate



2 Million people were reached across the region on social media to raise awareness on the different mandate areas

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Under this Regional Programme, UNODC intensified its efforts to increase **gender equality and empowerment of women**. Despite the predominantly male workforce in the criminal justice system in many countries in the MENA region, UNODC succeeded to increase female participation in trainings from less than **15% in 2016 to 32% this year**.
- In the past years, UNODC has also significantly increased **cooperation and partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** in several areas, e.g., on juvenile justice, violence against women and girls, health in prisons, HIV/AIDS prevention and care and outreach services for released inmates and at-risk persons, and rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners.
- **South-South cooperation** is another area UNODC has shown a stronger commitment to in the MENA region. UNODC is supporting the exchange of experiences and best practices between MENA countries and with other countries beyond the region on topics such as security and transnational organized crime. Furthermore, UNODC ROMENA promotes the deployment of expertise from the region in capacity building activities.
- In November 2022, world leaders came together in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt for **the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27)**. UNODC participated in COP27 to raise visibility on UNODC's mandate in relevance to crimes that affect the environment, to contribute to the deliberations on the COP27 outcomes within the biodiversity-climate nexus and waste, and to raise awareness of the importance of criminal justice system responses to the triple crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution. During the conference, UNODC organized **three high-level side events** on waste trafficking and crimes that affect the environment, took part in **two large events organized by the COP27 host Government**, and launched **two research papers** ('Crimes that affect the environment and climate change' and 'Illegal wildlife trade and climate change').

SUB-PROGRAMME 1: COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME

UNODC continued to provide assistance to **Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen** under Sub-Programme 1, mainly on countering illicit trafficking, including trafficking in persons (TiP) and smuggling of migrants (SoM), and enhancing border management and special investigation techniques, criminal intelligence analysis, forensics, cybercrime, and international cooperation.

Overall, over **2,800** criminal justice practitioners, staff working at NGOs, social workers, labour inspectors, lawyers, and diplomatic staff (approximately 20% female participation) benefitted from training activities, including targeted and in-depth capacity building (approximately 890 officials in border management, over 1,780 on TiP/SoM, over 100 in special investigations, including forensics, and approximately 120 on international cooperation); **650 migrants and refugees** in Lebanon (approximately 68% women) received hygiene kits and awareness raising sessions on TiP/SoM related issues and associated risks.

Additionally, UNODC supported border security in the region by supporting the establishment and/or strengthening of **Port Control Units (PCUs) and Air Cargo Control Units (ACCUs)** in several MENA countries. Specialised law enforcement units and forensics institutions received state-of-the-art equipment to better detect and prosecute transnational organized crime.

UNODC also supported the **Black Sea Grain Initiative**, which was established to allow ships to export grain, other foodstuffs, and fertilizers from Ukraine in 2022.

“

Whenever I look at the sea, I recall irritating scenes, when the boat abruptly stopped working in the middle of the sea for more than a day, the tension, the screams, cries, and noises became deafening... as if it happened yesterday... life is precious, don't risk it.

”



Amira noted at an awareness raising event by UNODC and Caritas in Lebanon on the risks associated with migrant smuggling for vulnerable Syrian refugees and their families in the Beqaa Governorate. Photo © UNODC.

SUB-PROGRAMME 2: COUNTERING TERRORISM

UNODC delivered technical assistance to **Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia** on various counter-terrorism activities, including (i) enhancing the capacities of criminal justice and law enforcement officers for conducting investigation and adjudication of terrorist crimes; (ii) preventing the use of the internet for terrorist purposes; (iii) countering terrorism financing; (iv) countering foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) and (v) chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence (CBRN) terrorism.

Overall, **216 criminal justice practitioners, judges, and law enforcement officers** (with approximately 15% female participation) benefitted from capacity building activities, and **52 terrorism victims/survivors** (55% female victims of terrorism) were provided with psychosocial recovery support.

“

I've been waiting 16 years for this moment. This is the first time someone has asked me how I am, the first time someone has given me time, listened to me, respected me, and helped me see things differently.... It's the first time I've revealed my weaknesses because, in front of others, I have to show myself as the strong, the protector, the powerful one.

”



Azok from Iraq is a terrorism survivor who attended a psychosocial workshop including art therapy implemented by UNODC with the Lebanese Association for Victims of Terrorism (AVT-L). Photo © UNODC.

SUB-PROGRAMME 3: COMBATING CORRUPTION AND FINANCIAL CRIMES

UNODC supported **Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Sudan** under Sub-Programme 3 in (i) anti-corruption and integrity; (ii) the investigation, seizure, and management of assets (including virtual); and (iii) establishing/strengthening effective anti-money laundering frameworks.

More than **710 officials, financial analysts, and private sector representatives** were trained through in-person and virtual training formats in 2022 (with approximately 20% female participation in trainings), and **107 students** (45 % girls) took part in activities promoting the role of education and youth empowerment in preventing and countering corruption.

UNODC introduced a **web-based corruption risk assessment tool** that had been adapted to the MENA region, which is the first step in developing internal compliance programmes. As a result, **30 companies** are using the corruption risk assessment tool and two companies started to develop their own internal compliance programmes with UNODC's support.

Additionally, UNODC produced **studies, guidelines, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** on issues related to corruption and money laundering.

“

I heard from experienced ethics and compliance professionals, and it enhanced my knowledge of international standards for promoting transparency, integrity, and countering corruption in SMEs.

Moreover, we got to know other businesses' practical experience in building effective anti-corruption compliance programmes. I encourage businesses to join the movement towards business ethics and comply with top standards.

”



Safa Ibrahim attended a training by UNODC on “developing compliance and integrity programmes and relevant internal mechanisms in the private sector.” Photo © UNODC.

SUB-PROGRAMME 4: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

UNODC provided assistance to **Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, and Tunisia** in the areas of crime prevention, prison reform, juvenile justice, access to justice and legal aid, and countering violence against children and violence against women and girls (VAW).

Implementation of UNODC's new **Youth 4 Impact (Y4I) programme** started in countries across the region in 2022 and built capacities of close to **900 coaches**, school staff, and families (approximately 50% women) on crime prevention programmes and strategies, and close to **8,316 families** and over **25,200 youth and children** (approximately 50% women and girls) were supported through a series of crime prevention activities.

In addition, over **2,000 criminal justice practitioners, health and social workers, NGO staff, and media professionals** increased their knowledge and skills in the above-mentioned areas (approximately 44% women participated in capacity building activities) and more than **1,300 persons** (approximately 15% women and girls), mainly children in conflict with the law and persons in detention, received UNODC's assistance in 2022.

“

In our society and our customs and traditions, the concept of violence against women and gender based violence is very sensitive. But we now know what this means and what gender issues are. For me, gender-based violence cases and their understandings were not clear. After the training, these concepts became clearer.

”



Twenty-year-old trainee journalist Razan is one of 25 male and female journalists who benefited from a gender awareness and sensitivity training by UNODC in Palestine. Photo © Razan Odeh.

SUB-PROGRAMME 5:

PREVENTION OF DRUG USE, TREATMENT AND CARE OF DRUG USE DISORDERS, AND HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND CARE

UNODC provided assistance to **Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, South Sudan, Sudan, and Tunisia** under Sub-Programme 5. Through the UNODC health in prisons programme, UNODC supported prison administrations in Egypt, Morocco, South Sudan, Sudan, and Tunisia in providing access to comprehensive health care services, including HIV, Hepatitis B virus (HBV), and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) prevention, treatment and care, and primary healthcare in closed settings.

During 2022, more than **11,000 inmates** (including at least 1,200 female inmates) had access to health services in closed settings and were screened for HIV, HBV, and HCV, and tuberculosis (TB); additionally, **10,000 at-risk individuals, including released inmates, their families, and other key populations**, underwent screening for these diseases and had access to other outreach services.

Approximately **90,000 at-risk individuals** and more than **7,000 prisoners** were immunized against HBV and approximately **14,000 prisoners** (including 750 women) and **2,000 at-risk persons** were reached through awareness raising on the prevention, treatment, and care of communicable and non-communicable diseases and other health-related topics.



SUB-PROGRAMME 5:

PREVENTION OF DRUG USE, TREATMENT AND CARE OF DRUG USE DISORDERS, AND HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND CARE

UNODC also built capacities of **70 counsellors and medical staff** (approximately 27% women) and provided a variety of medical equipment and essential medicines to health units in prisons.

Other highlights include comprehensive support to **the roll-out and/or implementation of Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)** programmes in **Algeria and Egypt** and support to **Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, and Tunisia** to deliver quality drug and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care for drug users, prisoners, and other vulnerable groups. UNODC carried out assessments, provided policy support, procured necessary equipment, and trained **550 medical professionals and health care providers** (37% women) on the provision of harm reduction services for released inmates and key populations.



NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES LAUNCHED IN 2022

- Strengthening the capacities of the Egyptian judiciary to improve access to justice for women subjected to **violence**;
- Support the capacities of consular and diplomatic staff on **trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants** related matters, which they might encounter while posted at Egyptian Embassies and Consulates;
- Supporting national authorities in implementing a robust **AML/CFT framework** and strengthen international cooperation on **money laundering and financing of terrorism** cases in Iraq and Jordan;
- Enhancing access to **legal aid and alternatives to imprisonment for children in conflict with the law** in line with the Moroccan legal framework and relevant international standards;
- Programme on support to **forensic services** in Morocco;
- Implementation of **Youth for Impact (Y4I)** started in Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine, and Sudan (and started in Algeria in early 2023);
- Prevention of **smuggling of migrants** via a public awareness raising campaign on its risks as well as on capacity building of law enforcement agencies to proactively investigate and prosecute smuggling of migrants in Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco;
- Morocco and Sudan component of the regional **Siemens Integrity Initiative**;
- South Sudan component of the regional **HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support in prison settings** project.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE

National counterparts and authorities

**Funding Partners
(non-exhaustive list):**

Austria

Australia

Canada

European Union

France

Germany

Italy

Japan

Netherlands

Norway

Siemens Integrity Initiative

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

United States of America

United Kingdom

**Regional Partner:
THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES**

UN Sister Agencies

Academic institutions

**CSO/NGOs & youth boards
and networks**

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