



UNODC Background Paper

Committee: UNODC

Topic: Curbing the Influence of Narcoterrorism and Transnational Crimes

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Letter to delegates

Dear Delegates,

It is a true pleasure to welcome you to this year's SPIS MUN 2026 conference. My name is **Renata Lozano**, and I am deeply honored to serve as your moderator for this remarkable committee. I would also like to proudly introduce your director, **Rebeca Martínez**, who will be working alongside me to ensure that each of you has a meaningful, enhancing, and unforgettable MUN experience. Together, we are committed to promoting an environment where your voices are heard, your ideas are valued, and your diplomatic skills can truly be shown.

Throughout the sessions ahead, your main objective will be to address the **harmful influence of narcoterrorism and transnational crimes**, issues that continue to pose severe threats to global security, governance systems, national economies, and public health. As these challenges grow increasingly complex and interconnected, the need for thoughtful, innovative, and collaborative solutions becomes more critical than ever.

In this committee, you will have the opportunity to explore the topic from multiple perspectives while examining the geopolitical, social, and economic implications while also considering the diverse capabilities and priorities of the country you represent. You should feel encouraged to propose strategic, well-researched solutions; to analyze specific concerns affecting various regions; and to engage in a constructive debate with the purpose to understand the roots of the problem as well as the paths toward sustainable resolution. Negotiation, dialogue, and teamwork in between this committee will be essential tools as you work together to craft comprehensive responses and proper solutions to this global issue.

We are genuinely excited to observe your passion, creativity, and analytical skills throughout the debate. Each of you brings a unique point of view that will enrich the discussion and contribute to a more profound understanding of the topic being discussed.

With all of this in mind, we wish you the best of luck as you embark on this journey. May this experience challenge you, inspire you, and empower you to continue growing as global citizens and future leaders. We hope that SPIS MUN 2026 becomes not only an educational experience but also one filled with memorable moments, new friendships, and personal growth.

We look forward to seeing everything you will accomplish.

Warmest regards,

Renata Lozano and Rebeca Martínez

History of Committee:

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime began in the early years of the UN. One of the first problems the UN addressed after its founding in 1945 was the international drug problem. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) founded the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in 1946 to handle world attempts to track and regulate the manufacture use of narcotic substances as well as trading. Later in the 1970s, the Division of Narcotic Drugs (DND) was established by the UN to offer more organization to these actions.

In 1971, the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) aimed to provide financial and technical assistance to nations battling drug abuse and prohibited trafficking. This was a major advancement in moving beyond only medication monitoring to really assisting states solve the social and health elements of the problem. Established in 1991 to make its initiatives more unified, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) grew to be the main UN organization in charge. For worldwide arrangement of drug control initiatives.

In the 1990s, worldwide worry involved not only drugs but also the rise of global organized crime, corruption, and even terrorism. In 1997 the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) joined the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP) to address these significant threats. They founded the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) together. Along with confronting international crime and justice, this office aimed to lower the supply and demand for medications.

At long last, the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) was improved and renamed as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2002. This change fits its bigger mission, which incorporates not just drug control and crime prevention, but also the fight against corruption and terrorism. In support of the promotion of human rights and the criminal justice system change.

Through a network of field offices, UNODC is based in Vienna, Austria, and works in more than 80 nations today. While advancing justice, it is the primary United Nations organization supporting governments and society fighting prohibited narcotics, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism. Which also include health and human security globally.

History Of the topic

The harmful influence of narco-terrorism and transitional organized crimes also known as some of the most illicit activities and global security problems have been concerningly spreading since the 1900s. That was when this topic started becoming a threat to global security, therefore national and international security began to emerge. Afterwards, in the late 1900s and early 2000s, criminal organizations began taking advantage of globalization, which greatly aided an easier means of communication, deregulated financial systems, and increased cross-border movement of funds and individuals, further fueling and promoting these types of crime.

The previous President of Peru Fernando Belaúnde Terry initially utilized the term narcoterrorism in 1983 for the purpose of describing drug traffickers' attacks on his police force. Thus, according to this context, we can definitively say that narcoterrorism is attempted by drug traffickers to impact

government officials negatively by terrorizing them through threats, verbal threats, physical attack, damage to home or property, and so on.

After this term was officially introduced the escalation of the violence regarding these activities started increasing significantly. The violence started escalating in various forms like, for example, drug traffickers organizations began using terrorist tactics such as, violence and intimidation in order to control drug routes, protect their operations and influence governments in an easier way. All these and so many more led to the establishment of global security in the 1900s to address threatening issues that transcend international borders, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, transitional organized crimes and so many more.

These crimes then caused tremendous amounts of trouble to international security by causing global physical and psychological harm, disrupting the ordinary course of life of people and causing vast economic losses since the 1900s. That destabilizes governments, fuels international conflict, and is a persistent transnational threat that requires global cooperation to combat, with the implications affecting everything from travel and commerce to core human rights.

However, by relying more heavily on transitional crimes it is important to acknowledge that this was not actually a great concern and not even a term until after the early 1900s, when this started spreading. Before the 1900s only a few countries like the US, Italy, and Japan had lots of trouble addressing this issue, until later when transitional organized crimes started spreading significantly because of globalization and the end of the Cold War. After this happened the term “transitional crime” emerged with the purpose of describing that it was now of a global and cross-border nature, along with new organized crime groups forming, and old ones expanding internationally.

The period of the 1900s marked a significant acceleration in transitional crimes as globalization increased along with the spreading of organized crimes across borders. This era saw this term become the major focus of public and political debate in industrialized countries. Then in the pre-1900s organized crimes started becoming a transitional issue, which made several criminal organizations emerge such as the ‘Ndrangheta clans in Italy, even though their operations were not yet global. And finally, in the post-1990s the evolution of technology, increased travel and global trade created more opportunities for criminal networks to expand beyond their borders. Which led to a diversification of criminal activities beyond just drug trafficking to include other forms of crime, and the structure of criminal networks changed to become more global.

Introduction to the topic

Every year, billions of dollars flow through vast illicit networks that fuel some of the world’s most dangerous criminal activities. These underground systems are connected to major lawbreaking operations such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and transnational organized crimes. Together, these activities not only disrupt the peace and safety of everyday citizens but also threaten global security.

The phenomenon known as *narcoterrorism* specifically describes the intersection between illegal drug trafficking and terrorism. Drug trafficking refers to the global black-market process of cultivating, producing, distributing, and selling substances prohibited by law. Terrorism, on the other hand, involves the deliberate use of violence against civilians to provoke fear and pressure governments or societies into making political, religious, or ideological changes. When these two forces combine,

drug profits often become a major source of funding for terrorist organizations, while terrorist tactics help traffickers protect their routes, intimidate authorities, and expand their operations.

Narcoterrorism is also closely linked to transnational organized crime, as they frequently share tactics, infrastructure, and a common need for large-scale illicit financing. Transnational organized crime refers to any serious and profit-driven criminal activity that crosses national borders, carried out by individuals or groups operating across multiple countries. These crimes include drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms smuggling, money laundering, cybercrime, and other illegal operations designed to exploit global vulnerabilities. Their impact is significant: they threaten economies, corrupt government officials, damage social stability, and weaken public trust in the state.

When narcoterrorism becomes interconnected with transnational criminal networks, the result can be the formation of hybrid organizations with the characteristics of terrorists, drug cartels, and other criminal groups. These hybrid groups operate with greater sophistication, adaptability, and power, making them even more difficult for governments to combat. As a result, curbing the influence of narcoterrorism and transnational crimes has become a critical priority for the international community, requiring coordinated policies, intelligence sharing, stronger law enforcement strategies, and global cooperation.

Key players

Colombia

- Historically a major coca-growing country, Colombia is central to the connection between insurgent groups (like FARC and ELN) and drug trafficking.
- Some armed groups fund their operations via the drug trade (narco-terrorism). Transnational crime designations by U.S. Treasury often target Colombian entities, showing its importance in global narcotics.

Mexico

- Serves both as a production (for some drugs) and a transit country for cartels.
- Powerful cartels in Mexico have blurred lines between organized crime and terrorism, using extreme violence, corruption, and even paramilitary tactics.
- Its proximity to the U.S. makes it strategically important in efforts to curb transnational trafficking.

Afghanistan

- The Taliban (and related insurgent groups) have historically taxed opium production, making drug trade a major revenue source.
- According to UNODC and other sources, the drug trade helps finance the insurgency and is intimately tied to narco-terrorism.
- Because Afghanistan produces a large share of the world's opium, disruptions there have global implications for heroin supply.

Venezuela

- Transnational criminal groups like Tren de Aragua originate in Venezuela.

- These gangs are deeply involved in drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, and more.
- These groups operate across borders — Tren de Aragua has presence in Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and more.
- As such, Venezuela becomes both a source and a hub for criminal networks that fuel narcoterrorism across Latin America.

Ecuador

- Because of its geographic location (adjacent to major cocaine producers like Colombia and Peru), Ecuador is a major transit country.
- Local criminal gangs in Ecuador work in coordination with larger cartels in Mexico and Colombia.
- These gangs facilitate the movement of narcotics toward other markets (e.g., Europe), intensifying the transnational crime problem.

UN Actions

The United Nations has taken many steps to help countries fight narcoterrorism and transnational organized crimes. One of the main ways the UN does this is through international agreements that guide how countries should prevent and punish these crimes. Treaties like the Palermo Convention and laws related to counterterrorism encourage nations to strengthen their borders, stop money laundering, and work together to track criminal organizations. These agreements help create a shared set of rules so countries can cooperate more easily.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) plays a major role in putting these actions into practice. UNODC provides training for police, judges, and other officials so they can better handle cases related to drug trafficking, corruption, and organized crime. The UN also runs programs that help countries inspect cargo containers, monitor airports, and detect illegal financial activity. These programs make it harder for criminal groups to move drugs, weapons, and money across borders. UNODC works especially closely with regions that have high levels of narcoterrorism, offering support and equipment when needed.

The UN Security Council also focuses on stopping the financial connections between terrorism and organized crime. It encourages countries to share information, freeze criminal assets, and prevent criminals from crossing borders. At the same time, the UN supports long-term solutions such as improving justice systems, reducing corruption, and helping communities that are vulnerable to criminal recruitment. By combining law enforcement, development programs, and international cooperation, the UN aims to reduce the power of criminal networks and protect global security.

Current status

Today, narcoterrorism and transnational organized crimes remain major global problems, and they continue to grow more complex each year. Criminal groups use modern technology, encrypted messages, and digital payments to avoid being detected, which makes their operations harder for governments to track. Many countries are also seeing increases in drug production and trafficking, especially with substances like cocaine, fentanyl, and methamphetamine. These activities have caused more violence and instability in regions such as Latin America, West Africa, and parts of Asia.

Another issue is that some criminal groups are now working more closely with terrorist organizations. In many places, terrorists rely on drug money or other illegal profits to fund their actions, while criminal networks use terrorist-style violence to protect their operations. This has led to the rise of hybrid groups that act like both cartels and extremist organizations. They use intimidation, corruption, and violence to control territories, scare the population, and influence political decisions. Because of this, many governments struggle to maintain public safety and prevent these groups from gaining more power.

Overall, narcoterrorism and transnational crimes affect economies, communities, and governments worldwide. These crimes lead to corruption, weaken trust in public institutions, and harm innocent people through violence and exploitation. Criminal networks take advantage of weak law enforcement, busy ports, and online platforms to expand their operations even further. Many countries do not have enough resources to fight these issues alone, making international cooperation more important than ever. The situation shows that narcoterrorism is still a serious and growing threat that needs immediate global attention.

Questions

1. What is narcoterrorism, and how does it threaten international peace and security?
2. How are narcoterrorism and transnational crimes connected?
3. What regions or countries are most affected by these issues?
4. What are the main causes behind the rise of narcoterrorism?
5. How does corruption and weak governance contribute to the problem?
6. What has the international community done so far to address narcoterrorism?
7. How effective have current strategies and treaties been in reducing transnational crimes?
8. What actions has your country taken to combat narcoterrorism and organized crime?
9. What challenges does your country face in cooperating with others on this issue?
10. What new or improved solutions should be implemented to curb the influence of narcoterrorism globally?

Quorum

1. United States
2. México
3. Colombia
4. China
5. New Zealand
6. Portugal
7. Russia
8. Canada
9. France
10. Afghanistan
11. Peru
12. Bolivia
13. Syria
14. Honduras
15. Guatemala
16. Brazil

17. Nigeria
18. Germany
19. Australia
20. Netherlands

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