
PNI

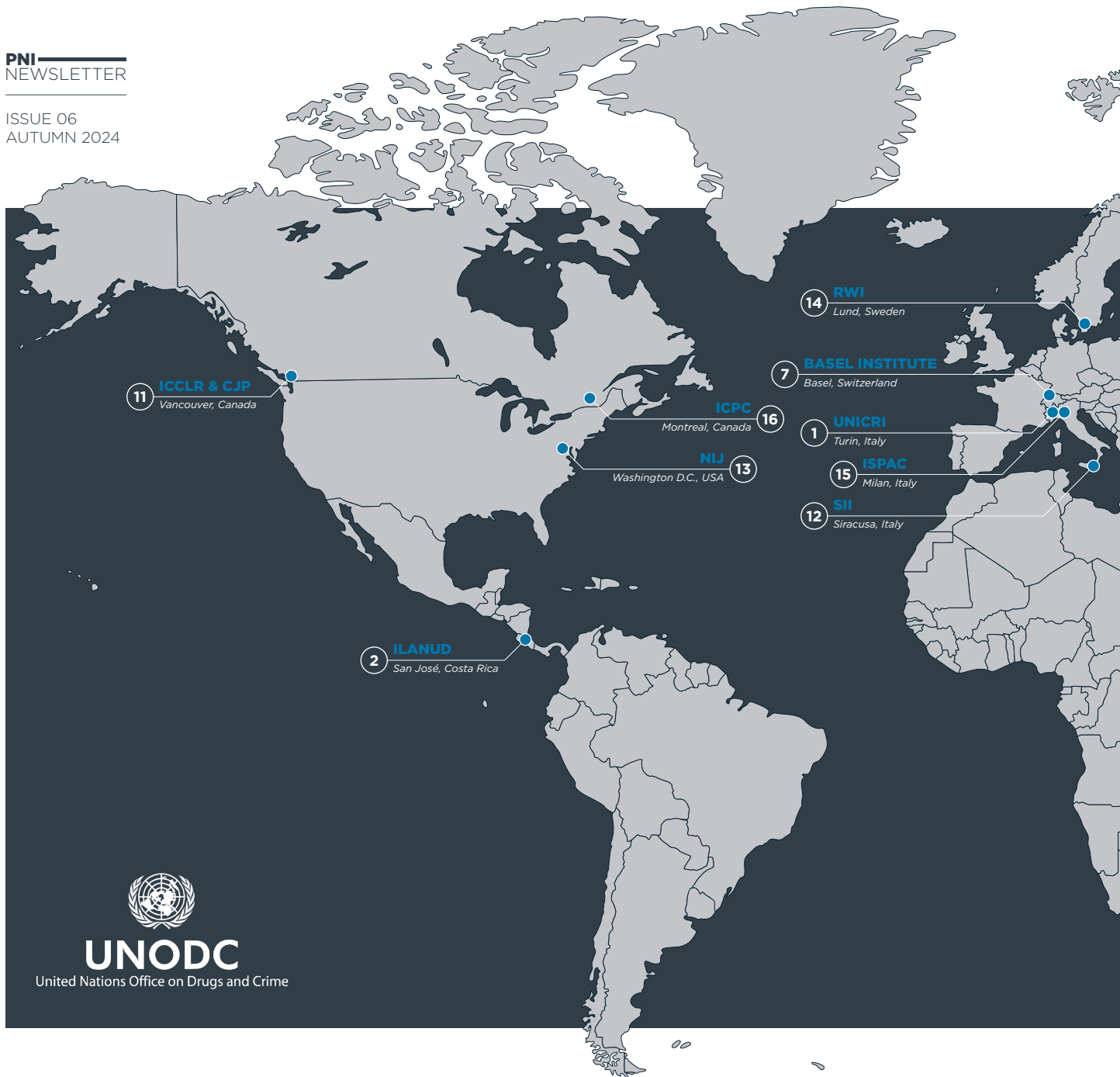
NEWSLETTER

THE UNITED NATIONS CRIME PREVENTION
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME
NETWORK OF INSTITUTES (PNI)

CONVERSATION WITH
H.E. TOMOKO AKANE,
PRESIDENT OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
CRIMINAL COURT

ISSUE 06
AUTUMN
2024





UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

INTERREGIONAL & REGIONAL INSTITUTES



1 UNICRI
United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute; *Turin, Italy*



2 ILANUD
Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; *San José, Costa Rica*



3 HEUNI
European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations; *Helsinki, Finland*



4 UNAFRI
African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; *Kampala, Uganda*



5 UNAFEI
Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; *Tokyo, Japan*



6 NAUSS
Naif Arab University for Security Sciences; *Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

NATIONAL INSTITUTES



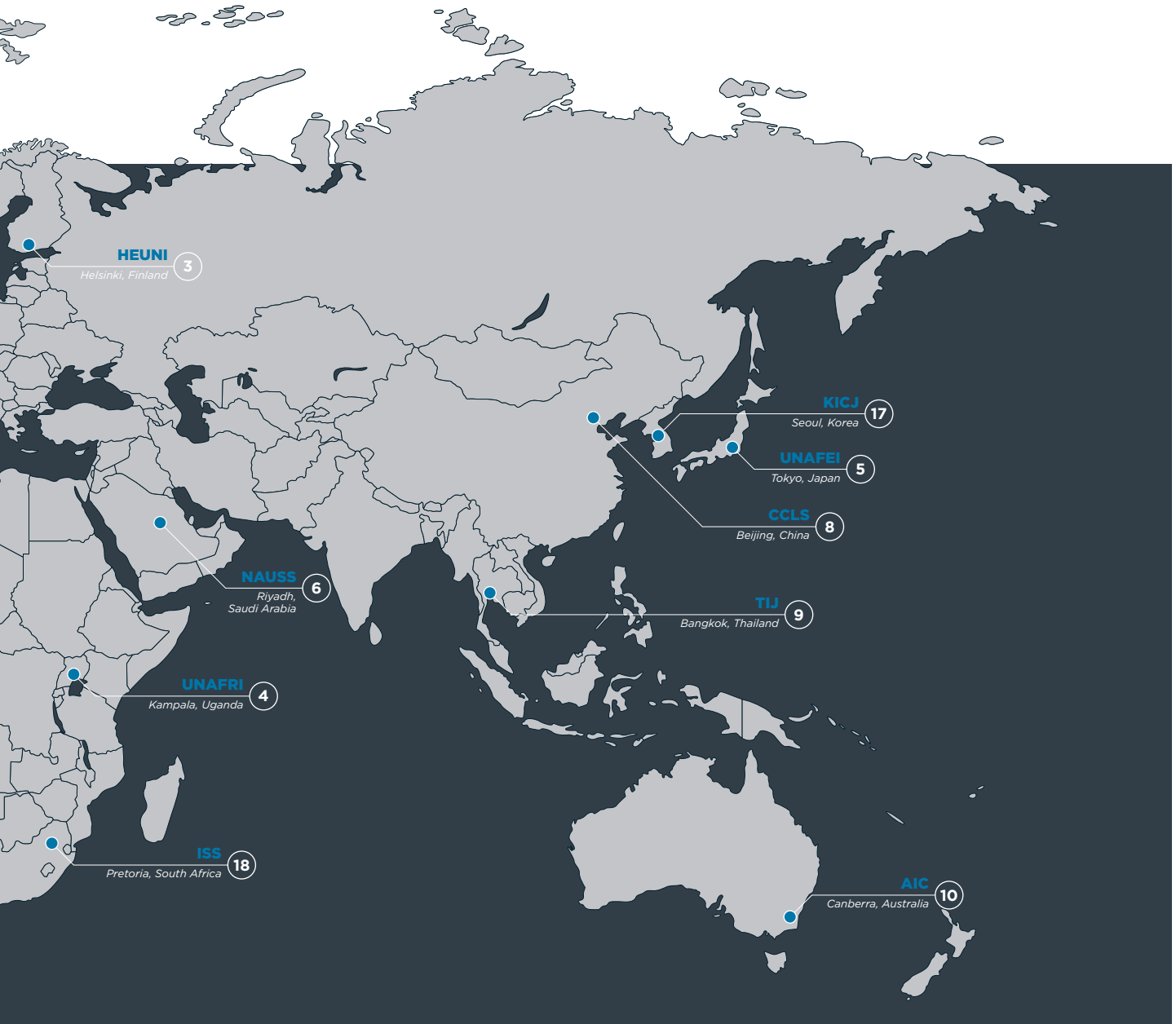
7 BASEL INSTITUTE
Basel Institute on Governance; *Basel, Switzerland*



8 CCLS
College for Criminal Law Science (CCLS); *Beijing, China*



9 TIJ
Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ); *Bangkok, Thailand*



Australian Government
Australian Institute of Criminology

10 AIC
Australian Institute of Criminology;
Canberra, Australia



13 NIJ
National Institute of Justice;
Washington D.C., USA



**INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE
FOR THE
PREVENTION
OF CRIME**

16 ICPC
International Centre for the Prevention of Crime;
Montreal, Canada



11 ICCLR & CJP
International Centre for Criminal Law Reform
and Criminal Justice Policy; Vancouver, Canada



14 RWI
Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights
and Humanitarian Law; Lund, Sweden

KICJ Korean Institute of
Criminology and Justice

17 KICJ
Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice;
Seoul, Korea



12 SII
The Siracusa International Institute for Criminal
Justice and Human Rights; Siracusa, Italy



15 ISPAC
International Scientific and Professional Advisory
Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention
and Criminal Justice Programme; Milan, Italy



18 ISS
Institute for Security Studies;
Pretoria, South Africa

ABOUT THE PNI NEWSLETTER



"Beauty of the Moon"

An NFT Art by a Prisoner

An artist, incarcerated for many years, experienced a profound realization about the value of freedom while observing a full moon—a sight he once took for granted. This moment of unexpected beauty and reflection occurred during an evening walk back to his cell and inspired the creation of this painting. It is part of a collection titled "12 Beauties of Freedom", comprising 12 artworks. These NFT pieces were created through the NFT x Prison Project while the artist was still in prison and were auctioned during the ASEAN Justice Innovation Week 2023 on October 18, 2023, an event organized by the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ).

Holders of "Beauty of the Moon"

1st Sale Collector: Mr. Satapon Patanakuha

Current Collectors: Mr. Kittipon Leepipattanawit and Mr. Trinupab Jiratrirarn

The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network (PNI) consists of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and 18 institutes and entities around the world. The mission of the PNI is to assist the international community in strengthening cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice on the global, regional and sub-regional levels, within the framework of the United Nations Crime Programme. In January 2022, the members of the PNI decided to publish a "PNI Newsletter" as a way of sharing information on the contributions of the Network, in a way that could benefit a wide range of international and regional stakeholders as well as the general public. The Newsletter also serves to promote cooperation within the Network as well as with UN entities and with national and international stakeholders, through the dissemination of information and the sharing of knowledge. The Newsletter is published twice a year, in the spring and the autumn.

This 6th issue highlights the work of members of the PNI in advancing global efforts in crime prevention and criminal justice, focusing on the implementation of Pillar IV of the Kyoto Declaration—promoting international cooperation and technical assistance. In the special section, we are honoured to feature an exclusive interview with H.E. Judge Tomoko Akane, President of the International Criminal Court, who shares invaluable insights on complementarity, mutual legal assistance, and the critical role of collaboration among member states and all other actors. This edition also includes articles on preparations for the Fifteenth UN Crime Congress, strategies for enhancing mutual legal assistance, and the vital role of asset recovery in preventing crime. Additionally, we present inspiring interviews with two PNI leaders from the ICPC and NAUSS, as well as key figures working on the ground to drive innovation in the field in our new "Meet the staff" section.

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UPDATES ON PNI ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KYOTO DECLARATION

The CCPCJ intersessional session on the Thematic Discussion of the Kyoto Declaration, held on 2-4 December 2024, focused on Pillar IV, which emphasizes promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime. This includes strengthening regional and cross-regional cooperation networks among law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners to foster trust and collaboration, enhancing technical assistance and capacity-building efforts to address the unique challenges of developing countries, and prioritizing asset recovery as a vital element of crime prevention and criminal justice.



In line with this session, this issue of the PNI Newsletter highlights the global contributions of the PNI in advancing these goals. The section showcases various initiatives, such as training programmes, capacity-building workshops, and platforms for exchanging knowledge and good practices, addressing critical areas such as criminal finance, corruption, organized crime, trafficking in persons, environmental crimes, and the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

From March to December 2024, the **International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme (ISPAC)**, in collaboration with the University of Milan and with support from the Italian Ministry of Justice, organized a hybrid training course in Milan on “International Criminal Law and Current Tools of Judicial Cooperation in the Field of International Crimes.” Sixty participants, including members of the judiciary, lawyers and graduate students, explored topics such as international crimes, judicial cooperation, victims’ representation, and environmental crimes, gaining practical and strategic insights into the field.

In June, the **Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights (SII)** held a Regional Atrocity Crimes Training Platform (REACT) in Tbilisi, Georgia, in partnership with the Office of the Prosecutor General of Georgia and Tbilisi State University. The programme brought together 40 legal professionals, including investigators and prosecutors, to address atrocity crimes, evidence management, and international cooperation. Combining theory with real-world case studies, the training enhanced the prosecutorial skills of the participants and promoted international collaboration.

The **Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ)**, in collaboration with **UNODC**, hosted the Training on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for Southeast Asia (T4SEA) in order to provide ASEAN justice personnel with more information and practical knowledge on UN standards and international best practices. From 4 to 13 June 2024, 36 participants from 11 Southeast Asian countries and the World Bank engaged in interactive sessions, sharing experiences and best practices. Thailand’s Justice Minister Tawee Sodsong, in his opening remarks, stressed the importance of fostering “hope” to combat injustice and build a shared vision for effective justice across the region.



CRIMINAL FINANCES

The 8th Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies, held on 11-12 September 2024, attracted over 1,000 participants from sectors including law enforcement, academia, the private sector, and civil society. Organized by the **Basel Institute on Governance** in collaboration with Europol and UNODC, the hybrid event examined strategies to combat the misuse of cryptocurrencies in crimes such as ransomware, money laundering, and terrorist financing. Key discussions addressed the risks posed by virtual assets, emphasizing the need for effective regulation and enforcement to enhance global security. Presentations highlighted collaborative

efforts among law enforcement, blockchain firms, and crypto providers to trace illicit transactions and recover assets.



FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION AND ASSET RECOVERY

The **Basel Institute's** International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR) launched a Financial Investigations and Asset Recovery Workshop for 25 Ukrainian anti-corruption practitioners, marking the first phase of a Train-the-Trainer programme extending into 2025. This initiative aims to enhance local training capacity by certifying six Ukrainian professionals as ICAR trainers while training 125 additional participants. ICAR's practical methodology focuses on real-world scenarios, teamwork, and collaboration across agencies. By equipping practitioners with these skills, the programme ensures sustainable expertise and supports Ukraine's ongoing efforts in anti-corruption and asset recovery.



From 6 to 9 May 2024, the **SII**, in collaboration with the Supreme Judiciary Council of Qatar, organized a **Capacity Strengthening Programme for Qatari Judges on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT)** in Rome,

Italy. The programme brought together 11 judges, prosecutors and financial experts to enhance their knowledge and skills in combating financial crimes. Topics included legal frameworks, investigative techniques, international cooperation, and FATF reporting. Field visits to the Antimafia Prosecutor's Office and the Guardia di Finanza offered practical insights.

TERRORISM AND RADICALIZATION

A hybrid conference titled **"The Prosecution of Terrorism Offences, Illegal Possession, and Trafficking in Firearms in East and Southern Africa"** was organized by the **United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)** on 20 February 2024. With 57 participants from eight countries, including government officials and civil society representatives, the event explored the links between terrorism and arms trafficking, challenges in judicial cooperation, and the training of judges and prosecutors. Discussions also emphasized strategies for offender re-socialization and harmonizing national judicial systems with international law.

Addressing radicalization among youth, the **International Center for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC)**, in collaboration with Réseau d'échange et de soutien aux actions locales (RÉSAL), organized a training session on **"Radicalization Leading to Violence and Acts of Hatred"** in Montreal on 25 September 2024. Funded by Montréal's "Prévention Montréal" programme and led by an expert from the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV), the session examined the causes of radicalization, violent extremism, and protective factors to prevent such acts, with a focus on youth aged 12 to 25.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, ONLINE VIOLENCE AND CYBERSEXUALITY

In February 2024, the **ICPC** and RÉSAL organized a training session in Montreal on **cybersexuality and cyberviolence**, exploring the complexities of sexuality in the digital age. Led by a sexologist, the session emphasized feminist, intersectional approaches to support young people aged 12-25 in navigating digital spaces safely. Using examples such as Twitch for outreach and addressing sexting, the session provided practical tools for community workers and social development officers.

Radical and harmful online content continues to shape digital environments. A seminar hosted by the **Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)** in May 2024 presented findings from a national survey in Australia, analysing exposure to fringe content and its overlap with child sexual abuse material and violent attitudes. Attended by 35 government officials, the event offered effective strategies to mitigate these risks.

In June 2024, the **AIC** held a seminar exploring the **links between violent pornography and sexual violence**, based on research showing its connection to self-reported acts of violence. The session highlighted the importance of prevention strategies, including age verification, public awareness campaigns, and targeted education programmes.

From June to November 2024, the **SII** hosted a **training series on cybercrime**, bringing together judges and experts from Egypt and Portugal. Participants addressed key topics such as financial crimes, intellectual property theft, and child sexual abuse material (CSAM), equipping them with practical tools and strategies to enhance judicial practices.

In order to address the need for robust regulation of digital assets and AI, **UNAFRI** and the University of Birmingham organized a “sandpit event” in Kampala in July. Participants explored challenges in **cryptocurrency and AI governance**, emphasizing localized solutions and preparing for the 2025 African Conference on Digital Regulation.

The **AIC** and the **European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI)** co-organized a webinar in June on **child sexual exploitation via online platforms**. The session analysed risks faced by young users of dating apps and websites, highlighting how technology enables offenders and offering actionable prevention strategies.

In August 2024, the **AIC** hosted a webinar on **live-streaming child sexual abuse**, demonstrating how financial tracking can identify perpetrators. The session also addressed challenges such as encrypted platforms and cross-border jurisdictional barriers while showcasing successful investigative strategies.

In November 2024, the AUS-US Joint Council, with the participation of the **AIC**, hosted a webinar on financial sextortion, a growing cybercrime involving the blackmail of victims with intimate materials. The session highlighted AIC’s research and expertise, prevention strategies, public awareness efforts, and law enforcement responses to combat this escalating issue.

The transformative role of AI in crime prevention was the focus of a roundtable by the **National Institute of Justice (NIJ)** and the **Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice (KICJ)** during the November American Society of Criminology meeting. Discussions explored advances in predictive algorithms and real-time surveillance, while addressing ethical concerns such as privacy and bias.

ORGANIZED CRIME

From 24 to 28 June 2024, a **Youth and Organized Crime Training** event was held in Cartagena, Colombia, co-organized by the **United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD)**, the Office of the Attorney General of Spain, and the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors (AIAMP) Juvenile Justice Network. The hybrid event gathered 35 Ibero-American prosecutors and judicial officials to address youth involvement in organized crime. Emphasizing restorative justice as an alternative to punitive measures, the training provided practical tools to promote rehabilitation and effectively manage such cases.

The **Mekong Development Dialogue 2.0**, held on 6-7 November 2024, was co-hosted by the **TIJ**, the Government’s Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), and the Mekong-Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime (MAP-TNC). The event strengthened regional cooperation in responding to transnational organized crime. The TIJ led a session on “Local Justice Innovation - Connecting the Local with the Regional and Global,” highlighting the integration of local initiatives with broader frameworks in order to develop coordinated responses to complex challenges.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

On 23 April 2023, the **AIC** and **HEUNI** co-organized an online seminar on **responsible recruitment to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers**. The seminar examined exploitation in Finland and Australia, highlighting similarities, differences, and promising practices to tackle modern slavery, with experts presenting concrete solutions. The **AIC** and **HEUNI** also hosted a webinar on 10 September 2024, focused on **coercive control in trafficking investigations**. The session introduced research on interviewing victims of

trafficking and offered practical strategies for investigative interviews in order to clarify whether the victim has been subjected to coercive control.

From 1 to 3 July 2024, the **SII**, in collaboration with the **UNODC**, organized the Liaison Magistrate Initiative Workshop in Siracusa, Italy. This multi-stakeholder event enhanced judicial cooperation between Europe and West Africa in **combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants**. The workshop brought together liaison magistrates, legal practitioners and international organizations in order to discuss mutual legal assistance mechanisms, practical strategies, and successful case studies, strengthening networks and addressing policy gaps.

CRIMES AGAINST CULTURAL PROPERTY

The **International Conference on Preventing Art Crime through Regulation and Self-Regulation** took place in Milan, Italy, on 30 September 2024. Co-organized by **ISPAC** and the UNESCO Chair at the University of Campania, the hybrid event gathered 300 participants from across Europe, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Key discussions were held for example on due diligence, anti-money laundering, and ethical codes in the art market. A featured presentation highlighted recent legal developments and case studies in recovering illicitly exported cultural heritage.



On 15 November 2024, the conference **“L’arte dispersa: Legal Framework and Recent Case-Law for Recovering Cultural Goods”** in Naples, Italy, brought together experts to address cultural property crimes. Co-organized by **ISPAC**, the UNESCO Chair, and the Fondazione Banco Napoli, the event examined strategies for recovering illicitly exported cultural goods. Key discussions covered international legislation, judicial cooperation and asset recovery, offering participants from Italy and France practical tools and insights in order to enhance efforts in protecting and preserving cultural heritage.

ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

On 22 October 2024, **ISPAC** hosted the **International Conference on Environmental Restorative Justice** in Milan, Italy, in a hybrid format. The event attracted 150 participants from Europe, Brazil, and Australia, including academics and lawyers. Discussions explored environmental restorative justice as a framework for addressing human welfare, ecosystems, species rights, and climate change injustices, focusing on concepts such as environmental, ecological, species, and climate justice.

From 1 March to 13 April 2024, the SII held the training programme **“The Transnational Dimension of Environmental Crimes”** in Siracusa, Italy, gathering together 100 judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials. The programme addressed legal frameworks, investigation techniques and international cooperation, with a focus on Italian Law 68/2015, case studies on Porto Marghera and the ILVA steel plant, and the proposed definition of ecocide. Participants praised the programme’s blend of theory and practice, which fostered valuable discussions and best practice exchanges.

The **Countering Environmental Corruption Practitioners Forum**, launched in 2022 by the **Basel Institute**, the World Wildlife Federation, Transparency International, and TRAFFIC, connects anti-corruption and conservation professionals in order to combat environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. Managed by the Basel Institute, the Forum facilitates collaboration through plenary sessions and working groups on topics such as land corruption and financial flows. In 2024, the Basel Institute’s Green Corruption Project hosted a **Regional Meeting on Anti-Corruption in Forest Management** with forestry agencies from Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, sharing strategies and visiting field sites in order to strengthen networks.

A virtual course launched in August 2024 further enhanced capacities to mitigate corruption risks in the timber value chain, fostering practical, hands-on learning across the three countries.



SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The **NIJ and KICJ Roundtable** at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) explored effective crime prevention strategies for random crimes in South Korea and the U.S., such as knife crimes and school shootings. While weapon choice varies due to legal permissibility, both crimes share fundamental characteristics that threaten public safety. The session highlighted prevention policies in both countries and emphasized the importance of global efforts to foster safer environments beyond national boundaries.

On 19 February 2024, the **AIC** hosted the **Occasional Seminar: The Evolution of Police Operations and Evidence-Based Policing**, which gathered researchers and law enforcement personnel to explore evidence-based approaches to modern policing. The seminar outlined principles of evidence-based policing and showcased examples, such as those from Philadelphia, to demonstrate its potential for improving law enforcement strategies.

AIC's Youth Crime and Gangs Symposium on 4 September 2024, brought together global experts, police and policymakers in order to address youth crime and gang-related activities. Through presentations and panel discussions, participants explored challenges, opportunities, and promising practices in order to foster safer communities and combat gang-related violence.

On 15 October 2024, **AIC** held the **Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse Forum: Indigenous Women and the Criminal Justice System**. This online forum featured experts who addressed issues such as family violence, wrongful incarceration, and systemic barriers faced by Indigenous women. Discussions focused on reforming laws to better support Indigenous women and address the criminalization of self-defence.

The **Diploma in Juvenile Justice**, co-organized by **ILANUD** and the Judicial Training Centre of Buenos Aires, runs from May 2024 to March 2025. This comprehensive programme brings together over 80 participants from Latin America and Andorra, including judges, prosecutors and criminologists. The course emphasizes restorative justice as a key principle in juvenile criminal justice systems and highlights ongoing challenges in implementing specialized justice for young offenders.

From 11–13 November 2024, the **Regional Conference “Achieving Just Societies: Inclusive Justice Pathways for People and Planet in Asia and the Pacific”** was held at the United Nations Building in Bangkok. Co-hosted by the **TIJ**, UNDP and partners, the event brought together policymakers and experts in order to address justice challenges in the Asia-Pacific. Discussions focused on systemic inefficiencies, resource limitations, and challenges faced by vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, in areas such as land rights, environmental hazards, and family conflicts. Themes included justice innovation, environmental justice, and women’s access to justice. The conference emphasized evidence-based approaches and multi-stakeholder collaboration in order to advance inclusive, people-centred justice systems across the region.

ADVANCING JUSTICE SYSTEMS

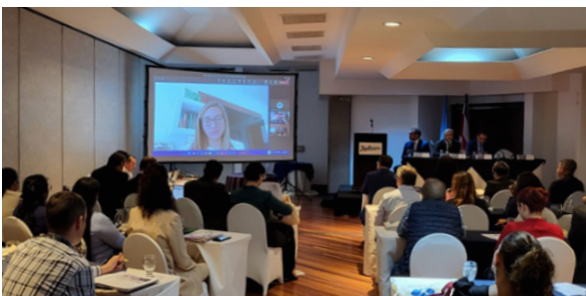
From 6 to 14 June 2024, the online seminar **“The Role of Prosecutors in the Enforcement Stage of Sentencing”** was co-organized by **ILANUD**, the Attorney General’s Office of Costa Rica, and the Ibero-American Institute of Public Prosecutors. Attended by 100 prosecutors and judicial officials from around Latin America, the seminar focused on imprisonment and personal integrity, emphasizing harmonized practices in order to safeguard the rights of persons deprived of liberty.

On 25 September 2024, **ILANUD** co-organized the **book launch of Sociología Jurídico-Penal** by Costa Rican author José Manuel Arroyo Gutiérrez, in San

José, Costa Rica. The book critically examines the penal system from a sociological perspective. Attended by 125 participants, the event fostered interdisciplinary dialogue and contributed to advancing discussions on justice reform.



On 19 June 2024, **ILANUD** and Costa Rica's National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, with OPCAT Special Fund support, presented outcomes of the **Interdisciplinary Training Project on the Istanbul Protocol** in San José, Costa Rica. Attended by 50 participants, including judicial officials, penitentiary staff and forensic personnel, the event highlighted tools such as a virtual course, a gender-focused guide, and a trainer manual. The project strengthens capacities to prevent, investigate and address torture, aligning with recommendations from international anti-torture committees.



On 23 April 2024, **UNAFRI** hosted the online conference **"Access to Justice for All"**, with 387 participants from Francophone Africa and the Arab Maghreb. The conference explored legal aid systems, focusing on legislative challenges and support for disadvantaged groups, emphasizing equality and proposing solutions for improving legal aid across regions.

On 5 August 2024, **UNAFRI** organized a roundtable in Kampala with Uganda's judiciary, attended by key judicial leaders. Discussing challenges such as case backlogs and prison overcrowding, the event emphasized implementing the **Nelson Mandela Rules**, including non-custodial sentences and virtual hearings, in order to enhance justice delivery and promote restorative practices.

SUPPORTING THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

From 16 to 18 September 2024, the **NIJ** organized the **NIJ 2024 National Research Conference**, bringing together 600 researchers, practitioners and policymakers. The conference addressed topics such as law enforcement, forensic science, community safety, and victims of crime. It focused on equitable research design and collaborative partnerships to promote safety, equity, and justice.

On 30 October 2024, **UNAFRI** held an online workshop with Kenya's National Crime Research Centre (KNCRC) in order to explore collaboration in crime prevention research. The meeting resulted in plans to jointly study emerging crime trends, build capacity for KNCRC researchers, and establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize the partnership.

On 15-16 November 2024, **UNAFRI** and Morocco's Ministry of Justice hosted the conference **"The Role of Scientific Research in Measuring Crime"** in Rabat. The event gathered government officials and academics to discuss criminology, victimization surveys, and international best practices in crime measurement, emphasizing regional cooperation and improved data collection techniques.

EXPLORING MODERN SLAVERY: HIGHLIGHTS FROM HEUNI'S AND THE AIC'S INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES¹

In 2024, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI) in Helsinki, Finland, and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) in Canberra, Australia partnered to co-host the webinar series "Down Under and Up North: Modern Slavery Discussions between Australian and Finland". This series has served as an information exchange between the Northern and Southern hemispheres on modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. The aim of this series has been to showcase the work and expertise of both institutes, examine the similarities and differences in experiences and challenges, and highlight promising practices in tackling modern slavery. Both the AIC and HEUNI have well-developed and longstanding programmes of work focused on human trafficking and modern slavery, and are internationally renowned centres of knowledge on the topic. Across the year the institutes have co-hosted four webinars. Each has featured expert speakers presenting on their work and discussing current issues in understanding and responding to modern slavery. Experts from within each institute, as well as invited guests from law enforcement, government, civil society, the private sector and academia, have taken part. Each webinar has been well attended, with audiences of between 60 and 250 people from across the world, working in multiple sectors.

The focus of these webinars has spanned multiple topics of relevance to policymakers, law enforcement,

service providers and others charged with responding to modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation. The first webinar, held in April 2024, examined how to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers at recruitment and placement. Australian and Finnish presenters canvassed this issue and measures to address it in their respective countries. A subsequent panel discussion further examined prevention and response mechanisms, along with their effectiveness, in each country, with a particular focus on measures adopted by businesses, industry regulators and victim support services.

The next webinar, held in June 2024, focused on the commercial sexual exploitation of children via online platforms. After a brief opening presentation examining the growing role of technology and online domains in human trafficking and modern slavery, researchers from the AIC presented some of their recent work on the online sexual exploitation of children. This research adopts a particular focus on how dating apps and online dating platforms are used in the sexual exploitation of children, as well as the use of online forums for the trading of information by perpetrators. Reflections from the Finnish perspective were provided at the end of the webinar.

A third webinar in September 2024 considered the role of coercive control in the trafficking of persons, and how to assess this in the context of criminal investigations. Speakers from across academia and Finnish law enforcement covered the unique challenges and novel solutions regarding this from a criminal justice perspective, drawing on both direct experiences in criminal investigations and the academic literature on investigative interviewing.

The final webinar, held recently in December 2024, explored the need for accurate and timely data on human trafficking and modern slavery. Australian presenters showcased recent efforts to establish a

¹ The PNI Newsletter Editorial Team extends its sincere thanks to Dr. Christopher Dowling, Research Manager for the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, Elder Abuse, and Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery Research Programs at the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), for his invaluable contribution to this article.

state-of-the-art National Minimum Data Set as a linked central national data repository on instances of human trafficking and modern slavery which have come to the attention of police and other services. Meanwhile, the newly digitized case management system of the Finnish Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking, or TILDA, was also examined. Presenters discussed the development of these datasets, as well as the contribution that comprehensive and current data can make to law enforcement and efforts to support victims across both countries.

AIC Deputy Director Dr Rick Brown stated that both institutes have done “...terrific work to address human trafficking and modern slavery over the years, and there is much that we can learn from one another.” Reflecting on the webinar series, he added that it has “...served as a useful forum for the sharing of knowledge and approaches, with each other and with attendees from across the globe, and has strengthened

the relationship between our two institutes.” HEUNI Director Dr Natalia Ollus further commented that the webinar series is “...a manifestation of the importance of cooperation and sharing of expertise...” and that the webinars “...have been very inspiring and substantive, with many concrete examples of how to address exploitation and modern slavery”. She also highlighted that she hopes this will serve as a “...model for enhanced PNI cooperation in areas of mutual interest”.

The AIC and HEUNI would like to thank all of the speakers who generously donated their time to make this webinar series such a success, as well as those who attended and participated so enthusiastically in discussions. Both institutes remain committed to improving understanding and responses to modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation, so keep an eye out for future releases!

**ADVANCING
THE BANGKOK RULES:
REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE
MEETING IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**



From 25 to 27 November 2024, the United Nations Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD), the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) and the UNODC co-organized **the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Consultative Meeting to Advance the Application of the Bangkok Rules**. Held in San José, Costa Rica, in a hybrid format, the meeting brought together approximately 90 participants, including prison officials, policymakers, academics, and representatives from international organizations and civil society.

The Bangkok Rules, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, provide critical guidelines for the gender-sensitive treatment of women prisoners and promote non-custodial measures for women offenders. However, implementing these rules remains a challenge, particularly in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, where female incarceration rates are among the highest in the world. According to the World Female Imprisonment List, more than 740,000 women are deprived of their liberty worldwide. While Asia and the Americas have the largest numbers of incarcerated women, the

Americas have the highest incarceration rate, with over 300,000 women in prison, equating to 30 women per 100,000 inhabitants. Within Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 95,000 women are imprisoned, with an incarceration rate of 13.7 per 100,000 inhabitants, one of the highest in the world.

The region faces additional challenges, including a lack of updated and comparable data on women in prison. Available estimates indicate a sharp increase in the number of women incarcerated in Latin America, rising from 40,000 in 2006 to more than 74,000 in 2010. Many of these women are held in pretrial detention, often for drug-related offences, and approximately 19,000 children live in prisons with their mothers, reflecting the pressing need for reforms that address the unique needs of women prisoners. Historically, prison systems have been designed primarily for men, which has influenced the focus of attention and infrastructure planning. This androcentric approach, coupled with limited resources, forces many prison systems to make improvised adjustments for women prisoners, often resulting in inadequate facilities and care.

During the meeting, participants reviewed progress and challenges in implementing the Bangkok Rules, focusing on the need to bridge the gap between legal frameworks and the reality of prison conditions. They emphasized the importance of improving prison infrastructure, addressing resource constraints, and identifying innovative practices that promote the well-being of women prisoners and offenders. Participants also highlighted the necessity of mobilizing resources and establishing a global funding mechanism to support initiatives benefiting women in contact with the criminal justice system.

The consultative meeting was organized in connection with the project “Renewing Our Promise: Fostering Progress and Investments to Advance the Application of the Bangkok Rules.” It reflected the ongoing efforts of the TIJ, the UNODC and ILANUD to enhance the treatment of women in contact with criminal justice systems. Participants emphasized that sustainable progress requires not only innovative practices but also enhanced international cooperation and a renewed commitment to addressing systemic challenges. By fostering dialogue and sharing knowledge, the meeting reinforced a shared vision of justice systems that prioritize human rights, gender equity, and effective rehabilitation for women worldwide.

In the margins of the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Mr. Douglas

Durán Chavarría, Executive Director of ILANUD, and Dr. Phiset Sa-ardyen, Executive Director of the TIJ. The MoU reflects a shared commitment to advancing justice system reforms, including prison reform, restorative justice, and gender-sensitive approaches, across Asia and Latin America. This agreement also strengthens collaboration among United Nations Programme Network Institutes, fostering partnerships to support fair and effective justice systems globally.



THE ICPC CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY



INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE
FOR THE
PREVENTION
OF CRIME

CENTRE
INTERNATIONAL
POUR LA
PRÉVENTION
DE LA CRIMINALITÉ

CENTRO
INTERNACIONAL
PARA LA
PREVENCIÓN
DE LA CRIMINALIDAD

On 8 October 2024, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) marked its 30th anniversary with a webinar attended by participants from various countries, including South Africa, Cameroon, France, England, Italy, Belgium, Chile, Switzerland, and Canada. The event served as an opportunity to reflect on the ICPC's accomplishments over the past three decades, explore current challenges, and discuss the future of crime prevention and reduction within communities worldwide.

Participants included Canadian and international collaborators, as well as former partners who have played an integral role in supporting the ICPC's mission throughout its history. Discussions during the webinar covered several key topics, including a brief history of the organization, a retrospective on its key achievements and pivotal moments, and a forward-looking exploration of challenges and strategic priorities for the coming years.

The webinar was recorded and is available for viewing on ICPC's YouTube channel. Post-event feedback was overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the engaging discussions and valuable insights shared during the event. Additionally, a short video featuring comments from attendees has been made available on the YouTube channel, providing a glimpse into the impact and significance of the celebration.

LEADERSHIP UPDATES

UPDATES

The PNI family is delighted to announce the recent appointments of esteemed leaders across our institutes. Each of these individuals brings a wealth of experience and expertise to their new roles, demonstrating exceptional competence and dedication in their specialized areas. We are excited to welcome these visionary leaders and look forward to their contributions to our community.

KOREAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY AND JUSTICE (KICJ)



DR. WOONG SEOK JEONG
President, KICJ

Dr. Woong Seok Jeong assumed his current assignment as President of the KICJ on 22 August 2024. President Jeong is the current Chairman of the Fourth Industrial Revolution Convergence Law Association. He has previously served as a member of the Prosecution Reform Committee of the Supreme Prosecutors' Office of Korea, a policy advisor to the Investigation System

Reform Council of the Ministry of Justice, and Chairman of the Korean Association of Criminal Procedure Law.

Prior to joining KICJ, Dr. Jeong was the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and a Professor of Law at Seokyeong University, where he taught criminal law and criminal procedure. He holds a Ph.D. in Law from Yonsei University, Korea.



DR. SUNG-HOON AN
Director, Planning and Coordination Division, KICJ

Dr. Sung-Hoon An, Senior Research Fellow at the Korean Institute of Criminology and Justice (KICJ), has been appointed as the Director of the Planning and Coordination Division, effective 1 November 2024. As the Director of the Planning and Coordination Division, Dr. An will oversee KICJ's international cooperation.

Dr. An holds a Ph.D. in Criminal Law from Meiji University, Japan. He serves as Vice President of the Korean Association of Victimology, Executive Director of the Korean Criminal Law Association, the Korean Association of Criminal Procedure Law, and the Korean Association of Criminology. Additionally, he is a member of the Criminal Appeals Review Committee of the Seoul High Prosecutors' Office and the Prosecution Investigation Review Committee.

UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN INSTITUTE
FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND
THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS (UNAFRI)



MUNANURA ANDREW KAROKORA

Deputy Director General, UNAFRI

Munanura Andrew Karokora is a highly experienced international criminal justice consultant. His extensive career includes serving as a training and legal consultant with UNAFRI. Notably, he played a pivotal role in reviving UNAFRI's participation in the PNI activities and he also contributes as a member of the Editorial Team of this PNI Newsletter.

Previously, Mr. Karokora served as Deputy Registrar at the Tax Appeals Tribunal and as a lecturer at the Law Development Centre, where he broadened his legal training and pedagogical skills. He later transitioned to private practice as an advocate, practicing law for 24 years.

Mr. Karokora holds an LL.B (Upper Second) from the University of Dar es Salaam, a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre, a Master's Degree in Law from University College London (UCL) as a Chevening Scholar, and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Makerere University. He is currently a doctoral fellow at Makerere University's School of Law, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to continuous learning and advancing his expertise in the field.



DR. AHMED LINGA

Director of Training and Programmes, UNAFRI

Dr. Ahmed Linga is a legal academic specialising in international law with a focus on the methodological approach to legal interpretation and application of criminal law and criminal justice.

As the Director of Training and Programmes at UNAFRI, Dr. Linga oversees the development of technical trainings and programmes on crime prevention and criminal justice reforms across Africa. He furthermore assists in UNAFRI's formulation of strategic policies and the rendering of legal advisory services to member states on criminal justice reforms and crime prevention mechanisms. His advanced research and training experiences promulgate UNAFRI's commitment to address the growing concerns about criminal justice systems and control in the African.

SIRACUSA INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE
AND HUMAN RIGHTS (SII)



CÉLINE VIGUIER

Deputy Director General, SII

Céline Viguier joined the Siracusa Institute in November 2024 as Deputy Director General. She is a French magistrate seconded to Expertise France (the French public agency for international technical cooperation) as a foreign expert. She began her career in 2008 as a Deputy Prosecutor (*substitut du procureur*) and in January 2016 joined the Directorate of Criminal Affairs and Pardons of the French Ministry of Justice. She was the deputy head of the office fighting against organized crime, counterterrorism and money laundering and, in July 2019, she was appointed as Senior Prosecutor (*vice-procureure*) in the National Counterterrorism Prosecution Office in Paris, in the specialized unit for crimes against humanity and war crimes. She holds a Master in Criminal Law from the University Paris II Panthéon Assas.

CONVERSATION WITH H.E. TOMOKO AKANE

PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CRIMINAL COURT



*It is with great honour that we present an exclusive interview with **Her Excellency Judge Tomoko Akane**, President of the International Criminal Court, in this issue of the PNI Newsletter. Judge Akane's distinguished career, including her leadership roles at the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) and her longstanding contributions to the PNI, offer invaluable perspectives that resonate deeply with the mission of the PNI and the broader United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.*

In this candid conversation, Judge Akane reflects on critical themes such as the principle of complementarity at the ICC, the importance of mutual legal assistance, and the essential role of capacity-building in strengthening criminal justice systems globally. Her insights highlight how stakeholders across the spectrum—PNI institutions, states, civil society, and non-governmental organizations—can collaboratively contribute to advancing international cooperation and ensuring justice for all. This interview also sheds light on the ICC's broader mandate to uphold the rule of law amidst unprecedented challenges, and its synergy with efforts to achieve Goal 16 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.



You've spent over four years in leadership positions at UNAFEI, having served as UNAFEI's Deputy Director from 2003 to 2005 and as Director from April 2013 to October 2014. Did your experiences at UNAFEI, including experiences with the PNI, provide any insights that have been relevant to your roles at the International Criminal Court, particularly as President?

Not only the roles and duties of Deputy Director and Director of UNAFEI, but also those of UNAFEI professor gave me significant and relevant insights to my current roles at the ICC.

The differences among legal systems, as well as the implementation of policies and practices in the field of criminal justice in the respective states, which are largely influenced by history and culture, have a tremendous impact on the mindsets of criminal justice practitioners, and vice versa. For example, in many countries it is believed that creating a new "independent organization" to tackle the issues of corruption would be a reasonable and thoughtful solution, which is in fact not always the case. But the experiences at UNAFEI remind me that there are diverse perspectives and various ways to address a specific issue, and it is important to respect other systems and practices that originated from different cultural and historical backgrounds. It is also important

to recognize the necessity of resources and to understand how resource constraints can impact the effectiveness of criminal justice systems.

I also learned a lot about working in a multicultural environment. UNAFEI - located as it is in Tokyo, Japan - invites more Asian participants than those from other regions and could be called a centre of international criminal justice in Asia and beyond. I learned about Asian culture in a broad sense and found some similarities among Asian justice practitioners, as well as differences. As a member of the PNI, I worked with criminal justice practitioners and researchers from all over the world. The PNI members are always friendly, work with each other in a cooperative manner, and are mindful to develop mutual understanding among their colleagues, regardless of their national origin. At the same time, I learned that other PNI members apply even more flexible staffing approaches than UNAFEI, with regard to the national origin of staff and thus the working culture. For example, I came to understand the necessity of ensuring unity among the staff in the organization, which can be maintained under appropriate leadership. These experiences taught me that cooperation among people and organizations can be enhanced, first, based on mutual trust by working together with shared common goals and, second, by establishing mutual respect based on better understanding, which usually leads us to empathize with other approaches, even though diversity and differences should be well recognized.

Unfortunately, Asian staff and States Parties to the ICC from Asia are always a minority in the ICC. Since I learned a lot from Asian participants and visiting experts of UNAFEI, I am quite confident in saying that many of the Asian policymakers, practitioners and experts who work for either domestic or international organizations are well qualified and thus can contribute to the criminal justice field, both domestically and internationally. It is important for me, as President of the ICC, that I am confident in my origin as a prosecutor of Japan, and as a representative of the Asian region.

For all of us in the PNI family and for those involved with the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, I think it's safe to say we all have great respect for the importance of the rule of law as a means to achieve equal protection under the law, procedural fairness and human rights - particularly in the context of the inclusion of Goal 16 in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. I wonder if you might share some of your personal thoughts on what

the rule of law has meant to you throughout your career and what new perspectives on the rule of law you have gained in your time at the ICC.

Indeed, the rule of law is essential especially for the criminal justice field, domestically and internationally. That is one of my life-long missions as a practitioner who has been working to achieve justice. In the past, while I worked for the prosecution in Japan and at UNAFEI, I viewed the rule of law as a slogan against corruption or abuse of power. And I was always proud of Japanese criminal justice practices which have been doing well in terms of operational integrity and efficiency. At the same time, I deeply believed that the rule of law must be a fundamental and common value to be shared among all criminal justice practitioners and academia, which everyone should uphold at the domestic, regional and international levels. Thus, at that time, the rule of law was a principle that I should never forget the importance of.

However, the meaning of the rule of law sounds a bit different to me now, after I assumed the position of the President of the ICC, because I strongly feel that the rule of law at the global level is at risk, although the rule of law is the primary and most important principle and line of defence to protect the legitimacy of the ICC.

Recently, in my lecture to students at Leiden University, I said:

“The ICC is entrusted with a noble mandate: to fight against impunity and establish the rule of law by carrying out fair judicial proceedings. I believe that the ICC has achieved more in its over two decades of existence than many thought possible. The Court has beyond any doubt become one of the pillars of the international legal system and it is very important that our State Parties continue supporting us in order to continue strengthening this system.

We all know that the Court is at a very critical moment. As cases subject to the Court’s jurisdiction have expanded, the Court is under enormous pressure and is subject to threats and coercive measures from powerful actors. As a judicial institution, the Court has been continuing and will continue to carry out its mandate in an impartial manner without being influenced by these actions or other political considerations. Because the ICC is one of the few tools that the international community has left to deal with core crimes, we must defend and reinforce the

commitment embodied in the Rome Statute to combat impunity and provide justice to victims.”

Sadly, the ICC, its judges and staff are facing unprecedented politically motivated threats that seek to undermine the ICC’s legitimacy and its ability to enforce the rule of law and administer justice. I have repeatedly reiterated the importance of the rule of law to the States Parties of the ICC, as well as in my recent address to the United Nations General Assembly:

“I want to be clear. We will never give up. We will not give in to political pressures. We are a judicial institution and we will continue abiding by our mandate undeterred, with integrity, determination, impartiality and independence at all times. Our guiding principles are those set forth in the Rome Statute and in international law. Everyone is equal before the law. The Statute applies equally to all persons without any distinction based on official capacity or other personal situations. ... We all know that the rules-based international order is at serious risk. The ICC is one of the few, if not the only, tool that you have left to pursue justice under the rule of law. If the ICC collapses, the international community will be left without any means to enforce the rule of law in a world where international crimes are committed too often. What will be left is the end, not only of the ICC, but of the rules-based international order.”

Because we are living in such difficult times, the rule of law must prevail. No one is above the law.

This issue of the PNI Newsletter focuses on the fourth pillar of the Kyoto Declaration: “Promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime”. In that sense, our opportunity to interview you is quite timely in that the ICC has been placing great emphasis on the principle of complementarity. Would you please explain to our readers what complementarity means in the context of the ICC, its importance and how this principle provides opportunities for the PNI to engage in capacity-building and for States Parties to the Rome Statute to strengthen cooperation with the ICC?

The ICC system is based on the principle of complementarity. This does not imply that the ICC is a supreme court above the domestic or regional courts. Rather, it means that it is the court of last resort which may exercise jurisdiction only where national legal systems fail to do so, including where States are unwilling or unable to genuinely carry out proceedings.

The principle of complementarity under the ICC's legal framework is based both on respect for the primary jurisdiction of States and on considerations of efficiency and effectiveness, since States will generally have the best access to evidence and witnesses and the resources to carry out proceedings. Realistically, as a permanent international criminal tribunal with temporal jurisdiction that is significantly broader than its predecessor, it is impossible for the ICC to prosecute all cases of international crimes.

That said, we are not insensitive to the fact that some States, although willing to prosecute such crimes on their own or to cooperate with the ICC, are unable to do so due to constraints on human resources. Those States need capacity-building and inputs from outside experts in specific areas, such as gathering objective and relevant evidence, protection of witnesses, and international cooperation especially on the matters of the surrender of suspects, enforcement of the Court's orders, etc. These fundamental abilities of criminal justice personnel are essential to efficient and effective practice. The ICC is mandated to prosecute and issue judicial decisions including judgments, but the capacity-building of the personnel in countries in need of assistance is not its prioritized mandate. Thus, the ICC appreciates and encourages PNI capacity-building activities not only for States Parties but also for non-State parties. Such activities will definitely assist such States to enhance their ability to prosecute such crimes by themselves and to cooperate with the ICC.



The fourth pillar of the Kyoto Declaration also addresses mutual legal assistance (MLA). What role does mutual legal assistance play in supporting the work of the Office of the Prosecutor or the Court? Do you have any thoughts on how the PNI can support the MLA process by working with the ICC and States parties to the Rome Statute?

Since I have served as a Judge of the ICC, not as a member of the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP), I am not in a position to precisely describe how MLA plays a role between the OTP and the States, but I am aware that the OTP has been working in cooperation with States based on specific agreements on a case-by-case basis. I believe that the States which try to conclude such agreements with the ICC can draw on their previous experiences with MLA in cooperating with other States.

Likewise, the Registry of the ICC also engages in concluding various agreements with the States, related to enforcement of judgments, protection of witnesses, and relocation of the witnesses, as well as in performing the role of a neutral agency to convey the cooperation requests from the Judiciary of the ICC to the States. Thus, the knowledge, practices and experiences of MLA among the States will assist cooperation between the Court and the States. Undoubtedly, the PNI can play a role in strengthening MLA practices through capacity-building and technical assistance.

The ICC has increasingly engaged with non-State parties through outreach activities. Could you share any insights you may have as to what activities by civil society, NGOs and other non-State actors would be of particular importance in supporting the work of the ICC?

Firstly, generally speaking, the ICC's work is supported not only by States Parties but also by non-State parties, civil society, and NGOs in broad areas, such as gathering information and evidence, as well as awareness-raising among the broader global society. In fact, from time to time non-State parties even assist in the surrender of suspects sought by ICC warrants. Civil society and NGOs are also main actors for "universality" by urging non-State parties to join the ICC system by ratifying the Rome Statute. The ICC is in fact engaged with non-State parties through outreach activities, usually with NGOs, including global and regional organizations, intergovernmental bodies, and other non-State actors. Such outreach activities are vital for the aim of "universality" under the Statute, as well as for their voluntary cooperation with the Court by raising awareness and building mutual trust, which sometimes leads to practical outcomes such as the surrender of suspects and so on.

On a bit of a different note, in 2014, the ICC concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (the UNODC) on, inter alia,

building the capacity of States to enforce Court sentences of imprisonment, in accordance with international standards on the treatment of prisoners. Under this MoU framework, for example, should the PNIs, including UNAFEI, assist the States to develop the capacity of domestic prisons in accordance with the UN standards and norms together with awareness-raising about the ICC, it would be an indirect but great help for non-State parties to gain momentum to join the ICC system.

As you know, UNAFEI training courses provide more than just the opportunity to develop professional skills. We actively encourage our participants to explore Japanese culture and to share experiences with the Japanese people. Undoubtedly, many would argue that these experiences bring people closer together and facilitate international cooperation. Now that you've spent more than six years in The Hague, would you mind sharing your thoughts on some of your personal discoveries living in the Netherlands or more broadly in Europe? What do you miss about Japan?

For me, UNAFEI is my second home, not because it is located in Japan, but maybe because it is located in a harmonious culture grown in Asia. I always miss UNAFEI and have pleasant memories of when I worked there. I truly appreciate how UNAFEI addresses global issues in the criminal justice field, which may be embedded in Japanese modesty and long-lasting and thus rich culture. And that is one of the points appreciated by the participants and visiting experts from Asia and beyond. On the other hand, I also feel some doubts that UNAFEI represents the values and principles around the world, and UNAFEI itself should always maximize its efforts to broaden its horizon by learning from the participants and visiting experts from all over the world, because we are now in difficult times in many ways. Moreover, Japanese, including the professors and staff of UNAFEI, must be aware that we are in a fiercely competitive world. The rule of law is at stake, and the rule of power could prevail at any moment. How you navigate UNAFEI under these circumstances will matter for the future of criminal justice in Japan, in Asia and beyond. I believe that UNAFEI is now going into uncharted territory.

Apart from that, yes, I miss Japan, but mainly because it is my home country, and my family is there. I enjoy my life in The Hague, or more broadly in Europe. Everything is well organized and equipped. I have learned a lot from my colleagues, especially how they see the legal issues from their own perspectives.

Of course, sometimes the perspectives from civil law jurisdictions are very different from those of common law jurisdictions, and this can create significant challenges in statutory interpretation and determining how to refer to the decisions of other tribunals. These differences in perspectives can lead to passionate arguments, and good solutions can be difficult to find. At the same time, this makes the work environment both interesting and engaging in a way that, when solutions are found, it is very similar to the positive atmosphere during UNAFEI's international training courses, as practitioners from different countries seek solutions to common challenges.

As you may easily imagine, Europe is in close proximity to Africa and the Middle East. Thus, the ICC has a vast variety of staff in terms of their countries, histories, religions, cultures, and others. I recall that this was also true of UNAFEI's training courses, and that there were some legal and cultural gaps in addressing the issues set by UNAFEI, especially at the beginning of each course. Such experiences at UNAFEI helped me prepare for "surviving" in a broader global community, such as in Europe.

I must clarify that living in Europe is exciting as well as comfortable, and I am gaining much experience as a global citizen. At the same time, the world is currently full of tension that divides various groups and states.

When it comes to my personal experiences, the most difficult part for me is the long and stressful proceedings to solve the issues happening around me. I need a lot of patience to settle the heated discussions in which no one concedes. This is not usually the case in Asia. But that is why we need fair and objective procedures to solve these issues. During such long proceedings, the parties or participants involved in the disputes or arguments find solutions, mostly by the decisions of the authorities, or judgments in the litigation after exhausting all legitimate avenues, and they reach a final outcome, even without agreement but with thorough understanding. I have really learned that there is a way to find a peaceful solution even in such a divided world.

I would like to repeat that life in Europe is comfortable, but I do miss life in Japan. Nevertheless, I truly hope that people living in Japan are well informed that Japan is a unique society in a sense, which is appreciated by many people around the world, and thus Japan and UNAFEI should find the way to be continuously leading figures in the difficult times the world is facing.

PREPARING FOR THE FIFTEENTH UN CRIME CONGRESS:

ARTICLES

THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY
MEETINGS AND THE DRAFTING OF
THE ABU DHABI DECLARATION

DR. MATTI JOUTSEN²



The United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, the venue for the 1st regional preparatory meeting, scheduled to take place from 21 to 23 January 2025

The Fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is scheduled to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on 25 – 30 April 2026. The Congresses have been an integral element of the UN Crime Programme from the very beginning.³ They provide a global forum for the

exchange of views between senior policymakers, practitioners, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individual experts, the *exchange of experiences* in research, law and policy development, and the *identification of emerging trends and issues* in crime prevention and criminal justice.

The Congresses are the *largest global gatherings on crime and justice*, and they attract thousands of participants from around the world. As is the case with many conferences and congresses, each UN Crime Congress has a limited number of topics (the most

² Special Advisor of the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) and former Director of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI).

³ The history of the UN Crime Congresses is described in Joutsen, Matti (2021), *The Evolution of the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*, Thailand Institute of Justice, Bangkok.

recent Congresses have had four, but earlier Congresses have had as many as six). These topics, referred to as “substantive agenda items,” have been selected by the UN Crime Commission so that, broadly speaking, they deal respectively with an issue related to crime prevention, an issue related to the operation of the criminal justice system, an issue related to international cooperation, and what could be termed a cross-cutting issue.

The UNODC prepares for the discussions by *providing structure and background documentation*. Each topic is linked to a workshop prepared by the Programme Network Institutes (PNIs) together with the UNODC. While the discussion on the agenda items tends to focus on policy and on developments in the different Member States, the Workshops are designed to be more practical and technical, of interest in particular to practitioners and researchers.

The focus of the Congress on specific topics (with interlinked workshops) is one of the main differences between the UN Crime Congresses and the annual sessions of the UN Crime Commission. The Commission deals with a fairly standard and wide-ranging agenda, and much of the work of the national delegations is focused on the negotiation of draft resolutions submitted by Member States. The Congresses, in comparison, have often served as a channel for discussion of recent developments in crime, crime prevention and criminal policy, and have contributed to the globalization of interest in such issues as transnational organized crime (1975 and 1995), prison overcrowding (1980), domestic violence (1985), victims (1985), environmental crime (1995) and cybercrime (2010).⁴

The preparation of the Congresses requires a considerable amount of time by the UN Crime Commission, the UNODC, the Programme Network Institutes, and the host country. At the time that this issue of the PNI Newsletter is going to print (December 2024), the cycle of preparations is shifting to the *regional preparatory meetings*, which in turn shall launch intensive work on the drafting of what is widely regarded as the main output of the Fifteenth UN Crime Congress, the *Abu Dhabi Declaration*.

The regional preparatory meetings

The regional preparatory meetings are aligned with membership in the five UN Economic Commissions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia. The main functions of these meetings are to insert regional views and concerns into the Congress preparations, *increase regional awareness* of and interest in the upcoming Congress, and as just noted, provide *elements to be used in the drafting of the Congress Declaration*.

The (tentative) schedule of upcoming regional preparatory meetings is as follows:

- Asia and the Pacific: Bangkok, 21-23 January 2025;
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Costa Rica, 4-6 February 2025;
- Europe: Vienna, 25-27 March 2025;
- Africa, Addis Ababa, 8-10 April 2025; and
- Western Asia, (venue to be confirmed), 23-25 April 2025.

The discussions at the regional preparatory meetings are based on the discussion guide, which was considered by the UN Crime Commission at its 2024 session.⁵ The discussions follow the format of the forthcoming Congress, dealing in turn with each substantive agenda item and its interlinked workshop.

Formally, the participants at the regional preparatory meetings are tasked by the General Assembly to “make action-oriented recommendations to serve as a basis for the draft recommendations and conclusions for consideration by the Congress.” In practice, the three days allotted to each regional meeting is not enough to allow for the negotiation of the specific wording of these recommendations. Instead, the chairperson seeks to identify the salient issues raised during the deliberations, which are then at the end of the meeting submitted by the rapporteur to the participants.

Negotiation of the Abu Dhabi Declaration

Ever since the Tenth UN Crime Congress held in 2000, each Congress produces a single document called a *Congress Declaration*. These Congress Declarations replaced the different resolutions that earlier Congresses had adopted on a wide range of topics.

⁴ Matti Joutsen, *The United Nations Programme on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*, Routledge 2024, pp. 153-187 and 238-239.

⁵ The discussion guide is available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_33/ECN152024_CRP1_e.pdf

General Assembly resolution 56/119, adopted in 2002 after the Tenth UN Crime Congress, specifies that the consolidated Congress Declarations should contain “recommendations derived from the deliberations of the high-level segment, the round tables and the workshops, to be submitted to the Commission for its consideration.” However, this request by the General Assembly has proved to be difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil. It would require a mechanism that would distil the deliberations taking place in the high-level segment, two or three parallel plenary sessions, as well as the workshops, and more or less at the same time draft a Congress Declaration that could be adopted by consensus by the Congress. Instead, the Congress Declarations emerging from the Congresses held in 2005 and 2010 were largely negotiated in advance of each Congress, with very extensive (and at times difficult) negotiations throughout the Congress itself.

The approach taken in connection with the Doha Declaration (2015) and the Kyoto Declaration (2021) was quite different. The Declaration was negotiated in advance of the Congress, based on the recommendations and conclusions from the regional preparatory meetings. The draft was then adopted during the opening of the Congress.

This proved a very workable approach and will be used also in the preparation of the Abu Dhabi Declaration. Paragraph 9 of ECOSOC resolution E/RES/2024/9 of 23 July 2024, to be adopted by the General Assembly at the end of 2024, “[r]equests the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ... to begin to prepare, at intersessional meetings ... well in advance of the Fifteenth Congress, a structured, short and concise draft declaration with a robust overarching political message addressing the main topics to be discussed at the Congress, taking into account the outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings, consultations with relevant organizations and entities and the relevant discussions held in preparation for the Congress, as well as the mandate and objectives of the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice”.

Paragraph 10, in turn, “[e]ncourages Member States to finalize their negotiations of the Abu Dhabi declaration in a timely manner prior to the commencement of the Fifteenth Congress so that the declaration can be adopted on the opening day of the Fifteenth Congress, thereby following the approach taken in the preparations for the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Congresses”.

The first Congress Declarations (in the years 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015) can perhaps be described as lengthy compilations of observations and recommendations by the Member States, without any perceptible structure or order. The Kyoto Declaration, adopted at the Fourteenth UN Crime Congress in 2021, was different. It followed the logic of the four agenda items at the Congress and made use of subheadings to provide a clear structure.

The assumption is that the Abu Dhabi Declaration will follow this model. The negotiations shall be led by the host Member State, the United Arab Emirates, and the process will involve a succession of informal negotiations among representatives of Member States, all designed to have the text negotiated in advance, for adoption at the opening of the Fifteenth UN Crime Congress.

Significance of the Congress Declaration

In the formal sense, the UN Crime Congresses do not set UN policy. The most visible outcome of the Congress, the Congress Declaration, is submitted to the UN Crime Commission, which is the policy-making body in this field. However, the Congress Declarations do have a marked influence in setting the framework of the work of the UN Crime Programme for the next five years. Indeed, both the UNODC and the UN Crime Commission have devoted increasing attention to ensuring that the UN Crime Congresses are not “one-off” events, which are forgotten as soon as preparations begin on the next five-year cycle. As was done in the follow-up to the Thirteenth UN Crime Congress in Doha (2015) and the Fourteenth UN Crime Congress in Kyoto (2021), the Abu Dhabi Declaration should provide a structure for discussions in Vienna over the next five years.

This follow-up takes three forms. First, the General Assembly has invited Member States to take into consideration the most recent Congress Declaration “when formulating legislation and policy directives and to make every effort, where appropriate, to implement the principles contained therein in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations” (A/RES/78/223, of 19 December 2023, para. 1)

Second, a standing item on the agenda of the UN Crime Commission is the UN Crime Congresses, during which implementation of action points raised by the

previous Congress is reviewed and discussed, at the same time as the preparations for the next Congress are advanced.

Third, and again at the request of the General Assembly (A/RES/78/223, para. 3), each year the Commission holds intersessional thematic discussions designed to review implementation of appropriate policy and operational measures for the follow-up to the most recent Congress Declaration, “to facilitate the sharing of information, good practices and lessons learned among Member States and relevant stakeholders.” This is done by discussing, at each respective intersessional meeting, one of the substantive agenda items from the previous Congress, as reflected in the Congress Declaration. This ensures continuity in the process.

The regional preparatory meetings from January through April 2025 have an important role to play in promoting the UN Crime Programme. Above all, they will provide much of the ingredients for the Abu Dhabi Declaration, which will provide a guide for the next five years.

USING SYNERGIES TO ADVANCE MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE

IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION AND BEYOND

ARTICLES

TOM SCHMID⁶



Mutual legal assistance in criminal matters (MLA) is one of the cornerstones of the international response to transnational crime, including corruption. MLA offers criminal justice practitioners unique tools to pursue investigations across borders and prosecute transnational crime. Practitioners, however, are quick to point out that formal MLA is a process that is fraught with challenges, such as the need to work with different legal systems and legislation, differences in the criteria for the admissibility of evidence, language

and translation issues, processing delays, staffing shortages, and differences in staff experience and training, among many others.

These very real challenges reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of MLA in combating transnational crime and may even deter practitioners from pursuing cases that require evidence from other jurisdictions. Each year, transnational crime diverts trillions of dollars from the legitimate economy for the benefit of criminals, illicit enterprises and further criminal activity, accounting for an estimated 3.6 per cent of global GDP in 2009 (UNODC, 2011).

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Moreover, the perpetrators of transnational crime have learned to use state sovereignty to obstruct criminal investigations, for example by deliberately operating from a jurisdiction where law enforcement is chronically understaffed, or which does not prioritize cross-border investigations. The inability or failure to investigate and prosecute transnational crime results in impunity, allowing those engaged in transnational crime to enjoy the illicit fruits of their exploitative schemes. Accordingly, the need to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of MLA is of paramount importance.

This article provides a brief look at some of the efforts undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region, including practical efforts to enhance MLA practice among the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These regional efforts – in line with the call for strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of central authorities and for greater regional cooperation by the Kyoto Declaration (Kyoto Declaration, 2022, paras. 61, 63) – are poised to accelerate international cooperation targeting transnational crime. Moreover, the synergies arising from these efforts promise lasting benefits to the region and beyond.

The Crim-AP Forum

Since the 14th United Nations Crime Congress (“Kyoto Congress”) held in Kyoto, Japan, in 2021, the Government of Japan and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have partnered to take an active role in promoting regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region. One of the highlights of that partnership has been the Criminal Justice Forum for Asia and the Pacific, which was intended as a regional forum to follow up on some of the priorities identified at the Kyoto Congress. The forum, known as Crim-AP, has brought together criminal justice practitioners from 18 countries, three Programme Network Institutes (PNI) (KICJ, TIJ, and UNAFEI) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat to share knowledge and experience in the fields of offender treatment and mutual legal assistance (Schmid, 2022).

During the three annual sessions of the Crim-AP, the Working Group on Mutual Legal Assistance (WG-MLA) exchanged base-line information on the organization and practices of the participating central authorities, as well as common challenges and obstacles to MLA. The various sessions also addressed best practices for obtaining electronic evidence,

witness statements and testimony, and bank records, and considered effective practices for asset recovery, including freezing and seizing illicit assets and practices for managing seized assets. The organizers of the Crim-AP forum aim to compile the information exchanged during the three sessions into a handbook for MLA practitioners.

UNODC e-Evidence Fiches

In recognition of the complexity of MLA and the importance of understanding the legislation and practices in requested States (i.e., the State to which an MLA request is directed), the UNODC, in collaboration with central authorities of certain United Nations Member States, has commenced a project to create a compendium of state-specific laws and information on the rules for preserving and obtaining electronic evidence through the MLA process. This project, known as the “e-Evidence Fiches”, seeks ambitiously to compile such information for all Member States of the United Nations. Initiated through the Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (ROSEAP), the UNODC has compiled valuable information from the Southeast Asia and the Pacific region (including eight ASEAN jurisdictions plus Timor-Leste) and seven countries from South Asia. During the second WG-MLA of the Crim-AP forum, which addressed the topic of obtaining electronic evidence, the UNODC introduced this new MLA resource to the participants attending from across the Asia-Pacific region.

New MLA Templates for the ASEAN MLAT

Alongside work at the Asia-Pacific level, ASEAN has been actively engaged in the process of strengthening the capacity of the central authorities of ASEAN Member States. The Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (“ASEAN MLAT”) was adopted in 2004, and the implementation of the ASEAN MLAT is overseen by the Senior Officials’ Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (SOM-MLAT). In 2023, the SOM-MLAT Working Group Meeting on Model Template of Mutual Legal Assistance Request (“SOM-MLAT WG on Model MLA Request”) authorized a project, first, to develop two types of Model MLA Request; first, a Standard MLA request template using the existing long-form MLA template which had been created by Malaysia in 2005 and, second, to create a new short-form template, or Simple template, specifically for the service of judicial documents and for the identification

of witnesses and suspects. ASEAN Member States agreed that the Simple template can also be used for other types of requests subject to the agreement of the parties.

The new templates, which are close to completion, aim to enhance drafting efficiency by combining the benefits of structured forms (including text fields, check boxes, drop-down menus, etc.) with the flexibility of an alterable template. To streamline the long-form template, optional “schedules” may be appended to the request as necessary to include voluminous text (such as relevant laws) or unique subject matter (such as detailed information on requests for electronic evidence, interview questions for witnesses or suspects, etc.). Importantly, one of the key additional outputs will be an instruction manual that provides guidance on completing the templates, as well as explanatory notes that provide country-specific information and requirements. This manual is expected to be a valuable resource for officials who are using the new templates to write MLA requests.

Training at UNAFEI

UNAFEI – as the PNI member located in Japan – has been uniquely positioned to support both the Kyoto Congress and the Crim-AP forum, both of which were hosted by the Government of Japan. Now that the Kyoto Congress follow-up and the Crim-AP forum are both winding down, UNAFEI is carrying on the legacy of the Crim-AP forum through its new ASEAN-Japan Criminal Justice Seminar. The new seminar will be held annually in or around December for a period of roughly ten days, and, like Crim-AP, it will be held in parallel working groups: one addressing offender treatment and rehabilitation and the other addressing mutual legal assistance.

During the first seminar in December 2024, MLA practitioners from the ASEAN region had the opportunity to work with the draft ASEAN templates and provide direct feedback to the drafters on the usability of the forms, potential issues and challenges, etc. This feedback will be invaluable as the final versions of the templates are prepared and provided to the SOM-MLAT WG on Model MLA Request for review and possible finalization in early 2025.

South East Asia Justice Network (SEAJust)

While Crim-AP is a knowledge-sharing platform, SEAJust is an operational network that facilitates communication between central authorities to advance and resolve MLA cases. Organized in 2020 and officially launched on 9 March 2021 at the Kyoto Congress, SEAJust, as of 2024, has expanded to 22 countries and territories, including several from well outside of the Asia-Pacific region such as France and Romania; Japan recently joined SEAJust in August 2024 (UNODC-ROSEAP, n.d.). In Bangkok, Thailand, in March 2024, SEAJust celebrated its fourth anniversary. The celebration was held in tandem with the SOM-MLAT WG on Model MLA Request, which included the First Consultative Meeting on the project to draft new templates for the ASEAN MLAT. This cluster of events serves as just one example of how regional cooperation plays a role in bringing together practitioners from the central authorities of overlapping cooperation networks, reinforcing the personal and professional connections necessary to facilitate efficient and effective MLA.

Synergies in the MLA Field

Regional initiatives to enhance MLA practice throughout the Asia-Pacific region have created unexpected synergies that bode well for the future of MLA. First, both SEAJust and the Crim-AP forum have brought MLA practitioners closer together: SEAJust as an operational network to handle MLA cases and Crim-AP as a forum for in-person exchanges of practical knowledge, challenges and best MLA practices. These two platforms complement one another and should explore how closer cooperation can generate greater synergies. As an initial step, the overlap among practitioners involved in Crim-AP, SEAJust and ASEAN has strengthened networking and personal relationships among MLA practitioners and the UNODC. Upon the conclusion of the Crim-AP forum, UNAFEI is well positioned to carry on Crim-AP’s knowledge sharing mission.

Second, the participation of the ASEAN Secretariat in the Crim-AP forum provided a contact point to springboard discussions toward bringing the UNODC onboard to provide technical assistance. UNODC was then able to engage consultants who had been working on MLA issues in the region to provide drafting expertise and assistance. Consequently, ASEAN is poised to introduce the new templates in 2025.

The new templates raise exciting possibilities for ASEAN. As ASEAN has announced plans to open the ASEAN MLAT to States outside of ASEAN (ASEAN Secretariat, 2024), the new templates could be used by a growing number of jurisdictions. Similarly, the expansion of SEAJust provides opportunities to develop new, and deepen existing, synergies.

Third, a variety of new MLA resources and tools are being developed that will enhance request writing and MLA practice. The anticipated Crim-AP handbook, the UNODC e-Evidence Fiches and the ASEAN Instruction Manual and Explanatory Notes all will be valuable resources for practitioners in the ASEAN and Asia-Pacific regions and possibly others around the world.

Fourth, the involvement of key stakeholders in the region provides a platform for ongoing training and MLA-related research. UNAFEI has been involved with many of the above-mentioned cooperation platforms and is prepared to help train current and future practitioners using the wide-range of resources available to support MLA across the Asia-Pacific region, including the deployment of the new templates for MLA requests under the ASEAN MLAT.

In short, the synergies arise from harnessing the output of distinct projects at various levels within the region and drawing them together to amplify the outcome. Although each of these initiatives arose independently, they enhance and reinforce one another. The ASEAN and Asia-Pacific regions have clearly heeded the Kyoto Declaration's call for greater regional cooperation, capacity-building and technical assistance to support central authorities in their fight against transnational crime, and these efforts have laid the groundwork for closer and more effective MLA practice in the years to come.

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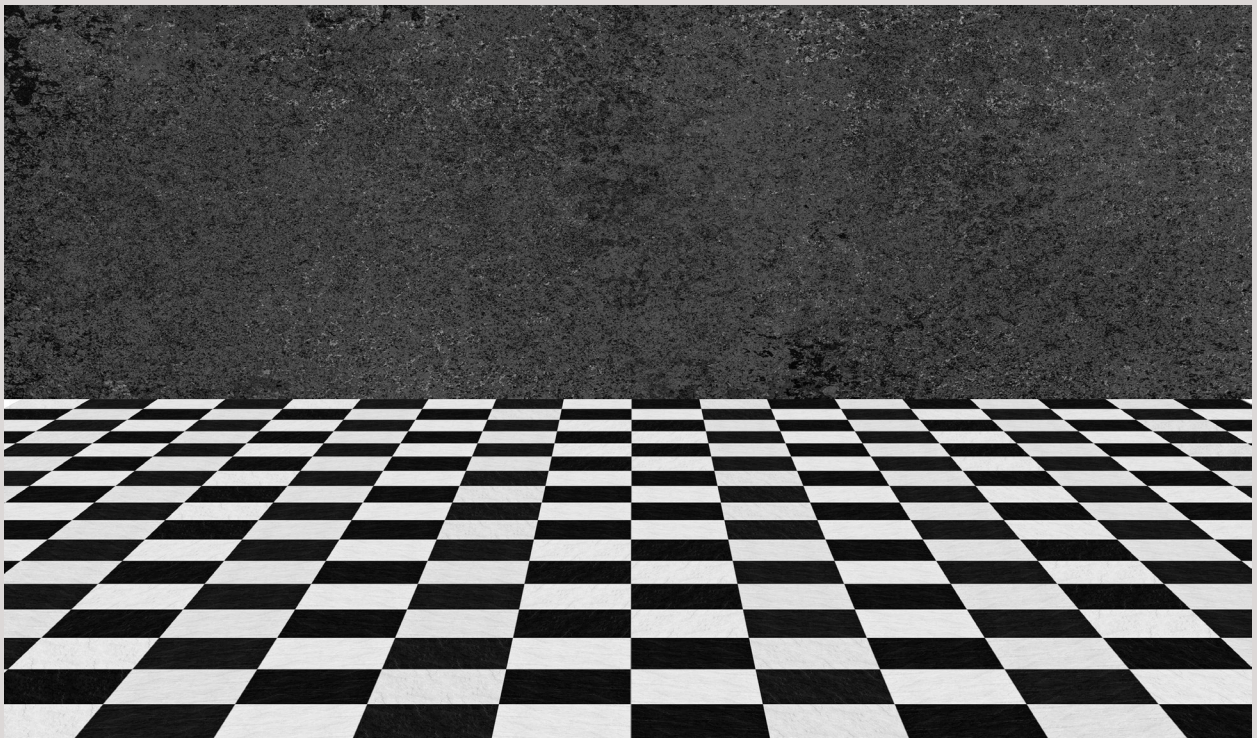
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ENHANCING COOPERATION IN ASSET RECOVERY IS VITAL FOR CRIME PREVENTION

ARTICLES

IKER LEKUONA⁷



This article explains the importance of asset recovery for crime prevention and highlights three vital aspects of international cooperation in corruption and asset recovery cases: informal cooperation mechanisms, trust and technical assistance.

At first glance, the Kyoto Declaration's fourth pillar may appear to combine two separate things. Why should "international cooperation" and "technical assistance" be connected?

The Basel Institute's International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR) provides technical assistance to over 18 jurisdictions across Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Asia. We work hand in hand with our partner governments to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and criminal justice systems to investigate and prosecute financial crimes and recover illicit assets.

International cooperation is a vital part of the asset recovery process and of the technical assistance that we provide. The transnational, high-level cases of corruption and money laundering that we support often involve multiple jurisdictions in which criminal

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proceeds are sourced, transferred, laundered, hidden and spent.

We see constantly that when it comes to asset recovery as a means to prevent and address corruption and other serious transnational crimes, international cooperation and technical assistance go hand in hand.

ASSET RECOVERY: KEY TO PREVENTING CRIME

In the eyes of the public, asset recovery is often seen through the lens of enforcement. It is linked to prosecutions and sanctions and to the desire for justice to be done. But as Article 70 of the Kyoto Declaration emphasises, asset recovery is “an important element of crime prevention... particularly in cases involving corruption”.

At the Basel Institute, we see prevention and enforcement as two sides of the same coin – complementary ways to change behaviours and social norms towards integrity. For asset recovery, three areas stand out.

- **Deterrence:** Confiscating criminal assets tackles the primary incentive to engage in financial crimes: the money, which is a gateway to power and influence. When public agencies and their foreign counterparts work efficiently to investigate, confiscate and recover illicit assets, this has a strong deterrent effect.
- **Disruption:** The financial investigations at the heart of the asset recovery process are key to understanding and disrupting organized criminal networks (Ratcliffe, 2020). Techniques such as social network analysis can build on these investigations, mapping the relationships between individuals and entities involved in criminal enterprises, from wildlife trafficking (Costa, 2023) to grand corruption and money laundering schemes (Costa, 2021).
- **Trust:** When citizens see that illicit assets are confiscated from corrupt individuals and high-level criminals, this helps to build trust in state institutions and to foster a more stable social environment (Pfister, 2019). This effect is enhanced when recovered assets are reinvested in public goods – for example as Kenya did to pay for hospital equipment during the Covid-19 pandemic or as Zambia has done to fund university education for underprivileged students (Marsh, 2022).

Our technical assistance to partner governments focuses on strengthening every link in the asset recovery process or “chain” – from detection of criminal assets right through to their recovery and return. Sometimes this can go further. In Peru, assets recovered in landmark cases from Switzerland and Luxembourg are being channelled into strengthening the criminal justice system, under an ongoing tripartite agreement that ICAR facilitated (Basel Institute on Governance, 2020).

Through this approach, we see tangible impacts on the strength and functioning of criminal justice systems as a whole in our partner countries. And that can only be positive for crime prevention.

EVOLUTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ASSET RECOVERY

Over the nearly two decades that ICAR has been active as a specialized centre of the Basel Institute on Governance, we have seen promising evolutions in international cooperation in the context of asset recovery:

Informal cooperation mechanisms and networks

In line with the Kyoto Declaration’s articles 63 and 64, we have seen a blossoming of positive initiatives to boost informal cooperation between competent authorities when working on transnational cases of corruption and asset recovery. Such informal cooperation is vital to obtaining intelligence and building connections between counterparts across borders.

The Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE) Network facilitated by UNODC is one such initiative. It eases the exchange of information between frontline anti-corruption law enforcement practitioners across the world. As an observer member, ICAR contributes its experience to the network’s growing efforts to accelerate efforts to identify, trace and confiscate the proceeds of crime.

The International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC) and the Global Forum for Asset Recovery Action Series are two other initiatives that have been game changers in terms of expediting intelligence sharing and cooperation on priority cases. The first is hosted by the UK government, while the second is an initiative of ICAR and the World Bank’s StAR Initiative together with the IACCC. These mechanisms are

leading to tangible results in smoothening and complementing formal mutual legal assistance processes.

Trust and relationships

The softer aspects of international cooperation shouldn't be underestimated. We see daily in our work how trust and good relationships between authorities engaged in mutual legal assistance are essential to smoothen the process and lead to a successful result.

This aspect was vital to achieving Colombia's first-ever international asset return using its non-conviction-based forfeiture law in 2024. The return amounted to nearly half a million dollars in the proceeds of drug trafficking and were recovered from Guernsey (Basel Institute on Governance, 2024b). The Colombian authorities recognized ICAR's "contribution and experience [which] facilitated the rapprochement and communication between the Colombian Attorney General's Office and His Majesty's Procureur's Office in Guernsey." They noted that "[t]his has been an excellent example of how judicial authorities can work together to ensure the recovery of the proceeds derived from criminal activities."

Trust, sustained collaboration, communication and positive relationships are also at the heart of successful asset return agreements and frameworks. One example is Jersey's return of around USD 3.7 million in corruptly obtained funds to Kenya, in a case that had previously been stalled for a decade. Proactive informal cooperation, which ICAR helped to facilitate, was key to building trust between the parties, breaking the deadlock, finding legal solutions to recover the funds and agreeing their safe return for the benefit of Kenyan citizens (Marsh, 2022b).

This case was the first asset return under another innovative cooperation agreement based on a sustained relationship of trust: the Framework for the Return of Assets from Corruption and Crime in Kenya (FRACCK). Agreed and signed by the Governments of Kenya, Jersey, Switzerland and the UK, this was praised by UNODC's Officer-in-Charge of the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch as being an "innovative" and "novel" approach to asset return (Basel Institute on Governance, 2019).

Building capacity among international counterparts

Article 66 of the Kyoto Declaration makes it clear why it is not enough to focus solely on formal and informal cooperation mechanisms, and why technical

assistance is vital to the functioning of the system as a whole. States, it says, should:

"promote, facilitate and support the widest measures of technical assistance, including material support and training, with a view to enabling law enforcement authorities and criminal justice institutions to effectively prevent and combat crimes, taking into account the specific challenges faced by and the particular needs of developing countries."

International cooperation is a two-way street. Financial centres seeking to detect and confiscate illicit assets will need information and evidence from the countries in which the crimes took place. And a lot of time can be wasted if mutual legal assistance requests are poorly drafted or not in line with the receiving state's requirements.

Yet many jurisdictions that suffer the worst effects of corruption and crime have low capacity and resources for asset recovery and for international cooperation in general. That is why it is so vital for international donors to support technical assistance programmes aimed at supporting the international cooperation process and building the capacity of counterparts in lower-resource jurisdictions.

This could take the form of financial support, such as the kind provided by ICAR's core donor group: the governments of Jersey, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and the UK. This financial support for our hands-on mentoring and training in low-capacity jurisdictions has been vital in enabling us to remain agile and innovative, to pilot new methods before scaling them up, and to provide sustained assistance in partner countries beyond the usual short-term project lifecycle.

To take just one example, our ongoing technical assistance programme in Peru has resulted in the development and implementation of a non-conviction-based forfeiture law that has already led to the confiscation of millions in stolen assets domestically and internationally (Basel Institute on Governance, 2024a).

Developing asset recovery communities and leaders is another area where states can provide resources and active participation as part of their efforts to promote technical assistance. Practitioner networks are vital for peer learning and to build those trust-based relationships that are so crucial to international cooperation. A standout example is the annual Global

Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies, which we organize with Europol and which UNODC hosted this year in Vienna (UNODC, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Our ICAR teams around the world see at first hand the importance of asset recovery for crime prevention, as the Kyoto Declaration emphasises. Recovering assets helps to deter corruption and criminality, disrupt criminal networks and build citizens' trust.

To boost asset recovery, we need to strengthen every link in the asset recovery process or "chain", from early detection of illicit assets to their eventual recovery and return. And for that, technical assistance is vital.

This article highlights three key areas of technical assistance that align with the Kyoto Declaration's spirit, ICAR's strategic approach and UN-led actions: informal information-sharing mechanisms and networks; efforts to build trust and relationships to smoothen international cooperation; and capacity building between countries.

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INFORMATION ON RECENT PNI PUBLICATIONS

BASEL INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE



Basel AML Index 2024

This report accompanies the 13th Public Edition of the Basel AML Index, released in December 2024. At the heart of the Basel AML Index is an independent, data-based ranking of countries and jurisdictions around the world according to their risks of money laundering and related financial crimes.

Apart from the scores and ranking and a regional focus section, this year’s report includes deep dives into the issues of fraud, FATF grey listing and the meaning of “success” in the fight against money laundering. The Basel AML Index is developed and maintained by the International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR) at the Basel Institute on Governance.

Working Paper 54: Targeting illicit wealth through non-conviction based forfeiture: Identifying human rights and other standards for Latin America

This report accompanies the 13th Public Edition of the Basel AML Index, released in December 2024. At the heart of the Basel AML Index is an independent, data-based ranking of countries and jurisdictions around the world according to their risks of money laundering and related financial



Working Paper 53: Good governance and the just transition: Implications for renewable energy companies

This paper discusses the concept of a just energy transition, with a particular focus on the importance of achieving a transition that benefits both local communities and society at large. It examines the governance and corruption challenges that could jeopardize this goal and discusses how industry associations and companies in the renewable energy sector could step up their efforts to address these challenges. The paper also sets out proposals on how to accelerate collective action in the renewable energy sector.

Working Paper 52: Navigating the political context: Practice insights and adaptive strategies to strengthen the anti-corruption and asset recovery justice chain

Politics matters for the success of anti-corruption and asset recovery efforts. This Working Paper discusses (a) the political and governance factors that affect the performance of the justice system in relation to anti-corruption and asset recovery; (b) provides guidance on assessing these factors systematically, including through a novel Assessment and Monitoring Framework; and (c) reveals how to use these assessments to develop adaptive strategies to strengthen the justice chain in line with changing contexts.



GOVERNANCE IN CORRUPTION QUICK GUIDE 34



Public-private partnerships for financial intelligence sharing

Basel Peters
Vice-President, Basel Institute
for Governance and Human Rights

Financial intelligence is the single best of investigations into corruption, money laundering and other financial crimes. Much financial intelligence is held by private sector institutions such as banks and other financial service providers. How can that get into the hands of law enforcement, where it can trigger or inform investigations? And how can we improve the approach?

This quick guide gives a brief introduction to public-private partnerships for financial intelligence sharing, and how they work in practice, and how they can improve the sharing of targeted, useful information between law enforcement and financial institutions.

**Quick Guide 34:
Public-private partnerships for financial intelligence sharing**

Investigations into corruption and other financial crimes depend on financial intelligence – and much of that is held by private-sector institutions such as banks and other financial service providers. How does that

get into the hands of law enforcement, where it can trigger or inform investigations? This Quick Guide gives a brief introduction to public-private partnerships or platforms for financial intelligence sharing. It sets out how they work in practice, and how they can improve the sharing of targeted, useful information between law enforcement and financial institutions to boost investigations, prosecutions and asset recovery.

**Quick Guide 33:
Multi-agency asset recovery task forces**

To effectively combat organised and financial crime, it is often necessary for countries to establish multi-agency asset recovery task forces. The teams are made up of personnel from various agencies in the criminal justice system. This Quick Guide examines their composition, the nature of cases they work on and how they can be set up. It also touches on the benefits of having such task forces in place and highlights success stories and lessons learned from previous experience.

GOVERNANCE IN CORRUPTION QUICK GUIDE 33



Multi-agency asset recovery task forces

Basel Peters
Vice-President, Basel Institute for Governance and Human Rights

To effectively combat organised and financial crime, it is often necessary for countries to establish multi-agency asset recovery task forces, which would also be introduced as joint investigations task forces. This means an initial and permanent task force, which operates in the external justice system to effectively investigate financial crime and recover funds and assets.

The Quick Guide examines their composition, the nature of cases they work on and how they can be set up. It also touches on the benefits of having such task forces in place and highlights success stories and lessons learned from previous experience.

What are the task forces for?

Multi-agency asset recovery task forces may be established to investigate financial crime, after a serious corruption incident, after the loss of a corrupt payment, etc. They are not

GOVERNANCE IN CORRUPTION QUICK GUIDE 32



Corruption and human rights

Paul Anne Peters
Vice-President of the Board

The relationship between corruption and human rights is complex but cry out for exploration. Could anti-corruption benefit from a human rights perspective? How can the two communities work better together – and what are some risks and challenges?

This quick guide gives a brief introduction to the ideas of the Basel Institute's Vice-President, Professor Anne Peters, and some of our initial work at the intersection of corruption and human rights.

Connections between corruption and human rights

We can identify four main types of legal relationship between corruption and human rights:

1. Direct violation of human rights. For example, where a corrupt public official results in a person suffering to pay a bribe, they would assert that person's right to liberty. Also, the bribery, corruption or financial practice can constitute a direct discrimination or denial of equality before the law.

**Quick Guide 32:
Corruption and human rights**

The relationships between corruption and human rights are complex but cry out for exploration. Could anti-corruption benefit from a human rights perspective? How can the two communities work better together – and what are some risks and

challenges? This Quick Guide gives a brief introduction to the ideas of the Basel Institute's Vice-President, Professor Anne Peters, and some of our initial work at the intersection of corruption and human rights.

**Quick Guide 31:
The disposal and sharing of confiscated assets – best practices**

Asset recovery is a critical tool in the fight against corruption and organised crime. But what happens after assets have been confiscated? How can they be most effectively repurposed in order to contribute to sustainable and equitable development? This Quick Guide examines the various approaches that states take – how they allocate recovered funds towards general government spending, redirect assets towards public interest causes or repatriate assets to their country of origin.

GOVERNANCE IN CORRUPTION QUICK GUIDE 31



The disposal and sharing of confiscated assets – best practices

Anna Schreiner
Senior Researcher, Basel Institute for Governance and Human Rights

Asset recovery is a critical tool in the fight against corruption and organised crime. But what happens after assets have been confiscated? How can they be most effectively repurposed in order to contribute to sustainable and equitable development?

This Quick Guide will explore the various approaches that states take after assets have been confiscated. It examines how they allocate recovered funds towards general government spending, redirect assets towards public interest causes or repatriate assets to their country of origin.

GOVERNANCE IN CORRUPTION QUICK GUIDE 30



Asset recovery legislation – best practices

Anna Schreiner
Senior Researcher, Basel Institute for Governance and Human Rights

Asset recovery tools are integral to combating corruption, organised crime, sanctions evasion and other profit-motivated crimes. However, in many states, the range of asset-recovery tools available to law enforcement and external justice agencies is limited.

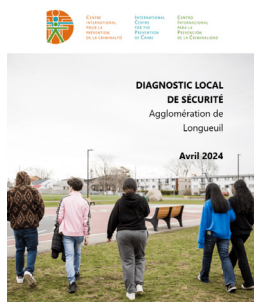
This quick guide examines the established good practices in asset recovery legislation as well as less conventional, broader measures. It shows how states can make their asset recovery laws and policies the potential of their recovery success.

It is drawn from a comparative study of good practices in asset recovery legislation, in addition to cooperation in Corruption and Co-Operation in Europe (COCE) participating States, published in July 2023. It is a working paper by the Basel Institute on Governance and the OECD.

**Quick Guide 30:
Asset recovery legislation – best practices**

Asset recovery tools are integral to combating corruption, organized crime, sanctions evasion and other profit-motivated crimes. This quick guide examines the established good practices in asset recovery legislation as well as less conventional, broader measures. It shows how states can widen their asset recovery toolkit and increase the potential for asset recovery success.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME (ICPC)



Local safety audit of the City of Longueuil, Canada (in French). Published in June 2024, the aim of the LSA is to provide a general description of safety among young people in the Longueuil agglomeration and to encourage community participation in safety issues.

The report is divided into 4 sections:

- An analytical framework, which lays the foundation for the study, addressing urban safety and the space syntax. It also points out the limitations of using police data and quantitative analysis;
- A portrait of crime in living spaces, which provides an overview of crime in the Longueuil agglomeration, detailing alleged perpetrators and victims by crime location, relationships between victims and perpetrators, and the temporality and geography of the crimes, etc.;
- The results of the on-site survey, such as risk factors and the feeling of safety in public spaces in the agglomeration, exploring issues relating to social cohabitation, the school environment, family life and parenting, cyber-violence, etc.;
- Conclusions and possible solutions, in collaboration with youths and local stakeholders, to improve safety, strengthen human and financial resources, coordinate organizational structures, and develop protection strategies for private and public spaces, such as schools and cyberspace.

Data collection plan on the recruitment of young people by criminal gangs (in French). Published in March 2024, this analysis, mandated by the Quebec Ministry of Public Safety, aims to highlight key facts, provide a study of the main recruitment strategies, and



situate this phenomenon geographically through field observation, individual interviews, and a review of the literature on the subject.

The report is divided into 3 sections:

- A framework for analysing the phenomenon and the specific characteristics of criminal gangs, as well as the risk and protective factors associated with their entry.
- The socio-spatial context of the study, highlighting the specific sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and sociocontextual characteristics of the territory concerned, i.e. the Chomedey district of Laval.
- A third section divided into five sub-sections:
 - A few definitions to define the subject of the study;
 - Risk factors associated with gang affiliation;
 - The role and recruitment of women and girls in these networks;
 - The growing importance of social networks in the process of joining criminal gangs;
 - An assessment of the current intervention system to identify possible solutions put forward by stakeholders to prevent or reduce the risk of youth joining criminal gangs.

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME (ISPAC)

S. Manacorda - C. Meloni (eds.), **Le questioni aperte della giustizia penale internazionale nella prospettiva interna** (“Open questions of international criminal justice from an Italian perspective”), Giuffrè, Milano, 2024, ISBN 9788828870890.



SIRACUSA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2024, the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights published the second phase of the External Dimension of Italian Migration Policy (DEPMI II) report. This comprehensive analysis examines Italy's external migration strategies, mapping tools, agreements, and bilateral cooperation mechanisms across a broader Mediterranean region, including Sub-Saharan Africa. Building on the first phase of the project, DEPMI II expands the scope of the study to include new countries and updated datasets, offering an in-depth look at Italy's evolving approach to managing migration flows.

ICPC AND NAUSS IN FOCUS

A CLOSER LOOK
AT INDIVIDUAL PNIs

INTERVIEW WITH ANN CHAMPOUX

Director General,
International Centre for the Prevention
of Crime (ICPC) ; Montreal, Canada



WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT ICPC AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED HERE?

I joined the ICPC in March 2018 as their General Director after a career in the private sector and in government agencies, public corporations and federal and provincial Ministries of Culture.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK AT ICPC AND WHAT IS THE MIX OF ROLES?

We have a team of about 10 experts in various fields. About three quarters of the team are analysts or strategic advisors. The others provide either administrative or communications support.

WHO ARE ICPC'S KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND HOW DO YOU INTERACT WITH THEM?

The ICPC was established in 1994 in response to calls for action from local authorities, governments and United Nations crime prevention entities. Following a declaration adopted by the governments of Canada, France and Quebec, the Centre was established in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

We advise national and local governments on crime prevention, promising practices and tools, and the development of strategies. Our key stakeholders are the governments of Canada and Quebec; the City of Montreal; police departments and municipalities; and our international board of directors.

We interact with stakeholders based on their needs. At the international level, this interaction can be through joint projects such as the crime prevention workshop at every UN Crime Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; the organization of seminars and conferences; research and the drafting of reports and guides; and training, through our new "Mobilizing Civil Society to Prevent Delinquency and

Crime” programme that can be exported worldwide and tailored to local and regional needs.

We also have about 60 international members with whom we interact mostly through newsletters. We are always on the lookout for opportunities to work more closely with them, either individually or as a group.

WHAT DREW YOU TO YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

I was first attracted by the ICPC’s mission which is to promote safer societies through the application of strategic and evidence-led programmes and initiatives. The aim of reducing and preventing offences and victimization and of supporting international norms and standards is also very compelling.

WHAT DOES A REGULAR DAY LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?

My job is largely devoted to developing business opportunities. I work to raise the profile and credibility of ICPC as an organization and to promote our expertise and services – emphasizing how they can be personalized and adapted to all situations.

I make connections between the team’s research function, between research and development, and then business development. Our main targets are all levels of government. Internationally, I work with the members of our Board of Directors and the contacts I make when attending international events.

Q – WHAT RESEARCH/TEACHING AREAS WILL BE KEY FOR [CIPC/YOU] OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

We’re going to be very busy working on several research projects over the next 12 months. Two examples are: the Safety Canada project on safety in mobility in five major Canadian cities, Montréal, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa; and several Local Safety Audits (LSA) to come for several boroughs, municipalities and suburbs, as well as large cities located mainly in Quebec.

I’ll be expanding on this later, but the ICPC Urban Safety Lab that we initiated about 5 years ago and that was used at first in the city of Montreal, has been expanded to include many municipalities in the Greater Montreal Area.

That means that we’ll be busy, not only over the next 12 months, but over the next three years. The lab’s purpose is to improve community safety by supporting governance by helping municipalities develop public policies or strategic plans or implement concerted urban safety projects.

We’ll be focusing on the 18 to 25 age group and strategies related to street gangs. We’ll be publishing a report on sexual exploitation in 2025 and working with local youth to develop a tool that they will be comfortable in using to help them recognize warning signs, get information and more.

We will also be offering our new training program. It’s called “Mobilizing Civil Society to Prevent Delinquency and Crime.” It is set up in such a way that it can be exported worldwide and tailored to local and regional needs. Our Summer School will also be back in 2025. Its goal is, of course, to help build safer cities. It takes place over several days and brings together experts and people interested in public safety.

WHAT’S THE MOST INTERESTING RESEARCH YOU / CIPC HAVE UNDERTAKEN RECENTLY?

We are pretty excited about the tool we are developing with local youth to help prevent sexual exploitation. We are learning so much on this very serious topic through our research. Our findings will be available in our report due in 2025.

Our work on street gangs is also very stimulating. We’ve published several reports on different aspects of this very troubling problem that is on the rise. The reports are available on our web site.

The rising use of firearms in crime in the Greater Montreal area is also an area of research where we are constantly learning. And of course, safety in mobility is an international problem that we will continue to research.

WHAT WOULD YOUR “ELEVATOR PITCH” BE TO PROMOTE THE WORK OF CIPC?

At the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) in Montreal, we envision cities as havens for all. Since 1994, we’ve led global efforts to enhance urban safety through the promotion of international crime prevention standards. We are the only international

organization that is a member of the UN and whose mission is to make cities safer. We have a team of specialists who research best practices worldwide and propose concrete solutions.

ARE THERE ANY MAJOR EVENTS INVOLVING ICPC IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Of course, there's the PNI meeting (Riyad) and I will certainly be present in Vienna next May. We don't miss any opportunity to participate in government events. Our team just spent two days at an annual colloquium organized by the Quebec government's Ministry of Public Safety for the Crime Prevention Week. As soon as I get back, I will be attending the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities Global Exchange, where I will be moderating a workshop and discussing with keynote speakers.

I will also be attending their Steering Committee meeting in Halifax next spring. We are in the process of organizing two webinars. They will present the results of our work in a governmental support programme for small municipalities, in which we have been involved for several years. We will also offer training sessions, including our own new programme that will be available throughout Canada. Depending on demand, we can also export it to other countries. And finally, our summer school will also be back in 2025.

WHAT NEW OR EMERGING AREAS OF RESEARCH ARE YOU INTERESTED IN EXPLORING?

We plan to focus even more intently on specific problems faced by 18-25-year-olds (how to break the cycle, leave a gang, health, safety, etc.). We feel this international phenomenon is one of the keys to prevention. We also want to further develop safety in mobility, which is also an issue faced by people throughout the world.

WHAT NEW AREAS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE YOU INTERESTED IN EXPLORING?

We plan to expand our training programme with focus on street gangs and security in mobility. We want to continue to export our urban lab model, to measure its potential, and to improve it.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A NEW RESEARCHER/EDUCATOR KEEN TO WORK FOR CIPC?

Be curious! Learn to communicate and to simplify complex subjects like your research to reach a broader audience, engage people, and help them understand the issues.

HOW DOES THE COVID-19 IMPACT THE WORK OF YOUR ORGANIZATION? AND THE RESPONSE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES POSED BY THE COVID-19?

At a very basic level, our first challenge was organizing our team so they could work from home. Then, being an international organization, travel restrictions made it difficult for us to operate overseas. The pandemic also dried up sources of finance for work done by organizations like ours.

APART FROM THE CHALLENGES, DO YOU FIND ANY OPPORTUNITIES ARISEN FROM THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

Fewer opportunities to work on international projects because of travel restrictions gave us time to dive more deeply into local projects and to innovate by creating new approaches and new tools. The ICPC Urban Safety Laboratory is a good example of this. It improved the way we carry out diagnostic work.

The Lab seeks to improve community safety by: Supporting governance by assisting municipalities in the development of a public policy, a strategic plan or in the implementation of concerted urban safety projects. Providing a platform for innovation, discussions, and knowledge development.

It also helps identify the best practices to continuously improve urban safety strategies and practices; contributes to the transfer and dissemination of knowledge; offers responsive support services to address corporate or local needs as quickly as possible; and identifies and processes the databases required for a better understanding of the issues.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES/OPPORTUNITIES OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE PNI?

Being a member of the UN Programme Network Institutes (PNI) offers numerous advantages and opportunities. Membership grants access to a vast pool of global expertise, enabling members to draw on the knowledge and experience of renowned professionals in crime prevention and criminal justice. It also opens doors to meaningful collaboration and partnerships, fostering international cooperation on initiatives that raise awareness and promote effective crime prevention strategies.

Members benefit from capacity-building opportunities through specialized training programmes, seminars, and workshops tailored to address pressing issues in crime prevention and criminal justice. Additionally, being part of this esteemed network enhances the credibility and international visibility of organizations such as the ICPC. Active participation in international forums further solidifies this standing on the global stage.

Finally, the PNI serves as a valuable platform for the exchange of knowledge and information, encouraging the sharing of innovative practices and insights among members. Together, these opportunities contribute to a more connected, informed, and impactful global community.

ARE YOU WORKING WITH OTHER PNI PARTNERS AT THE MOMENT?

We aren't working with other PNI partners at the moment, but we are working to develop partnerships with them and especially with new members. This said, several PNI partners are also members of the ICPC. These include the AIC - the Australian Institute of Criminology; Canberra, Australia; ILANUD - the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; San José, Costa Rica; NAUSS - the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and UNAFRI - the African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; Kampala, Uganda

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGING PARTS OF YOUR JOB?

As is the case with many NGOs, funding is always one of our biggest challenges. Our team spends a lot of energy looking for subsidies, and I multiply my contacts to bring them to fruition. Networking and my background as a senior civil servant are invaluable assets in securing our funding.

INTERVIEW WITH KHALID BIN ABDULAZIZ AL-HARFASH

Vice President for External Relations
General Secretariat of the
NAUSS Supreme Council
Naif Arab University for Security Sciences



WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT THE UNIVERSITY AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING HERE?

I serve as the Vice President for External Relations, a role I have held for over 25 years at the university. In this capacity, I oversee numerous tasks by supervising various departments and sectors. My primary responsibilities include strengthening the university's external relations with international and regional institutions, judicial and security bodies, and research centres in the security fields. This effort aligns with the implementation of Arab security strategies and plans

developed by the university, which serves as the scientific body of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers. These strategies emphasize the necessity of enhancing regional and international cooperation with relevant institutions. Additionally, I support academic, research, and training cooperation efforts with international partners.

Throughout my tenure, I have held multiple positions, contributing to establishing the university's reputation as a beacon for security sciences in the Arab world and as a link between Arab security and judicial bodies and their global counterparts. Currently, I also hold the position of Secretary-General of the University's Supreme Council, the highest council responsible for setting the university's general policy, overseeing its scientific, administrative, and financial affairs, and making decisions to ensure the optimal achievement of its objectives. The council is reconstituted every three years.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY AND WHAT IS THE DIVERSITY OF ROLES WITHIN IT?

The university employs a large and diverse staff from Arab countries and various nations worldwide. Our team includes faculty members with high scientific and practical expertise, specialized researchers, trainers, and administrative personnel. This diversity enhances the exchange of experiences and reflects the university's comprehensive approach to academic, research, and practical aspects of capacity building in crime prevention and criminal justice.

In our previous strategic plan (2019-2023), the university focused on specialized security programmes and scientific events that fostered cooperation. We intend to expand and lead further in our next strategic plan (2025-2029), continuing to build on this diverse and expert workforce.

WHO ARE THE UNIVERSITY'S MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AND HOW DO YOU INTERACT WITH THEM?

Our main stakeholders are diverse, given the university's role as the scientific body of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers and its mission to provide specialized programmes in security fields. Key stakeholders include ministries of interior and justice from various Arab countries, international organizations such as the United Nations and its various institutions, the International Organization for Migration, and

INTERPOL, and academic institutions and research centres specialized in security sciences.

We interact with these stakeholders through partnership agreements, organizing numerous scientific events, including joint workshops, training programmes, research projects and studies. These collaborations enhance security capabilities at both regional and international levels.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL WORKDAY LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?

My workday is characterized by diversity and interaction with multiple facets, encompassing both administrative and academic tasks. A typical day begins with reviewing files and documents related to international cooperation or monitoring the progress of new centres established in partnership with international institutions, such as the **Regional Expertise Center for Combating Drugs and Crime**, which is the **Regional Center of Expertise on Evidence-Based Drug Control Policies and Strategies, Crime Prevention, and Criminal Justice** (in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - UNODC) and the **Arab Center for Technical Cooperation in Migration and Border Management** (in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration - IOM).

Supervising these initiatives requires dedicated time to coordinate with international partners and ensure their successful operation.

I also spend part of my day holding meetings with representatives of international and regional institutions to discuss existing agreements or develop new projects aligned with the university's strategic objectives. Additionally, I coordinate with various university components to manage internal workflows and ensure the implementation of policies set by the Supreme Council.

Other responsibilities include overseeing external visits by high-level figures, representing the university at international and Arab forums, communicating with faculty members and researchers to support their initiatives, reviewing project reports, managing the university's media presence as an official spokesperson, and enhancing the university's reputation through media channels.

Occasionally, my workday includes attending scientific events or receiving visiting delegations to strengthen international relations and partnerships. Each day presents an opportunity to contribute to achieving the university's goals and enhancing its leading position regionally and internationally through a blend of administrative work and strategic scientific vision.

WHAT ARE THE MOST CHALLENGING PARTS OF YOUR JOB?

The most challenging aspects of my role include:

- 1. Time management:** Balancing numerous tasks, such as managing Arab and international relations with diverse entities and institutions with varying interests. Ensuring alignment to achieve the university's strategic objectives requires extensive coordination and precision.
- 2. Adapting to rapid changes in security issues:** Keeping pace with evolving security challenges at regional and international levels demands continuous knowledge updates and collaboration with university components to develop new policies and strategies.
- 3. Managing joint international projects:** Balancing the university's needs with those of international partners is particularly demanding when handling complex initiatives such as establishing UN centres or organizing international events.
- 4. Achieving academic and research excellence:** Maintaining high standards while fostering effective partnerships requires the development of academic programmes and research initiatives that meet regional needs and align with the university's goals.

Despite these challenges, they offer motivating and inspiring opportunities to enhance the university's role regionally and internationally.

WHAT ARE THE RESEARCH/TEACHING AREAS THAT WILL BE ESSENTIAL FOR THE UNIVERSITY IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS?

Over the next twelve months, the university will focus on several essential research and teaching areas that reflect the changing security priorities in the region and globally:

1. The University's 2025 Work Programme:

- Derived from Arab security strategies and plans.
- Includes numerous scientific, training and research activities in cooperation with strategic partners.
- Implementation at the university's headquarters and selected Arab and friendly countries.

2. Artificial intelligence and its applications in security:

- Studying the use of artificial intelligence in enhancing security and analysing security data.
- Developing technologies for predicting security threats using machine learning.

3. Crisis and disaster management:

- Researching security and natural crisis management strategies, including the use of modern technology such as drones.
- Training security leaders on effective crisis management.

4. Combating terrorism and violent extremism:

- Studying emerging terrorist threats and methods of countering them.
- Analysing the links between organized crime and terrorism and their impact on regional security.

5. Drug control strategies:

- Focusing on methods of combating drug smuggling and countering criminal networks.
- Studying the impact of drugs on community security and preparing comprehensive awareness programmes.
- Cooperating with international and regional institutions to develop integrated drug control policies.

6. Migration and border security:

- Focusing on managing migration safely and in an orderly manner.
- Researching the security challenges associated with illegal immigration and human trafficking.

WHAT IS THE MOST INTERESTING RESEARCH THAT YOU HAVE CONDUCTED AT THE UNIVERSITY RECENTLY?

One of the most prominent research projects conducted by the university was a study entitled "Assessment of Synthetic Drug Trafficking (Amphetamine-Type Stimulants - ATS) and its Impact on the Arab Region." This project was carried out in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Research and Analysis Branch, led by Ms. Angela Me. The study aims to analyse the trafficking flows of these

substances and their impact on security and development in Arab countries. Utilizing recent data from the region and collaborating with regional and local authorities, the research provides practical recommendations for policymakers.

The official launch of this partnership was announced during a high-level event held on 27 November 2024, at the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna, with participation from permanent representatives and stakeholders from the Arab region and international partners. What distinguishes this research is its focus on providing evidence-based solutions to address the growing challenge of synthetic drug trafficking, reflecting the commitment of both the university and the UNODC to enhance security and combat related threats.

Additionally, the university is conducting similar joint research with institutions such as INTERPOL, the IOM, and others.

ARE THERE ANY MAJOR EVENTS RELATED TO THE UNIVERSITY IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS?

Yes, the university has several major events planned for the next twelve months:

- **International Forum on Artificial Intelligence and Ethical Uses in Security:** Bringing together experts and specialists worldwide to discuss challenges and opportunities associated with AI applications in security fields.
- **Conference on Restorative Justice in Bahrain:** Focusing on innovative approaches to justice and rehabilitation.
- **Scientific Event in Tunisia on Civil Protection:** Conducted in cooperation with the International Civil Defence Organisation.

Additionally, the university is preparing to organize an international conference in partnership with global academic and security institutions. This conference aims to enhance academic dialogue and research cooperation on security issues of regional and international importance.

Furthermore, the university intends to launch a new strategy aimed at expanding the scope of its research and educational work. This strategy will focus on developing academic programmes and building strategic partnerships to reinforce the university's position as a leading institution in security sciences at both regional and international levels.

These initiatives reflect the university's commitment to addressing evolving security challenges and enhancing international cooperation in this field.

WHAT ARE THE NEW OR EMERGING AREAS OF RESEARCH THAT THE UNIVERSITY IS INTERESTED IN EXPLORING?

The university is keen to explore several emerging research areas, primarily focusing on new technologies and evolving security challenges:

- **Artificial intelligence technologies and their uses in security fields:**
 - Developing advanced AI applications for security analysis and threat prediction.
- **Economic crimes:**
 - Investigating rapidly developing economic crimes facilitated by technological advancements.
- **Organized crime and cross-border crimes:**
 - Studying the dynamics of organized crime networks and their transnational operations.

These areas are critical for staying ahead of emerging security threats and leveraging technological innovations to enhance security measures.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A NEW STAFF MEMBER AT THE UNIVERSITY WHO WANTS TO WORK HERE (WHETHER A RESEARCHER/FACULTY MEMBER/ADMINISTRATOR)?

I advise any new staff member at the university—whether a researcher, faculty member, or administrator—to embrace the following:

- **Continuous development:** Be passionate about continuously enhancing your skills and knowledge.
- **Flexibility and openness:** Be adaptable and open to working in a multicultural and multidisciplinary environment.
- **Build relationships:** Take advantage of opportunities to build fruitful relationships with regional and international partners.
- **Engage actively:** Participate in the university's scientific activities and leverage its Arab and international presence.
- **Contribute to excellence:** Strive to enhance the university's role as a leading institution in security sciences by focusing on quality and innovation in your work.

Focusing on these areas is key to success in our distinguished institution.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS/OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE PNI?

Membership in the PNI (Programme Network Institutes) provides numerous valuable benefits and opportunities:

- **International network access:** Facilitates connections with a wide network of experts and leading academic and research institutions globally.
- **Knowledge exchange:** Enhances the exchange of knowledge and experiences with international partners.
- **Strategic partnerships:** Enables the establishment of strategic partnerships that support our research and scientific projects.
- **Global presence:** Contributes to enhancing the university's presence on the international stage.
- **Participation in events:** Allows participation in international events and activities that address contemporary security challenges.
- **Joint activities:** Supports the implementation of joint scientific and research activities.

Overall, PNI membership strengthens our ability to address global security issues collaboratively and effectively.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING WITH OTHER PARTNERS IN THE PNI?

Yes, we are actively collaborating with several partners within the PNI. Our collaboration encompasses a wide range of initiatives, including the development of capacity-building programs through field visits and training workshops in various security fields. Additionally, we engage in conducting scientific research that addresses global security challenges in partnership with PNI institutions. We also cooperate in organizing events that facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge between international academic and research institutions. This collaboration with PNI significantly contributes to achieving the university's goals and enhancing its role at both regional and international levels.

MEET THE STAFF

CONVERSATIONS WITH DAMARIS SEINA AND SUPARAT SAWETAMAL

The “Meet the Staff” section of the PNI Newsletter aims to spotlight the diverse expertise and experiences of professionals across the PNI network. In this issue, we delve into the work and insights of two remarkable women making waves in the fields of justice innovation and human rights. Ms. Damaris Seina, Senior Advisor on Access to Justice and Rule of Law at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) in Nairobi, Kenya, is driving reforms in correctional systems and advancing human rights across the African continent. Meanwhile, Ms. Suparat Sawetamal, Project Coordinator at the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), is spearheading efforts to build ecosystems of justice innovation in Southeast Asia, fostering partnerships that bridge global and local contexts.

Through their work, both contribute to a wide range of initiatives, including implementing United Nations standards and norms, delivering training programmes for criminal justice professionals, collaborating with stakeholders across sectors to strengthen systemic reforms, and developing innovative approaches to justice challenges. This article highlights their unique contributions and the broader impact of the PNI in advancing justice reform and promoting sustainable, human-rights-based practices across regions.

MS. DAMARIS SEINA



Ms. Seina’s career began with her role as an officer in the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS), where she first encountered the RWI during a workshop on revising prison laws. “That workshop opened my eyes to the gaps and challenges in our legal framework,” she shares. This experience led her to train as a Human Rights Officer so that she could deliver training programmes for her colleagues. Her role expanded to include assessing prison compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules, which shaped her understanding of the critical role human rights play in corrections. Inspired by her growing interest in systemic reform, she transitioned to roles at the Independent Policing Oversight Authority and eventually joined RWI.

Now serving as Senior Advisor on Access to Justice and Rule of Law at the RWI, Ms. Seina oversees human rights training programmes, collaborates on legal reform projects, and advises on regional initiatives to

enhance compliance with international standards. Her work involves coordinating capacity-building workshops, conducting assessments of correctional facilities, and drafting strategic frameworks for criminal justice reforms in Kenya and beyond. One of her key responsibilities is ensuring that her programmes align with the realities on the ground while reflecting the principles of international human rights standards.

Ms. Seina's day varies depending on the stage of her projects. She might be delivering human rights training to correctional officers; drafting policy documents, monitoring and evaluation templates, concept notes and proposals; or organizing stakeholder consultations. "Currently, we're planning the implementation of a new project in Kenya," she shares. This involves meticulous coordination with colleagues and partners to ensure alignment with RWI's strategic goals. Whether in Kenya, Uganda, or Zimbabwe, her work emphasizes systemic reforms and adherence to international human rights standards. Each project begins with a comprehensive needs assessment, ensuring that interventions are tailor-made to address the unique challenges of each region.

Ms. Seina's collaborations span the criminal justice spectrum, including magistrates, prosecutors, and correctional officers. "We emphasize co-implementation to ensure that the projects are relevant and sustainable," she notes. Her work often involves training stakeholders on the Nelson Mandela Rules and other international standards, fostering ownership and lasting impact within justice systems. Building relationships with diverse actors—from policymakers to community leaders—has been essential to her approach. Ms. Seina has also facilitated multi-agency dialogues aimed at strengthening inter-agency cooperation to create more cohesive and efficient justice systems.

Ms. Seina recalls two formative projects that profoundly shaped her career. The first was the human rights training initiative she participated in as part of RWI's programme with the KPS. "It was rewarding to see officers recognize that good correctional management aligns with human rights," she reflects. This initiative involved a series of training sessions that empowered prison staff to audit their facilities against the Nelson Mandela Rules, enhancing compliance and improving prisoner welfare. The second was her leadership in revising Kenya's Prisons and Borstal Institutions Acts. This project required extensive consultations and comparative legal research to ensure alignment with the Nelson Mandela Rules. "By embedding human rights into our legal framework, we created a

foundation for sustainable change," she explains. This process involved not only drafting new legislation but also conducting sensitization workshops with key stakeholders to mobilize support for the reforms.

Ms. Seina's aspirations include exploring the nexus between environmental sustainability and prison conditions. She is currently leading a prison reform project funded by the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, which includes developing an e-learning course for correctional officers and strengthening monitoring mechanisms in detention facilities. "Integrating sustainability into prison management is critical in mitigating the environmental impact of overcrowded facilities," she notes. Her collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on Prisons and Policing, of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, underscores her commitment to ensuring accountability and dignity in correctional systems. "The link between environmental degradation and human rights in overcrowded prisons is an area I'm passionate about addressing," she adds. Her vision involves developing region-wide guidelines that incorporate environmental sustainability into justice reforms, recognizing the interconnectedness of social and ecological well-being.

MS. SUPARAT SAWETAMAL



Ms. Sawetamal's journey to the TIJ was shaped by her diverse academic and professional background. After completing a double major in psychology and business

with a minor in legal studies at Brandeis University in the United States, she explored various industries through internships in hospitality, finance, and legal services. A pivotal moment came during her time at a mental health legal clinic in Boston, which solidified her interest in law and justice. Her exposure to the intersections of mental health and legal advocacy deepened her commitment to exploring innovative solutions in justice systems.

Returning to Thailand, Ms. Sawetamal joined the TIJ, initially as a part-time researcher, before transitioning into a full-time role. “It all started with an informal lunch meeting with a former schoolmate who inspired me to explore the innovative field of justice,” she recalls. Her multidisciplinary experiences have shaped her approach to fostering international partnerships and driving systemic reforms. At the TIJ, her role spans coordinating international collaborations, developing justice innovation projects, and creating platforms for dialogue on the rule of law and governance. She also leads several initiatives aimed at integrating youth engagement into justice programmes, recognizing the importance of cultivating future champions of justice.

For Ms. Sawetamal, her role at the TIJ is defined by its dynamism. “Due to the different time zones, a typical day can involve morning calls with partners in the U.S. and afternoons with European counterparts,” she says. Her schedule is shaped by the demands of current projects, which range from internal team discussions to external engagements with global stakeholders. Workshops, strategic planning sessions, and partner coordination are all part of her daily rhythm, reflecting the multifaceted nature of her responsibilities as a “Global Engagement Lead.” She also frequently interfaces with emerging justice innovators, offering mentorship and guidance to help them scale their ideas into actionable solutions.

At the TIJ, collaboration is integral to Ms. Sawetamal’s role. She works closely with international organizations such as the OECD and the World Justice Project, as well as local justice innovators across Southeast Asia. “Building ecosystems of justice innovation requires engagement with a range of stakeholders, from government champions to grassroots innovators,” she explains. These partnerships are crucial in driving sustainable reforms and promoting evidence-based approaches. Her team also conducts impact evaluations to assess the effectiveness of their initiatives, ensuring continuous learning and improvement.

Among her many initiatives, Ms. Sawetamal highlights her collaboration with the World Justice Project as particularly impactful. She co-organized a regional event in Thailand that brought together Southeast Asian representatives to discuss justice innovation. “It was inspiring to see the exchange of ideas and the commitment to people-centred justice,” she reflects. This event included sessions on leveraging data for systemic change and fostering cross-border collaborations, aligning with the TIJ’s broader mission of enhancing the rule of law in the region. Her role encompassed outreach, partner coordination, and moderating discussions to ensure actionable outcomes. Following this, Ms. Sawetamal initiated a series of follow-up workshops to deepen the conversations sparked at the event, focusing on practical implementation strategies.

Looking ahead, Ms. Sawetamal is focused on two major initiatives: the second phase of a white paper on justice innovation in Southeast Asia and a “Rule of Law Fair” scheduled for February 2025. Both projects aim to engage diverse audiences and drive meaningful dialogue. She is also keen to explore data-driven approaches to justice reform, using analytics to measure socio-economic impacts and guide policy decisions. Additionally, Ms. Sawetamal is working on integrating technology into justice systems, exploring how digital platforms can improve access to justice and reduce systemic inefficiencies.

Reflections on challenges, opportunities and motivations

As members of the PNI network, both Ms. Sawetamal and Ms. Seina value the opportunities the PNI provides for collaboration and learning. For Ms. Sawetamal, the PNI provides a platform to share and gain insights that enrich her work in justice innovation. She recalls fruitful collaborations with partners such as UNAFEI. “These interactions help us contextualize global standards within our regional framework,” she adds. “Through collaborations such as those with UNAFEI, we organized events such as a youth forum that enabled us to explore innovative community justice models and halfway houses in Japan,” she notes.

Ms. Seina appreciates the PNI’s role in amplifying voices and fostering global connections. “The strength of the network lies in its collective commitment to justice,” she says, citing her involvement in developing the UN Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending as

an example of impactful collaboration. Her experience with the PNI has also enabled her to exchange best practices with counterparts from diverse cultural and legal contexts, enriching her approach to justice reforms. “Additionally, I have collaborated with the TIJ, particularly in supporting their research on pathways to imprisonment in Kenya. This partnership enriched both of our perspectives, enhancing the practical implementation of standards in diverse settings,” she reflects.

Both professionals also highlight the challenges inherent in their work. For Ms. Sawetamal, navigating different time zones and balancing dynamic workloads can be demanding, but she credits her team with creating a supportive and creative environment. Ms. Seina acknowledges the slow pace of justice reforms but finds motivation in the ripple effects of meaningful change. “Empowering prison staff to champion human rights can transform lives,” she reflects. The two professionals also emphasize the importance of resilience and adaptability in overcoming obstacles, underscoring the value of sustained collaboration and shared learning.

The journeys of Ms. Damaris Seina and Ms. Suparat Sawetamal illustrate the diverse approaches to tackling systemic challenges in justice reform. Through their commitment to innovation, collaboration, and evidence-based practices, they highlight how tailored initiatives can address pressing issues within complex systems. Their experiences encourage reflection on the potential of shared knowledge and collective effort to drive meaningful, sustainable change across regions.

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