

Forum:	Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)
Issue:	Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on organized crime amid pre-existing civil unrest
Student Officer:	Ioulia Kapsali
Position:	Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

My name is Ioulia Kapsali. I am 16 years old and attend the 11th grade at Pierce – The American College of Greece. It is my utmost honor to serve as deputy president in the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in this year's PS-MUN Conference.

By attending the 11th PS-MUN Conference, you open yourself to a new experience and most importantly engage with current affairs that affect people across the world. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice might seem like a challenging or daunting debating environment, especially when it comes to newcomers. We as student officers, have worked hard on creating a safe space that will foster fruitful debate. It is crucial for all of you to work hard as well, so that the outcome of the debate that is to take place will be reflecting of the time and effort each of you devoted to this conference.

Your participation in this debate will enhance your collaborative skills, your public speaking skills and most importantly, push you outside your comfort zone; all essential to one's personal growth.

The context of this study guide refers to the second topic of the CCPCJ agenda namely, the issue of Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on organized crime amid pre-existing civil unrest.

I would like to stress to all of you that this study guide covers this topic adequately. It is of great importance, however, that following your examination of this study guide, you are to conduct further research on your representative country's policy.

If clarification on any part of the study guide is needed, or if any questions arise, feel free to contact me at my personal email (i.kapsali@acg.edu). I remain at your disposal for any kind of help you might need, as well as guidance.

I am looking forward to meeting and collaborating with you all.

Best regards,

Ioulia Kapsali.

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

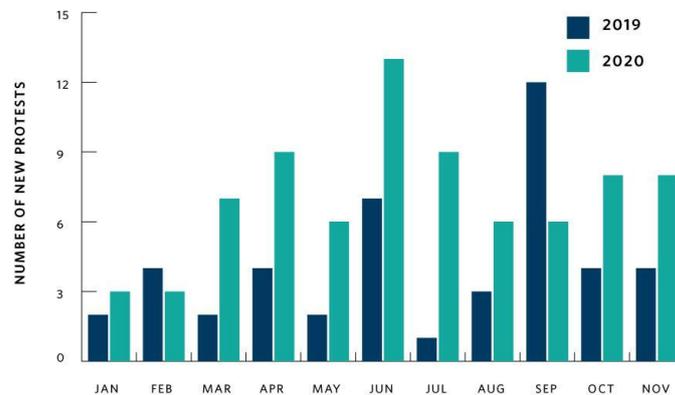
The Covid-19 pandemic has undoubtedly taken over every single aspect of our lives. Characterized as one of the deadliest viruses in modern history, it has led to global lockdowns, challenging views on human rights policies, and affected economies and so much more.

Organized Crime Groups (OCG) refers to groups that engage in illegal activity that proves to be beneficial in a political or financial manner. The damage caused by OCG is vast, whether that refers to economic, social, or environmental damage, all aspects should be kept in mind. During the pandemic this phenomenon has expanded transnationally to a greater extent.

One common misconception when it comes to such organizations, is that their activity is solely related to drug distribution and killings – a Cartel facade. The Covid-19 pandemic has proven to be a game changer when it comes to OCG activity, for several reasons. It is no secret that the implementation of lockdowns around the world, suggested a steep rise in unemployment, making millions of people around the globe vulnerable and easier to involve in illegal activity, hence a rise in all pre-existing forms of organized crime; money laundering, fraud, corruption, human trafficking, trafficking of various good as well as created an environment that favored the rise in cybercrime. Digital crime is of great importance during our time and age; Covid-19 has given OC organizations the space required for such activity to take place; though it was a matter of concern before, it never reached the extent it has now. OCG's aimed in further expanding as well as complicating their schemes with the use of fake news, phishing, and online scams. The dark web has also had a rise in activity, according to Europol, with no one market being the most predominant, creating a broader space for OCG activity.

Schools being shut down have also provided the opportunity for OC organizations to recruit young children due to their innocence and need for income, a result of the aforementioned rising in unemployment affecting their households. The everyday difficulties that interfere with people's survival, along with the inability to properly socialize and grasp the new reality we are all facing, leads to spikes in public unrest cases. Demonstrations and protests have always been a way for people to express their discontent, therefore, a rise in upheavals can be observed worldwide. There are many reasons as to why people might be discontent with their government; the pandemic has played a key role, as can be seen in the graph comparing 2019 and 2020. At least 26 countries held anti-lockdown protests within the first year of the pandemic.

FIGURE 1
Significant New Anti-government Protests in 2019 and 2020



SOURCE: Global Protest Tracker, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed December 11, 2020. See the "About the Tracker" tab for information on the methodology used to identify "significant protests."

Figure 1.1¹ - Significant New Anti-government Protests in 2019 and 2020

Bearing in mind that people want the best for themselves and future generations, seeing as issues like this fundamentally shape our societies, it is important that this topic is thoroughly considered. Such social phenomena in many cases favor the activity of OCG, often because governments will aim in dealing with civil unrest rather than focusing on all the different schemes used by OC. While policymaking and writing resolutions, delegates must remember that both the governments and the citizens have a part in resolving the issues at hand.

Addressing the impact of Covid-19 on organized crime specifically amid pre-existing civil unrest, is in reference to Sustainable Development Goals no. 16, 8 and 3. "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions", "Decent Work and Economic Growth" and "Good Health and Well-Being". These SDG's will be analyzed in the Background Information section.

¹ "Worldwide Protests in 2020: A Year in Review" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/21/worldwide-protests-in-2020-year-in-review-pub-83445>.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Pandemic²

“A pandemic, is a disease that affects a large number of people within a community, population or region, that has spread over multiple countries or continents”

Organized Crime³

“Organized crime, complex of highly centralized enterprises set up for the purpose of engaging in illegal activities. Such organizations engage in offenses such as cargo theft, fraud, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and the demanding for “protection” payments. The principal source of income or these criminal syndicates is the supply of goods and services that are illegal but for which there is continued public demand, such as drugs, prostitution, loan-sharking, and gambling”

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC)⁴

“Transnational organized crime (TOC) groups are self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate, wholly or in part, by illegal means and irrespective of geography. They constantly seek to obtain power, influence, and monetary gains. There is no single structure under which TOC groups function—they vary from hierarchies to clans, networks, and cells, and may evolve into other structures. These groups are typically insular and protect their activities through corruption, violence, international commerce, complex communication mechanisms, and an organizational structure exploiting national boundaries.”

The Great Depression⁵

“Great Depression, worldwide economic downturn that began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939. It was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world, sparking fundamental changes in economic institutions, macroeconomic policy, and economic theory. Although it originated in the United States, the Great Depression caused drastic declines in output, severe unemployment, and acute deflation in almost every country of the world. Its social and cultural effects were no less staggering, especially in the United States, where the Great Depression represented the harshest adversity faced by Americans since the Civil War.”

² “What is the difference between a pandemic, an epidemic, endemic, and an outbreak?”, Intermountain Healthcare, <https://intermountainhealthcare.org/blogs/topics/live-well/2020/04/whats-the-difference-between-a-pandemic-an-epidemic-endemic-and-an-outbreak/>.

³ “Organized Crime” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/organized-crime>.

⁴ “Transnational Organized Crime” UNTOC, <https://www.unodc.org/ropan/en/organized-crime.html>,

“Transnational Organized Crime” FBI, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/organized-crime>

⁵ “Great Depression” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Great-Depression>

Prohibition⁶

“Prohibition, legal prevention of the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages in the United States from 1920 to 1933 under the terms of the Eighteenth Amendment. Although the temperance movement, which was widely supported, had succeeded in bringing about this legislation, millions of Americans were willing to drink liquor (distilled spirits) illegally, which gave rise to bootlegging (the illegal production and sale of liquor) and speakeasies (illegal, secretive drinking establishments), both of which were capitalized upon by organized crime. As a result, the Prohibition era also is remembered as a period of gangsterism, characterized by competition and violent turf battles between criminal gangs.”

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)⁷

“Gross domestic product (GDP) is the total monetary or market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country’s borders in a specific time period. As a broad measure of overall domestic production, it functions as a comprehensive scorecard of a given country’s economic health.”

Civil Unrest⁸

“Civil unrest includes riots, demonstrations, threatening individuals or assemblies that have become disruptive.”

IOCTA⁹

“Each year, Europol’s European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) publishes the Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA), its flagship strategic report on key findings and emerging threats and developments in cybercrime — threats that impact governments, businesses and citizens in the EU. The IOCTA provides key recommendations to law enforcement, policy makers and regulators to allow them to respond to cybercrime in an effective and concerted manner.”

SoCTA¹⁰

“The EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) is the product of systematic and comprehensive analysis of law enforcement information on criminal activities and networks affecting the EU. The SOCTA is designed to assist decision-makers in the prioritisation of serious and organised crime threats.”

⁶ “Prohibition” Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Prohibition-United-States-history-1920-1933>

⁷ “Gross Domestic Product” Investopedia, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gdp.asp>.

⁸ “Civil Unrest” Florida State University, <https://emergency.fsu.edu/hazards/civil-unrest>.

⁹ “IOCTA” Europol, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/main-reports/iocta-report>

¹⁰ “SoCTA” Europol, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6e5575ce-c34b-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1>

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹¹

“The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice”.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

Organized Crime Groups can be traced back to the 17th century, commonly known in our day and age, as pirates. Because illegal activity has been going on since the dawn of humanity, it is very difficult to pin-point the exact time frame in which organized crime became what we come to recognize today. However, the most known form of organized crime today derives from “street gangs” of the 1800’s, more specifically in the United States. At that time, there was a vast move from various places of the world to the US, with many of the people migrating coming from parts of Europe. The state of New York took in a very large number of immigrants, bearing in mind that it had one of the biggest ports in the East Coast at that time; however, the country was not adequately prepared to properly take care of the people coming in. When immigrants felt like they were not protected by the law, were unable to work or worked for very low wages; they formed gangs, such as the infamous “Forty Thieves” in New York. In the beginning, the sole purposes of these immigrant groups were protection and financial gain as well as protect themselves from corruption. With time, because most needs were met and members received quota depending on their work, these groups aimed in expanding their activities, some of them even taking up politics. Although groups such as the “Forty Thieves” dissolved with time, Organized Crime Groups continued their illegal activities throughout the next decades, however because of various political changes, they also had to adapt. The 1920’s are often associated with Italy and their long heritage in organized crime. The 1929 Wall Street Market Crash is believed to be a key reason for the Great Depression; a social issue that led to the implementation of Prohibition; which made the selling of alcohol illegal therefore called for a fundamental change in the activities of organized crime groups and very closely resemble what we recognize as illegal activity deriving from OCG’s. As was mentioned, OCG’s had to adapt to the current situation many times throughout history. Post WWII, the United States cooperated with Italian and Jewish organized crime in what was called “Operation Underworld” to counter Axis activities and tackle the issue of stolen vital for the war goods.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has tremendously affected criminal networks. Whilst their activity used to be in the forms of human trafficking, cargo theft, fraud etc., the pandemic and the measures implemented by governments across the globe have

¹¹ “About the Sustainable Development Goals.” *United Nations Sustainable Development*, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/.

severely limited certain organized criminal activities, whilst also creating new opportunities for different kinds of action in different sectors. Europol reports that new schemes have been introduced; such include members of criminal organizations participating in deception tricks, that usually involve pretending to be the victim's loved ones, usually targeting older people. Young children spending more and more time on their phones also become vulnerable as there might be an increase in demand for material containing child exploitation. Cybercrime, fraud, counterfeit and sale of sub-standard goods, organized property crime and other criminal activities have all flourished amid the covid-19 pandemic. Attacks such as the Brno University Hospital Brno in Czechia, which forced the hospital to shut down its IT network entirely and resulted in the country declaring a state of emergency due to attack on "critical infrastructure". Though the attack was not done on a major Czech hospital, it did create a substantial problem to both the hospital and other cooperating hospitals. Such attacks leave a lot of room for conversation on the impact a successful operation would have on human lives amid the pandemic.

Causes and effects of Organized Crime

When discussing the causes of organized crime, it is important to keep in mind the role of broader systemic factors and not rule individual behavior as the sole cause; in other words, people that might have a tendency toward taking part in such organizations, be that a violent background or other external conditions, should not concern delegates, as individuals but rather as a group. Delegates also must bear in mind that OCG's take advantage of vulnerability in all forms, whether it is childhood innocence, unemployment, or a struggling business. Sociological, economic, legal, and political attributes of the international system are of great concern when discussing the causes of organized crime, not because of the sole existence of them but because they oftentimes leave enough space for illegal activity to take place. It is much more unlikely for a weak government that lacks adequate law enforcement and good governance to provide for its country, whether that is by great amounts of unemployment, low quality of life for its citizens and results in rise of participants in black markets. Such a government would imply weak institution, that ultimately cannot control or prove to be present in remote areas, many of them being close to international borders, resulting in a spike in illegal activity. As was mentioned in the Historical Background section, many people felt as if they have to rely on OCG's for their safety and well-being when they first started forming and such a notion still applies today. Economically marginalized areas with little population often view OCG's as a "closer to the citizen" government. Such environments being created ultimately favor for systematically corrupt institutions throughout the country, be that legal framework, economy, and illegal markets. Although many think of OCG's as a helping hand, their activity results in vast corruption, rise in violence and in lower quality of life, all putting societies at risk.

Consequences of Organized Crime and dangerous implications

Transnational Organized Crime includes drug trafficking, human trafficking, firearm smuggling, money-laundering, fraud, counterfeit goods, live animals, and cultural property. It goes without saying that all the aforementioned are highly illegal and dangerous as to their execution. Throughout the past years, the UNODC has reported numerous deaths as a result of implications during illegal activity conducted by OCG's, whether that is in reference to related killings or with other issues faced. Other than accounting for huge losses of life, organized crime tampers with other human lives, those of the people being trafficked, as well as contributing to further corruption within a country. As was previously mentioned, the issue at hand is greatly characterized by its complexity, especially because it is a socioeconomic issue. That can be showcased through its effect on different aspects of our societies. It is no secret that the pandemic has had an immense toll on both the public and private sector. Depending on the measures implemented, the pandemic effect on the economy can be of different extents, however, a country maintaining a stable economy – meaning the public and private sector are functioning properly and maintaining salaries is vital. As is mentioned in SDG no16, countries with lower or unstable salaries are at least 5 times more likely to experience bribery and corruption; delegates should keep the socioeconomic aspect of the pandemic in mind whilst drafting clauses.

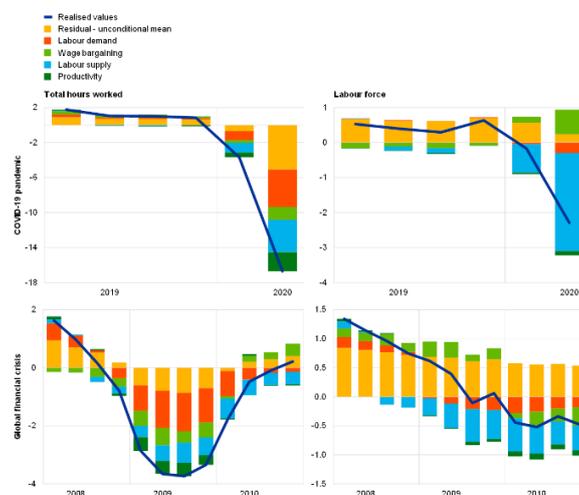


Figure 1.3¹²

A country's economy is crucial for its proper function. A stable economy, like mentioned before, can support its citizens properly. Therefore, the GDP, as mentioned in the Key Terms section of this study guide, is indicative of a country's economy health and of great importance when discussing the economic background of a country. This

¹² "The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the euro area labor market" European Central Bank, https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/economic-bulletin/articles/2021/html/ecb.ebart202008_02~bc749d90e7.en.html

ultimately connects to SDG no8, that aims in promoting economic growth and decent work for all.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and its contribution to Organized Crime activity expansion

The pandemic, through its numerous quarantines implemented by various governments, has made humanity opt for a more digital-based everyday life. In the historical background section, it was mentioned how OCG's adapt to the current situation very effectively. Much like every historical evidence that was presented, OCG's did not fail to successfully tackle the issues caused by the implementation of various measures, such as quarantine and social distancing, to protect public health. OCG activity continued as expected, with many organizations such as the UNODC, reporting that even though there was a brief halt in illegal activities deriving from OCG's, they managed to work around the measures implemented and continued with their activities. Other than the aforementioned, many OCG's managed to come up with different schemes to scam, conduct fraud, and approach young, impressionable children in hopes of recruiting or exploiting them. When it comes to activities such as human trafficking, the UNODC reports that because of overall isolation due to the pandemic, it is much easier for OCG's to capture people and take them off the grid, which makes it harder for people to access the help they need in such a situation. The anonymity provided by the World Wide Web, as well as their easy access to the dark web poses a huge threat to the safety of citizens and calls for new legislations in accordance with the issue at hand to deal with the issue effectively. Another issue that arises when discussing about OCG activity, is related to vaccine distributions, something that the FBI has warned citizens around the globe for. This issue is closely related to SDG no3, "Good Health and Well-Being", as the scams surrounding the vaccines arise, it is required of member states to come up with measures that will ensure proper vaccine allocation, as it is fundamental for public health protection.

Civil unrest in relation to OCG activity

Civil unrest is very closely related with the aforesaid. While Covid-19 does not account for the entirety of civil unrest these past two years, one could argue that it has had immense impact on the overall behavior of the public. People are not conditioned to be living in a state of isolation; the global lockdown measures proved to be devastating for many. Seeing as the pandemic was very quick to spread, it also did not give the people the time required to transition into the new reality in an easy manner either. This led to a huge psychological toll on most people; and is correlated to the last point made in the previous paragraph; the panic factor, due to government mismanagement, food insecurity, discontent over the pandemic response as well as spreading of hoaxes. All the conspiracies and other theories with no solid supporting evidence being spread caused commotion amongst the public – as was expected due to most not being properly educated on deadly viruses and the measures that should be taken to deal with them. At this point, it is important to raise questions as to who

could benefit out of the public being distressed, making this issue even more complex as more and more parameters enter the picture. It is also important to remember that OCG's thrive in periods of general civil unrest when not much attention is given to such issues. As was previously stressed, such organizations strive off of taking advantage of the vulnerable. When the public is vulnerable and the state is focused on calming the upheavals taking place, it is much easier for OCG's to take advantage of these situations and start taking action on further expanding their activity.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The US has dealt with a number of protests and demonstrations during the past two years. It can also be observed that the country's GDP has suffered during the pandemic. It is difficult to talk about nationwide measures seeing as each state had implemented measures that were suggested by their Governor, rather than the President of the country.

The economic reasons played a big part in both the rise in organized crime as well as the rise in upheavals in the states. It is no secret that even though the Trump Administration seemingly improved the country's GDP, most of the jobs created were not essential workers, resulting in a great amount of people re-entering unemployment, especially in urban areas, where one must also consider the living expenses. Throughout the past two years, protests ranging from matters such as the Black Lives Matter movement to anti-lockdown protests have been demonstrated.

Due to the inconsistency of the measures implemented throughout the country, one might argue that organized crime in the States was given more space to evolve, rather than some criminal activities being inefficient because of stricter measures.

Despite the rise in both civil unrest and organized crime, the US is actively trying to contain the issue through the execution of various missions conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigations in collaboration with various other organizations, such as the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC).

Mexico

Mexico is a country that has long been dealing with issues such as corruption, civil unrest, and vast organized crime. In this case, the measures implemented, quarantine and overall social distancing, did initially slow down the criminal organizations, but it did not take long for them to adapt to the new reality. As mentioned in the Historical Background section of this guide, one of the main reasons why such organizations were formed were because the people felt as if they were not treated properly by the governments. In many remote areas in Mexico, OCG's have the role of small governments and in many cases, the measures implemented derived from them. Westernized countries turned to cybercrime, whilst countries like Mexico were not

able to do so due to internal affairs and used territory and people control in order to go forward with their illegal activity. This is in accordance to what was stated regarding the OCG's having a government-like role in such a society. The measures implemented aimed in basic protection of public health but also favored illegal activity in the country. In the case of Mexico, state failure has been so vast that the corruption deriving from OCG activities ultimately affects decision making throughout the country.

The reason why Mexico is so important, is because of the depth of the criminal activity taking place within Mexican territory; reaching every aspect of their country as well as the fact that there is no action taken to prevent and deal with this issue. Another thing that should be taken into consideration, is the power these groups hold over people and different communities and what we can do to prevent such situations.

Serbia

Similarly, to Mexico, Serbia also has vast corruption, deriving from OCG activities, as it is a country with a history of Organized Crime. Serbia is a Balkan country that is surrounded by countries the FBI has ruled out to be prone to illegal activity in the form of organized crime. It is to be expected for a country amid countries prone to OC activity to benefit from the pandemic, as the vast corruption that characterizes the country is rooted deep inside and proves to be beneficial for many. As was highlighted, OCG activity is benefit-driven activity. When opportunities for implementation of new schemes arise, such as the sale of counterfeit or sub-standard goods among others, expansion on OCG activities was to be expected, as a result of the previously mentioned corruption. Corruption is very closely related to OC and is considered to be by both the UNODC, Europol and Interpol. It is important to note that criminal groups in Serbia did struggle at first, much like everywhere in the world when it came to coming up with ways to work around quarantine measures, but ultimately, came to benefit from various types of criminal activity, mainly drug trafficking, and capitalized on vulnerability, which resulted in illegal markets and shadow economy to benefit. Despite Serbian authorities' attempts at dealing with the issue, such as their collaboration with Europol and the FBI in the 2021 OTF Greenlight/Trojan Shield operation, they still face major issues when it comes to OCG activity, with 60% of criminal networks are reported to engage in corruption, according to Europol.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The UNODC is the office responsible for the safety of civilians as far as drugs, terrorism, organized crime, and corruption are concerned. Their work is primarily based on research, guidance, and support to all member states of the United Nations. The UNODC was established in 1997, and its main aims are counterfeiting issues such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, exploitation, corruption, money-laundering and organized crime, amongst others. Throughout the years the UNODC has been involved with many cases and has come up with various campaigns to tackle issues closely related to OC, such as corruption i.e. "Your No Counts". Because it is under the UN, all reports deriving from data collected comes from various state members with different

policies – thus it can be concluded that many times, the image created by their data collection may not always be clear and itself cannot reinforce any policies; as mentioned they have a more of a guiding role and its reports are only taken into account by countries that are willing to do so. It is important to remember that OC is profit-driven activity – that means that if a country is dealing with vast corruption in its government as a result of OC activity, it consequently will most likely disregard such reports.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is the principal Law Enforcement Agency in the United States. It is a leading counterterrorism, counterintelligence, and criminal investigative organization. Their work is not solely domestic however, as they have the legislation to carry out their activities overseas as well. The FBI has had many missions regarding organized crime ; their main goal is to take down entire organized crime schemes; not individuals, something that local police tends to do. They have collaborated with Europol as a whole but have tackled OC related issues in collaboration with other authorities. One of their biggest achievements in Europe regarding OC is the OTF Greenlight/Trojan Shield, that resulted in the arrest of 800 criminals through ‘ANOM’ – an encrypted device system that was advertised to criminals as ‘by criminals made for criminals’ and regulated their activity via ANOM-associated devices. Their work on this operation resulted in not only the arrest of a substantial amount of OC members but also, contributed to the overall knowledge both they and other EU authorities and institutions have on the matter, which is fundamental for efficiently dealing with this issue.

OCDEFT

The Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces aim in collectively attacking organized crime and the activities that derive from it. They are closely collaborating with the FBI when it comes to effectively dealing with transnational organized crime. They also work with DEA, and combine their expertise on drug handling. They have successfully convicted over 44 thousand drug-related operations.

Europol

Europol, also known as European police, is the European Agency for Law Enforcement. They deal with various illegal activities, one of them being Organized Crime. Each year, a report is published, called the “Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA)” specifically targeting key findings in cybercrime. Europol’s activities are not only in relation with cybercrime; throughout the years they have released various reports, like the SOCTA, regarding organized crime in Europe and other parts of the world.

Global Initiative

Global initiative is an independent civil-society organization. Their goal is to create new innovative strategies and responses to organized crime. Their work consists of

numerous educational articles on TOC and an agenda of possible solutions for the issues raised.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of Event	Description of event
October 15 th , 1970	Organized Crime Control Act
September 29 th , 2003	Protocols Thereto put into force
March 3 rd -10 th , 2020	Operation Pangea coordinated by Interpol
March 27 th , 2020	“Pandemic profiteering: how criminals exploit the covid-19 crisis” published by EUROPOL
March 26 th , 2021	Justice Department takes action Against Covid-19 Fraud
July 22 nd , 2021	Resolution adopted by ECOSOC “Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the COVID-19 pandemic”
October 8 th , 2021	US and Mexico draw up outlines of New Security Framework
October 28 th , 2021	Workshop on Accelerating the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and AU Agenda 2063 in Africa in the time of Covid-19
November 19 th , 2021	FBI, Politie, Polisen, DEA and 16 other countries carried out operation OTF Greenlight/Trojan Shield, under Europol
December 7 th , 2021	2021 IOCTA report released
December 14 th , 2021	2021 SOCTA published

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Briefing Security Council on Linkages between Terrorism and Organized Crime

On August 6th, 2020, the Security Council of the United Nations called for new measures to tackle TOC. During the debriefing, it was highlighted that the efforts that were to be made in order to deal with the issue needed to be cojoined, so they would be adequately effective. Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of the UNODC, stressed the need for collaborative action against OC. During the debriefing, legal grounds as well as ways to deal with human trafficking, drug distribution, fraud and money-laundering were discussed.

Protocols Thereto

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is the main international instrument we have at hand in order to tackle Organized Crime as a whole. It is important to keep in mind that such a document cannot be forced upon

any state therefore it creates room for further discussions but does not resolve the issue entirely. The Protocols Thereto are three and they have to do with, prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking persons, especially women and children, facing the issue of smuggling migrants by sea, land and air as well as the issue of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking of firearms their parts, components and ammunition.

Operation Pangea

Operation Pangea is a well-established campaign coordinated by INTERPOL, involving 90 countries worldwide. This operation was based on data that revolved around counterfeit and sub-standard goods. The results of this operation reveal unsettling information in terms of OC activity, with BBC reporting “fake coronavirus cures” and other false information regarding the pandemic being very widely spread throughout the countries that participated in Pangea. The operation led to 121 arrests, millions of euros worth of goods seized and 2.5 thousand links leading to websites stating false information in various forms, taken down.

Economic and Social Council resolution; on “Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the COVID-19 pandemic”

This is a very important resolution that shows that the UN has recognized the issue at hand as a topic worth debating upon. This resolution in particular is very important as it highlights the need for strong judicial systems especially in times like these; something that delegates should keep in mind whilst drafting their own resolutions. A clause worth mentioning is clause no13, “*Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as the leading entity of the United Nations supporting Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice through the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building, based on their needs and priorities, as well as through its normative work, research and expertise, to conduct in close consultation with Member States, and within existing extrabudgetary resources, further studies on the impact of COVID-19 on criminal justice systems and to provide recommendations on advancing criminal justice reforms, with an emphasis on the future preparedness of the criminal justice system, in particular prison systems, to tackle challenges arising from pandemics and widespread health-related issues;” that amongst others, highlights the need for strong institutions to be established along with the research and data provided, as for member states to deal with Organized Crime as effectively as possible.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Collaborative policymaking

Policymaking is one of the first actions taken by any government to combat an issue. Organized Crime is a vast issue that affects all countries and when it comes to issues such as organized crime amid civil unrest, cojoined action between member states is the most effective, in terms of achieving reduction of such activities as well as preventing it and bringing those involved in such schemes to justice. This could suggest a convention, however as was mentioned this may not tackle the issue at hand entirely. The areas that are of utmost importance and should be given special attention, according to the SDGs mentioned in the “Background Information” section of this study guide, are areas with high TOC-vulnerable population & civil unrest. Delegates are expected to form their policies in accordance with the SDG’s.

Education

The issue at hand, is not one that will be solved by a single party. Both sides, government and citizens, need to work towards a more peaceful and stable reality for themselves. Education in vulnerable groups is fundamental, both for the protection of young children of early criminal organization group recruitment, as well as the overall embetterment of people’s everyday lives. This is a very big factor when it comes to prevention as well, seeing as people will be educated on OCG activity and will also be familiarized with various ways to deal with such encounters. This will of course require the implementation of certain crash courses regarding organized crime, that will aim in effectively informing children from a young age of the dangers surrounding OCG. Adults can be vulnerable too if not properly educated on the matter, therefore, adults will be required to undergo certain courses in order to be adequately prepared for such an encounter. These are all measures to deal with organized crime after groups have been formed. Educating people before it gets to the point of illegal activity is a major part of the prevention of such situations and can also be achieved through educating the people, whether that concerns responsible voting, the basics of a country’s economy etc. Bearing in mind that the Covid-19 pandemic has created emergency funds to cover different issues that arise with time, one could support this idea by distributing an amount of the Covid-19 funds. When the public is adequately educated, it makes it more difficult for conspiracies to reach them, even more so affecting them to a great extent. The issue of funding can also be resolved by the World Bank and does not concern the delegates.

Funding appropriate institutions

Referring to organizations such as Europol, Interpol, the FBI etc, that conduct work towards resolving these issues. So far, their work is based on crime response however, their work has allowed for them to collect data and make up for documents such as the IOCTA and SOCTA. Such data could be used in education, after it being made age appropriate for every target audience, but also, would allow for the institutions at

hand to effectively deal with the issue to a greater extent, seeing as none of these tackles organized crime solely.

Legislation

Legislation is a broad term when it comes to OC. In many cases punishment is not the issue, making prevention much more important. For this, we have to analyze how & why people get involved with OC – and what is stopping them from exiting themselves. As was mentioned previously, OC is profit-driven activity. When people feel like they are not protected from their governments, or when they believe that their wages do not suffice for them to live comfortably; that is when they might turn to OC activity. This is very closely related to education and its importance seeing as it usually results in higher quality of life. Children joining OCG for example before they finish secondary education is a social phenomenon very closely related to poverty and failure of the state to provide for these children and their families. Legislation protecting workers, legislation around child safety, countries giving incentive for new businesses to be established, will generally prove to be beneficial in terms of limiting people joining OCG's.

Funding operations pertaining to corruption

Expertise on this matter is crucial. Funding well-trained teams of agents to regulate areas that data and reports have proven to be prone to OC activity is a measure that would, to a great extent, combat this issue. This could not only be funded by the World Bank but also, by various member states that are known to take action against this issue such as the United States. Regulation is a difficult measure because one has to keep in mind that legislation concerning regulation and even operations will be made far more difficult when not done in “groups” of countries such as the EU or the USA. However, if done correctly, it can result in big successes, such as Operation Pangea.

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