

Forum:	General Assembly 1 (DISEC I & II)
Issue:	Combating Organized Crimes to Develop Inclusive and Sustainable Communities
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Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals, otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a set of objectives set by the United Nations in 2015 aimed to call countries to action in order to improve the lives of people universally by 2030. Several global issues are covered by the 17 SDGs, with topics such as poverty and equal education all integrated and dealt with through social, economic and environmental perspectives. The Goals are meant to be open to contributions from all, including nations, NGOs, local communities, and everyday citizens.

Organised crime has been a global issue to tackle. They instill fear in communities and do not contribute to an inclusive society. There have always been previous attempts to fix this issue. Still, because organised crime groups are now becoming more and more international and global, it is becoming difficult to not only track down the source of the problem. This means that international cooperation is crucial to help in solving this issue.

Organised crime is a pressing issue because it has been found to hamper economic growth severely, but also because it damages civilian wellbeing. Countries with high crime rates were found to have high violence rates as well. In Latin America, where transnational organised crime is at large, it has been found to contain 34% of all murder scenes. It does not contribute to an inclusive society either because it often creates inequality between the citizens within, with leaders often having extra advantages over others. Quoting the UN, organised crime groups are “a threat to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.”

The UN has been doing much within this area: the UNODC (United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime) has explicitly been tasked on the issue of reducing organised crime. Among some of their goals at hand are ending abuse and to reduce illicit arms and financial flow, which could be some areas to tackle when thinking up solutions to the issue.

Organised crime is a complicated issue to manage because it is not only global, with crime groups having extensive networks and considerable influence (especially in Latin America), they cover large areas as well. Each crime group is specialised in a different area, from drug smuggling to human trafficking to illegal arms to money laundering. Because of this, it is difficult for an organisation to cover all areas of the crime scene. It is crucial when tackling the issue, to remember that these communities with high organised crime rates are not weak and vulnerable due to the crime; it is often because they are poor and vulnerable, which is why they have become a breeding ground for crime groups where people become desperate.

Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable and Inclusive Communities

These two terms are often interlinked in terms of definition.

Sustainable communities refer to ones that promote sustainable living, so environmental and economic sustainability. Sustainable communities tend to focus on commercial and ecological sustainability, urban infrastructure, social equity, and municipal government.

Inclusive communities are ones that respects its citizens, including offering equal opportunities to all, providing access to all resources¹, as well as fair treatment of individuals to where its citizens and members feel safe, respected, and comfortable in being themselves and expressing all aspects of their identities.

Organised crime does not provide either of these characteristics to a community. There is no equal rights between citizens, as seen often in drug cartels, where leaders of the group have significant power over life and death of individuals. Political stability is a factor in sustainable and inclusive communities; usually, however, in areas with high organised crime, there is corruption and political leverage. According to Institutes of Sustainable Communities, social wellbeing is a large factor which states as an objective “maintains a place that is safe from crime and aggression.”² Because of organised crimes’ contradictory act against the development of such communities, which are beneficial to citizens, it is of utmost importance to be solved.

Organised Crime

According to the Cambridge dictionary, this term refers to criminal organisations that plan and commit crimes, or the crimes that are incurred by such organisations. Some well-known examples of organised crimes are drug trafficking, human trafficking, and money laundering. Organised crime differs

¹ As per Google definition

² <https://sustain.org/about/what-is-a-sustainable-community/>

from typical, spontaneous crime as it is "organised". Typically, criminal activity conducted under the term "organised crime" involves a larger group of individuals who look for-profit and operate with similar criminal interests. While organised crime groups like gangs or syndicates appear almost everywhere, different groups working in different regions often participate in various forms of organised crime, such as sex trafficking, arms dealing, drug distribution, etc. According to the UNODC, organised crime partakes in "profit from illicit activities that are often in great public demand" and exists through "corruption of public officials and the use of intimidation, threats or force to protect its operations."

Transnational Organised Crime (TOC)

Organised crime across borders, and in many different countries, where they set up illegal ventures. It can be seen as a global international network spanning between multiple countries. This makes it extremely difficult to track, hence, making international cooperation all the more critical. Transnational organised crime is more powerful than the general organised crime, especially because most have large profits and are often allied with powerful political figures, financial and legal institutions, through building up their network. This works to undermine the stability, and hence the "inclusivity" of a community. TOC also has an impact on a global level, as the World Bank estimates that such groups spent \$1 trillion on bribery each year, diminishing economic competitiveness between countries. It is also said that terrorist groups have, in recent years, been turning towards TOC groups for funding and donations.

Background Information

Logistics of Transorganised Crime Groups

Organised crime groups are usually transnational, working across different continents worldwide with illegal drug trafficking, arms trade, and human trafficking. As such, they must have an organised system in place for funnelling money a logistic strategy for making a profit.

Profit Strategies and Firm Strategies

Because they are often illegal and illegitimate to perform, they usually have proper model plans in place for funnelling money in and out of countries. Transnational organised crime groups are mostly like that of an ordinary firm's: profit maximisation. As such, they supply whatever is in constant demand. Drugs and arms are usually illegal to sell, so there is a higher demand than there is supply, which is where these cartels and groups see the opportunity to make a profit. This can hence be an aspect to address, where countries could try to send in some situations the excess demand, such as Canada recently legalising cannabis to increase supply.

History

Europe and Asia have always had their own famous transnational organised groups, such as the Yakuza in Japan. However, in the United States, organised groups have primarily thrived ever since the Prohibition era in the 1920s. As mentioned above, there was an excess demand for alcohol, creating an opportunity for organised crime to flourish. They call these groups “families”. They are usually led by a leader who has power over citizens not just in the cartel, but in the entire community. They often even have the power for major life and death decisions. This in itself is damaging to the sustainability and inclusivity of a community, creating an atmosphere of fear. Most organisations with long term plans in place thrive, with the Chinese Triads dealing with illegal drugs, and in Australia with organisations dealing in narcotics and cargo theft. But often, there are also short term plans in place with robbery, theft, and murder. In Russia, there is the largest concentration of organised crime groups in the world, with more than 5000 individual groups held responsible for “international tax evasion, money laundering, murders of businessmen, journalists, and politicians”. These days, North America is said to be one of the largest producers and importers of organised crime, while Latin America, Asia, and Africa are producers and exporters of organised crime products, such as drugs. ³

Transnational Crime in East Asia and the Pacific



- Counterfeit Goods 24.4 bn*
- Heroin within EAP 16.3bn
- Fraudulent Medicines 5bn****
- Illegal Wildlife in EAP 2.5bn
- Illegal Wood Products 17bn**
- Methamphetamines 15bn***
- Illegal E-waste from EAP 3.75bn
- Migrant Smuggling 1.55bn*****

EAP - East Asia and the Pacific *East Asia Pacific to Europe and US
 Within EAP *Within EAP ****EAP to Southeast Asia and Africa
 *****China and Viet Nam to Europe and US

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Caption #1: Transnational Crime Examples in East Asia and Pacific

³ https://www.jstor.org/stable/25659076?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents

⁴ unodc.org

Difficulties in Tracking TOC groups

Often with problems locating the top of the problem usually solves it. With organised groups, locating the top of the chain is not only difficult, but even if the leader is removed, the leader is simply replaced. This can be seen with the Sinaloa cartel and with El Chapo. Even though El Chapo was captured, the Sinaloa group simply replaced him, and continued. These leaders usually have large influences, especially over financial structures. Because of this control, it often makes it easy for them to cover tracks. They usually have considerable influence over the community as well, with huge funding backing them. Even with financial accounts, attempting to track them is difficult, as they move large sums of money frequently across international borders. This means that international cooperation is crucial in tracking these criminals, as well as with international banking systems. Additionally, with the ease and speed of international mobility right now, it is increasingly difficult to track resources from moving across borders. Again, this emphasises a more international and global effort to tackle the issue.

Previous International Efforts

There has already been bilateral agreements working with law enforcement between countries, as well as UNODC acting as a liaison between countries, but still major gaps remain for transnational organised crime groups to successfully thrive. The Council of Europe's Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure, and Confiscation of Proceeds from Crime has a growing membership with Eastern European countries, and have also cooperated with nonmember states, such as the USA and Australia. This council is more effective than others because it does not restrict the scope of organised crime to drugs, but includes a wider reach to be explored and investigated. In regards to narcotics and money laundering, there have been organisations like Caribbean Financial Action Task Force and Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission (CICAD). The main barrier to international cooperation on this issue has been differences in the structures of governments and politics, which hinders agreement. This is further exacerbated by differences in economic development, legal systems, social and cultural norms. Additionally, there is the matter of defining what constitutes as organised crime, which is a broad category and is open to interpretation by different parties involved.

Financial Infrastructures

Because transnational organised crime groups usually have ways of funneling money through international banking systems, it would be beneficial to be able to track suspicious flows of money, such as large amounts of money passing by certain banks. However, because of the differing structures of every single bank internationally, this has been a major challenge in achieving.

Databases for Transnational Crime Groups and Information Sharing Between Countries

Again, these are crucial methods to tackle the issue because of the mobility of crime groups. However, despite international efforts, it is difficult to cooperate because of the various systems in place in each country. So far, most policing organisations have contributed Interpol's international database of criminal organisation. This could be used as a future solution for improvements in international cooperation. Some simple ways for them to support the international effort is strengthening the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC), through methods such as further sharing criminal and financial intelligence. More extreme measures include extradition, as well as freezing of criminal proceeds. More international cooperation should also be done through UNODC, who have been attempting to increase international cooperation on this issue for years.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

UNODC is specifically dedicated to eradicate drugs and organised crime in society. One of the sustainable development goals are officially under their enactment, which states: "Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels⁵." In essence, they are one of the primary organisations working on eradicating organised crime around the world. In the organised crime branch of the UNODC, it is split up into three sections: Conference Support Section (CSS), Implementation Support Section (ISS), and Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section (HTMSS). Together, they offer an international policy against organised crime as well as upholding the Organised Crime Convention. It was first established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, and was then renamed in 2022 Countries collaborate to promote health, security and justice in the council as well as resolve issues and crises. Since larger organized crime groups operate transnationally, the UNODC assists in the encouragement of international efforts to fight organized crime.

International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL)

Interpol is an intergovernmental organisation that plays a major role in limiting organised crime. They have helped identify major players within transnational criminal groups using biometrics and data given by countries. They not only help to locate international criminals, but they monitor any future developments in the technology of crime through methods such as research and development. As organised crime becomes more and more mobile and international, INTERPOL provides a platform for international cooperation, allowing for police across different countries to work together. Some of their

⁵ https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/sustainable-development-goals/sdg16_-peace-and-justice.html

projects in regards to organised crime are Project Fortaleza, which combats crime in Latin America, and Project Millenium, which tackles transnational Euroasian crime. Through these projects, INTERPOL provides databases, lists of gangs, locations of operation and influence, among others. INTERPOL is a crucial player involved in the fight against organised crime.

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime is the largest Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) involved in the fight against organised crime. They not only help victims of organised crime and prevent violence, but they also aim to strengthen global institutions. They continuously look for new strategies to combat organised crime through publishing reports and expanding their network of experts. They are actively promoting political awareness in organised crime and contribute to strategy development.

Venezuela

Venezuela has one of the lowest rankings in the security and organised crime aspect in the World Economic Forum (WEF) report. This is likely due to the poor conditions of its country and its citizens face. There has often been a reputation of violence and gang violence in the country. The gang violence and cartels are likely only to get worse as protests continue throughout the country, creating more opportunities for expanding crime organisations. Their main area of organised crime is in drug trafficking and arms trade; typically, Colombians have been in charge of organised crime groups there, likely because of poor law enforcement and corruption. Street crime and gang violence is prominent in its capital especially, with one of the highest homicide rates worldwide at 130.5 people per 100,000.

Mexico

Mexico is famous for some of the most violence criminal groups. They have been known to traffick drugs, arms, and humans. These trafficking groups have often caused Mexican refugees to seek refuge across the border in the States, but have also sparked a war between the two countries regarding the illegal drug trafficking between the two countries. The most well known of organised crime leader in Mexico is the famous Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, boss of the famous Sinola cartel, who has been caught in the 1990s. These groups are truly transnational, reaching Canada and the United States, as well as to countries in Europe. The Mexican government has increased efforts to crack down on organised crime groups, but have only resulted in these groups splintering off and fragmenting the large organisations into smaller networks. Their proximity to the largest economy in the world, the United States, has also to some extent played a role in the large number of criminal organisations in the area.

El Salvador

El Salvador is ranked as the lowest in security and organised crime in the WEF report as well as with the highest ranking murder rate worldwide. Its geography in between North and South America has provided it with an ideal location of being the center of organised crime, mainly drug trafficking. Additionally, its extreme poverty and history of civil war have created an ideal atmosphere and breeding ground for organised crime groups to thrive. Another primary culprit for thriving of organised crime groups is corruption in the country. Crime groups like MS-13 and other infamous groups in El Salvador are rumoured to be protected by the political class, through their covert funding for presidential campaigns. This, however, is not just seen in El Salvador, but often across countries in Latin America where political groups get economic support and political barriers in exchange for protecting illegal crime groups.

Japan

Japan is a country with a long history with organised crime with several organised crime gangs, families and businesses closely connected to the transnational organised crime syndicate Yakuza where its origins date back to the Tokugawa Shogunate era. The Japanese government estimated in 2007 that more than 102,000 Yakuza members were working in Japan and abroad, in 2,500 different families. The largest yakuza families operating today are the Kobe-based Yamaguchi-Gumi, which includes about half of all active Yakuza in Japan and is one of the largest organised criminal organisations in the world. The Yakuza gangs engage in illegal activities such as international drug-smuggling, human trafficking, and arms smuggling. Moreover, they also hold significant amounts of stock in large, legitimate corporations, and some have close ties with the Japanese business world, the banking sector, and the real estate market. On the other hand, Yakuza families surprisingly help provide relief after disasters such as during the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami. Although the police are making serious efforts to suppress yakuza activity in Japan these days, it seems unlikely that the syndicates will disappear entirely. After all, they have survived for more than 300 years, and they are closely entwined with many aspects of Japanese society and culture as a whole.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1988	Sinaloa Cartel, or known as Guzman-Loera Organisation, was founded in Mexico. This cartel is an international organisation which is known for smuggling illegal drugs and money laundering.
1920	Prohibition Era in the United States triggered nationwide increase in organised crime groups.

November 1925

Al Capone takes over Chicago as one of the largest crime lord gangsters and businessmen during the Prohibition era

June 9th, 1993

El Chapo, leader of the infamous Sinaloa Cartel, is captured and arrested, sentenced to jail for 20 years and is currently in a maximum security jail, Federal Center for Social Rehabilitation No.

September 29th,
2003

United Nations Convention Against Organised Crime is agreed

Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto, 15 November 2000, (**A/RES/55/25**)

This resolution aims to tackle three areas in particular: preventing smuggling of migrants, preventing trafficking of persons, and against illicit manufacturing of arms and weapons. This was one of the first major steps taken in tackling organised crime.

- Threats to international peace and security caused by international terrorism and organized crime, 2019 (**S/RES/2482**)

Focusing on the effects of organised crime in relation to terrorism, this resolution mainly contains clauses against the possible trafficking of arms and weapons. However, it also addresses other issues, such as money laundering.

- Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime, 24 February 1995 (**A/RES/49/159**)

This resolution commits to encouraging international cooperation, with clauses endorsing member states to donate to the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund in order to prevent control of TOC.

Possible Solutions

Investment of Education, Health care, and Infrastructure in Areas of Poor Living Quality

In some areas, because there is a lack of education, social support services, health care, with unusually high unemployment, they can be breeding grounds for organised crime. With no help from outside, people are likely to be desperate for some sort of income, so turn to organised crime and drug trading. By offering such services to boost up the quality of living in these areas and to attempt to

increase the average income, or at the very least, to maintain a basic income for those in these communities, it makes people less desperate for money, reducing the likelihood of organised crime groups finding additional people. This offers citizens better opportunities and other choices than to join a cartel or a gang. However, this will likely increase expenditures of countries and in some countries where organised crime is at large, the government is already in debt. This is a factor to consider when we consider investments, especially for LEDCs. With LEDCs, they could potentially ask for help from MEDC for investment opportunities. This could also involve having LEDCs get involved in sustainable development with funding, again helping to eliminate breeding grounds for crime.

Tracing the Source of Crime

In terms of illegal drug and human trafficking and arms trading, searching for a method to track the flow of products could be beneficial. By tracking the movements of product, it could potentially lead to the source of the organised crime, directly rooting out the primary root. This could, however, take time and money. This counts on the market being constant at any given moment, to be able to trace the movements. In reality, the market is always shifting, making it even more difficult to try to track. Black markets themselves, which are often where these transactions occur, are difficult to find, hence the term underground markets. This could potentially lead to a fruitless search. A more worthwhile tracking would be only for illegal drugs or arms trading, the production of the good as it is harder to constantly change the location of producing the product.

Improving Transparency between International Financial Systems

Organised crime usually has gangs and cartels filtering money through channels, shuffling them around bank to bank, often in international settings for transnational organised crime. To tackle transparency, we could start by dissolving tax havens, which are easily a way for crime groups to avoid questioning of their large sums of profits. Regulating banks to try to prevent tax evasion and jurisdictions for banks to report crime suspicions could be implemented. This could overall eliminate the method of how crime groups transfer flows of cash, and prevent money laundering from occurring. However, this solution could be difficult in essence to implement; if not implemented well, it will not be efficient. Creating an international jurisdiction, or getting countries to agree to put this law into effect, could be a challenge.

Improving International Efforts on Transnational Organised Crime

Throughout this report, it has been emphasised the importance of international cooperation on this issue. If international efforts are to be included as a solution, UNODC should be mentioned as a platform, as a liaison between countries. Interpol could also be another platform to mention. Some previous problems and efforts have been mentioned above. International cooperation on crime is not imposing on national sovereignty but is instead strengthening it and security. As stated on the UNODC

website, “mutual legal assistance (MLA), extradition, transfer of sentenced prisoners, and asset confiscation make it a practical tool in this area⁶”. When thinking up solutions for international efforts, adaptability and flexibility is crucial to be applicable to different members states, efforts and agreements that could be applied to different legal systems and political structures. Technology is an imperative aspect to be focused on, with improving upon technology to track organised crime, so investments could be a target.

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