

## CICTE: Regional cooperation to prevent and counter terrorism



**OAS Member States came together to create the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)**

**E**stablished in 1948, the Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization. It works to achieve peace, promote solidarity, strengthen collaboration and defend sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. With its four core pillars of democracy, human rights, security and development, the OAS serves as the Western Hemisphere's primary political forum and today is comprised of 34 Member States and 71 permanent observers.<sup>1</sup>

In 1999, in response to the region's evolving terrorist threat, including the actions of the Shining Path in Peru and the attack against the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires (Argentina), OAS Member States came together to create the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), the region's primary and most preeminent political body charged with promoting cooperation and coordination in order to prevent and counter terrorist activities. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks OAS Member States went a step further and established the CICTE Secretariat in 2002 to better support countries in meeting their counter-terrorism obligations.

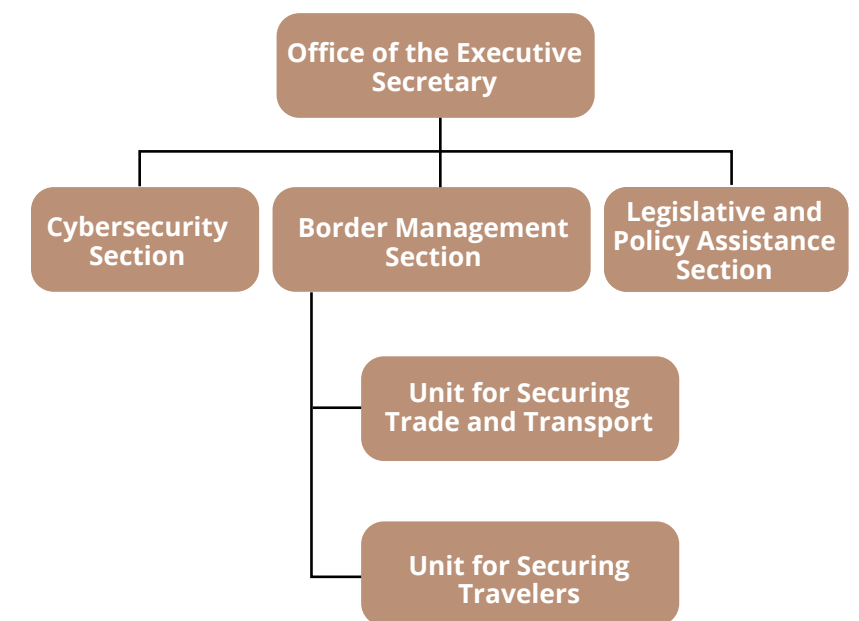
Through the designated National Points of Contact, the CICTE Secretariat provides technical assistance to Member States to respond to their changing needs and priorities. As a result, CICTE's efforts are today focused primarily on cybersecurity; border management (including maritime and port security, supply-chain security, cargo and container security, aviation tourism, and major events security); disarmament and non-proliferation of CBRN materials; prevention of terrorism financing and prevention of violent extremism. In addition, the Secretariat organizes an annual meeting to facilitate Member States dialogue, identify new terrorist threats, and define

new regional counter-terrorism priorities.

As such, CICTE has become a key player in the multilateral counter-terrorism architecture, and its work has contributed to the identification of emerging security issues and the development of national and regional policies. CICTE is particularly well-known for establishing information-sharing networks to facilitate the exchange of good practices and lessons learned between diverse public and private sector stakeholders involved in preventing and countering terrorism.

While the support of its Member States is essential, close

### CICTE Secretariat



<sup>1</sup> Today, the OAS brings together all 35 independent states of the Americas and constitutes the main political, juridical, and social governmental forum in the Hemisphere. In addition, it has granted permanent observer status to 70 states, as well as to the European Union (EU).

cooperation and coordination with other international, regional, and subregional organizations are equally critical for CICTE's success. CICTE is particularly proud of its 15-year partnership with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and of the combined efforts of both organizations to build greater capacity in the Americas to better protect vulnerable targets.

### Tourism and major events security

Through the implementation of four distinct, yet related, programs financed by the Government of Canada, CICTE and UNICRI trained more than 6000 authorities from 34 OAS Member States to strengthen integrated security planning to protect soft targets and tourism destinations. For instance, training on security practices and techniques was provided to Chile in preparation for the XIX Pan American Games in Santiago; to Mexico for the XVI Pan American Games in Guadalajara and the XXII Central American and Caribbean Games in Veracruz; to Costa Rica for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup 2022; and to Brazil in preparation for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Capacity-building activities have also been provided to

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beneficiary Member States when organizing national festivals and carnivals, and to Mexico for the visit of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. Also, when drafting the report [“Tourism Security in Mexico, Central America and The Caribbean 2016-2019: Key Findings and Recommendations Report”](#) 11 OAS Member States, including Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Jamaica, Ecuador, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic received training on basic tourism security and risk management for tourism destinations.

CICTE and UNICRI have also collaborated on the development of several security planning tools designed to help Member States to better protect crowded or public spaces. As a result: a) four countries of the region now have a national tourism security strategy; b) two different networks – the Inter-American Network on Tourism Security and the Network in the Americas for the Security of Major Events – are in place to pro-

vide regional information sharing among designated authorities; and c) all OAS Member States can now refer to the “Practical Manual on Security Planning on a Large Scale” which offers a proven methodology for designing, implementing and analyzing security plans for tourism sites and other vulnerable targets. This publication is also available in [Spanish](#).



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**Member States can now refer to the “Practical Manual on Security Planning on a Large Scale”**

### Preventing violent extremism through sport

More recently, as part of CICTE's efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism, CICTE and UNICRI have been working together to foster greater regional un-

derstanding of violent extremism, including the threat that extremism poses to regional and global security, and the cross-cutting actions that are needed by diverse stakeholders to prevent it.

Recognizing the important role that sports can play in promoting peace through tolerance, respect, integrity, and solidarity, the two organizations hosted the 2020 webinar on “Preventing violent extremism: good practices of youth engagement through sport”, in collaboration with the Government of Mexico, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and Save the Dream, a global non-profit organization.

This ground-breaking event highlighted different sport-led initiatives underway throughout the region to empower youth and communities by promoting positive values and transferable skills on teamwork and mentoring. We hope that the lessons learned from this webinar, namely the importance of linking sports, youth participation and empowerment, will influence the design and implementation of national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization, in line



with the recommendations established by the [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 \(2015\)](#).

### Looking ahead

CICTE and UNICRI share these and many other common priority areas of work, including cybersecurity and strengthening national capacity to prevent the misuse of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons, so it is hoped that the collaboration and coordination between the two organiza-

tions will continue to grow in the future. In the short term, and building on UNICRI's successful [“Policy Toolkit on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism”](#), research is currently underway to help practitioners and policymakers better understand the linkages between terrorism and organized crime in Latin America so that they can design practical and more effective responses. It is expected that this last working paper will be published in mid-2023.

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