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Integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice: other activities in support of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in particular activities of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, non-governmental organizations and other bodies

Report of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Note by the Secretary-General

The report of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was prepared pursuant to article IV, paragraph 3 (e), of the statute of UNICRI and approved by a decision of the Board taken at its online meeting held on 19 and 20 October 2022, for submission to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

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Results achieved by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Report of the Board of Trustees

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1086 B (XXXIX) of 1965. The Institute is an autonomous institution of the United Nations and is governed by its Board of Trustees, which provides strategic direction and contributes to the setting of priorities.
2. Within the broad scope of its mandate to develop and implement improved policies in the field of crime prevention and control, the mission of UNICRI is to advance justice and the rule of law in support of peace and sustainable development.
3. UNICRI works in specialized niches and selected areas related to crime prevention, criminal justice, security governance, counter-terrorism and the risks and benefits of technological advances. The Institute contributes to United Nations policy and operations through its specialized, cutting-edge and action-oriented research, training and capacity-building programmes. Within the scope of its mandate, the Institute serves as a conduit for channelling innovative ideas from within and outside the United Nations system.
4. The present report of the Board of Trustees contains a summary of the work carried out by UNICRI in 2022, in line with the UNICRI Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022.

A. Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022

5. Through its research, needs assessments and analyses of evolving trends, as well as the feedback received from partners, academics, civil society actors, policymakers and practitioners, UNICRI identified the following threats and challenges in its Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022, under which the activities described in the present annual report were carried out:
 - (a) Radicalization and violent extremism: lack of context-specific responses, weak criminal justice systems, and gaps in national and transnational cooperation;
 - (b) Transnational organized crime involvement in licit and illicit markets: shadow economies, illicit financial flows and possible links with terrorist networks;
 - (c) Weak security governance, poor rule of law and lack of accountability of institutions in post-conflict areas;
 - (d) High-tech security: encompassing global threats and solutions;
 - (e) Threats to crowded spaces and vulnerable targets;
 - (f) Vulnerabilities to criminal exploitation, gender inequalities and human rights violations against vulnerable populations;
 - (g) Emerging trends in crimes having an impact on the environment: illegal extraction, use of and trade in environmental resources and trafficking in hazardous substances.
6. The Framework contains the following six strategic priorities, which govern the activities covered by the present report:
 - (a) Preventing and countering violent extremism;
 - (b) Countering organized crime and fighting all forms of trafficking and illicit financial flows;

- (c) Reinforcing the rule of law in post-conflict countries;
- (d) Security through research, technology and innovation;
- (e) Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance;
- (f) Preventing crime through the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

7. The priorities of the Institute are aligned with Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) of the Sustainable Development Goals, but are also linked to several other Goals (2–6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15).

8. In 2022, UNICRI developed its new Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2023–2026 (see section VIII below).

B. Tools and approaches

9. UNICRI continued to expand its multisectoral and holistic approach, through applied and action-oriented research, the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, the provision of training and technical assistance, the creation of strong partnerships and policy support.

10. UNICRI promoted research to expand knowledge and understanding of specific problems and to tailor interventions appropriately. The Institute produced multiple reports and analytical briefs on a wide range of topics, including the following:

(a) “The Taliban in Afghanistan: assessing new threats to the region and beyond”;

(b) *The Conflict in Ukraine and its Impact on Organized Crime and Security: A Snapshot of Key Trends*;

(c) *Compendium of Best Practices on the Engagement and Advancement of Women in Chemical Safety and Security*;

(d) *Gaming and the Metaverse: The Alarming Rise of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse within the New Digital Frontier*;

(e) “A policy framework for responsible limits on facial recognition: use case – law enforcement investigations”;

(f) *Perceptions of Climate Change and Violent Extremism: Listening to Local Communities in Chad*;

(g) *A Prosecutor’s Guide to Chemical and Biological Crimes*;

(h) *Learn Better, Together: Independent Meta-Synthesis under the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*;

(i) *Illicit Financial Flows and Asset Recovery in the Eastern Partnership Region: A Mapping of Needs and Recommendations*.

11. The research carried out by the Institute supported the formulation of targeted social and criminal policy strategies for Member States. By disseminating qualitative and quantitative data and analysing the latest trends in crime, the Institute helped Member States to raise awareness of the needs and gaps in criminal justice systems and related policy frameworks.

12. UNICRI training and learning activities actively contributed to the transfer and dissemination of the Institute’s expertise acquired through the implementation of projects and programmes under its six strategic priorities. The Institute’s well-developed in-house capacity to design, deliver, manage and evaluate learning activities, together with its growing network of experts and partnerships, allowed it

to organize numerous training activities. UNICRI continued to expand its e-learning capacity and online platform.

13. UNICRI delivered its projects and programmes at the national, regional and international levels, benefiting a wide range of stakeholders. The Institute conducted more than 60 training activities for some 2,000 trainees. Those activities included, for example, the training of more than 500 law enforcement and security officials on the mitigation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks and the prevention and detection of trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials; 250 representatives of law enforcement authorities and the private sector on the protection of crowded spaces, including during sporting events; 500 technical experts and law enforcement officials on the use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement; and 20 representatives of various United Nations agencies to raise awareness of the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime.

14. In 2021 and 2022, UNICRI, in cooperation with the University for Peace, delivered the sixteenth edition of the Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice programme, comprising a distance-learning phase and a residential phase at the United Nations campus in Turin, Italy; 40 students wishing to specialize in international criminal law, humanitarian law, human rights law and transnational crime were admitted to the programme. As part of the Master of Laws programme, the International Criminal Law Defence Seminar – organized in cooperation with the Office of Public Counsel for the Defence of the International Criminal Court – was delivered to the students and six external participants at the United Nations campus in Turin by UNICRI and the University for Peace.

15. In addition, UNICRI held several courses for postgraduate students and professionals using dynamic training methodologies. This included five specialized online and hybrid courses for young professionals and postgraduate students organized in cooperation with United Nations entities and international universities to disseminate knowledge in the areas of illicit trade, migration and human rights, cultural heritage, crime and security, and environmental crimes. Because of the high demand, several of those courses, with updated content, will be included in the Institute's programme of work for 2023.

16. Applying the findings and lessons learned from its research, UNICRI continued to provide training and on-the-ground practical advice and mentoring in many highly specialized areas relating to crime and justice. It also advised counterparts on crime- and justice-related issues at the policy and operational levels, to enable them to respond more effectively to specific and emerging challenges.

17. The Institute employed various methods to enhance learning and raise awareness in the field of crime and justice, such as holding and hosting international online conferences, workshops, specialized courses for practitioners and the annual Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice programme. Furthermore, to promote cooperation and the sharing of experiences, UNICRI directly supported the capacity development of national stakeholders in the field. Those efforts were strengthened through the Institute's publications, including its *Freedom from Fear Magazine*, as well as through policy papers and specialized materials developed on the basis of research projects, training and field activities.

18. Through its websites, social media platforms, reports, campaigns and videos, UNICRI contributed to reinforcing knowledge of priority issues within the scope of its mandate and relevant available tools to address them.

19. The work undertaken by UNICRI in 2022 was funded exclusively by voluntary contributions. Its primary donors were Canada, Italy, Japan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, the Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, as well as the European Union, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and Société Industrielle et Commerciale de Produits Alimentaires (SICPA).

20. UNICRI delivered its programme of activities through its headquarters, in Turin, and through liaison offices in Rome and New York, a project office in Brussels, the Knowledge Centre “Security Improvements through Research, Technology and Innovation” (SIRIO) in Geneva, the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in The Hague, and the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence in Algiers, Amman, Manila, Nairobi, Rabat, Tashkent and Tbilisi. UNICRI participates in United Nations system coordination mechanisms in the locations where it has an official presence.

II. Preventing and countering violent extremism

21. As a signatory to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, UNICRI played a vital role in helping Member States to translate the good practices identified in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy into national policies.

22. In 2022, the Institute leveraged its extensive expertise in preventing and countering violent extremism and focused on the following three main areas: (a) supporting local communities and civil society organizations in preventing and countering radicalization and extremism; (b) rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist offenders and returning foreign terrorist fighters, both inside and outside prisons; and (c) empowering and building the resilience of vulnerable populations, in particular young people, to resist violent extremism through social cohesion.

23. UNICRI also partnered with local communities, civil society and State institutions to tackle threats related to radicalization and violent extremism and understand their impact on society and vulnerable groups. The Institute focused on addressing local drivers of youth radicalization, including the gender dynamics of recruitment, and worked in high-risk settings, such as prisons, to prevent radicalization and recruitment.

A. Supporting local communities and civil society organizations in preventing and countering violent radicalization and extremist activity

24. Recognizing the critical role played by communities in combating violent extremism, UNICRI continued to support and implement programmes aimed at preventing and countering radicalization, terrorist recruitment and violent extremism.

25. Building on its previous work and research in the Sahel region, UNICRI undertook research with SWISSAID to better understand the linkage between climate change and violent extremism, with a focus on Chad. The conclusion of the research, which included more than 130 interviews with community members and traditional authorities, was that the main productive activities – farming, herding and fishing – in four target areas in Chad had been adversely affected by climate change, increasing economic and survival pressures on communities. Violent extremist groups had taken advantage of those pressures for recruitment and propaganda purposes. Furthermore, competition for ever-shrinking resources had led to increased conflict within and between communities, causing a breakdown in social cohesion.

26. The resulting report identified key guiding principles that will inform future interventions to prevent violent extremism in the Sahel region and take into account cross-cutting and context-specific climate-related challenges and security risks. In particular, the report stressed the necessity of improving understanding of specific gender vulnerabilities and of investing in strategies and policies aimed at women’s inclusion, empowerment and access to decision-making processes.

27. UNICRI also launched an initiative to address both gender discrimination and violent extremism in Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. The initiative is designed to highlight the importance of cross-cutting issues when developing policies to prevent violent extremism. In that context, UNICRI embarked on new research focusing on identifying ways in which gender-based discrimination and violence may act as drivers of engagement in terrorism by men and women in the region.

28. In parallel, in cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNICRI published the study *Learn Better, Together: Independent Meta-Synthesis under the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. The study provides the collective results of an analysis of over 118 evaluation and oversight reports available from entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and contains aggregated findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations for use by Global Compact entities to deliver quality technical assistance.

B. Promoting the use of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism

29. UNICRI continued to raise awareness among the international community of the importance of sport and its values as a valid alternative tool to promote justice, inclusion, a sense of belonging and resilience. UNICRI collaborated with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the International Centre for Sport Security under the Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events, and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism. Through the Global Programme, UNICRI aims to provide Member States with concrete examples of policies, programmes, tools and international instruments for integrating sports into national action plans on preventing and countering violent extremism.

30. Under the Global Programme, UNICRI continued to monitor the 10 grant projects implemented by civil society organizations around the world aimed at delivering innovative actions that use sport and its values to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. In that context, in 2022, the Institute's civil society partners implemented over 130 training sessions that benefited more than 2,500 participants and conducted more than 300 activities that involved approximately 8,000 participants. Those activities included sports matches and competitions (in Albania and Cameroon), intercultural dialogues (in Uganda) and weekly sports schools and activities.

31. UNICRI is evaluating the effectiveness of the 10 grant projects at generating lessons learned and recommendations for other sport-based projects to prevent violent extremism. The Institute developed a baseline/endline questionnaire for the civil society organizations that received the grants, and it also conducted monitoring missions. Preliminary findings and recommendations include the need to develop a context-sensitive, gender-inclusive strategy, the importance of debriefing sports participants and the need to build a positive relationship with minority groups.

32. UNICRI organized the first Regional Forum of National Focal Points for South-East Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok, and the first Regional Forum of National Focal Points for Africa, held in Dakar. The forums brought together national focal points from all over the regions, providing them with a platform for sharing lessons learned and enhancing the capacity of Member States to apply recognized standards when making security arrangements for upcoming major sporting events and developing advanced policies for preventing violent extremism that leverage sport and its values.

C. Enhancing efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders and returning foreign terrorist fighters, both inside and outside prisons

33. UNICRI continued to support Member States in translating into national policies the generalized good practices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, as contained in its Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders, which addresses the rehabilitation needs of incarcerated violent extremists.

34. In that context, UNICRI worked in collaboration with MINUSCA and the National Prison Administration in the Central African Republic to enhance the country's prisoner classification system by developing a tailored classification tool and building the capacity of prison personnel.

35. UNICRI and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Office of Counter-Terrorism continued their efforts to fill knowledge gaps concerning violent extremist prisoners. Building upon their analysis of existing data on violent extremist prisoners and the challenges faced by Member States in managing them, the Institute and the Centre further developed a tailored methodology for the systematic generation and collection of relevant data on violent extremist prisoners that can be used to inform their management in prison settings and their eventual reintegration into society. The methodology involves a road map and corresponding series of activities, including a flexible questionnaire that can be adapted to different operational contexts. In the next phase, UNICRI and the Centre will test the methodology with prison authorities in participating Member States.

D. Addressing the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime

36. Member States continue to face increasing challenges in identifying and investigating cases in which criminal and terrorist elements coexist or overlap. Consequently, UNICRI continued to carry out relevant research to better support Member States and organizations.

37. In that context, UNICRI is using The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism and the related *Policy Toolkit on The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism* as the basis for providing assistance to Member States and for organizing capacity-building activities for policymakers and practitioners.

38. The Institute is also promoting inter-agency cooperation in countering terrorism and organized crime, in particular collaboration between law enforcement agencies, judicial officers and prosecutors. The research that is being carried out will allow UNICRI to expand in various relevant global regions and obtain data that can contribute to consolidating the recommendations contained in the *Policy Toolkit*, which are relevant to concerned Member States.

39. UNICRI organized two capacity-building workshops in Tunis for Libyan policymakers and practitioners working on engagement with local communities. Moreover, UNICRI supported staff at the United Nations Global Service Centre by training those deployed in the field on how to recognize the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism and on enhancing research and information-sharing capacities. The Institute, with the support of UNODC, also provided capacity-building on the *Policy Toolkit* to law enforcement agents in the Niger.

40. Expanding its assistance to Latin America, UNICRI supported the Government of Argentina through research and awareness-raising workshops on the nexus between organized crime and terrorism in the capital and in the country's tri-border area.

41. Those activities supplemented ongoing research that UNICRI has been carrying out in partnership with the Organization of American States on the topic of the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism in Latin America, the findings of which are due to be published in 2023. The Institute has also embarked on research on trafficking in cultural heritage and its links to terrorism financing, with activities planned in 2023 in partnership with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

III. Countering organized crime and fighting all forms of trafficking and illicit financial flows

42. In 2022, UNICRI worked with Governments, justice departments, legal institutions and prosecuting authorities to target criminal financial enterprises, illicit financial flows, trade in counterfeit goods, and corrupt practices. The Institute supported Member States in investigating and prosecuting economic crimes, improving parallel financial investigations and confiscating illicit assets. It also provided expert advice on countering corrupt practices and protecting essential supply chains. In addition, UNICRI advised Member States on using recovered assets for high-priority development needs and addressed the impact of organized crime and corruption.

43. Research carried out by UNICRI highlighted the link between transnational organized crime and terrorism and the use of trafficking to finance illegal activities. The Institute's research initiatives provided up-to-date technical expertise on how to prevent and counter organized criminal activities and trace, seize and recover illicitly acquired assets.

A. Improving the capacity of Member States to better trace, freeze, seize, confiscate and recover assets linked to major acts of corruption

44. UNICRI assisted Ukraine in beginning the work needed to bolster the country's civil confiscation system in order to allow authorities to seize and confiscate illicitly acquired assets while ensuring respect for due process. Despite the ongoing conflict, new judicial decisions were handed down in 2022, and a larger number are anticipated in 2023, all involving assets linked to acts of corruption or other organized criminal activity.

45. UNICRI also assisted Armenia and Azerbaijan in seeking clarification from foreign jurisdictions concerning stolen assets located in banks in those jurisdictions. Similarly, the Institute's asset recovery experts provided technical support to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in relation to cases involving Moldovan and Ukrainian assets located abroad.

46. The Institute expanded its provision of expert advice to the Civil Confiscation Department of the Prosecutor General's Office in Armenia, overseeing 300 civil confiscation investigations.

47. Officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Libya, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine participated in study missions organized by UNICRI, including a mission conducted by Eastern Partnership officials to the Kingdom of the Netherlands to identify good practices in the seizure, confiscation and management of assets. The officials discussed modern practices regarding the transparent management of recovered assets and the evolving trend of channelling liquidated assets to national high-priority development needs. The participants also had the opportunity to learn about best practices concerning the seizure, confiscation, management and recovery of virtual assets, an area about which authorities in Eastern Partnership countries had expressed concern.

48. UNICRI produced the report *Illicit Financial Flows and Asset Recovery in the Eastern Partnership Region: A Mapping of Needs and Recommendations*, which sheds light on the damage caused to the Eastern Partnership region by unchecked illicit financial flows. The report also highlights the importance of strengthening cross-border relationships within the region to maximize the capture of illicitly obtained assets. In particular, it focuses on issues related to cross-border cooperation in relation to the broader issue of illicit financial flows and asset recovery, thus enabling more comprehensive and holistic policy recommendations to be made to regional, national and international stakeholders in order to enhance cross-border cooperation on the issue of asset recovery.

49. UNICRI continued to work with the Libyan authorities on mechanisms that need to be adopted or strengthened to prevent and prosecute cases involving acts of corruption, with a primary focus on facilitating improved outcomes regarding asset recovery. In that context, the Institute facilitated a multilateral effort to return to Libya looted cultural assets that had been seized by United States authorities and that were more than 2,300 years old and had an estimated value of more than \$ 500,000.

B. Strengthening policies and mechanisms to combat illicit financial flows, illegal trafficking and organized crime

50. UNICRI conducted a study to assess the impact of the conflict in Ukraine and its implications for organized crime and security-related issues for neighbouring countries, with a focus on the Republic of Moldova. The research included analyses of: (a) organized crime and trafficking, including trafficking in persons, drugs, arms, illicit tobacco and other goods; (b) cybercrime and fraud; (c) disinformation and propaganda; and (d) chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats.

51. The study provided key recommendations for concerned stakeholders at the national and regional levels, in order to identify lessons learned and guide future initiatives to mitigate risks in the areas mentioned above. The multiple and evolving challenges identified in the study call for urgent common action, in particular to strengthen regional cooperation, as the challenges exist throughout the region. As transnational crime groups are increasingly outpacing national criminal justice responses, border law enforcement agencies need to improve cooperation and communication across borders and in the region in order to share real-time information and intelligence on criminal activities and trafficking routes.

52. The findings of the study facilitated the design of a broader cooperation initiative to provide urgent and tailored support to the Republic of Moldova. Initially, UNICRI facilitated two online workshops on cybercrime, cybersecurity and critical infrastructure planning. Representatives of the country's General Inspectorate of Police, the Information Technology Service, the General Inspectorate of Border Police and the Bureau for Migration and Asylum attended the workshops. The participants gained a deeper understanding of the issues discussed and how they could be addressed in the context of the Republic of Moldova.

53. With a view to increasing knowledge of the various ways in which intellectual property infringements occur and improving the effectiveness of national and international responses, UNICRI continued to conduct in-depth analyses of case studies on the infringement of intellectual property rights, in cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office.

54. UNICRI conducted in-depth analyses of the following three cases: (a) a case in Denmark focusing on a reseller of illegal Internet Protocol television content; (b) a case in Serbia involving counterfeit cookies marketed as originals; and (c) a case in Sweden involving invoice fraud relating to intellectual property registration at the European Union level.

55. Each case study provides a complete analysis, from the stage of investigation to prosecution and sentencing. Prosecutors in the European Intellectual Property Crime

Prosecutors Network use the case studies as a reference when conducting similar investigations. The findings of the analyses are also being applied as best practices and lessons learned by prosecutors and investigative judges in other countries in order to strengthen judicial proceedings and results. In addition, the case studies strengthen the effectiveness of investigative and prosecutorial strategies to counter intellectual property crime.

IV. Reinforcing the rule of law in post-conflict countries

56. Within the broad scope of its mandate to develop and implement improved policies in the field of crime prevention and control, UNICRI worked on raising awareness among national stakeholders of the needs and gaps in counter-terrorism policies and practices, with a view to bridging the gap between international standards and national programmes related to juvenile justice and improving access to justice as a critical factor in preventing violent extremism and terrorist recruitment in post-conflict countries.

57. The Institute's support to Member States in tracing and recovering assets linked to corruption and other forms of serious crimes contributed to strengthening the rule of law and public confidence and served as a model for post-conflict countries that were considering undertaking the recovery of stolen assets.

58. UNICRI continued to work with justice institutions such as the judiciary, the police, security forces and corrections services on tools, policies and legal mechanisms that ensure a fair and accountable justice system.

59. The Institute is advising Member States and interested stakeholders on how best to address the links between organized crime and terrorism, in addition to enhancing their understanding of this evolving phenomenon and providing definitions to facilitate its monitoring.

60. To that end, UNICRI produced an initial threat assessment, entitled "The Taliban in Afghanistan: assessing new threats to the region and beyond", in order to analyse and assess recent developments in Afghanistan and their broader implications for security at the domestic, regional and international levels. The assessment also provided recommendations to guide the design of an integrated programme for neighbouring countries. This is a prelude to a more comprehensive report, currently in progress, that will explore and identify: (a) current sources of Taliban funding; (b) the relationship between the Taliban and foreign terrorist groups, notably, Al-Qaida and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan; (c) the use of sanctions and their unintended consequences; (d) regional relations and dynamics; and (e) potential implications for the European security context.

V. Security through research, technology and innovation

61. UNICRI continued to reinforce the capacity of Member States to navigate the risks and opportunities offered by rapid advances in science and technology, including in the areas of artificial intelligence, big data analytics, robotics, augmented and virtual reality, the metaverse and decentralized technologies.

62. To that end, UNICRI increased understanding among law enforcement agencies of: (a) risks related to the malicious use of technology; (b) use cases for the application of new technology to counter security threats and various forms of criminal activities, such as terrorism and child exploitation; and (c) the legal, ethical and social challenges associated with the use of such technology.

63. Traditional information and communications technologies and new and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, can advance public security and safety. However, the full potential of these sophisticated tools to efficiently prevent, detect and counter crime and terrorism has not yet been fully explored. UNICRI continued to advance policy discussions on innovation in the security sector and to

facilitate understanding of these evolving technologies among practitioners in the law enforcement and counter-terrorism communities.

A. Enhancing knowledge of advances in science and technology to counter criminal infiltration of the legitimate supply chain

64. UNICRI continued to enhance knowledge of the role of technology in countering the threats posed by the infiltration of the legitimate supply chain by organized criminal groups.

65. To that end, UNICRI, in partnership with the Government Chemist Department of the Ministry of Interior of Kenya, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence, organized a workshop on the theme “Using authentication technologies and nuclear analytical techniques to counter criminal infiltration into the legitimate supply chain: the cases of fuel fraud, illegal pesticides, illegal fishing and counterfeit medicines”. The workshop included government experts from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, and experts from companies that design technology solutions.

66. Participants in the workshop analysed how violent organized criminal and terrorist groups infiltrate the legitimate supply chain in key areas. In particular, the analysis focused on existing and evolving security risks related to illegal unreported and unregulated fishing, illicit pesticides, fuel fraud and falsified medicines. The participants also discussed how recent technological advances could help reinforce supply chain integrity in those areas. The discussion centred on the following two main categories of technologies: (a) innovative supply chain security technologies designed to prevent and detect criminal infiltration of the legitimate supply chain; and (b) nuclear analytical techniques used in forensic investigation to determine product composition and attribute criminal activities.

B. Law enforcement, artificial intelligence and related new and emerging technologies

67. UNICRI advanced knowledge and understanding related to the use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement, with a particular emphasis on the responsible use of such technology. Through its ongoing cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and with the support of the European Union, UNICRI developed a toolkit for responsible artificial intelligence innovation in law enforcement as a practical guide for law enforcement agencies on developing and deploying artificial intelligence in a human rights-compliant and ethical manner. During the development process, a global survey was conducted to gauge public opinion about the use of artificial intelligence in policing.

68. UNICRI and INTERPOL produced a joint report highlighting several key aspects of artificial intelligence for law enforcement. The report includes insights on use cases presented at the third INTERPOL-UNICRI Global Meeting on Artificial Intelligence for Law Enforcement, such as law enforcement hotlines using natural language processing in the Arabic language, the use of artificial intelligence to identify suspicious transactions that may indicate signs of money-laundering or terrorism financing, and the use of artificial intelligence in narcotics analytics.

69. The use of facial recognition technology in law enforcement investigations drew greater attention in the reporting period. UNICRI, in partnership with the World Economic Forum, INTERPOL and the National Police of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, enhanced understanding of how law enforcement agencies can use such technology and laid the foundations for policy discussions regarding its responsible use. UNICRI piloted its “Policy framework for responsible limits on facial

recognition: use case – law enforcement investigations” with law enforcement agencies in Brazil, France, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand and Sweden.

70. UNICRI continued to drive innovation within law enforcement, particularly in relation to the use of new and emerging artificial intelligence-based tools and technologies to investigate child sexual exploitation and abuse as part of its Artificial Intelligence for Safer Children initiative, implemented in cooperation with the United Arab Emirates. Significant progress was made, particularly through the launch of the Artificial Intelligence for Safer Children Global Hub, which is a key resource for law enforcement investigators. Since its launch, more than 200 law enforcement personnel from 60 Member States have joined the Global Hub, gaining access to knowledge of and information on more than 60 artificial intelligence-based tools and techniques.

71. UNICRI also explored the virtual world with partners from the Bracket Foundation and Value for Good through the release of a new report entitled *Gaming and the Metaverse: The Alarming Rise of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse within the New Digital Frontier*. The report contributes to building an understanding of the new and unique risks facing children who use social gaming platforms and more immersive platforms such as the metaverse, as well as the measures that various stakeholders must take to ensure the safety and security of children in those spaces. This includes how Governments and the industry can work together to implement legislation and platform features that protect children and their rights. The report serves as an advisory warning on the current state of those virtual environments and the risks that children may face there.

72. In addition, UNICRI organized expert group meetings with the Office of Counter-Terrorism to map new areas for the use of artificial intelligence, such as the use of artificial intelligence-enabled social network analysis to counter terrorism online. The Institute’s Future Series webinars on the metaverse and Web 3.0 explored possible related technological challenges and opportunities. The exploratory work carried out by UNICRI on these issues provides an essential foundation for stakeholders to understand the use of these technologies for crime prevention and possible malicious uses.

73. UNICRI also reviewed technological tools and solutions for detecting and debunking false information (such as artificial intelligence tools and platforms for detecting fake news online, mobile apps and chatbots powered by fact checkers targeting the general public, web browser extensions for the general public and digital media information literacy platforms and tools), describing the advantages and limitations of each.

VI. Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance

74. UNICRI developed new ideas to prevent and mitigate global security threats and promote viable strategies to address various emerging safety risks. The Institute continued to support Member States’ efforts to improve existing policies aimed at enhancing overall preparedness for and capacity to mitigate the consequences of incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, mainly by strengthening inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

75. With regard to radiological and nuclear security, UNICRI developed capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall capabilities of law enforcement and security agencies to thwart attempts to traffic radiological and nuclear materials, including through the timely exchange of information and intelligence.

A. Improved inter-agency cooperation in relation to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials

76. UNICRI continued to support the efforts of the 64 Member States currently participating in the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear

Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative to improve existing policies aimed at enhancing overall preparedness for and capacity to mitigate the consequences of incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, in particular through the strengthening of inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

77. The Institute convened a team of international and regional experts in the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear field, along with senior prosecutors and trial attorneys, to create the first edition of the *Prosecutor's Guide to Chemical and Biological Crimes*. The Guide is designed to assist police officers, prosecutors and investigative agencies in successfully prosecuting incidents involving the deliberate acquisition, stockpiling, production, transfer or use of a chemical or biological agent. It is a non-binding, high-level document that provides information on key considerations related to the deliberate use of those agents and the impact that they have on the prosecution process.

78. UNICRI developed a series of capacity-building and training packages related to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear crimes for prosecutors, judges, investigators, forensics experts, the police and other law enforcement authorities. Those packages will improve the investigation and prosecution of such crimes through the provision of more than 38 training courses and will be integrated into the national curricula of training institutions in beneficiary countries.

79. UNICRI and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons collaborated to address the unequal representation of women in the chemical safety and security field. To amplify women's voices and increase their participation in this area, they created the *Compendium of Best Practices on the Engagement and Advancement of Women in Chemical Safety and Security*. The publication provides guidance for policymakers and relevant professionals on advancing gender inclusivity in the chemical safety and security sector by highlighting best practices for recruitment, training and the promotion of gender-inclusive careers.

80. The Institute facilitated several targeted activities in various regions, including:

(a) Organizing the first Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Academy for National Focal Points, attended by 51 participants from 39 countries. The Academy provided a platform for strengthening chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear knowledge, sharing experiences and enhancing the skills of the national focal points;

(b) Conducting a wide range of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation activities, including needs and risk assessments, national and regional action plans, training, train-the-trainer modules, and tabletop and field exercises, including cross-border exercises;

(c) Organizing regional round-table meetings to discuss the results and activities of the Centres of Excellence Initiative, to present and discuss regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear action plans, and to plan new regional projects and activities, including training and field exercises;

(d) Holding in-country workshops to support national chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear teams, including in the preparation and implementation of national action plans;

(e) Finalizing the regional chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear action plans for Central Asia and for South-East and Eastern Europe, which included priority areas and which will guide the further development of regional projects;

(f) Holding the international meeting of national focal points, which was attended by approximately 120 participants from the 64 countries involved in the Centres of Excellence Initiative;

(g) Facilitating the implementation of a regional conference on dual-use trade control, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The two-day conference was organized by the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control of Germany, the

Executive Office for Control and Non-Proliferation of the United Arab Emirates and the European Union Partner-to-Partner Export Control Programme;

(h) As a result of the engagement of the Centres of Excellence Initiative with Lebanon, a decision was issued by the country's Prime Minister to regulate the mechanism of action for the implementation of the obligations of Lebanon related to international conventions relevant to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances and the management of and fight against the risks related to weapons of mass destruction.

B. Combating trafficking in radiological and nuclear material

81. UNICRI continued to support selected countries in the Middle East (Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon), the Black Sea region (Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), and South-East Asia (Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic) in improving the capacity of State security and law enforcement officials to devise, plan and carry out intelligence operations to thwart attempts to traffic radiological and nuclear materials, and in fostering cooperation among intelligence and law enforcement officials in those States.

82. The Institute has leveraged its networks and partnerships with national agencies that address trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials in order to further strengthen relationships of trust with its interlocutors in the Middle East, the Black Sea region and South-East Asia, with a view to improving regional nuclear security and safety through enhanced collaboration and cooperation.

83. Through its train-the-trainer sessions, UNICRI improved participants' knowledge of radiological and nuclear materials subject to smuggling activities and increased their capacity to plan and conduct intelligence and law enforcement operations and radiological crime scene investigations.

84. Through its first peer-to-peer workshop on regional cooperation mechanisms, UNICRI provided a platform for experts to exchange lessons learned and experiences in the sharing of information and intelligence, laying the foundation for overcoming challenges in that regard. The workshop enhanced regional cooperation and improved overall responses to trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials.

85. In the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, national inter-agency teams of trainers conducted, with the support of the Institute, their first national training courses on combating trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials. The training was aimed at enhancing the capacities of security and law enforcement personnel to counter trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials and provided an opportunity for the trainers to practice the training delivery skills that they had acquired during the national and regional train-the-trainer sessions conducted previously.

86. UNICRI organized the first regional peer-to-peer workshop on regional cooperation mechanisms in the Black Sea region, bringing together representatives from Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The workshop was aimed at assessing and improving regional cooperation mechanisms for incidents of radiological and nuclear trafficking. Participants discussed their capacities and systems for countering trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials as well as the challenges they faced in relation to regional cooperation. Scenario-based discussions provided a framework for regional cooperation between the countries.

87. Several training workshops were conducted in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines on the basis of a training curriculum developed by UNICRI and tailored to the specific needs of those countries.

88. The Institute held a train-the-trainer session on intelligence-led operations to prevent and combat trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials in Phnom Penh. The training was aimed at enhancing participants' knowledge of radiological and nuclear materials liable to being smuggled, detection equipment and principles, and

the planning and conduct of intelligence and law enforcement operations and radiological crime scene investigations.

89. UNICRI held the first peer-to-peer workshop on international and regional cooperation in the area of nuclear security in South-East Asia. A total of 25 experts who had diverse technical backgrounds in areas such as intelligence-sharing, law enforcement, investigations, border security and radiological and nuclear safety and who were from partner countries and regional and international organizations participated in the event.

90. Lastly, the Institute held a regional tabletop exercise on countering trafficking in radiological and nuclear materials in Jordan with a view to enhancing the preparedness of Iraq and Jordan to detect and respond to radiological and nuclear security incidents in the region, promote inter-agency coordination between national radiological and nuclear stakeholders and foster regional cooperation in radiological and nuclear security.

C. Mitigating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear proliferation financing risks

91. The proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery represents one of the most pressing threats to international peace and security. Actors involved in financing such activities seek to exploit loopholes in the global financial system to move and raise funds to develop chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons programmes.

92. Through workshops and consultations held in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines, UNICRI shed light on the threat posed by proliferation financing activities – conducted by both State and non-State actors – at the national and regional levels. The Institute also increased participants' understanding of sophisticated evasion techniques involving cyberattacks and virtual assets.

D. Monitoring the malicious use of social media by violent non-State actors in relation to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards

93. UNICRI monitored the malicious use of social media to spread disinformation, in particular concerning chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards. The Institute supported Member States in building resilience, improving responses to disinformation and broadening skills and competencies. UNICRI developed training for government officials, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear experts and journalists on techniques to anticipate disinformation (“pre-bunking”), to detect and analyse disinformation, to effectively respond to disinformation and to demonstrate the falseness of information or conspiracy theories (debunking). Moreover, the Institute produced the *Handbook to Combat CBRN Disinformation*, designed for individuals or agencies working on various aspects of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation (e.g. communication, decision-making or managerial, operational and technical aspects), who have been or could potentially be exposed to and targeted by disinformation.

E. Supporting Member States in the establishment of non-invasive, integrated and holistic safety and security planning policies

94. UNICRI continued to assist Member States in adopting measures necessary to protect vulnerable targets, crowded spaces and critical infrastructure. Recent mass-casualty attacks on crowded and public places have demonstrated the need to further address the vulnerabilities of so-called “soft targets” by promoting effective methodologies for security planning.

95. The Institute developed, in cooperation with the Organization of American States, the publication *Security Planning on a Large Scale: A Practical Manual*, as an update to *The IPO Security Planning Model*, published in 2006, and the “Handbook to assist the establishment of public-private partnerships to protect vulnerable targets”.

96. The Manual is based on a suppliers, inputs, processes, outputs and customers diagram for process mapping, and it creates a straightforward model that allows relevant stakeholders to have a high-level overview and common reference for developing a security plan.

97. In addition, UNICRI contributed, in cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the International Centre for Sport Security, to the *Guide on the Security of Major Sporting Events: Promoting Sustainable Security and Legacies*, the *Handbook for Organizers on Preventing Violent Extremism through Major Sporting Events* and an e-learning course on countering terrorist threats against vulnerable targets, with a special focus on the security of major sporting events. The Institute is finalizing, in partnership with the Organization of American States, the electronic version (e-tool) of *Security Planning on a Large Scale: A Practical Manual*, which will allow beneficiaries to access the content of the Manual and other relevant information through an online platform.

98. Through the above-mentioned technical tools and a consolidated network of international experts, law enforcement officers and security practitioners, UNICRI is providing Member States with a wide range of practices, policies and benchmarks for measuring and improving their preparedness and level of safety and security integration to protect tourism destinations, major events and crowded and public spaces in general.

99. On the basis of that expertise, UNICRI designed, organized and participated in several technical activities and capacity-building initiatives implemented in cooperation with various United Nations and international partners. In particular, UNICRI contributed to improving cooperation between States members of the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community, in responding to the most recent security threats through four dedicated subregional workshops.

100. In addition, the Institute designed, in cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Organization of American States, more than 15 needs assessments and training sessions to increase the capacity of Member States to design and adopt effective measures for the protection of major events, tourist and religious sites and other vulnerable targets.

VII. Preventing crime through the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups

101. The protection of vulnerable groups, reduction of risk factors and promotion of positive change remained priorities for UNICRI in 2022.

A. Promoting sport and delivering crime prevention initiatives targeted at vulnerable populations

102. An analysis carried out by UNICRI showed that sports-based programmes encourage interaction with and the inclusion of minority and most vulnerable groups. The creation of mixed teams, experimentation with unique rule changes and follow-up through discussion and debriefing provided opportunities for minority and majority groups to interact on more neutral ground in many projects. The Institute also paid particular attention to gender, and in some projects more than 50 per cent of participants were women.

B. Enhancing the capacity of key actors to reach vulnerable individuals and populations

103. UNICRI organized 12 training activities and coordinated three mentoring services to support various Member States in the design of security plans for the protection of major sporting events, tourist destinations and other vulnerable targets and critical infrastructure. In its training curricula, UNICRI includes specific sessions on social inclusion, accessibility, the protection of minorities and LGBTQI+ persons and the promotion of gender mainstreaming in law enforcement and security organizations. In 2022, an increased number of Member States adopted such an approach in their national policies, ensuring the improved protection and empowerment of the most vulnerable populations and promoting more effective implementation of existing security measures.

104. Through the Artificial Intelligence for Safer Children Global Hub, established by UNICRI, investigators can access information about cutting-edge artificial intelligence tools that can be used in their work to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition to being an information repository, the Global Hub serves as a platform for law enforcement investigators to communicate with each other, share their experiences of using artificial intelligence tools in their work and learn how to use those powerful tools responsibly.

VIII. Developing the Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2023–2026

105. In consultation with Member States, partners and affiliates of the United Nations system, subject matter experts, non-governmental organizations, programme partners and beneficiaries of UNICRI projects, the Institute developed its new Strategic Programme Framework, covering the period 2023–2026.

106. Building upon the research and findings of the work carried out by UNICRI under the Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022, the new Framework defines five priorities for the Institute for the period 2023–2026 and identifies youth, gender and climate change as cross-cutting issues. The five strategic priorities are as follows:

- (a) Preventing and countering transnational security threats, terrorism and points of nexus;
- (b) Countering criminal enterprises, illicit financial flows and corrupt practices;
- (c) Promoting the responsible use of new and emerging technologies to address crime and exploitation;
- (d) Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization;
- (e) Promoting the rule of law and safeguarding access to justice.

107. As with its predecessor, the strategic priorities in the Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2023–2026 are aligned with Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are linked to several other Goals, most notably, Goals 2 to 6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15.

108. The Institute's extensive portfolio of activities is exclusively funded through voluntary contributions from Member States and other donors, including an annual voluntary contribution from the Government of Italy, its host country. Most voluntary contributions are short-term, earmarked, project-specific funds. The successful implementation of the ambitious Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2023–2026 will require continued pivotal support and voluntary contributions from Member States and other donors, to whom UNICRI is grateful.