# <u>Contribution from UNODC to the New Agenda for Peace</u>

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As the United Nations Secretary-General has emphasized, the technical absence of war does not mean that people enjoy peace. Levels of violence outside armed conflict are an increasing concern, and risks may no longer be managed effectively through existing systems and frameworks.

*Our Common Agenda* highlights the growing risks to peace and security posed by transnational networks and new actors; by new technologies; and by threats emanating from emerging domains of lawlessness, off- and online. These new threats blur old divisions and traditional categories, as terrorists and other actors employ criminal means to achieve their ends, transnational criminal networks compromise governance, illicit financial flows weaken resilience and cybercrime can be used to wage cyberwarfare.

To deliver on the promise of the UN Charter and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, a New Agenda for Peace must understand new realities and offer new approaches. Effective action for peace must therefore prevent and tackle the intersecting threats posed by transnational organized crime and address its harms.

Since the start of the twenty-first century, organized crime has killed about as many people as all armed conflicts across the world combined. In recent years, homicide has accounted for around four times as many deaths as armed conflict, and 19 times as many deaths as terrorism.

The indirect death toll is far higher. In Latin America, organized crime and gangs have contributed to the highest homicide rates in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, as many as 267,000 deaths per year are linked to falsified and substandard antimalarial medicines alone.

Transnational organized crime can involve small and large criminal groups with different levels of organization, operating across borders with more and less violent means and sometimes under a legal façade. Drug trafficking, illicit arms and ammunitions trafficking, trafficking in persons as well as trafficking in falsified medicines, natural resources, illicit and toxic waste, cultural property, undeclared legal commodities and more intersect with terrorism and other crimes, and are abetted by corruption and money laundering.

In particular, the trafficking of firearms and their proliferation, diversion and criminal use not only contribute to aggravating violence and armed conflicts but enable the commission of other forms of crime and empower criminal and terrorist groups as well as non-state armed groups to gain control over territories and people.

The harms to people, planet and governance cause by organized crime and trafficking are wide-ranging and profound, compromising public safety and health, contributing to the triple planetary crisis and resource depletion, and undermining institutions and the rule of law, as well as contributing to social unrest and heightened inequalities.

Furthermore, by feeding on and exacerbating crisis and fragility, organized crime drives, facilitates and prolongs conflict, and hinders peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Infiltrating licit markets and potentially capturing state actors as well as funding terrorist activities and violating embargoes and sanctions regimes, organized crime poses cross-cutting threats that require integrated and prevention-centred responses.

To achieve the paradigm shift the world needs to better secure the global public good of peace, organized crime prevention and mitigation must be integrated across the core areas of the New Agenda for Peace:

**Reducing strategic risks** from nuclear arms, cyberwarfare and lethal autonomous weapons requires action against crime actors and illicit markets which are multiplying these threats, with a particular focus on firearms trafficking, cybercrime and terrorism-crime linkages.

**Strengthening foresight** of future risks requires data sharing and analysis that take into account the direct and indirect impacts of transnational organized crime and its myriad harms on international peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

**Reshaping responses to all forms of violence** requires that we widen the peace lens to understand and address violence by criminal groups as well as interpersonal violence, including gender-based violence, which is often interlinked with criminal and terrorist violence and with conflict.

**Investing in prevention and peacebuilding** requires attention to transnational organized crime, which can serve as a root cause of conflict by weakening resilience and fomenting violence, crippling governance and development, exacerbating inequalities and increasing impunity.

**Supporting regional prevention** requires enhanced South-South cooperation and coordination platforms linking law enforcement, criminal justice, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering networks and responses, to promote effective cross-border information sharing and action, accountability and institution-building.

**Putting women and girls at the centre of security policy** requires increased attention to the particular threats women and girls face in situations of insecurity, including those posed by transnational organized crime. Women and girls in fragile and conflict-affected settings are especially vulnerable to trafficking in persons and other forms of abuse and exploitation.

To respond to these requirements, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime offers three concrete recommendations for inclusion in the New Agenda for Peace:

1. Integrate data collection and sharing, monitoring and analysis on transnational organized crime and trafficking in international foresight and risk analysis, with the aim of triggering early attention and action to address organized crime-related threats to peace and security.
2. Mainstream integrated prevention and mitigation of transnational organized crime and associated harms in peace and development assessments and missions, with a particular emphasis on conflict and post- conflict settings, to stop both crime and anti-crime responses from contributing to further destabilization.
3. Propose that Member States consider developing regional strategies to tackle transnational organized crime and its harms to peace and development, to be elaborated with the support of the UN, working in close cooperation with relevant regional organizations, and building on the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and related frameworks.