

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNODC Everywhere

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Remarks at CCPCJ side event on the Global Threat of Trafficking in Cultural Property: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses

23 May 2016

Undersecretary Borletti Buitoni,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by thanking the Government of Italy for co-sponsoring this important event.

I would also like to thank our partners joining us today.

In recent years, we have seen the growing involvement of organized criminal and terrorist groups in all forms and aspects of trafficking in cultural property and related offences.

Trafficked cultural property is increasingly being used to launder the proceeds of crime, and has been identified as a source of financing for terrorist groups.

This event is an opportunity to highlight some examples of our cooperation to meet this threat, and to present the latest tool UNODC has developed to support States in mounting effective preventive and criminal justice responses.

Dramatic developments in Syria, Iraq and Mali have shown how vulnerable historic and archaeological sites can be.

The devastation at Palmyra revealed the tragic extent of the looting and destruction that has taken place.

The world has witnessed extensive trafficking in cultural objects from other countries in conflict, including Libya and Yemen.

A brisk illicit trade in undocumented cultural items from around the world persists, clearly calling for global action against this crime.

Political instability; corruption; lack of resources to control borders; and weaknesses in domestic

procedures for the effective criminalization of illicit trade, seizure, confiscation and return of cultural property are some of the main challenges we face.

Several resolutions have been adopted in recent years - both by the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC - which have recognized the need for crime prevention and criminal justice responses.

These resolutions call on UNODC to collaborate with its international partners to support Member States in developing and implementing such responses.

As part of these efforts, I urge all government to fully and effectively implement UNSCR 2199, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the UN Convention against Corruption, and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, alongside the relevant international instruments developed under the auspices of UNESCO and UNIDROIT.

UNSCR 2199 was adopted under Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter and is binding on all Member States.

Based on these instruments, and working with our partners, UNODC provides technical assistance to Member States to strengthen national legal frameworks and build the capacities of law enforcement and judicial authorities.

Along with UNESCO, INTERPOL, UNIDROIT, WCO, the International Council of Monuments and Sites and the International Council of Museums, UNODC is an active member of the Experts Network on the Implementation of UNSCR 2199 and Safeguarding of Iraqi and Syrian Heritage.

Furthermore, UNODC facilitated the intergovernmental process that led to the General Assembly's adoption of the first International Guidelines for crime prevention and criminal justice responses to address trafficking in cultural property and related offences.

Thanks to the contribution of Italy and the substantive support of Member States and partners, today we are presenting a tool to assist Member States in implementing the Guidelines.

The Practical Assistance Tool is designed for use by national authorities, law enforcement officials and practitioners. It can also serve as a reference for policymakers.

I hope it is of use to you.

UNODC remains committed to working with our partners to advance national, regional and global efforts to stop trafficking in cultural property and protect humanity's common heritage.

Thank you.

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