



ISPAC
*International Scientific and Professional
Advisory Council
of the United Nations
Crime Prevention and Criminal
Justice Programme*

International Conference on

ORGANIZED CRIME AND HUMANITARIAN DISASTERS

at the initiative of

International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention
and Criminal Justice Programme/ ISPAC

Centro Nazionale di Prevenzione e Difesa Sociale/ CNPDS

in cooperation with

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/ UNODC, Vienna

Courmayeur Mont Blanc, Italy, 3-5 December 2004
Centro Congressi



FONDAZIONE
CENTRO INTERNAZIONALE SU DIRITTO, SOCIETÀ E ECONOMIA

The latest reports by the European Union's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO 2003) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR 2004) depict an increasingly worrying scenario of humanitarian disasters (or crises). They can be defined as an "exceptional and widespread threat to human life, health and basic subsistence" (definition adopted by the UNHCR) and can be grouped into two main categories: *natural catastrophes* (such as cyclones, floods and earthquakes), and *man-made disasters* (such as wars, genocide and extensive violations of basic human rights).

Experience shows that organized crime can play a part in both types of humanitarian disasters in two main ways: either by *fuelling/provoking* or *exploiting* humanitarian disasters. In 1998, many Central American Regions suffered significant devastation from Hurricane Mitch. Unfortunately, part of the reason for this was inadequately constructed infrastructure by and large due to corruption and organized crime. Furthermore, the same problem led to a delay in reconstruction. The regions, which received substantial disaster relief funds, were unable to utilize this help as the money never reached its intended recipients. Another example are the activities of Serb and Albanian criminal groups who exploited the Yugoslavian conflict to carry out their illicit trafficking activities and who are now fueling a resurgence of civil conflicts in order to prevent the stabilization of the region which would hamper their activities.

The relationships between organized crime and humanitarian disasters could be developed in four different combinations that could be simplified as follows:

1. organized crime fuelling/provoking man-made disasters;
2. organized crime fuelling/provoking natural disasters;
3. organized crime exploiting man-made disasters;
4. organized crime exploiting natural disasters.

The first relationship includes the role carried out by organized criminal groups in fuelling civil strifes and the resulting humanitarian disasters for the sake of illicit profits. The devastating results of these activities are particularly evident in the linkages between drug traffickers and terrorists in Colombia, the Serbia/Kosovo conflicts, or in the war for diamonds in West Africa.

The second area focuses on the role of organized crime in provoking natural disasters, which are the result of criminal activities. Areas of particular interest here are the hazards associated with environmental risk associated with nuclear proliferation and toxic waste disposal by Russian syndicates as well as the recent cases of bio-piracy and related global pollution of food.

The third relationship between organized crime and humanitarian disasters includes all of the activities carried out by criminal networks in exploiting man-made disasters. One of the most evident examples of this relationship is the exploitation by organized criminal groups of the people trying to escape conflict areas or other places in crisis, which results in massive trafficking of persons for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Another profitable illegal business that flourishes during conflicts is cross-border weapons trafficking.

As to the fourth relationship, organized criminals can also exploit natural disasters by diverting funds for reconstruction and other humanitarian aids through corruptive activities.

These complex relationships and the role of organized crime in fuelling/provoking/exploiting humanitarian disasters need to be adequately analysed in order to gain knowledge of the phenomenon and address them with proper countermeasures. Some possible remedies could be:

1. anticipating organized crime's *modus operandi* in crisis situation through the development of vulnerability studies, early warnings and risk assessment techniques;
2. improving the existing legal instruments against organized crime through the development of mechanisms for *crime proofing* legislation;
3. creating *partnerships* among public institutions, private actors and law enforcement.

The rationale underlying the first countermeasure is the criminal groups' ability to infiltrate weak states and institutions during humanitarian crises. In order to prevent organized crime from fuelling/provoking/exploiting humanitarian disasters it is important to understand where the weaknesses are, how organized crime groups exploit these gaps and what can be done to address the potential problems.

On the basis of this knowledge it becomes possible to improve the existing legal instruments against organized crime. The new frontier of research in this field is crime proofing, a methodology that is in the process of being created for the purposes of preventing criminal groups from exploiting gaps and weaknesses in the system.

The third countermeasure addresses the point that during humanitarian disasters organized crime exploits state weaknesses and political instability. One of the major instrument to avoid this phenomenon is international cooperation, as envisaged in the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The importance of both multilateral and bilateral cooperation in combating Organized Crime in crisis regions can be illustrated by the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations/DPKO's experience in Kosovo and the recent Turkish-Rumanian narco-terrorism successful cases.

PROGRAMME

Friday

3 December 2004

3.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.

Opening Session

- Romano BLUA, *Mayor of Courmayeur*
- Lodovico PASSERIN d'ENTREVES, *President, Courmayeur Foundation*
- Carlo PERRIN, *President, Regional Government of the Aosta Valley Region*
- Livia POMODORO, *ISPAC Board*

- Michele VIETTI, *Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Justice of Italy*

Keynote Address

- Antonio Maria COSTA, *Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC*

Session I:

The Role of Organized Crime in Provoking Humanitarian Disasters

Chair

Massimo BUSCEMI, *Assessore alla sicurezza, polizia locale e protezione civile, Lombardy Region, Italy; ISPAC Board*

- Drug Trafficking and Terrorist Activities in Colombia

Nazih RICHANI, *Political Science Department, Coordinator of Latin American Studies Program & the Institute of Foreign Service and Diplomacy, Kean University, Usa*

- The War on Diamonds in Africa: Economic and Political Impact of the Diamond Industry on the West African Conflict
Lansana GBERIE, *Senior Research Fellow, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Ghana*

“Case analysis: Angola”

- Nuclear, Radioactive and Chemical Illicit Trafficking in the Former Soviet Union
Elena SOKOVA, *Director, Newly Independent States Nonproliferation Program, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Usa*

- Organized Crime and Deaths of Smuggled Migrants on the Mexico/USA Borders
Ronald V. CLARKE, *Professor, School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University, Newark, Usa*

and

Rob T. GUERETTE, *Assistant Professor, Florida International University, Miami, Usa*

- Organized Crime and Piracy Related Deaths
Erika K. J. PLADDET, *PhD Candidate, LL.M., Erasmus University of Rotterdam, The Netherlands*

Debate

Saturday
4 December 2004

9.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Session II:
Organized Crime Exploiting Humanitarian Disasters

Chair

Roberto CENTARO, *President, Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sulla criminalità organizzata mafiosa o similare*

- Organized Crime and Humanitarian Assistance in African Conflicts

Gail G. WANNENBURG, *Research Fellow, War and Organized Crime, Southafrican Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg*

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- Weapons/Arms Trafficking and Civil Strives in South-Eastern Europe

Tony MONAGHAN, *Project Manager, Small Arms Light Weapons Control in Serbia and Montenegro (UNDP/Stability Pact for South–East Europe) – South Eastern Europe Clearing House for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons/SEESAC*

- The Links between the Peace-Keeping and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Peter von BETHLENFALVY, *Regional Representative of the Regional Liaison and Coordination Office of International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the European Union, Bruxelles*

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Debate

3.30 p.m. – 7.30 p.m.

Session III: Reducing Opportunities for Organized Crime Provoking/Exploiting Humanitarian Disasters

Chair

Maria DE LA LUZ LIMA, *Vice-President, World Society of Victimology, ISPAC Board*

- Anticipating Organized Crime: Early Warnings and Risk Assessment Techniques
Phil WILLIAMS, *Professor, University of Pittsburgh, USA*
- Preventing Organized Crime Infiltration through Vulnerabilities Studies
Tom VANDER BEKEN, *Director, Institute for International Research on Criminal Policy (IRCP)*
- Proofing Legislation against Crime in the Case of Reconstruction after Humanitarian Disasters
Ernesto U. SAVONA, *Professor, Catholic University, Milan; Director, Transcrime, Joint Research Centre on Transnational Crime, Italy*

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Debate

Sunday

5 December 2004

9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Session IV:

Partnerships to Combat Organized Crime in Crisis Regions

Chair

*Alenka ŠELIH, Professor, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
ISPAC Board*

- Instruments of International Cooperation to Combat Organized Crime: The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
*Eduardo VETERE, Director, Division for Treaty Affairs,
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*
- International and Regional Cooperation to Combat Organized Crime
*Representative from EUROPOL
Representative from INTERPOL*

Debate

Conclusions and Recommendations

Official languages: English, French and Italian with simultaneous interpretation

Coffee Breaks at 11.00 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Conference Secretariat:

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