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**Use and application of United Nations standards
and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice****Use and application of United Nations standards and norms
in crime prevention and criminal justice****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report, prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/22, outlines progress made in 2020 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in promoting the use and application of the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice. The report places emphasis on how the standards and norms were used and applied in response and recovery efforts related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), as well as on criminal justice issues that received increased attention during the reporting period.

* E/CN.15/2021/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/22, in which the Council decided that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should include in its agenda a standing item on existing United Nations standards and norms in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and their use and application.
2. The previous report of the Secretary-General on the same topic is contained in document [E/CN.15/2020/9](#). The present report places emphasis on the use and application of the standards and norms in response and recovery efforts related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), as well as on issues that received increased attention during the reporting period, such as policing and racial discrimination.

II. Collecting and analysing data

3. Reliable statistical data on crime and criminal justice are needed in the formulation of evidence-based policies and the monitoring of criminal justice responses to crime.
4. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, several activities were delivered through online platforms. The first of its kind, a virtual regional training session on the theme “Measuring Sustainable Development Goal 16 in Africa: peace, justice and strong institutions”, was organized jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)-National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Victims of Crime, Public Security and Justice. Over 100 participants from national statistical offices and criminal justice and law enforcement entities in 38 countries, as well as from United Nations field offices, familiarized themselves with the concepts, international standards and methodological tools needed to measure progress against the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16 by analysing the indicators relating to crime, corruption, illicit trafficking, governance and prisons.
5. The UNODC-Statistics Korea Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific conducted an e-learning course on crime statistics from a gender perspective. The course, delivered in partnership with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, was attended by 216 participants from 23 countries and served to raise awareness of methodological processes that integrate a gender perspective into crime statistics.
6. UNODC launched “dataUNODC”,¹ a global portal for data on drugs, crime and criminal justice. The portal provides access to comprehensive statistical data at the country, regional and global levels and makes use of advanced visualization features. Among other topics, the portal provides data on Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to UNODC mandates, and monthly updates to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on crime trends and criminal justice operations.
7. UNODC published three studies assessing the rehabilitation and social reintegration challenges faced by prisoners in Albania, Czechia and Thailand, respectively. The results of the studies were published in UNODC research briefs.

III. Developing tools and providing guidance

8. UNODC has, over the years, developed a comprehensive set of tools, including guides, model laws and training materials, intended to facilitate the application of the standards and norms. With a view to providing timely support to policymakers, legislators, criminal justice practitioners, technical assistance providers and other

¹ <https://dataunodc.un.org/>.

stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNODC developed a number of guidance materials related to the COVID-19 response.

9. Focusing on efforts to respond to and recover from the impact of the pandemic on justice systems, UNODC, jointly with UNDP and with input from partners of the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law, developed a comprehensive inter-agency guidance note on ensuring access to justice in the context of COVID-19.

10. UNODC issued a position paper on COVID-19 preparedness and responses in prisons, calling for robust and human rights-compliant infection prevention measures in prisons, as well as the increased use of alternatives to imprisonment during the pandemic. Together with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNODC also issued a joint statement on COVID-19 in prisons and other closed settings. A menu of services, infographics and video materials relating to COVID-19 in prisons were developed to guide field-based programming.

11. Recognizing the impact of COVID-19 on gender-based violence against women, UNODC issued a thematic brief on gender-based violence against women and girls, providing specific recommendations on how criminal justice systems should respond to increased gender-based violence and decreased access to justice for women during and in the aftermath of the pandemic. Furthermore, UNODC conducted a global assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on criminal justice system responses to gender-based violence against women.

12. UNODC endorsed the “Technical note: COVID-19 and children deprived of their liberty”, developed by the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and published a menu of technical assistance services provided by UNODC in relation to protecting children deprived of liberty during the COVID-19 outbreak, thereby providing UNODC field offices and criminal justice actors with information on how to better protect children during the pandemic. The Executive Director of UNODC also joined United Nations, government and civil society leaders in signing the leaders’ statement entitled “Violence against children: a hidden crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic”, issued on 8 April 2020.

13. As a member of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and the protection of minorities, UNODC contributed to the statement by the network entitled “Leave no one behind: racial discrimination and the protection of minorities in the COVID-19 crisis”.

14. UNODC launched a repository of materials on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women, providing access to different types of materials developed and used by UNODC headquarters and field offices worldwide. In cooperation with the Thailand Institute of Justice, UNODC published the *Toolkit on Gender-Responsive Non-custodial Measures* to support Member States in their efforts to build the capacity of police, prosecutors and judges to apply non-custodial measures for women offenders, and the capacity of criminal justice officials to apply laws, policies and procedures in a gender-sensitive manner.

15. To complete the series of 14 university modules on crime prevention and criminal justice, UNODC published two online modules, on the topics “Justice for children” and “United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice”. The modules were complemented by a teaching guide to provide university instructors with pedagogical advice on how to make effective use of the modules in their teaching.

16. UNODC published the *Handbook on the Classification of Prisoners*, which offers practical, evidence-based guidelines to assist prison administrations in conducting individual risk and needs assessments of prisoners. UNODC complemented the handbook with a background paper on assessing the risks posed by violent extremist prisoners and returning foreign terrorist fighters.

17. UNODC published the *Practical Guide to Creating a Brand of Prison Products* to support prison authorities in the creation and commercialization of national brands of prison products, in line with international standards.

18. UNODC issued the publication *Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport: Technical Guide*, which provides guidance to policymakers and practitioners on strengthening the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sport-based initiatives to prevent radicalization and violent extremism among young people. In addition, a practical guide for trainers and an e-learning course on the use of sport to prevent violent extremism was finalized in the reporting period.

19. UNODC published the second edition of the Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes, which provides an updated overview of the concept, values and principles of restorative justice as they have evolved over the past decades, as well as practical guidance on the implementation of restorative justice.²

20. To ensure multilingualism, the following tools were published in additional languages: the Education for Justice (E4J) initiative modules on police accountability, integrity and oversight; alternatives to imprisonment; and violence against women and girls (in French); the Education for Justice modules on crime prevention; the use of force and firearms; prison reform; alternatives to imprisonment; restorative justice; gender in the criminal justice system; and justice for victims (in Spanish); the publication *Maritime Crime: A Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners* (in Spanish); the Education for Justice modules on justice for victims (in Portuguese) and restorative justice (in Arabic); the *Handbook on Ensuring Quality of Legal Aid Services in Criminal Justice Processes: Practical Guidance and Promising Practices*; the Education for Justice modules on crime prevention; access to legal aid in criminal proceedings; and police accountability, integrity and oversight; and the publication *Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims of Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: A Training Manual* (in Russian); and the *Handbook for the Judiciary on Effective Criminal Justice Responses to Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls* (in Nepali, Spanish and Vietnamese).

IV. Providing sustained technical assistance³

A. Strengthened access to justice for all through more effective, fair and accountable criminal justice systems, from policing to prosecution and the judiciary

21. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges in access to justice. To address these challenges, UNODC focused on promoting human rights-based policing, access to legal aid and restorative justice programmes, and access to justice for victims of crime. Adjusting to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, UNODC innovated in the delivery of its assistance and in sharing its wealth of knowledge and expertise through remote services.

22. In the area of policing, UNODC offices provided specific assistance to law enforcement authorities in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, such as the need to enforce control measures. For instance, in El Salvador, Nigeria and Pakistan, guidance was developed for police on how to deal with the COVID-19 emergency. In Sri Lanka, the Global Maritime Crime Programme developed a manual on COVID-19 contact tracing and trained law enforcement officials on its use.

23. UNODC advanced work in the area of policing at the global level by contributing to the development of the United Nations police training architecture

² The handbook also includes an update on the implementation of Commission resolution 27/6, on restorative justice, pursuant to the request made by the Commission in paragraph 16 of that resolution.

³ The five sub-items in the present section mirror outcomes 1 to 5 identified under thematic area 5 ("Crime prevention and criminal justice") of the UNODC Strategy 2021–2025.

programme, serving as a member of the programme's Steering Committee and its curriculum development groups. UNODC co-organized an event on non-coercive investigative interviewing methods and associated safeguards, held on the margins of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The event introduced participants to an evidence-based interviewing methodology that law enforcement officials can use to acquire reliable information, thus leading to more effective and human-rights compliant investigations. In addition, the Office published a menu of UNODC services relating to police reform.

24. UNODC launched an e-learning course for the National Police Service of Kenya on the use of force, human rights-based approaches to crowd control and the handling of cases involving sexual and gender-based violence. In Brazil, UNODC developed a police activity compliance index focused on monitoring the use of force in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná. In the Caribbean, UNODC conducted a regional webinar on integrity, ethics and accountability in law enforcement. In Kazakhstan, UNODC started a new cooperation programme on police modernization.

25. In the area of legal aid, UNODC convened an innovative, interactive series of eight virtual expert group meetings, involving more than 100 legal aid practitioners, researchers and representatives of United Nations entities and civil society organizations from all regions, to discuss good practices and challenges in conducting legal aid assessments. The outcomes of the meetings are feeding into the development of a new UNODC legal aid assessment tool, to be finalized in 2021.

26. UNODC, together with the Public Defender's Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro, UNDP, the International Legal Foundation and the Open Society Justice Initiative, co-hosted the fourth International Legal Aid Conference, a five-day event conducted in a virtual format in eight languages. More than 800 participants from 89 countries discussed topics such as the unprecedented challenges in accessing justice posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and how legal aid can be used to combat intensified inequalities by advocating for the release and protecting the rights of people deprived of liberty, the holistic representation and protection of marginalized groups, and tackling systemic racism and discrimination based on ethnicity, gender or other status.

27. UNODC supported authorities in El Salvador in the development of new legislation and the provision of training related to enforced disappearances. In Brazil, UNODC, jointly with UNDP and the National Council of Justice, launched five UNODC handbooks on pretrial detention hearings, delivered three webinars on social protection services available at pretrial detention hearings and provided training on a new data monitoring platform, which, at the time of reporting, included over 100,000 court decisions related to pretrial detention hearings. In Mexico, UNODC developed three assessment toolkits for key criminal justice actors and standards for courtroom facilities in 16 Mexican states.

28. The Office facilitated expert discussions in Uzbekistan to finalize two new pieces of legislation: the Criminal Procedure and Executive Code and the Law on Legal Aid. Also in Uzbekistan, as part of a joint initiative with UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNODC trained 20 young lawyers on the provision of legal aid to young people in the Fergana Valley and opened three new legal clinics in Fergana, Andijan and Namangan. In Pakistan, UNODC conducted a survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the criminal justice services in two provinces and developed a database management information system to monitor the progress of criminal justice institutions under the "rule of law road map".

29. In Africa, UNODC provided legal assistance in two prisons in the Niger, resulting in a reduction in the number days of pretrial detention for several detainees and in the backlog of pending cases. To limit physical interaction among court personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNODC supported the development of an electronic case management system in the courts of Kenya and contributed to the

development and launch of the country's first alternative justice systems policy, designed to mainstream traditional customary law into the country's criminal justice system.

30. UNODC provided equipment and training on 17 standard operating procedures for 45 staff members of the Witness Protection Agency of Kenya, strengthening the capacity of the Agency to fulfill its mandate of protecting witnesses. In El Salvador, UNODC developed a protocol and a guide on assessing risks of COVID-19 in victim and witness protection shelters.

31. In the Indian Ocean region, UNODC assisted prosecutors in preparing cases related to maritime crime and provided mentorship and training to maritime law enforcement agencies. In Maldives, UNODC conducted a remote assessment and an online training session on maritime law enforcement for criminal court judges and prosecutors and maritime law enforcement agencies.

32. UNODC provided training on the conducting of virtual hearings and the impact of COVID-19 during maritime operations in West and Central Africa. In cooperation with INTERPOL and the Interregional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa, UNODC developed guidelines on the conducting of simulated trials and the handling of evidence. In Kenya, UNODC provided guidance to maritime law enforcement agencies on preventing the spread of COVID-19 and, in Somalia, performed a gap analysis of the capacities of maritime law enforcement agencies.

B. More effective, community- and knowledge-based crime prevention

33. UNODC continued to promote effective, community- and knowledge-based crime prevention in States, including through awareness-raising activities, capacity-building and the provision of policy and legislative advice in Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the State of Palestine. The Office contributed to numerous global and regional events to promote evidence-based prevention and the use of UNODC tools, including events dedicated to the development of indicators for safer cities and the development of community-oriented policing.

34. UNODC raised awareness about challenges faced by young people and promoted the continuous provision of support to young people and their families, including the provision of opportunities for positive development both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, UNODC organized a series of 16 global, national and regional virtual events, engaging stakeholders from the justice, social, youth, education and sport sectors, as part of its initiative on youth crime prevention through sport. In Uzbekistan, UNODC launched an online "sport challenge" to promote sport as a means to cope with stress during the pandemic, sharing audiovisual material produced by young people on social and other media, including national television.

35. In Brazil, UNODC organized online discussions on the impact of COVID-19 on crime in slums in Brazil and initiated an online advocacy campaign on social media highlighting the impact of the pandemic on the Sustainable Development Goals.

36. In Ethiopia, UNODC supported the national task force on crime prevention during consultations on the national crime prevention strategy and contributed to the drafting of a document aligning the strategy with broader justice reform initiatives. In Kyrgyzstan, UNODC provided expert advice during the drafting of new legislation on crime prevention.

37. In Colombia, UNODC continued to support local governments in crime prevention efforts, including in urban areas. In partnership with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, the Office developed a methodology to diagnose risk factors related to crime in 22 municipalities. Similarly, the Office supported the local government of

Cajicá in the design and formulation of the Comprehensive Plan for Security and Citizen Coexistence, based on the results of a safety audit. In partnership with the Office of the Governor of Santander, UNODC designed and conducted a virtual training course on crime prevention and access to local justice, adapted to address specific challenges posed by COVID-19 lockdown measures, benefiting 50 officials, conciliators and teachers. In Uzbekistan, UNODC, jointly with the Academy of the General Prosecutor's Office, conducted an urban safety governance assessment focusing on one district in Tashkent. The outcomes of the assessment are expected to inform the implementation of new crime prevention initiatives.

38. To prevent youth victimization and engagement in crime, violence and substance use, the Office carried out a wide range of activities to strengthen resilience among young people and promote their role as agents for change in crime prevention and criminal justice. UNODC continued to engage at-risk youth in both face-to-face and online activities through the “Line Up Live Up” programme and other sport-based interventions. The activities were aimed at building life skills and providing opportunities for youth participation, reaching over 21,700 young people from five States.⁴ In addition, through the provision of sports equipment to schools and sports and community centres, UNODC created safe public spaces for the positive engagement and development of young people.

39. UNODC delivered capacity-building activities to approximately 500 sport coaches, trainers and youth workers in six States⁵ on the use of sport as a tool for crime prevention, and the “Line Up, Live Up” curriculum. To enhance the capacity of trainers to respond to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, thematic training sessions on online safety and positive parenting were conducted in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and a series of online training sessions on sport for development and peace were held in Peru.

40. In Uzbekistan, the Office organized a national awareness campaign jointly with the Ministry of Physical Culture and Sport, the Ministry of Public Education and the National Olympic Committee to strengthen youth resilience to violence by engaging athletes as positive role models. In the Roumieh prison and selected communities in Lebanon, UNODC, in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and the Ministry of Justice, conducted activities using sport to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of boys and young men in conflict with the law, including those convicted or accused of engaging in acts of violent extremism.

41. With a view to engaging young people in promoting the rule of law, the Office launched the fifth cycle of the Youth Ambassadors Programme in Brazil, a capacity-building training course, in cooperation with the Municipality of São Paulo and the Caixa Seguradora Institute. The Office engaged 25 at-risk young people, (76 per cent of whom were female, supporting them to act as multipliers of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, and focusing on violence against women, urban crime prevention and community-police relations.

42. The Office worked with the Youth Affairs Agency, the Youth Entrepreneurship Support Centre and the Information Technology Park in Uzbekistan to launch online initiatives aimed at empowering young people to develop innovative technology-based solutions to promote social cohesion and the rule of law, with a focus on the prevention of violence and corruption, and entrepreneurship development. In Kazakhstan, UNODC partnered with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the “Street Law Kazakhstan” project to conduct a series of webinars on youth crime prevention and the use of tools developed under the UNODC Education for Justice initiative in the daily work of police officers.

43. UNODC continued to promote crime prevention and a culture of lawfulness in cooperation with schools. In Colombia, the Office led virtual meetings of

⁴ Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and State of Palestine.

⁵ Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Peru, South Africa, Uzbekistan and State of Palestine.

“coexistence task forces” in 80 schools to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the context of early prevention of juvenile delinquency and victimization. In Central Asia, UNODC launched a regional awareness-raising campaign to share best practices in promoting a culture of lawfulness in schools, targeting educators and psychologists. In Kyrgyzstan, UNODC supported the integration of the “Line Up, Live Up” life skills training programme in the secondary school curriculum.

C. Violence against women is prevented, and increased access to gender-responsive justice for women and girl victims of violence or in vulnerable situations

44. In 2020, UNODC supported 21 States in strengthening responses to violence against women, including by supporting the alignment of legislative frameworks with the standards and norms. The Office provided technical expertise in the development of a Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional model law against gender-based violence. In South Africa, UNODC provided comments on draft legislation concerning sexual and domestic violence. In Kyrgyzstan, the Office provided input to the revision of the Criminal Procedural Code, aimed at strengthening protection mechanisms for survivors.

45. In its efforts to enhance the capacity of criminal justice professionals to prevent and respond to violence against women, UNODC held a global webinar on judicial responses to gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing together experts from 15 countries. In addition, UNODC trained judges, prosecutors, police officials and public defenders from Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador and Nepal.

46. UNODC developed a guide on gender-based violence for Santiago de Cali, Colombia, and supported local government authorities in promoting the prevention and reporting of cases, responding immediately to survivors and monitoring gender-based violence. In Mexico, UNODC provided legislative support, including an analysis of the legislation of 32 states and guidance on standardizing the legal definition of the criminal offence of “feminicide”. The Office also initiated specialized police training on preventing and investigating gender-related killing and conducted an impact evaluation which showed that the training had enhanced participants’ empathy for victims and knowledge of referral procedures. Under the Spotlight Initiative, UNODC developed guidelines and protocols to guarantee access to high-quality care and assistance for women and girls, on the basis of the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, and improved public spaces to provide a safe urban environment for women and girls in the cities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez. In Guatemala, UNODC increased women’s access to justice by improving the capacities of the national police and the Office of the Attorney General to respond to violence against women, in particular indigenous women, by enhancing reporting channels and the documentation of cases.

47. In the Middle East and North Africa, UNODC partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in delivering a regional virtual workshop for representatives of the health, social, police and justice sectors from seven Arab States⁶ on essential services for survivors and initiatives to respond to increases in gender-based violence. UNODC supported the National Family Safety Programme of Saudi Arabia by delivering webinars on essential police and justice services for survivors of gender-based violence and on effective gender-based violence risk assessments, reaching 1,400 attendees from the legal, medical, psychosocial and academic sectors.

48. UNODC enhanced awareness of key services in the State of Palestine, including legal assistance and forensic medicine, through workshops, an informational brochure and a promotional video and initiated WhatsApp groups to facilitate communication

⁶ Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and State of Palestine.

and coordination among service providers. As part of the emergency response plan on COVID-19, UNODC provided personal protective equipment to shelters. In partnership with UN-Women, UNODC organized capacity-building workshops for law enforcement officers from Iraq and for police officers, judges and prosecutors from Jordan on effective responses to violence against women.

49. UNODC conducted four training workshops in Egypt for judges on the national legal framework relating to violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation and child marriages, and practical challenges encountered in cases of such violence. In partnership with UN-Women, UNODC organized a workshop on the legal and judicial challenges in providing women with access to justice in family courts. UNODC provided medical supplies, specialized materials and COVID-19 protective equipment to the Forensic Medicine Authority of Egypt, thereby guaranteeing the continuity of services and the conducting of forensic examinations of survivors. In partnership with the Ministry of the Interior, UNODC launched a national police manual and a pocketbook to enhance training for law enforcement.

50. In Kyrgyzstan, under the Spotlight Initiative, UNODC supported mobile emergency-response groups of police officers, health and social workers and psychologists in providing essential services in the context of COVID-19 lockdowns. In addition, UNODC conducted a needs assessment in relation to piloting a one-stop crisis centre for victims, launched the gender-disaggregated statistical forms for gender-related crimes to be included in the electronic crime registry and updated a mobile application to facilitate citizen-police communication and emergency calls to report violence.

51. UNODC supported the establishment of a women's and juvenile facilitation centre in collaboration with the Punjab Police in Pakistan and provided training for police officials, resulting in increased availability of psychosocial and medico-legal services to victims of abuse and domestic violence. UNODC also co-hosted a consensus-building workshop for senior public and development officials to develop a shared vision towards the protection of women and girls through essential justice and policing services.

52. In Myanmar, UNODC co-organized a series of workshops for 1,700 front-line police officers, strengthening the capacity of the Myanmar police force to prevent and respond effectively to incidents of gender-based violence. In addition, UNODC distributed 25,000 pocketbooks to front-line police officers on responding effectively to gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic and coordinated a national round table on responses to gender-based violence, with high-level representation from criminal justice institutions and civil society. In Viet Nam, UNODC provided technical support to domestic violence rapid-response teams in Ben Tre Province and trained criminal justice officers on providing protective and justice services for survivors.

53. Under a joint project in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal, UNODC and UN-Women strengthened the capacities of local stakeholders to provide legal aid services to survivors of sexual gender-based violence, at the same time increasing awareness of COVID-19 prevention strategies. Under the project, civil society organizations received grants to enable the continuity of legal aid service delivery to female suspects, prisoners and victims, as the demand for such services had increased during the pandemic.

54. UNODC raised awareness at the global and national levels of the crucial role of crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women, particularly in the context of the pandemic. The Executive Director of UNODC took part in the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" and the "With her" digital engagement campaign (#WithHer) led by the Spotlight Initiative, reaching at least 1.8 million people. Under the Education for Justice initiative, UNODC produced a podcast on the global scale of intimate femicide, showcasing research on the need for a systematic global count of deaths among

women resulting from intimate partner violence, as part of a broader strategy to end violence against women.

55. UNODC launched a national campaign against gender-based violence and stereotypes in El Salvador, achieving over 30,000 online “shares” on social media, and initiated a partnership with women’s and **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex** (LGBTQI) organizations to hold a monthly round-table dialogue on the disappearances of women, girls and young people. In Brazil, UNODC held a panel discussion on gender-based violence during the “HeForShe” conference on gender equality, held at NOVA University Lisbon.

56. In Nepal, the Office launched a public service announcement that was broadcast on 300 radio stations, and developed awareness-raising materials on gender-based violence that were disseminated in all districts reaching 6,000 people. In Myanmar, UNODC conducted four national advocacy campaigns on social media and in national newspapers, highlighting exceptions to COVID-19 lockdown and curfew orders for those facing violence. In Uzbekistan, UNODC and the Youth Affairs Agency established the “Voice of Girls” network to promote women’s empowerment and gender equality in the Fergana Valley.

57. UNODC partnered with the Government of the State of Palestine and academia to train journalists and media focal points on available public services and referral systems to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In Ethiopia, UNODC published a video in collaboration with civil society aimed at raising awareness of available services for survivors of violence against women.

D. Strengthened prevention of and responses to violence against children, including by terrorist and violent extremist groups, and enhanced access to justice for children

58. Ending all forms of violence against children, including by terrorist and violent extremist groups, is critical for improving the well-being of families, communities and societies at large. UNODC increased the understanding of measures to prevent and respond to violence against children, especially in the context of terrorism and during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNODC continued to deliver technical assistance to strengthen intersectoral coordination mechanisms in order to ensure comprehensive and sustainable prevention and response strategies for children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups in Africa and in Central, South-East and South Asia.

59. UNODC conducted a scoping mission in Nigeria on prevention of and responses to violence against children by terrorist groups. In South Africa, UNODC provided legal advisory services, commenting on three pieces of draft legislation in the areas of violence against children, domestic violence and gender-based violence.

60. In Kazakhstan, UNODC provided legal advisory services relating to the approved rules on the social rehabilitation of children affected by terrorist activities, held a national round table involving 21 ministerial representatives to discuss and validate the UNODC technical assistance needs assessment and finalized the assessment report on prevention of and responses to violence against children by terrorist and violent extremist groups, including children affected by the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. UNODC held five online capacity-building events for 571 ministerial officials and multisectoral professionals involved in the rehabilitation and reintegration of such children. UNODC, jointly with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the **United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre**, delivered a national workshop on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon to 21 ministerial officials and multisectoral professionals involved in supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of children returned from conflict zones.

61. UNODC co-organized a high-level event on the topic “Children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups: the UNODC Roadmap in action”, benefiting Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives and the Philippines. Indonesia endorsed the UNODC “Roadmap on the treatment of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups” through the Bali Call for Action, and the Government of Maldives requested to become a pilot country for the implementation of the UNODC road map.

62. UNODC and the Government of Indonesia worked to align the national action plan on countering violent extremism with international law by conducting a national needs assessment and a national round table to collect input from stakeholders. The Office, in partnership with the National Counter-Terrorism Agency of Indonesia, held a three-day capacity-building workshop on the treatment of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups. In addition, UNODC produced a training manual on justice for children in the context of counter-terrorism in Indonesia.

63. UNODC conducted its first virtual needs assessment in Maldives on juvenile justice, holding consultative meetings with 25 national counterparts and sharing its final report with government counterparts. As a follow-up, the Office delivered a webinar on international standards in the area of juvenile justice, in cooperation with the Judicial Academy of Maldives. UNODC also conducted a virtual situation analysis on children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups with representatives of 44 national counterparts and civil society organizations.

64. UNODC conducted a five-day specialized training-of-trainers workshop on justice for children in Nepal to strengthen the capacity of 20 prosecutors in the discharge of their duties in relation to child victims and witnesses and children in conflict with the law.

65. UNODC organized an online training workshop on the topic “Epidemiological considerations for the prevention of infectious diseases, including COVID-19 in juvenile correctional facilities”, benefiting 42 participants, including 16 women, from the Ministry of the Interior of the United Arab Emirates and the Juvenile Correctional Institutions Sector of the Ministry of Social Solidarity of Egypt.

66. In Kenya, UNODC donated equipment to the Department of Children Services to assist with the virtual hearing of cases, which allowed the Department to ensure cases involving children were heard in a timely manner despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNODC also supported Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions of Kenya in the development of a prosecutors’ guide to handling children in the criminal justice system, aimed at improving access to justice for children and promoting a more child-friendly criminal justice system in Kenya. In partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, UNODC rolled out a rehabilitation and reintegration initiative for adolescent girls in conflict with the law at the juvenile rehabilitation centres in Kirigiti and Dagoretti. UNODC also launched the “Designing Dreams” fashion design and entrepreneurship programme, as well as a national art competition for children and youth to raise public awareness of and generate ideas on probation and the prevention of recidivism.

67. UNODC, in collaboration with UNICEF, developed an advocacy brief on children deprived of liberty in Pakistan that included information on national laws, international instruments and best practices on how to protect children deprived of liberty in Pakistan from the impact of COVID-19. The Office also developed a toolkit for law enforcement agencies and legal practitioners that was aligned with the Juvenile Justice System Act of 2018.

68. UNODC launched toolkits aimed at building the capacity of police and prosecutorial officers in Viet Nam to effectively prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute cases involving the sexual abuse of children and to better protect the rights and interests of abused children. UNODC trained 127 police officers and prosecutors on the international and domestic legal and policy framework on child sexual exploitation, focusing on the identification of victims and perpetrators while applying

victim-centred and human rights-based responses. UNODC conducted a national seminar on using electronic devices and modern technologies for the effective prosecution of child sexual exploitation cases, involving the participation of 80 criminal justice officers.

69. In Colombia, UNODC strengthened crime prevention efforts by facilitating a training session for 446 children on techniques to identify sexual exploitation within their communities.

70. In the Niger, in the framework of the Sahel Programme, the Office continued to build capacity with a view to improving the treatment of child victims of recruitment by terrorist groups, trafficking and violence. At the regional level, the Office developed a guide on legal aid for children.

E. Comprehensive and gender-responsive penal and prison reforms implemented to reduce the overuse of imprisonment, prison overcrowding and other prison challenges, including radicalization and violent extremism in prisons

71. In view of the unprecedented challenges to health and safety in prisons posed by COVID-19, UNODC provided emergency assistance to more than 50 prison and correctional services to enhance infection prevention and control measures and policies in prisons. UNODC called for continued adherence to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) when introducing such measures and promoted the increased use of alternatives to imprisonment, with a view to addressing prison overcrowding.

72. Technical assistance services provided by UNODC encompassed the procurement of personal protective equipment and sanitary items; the improvement of prison conditions and health-care and basic services available to prisoners; and targeted capacity-building for prison officers and health-care professionals. In addition, UNODC undertook efforts to ensure the broad availability and continuity of quality health-care services for prisoners, including at-risk groups, and to develop human rights-compliant prison policies and standard operating procedures related to COVID-19, as well as advocacy and technical guidance on emergency release mechanisms and non-custodial measures.

73. States that benefited from UNODC technical assistance aimed at enhancing COVID-19 preparedness and responses included the following: Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe and State of Palestine.

74. UNODC launched a global awareness-raising campaign on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of adoption by the General Assembly of the Nelson Mandela Rules and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). UNODC joined the "We applaud" campaign (#WeApplaud), launched by the International Corrections and Prison Association to draw attention to the important and demanding work of prison officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

75. The global persistence of prison overcrowding led to the increases in the spread and impact of COVID-19 in prisons. In Myanmar, UNODC co-signed a letter addressed to the President advocating for urgent action to reduce the prison population, which was followed by the release of nearly 25,000 prisoners through a presidential pardon. Similar advocacy efforts were pursued in Indonesia, Pakistan, the

Philippines and Thailand. In Kenya, UNODC supported multiple interventions to reduce prison overcrowding, including streamlining and standardizing bail and bond procedures, enabling greater use of diversion and plea bargaining, promoting other non-custodial measures, and facilitating a sector-wide commitment to reducing prison overcrowding through the National Council on the Administration of Justice. An estimated 12,000 persons were released from prisons across the country in 2020. Similar partnerships aimed at holistic penal reform were forged in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Uganda. In Kyrgyzstan, UNODC supported the newly established Probation Service by building the capacity of newly recruited probation officers and procuring equipment for its eight probation offices throughout the country.

76. UNODC continued to provide extensive support to training programmes for prison staff, including through the provision of in-person training and webinars, the enhancement of training curricula and the deployment of prison mentors. Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Libya, Kenya, Maldives, Panama, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Somalia and Viet Nam benefited from initiatives to build the capacity of prison officers, including specialized training and technical advice on the treatment of women prisoners. Officials in Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Somalia and Thailand received specialized training and technical advice on gender-responsive prison management and non-custodial measures for women offenders. In Kazakhstan, UNODC helped to set up a new Prison Staff Training Centre as part of the Kostanay Police Academy, with the capacity to deliver online training courses for different categories of staff, including as part of efforts to address violent extremism and prevent and respond to COVID-19 in prisons.

77. To meet the strong demand for virtual training solutions during the pandemic, UNODC further promoted its scenario-based e-learning course on the Nelson Mandela Rules. Regional and national sensitization workshops were held involving the participation of representatives from, inter alia, all the German-speaking countries, the Caribbean Community and the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior. As at December 2020, nearly 35,000 users from more than 150 countries had enrolled in the course, which was accessible free of charge on the UNODC e-learning platform in the following languages: Arabic, English, French, German, Indonesian, Malay, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Thai. In several countries, such as Kazakhstan and the Philippines, the course has become a compulsory component of the national training curriculum for prison officers.

78. As part of its efforts to promote the reflection of the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules in national legislation relating to prisons, UNODC provided legislative assistance to Ethiopia, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania and Uzbekistan. In Mexico, UNODC complemented previous work on a standardized national evaluation and certification scheme for prisons with the development of specialized standards relating to COVID-19. In Southern Africa, UNODC, jointly with Southern African Development Community, developed a strategic action plan for the period 2021–2025 to guide and harmonize reform efforts in the corrections, prison and penitentiary services of its 16 member States. In addition, UNODC established a firm basis for prison reform programming in Iraq by conducting a comprehensive assessment of prisons and juvenile detention facilities operating under the Ministry of Justice in the Kurdistan region.

79. UNODC strengthened core management practices in prisons. With a view to supporting the social reintegration of prisoners upon release, the Office initiated prison-based rehabilitation programmes and services in several Member States. Recreational, educational, vocational training and work programmes, as well as psychosocial support services, were launched in prisons or juvenile detention facilities in Colombia, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Somalia. In addition, UNODC undertook qualitative reviews of existing rehabilitation and social reintegration strategies and policies in Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan and Maldives.

80. In Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mali, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste and Uganda, UNODC supported the development and implementation of evidence-based and human rights-compliant systems for the classification of prisoners by conducting individual risk and needs assessments. In order to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the treatment of detainees and prisoners, UNODC upgraded the online network infrastructure of prison and/or prosecution authorities in Egypt, Kazakhstan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. In Pakistan, UNODC supported the digitalization of prisoner files and records in more than 60 prisons by means of an online prison management information system.

81. Acknowledging the challenges posed by high-risk prisoners, and that prisons may serve as potential incubators for violent extremism and terrorist recruitment, UNODC provided technical assistance to more than 20 Member States in Africa and Asia aimed at strengthening the capacity of prison services to effectively manage high-risk prisoners, including violent extremist prisoners, prevent radicalization to violence in prisons and implement tailored post-release support and supervision. UNODC advocated for and supported age- and gender-sensitive approaches to such interventions that were in full compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules and embedded in a healthy prison environment conducive to rehabilitation and disengagement from violence.

82. More specifically, UNODC strengthened inter-agency cooperation, conducted security audits and sociological surveys, provided support for rehabilitation and re-entry and built specialized capacity among prison and probation officers. Those measures helped to enhance prison security, intelligence and social reintegration prospects in Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan. A focus was placed on the concept of “dynamic security”, which is based on positive and professional relationships between prison officers and prisoners. UNODC supported the Uganda Prisons Service in the incorporation of six modules on preventing and countering violent extremism into the basic training curriculum of the Prisons Academy and Training School. Similar efforts to develop and roll out training curricula were undertaken for the Maldives Correctional Service and the Probation and Aftercare Service of Kenya.

V. Partnerships

83. UNODC fostered new partnerships in order to address the challenges posed to criminal justice systems by the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging issues.

84. Responding to the global call to accelerate action to address racial discrimination, the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, established in 2012, of which UNODC is an active member, was revitalized in 2020. A senior-level meeting was held in November 2020 that led to the adoption of a workplan under which UNODC was to take the lead in criminal justice matters.

85. UNODC, together with UNDP and the Department of Peace Operations, organized a webinar for 240 United Nations staff members on how to assist Member States in facilitating access to justice in the context of emergency measures. The webinar highlighted the rights and needs of at-risk groups and possible interventions in mission settings, and explored the possibilities and limitations of e-justice.

86. With regard to access to legal aid, UNODC closely cooperated with new and established partners to provide support to countries, including to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The partners included UNDP, UN-Women, the Department of Peace Operations, the International Legal Foundation, the Open Society Justice Initiative, the International Development Law Organization, the International Legal Aid Group and civil society organizations.

87. In its efforts to support COVID-19 preparedness and responses in prisons, UNODC closely liaised with WHO and UNAIDS. Other coordinating partners in that

regard included OHCHR, UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and numerous civil society organizations, including Penal Reform International.

88. Under the joint initiative on the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons, UNODC partnered with the Office for Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. In the field of prison reform, UNODC forged new partnerships with regional entities such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of OSCE, SADC and the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security of the Caribbean Community. Furthermore, UNODC continued its partnership with the Thailand Institute of Justice to promote the Bangkok Rules and the Nelson Mandela Rules.

89. UNODC strengthened its partnership with the sports sector, signing a memorandum of understanding with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association with a view to jointly countering crime in and through sports. The Office continued its cooperation with other United Nations entities working in the areas of crime prevention and the prevention of violent extremism, most notably the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNESCO, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Department of Peace Operations and the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

90. Engaging academia and educators in discussions relating to crime prevention, the Office partnered with a number of institutions to promote the use of UNODC Education for Justice modules on crime prevention and criminal justice, including with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in India; the Eurasian Center for Legal and Economic Research of Narxoz University in Kazakhstan; the University of Lisbon; Qatar University; Tashkent State University of Law and the Academy of the General Prosecutor's Office of Uzbekistan and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

91. In the area of violence against children, UNODC took part in an inter-agency group composed of United Nations entities and civil society organizations, as part of a joint effort with the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. UNODC launched a new project with the European Union entitled "STRIVE Juvenile: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups", to be implemented in Indonesia, Iraq and Nigeria. In addition, UNODC co-organized the second regional INSPIRE⁷ workshop and the first in a series of webinars on the implementation of the seven INSPIRE strategies for ending violence against children.

92. UNODC continued its partnership with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, WHO and UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls subject to Violence, as well its participation in activities in Mexico and Kyrgyzstan under the Spotlight Initiative.

93. In the area of police reform, UNODC strengthened its partnership with sister United Nations entities, in particular UNDP, OHCHR and the Department of Peace Operations, and established new partnerships with, inter alia, the Convention against Torture Initiative and the Association for the Prevention of Torture.

⁷ Launched alongside the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children in 2016, INSPIRE is a set of seven evidence-based strategies for countries and communities working to eliminate violence against children.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

94. During the reporting period, UNODC supported 63 States in their efforts to prevent crime and strengthen their criminal justice systems while facing additional challenges in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the basis of the standards and norms, UNODC promoted police, penal and prison reform, and worked to strengthen access to justice for women, children and other groups that have been left behind. The Office cooperated with crime prevention actors and criminal justice institutions, civil society, academia and the private sector in awareness-raising, the development of strategies, legislative and policy reform, data collection and analysis, the development of tools, knowledge transfer and capacity-building.

95. The Commission may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) To prevent, respond to and recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on justice systems, Member States should focus on leaving no one behind in providing access to justice, ensure equal access to quality legal aid services, address discrimination within the justice system, consider the need to reform their police institutions and implement restorative justice programmes and victim assistance services. Member States should also create comprehensive evidence bases to identify and address the impact of the pandemic on efforts to ensure equal access to justice for all and support UNODC in its role as a centre of excellence in this regard;

(b) Member States should continue to support the United Nations in efforts to promote better and more evidence-based crime prevention as an effective means to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Sustainable Development Goals 5, 11 and 16. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath has made it even more important for Member States to design and implement human rights-based policies that address systemic inequalities in access to the labour market, education, health care, justice and other essential services focused on women and young people;

(c) Member States should include in any post-pandemic recovery strategy measures aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence against women and should ensure that police and justice services for survivors of gender-based violence are regarded as essential, remain open, and provided with adequate resources and are made accessible. Member States should also develop and implement national crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and plans to promote the full protection of women and girls from all acts of violence, including the gender-related killing of women and girls;

(d) Member States should strengthen their legal, institutional and operational frameworks and adopt a multisectoral approach to the security, education, health, child protection and other relevant sectors to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against children, including the recruitment of children by terrorist groups. Efforts should focus on implementing comprehensive and evidence-based strategies to prevent the victimization and involvement of children in crime and violence; ensuring that interventions targeting children who are victims, witnesses or alleged offenders identify as key objectives the rehabilitation, reintegration and best interests of those children; and strengthening child and juvenile justice systems to ensure that they are fair, transparent and child- and gender-sensitive. Special attention should be paid to making full use of alternatives to imprisonment, restorative justice and diversion measures and to refraining from lowering the age of criminal responsibility;

(e) The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 in prison settings has underlined the challenges related to prison overcrowding, as already overburdened and ill-equipped prisons are confronted with additional health or other crises. Member States should intensify their efforts to address prison overcrowding and reduce overincarceration, including through enhanced resort to non-custodial measures in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules). Member States should also increase their compliance with international prison standards, in particular on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of

the adoption of the Nelson Mandela Rules and tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Bangkok Rules. Member States should also take concrete steps to maintain safe, humane and rehabilitative prison environments in order to limit the impact of the severe restrictions imposed on the regular prison regimes as a result of the pandemic. Member States should develop tailored strategies to counter terrorist narratives within prisons and upon release, both during and in the aftermath of the pandemic.
