The Question of Trans-national Organised Crime

NB: While this paper provides information on all key points that delegates should be familiar with preceding the debate - this briefing paper is in no way a comprehensive source of evidence regarding the extremely complex and multifaceted issue of transnational organised crime. Thus delegates are encouraged to engage in further research into this topic in preparation for the debate should they wish to participate with a depth of understanding surrounding the topic.

Any questions or clarifications at all please email the Security Council chairs at gw13fradermaria@glow.sch.uk

Best of luck! ☺

 OVERVIEW

Transnational Organised Crime (henceforth referred to as TOC) is a growing global threat undermining international security on an enormous scale. Every day innumerable lives are lost directly, or indirectly, as a result of organised crime. It is important to note that transnational organised crime is not stagnant but is a constantly changing industry as networks and organisations adapt to changing markets. It transcends cultural, social, linguistic and geographical boundaries and exploits weak governance, conflict, and global financial systems. TOC can include but is not limited to: human trafficking, drug trafficking, natural resource trafficking, smuggling of migrants, illicit firearms trading, illegal wildlife trade, sale of fraudulent medicines, cybercrime.

SCALE OF ISSUE

Financially, TOC is big business. In 2009 it was estimated to generate $870 billion - an amount equal to 1.5 per cent of global GDP. That is more than six times the amount of official development assistance for that year, and the equivalent of close to 7 per cent of the world's exports of merchandise.Moreover illicit financial laws between organisations undermine national tax systems and siphon money away from public services particularly in developing nations. Corruption also affects the economy with the world bank estimating that bribery related to TOC costs the global economy over $1 trillion annually.

TOC also has far reaching humanitarian impacts. Over 40 million people are estimated to be victims of modern slavery, including forced labour and sexual exploitation, many of which are trafficked by transnational cartels. In countries where drug cartels are or have been particularly active such as Mexico, Colombia, and parts of Western Africa, TOC in the form of drug production and trafficking has contributed to tens of thousands of homicides annually.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

* Undermining the rule of law

Bribery and intimidation of officials erodes trust in public institutions, while laws determined between cartels and other criminal organisations undermine governmental control.

* Fuelling conflict and insecurity

In some cases TOC groups have been known to form alliances with terrorist organisations, fund or encourage insurgencies, or to deliberately destabilise governments.

* Blocking development

Economies monopolised by TOC groups prevent legitimate investment, disrupt markets, and reduce public spending on health/education/infrastructure

* Weakening international cooperation

The transnational nature of this type of crime means disagreements over jurisdiction sovereignty and enforcement hinder multilateral responses. States are often accused of harbouring or tolerating criminal elements for political or financial gain.

KEY LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) 2000 - also known as the Palermo Convention. Includes protocol to prevent suppress and punish trafficking, protocol against migrant smuggling, and protocol against illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Coordinates global anti-crime programs and facilitates international cooperation.

INTERPOL. Provides intelligence sharing networks between police forces in multiple member states.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Monitors global compliance on anti – money laundering.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What are your country’s main vulnerabilities in relation to TOC?

Is your country a source or dest for trafficking or illicit goods and materials?

What international treaties that concern TOC is your country ratified or opposed to?

How can global cooperation be improved without infringing on national sovereignty?