



**GLOBAL
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AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

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STATEMENT UNDER AGENDA ITEM 1 (B) “GENERAL DISCUSSION”

**UNCAC COSP 10
ATLANTA, 12 DECEMBER 2023**

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

I am honoured to be speaking here at COSP10 on behalf of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, an independent civil society organization headquartered in Geneva, with staff and offices around the world.

Through our Regional Observatories and global Network of Experts, we focus on bringing forward research and analysis on all types of illicit markets, promoting civil society resilience in the countries and regions most affected by organized crime, and supporting policymakers to develop more strategic and effective responses.

Dear colleagues,

Since the adoption of the UNCAC, and its sister convention, the UNTOC, the strength of corrupt and criminal networks has grown and evolved beyond recognition.

Our flagship 2023 Organized Crime Index shows that the most prevalent and potent set of organized criminal actors are those that are embedded in the state, and who instrumentalise state resources and institutions for the purpose of protecting and profiting from organized crime.

The criminal underworld is increasingly indistinguishable from the upperworlds of politics and business, to the point that the greatest enablers of illicit behaviour have been made legal and integral to contemporary globalisation.

Whether through lax financial regulation in offshore jurisdictions, the proliferation of special economic zones, or the ability of states to undermine or manipulate the very measures that they are obligated to implement under this convention - it has become too easy for those within states to act with impunity, and too often, civil society pay the heavy price, living their lives under threat for having spoken out.

That is why we refer to organized corruption as the phenomenon of this abuse of power and use of elite influence to extract resources and exploit societies.

Despite the widespread ratification of both conventions, it is increasingly evident that international efforts have not been effective enough. More than 20 years into the lives of the UNTOC and UNCAC, and as we get nearer to the target achievement date of the SDGS in 2030, the situation is critical and things have gotten worse, not better.

Our research shows time and time again, that the strongest indicators of resilience to organized crime and corruption are the rule of law, democratic systems, and a free media and a civil society that is able to operate and work with partners across sectors to monitor and follow up on the implementation of the obligations to which states have committed, and which are essential in formulating an effective legal and regulatory framework to counter corruption.

These are all principles that are enshrined within the conventions.

But not only do the two conventions remain disjointed, but the review mechanism of the UNCAC and the UNTOC essentially allow states to mark their own homework.

Incentives for positive performance are weak, and there are no penalties for non-compliance.

In the view of the Global Initiative, therefore, it is time to ensure data, inputs and actions from civil society form a more integral part of the implementation of this and other relevant conventions, to support states in achieving the goals to which they have signed up.

Thank you.

Tuesday Reitano, Deputy Director, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime