GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

WHERE NEXT FOR THE UNTOC? AN INTER-REGIONAL DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE PALERMO CONVENTION

21 October 2026
09:00–09.50 AM

Venue: M7, Vienna International Centre (hybrid)

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SIDE EVENT AT THE 13TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

Event summary

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) has been in existence for more than 25 years, and remains the cornerstone of the UN's international response to transnational organized crime. However, the impact of the convention is impossible to assess, partly due to the slow progress of its review mechanism.

Research carried out by academia and civil society has in recent years highlighted the lack of data and the need for more concerted efforts to enhance the implementation of the convention, as have member states through the meetings of the working groups. Data on the convention's use in the Global South appears to be particularly sporadic, leaving countries who need it the most without access to the cooperation tools that it provides.

In the meantime, the review mechanism has been unable to meet its deadlines, leaving countries and societies without the information necessary to upgrade their domestic criminalization and international cooperation frameworks, and access capacity building resources. The financial crunch facing the UN has no doubt contributed to the challenges facing the UNTOC, but its challenges have political as well as financial causes.

This event will probe, in the context of ongoing negotiations at COP13, what different states and stakeholders from different regions feel is needed to reinvigorate and reposition the UNTOC, in order to help states disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal networks.

Speakers

- **Chair:** Mark Shaw, Executive Director of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)
- Ambassador Carl Hallergård, Permanent Representative of the EU to the International Organizations in Vienna
- Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the International Organizations in Vienna
- Sandrine Kalisa, Legal Officer, Criminal, Security and Diplomatic Law Division, Global Affairs Canada
- Cathy Haenlein, Director, Trade and Economic Security & Ian Tennant, Director of Multilateral Engagement, GI-TOC
- **Closing remarks:** Ivan Marques, Secretary for Multidimensional Security, Organization of American States