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GLOBAL INITIATIVE
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

THE ROLE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

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

20 October 2026
09:00–09:50 AM

Venue: M3,
Vienna International
Centre (hybrid)

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Event summary

Organized crime is undermining democracy, human rights and public safety, the sovereignty of states, and even international peace and security and the rule of law itself. The rules-based order that has prevailed for decades is being increasingly undermined by those who don't play by the rules – including state-embedded actors.

Criminal groups, who are increasingly transnational and enabled by corruption at various levels, are some of the biggest profiteers. Simultaneously, international resilience mechanisms face institutional strain, with judicial systems, civil society, international cooperation frameworks, and democratic accountability mechanisms under unprecedented pressure.

This side event will discuss how, more than 25 years after the adoption of the UNTOC, states parties to the convention can better respond to the complex and shifting challenges posed by transnational organized crime. Based on the findings of the Global Organized Crime Index, and the experience of international initiatives active in responding to organized crime, the event will hear perspectives on the importance of strengthening institutional resilience, advancing human rights protections, maintaining democratic governance and empowering civil society, as key building blocks in the fight against organized crime.

The event will include perspectives from the **Latin American and Caribbean Working Group on Security and Democracy (GLACSED)**, which was launched in Guatemala in 2026. The GLACSED, chaired by former President Carlos Alvarado of Costa Rica, and funded by Switzerland and the European Union, aims to strengthen regional dialogue and promote evidence-based, democratic public security policies in Latin America.

The event will hear key perspectives from member states promoting democratic and rule-of-law based responses to the increasing challenges of organized crime.

Speakers

- **Chair:** Mark Shaw, Executive Director, GI-TOC
- **Opening remarks:** Víctor Hugo Cruz Reynoso, Vice Minister of Interior, Guatemala
- HE Matilda Osei-Agyeman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Organizations in Vienna
- Patrizia Palmiero, Alternate Permanent Representative to the UN/IOs, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the OSCE, the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna
- Felipe Botero, Director of the Andean Regional Office, GI-TOC
- Dominique Bush, Human Rights Officer, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **Closing remarks:** Sophie Kammerer, Head of UN Section, EU Delegation to the International Organizations in Vienna