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United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)

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BILINGUAL NEWSLETTER- ENGLISH

**REDUCING RECIDIVISM THROUGH REHABILITATION
AND REINTEGRATION**

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY TO MARCH 2025

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NEWSLETTER JANUARY TO MARCH 2025

**UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME
AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS (UNAFRI)**

“Empowering African States for crime prevention and criminal justice to ensure sustainable development”.

“Renforcer la capacité des États africains dans la prévention du crime et la justice pénale pour assurer un développement durable”.

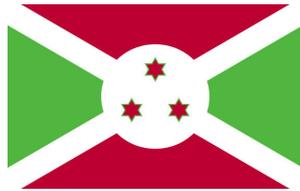
«Fortalecer la capacidad de los Estados africanos en materia de prevención del delito y justicia penal para el desarrollo sostenible»

UNAFRI SECRETARIAT, P.O BOX 10590, NAGURU-KAMPALA (UGANDA).
Phone :+256 414 221 119, +256 414 285 236 | Email : unafri@unafri.or.ug,
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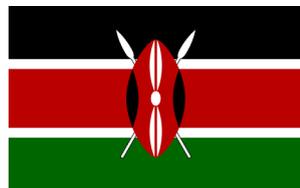
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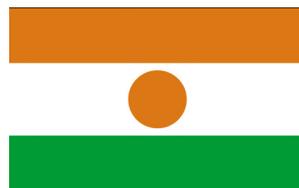
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REDUCING RECIDIVISM THROUGH REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS

From January 27 to 31, 2025, at the invitation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNAFRI participated in the second meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental group of experts to review the draft text of model strategies aimed at reducing recidivism amongst offenders. This meeting was held at the Vienna International Centre (VIC) in Austria and was attended by the Institute's Director General, Dr. KITIO Édouard.

The five-day meeting allowed experts from UN Member States to make significant modifications to the working document prepared by the chair of the open-ended intergovernmental group of experts. The drafting of the text had already been the subject of several other meetings, during which discussions focused on the wording of specific paragraphs and clarifications of certain expressions used in the document. The aim was to avoid words or phrases that might stigmatize convicted individuals and thereby reduce their chances of reintegration.

The final draft under review was based on:

- The conclusions of the first meeting of the intergovernmental group of experts,
- Written observations and contributions from Member States and other relevant stakeholders in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/232,
- The working document prepared by the Secretariat for the first meeting of the intergovernmental group of experts, and
- The conclusions of the expert group on reducing recidivism, which had in the past met from April 6 to 8, 2022, in line with General Assembly resolution 76/182.

It is worth recalling that in its resolution 2024/10, titled "Reducing Recidivism Through Rehabilitation and Reintegration," the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations authorized the open-ended intergovernmental group of experts on model strategies for reducing recidivism to continue its work within its mandate. The goal is to present a report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal

Justice at its upcoming thirty-fourth session in May, 2025.

The adoption of these model strategies to reduce recidivism can enable States to implement appropriate measures for better treatment of individuals in conflict with the law, thereby facilitating their reintegration into society. Ultimately, the objective is to prevent their stigmatization, which could increase the risk of reoffending.



ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION: PRESIDENT MUSEVENI TAKES A STAND



**H.E YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI THE PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**



The peaceful resolution of disputes has been practiced in Africa long before the introduction of other mechanisms such as judicial litigations. One well-known example of African traditional peace resolving method is through the “palaver tree,” gathering, where elders would gather to find solutions for pertinent problems and conflicts within their community. This method of dispute resolution

helped reconcile feuding families and prevented the development of divisions within the community.

With the onset of colonialism, traditional dispute resolution mechanisms were overshadowed by, judicial methods. However, it is evident that judicial proceedings do not always facilitate the reintegration of offenders into society; instead, it sometimes encourages recidivism. This is because court rulings

are imposed on the parties without necessarily addressing the root causes of the conflict issues that traditional justice could have examined more thoroughly. Additionally, the enforcement of judicial decisions often creates tension between the party in favour and the condemned party, sometimes negatively affecting relationships between families or entire communities.

Given the challenges of state justice in ensuring social cohesion, calls have emerged for a return to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. ADR methods vary across legal cultures, with the most well-known being mediation, conciliation, and arbitration. In mediation, the disputing parties select a mediator who helps them reach an amicable settlement. The mediator's role is primarily to facilitate open discussions while respecting customary practices, helping the parties explore mutually beneficial solutions. Conciliation follows similar principles, but the conciliator takes a more active role by suggesting possible solutions to the parties.

Arbitration, on the other hand, functions as a form of private tribunal where the disputing parties submit their case to arbitrators chosen either by themselves or through an arbitration centre designated in their contract. The arbitral tribunal may consist of a single arbitrator or a panel of three. The method of selecting arbitrators is determined by the arbitration agreement or the rules of the chosen arbitration centre. Arbitration closely resembles traditional justice, except that instead of the parties choosing their own arbitrators, they are subjected to a tribunal constituted by the community. This tribunal may be presided over by a neighbourhood leader, village chief, community head, elderly person or any other respected traditional authority capable of delivering a fair and equitable solution.

Alternative Dispute Resolution methods have been particularly developed in Anglo-Saxon countries before spreading to other parts of the world. Uganda has embraced this movement, and in recent years,

authorities have been promoting ADR mechanisms to address the shortcomings of the formal judicial system. In the specific context of Uganda, the number of magistrates is clearly insufficient to serve a population estimated at approximately 46 million people. Until recently, Uganda had fewer than 300 magistrates.

To date, there is only one Court of Appeal for the entire country, although efforts are underway to establish a Court of Appeal in each region. Due to inter alia the shortage of magistrates and judicial infrastructure, the workload in courts has become overwhelming for the serving judges, leading to severe judicial delays and a widespread feeling of injustice among the population. The promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) aims to alleviate public dissatisfaction with a judicial system perceived as too slow, corrupt, and inefficient.

On March 4, 2025, during the swearing-in ceremony of 21 new judges of Uganda's Supreme Court, His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni emphasized the revival of traditional justice for resolving certain disputes, except for criminal cases. These traditional mechanisms should complement the formal judicial system to reduce the burden on professional judges. The President reminded attendees that, in traditional societies, when a couple faced marital issues, both families would convene to find a mutual resolution, and the guilty party would



pay fines or other financial reparations except in cases of murder.

The President furthermore advocated for the revival of customary courts at the village level to handle minor cases, such as livestock theft or family disputes. The dispute resolution methods are more affordable, quicker, and better suited to African realities. "If someone steals a goat, they should be asked to return or replace it instead of undergoing lengthy and costly legal proceedings," the Ugandan Head of State emphasized.

According to President Museveni, the judicial system should be guided by three key principles: calm, justice, and energy efficiency. Explaining these principles, His Excellency pointed out that justice should serve as a pillar of social peace. When justice is delayed, it creates tensions and a sense of injustice, which can lead to public dissatisfaction and even uprisings, ultimately disrupting social order. Additionally, the judicial system should ensure societal harmony, and no one should suffer due to its inefficiencies.

CHILDREN AND THEIR RIGHTS IN THE FACE OF TERRORISM: THE DILEMMA OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM



For several years, the international community has been committed to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, particularly by strengthening international, regional, and sub-regional cooperation. States are expected to collaborate at all levels to prevent and fight against all acts, methods, and practices related to terrorism, mainly by reinforcing the rule of law and ensuring the implementation of relevant international conventions and protocols on counterterrorism. Additionally, states are required

to develop strategies to effectively counter the factors contributing to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism and implement, without delay, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in all its aspects (see Kyoto Declaration, p.15).

The implementation of global counterterrorism strategy, however, presents challenges especially when children are involved in terrorist organizations. The fight against terrorist acts must be

balanced with the need to protect the rights of children exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups. In particular, the judicial system is pointed with the fundamental question: What is the legal status of children suspected of committing terrorism-related offenses or acts of violent extremism? Are these children both victims and perpetrators? If so, in what way?

Children are increasingly targeted by terrorist organizations and violent extremist groups that subject them to various forms of exploitation. Numerous reports have highlighted the alarming scale of this phenomenon. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), it is estimated that since 2009, approximately 8,000 children have been recruited and used in militant activities such as those of Boko Haram group in Nigeria (see UNODC: Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System, United Nations, Vienna, 2018).

The recruitment and exploitation of children have also been carried out by other militia groups namely: the Al-Shabaab movement in Kenya and Somalia, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, Ansar Dine and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Mali and neighbouring countries, as well as the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, among others.

The forced recruitment of children by the terrorist organizations often occurs through targeted attacks on schools and other educational institutions. Many children are killed in these attacks; others are left injured and disabled. Kidnapped children are taken to training camps where they are assigned various roles such as planting bombs, acting as lookouts, or serving as couriers. Some girls become sexual slaves, while others are forced into marriage or exploited for domestic labour.

The trauma experienced by these children severely affects their health, dignity, and overall basic rights, ultimately jeopardizing their future.

Terrorist organizations do not always rely solely on the use of force to recruit children. While some children are kidnapped or forcibly conscripted, others are lured by promises of money or material benefits. Additionally, some children join voluntarily, while others have little choice but to follow their parents or other family members involved in these groups (see op.cit., p.88). All these scenarios and others affect the well-being of children exacerbated by serious violations of children's rights and freedoms thus demanding just reparations. Regardless, the seriousness of terrorism-related offenses must never overshadow the principle of the best interests of the child, which should remain the primary concern of states facing terrorism or violent extremism.



Photo credit: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund at www.unicef.org

Given their young age (under 18 years old), children are vulnerable and deserve protection within the family unit and entire community. The UN has urged Member States to implement effective measures for the legal protection and social reintegration of children associated with armed groups, including terrorist groups.

In its Resolution 70/291 on the review of the

Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed that, due to their potential status as victims of terrorism or other violations of international law, children suspected, accused, or convicted of breaking the law as well as those who are victims or witnesses of crime must be treated in a manner that respects their rights, dignity, and needs. This treatment must align with applicable international law, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other instruments like The Paris Principles which state that children who have been unlawfully recruited or used by armed forces or groups should never be prosecuted, punished, or threatened with prosecution or punishment solely for their association with such forces or groups (Paragraph 8.7).

Therefore, states must refrain from charging or prosecuting children associated with terrorist or violent extremist groups solely based on their affiliation, especially when their association is similar to that of a child soldier in an armed force or group (UNODC, op. cit., p.89). Checklist for Practitioners: Key Considerations

- States must ensure that counterterrorism measures, including investigations and prosecutions of individuals suspected of terrorism-related offenses, comply with all child rights and fundamental freedoms under international law.
- Children suspected, accused, or convicted of a terrorism-related offense or an offense against state security should have the right to a treatment that promotes their dignity and self-worth. This treatment should enhance the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, take into account their age, and facilitate their reintegration into society, enabling them to assume a constructive role within it.

- Children associated with terrorist or violent extremist groups must primarily be considered as victims of a violations of international legal norms. Regardless of their suspected involvement in offenses defined by national law as terrorism-related or as threats to state security, these children must be able to exercise the rights granted to victims under international child protection frameworks.
- Children associated with terrorist or violent extremist groups must not be prosecuted, punished, or threatened with prosecution or punishment solely for their affiliation with the groups, especially when their association occurred within the context of an armed conflict.
- When the violence committed against a child by a terrorist or extremist group qualifies as human trafficking, the child must be treated as a trafficking victim and receive appropriate protections.
- Any child suspected, accused, or convicted of a terrorism-related offense has the right to a fair and prompt hearing before a competent, independent, and impartial judicial authority. The proceedings must follow fair trial standards as outlined by law and ensure that children are handled under juvenile justice procedures. At the same time, it is recommended that criminal justice officials dealing with terrorism-related cases undergo specialized training and be provided with adequate resources.

(Source: UNODC, "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," United Nations, Vienna, 2018, p.90).

THE RISE OF TERRORIST THREATS IN MOROCCO



Special forces agents from the General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance, in Errachidia, Morocco, in September 2021 - / AFP.

States will now have to integrate the terrorist threats into their daily security concerns. The question of the real motivations of terrorists and the origins of their often-superior means of action compared to state defence mechanisms will always be asked.

The rise of terrorism is not limited to the Sahel countries alone. There are links between terrorism in the Sahel region and terrorism in the Arab Maghreb region. An article published on February 20, 2025, by a correspondent for *Le Monde*, reports that twelve individuals were arrested in various localities across the Kingdom of Morocco, including the Western Sahara. An investigation was carried out to determine the nature of their connections with the Sahel branch of a famous terrorist group – the ISIS.

According to the article, the large-scale operation was carried out by the Moroccan security agency: the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations (BCIJ). According to information released by the BCIJ, intensive searches were conducted at the homes of

two suspects in Tamesna, a suburb of Rabat, based on intelligence provided by the General Directorate for Territorial Surveillance. From these searches, there was a seizure of “four modified gas cylinders containing nails and chemical products, connected to pipes and electrical wires, all linked to mobile phones for remote detonation.” - the article states.

Moreover, the article refers to the statement released by the Moroccan agency responsible for counterterrorism regarding the twelve individuals arrested on suspicion of having “pledged allegiance to the terrorist organization Daesh” (ISIS) and of preparing “a terrorist plan under the instigation and direct encouragement of a high-ranking leader of the organization operating in the Sahel region”. The suspects, aged between 18 and 40, were arrested in nine Moroccan cities located over thousand kilometres apart, clearly demonstrating a coordinated and organized operation across a large part of the national territory.

The efforts of the operation by Moroccan authorities

proves their determination in combating terrorism across the sub-region. The presence of terrorist cells in multiple locations across Morocco undermines the terrorist suspects' activities and the severity of the potential damage they might cause. It should be realized that the Maghreb-Sahel axis, which has historically been a hotspot for terrorism, must be taken very seriously by the countries concerned.

The region has seen the emergence of a criminal-terrorist ecosystem characterized by the development of a full-fledged criminal economy. Criminal networks have forged strong ties with terrorist organizations, creating an increasingly interconnected and complex

landscape. Beyond Al-Qaeda, which operates particularly in the Arab Maghreb, other terrorist organizations have also gained momentum in the region. Morocco being part of the region, has also experienced the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and children associated with these fighters. Some sources indicate that Morocco is home to more than 8,000 foreign terrorist fighters.

(Material Source: https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2025/02/20/sur-fond-de-hausse-de-la-menace-terroriste-le-maroc-annonce-avoir-demantele-une-cellule-de-l-etat-islamique_6556146_3212.html).

REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN THE YEAR 2024



The Secretariat of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)

1. A Zoom conference was organized by UNAFRI on 20th February 2024 under the Theme: 'The Prosecution of Terrorism Offences, Illegal Possession and Trafficking in Firearms in East and Southern Africa: "The Trial Process and Place of International Law"'. Discussions focused on the

linkages between terrorism and illegal firearm trafficking, African judicial jurisdictions for prosecution, procedural guarantees under international law, international judicial cooperation, and rehabilitation of convicted individuals.

2. On 23rd April 2024, UNAFRI held another

Zoom conference for the francophone countries under the theme: "Access to Justice for All: Legal Aid in Criminal Justice in Francophone Africa and the Maghreb region". This conference explored the implementation of legal aid in Francophone Africa and the Arab Maghreb, focusing on legislative, administrative, and practical challenges. Discussions highlighted the role of bars, financing of legal aid, and state efforts to ensure free access to justice.

3. On 4th July 2024, a Sandpit Event was successfully carried out with a focus on Indigenous approaches to the regulation of digital assets and Artificial Intelligence in Africa. The event was co-organized by UNAFRI and the University of Birmingham.

3. On 5th of August 2024, UNAFRI initiated a round table discussion with the Uganda Judiciary represented by the Deputy Chief Justice, the Principal Judge and the Deputy Registrar of the Judiciary on the topic: Commemoration of Nelson Mandela International Day: Uganda Judiciary and Criminal Justice. This meeting focused on the role of the Uganda Judiciary in the criminal justice system, emphasizing best practices and challenges in prison reform.

4. In September, 2024 the Institute held a meeting with the Judicial Training Institute. The meeting established a foundation for cooperation between UNAFRI and the Judicial Training Institute to enhance judicial training and research in response to emerging legal challenges. Discussions focused on potential collaboration activities to evaluate judicial competencies in areas such as artificial intelligence, bail procedures, and cybercrime.

6. On 30th October 2024, the Institute had a virtual meeting with Kenya National Crime Prevention Research Center. This meeting aimed at forging cooperation between the two institutions

in Strengthening Collaboration for Enhanced Crime Prevention Research and Policy Advisory in East Africa.

7. On 1st November, 2024 a Dialogue on the digital space (Twitter/ X) was attended by UNAFRI under the topic: "The place of youth in AU Agenda 2063". Co-hosted by the Afro Arab Youth Council (AAYC), the dialogue encouraged the need to empower youth for leadership and development by allowing youth to take active roles in leadership and governance, thus contributing to building of the continent's future.

8. From 15th to 16th November 2024, a joint training was held with the Moroccan Ministry of Justice and the National Crime Observatory, on the Role of Scientific Research in Measuring Crime and Analysing Criminal Phenomena. This Training examined the role of scientific research in understanding crime trends.

9. On 5th December 2024, UNAFRI organised a conference in partnership with ERSUMA on the topic: "Cross-Border Economic Crime: Strategic Solutions for Overcoming the Crisis".

BRIEF UPDATES

1. UNAFRI has recently initiated the recruitment of both professional and general service staff to strengthen its operations.
2. UNAFRI is currently in discussions with the Uganda Bankers Association to develop a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at addressing the growing threat of cybercrime in the financial sector.
3. UNAFRI has developed a concept note for cyber legislation and is seeking collaboration with the Council of Europe for a training program scheduled for 2025.
4. UNAFRI is conducting research on police detention practices in relation to Uganda's 48-hour rule for holding suspects on bond.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE C1-UNAFRI-2025



Theme: The Protection of Women and Children's Rights in Southern And Eastern Africa's Criminal Justice System: Current Situation, Challenges and Prospects

Background:

On 18th February 2025, the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) organized its first International Conference for the year 2025. With a number of nearly a hundred (100) approved attendees, the conference was the 6th in series held by the Institute via Zoom platform and aimed for English-speaking participants (a separate version of the conference exists for the French-speaking participants).

Conference Objectives:

The conference had the following objectives:

From its thematic foundation, the conference aimed at enabling the sharing of knowledge and practices among the stakeholders and experts in criminal justice and human rights fields towards improving the accessibility of basic rights of women and children in conflict with the law. That is by means of addressing pertinent issues related to the accessibility of criminal justice such as:

- a. Gender based offences and justice
- b. Deprivation of liberty during penal procedures
- c. Inadequacy of legal Aid services and Rehabilitation programmes
- d. Mistreatment of victims of crime and witnesses
- e. International legal instruments and equal access to criminal justice

Moderator: The conference was moderated by Barrister Munanura Andrew Karokora – Deputy Director General, UNAFRI.

Sub- themes: The main theme of the conference titled: “The protection of women and children’s rights in southern and eastern Africa’s criminal justice system: Current situation, challenges and prospects” was clustered into two panel discussions’ sub-themes with a total of four topics distributed to four presenters respectively: -

PANEL I: Theme - Women and Children in Conflict with the Law

Topic 1: Women and children facing deprivation of liberty during criminal justice processes (i.e. detention, investigation, trial and conviction).

Presenter: Ms. Judy Cheserek – Principal Legal Officer in Office of the County Attorney, County Government of Kiambu. - Kenya.

Topic 2: Women, children and the benefit of effective legal aid system; challenges and prospects.

Presenter: Ms. Elizabeth Kemigisha– Advocacy Manager, Association of Women Lawyers FIDA-Uganda.

Conclusion:

Following the successful implementation of this conference, the Institute geared up to the preparation of a subsequent conference as scheduled in Mid-April 2025. The upcoming conference will as well bear an interesting thematic topic with experts' views within the domain of crime prevention and criminal justice. The information about these online conferences is available on the Institute's website: www.unafri.or.ug



PANEL II: Theme - Women and Children as victims or witnesses of crime

Topic 1: Recall on the implementation of international rules, standards and guidelines protecting women and children in criminal proceedings.

Presenter: Dr. Ahmed Linga – Director of Training and Programmes, UNAFRI.

Topic 2: The role of governmental, non-governmental and civil society organizations in the protection of women and children's rights in criminal justice system; challenges and prospects.

Presenter: Dr. Oghenerioborue Esther Eberechi - Lecturer, Department of Law at the University of Botswana. Nigeria.

UNAFRI ENGAGES YOUTH IN PEACEBUILDING DISCUSSION ON TWITTER SPACE

SPACE

**Youth and the Future of Peace & Security:
How Can Youth Contribute to Peacebuilding
in Conflict-Affected Regions?**

FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2025
8:00PM - 9.30PM (EAT)

AFRO-ARAB YOUTH COUNCIL
مجلس الشباب العربي والإفريقي
Conseil de Jeunesse Arabo-Africaine

MUNANURA ANDREW KAROKORA
Deputy Director General UNAFRI

ADVOCATE BROWN KUDAKWASHE
AAYC Southern Africa Regional Co-ordinator

YASSINE JOULAL
AAYC Regional coordinator Diaspora

ABUBAKR ABDALLA ALI
AAYC Advisory Committee Member

MAI SULTAN
Communications & Language Specialist
MODERATOR

Built on "Peace, Unity & Development"

The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) recently participated in a thought-provoking discussion hosted by the Afro - Arab Youth Council (AAYC) on Twitter Space. The event, held on February 21, 2025, featured Munanura Andrew Karokora, Deputy Director General of UNAFRI, as the keynote speaker under the theme "Youth and the Future of Peace and Security." The conversation revolved around the sub-theme: "How Can Youth Contribute to Peacebuilding in Conflict-Affected Regions of Africa?"

As a pan-African institute, UNAFRI is dedicated to promoting innovative approaches to crime prevention and justice reforms. Through knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, the institute empowers governments, practitioners, researchers, and youth organizations such as the AAYC. During the Twitter Space discussion, UNAFRI outlined several key strategies through which young people can actively contribute to peace-

building and the creation of inclusive societies:

Key Strategies for Youth in Peacebuilding

- **Advocating for Peaceful Dialogue:** Young people can leverage their platforms to promote open communication between conflicting groups, encouraging peaceful resolutions instead of violence.
- **Mobilizing Communities:** Youth have a unique ability to bring together different community groups to work collectively toward peace and reconciliation.
- **Promoting Education:** By championing peace education, young people can spread awareness on tolerance, diversity, and mutual understanding.
- **Building Cross-Cultural Connections:** Engaging in cultural exchange programs fosters unity, breaks stereotypes, and

reduces ethnic and political tensions.

- **Social Media Advocacy:** With digital platforms at their disposal, youth can share peace-driven messages, expose human rights violations, and rally support for initiatives promoting stability.
- **Participating in Peacebuilding Initiatives:** Young voices are critical in formal peace processes, negotiations, and policy advocacy for lasting peace solutions
- **Promoting Economic Development:** Youth-led projects that improve economic conditions contribute to long-term stability and prevent conflicts fuelled by poverty and inequality.
- **Engaging in Conflict Resolution:** By receiving training in mediation and peacebuilding, youth can help prevent minor disputes from escalating into widespread violence.
- **Offering New Perspectives:** Young people bring fresh ideas and innovative solutions to entrenched conflicts, providing alternative approaches to peace efforts.
- **Volunteerism and Grassroots Action:** Many young people are eager to rebuild their communities by offering psychological support, reconstructing infrastructure, or aiding displaced populations.
- **Leading by Example:** Youth who demonstrate peaceful behaviour inspire others to adopt conflict-free solutions, reinforcing a culture of peace.
- **Youth Empowerment Programs:** Investing in youth leadership and capacity-building programs ensures the next generation is well-equipped to sustain peace efforts.

UNAFRI's Commitment to Youth-Led Peacebuilding

UNAFRI emphasizes that young people are not just beneficiaries of peace efforts but active agents of change in conflict resolution and community stability. The Institute remains committed to collaborating with youth organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders to support initiatives that empower the next generation to build a safer and more harmonious Africa.

As the Twitter Space discussion concluded, it was evident that the role of youth in peacebuilding cannot be underestimated. Through sustained dialogue, education, and action, young people have the potential to shape a future where peace and security prevail across the continent.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE C2-UNAFRI-2025



THEME: Recruitment and Exploitation of Children by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of The Judicial System

1. Objectives

- Assess the current state of child recruitment and exploitation by terrorist and extremist groups.
- Evaluate state mechanisms for protecting children involved in terrorist activities.
- Assess preventive measures against child recruitment and exploitation.
- Examine how states implement international child protection conventions.
- Evaluate judicial responses to child victims, witnesses, or accused individuals.
- Provide recommendations for enhanced child protection measures.
- Encourage academic research on child recruitment by terrorist groups.

2. Introductory Presentation and Moderation:

Dr. KITIO Édouard, Doctor of Law, Senior Magistrate, and Director General of UNAFRI.

3. Sub- themes of the conference:

Panel 1: Situation in West Africa, Central Africa, and the Maghreb

- West Africa: Prof. ADAMOU Rabani, Associate lecturer of law, University Djibo Hamani of Tahoua (Niger).
- Central Africa: Dr. NGUIFFEU TAJOUO Eddy L., Doctor of Law, lawyer at the Paris Bar, university lecturer, and expert on organized crime and counterterrorism.

Maghreb: Dr. BENYAHIA SOFANA, Doctor in decision modelling and AI application in foreign policy, Coordinator of the National Observatory of Crime at the Ministry of Justice, Morocco.

Panel 2: The Role of the Judicial System

- Judicial treatment of child victims and witnesses of recruitment and exploitation:
- Dr. DOSSA Édouard Cyriaque, Doctor of Private Law and Criminal Sciences, expert in counterterrorism and economic crimes, President of the

Court for the Repression of Economic Crimes and Terrorism in Benin.

- Judicial treatment of children accused of terrorism-related offenses:

M. MBANG MOUBEI Parfait Derlin, 4th-grade Magistrate, President of the First Instance Court of Kaélé (Cameroon), expert in juvenile justice and legal aspects of terrorism.

4. Summary

The second International Conference of the year, organized online via Zoom on February 25, 2025, by UNAFRI, brought together a panel of experts, academics, magistrates, and justice sector actors to discuss the issue of child recruitment and exploitation by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

The discussions provided an overview of this threat across several African sub-regions (West Africa, Central Africa, and the Arab Maghreb) and assessed state responses, particularly judicial mechanisms and preventive measures. Emphasis was placed on the implementation of international conventions and the need for better care for children who are victims, witnesses, or accused within national judicial systems.

The thematic debates highlighted that, in all circumstances, the best interests of the child must be safeguarded whenever they face justice. It is crucial to avoid secondary victimization by the judicial system of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

The seriousness of terrorism-related offenses should not lead states to adopt measures that compromise children's rights. On the contrary, child protection mechanisms should be implemented at all stages investigation, judicial proceedings, trial, and even within penitentiary institutions when a child is ultimately subjected to a restrictive measure of liberty. Such measures should, however, be considered only as a last resort, in the best interest of the child or public security.

Non-custodial measures should be prioritized to facilitate the social reintegration of the child and prevent stigmatization. These measures must be supported by reintegration programs tailored to the specific needs of each case.

Thanks to the active participation of attendees and the rich exchanges among experts, this conference was a great success, contributing to a better understanding of the challenges and the identification of concrete solutions to combat the recruitment and exploitation of children by terrorist and violent extremist groups.



UNAFRI JOINS URSB NETWORKING AND INNOVATION FACILITATION BREAKFAST



Among the distinguished guests were the Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Nobert Mao; the state minister for Foreign Affairs in Charge of International Cooperation, Hon. Okello Henry Oryem; the Chairman of the Board of Directors of URSB, Rt Hon. Amb Francis K. Butagira; and the Registrar General, Ms. Mercy K. Kainobwiso. Also in attendance were ambassadors, heads of missions, honorary consuls, and other prominent dignitaries.

The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) participated in a high-level networking and innovation facilitation breakfast meeting hosted by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) on March 13, 2025. The event, held at the Uganda Business Facilitation Center in Kololo, was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda. It brought together diplomatic missions, international organizations, and consuls to explore opportunities for business innovation and investment in Uganda.

Among the distinguished guests were the Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Nobert Mao; the state minister for Foreign

Affairs in Charge of International Cooperation, Hon. Okello Henry Oryem; the Chairman of the Board of Directors of URSB, Rt Hon. Amb Francis K. Butagira; and the Registrar General, Ms. Mercy K. Kainobwiso. Also in attendance were ambassadors, heads of missions, honorary consuls, and other prominent dignitaries.

During his remarks, Hon. Nobert Mao emphasized Uganda's strategic positioning as a prime destination for business in Africa. He highlighted the importance of educating diplomats about the one-stop center at URSB and encouraged them to promote Uganda as a viable business hub among their nationals.

Key initiatives highlighted at the event included:

- The establishment of a one-stop center at

URSB to simplify business registration processes.

- Enhancements in the legal and regulatory framework to support innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Opportunities for foreign investors to engage with Uganda's expanding market.
- Recent advancements in infrastructure and digital services aimed at easing business operations.

The breakfast meeting served as an important platform for fostering international collaboration, sharing insights, and strengthening relationships to drive economic growth. Representing UNAFRI's Director General at the event was the Deputy Director General, underscoring the institute's commitment to supporting initiatives that contribute to economic development and crime prevention across Africa.

UNAFRI'S PARTICIPATION IN THE UN WORKSHOP FOR THE 2024 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND THE RESULTS FORMULATION FOR THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 2026 -2030



INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Office in Uganda carried out a major Workshop lasted from the 4th to 6th March 2025, for reviewing the country's performance in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Cooperation Framework for the year 2024, and as well for enabling the results formulation for the Cooperation Framework in the year 2026 to 2030 period.

The UN Workshop aimed at evaluating and assessing the needs and progress on the country's United Nations strategic priorities, outcomes, outputs and potential changes. The Workshop provided a forum for identifying and analysing emerging priorities for the UN contributions to the national goals and objectives of Uganda, in terms of consolidated partnership with the key stakeholders, i.e., the government, civil society organisations and the development partners.

UNAFRI PARTICIPATION AND THE WORKSHOP AGENDA

UNAFRI was amongst the stakeholders invited to the UN Workshop, and it was represented by the Director of Training and Programmes, Dr. Ahmed Linga, on behalf of the Director-General. The UN Country Team (UNCT) engaged various stakeholders ranging from the entities of the UN family, governmental, non-governmental and civil society organizations to participate in the development of a new Cooperation Framework for the next five years (2026-2030) whilst hailing the milestones completed towards the year 2025. According to UNCT, notable milestones include: Cooperation Framework design roadmap, 2021-2025 Cooperation Framework evaluation, the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the Strategic Prioritization exercises.

2024 Annual Performance Review

The Workshop commenced with the common under-



Dr Ahmed Linga - UNAFRI's Director of Training and Programmes at the workshop.

standing by the representative Results Groups (RGs) on the expectations of the review and the achievement of the expected results. On Day One, the RGs (which constituted various UN agencies functioning in Uganda) presented what they had documented as results from their annual programme activities. Post the RGs' presentations of key results, the feedback was provided focusing on the consolidation and review of the results, resources and lessons learned by the RGs.

Cooperation Framework 2026-2030 Results Formulation

The Cooperation Framework 2026-2030 Results Formulation was initiated on Day Two and ended on Day Three of the Workshop, respectively. Several breakout groups were created amongst the RGs for reviewing issues and defining possible outcomes. The formed groups were aligned with certain strategic pillars, and the participants critically reviewed the respective issue papers, identifying key challenges and opportunities.

The Results Groups 1 comprised of UN-related entities such as UN Women, UNDP, UNAFRI, ILO, IOM, UNCDF, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA and WHO, which focused on reviewing the 2026-2030 Cooperation Framework Results Formulation for several Strategic Priorities. UNAFRI participated in the review and discussion of Strategic Priority 3, which focused on the theme: "Integrated, Inclusive and Rights-based Governance for Transformative Development".

The abovementioned Strategic Priority 3 aligns with the UNAFRI's regional mandate in crime prevention for the broader sustainable peace and security goal. The results formulation touched upon the significant 2026-2030 expected outcomes in key topics such as 'good governance systems and sustainable peace for all people, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized groups' and 'Crime prevention and justice system for a safer and more just society'.

CONCLUSION

The United Nations African Institute for the Pre-

vention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders commends the United Nations Office in Uganda for engaging key development partners in a forum to assess the progress, challenges and prospects of UN support in Uganda. The recent Workshop enabled the review and discussion of issues at the core of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation

Framework that ensures United Nations work aligns with the national development priorities of Uganda. In the Workshop, several achievements and challenges were evaluated under the 2021-2025 Cooperation Framework, and a crucial step was taken to design the subsequent 2026-2030 Cooperation Framework.

UNAFRI OFFICIALS MEET THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE OF TANZANIA AT SERENA HOTEL, KAMPALA



From left is Commissioner for Financial Sector Development in the Ministry of Finance of Tanzania, Dr. Charles A. Mwamwaja, the Minister for Finance of Tanzania, Honourable Dr. Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba Madalu (MP), Mr. Munanura Andrew Karokora, the Deputy Director-General of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) and the Director of Training and Programmes of UNAFRI, Dr. Ahmed Linga.

On the 14th of March 2025, the Minister for Finance of Tanzania, Honourable Dr. Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba Madalu (MP), met with UNAFRI officials led by Mr. Munanura Andrew Karokora, the Deputy Director-General of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime

and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) in Kampala, Uganda.

The Deputy Director-General briefed the Minister on UNAFRI's mission, emphasizing its pivotal role in combatting crime across the region and the African continent. He highlighted how the

Institute serves as a crucial platform for member states to address and amplify issues affecting the criminal justice system in Africa.

Mr. Karokora expressed his gratitude to the Tanzanian government for its unwavering financial support through the regular payment of its annual assessed financial contribution. This financial commitment has been instrumental in ensuring that UNAFRI can continue its vital work. Additionally, he acknowledged Tanzania's active participation in UNAFRI's training activities and workshops, which have significantly contributed to capacity building and knowledge sharing among member states.

During the meeting, the Deputy Director also praised Tanzania's engagement during the last UNAFRI Governing Board meeting held in Addis Ababa in October 2023. He noted that Tanzania's contributions during the session were invaluable in shaping the institute's strategic direction. The discussions at the meeting underscored the importance of collaboration among African nations to address shared challenges in the criminal justice sector.

Furthermore, the Deputy Director-General outlined specific areas where UNAFRI and Tanzania could strengthen their partnership. These included enhancing data collection and analysis for crime prevention, developing community-based rehabilitation programs, and fostering international cooperation to tackle transnational crime.



He emphasized the importance of leveraging technology and innovative approaches to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal justice systems.

Dr. Nchemba reiterated Tanzania's commitment to supporting UNAFRI's initiatives and expressed his enthusiasm for exploring new avenues of collaboration. He underscored the significance of a coordinated regional approach to address crime and ensure the safety and well-being of African citizens.

The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to continue their dialogue and cooperation, with a focus on achieving tangible results in the fight against crime and improving criminal justice systems across Africa. The meeting was also attended by the Commissioner for Financial Sector Development in the Ministry of Finance of Tanzania, Dr. Charles A. Mwamwaja and the Director of Training and Programmes of UNAFRI, Dr. Ahmed Linga.

CAMEROON: THE TERRORIST SECT BOKO HARAM TAKES THE LIVES OF TWELVE SOLDIERS



The Multinational Joint Task Force operates within the authorized AU Peace and Security Council mandate to eliminate Boko Haram source : <https://mnjtfmm.org/>

During the night of March 24 to 25, 2025, 12 Cameroonian soldiers lost their lives in northeastern Nigeria near the border with Cameroon while conducting operations to track down Boko Haram terrorists. These soldiers were part of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) deployed in Wouglo, Nigeria, an area covered by Sector 3 of this multinational force.

According to military sources, a heavily armed group of terrorists, traveling in several vehicles, launched an assault on the MNJTF's mixed post. The Cameroonian toll stands at 12 soldiers killed, whose bodies were repatriated to the hospital in Maroua, and around ten wounded soldiers, all evacuated to an Hospital in N'Djamena, Chad. It has also been reported that several terrorists were neutralized.

The U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé has condemned this barbaric attack by Boko Haram against the Cameroonian army and expressed solidarity with the grieving Cameroonian people.



It is worth recalling that in October 2024, the same terrorist sect also inflicted heavy losses on the Chadian army. Around forty Chadian soldiers lost their lives during a Boko Haram assault near the Nigerian border.

The March 24, 2025, attack once again demonstrates that the Boko Haram terrorist sect is gaining strength despite the efforts of countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Benin, Nigeria, and other neighbouring nations to contain it.

The MNJTF was established in 2015 to provide a comprehensive response to the global threat of terrorism in Central and West Africa. Jihadism has been on the rise since 2011 following NATO's destruction of Libya under false pretences. Today, African countries are paying the price for the irresponsibility of Western nations. These countries should acknowledge their mistake and equip the nations of the sub-region with adequate military resources to effectively combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The necessary support should align with the Kyoto Declaration, one of whose pillars calls on states to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The objective is to strengthen cooperation at the international, regional, and sub-regional levels to prevent and combat all acts, methods, and practices of terrorism, particularly by reinforcing the rule of law and ensuring that states implement international conventions against terrorism.

UNAFRI extends its sincere condolences to the families of the soldiers who fell in battle and wishes a speedy recovery to the wounded soldiers. The Institute also urges the Cameroonian state to provide unwavering support to the victims and their families to continue boosting the morale of compatriots sent on various anti-terrorist missions.



Photo credit: Institute for International Political Studies, Italian think tank at www.ispionline.it