



31st Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF31)
23-26 November 2023, Manila

RESOLUTION ON COMBATting TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES

Sponsored by Malaysia, Canada, Russian Federation, Japan, and Philippines

We, the parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF), gathering in Manila, Republic of the Philippines for the 31st Annual Meeting of the APPF under the theme "Resilient Partnerships for Peace, Prosperity, and Sustainability":

Recognizing the worldwide proliferation of drugs, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, money laundering, piracy and armed robbery against ships, and illicit trade in small arms and light weapon and cybercrimes, collectively known as transnational crimes that have continuously endangered global peace and security;

Recalling the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), also known as the "Palermo Convention," and its protocols: (1) The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, (2) The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, and (3) The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances; the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions;

Recalling also the biennial United Nations General Assembly Resolutions under the agenda "Advancement of Women on Violence against Women Migrant Workers" and "Trafficking in Women and Girls" and previously adopted APPF resolutions focusing on combatting terrorism and transnational crimes;

Mindful of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 which targets prevention and treatment of substance abuse and SDG 8 which calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate human trafficking;

Welcoming the Bali Process and repeated holding of ministerial meetings based on the Process, and the continuation of the voluntary, inclusive, and non-binding forum for policy dialogue, information-sharing, and capacity building, as an international cooperation on trafficking in persons;

Welcoming also regional cooperation to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons, including through the Roadmap to Address Transnational Organized Crime and Trafficking in Persons Associated with Casinos and Scam Operations in Southeast Asia agreed between ASEAN Member States and the People's Republic of China, and **desiring** to further enhance such regional cooperation in other areas;

Acknowledging that transnational organized crime has become increasingly coordinated, high-tech and aggressive on an international level; radical terrorist organizations and extremist groups are merging with transnational organized crime; and millions in revenues from criminal activity are directed for international criminality purposes and become the financial support for terrorist structures;

Deeply concerned over the persistent existence of drug trafficking and human trafficking networks and the exploitation of advanced technology and the speed, convenience, and anonymity of the internet to find novel ways to subvert the criminal justice system, reach a more comprehensive array of victims, and influence impressionable young individuals across nations and borders;

Observing that cybercrimes encompass malicious attacks on critical infrastructure, breaches of privacy, the creation and use of malware and ransomware, extremist indoctrination, hate crimes, money laundering, online and commercial sexual exploitation and the targeting of vulnerable populations, including seniors, women, children, youth, people with disabilities, racialized communities and Indigenous peoples;

Drawing attention to the United Nations' cyber-related work, including the Security Council's June 2021 inaugural formal meeting on cyber threats, multiple General Assembly resolutions adopted regarding ICT developments in the context of international security, and the establishment of intergovernmental processes, notably the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing responsible State behavior in cyberspace in the context of international security, the Open-ended Working Group in the Field of Information Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, and the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes;

Recalling the Inter-Parliamentary Union's adoption in 2023 of a resolution entitled "Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security", and of debates about cybersecurity and cyber threats at various other interparliamentary meetings;

Acknowledging that many countries have developed national strategies, adopted legislation, and fostered international cooperation designed to address cybercrimes and the malicious use of cyberspace, but that the development of legal and policy instruments has not kept pace with the evolving threats presented by such crimes;

Emphasizing the importance of preserving the leading role of the UN in coordination of international efforts on combatting transnational organized crime and international terrorism;

Stressing the value of multidisciplinary professional cooperation and the necessity of facilitating the formal and, to the extent permitted under domestic law, non-formal exchange of information, and communication necessary to prevent and combat crime through the support of intergovernmental organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL);

Acknowledging the importance of resilient partnership among states achieved through open, unrestricted dialogue and trust among parliamentarians in combatting transnational crimes and addressing the threats and cross-cutting challenges posed by these crimes to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of the people in the region;

Underscoring that legislatures and legislators have a role to play in national, regional and international actions designed to combat transnational crimes, including cybercrimes;

Recognizing the current global situation where crime cases of organ trafficking and trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal with the involvement of brokers and international crime organization are suspected, **strongly criticizing** the illegal and unethical acts that tarnish with money the great medical accomplishment of organ transplantation, and **noting with great concern** that the accurate scale of such crime is unclear due to reasons such as hesitation to report among victims who are exploited because of poverty or other social or economic vulnerability, or the lack of specialized countermeasures; and

Noting the Declaration of Istanbul on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism (2018 Edition) that upholds such principles as that countries should strive to achieve self-sufficiency in organ donation and transplantation, trafficking in human organs and trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal should be prohibited and criminalized, organ donation should be a financially neutral act, and governments and health professionals should implement strategies to discourage and prevent the residents of their country from engaging in transplant tourism;

RESOLVE TO:

1. **Affirm** the importance of human rights and need to take domestic, regional, and international actions designed to combat all types of transnational crimes, including cybercrimes and trafficking in persons, while respecting state sovereignty and freedoms;
2. **Encourage** all Member Parliaments to enhance their commitment in proactively combatting transnational organized crimes, with a specific focus on underlying causes such as poverty, corruption, and poor governance, as well as addressing demand factors;
3. **Call upon** Member Parliaments to pass pieces of legislation considering existing regional and international legal conventions on terrorism and

transnational organized crime to effectively close any potential loopholes in legislation across different countries;

4. **Promote** cooperative approaches to combat the growing number and complexity of transnational crimes, and to address their negative consequences for citizens' safety and well-being, for national and international peace and security, and for democratic processes and institutions;
5. **Appeal to** APPF Member States to actively use parliamentary diplomacy to facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy for combatting transnational crime and to **work towards** the development or strengthening of mechanisms for enhanced cross-border coordination and efficient information-sharing with law enforcement agencies, intelligence communities, and judicial authorities in other countries in the region and international partners;
6. **Call upon** the APPF Member States to strengthen the international efforts in combatting the pressing criminal challenges and threats, taking into account the central coordinating role of the UN, observing the principles of international law, and based on equality and mutual respect;
7. **Focus on** the search for efficient methods for strengthening international cooperation in combatting transnational organized crime, including cooperation in extradition and mutual legal assistance in criminal cases both through the legal framework and through ensuring professional, honest, and responsible interaction between law enforcement agencies;
8. **Call upon** all states to adopt efficient and effective mechanisms for seizure and confiscation of income from criminal activity within the framework of their national legislation systems and to strengthen international cooperation to ensure the efficient and fast return of the funds and valuables to their legitimate owners;
9. **Consider** the possibility of establishing a regular dialogue mechanism concerning the issues of joint counteraction against threats with involvement of interested states and international organizations in addition to the existing international formats of combatting the challenges of transnational organized crime, international terrorism, and drug trafficking in the region;
10. **Continue** developing a comprehensive, integrated legal base for practical cooperation among law enforcement agencies of Asia-Pacific countries in different fields of combat against transnational crimes;
11. **Advocate** for scientific evidence-based policies and programs in combatting illicit drugs, with utmost priority on holistic approaches that give equal attention to demand and supply reduction, and the rehabilitation and reintegration to society of substance abuse victims;

12. **Request** the APPF Member Parliaments to fully exercise their investigative and scrutiny power to understand the actual situation of organ trafficking and trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal;
13. **Request** the APPF member states to further inform and enlighten citizens on organ transplantation based on the international principle that countries should strive to achieve self-sufficiency in organ donation and transplantation, as well as to reinforce cooperation with relevant academic societies and relevant organizations in the medical field in each country;
14. **Commend** the work of the United Nations and other international organizations aimed at addressing the malicious use of ICT in domestic, regional and international contexts;
15. **Confirm** that one of the priorities is enhancing cooperation between the APPF Member States in combatting disinformation and the use of ICT for criminal purposes;
16. **Promote** a whole-of-society approach to prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism and **support** the development and enforcement of effective legal, regulatory, and administrative counter-terrorism frameworks;
17. **Urge** the states to conduct a systematic and periodic review of national legislation and policy frameworks to ensure that their provisions and design adequately address cyber threats as they evolve and lead to meaningful reductions in cybercrime;
18. **Enhance** protections for vulnerable populations in cyberspace, including but not limited to seniors, women, children, youth, people with disabilities, racialized communities and indigenous peoples;
19. **Provide** the financial and other resources needed for national cybersecurity centers, infrastructure and other tools needed to protect citizens in cyberspace, as well as for the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cybercrimes;
20. **Request** the APPF Member States to further reinforce technical support and support for human resource development through industry-government-academia cooperation and public-private cooperation, in order to utilize specialized knowledge at all levels, as a part of support for the capacity building of law enforcement institutions to address crimes that are becoming increasingly complex and advanced, such as cybercrime;
21. **Encourage** APPF Member States to accede, ratify, and implement relevant international law to combat transnational crime and develop appropriate regulatory procedures to prevent any criminal activity within their jurisdictions and its spillover to others; and

22. **Recognize** APPF as an essential platform to forge resilient partnerships among states through meaningful dialogues and exchange of best practices in curbing transnational crimes in the region.