

UNODC inputs to the SG report on Oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to

[A/RES/77/248](#)

The present contribution showcases the work carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) between June 2022 and June 2023 to support Member States in

(UNCLOS) and case scenarios as part of the Visit, Board Search, Seizure (VBSS) training programmes to Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) officers to apply the knowledge of what has been taught to real case situations in maritime interdictions in several maritime training centres in May, June and November 2022. UNODC has mapped academic and law enforcement institutions from **Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka** for the potential establishment of the law of the sea and maritime crime curricula in the academic institutions of these three countries. The work related to curriculum development commenced in June 2022 and was completed in January 2023.

Though Law of the Sea remains a discipline in most universities, it is rarely connected with law enforcement and prosecution offices and judicial authorities. This initiative aims at reinforcing sustainable capacities to enforce the law on the maritime domain in critical academic institutions to develop curricula that could remain in the long and medium terms as national means to sustain capacities of the criminal justice practitioners, and on the other side to connect criminal justice and academic institutions providing students selected by governmental agencies as much as regular academic students.

During the reporting period, UNODC provided various practical and tactical training for MLE officers from eleven countries in the **Western Indian Ocean region and Pakistan**. Through its maritime training centres in Seychelles and South Africa, UNODC delivered a series of VBSS training, including courses on the smuggling of migrants and the safety of life at sea, as well as on Pier-side Vessel Search Techniques. UNODC also provided Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) courses for Member States as well as the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre in the region to enhance the ability to detect illicit activity at sea. In support of the regional MLE Exercise Cutlass Express 2023, UNODC provided training on UNCLOS to MLE or MDA personnel from around the Indian Ocean region prior to their participation in the

In the **Indian Ocean East region**, UNODC conducted several VBSS courses in **Maldives, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka** for Marine Police, Coast Guard, Customs and Navy to build capacities of maritime law enforcement officers including Pier-side Vessel Search, VBSS, Seamanship and Coxswain courses.

In cooperation with Detection and Deterrence (NSDD), UNODC facilitated a VBSS course focused on countering smuggling of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) components for law enforcement officers from **Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania** in Seychelles from 29 March to 18 April 2023. Complementing UNODC standard curriculum, NSDD experts also integrated training on search methods using various nuclear and radiological detection equipment, including personal radiation detectors and radioisotope identification devices.

In the Mediterranean, UNODC has conducted an inter-agency workshop on strengthening criminal justice response in countering illegal maritime pollution at sea in **Tunisia** in February 2023 and is preparing for the next one in **Morocco** in July 2023.

In **Lebanon**, UNODC has strengthened the capacities of VBSS teams through the provision of IT equipment, diving equipment, drones in January 2023 . Maritime domain awareness, search and rescue, VBSS and anti-corruption trainings were delivered to the Lebanese Armed Forces Navy in November 2022. The Office has also developed awareness, technical knowledge and inter-agency cooperation to respond to the trafficking and movement of hazardous materials through maritime routes in Lebanon in February 2023.

Specialized training of VBSS with underwater drones was conducted to Lebanese Armed Forces from September to October 2022. In **Algeria**, UNODC will deliver training on all types of smuggling including the trafficking of chemical, biological, radiological and and

UNODC continued to implement the

the five-day forum, the prosecutors conducted a Joint Intelligence exercise in collaboration with the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center (RMIFC) and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) which provided an opportunity to discuss legal hindrances they must overcome both at the national and regional levels to increase the likelihood of successful prosecutions.

During the reporting period, UNODC released a series of publications related to the latest research findings on manufacture, trafficking and consumption of drugs. These include the [World Drug Report 2022](#), the [Global Report on Cocaine 2023 – Local dynamics, global challenges](#), and the [2022 Synthetic Drugs in East and Southeast Asia: Latest Developments and Challenges](#) report. Data on drug seizures at seaports, reveal that worldwide maritime routes remain common routes to smuggle drugs across countries and regions. For example:

- Individual drug seizures suggest growing cocaine trafficking at sea. The share of cocaine quantities seized associated with maritime trafficking has increased from 84 per cent in 2015-2018 to 89 per cent in 2021 with a drop in 2020 when trafficking of cocaine by private aircrafts increased notably in **Latin America** to overcome COVID-19 restriction measures.¹

Important departure points for shipping cocaine out of **South America** by sea include the Pacific seaports of Buenaventura, Colombia, and Guayaquil, Ecuador,

trafficking routes along the Andaman Sea and through the Malacca Strait towards Malaysia, Indonesia, and beyond being still used in 2021.⁴

*Pursuant to **OP 165**, which “Notes with grave concern the recent proliferation of, and endangerment of lives through, the smuggling of migrants by sea, underscores the necessity to address such situations in accordance with applicable international law, and encourages States, acting nationally or through relevant global or regional organizations, as appropriate, to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to flag, port and coastal States, upon request, to enhance their capabilities to prevent smuggling of migrants and human trafficking by sea”*

The UNODC [Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants](#) conducts policy-relevant research on migrant smuggling along sea and land routes, providing up-to-date research and analysis on migrant smugglers profiles and modus operandi, routes and modes of transport used, and abuses of the human rights of smuggled migrants and refugees, including deaths at sea. Migrant smuggling analyses available on the Observatory website cover the **Central Mediterranean, Western Mediterranean and Northwest African (Atlantic) seas** smuggling routes. Currently, data collection and research on migrant smuggling along sea and land routes in Southeast Asia is being conducted, covering **Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand**.

*Pursuant to **OP 189**, which*

abandoned containers during mentorships under this project and 15,596 kg of used batteries were seized.