FORUM: General Assembly

QUESTION OF: Measures to Combat Organized Crime and Economic Corruption in Latin America

MAIN SUBMITTER: Costa Rica

CO-SUBMITTERS: Japan, Chile, Indonesia, Canada, Russian Federation, Germany, Angola, Republic of Korea, Peru, Egypt, Spain.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

Aware of the fact that Latin America has only nine percent of the world's population but accounts for nearly one-third of its homicides,

Deeply Concerned that organized criminal groups weaken democracy by collecting illegal "taxes" and influencing government officials in territories they control,

Alarmed by the assassination of Ecuadorian presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio in 2023, only days before the election,

Recognizing that weak prisons, police, and courts, along with impunity, let criminal groups grow and spread to other countries,

Emphasizing that many young people join criminal groups because there are few legal jobs,

Noting that the Shield of the Americas summit in March 2026 is criticized for not giving sufficient long-term plans for funding and burden sharing,

Recalling the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),

1. Calls for improved collaboration between the police and courts of Latin American states to bridge loopholes exploited by criminal gangs when trafficking drugs, money, and persons across borders through ways such as but not limited to:

a) Supporting Joint Investigation Teams, where police and prosecutors from different Member States work on the same case and share:
    i. Information about drug smuggling, human smuggling, and illegal mining operations, such as their travelling routes and crime locations,
    ii. Information about money laundering done through cryptocurrencies and shell companies to trace a transaction through various banks and nations rather than just stopping at the first one,
b) Expanding Mutual Legal Assistance agreements so courts in different countries can help each other with less waiting and paperwork, by:
    i. Providing timely response to requests for evidence in a stipulated period, to prevent the witness from disappearing and destruction of the documents while the request awaits attention,
    ii. Returning transnational criminals to the nation where they will be prosecuted provided that the person is assured a fair trial,
c) Reducing the financial gains made from crimes through asset forfeiture and frequent inspection by:
    i. Determining, securing and confiscating funds, real estate, assets, and businesses that were obtained through illegal acts and allocating their worth to support victims and community members that have been affected by gangs,
    ii. Holding annual conferences in different Member States, where each state gives its successes, failures and way forward;

2. Urges the development of improved police and prison systems backed up by the UNODC, so that criminal networks are no longer protected from prosecution, while ensuring that all security measures are consistent with human rights, through ways such as but not limited to:
    a) Training officials at both the national and local levels in a manner that will enable them to work safely, objectively and impartially through:

i. Training the police officers on how to deal with threatening situations without employing excessive force,

ii. Training the judges, prosecutors and government officials on how to detect corruption cases and apply international standards, developing codes of ethics for municipalities,

b) Protecting judges, prosecutors and witnesses who take real risks to fight organized crime, by:

i. Assessing the provision of appropriate protection measures, like employing security staff, using secured court premises, and the emergency hotline system,

ii. Allowing witnesses to testify via video conferencing or anonymously, as well as the sharing of experts on protection and accommodation among Member States in the most severe cases,

c) Reforming the prison system and restoring public faith in the police and the judiciary, by:

i. Training and monitoring prison staff and offering rehabilitation programs, so criminal groups cannot run crimes from inside and prisons do not become places to recruit new members,

ii. Setting up independent mechanisms for the police and judiciary, and conducting more transparent investigations in order for citizens to see that the law is applied equally to all;

3. Calls upon governments in Latin America to prevent and deal with corruption within the state to ensure that no criminal gangs bribe and gain influence through public officials, through ways such as but not limited to:

a) Setting up independent anti-corruption institutions and a Latin America Anti-Corruption League made up of Latin American states, which would:

i. Investigate local officials suspected of bribery, using proper legal procedures and respecting their right to defend themselves,

ii. Share best practices, write model anti-corruption laws that Member States can adopt, and regularly check how public money moves to find suspicious spending early,

b) Increasing the transparency of government actions to allow citizens to know how their money is spent, by:

i. Making all governmental bodies disclose their budget and financial accounts annually,

ii. Making public tenders accessible to citizens and published on public websites, in order to combat bribery and corrupt actions,

c) Encouraging citizens and law-abiding officers to work for the sake of the cleanliness of the state, through:

i. Providing safe telephone lines allowing citizens to make anonymous reports on corruption cases, and protecting those making such reports from any forms of retribution,

ii. Checking the backgrounds of people applying to become policemen to keep criminals out, and cooperation between communities and authorities to combat organized crime;

4. Further encourages economic growth in regions where illicit economies prevail to provide youth with an alternative to the money, safety, and prestige offered by criminal gangs and denied by the state, through ways such as but not limited to:

a) Helping informal sector workers, such as street hawkers and petty traders, to join the formal economy and gain legal cover and regular income, by:

i. Giving financial support such as microloans, mobile banking and savings programs, including low-interest loans for local farmers and small business owners,

ii. Making registration simple, cheap and fast, and giving access to social protection such as health insurance,

b) Providing legal alternatives to youths and other recruits of criminal organizations by:

i. Opening vocational schools and employment training institutions in the areas that suffer from the high rate of crimes and have little state presence, and organizing after-school activities such as sports and arts activities along with the local government and UNODC,

ii. Developing the formal economy with incentives for local businesses and construction of infrastructure projects like roads, schools and other public institutions in the areas previously controlled by criminal organizations;

5. Recommends the setting up of independent electoral bodies in member states that will monitor elections and campaign financing in order to shield politics from criminal elements and corrupt funding in addition to maintaining citizens' confidence in the democratic process, through ways such as but not limited to:

   a) Making steps to ensure campaign finance transparency so that voters know who is funding each individual candidate:

      i. Disclosing all campaign contributions prior to and after each election,

      ii. Prohibiting donations from criminals or anonymous contributors,

   b) Making elections safer through:

      i. Ensuring the safety of candidates and journalists in politics from violence and threats before, during, and after elections, particularly where criminals have a strong presence, and limiting online threats and hate speech toward candidates,

      ii. Campaigns within areas controlled by criminals on the interference of criminals in the political process and activities that make participation in the election process safe for citizens;

6. Invites developed countries and international organizations to bear the cost of combating organized crime in order to assist Latin American countries which lack the means to do so by themselves and to cut funding to criminal organizations by decreasing the demand

for drugs, gold, and illegal migration in other areas through ways such as but not limited to:

a) Creating a regional voluntary fund for security and development which member states can access equitably and transparently, by:
    i. Collecting funds from developed countries and international financial institutions,
    ii. Spending the money on judicial cooperation, prison reform and youth employment, with a public yearly report that shows where every dollar went,

b) Using the support of developed countries and international organizations to improve the response to transnational crimes, through:
    i. Funding the effective implementation of the UNTOC by helping Member States collect data in a transparent and standardized manner, and involving communities and non-state actors in evaluating its effectiveness,
    ii. Supporting awareness campaigns in consuming countries, together with financial and customs cooperation, to reduce the global demand for drugs and gold that provides income to criminal organizations.