

**Speech at the International Conference against  
Terrorism  
of the Special Services, Security Agencies and Law Enforcement  
Organizations**

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**A challenge for an efficient inter-agency cooperation:  
The links between Terrorism and Transnational Organized  
Crime,**

**By**

*Ambassador. Jean-Paul Laborde  
Roving Ambassador, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean,  
Special Advisor, Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime  
Director, CELT*

Few weeks ago, on 26 September 2018, the World Atlas on the Illicit Flows issued by the Global Initiative against Organized Crime (GI), Interpol and the Norwegian Centre for Global Analyses was launched in New-York on the margins of the Special High-Level Session of the United Nations General Assembly Session. This week, it will also be presented by the Director of Operations of GI during a session of the United Nations Security Council. Here, today, during this international conference of the Special Services, Security Agencies and Law Enforcement Organizations, I would like to report to you on that issue, based on my experience as Ambassador of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, GI Special Advisor and Director of the Centre of Expertise on Counter terrorism. Actually, I detected many times that it does seem that a solid cooperation among the various types of agencies should be increased in order to maximize our impact against terrorism. Working in silos is unfortunately too frequent, special services and security agencies working on terrorism, on one hand, while law enforcement agencies are more oriented and specialized to work against transnational organized crime, on the other hand.

In this context, why the Atlas is so important for us?

-first, because, it provides the international community, with factual elements concerning links not only between terrorism but also more broadly between conflicts and transnational organized crime, a matter which is so important for all of us;

-second, it gives also a real sense of the huge magnitude of all trafficking activities in its different forms and its support for conflicts and terrorist organizations; quoting few figures offered by the Atlas, can give us the sense of our challenge. *Environmental crimes encompassing not just wild- life crime but fuel and mining of gold, diamonds and minerals, has grown to become the largest single source of income to non-state armed groups and terrorism through taxation schemes. Combined environmental crimes including through sale or taxation of natural resources represent 38%, drugs 28%, other taxation, extortion, confiscations, looting 26%, and external donations 3%, and kidnaps 3%, of the finance in conflicts and non-state armed groups including terrorist groups. An estimated 40,000 Taliban make an estimated annual income of USD 75-95 million from taxation, particularly of drugs, land and agricultural produce, as well as donations from abroad. Islamic State in mid 2017 made an estimated USD 10m per month,<sup>3</sup> and today with dramatic losses of territory probably no more than a quarter of this, for a total of USD 6-24m largely from confiscations and taxation, where half is spending of reserves. This is 98% down from their high of USD 549-1,693 million in 2014. The new Al Qaeda mergers the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria and the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in Sahel make an estimated USD 18-35 and 5-35 million USD respectively, on taxation, donations, kidnap for ransom, extortion, smuggling of counterfeit cigarettes, drugs and illegal taxation.*

*Al Shabaab makes an estimated USD 20 million, where half is from the illicit charcoal trade and the rest on other taxation,<sup>5</sup> and Boko Haram an estimated USD 5-10 million mainly from taxations, bank robberies, donations from other terrorist groups, and kidnappings for ransom.*

-third, it also informs our services about the concrete support of environmental crimes to conflicts and terrorist organizations. In particular, it should be stressed that *“armed groups in eastern DRC which retain only around two percent - equivalent to USD 13.2 million per an- of the net profits from illegal smuggling”*. However, *“this income represents the basic subsistence cost for at least 8,000 armed fighters per year and enables defeated or disarmed groups to continuously to resurface and destabilize the region. Revenue from illegal natural resources exploitation finances a high number of well over 25 armed groups (up to 49 according to some estimates) continuing to destabilize eastern DRC. While the armed groups have their own proven survival strategies, transnational organized crime networks might try to “divide and rule” armed groups in eastern DRC to prevent any single armed group from achieving a dominant role and potentially interfering with illegal exploitation rackets run by transnational criminal networks”*.

In addition, in a report on the situation in Mozambique, the Global Initiative has provided clear evidences the links between those TOC activities and terrorism; according to this report, networks of powerful, politically connected criminal actors have created an enabling environment for an Islamic insurgency in Northern Mozambique that is terrorizing local communities and threatening the country’s stability. For example, in that report, the Global Initiative against TOC mentioned that *“Aside from any ideological and sociological factors driving the group, Al-Sunna has capitalized on the ease with which illegal activities can be conducted on this stretch of the East African coast. Underlining this point, we have also been told that the group is using camps and routes that have long been used by organized-crime syndicates in Cabo Delgado to evade authorities”*.

The new World Atlas of Illicit Flows could, indeed, also constitute a solid basis for further thinking on how financing of terrorism is based on those illicit markets, which is a core action to defeat terrorism.

Furthermore, as the chair of the Cyber Security Unit, in the Military School Research Centre, I have really to underline the fact that cyber-crime which is now one of the key pillars of transnational organized crime is also a terrible threat for the stability of our societies and a possible source or vector of financing of terrorism.

To be absolutely clear on those links and their financial aspects, we should, also, look into the conceptual approach of those links. Actually, there should be described as objective links. Indeed, at the conceptual and legal levels, there is a distinction between the ultimate goals between terrorist organizations and organized criminal groups. According to definitions of terrorist acts encapsulated in the United Nations Sectorial Conventions against terrorism such as, for example, the Convention against Financing of Terrorism or the Terrorism Bombing Convention, the specific intentional element of terrorism is to terrorize the general population or to coerce a government to do or not to do something. At the same time, the intentional element of an organized criminal group is to obtain a financial or other material benefit. However, at a certain point in time, it happens that an organized criminal group sells arms to terrorist organizations or even more, a terrorist organization may not hesitate to become an organized criminal group in order to get appropriate resources to support its structure and commit its terrorist attacks. This is what we see with the evidences collected in the Atlas. In such a situation, we should never forget that the Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) Convention would be applicable to such terrorist organization which de facto and de jure, has become an organized criminal group in addition to be at the same time a terrorist organization.

This is the reason, the introduction of the Analysis of UN Security Council Resolutions on Organized crime and its role in Contemporary

Conflicts by the Global Initiative against TOC, is absolutely crucial. That analysis constitutes an excellent measurement toll for the Council in terms of the measurement of those links since it stresses, inter alia, that *each year from 2012 to 2017, more than 60% of the resolutions have mandated a response to criminal flows and markets, reaching a peak in 2014 of 63.5%. It means that the Security Council, whose remit is centred on major global threats to peace and security, has so consistently concerned itself with criminal groups and markets in recent years is a remarkable trend*'.

Those two pieces of work are obviously in symbiosis with the latest Security Council Presidential Statement on those matters. (S/PRST/2018/9). In that Presidential Statement of 8 May 2018, the Council "*recalls its noted concern about the close connection between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, and, in this regard, strongly encourages Member States and relevant regional, sub-regional, and international organizations, as appropriate, to enhance cooperation and strategies to prevent terrorists from benefiting from transnational organized crime, and to build the capacity to secure their borders against and investigate and prosecute such terrorists and transnational organized criminals working with them, including through the strengthening of national, regional, and global systems to collect, analyze and exchange information, including law enforcement and intelligence information*"

Hence, after having referred to those documents, the conclusion of our analysis is that the work of the **Special Services, Security Agencies and Law Enforcement Organizations** in countering transnational organized crime and terrorism should be conceived by all of us as a collective effort. The President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, underlined this aspect of that work in his address during the No Money for Terror Conference organized by France on 25-26 April, in insisting, in particular on transparency and cooperation. That event of today provides us evidences that we would go in the right direction in doing so. We should be very consistent in our joint actions and unite the international community and people of our planet to defeat those intolerable threats.

In concluding, I would like to praise the organizers of this International Conference for the impeccable organization of the meeting and their great hospitality, especially Army General Alexandr Bortnikov, as it is always the case every year. But I am also sure that the Conference is an exceptional momentum to reinforce our joint cooperation against the links between Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime.