Concept Note

Strengthening Crime Prevention

through addressing root causes

Hosted by

Co-hosted by

Mali • African Union • Cabo Verde

International Association of Youth and Students for Peace • National Union of Nigerian Students in Austria
Pakistan Youth Organisation • International Peace Youth Group • UNODC MENA Youth Network
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Theme	Strengthening Crime Prevention through Addressing Root Causes
Objective	Strengthen the exchange between countries and civil society on crime prevention; build the foundation for coordinated, sustainable long-term cooperation.
Focus	Bridging policy frameworks with field-level implementation to strengthen sustainable prevention.
Format	Multi-stakeholder dialogue (Member States, UNODC, I/NGOs) — 60 minutes
Date & Time	4th of June 2026, 15:00 to 16:00
Venue	Vienna International Centre (VIC), UNODC, Vienna – **Room M7**
Host	HWPL — Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light
Co-Hosts	Mali • African Union • Cabo Verde • International Association of Youth and Students for Peace • National Union of Nigerian Students in Austria • Pakistan Youth Organisation • International Peace Youth Group • UNODC MENA Youth Network • AIESEC in Austria • EUth

I. Background

Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light

HWPL is a non-governmental organisation registered with the UN Department of Global Communications, holding ECOSOC consultative status since 2017. Since 2013, HWPL has implemented long-term grassroots initiatives, including Peace Education Programmes, Interfaith Harmony initiatives, and Youth and Women Empowerment programmes, across 170 countries.

At the heart of this work is an early-intervention approach: by equipping young people with values, identity, and a sense of civic belonging before vulnerabilities take hold, HWPL's peacebuilding programmes aim to prevent youth from being drawn into drug abuse, criminal networks, and cycles of violence. HWPL currently implements Peace Education and Conflict Prevention Programmes in 1,012 educational institutions across 112 countries, cooperating with national governments on every continent as well as supranational parliaments in Africa and South America.

Why this Side Event

Crime and corruption are not isolated phenomena. They are symptoms of deeper structural failures. As the Kyoto Declaration (2021) affirms, effective crime prevention requires whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that go beyond reactive enforcement to address the social, economic, and cultural conditions that enable criminal behaviour to take root.

However, implementation continues to face persistent structural challenges. Key drivers such as weak value systems and identity formation processes, limited community cohesion structures, social exclusion, and heightened youth vulnerability remain insufficiently addressed within existing interventions.

As a peacebuilding organisation with extensive field-level engagement, HWPL is committed to contributing to the bridging of these gaps. This side event will therefore bring together Member States, intergovernmental organisations, and civil society actors in a structured policy dialogue aimed at moving beyond diagnostic assessments toward substantive exchange of operational experience, mutual learning, and strengthened cross-sectoral cooperation frameworks.

> *"Corruption is an evolving global threat that does far more than undermine development – it is a key cause of declining democracy, instability, and human rights violations. The international community and every nation must make tackling corruption a top long-term priority."*
>
> **— François Valérian, Chair of Transparency International, 2025**

II. Opening Segment

Presenters: HWPL & Permanent Mission of Mali

The session opens with welcome remarks from HWPL as host organisation, followed by an address from the Permanent Mission of Mali. Mali's opening contribution reflects a deliberate choice: as a country navigating severe security challenges in the Sahel, including the rise of armed groups, cross-border trafficking, and the fragmentation of state authority, Mali exemplifies both the urgency of preventive action and the courage required to pursue it.

III. Analysis of Crime & Corruption

Before turning to country realities and concrete responses, this segment establishes the analytical foundation of the session. Drawing on UNODC strategic frameworks, the Kyoto Declaration (2021), and the UNODC Youth Forum 2026 Joint Statement, it presents a structured analysis of why crime and corruption persist despite existing policy efforts, and what a more effective prevention approach requires.

> **Root causes addressed in this session:** Lack of values and identity formation • Weak family and community structures • Social exclusion and inequality • Identity conflicts and polarisation • Online influence and normalisation of harmful behaviour

IV. Country Perspectives

Local challenges and situations

This segment provides the empirical foundation of the session. Representatives from three distinct regional contexts share their country's experience with crime, corruption, and the implementation of prevention measures, highlighting both what has been tried and where the gaps remain.

1. Permanent Mission of Cabo Verde

The General Consul of Cabo Verde offers a compelling case study in both vulnerability and resilience. As a small island state that has achieved notable governance progress while navigating persistent risks related to its position along drug trafficking routes, its experience speaks to the potential of community-based prevention and the importance of regional partnerships.

2. Delegation of Tanzania

The Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania in Vienna brings a regional perspective on the importance of community-based prevention and youth engagement as foundations for sustainable security. Its contribution highlights the role of education, inclusive dialogue, and cross-sectoral cooperation in addressing the structural drivers of crime, illustrating how investment in young people and social cohesion can help prevent violence and illicit activity before they take root.

3. Honorary Consulate of Mali - Conflicts of Interest as Drivers of Corruption and Crime

Addressing the underlying causes and consequences of corruption, crime, violence, and terrorism requires sustained discussion. Such discussion must include critical examination of institutional vulnerabilities that enable organized crime and illicit networks to operate without consequence. Corruption undermines the rule of law, thereby fostering an environment in which violence and terrorism can emerge and persist. In the absence of mutual accountability between developed and developing nations, conflicts of interest become structural determinants of corruption and insecurity.

V. Prevention Approach

What Works on the Ground

This segment moves from diagnosis to response, presenting evidence-based approaches that have demonstrated measurable community-level impact and asking how these can be scaled, replicated, and embedded within national and regional policy frameworks.

HWPL — Peace Education & Community Prevention

HWPL's contribution covers three interconnected dimensions of its global prevention work, each directly addressing the root causes identified above.

1. Peace Education Programme

HWPL's Peace Education Programme is currently active in 1,012 educational institutions across 112 countries. It equips students, educators, and community members with the values, skills, and civic awareness needed to prevent violence before it starts, directly targeting the root causes identified in the Kyoto Declaration framework.

2. Youth Empowerment Peace Class (YEPC)

The YEPC is a structured youth programme addressing vulnerability to crime and extremism through identity formation, applied skills, cross-cultural dialogue, and community service. Active in over 112 countries, it equips young people as active architects of peace, reducing exposure to harmful influences while strengthening community resilience.

> **Further information:** www.hwpl.kr

African Union

The African Union will present the continental framework for drug control and crime prevention, including ongoing efforts to address illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime. It will further highlight the structural linkages between governance, development, and security, situating Member States' national experiences within a broader regional and continental evidence-based context informed by available AU data and monitoring systems.

UNODC MENA Youth Network

The UNODC MENA Youth Network brings a youth-led perspective on prevention, highlighting how empowering young people as active partners in policy and community action strengthens crime and drug prevention efforts and ensures more inclusive, sustainable solutions across the region. Through the UNODC MENA Youth Network, youth from across the region are actively implementing initiatives and projects that foster resilience, promote inclusion, and counter harmful influences.

The Station

The Station brings a practitioner's perspective on why partnership architecture matters as much as programme content. As an entrepreneurship hub and youth empowerment platform in Baghdad, it shows how civil society can build the right local partnerships to empower young people and sustain prevention efforts beyond individual projects.

International Association of Youth and Students for Peace

The International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP), empowers young people to build inclusive societies through its Peace Designer program. In North Macedonia, the project "Anti-Corruption – Education for Anti-Corruption" teaches children aged 6–14 core values of honesty and fairness using interactive, practical methods. By fostering accountability from an early age and engaging the wider community, IAYSP aims to tackle corruption at its roots and build a foundation for a more transparent and just society.

VI. Objectives & Outcomes

Goals of the Session

Central Goal

To strengthen the exchange between countries and civil society actors working on crime prevention, and to build the foundation for more coordinated, sustainable long-term cooperation, moving from parallel action to genuine partnership.

Specific Objectives

- Facilitate substantive exchange between affected Member States and civil society practitioners on the realities of implementing crime prevention at the community level.
- Identify shared root causes and transferable solutions across distinct regional contexts and enabling cross-regional learning.

Expected Outcomes

- Commitments to follow-up cooperation, including the potential implementation of tailored prevention programmes in represented countries.
- Agreement on a continued platform for exchange beyond CCPCJ 35, facilitated through HWPL and its partner network in coordination with the UNODC Civil Society Unit.

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Sources & References: Transparency International, CPI 2024 (transparency.org/en/cpi/2024) • UNODC Kyoto Declaration (2021) • UNODC Youth Forum 2026 Joint Statement • UNODC–UNESCO Culture of Lawfulness Programme • Organized Crime Index (ocindex.net)