



GLOBAL FOCAL POINT FOR THE RULE OF LAW (GFP)

A JOINT ARRANGEMENT FOR RULE OF LAW DELIVERY IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

MARCH 2021



Starting in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and wide-ranging travel restrictions, the GFP re-oriented its activities to provide joint support to national rule of law authorities in addressing the health crisis, intensify exchanges of information among its partners on responses to COVID-19, and promote the establishment of new joint programmes (e.g. addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in South Sudan). Within the first stretch of the pandemic 16 countries received focused COVID-19 support – and a total of \$1.8 M was allocated- through a dedicated partnership between the GFP and UNDP’s Global Programme on Rule of Law and Human Rights.

UNDP Central African Republic | UNDP - MINUSCA joint COVID-19 response in prisons

Joint response to COVID-19

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



In the Central African Republic (CAR), the UNDP and MINUSCA joint Rule of Law Program greatly facilitated support for the response to and prevention of COVID19. In collaboration with other technical and financial partners, the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security received technical assistance in developing its emergency strategic plan to address the pandemic, as well as in raising internal and external awareness, and procuring a wide-ranging supply of PPE equipment for military, police and gendarmery. The program was able to support the Ministry of Justice and the prison sector for the development of a multisectoral prevention and response plan in prisons –connecting the Ministry of Justice with the Ministries of Defense and Health, the WHO, and the ICRC– and contributing to the implementation of strict protocols in prisons, the mobilization of resources, and the purchase and supply of protective materials for all prisoners and prison staff.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), UNDP and MONUSCO worked closely together and secured preventive and protective equipment for the police and other essential workers, ensuring that the capacity of state rule of law entities could remain near to intact and keep protecting the population. Six prisons across the country were equipped with additional mattresses, which improved the living conditions of detainees, and helped to enhance prison hygiene. The COVID-19 pandemic also shed new light on existing and recurring flaws in the national justice and corrections systems that undermine fundamental human rights and the foundation of rule of law. In that regard, two assessments are underway: a) the first one looks more closely at best practice in terms of awareness raising and mitigation measures; and b) the second one examines alternative non-custodial measures to address the issue of overcrowding and the over use of prison sentences for petty crimes.



UNDP Somalia | Paralegal provides legal assistance to IDPs in Ajuran IDP camp, Garuwe

SOMALIA



In Somalia UNDP, UNSOM and the UN Country Team members contributed to the development of a E-justice system: through joint efforts they successfully established four courtrooms with enabling technology making the court rooms more accessible. Also, the Electronic Case Management System was made available to judges, clerks, and lawyers in Banadir. Joint advocacy efforts led to the release of more than 1000 low-risk prisoners in Somaliland and Puntland. Awareness raising campaigns and preventive measures were put in place in detention facilities. This included improved hygiene and sanitation in 17 prisons where maintenance of water pipes and water systems was undertaken.

The “Clerics vs. COVID campaign” identified marginalized groups with religious leaders visiting markets, mosques, schools, businesses, overcrowded public spaces and IDP camps to reach the most vulnerable. Madrassa leaders who had lost their income due to the pandemic were brought into the campaign and through their engagement received financial support and life-saving information. Gender-based violence prevention and psychosocial counselling (hotline) for women and at-risk groups throughout the country was reinforced providing options for women to report abuse and seek help without alerting perpetrators. In addition, continued support was provided to shelters for survivors of violence.

MALI



In Mali, the protection of human rights was brought to the forefront when UNDP, OHCHR, MINUSMA, the ICRC and the European Union successfully advocated with the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights the reduction of prisons’ overcrowding. To date, this joint effort has led to the release of more than 1,300 convicts and 200 defendants, including 32 women. Technical support to the National Commission for Human Rights aided the monitoring of prisons amidst the ongoing health crisis. Moreover, two studies were conducted to collect data regarding COVID-19 and its effects on the population of Mali. The assessments measured the perception of citizens on the socio-economic impact, and rule of law related issues such as corruption, security, and justice, and identified specific measures to improve the delivery of and access to justice.

Additional GFP initiatives and partnerships



Partnership with Health Through Walls:

The GFP formalized a one-year partnership with Health through Walls, a medical NGO with specific expertise on preventing and addressing infective and contagious diseases in low-income countries. The NGO is now available to provide real-time, online advice to all GFP partners globally. GFP Partners including MINUSCA in CAR, MONUSCO in DRC and UNSMIL in Libya, amongst others, strengthening their preventive actions in prisons, effectively mitigating the risk of infection in these settings.



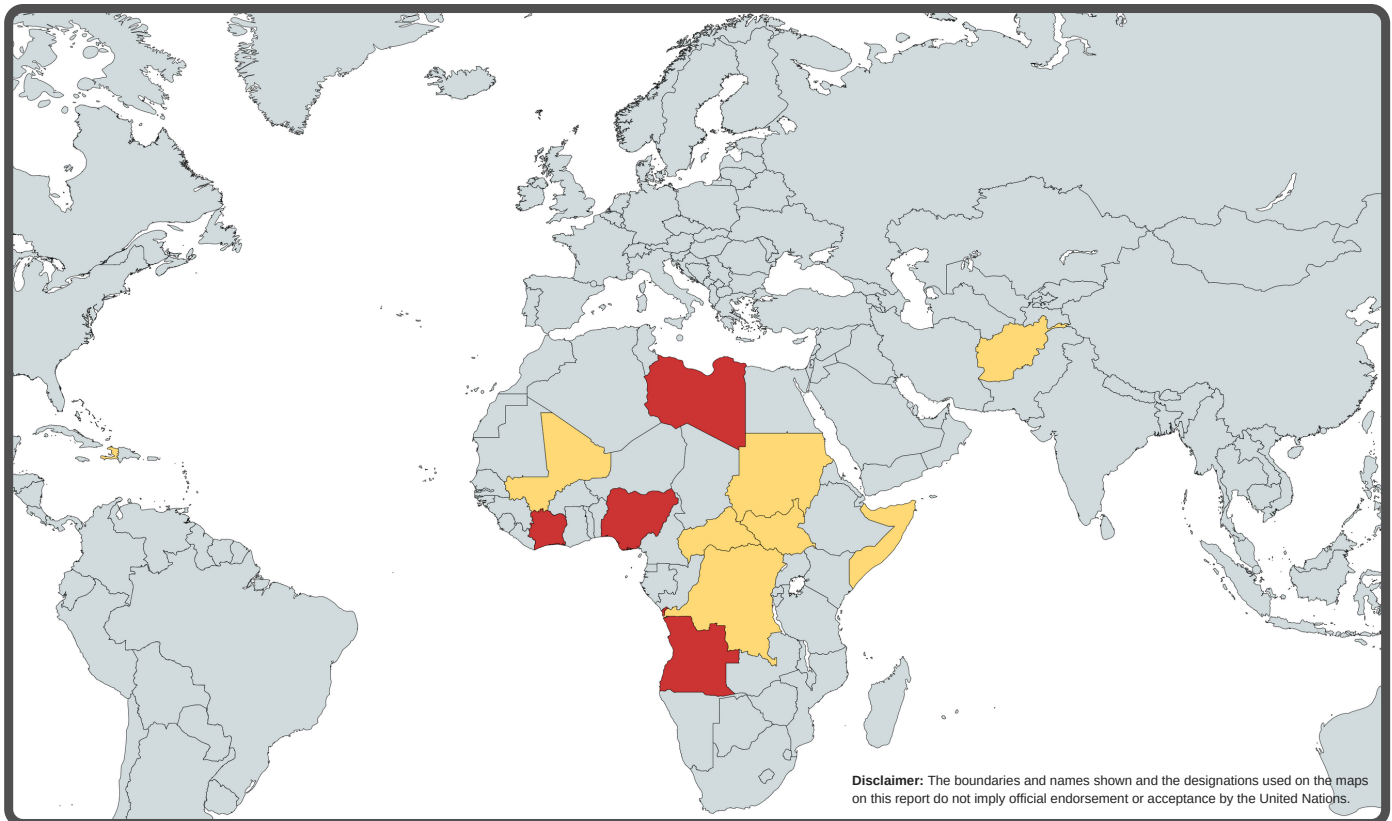
Joint deployments:

The Standing Police Capacity, UNDP and OHCHR partnered under the GFP umbrella in Angola, and Zambia offering innovative online training to law enforcement on how best ensure human rights abiding policing in the context of a state of emergency, including the development of Standard Operating Procedures.



Coordination of COVID-19 initiatives:

Various webinars and consultations were organized by the GFP to facilitate exchanges among its partners on COVID-19 related projects. A specific webpage to exhibit the resources and encourage exchange and knowledge sharing was developed by the GFP in partnership with the Executive Office of the Secretary- General.



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps on this report do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

● Catalytic funding

● Expert deployments and assessments