

The UNODC SHERLOC Databases Information for Contributors

What is the UNODC SHERLOC Portal and its Databases?

The UNODC SHERLOC (Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws On Crime) knowledge management portal is an initiative to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its three Protocols, for which UNODC is the guardian. The SHERLOC portal is currently host to three databases: the Case Law Database, the Database of Legislation and the Bibliographic Database.

The **Case Law Database** is a comprehensive database allowing users to see how Member States are tackling organized crime cases both operationally and in their courts. It contains jurisprudence, as well as records of successful law enforcement operations, on corruption, counterfeiting, cybercrime, drug offences, money laundering, obstruction of justice, participation in an organized criminal group, piracy, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in firearms, trafficking in cultural property, wildlife and forest crime, trafficking in persons and fraudulent medicine/medicine crimes.

The **Database of Legislation** is an electronic repository of laws relevant to the provisions of UNTOC and the Protocols thereto. It is searchable by country, UNTOC article, crime type and cross-cutting issue. While also enabling access to full legislation documents, the Database of Legislation provides extracts of laws relevant to specific UNTOC articles and crime types, allowing the user to quickly find provisions relating to their search query.

As of March 2015, the Databases include summaries and, when available, full court decisions of 1,800 cases on transnational organized crime, as well as 3,900 relevant legal provisions, from at least 180 countries. These can be accessed through: sherloc.unodc.org

As of October 2014, SHERLOC also contains a **Bibliographic Database**, which is an annotated bibliography providing a synopsis of key articles that are searchable by country, research method and keyword. The database is under development and currently contains 295 abstracts on migrant smuggling. UNODC plans to expand the database to cover each of the crime types contained in SHERLOC.

What is the purpose of the UNODC SHERLOC Databases?

Despite continuing efforts by UNODC and Member States to adopt and enforce national legislation against organized crimes, the legal provisions and mechanisms of enforcement contained within certain domestic laws remain weak, inefficient and inconsistent across jurisdictions. Such crimes continue to be under-prosecuted, and conviction rates remain low. In those cases for which prosecutions have been undertaken, very little is currently known about them internationally. By creating the Case Law Database, Database of Legislation and the Bibliographic Database, UNODC is working to develop internationally agreed upon legal mechanisms against transnational

organized crime, while improving the visibility of successful prosecutions and promoting awareness about the devastating realities of organized crime.

The SHERLOC portal, by way of these three databases, has become a practitioner's tool for police investigators, prosecutors and judges; a monitoring tool for government policy-makers; an awareness-raising tool for the public and media; as well as an information tool for researchers, policy makers, legal drafters and all those responding to transnational organized crime.

What Cases and Legislation are in the UNODC SHERLOC Databases?

The Databases collect cases and legislation which fall under the internationally agreed definitions of organized crimes as per UNTOC and the Protocols thereto. They also reflect cases and legislation that are based upon domestic adaptations of UNTOC mandates in accordance with domestic legal systems that give effect to the meaning and concepts contained in these international standards.

The Database also includes cases and legislation that potentially fall outside the scope of the UNTOC and its Protocols, but which concern similar values or purposes contained therein. In such cases, the particular reasons for inclusion are explained in the Commentary/Significant Features section located at the bottom of the respective case summary.

Through reflecting the different approaches of States in dealing with organized crime within the context of their domestic legal traditions, the SHERLOC Databases give life to the legal standards embodied within UNTOC.

Why and how to Contribute to the UNODC SHERLOC Databases

As the only global public record of UNTOC-related case law and legislation, the Databases are a vital tool for stakeholders; however, there is a continued need for expansion and improvement of Database content. UNODC relies upon its networks and contributors to enrich the SHERLOC portal. To this end, UNODC welcomes the involvement of new contributors towards:

- a) Providing access to new cases and legislation which are not easily accessible online;
- b) Identifying landmark organized crime cases from all over the world;
- c) Preparing summaries of new cases in English and/or other United Nations languages (UNODC will provide a template);
- d) Submitting abstracts and bibliographic information on key articles relating to transnational organized crime;
- e) Updating existing cases to reflect subsequent decisions by higher instances; and/or
- f) Translating court decisions/case summaries into the official languages of the United Nations.

UNODC is dedicated to providing access to high-quality electronic resources by way of the SHERLOC portal's databases.

With regard to the **Case Law Database**, preference is given to official issuances of court decisions and/or official translations thereof (although court and case summaries may be unofficial in nature).

The most valuable case law will reflect superior-level court decisions, landmark cases, and cases in which UNTOC-related provisions are interpreted.

Contributors to the **Database of Legislation** are requested to submit official, primary sources of law that may include: laws; constitutions; treaties and other binding international agreements; and statutes as enacted and/or codified. It is requested that all translations of primary sources be official.

New contributors would join the Databases existing network of contributors who, beyond government institutions, include law schools, non-governmental organizations, United Nations Online Volunteers, and pro bono programmes of commercial law firms. The full list of current contributors is acknowledged online at: <http://www.unodc.org/cld/acknowledgements/index.html>.

UNODC supports the work of contributors by sending a UNODC template for the preparation of summaries, and providing detailed instructions and background information.

Where can I find more information about the UNODC SHERLOC Databases?

For more information on the UNODC SHERLOC Databases, please visit the “About” section of the Database at: <http://www.unodc.org/cld/about-us/index.html>

You are also invited to watch a video on how to use one Case Law Database in particular; the Human Trafficking Case Law Database: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpyq97aEJ54>. Apart from the general information on the Human Trafficking Case Law Database, the video explains how to use the advanced multi-faceted search function of the Database, through which cases of interest can be easily selected. Cases can be browsed by country, keywords or filtered by various criteria, such as verdict date, nationality or gender of victims/defendants, legal system or sector in which exploitation takes place.

For more information on UNODC’s work on transnational organized crime, please visit: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/index.html>.

Feel free to contact us on: sherloc@unodc.org