

SAVE THE DATE

**JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC
INFORMATION PROGRAMME ON NEW
THREATS DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC**

6 - 7 May 2021

The Journalism and Public Information Programme on New Threats during the COVID-19 Pandemic aims at enhancing the capabilities of journalists and public information professionals in the areas of justice, crime prevention and security. The programme intends to promote reliable and responsible public information given the crucial role played by media in influencing policies and civil society development.

In recent times, the problems generated by misleading, biased, overly simple, or false information have been amplified. This is due to intentional misinformation and propaganda.¹ These problems may also arise because the new and emerging threats are complex and technical, requiring specialist knowledge to understand. These threats are constantly evolving, and thus require that media professionals receive recurrent training to stay well informed and expand the network of reliable sources. Meanwhile, technological changes in media consumption have amplified the potential reach of misinformation. This is particularly true when we think of the negative impacts of extremist propaganda or the dissemination of intentionally false information spreading directly to the public via social media.

New threats have emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic requiring more expertise and awareness. The pandemic and the resulting crisis are posing unprecedented global challenges to public health, social well-being and the economy. The pandemic has been exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities. During this emergency, as national resources are being directed towards urgent public health measures, it is important to identify and address additional risks exposure.

One of the key challenges Member States are facing relates to non-state actors (including criminal, extremist and terrorist groups) that are taking advantage of the crisis to jeopardize the efficacy of governments' responses, as well as undermining the safety of citizens through a wide spectrum of criminal activities. It is very likely that these corrosive criminal actions will not be limited to the present crisis but will continue during its aftermath.

During this specialized course, participants will gain an in-depth knowledge on such emerging threats and how to report about them accurately through learned methods of prevention. Moreover, participants will gain effective skills relating to digital tools and good practices that will enable them to protect their information and their sources while exercising freedom of expression on the Internet.

The specialized courses are conducted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in cooperation with The Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS).

¹ UNICRI, [Stop the virus of disinformation: the malicious use of social media by terrorist, violent extremist and criminal groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

About UNICRI

Established in 1968, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) carries out action-oriented research and training and implements technical cooperation programmes. It aims to assist governments and the international community at large in tackling criminal threats to social peace, development and political stability and in fostering the development of just and efficient criminal justice systems.

UNICRI supports the formulation and implementation of improved policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, the promotion of national self-reliance, and the development of institutional capabilities.

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About CARICOM IMPACS

CARICOM IMPACS is the coordinating and implementation arm of the region's multilateral crime and security management architecture, specifically designed to administer a collective response to the crime and security priorities of its Member States. Its members comprise fifteen (15) CARICOM Member States and five (5) Associate Members. IMPACS comprises the Headquarters which is in Trinidad and Tobago and two sub-Agencies, the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre (RIFC).

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TENTATIVE AGENDA

6 MAY 2021

DISINFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC: PROTECTING RELIABLE AND RESPONSIBLE INFORMATION

09:00 – 09:20 Welcome Remarks

Lt. Col. Michael Jones, Executive Director (Ag.), Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)

Ms. Antonia Marie De Meo, Director United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

Ms. Marina Walter, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curacao and Sint Marteen

Ms. Nazima Raghubir, acting President, Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM)

09:20 – 09:50

The malicious use of social media by violent non-state actors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Francesco Marelli, Head of the Knowledge Center SIRIO on Technology and Security, UNICRI.

09:50 – 10:20

Cybercrimes, the dark web and cyber security (including digital security encryption tools and techniques).

Mr. Dale Joseph, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS).

10:20 – 10:50

The United Nations Verified Initiative.

Mr. Robert Skinner, Director of the United Nations Information Centre, Washington, DC

10:50 – 11:20

Investigative journalism and the fight against fake news.

Peter Wickham, Director, Caribbean Development Research Services (CADRES)

Ms. Rhoda Bharath, Cultural Studies Researcher, University of the West Indies

11:20 – 11:30 Break

11:30 – 12:00

The malicious use of artificial intelligence (i.e. social engineering attacks; evasion of image recognition and voice biometrics; and data pollution).

Mr. Irakli Beridze, Head of UNICRI's Centre on Artificial Intelligence and Robotics.

12:00 – 12:40 Questions & Answers

12:40 – 13:00

Wrap-up and closing of the meeting

moderated by Mr. Leif Villadsen, Deputy Director of UNICRI

7 May 2021

EMERGING THREATS DURING THE PANDEMIC

09:00 – 9:05 Welcome by CARICOM

09:05 – 9:35

How crisis can increase the threat of violent extremism and radicalization among vulnerable groups.

Norihiro Yamabe, Political Affairs Officer, Political Analysis and Research Unit, UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED).

09:35 – 10:15

Effective communication strategies to counter violent extremism propaganda to protect vulnerable targets in times of crisis.

Ms. Julie Coleman, Senior Programme Manager, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT).

Mr. Wesley Gibbings, Executive Member Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM)

10:15 – 10:40

COVID-19 pandemic and new opportunities for organized crime: counterfeiting and organized crime's infiltration into the legal economy.

Mr. Marco Musumeci, Programme Manager, UNICRI.

10:40 – 11:10

Fake COVID vaccine distribution.

Mr. Chi-Wang Lam, Coordinator for Public Health and Pharmaceutical Crim, International Criminal Police Organization, INTERPOL.

11:10 – 11:20 Break

11:20 – 11:50

Media cross-border investigative techniques on transnational organized crime.
Mr. Paul Radu, Director of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project.

11:50 – 12:20

The future trajectories of organised crime.
Mr. Walter Kemp, Senior Fellow, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC).

12.20 – 12.50 Questions & Answers

12.50 – 13.00 Wrap-up and closing of the meeting

moderated by Mr. Callixtus Joseph, Regional Crime and Security Strategy Coordinator; IMPACS.