



THE
Alliance
OF NGOs ON CRIME PREVENTION
& CRIMINAL JUSTICE



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO



Civil Society and the Fight against Transnational Organised Crime: Opportunities for International Engagement, Regional Initiatives and Grassroots Projects

The online Seminar “*Civil Society and the Fight against Transnational Organised Crime: Opportunities for International Engagement, Regional Initiatives and Grassroots projects*” took place on 20 March 2026. This educational meeting, hosted by the University of Milan CROSS (Observatory of Organised Crime) and *The Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice*, formed part of the university's postgraduate course in International Scenarios of Organised Crime and its PhD programme in Studies on Organized Crime. It focused on the central and growing role of civil society in combating transnational organised crime.

The event brought together academics, members of NGOs, as well as UN representatives. Speakers included Billy Batware, Programme Officer at the Civil Society Unit of the *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*; Ian Tennant, Chair of the *Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*; Monica Usai, Manager at *Libera*; Ruggero Scaturro, Senior Analyst at the *Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime*; Tariq Khosa, Director of the *Centre for Governance Research (Pakistan)*; Clara Inés Lucarella, coordinator of the Democracy Program at the *Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (Argentina)*; Edson Cortez, Director of the *Public Integrity Center (Mozambique)*; Thomas Aureliani, Researcher in Sociology at the University of Milan; and Monica Massari, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Milan. Christian Ponti, Professor of International Law at the University of Milan, and Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Executive Director of *Kennis: Knowledge for Safety and Good Governance*, facilitated the seminar.

The purpose of the first part of the conference was to illustrate the main entry points and opportunities for civil society involvement in UN institutional contexts and fora. This includes engaging with civil society organizations particularly active in supporting the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). The second part focused on examples of concrete local projects and regional initiatives by NGOs that support relevant state policies contributing to both the implementation and the review mechanism of the UNTOC. By analysing different contexts in Mozambique, Pakistan, Argentina, Mexico

and Italy, participants gained a better understanding of the broad and increasingly central role that civil society can play in supporting present and future generations in the fight against organised crime. Civil society has the responsibility to highlight issues that governments may not be ready (or willing) to see or accept. Thanks to the growing role of many groups and associations working together, the civil society could really aim at contributing and leading the global agenda. That's why it's essential for the community to continue to collaborate on the long term.

In her discussion remarks, Professor Monica Massari proposed some questions that could guide future discussions. These may focus on how civil society participation can be made truly sustainable over time and circumstances, how can we ensure adequate protection for people engaged in anti-organized crime work, and have really all the relevant civil society actors got involved to play their role?

To conclude, this conference was a perfect example on how the Academia could serve as a bridge that brings different perspectives together to discuss and redefine the role of civil society.