



The Bali Process

on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks Involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons

Report for the Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting 2022

The co-chairs of the Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks Involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons (Disruption Working Group, DWG) are pleased to report on the activities and priorities that have progressed in 2022.

The Disruption Working Group focuses on concrete, action-oriented activities for enhancing coordination to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks involved in people smuggling and trafficking in persons in the Asia-Pacific region.

The key objectives under the Disruption Working Group's Terms of Reference include:

- Discuss the role of transnational networks in people smuggling and trafficking in persons
- Foster a better understanding of the routes, modus operandi, hierarchies, and criminal activities
- Suggest strategies to strengthen national and regional law enforcement efforts
- Promote effective and coordinated approaches in investigation and prosecution
- Identify ways to strengthen participating agencies' operational capacity to disrupt

The Working Group's recent activities are based on a refreshed Concept Note from 2020, where co-chairs sought to refresh the group's work programme to ensure that participants' priorities continue to be reflected in the group's work.

It was determined that the Joint Periods of Action will continue to be the centrepiece of the Disruption Working Group. The purpose of the Joint Periods is to enable interested Ad Hoc Group member states to carry out co-ordinated law enforcement operations against criminal networks involved in people smuggling and/or trafficking in persons over a designated period of time.

In the past, Joint Periods of Action have taken place over a six-month time period. The co-chairs proposed the Joint Periods extend to 12-month cycles, allowing tangible outcomes from larger and longer-term investigations to be progressed and reported on.

Forward Work Plan

In addition to the Joint Period of Action, the co-chairs proposed that the Disruption Working Group complement Joint Periods with one or more existing and new activities as follows. They also form the Forward Work Plan for the Working Group:

- a. Simulation-based exercises on people smuggling and trafficking in persons investigations. It is intended that such exercises would help develop strong networks between practitioners to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute people smuggling and trafficking in persons enterprises operating along migration routes in and through the Asia-Pacific;
- b. A compendium of successful cross-border people smuggling and trafficking in persons joint operations and cases based on historical Joint Periods of Action;

- c. Engagement with experts on topics of interest to members for example, open-source intelligence, financial investigations, and victim support;
- d. Collaboration with the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, for example, enhancing a victim-centred approach and identifying trafficking indicators in cases of smuggling;
- e. Collaboration with the Returns and Reintegration Working Group, for example, operationalising repatriation; and
- f. Collaboration with the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness, for example, large-scale irregular migrations situations and enhancing co-operation between origin, transit and destination countries.

Activities undertaken by the Disruption Working Group in 2022

1. Bali Process Disruption Working Group and Task Force on Planning and Preparedness Tabletop Exercise

After a COVID-19 enforced hiatus, the Disruption Working Group was able to resume face to face interactions.

Working together with the Taskforce for Planning and Preparedness (TFPP), the table-top exercise (TTX) provided an opportunity for participants to engage with a fictitious and hypothetical movement of irregular migrants. This in-person activity took place in Bangkok, Thailand on 10-11 October.

Day One was facilitated by Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO) and sessions included:

- Cooperation against key partners, data collection and analysis
- Protection-sensitive entry systems and reception arrangements
- Mechanisms for screening and referral; differentiated processes and procedures

Day Two was facilitated by the New Zealand Irregular Migration Liaison Officer Network and sessions included:

- Leading Investigation Plans
- Crime Scene; Leadership and Planning
- Investigative Interviewing
- Prosecutions and Decision Making

The TTX provided an opportunity for collaborative learning by 50+ attendees from 16 countries and international organizations. The TTX was attended by officials involved in aspects of national security, law enforcement, border control and by subject matter experts from international organisations specialising in issues relating to people smuggling and trafficking in persons.

The activity relates to two action items in the Forward Work Plan, which have now been completed:

- Simulation-based exercises on people smuggling and trafficking in persons investigations
- Collaboration with the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness

The activity also relates to issues of strategic priority for the Bali Process such as:

- the growing use of technology
- the vulnerabilities of women and children
- the growing awareness of the need to account for health-related contingencies

Presentations by subject matter experts - Disruption Working Group Annual Meeting 2022

The Disruption Working Group Annual Meeting was held on 12 October 2022 in a hybrid format with in-person and virtual participants in Bangkok, Thailand.

The meeting was attended by officials involved in aspects of national security, law enforcement, and border control and by subject matter experts from international organisations specialising in issues relating to people smuggling and trafficking in persons.

The meeting included two presentations:

- Trauma-informed approaches to trafficking in Persons Investigations by Dr Marieke Jasperse, Immigration NZ
- Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) Collection by Ms. Parveen KhunKuhn, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

These presentations relate to another action item in the Forward Work Plan, which have now been completed:

- Providing presentations on trends, policies and tools

The presentations also relate to issues of strategic priority for the Bali Process such as:

- the growing use of technology
- the vulnerabilities of women and children

Upcoming activities for the Disruption Working Group

At the Disruption Working Group Annual Meeting in October, the co-chairs and members also reviewed the Forward Work Plan to focus on the upcoming activities of the Working Group.

Participating members are keen to conduct a Joint 12-month Period of Action, allowing tangible outcomes from larger and longer-term investigations to be progressed and reported on.

Participants provided suggestions for this activity such as investigating the links between trafficking in persons and online scams.

The co-chairs will be in touch with the members in the new year and look forward to facilitating the Joint Period of Action in 2023.

Another action item in the Forward Work Plan was the Compendium of Cross-Border People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Joint Operations and Cases. Co-Chairs have received very few cases to go in the Compendium. It is likely that this item may be of less interest to members.

Other activities will continue to be considered based on the interests and priorities of the Working Group. Co-Chairs also look forward to collaborating with Bali Process Working Groups in the coming months.