

TRACIT and the Universal Postal Union partner to address illicit trade via small packages

Bern, Switzerland, 1 March 2023 - The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations on mitigating illicit trade. The UPU is a UN specialized agency with 192 member countries and is the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players.

The MoU was signed by UPU Director General Masahiko Metoki and TRACIT Director General Jeffrey Hardy at UPU's headquarters during a meeting of the UPU Postal Security Group. It establishes a foundation for collaborating on measures that can safeguard the postal supply chain from illicit trade and criminal exploitation of global postal services. The MoU was signed in recognition of the dramatic increase in the magnitude and scope of illicit trade throughout the UPU's global network and responds to needs for raising awareness and building capacities to deter illicit trade.

"At its basis, the MoU is a tool for improving safety and security in the postal sector," said Mr. Hardy. "This starts with increasing awareness of illicit goods transported through postal networks via small packages and explaining the related economic, social, security and environmental impacts – especially those undermining achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

"The only way to truly eliminate illicit goods from the postal supply chain is through the dedication and expertise of all postal security focal points, and by leveraging the knowledge and expertise of external stakeholders. I would like to thank TRACIT for its commitment to eliminating these items from the supply chain, and I very much look forward to our future collaboration on this initiative," said the UPU Director General.

In addition to raising awareness, the collaboration will drive improvement of postal security standards, promote responsible practices by postal operators to combat illicit trade and initiates pilot projects for information sharing among national posts and the private sector. It responds to a UPU survey of the postal operators that galvanized the need to step up efforts to address illicit trade worldwide.

"The TRACIT MOU signed today will improve postal security standards set by the UPU by strengthening the partnerships that make the global postal system safer, and more secure for all member countries," stated Chief Postal Inspector Gary R. Barksdale, U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

"This is an excellent opportunity to build capacities for collecting and relaying Electronic Advance Data, improving the automation of detection processes, and even putting in place tougher sanctions for illicit traders caught abusing the global postal system," said Mr. Hardy.

TRACIT is also contributing to the UPU's newly instituted Illicit Goods Mitigation Expert Team (IGMET), which was formed to support designated postal operators ability to address vulnerabilities that permit illicit trade to proliferate throughout their networks.

"The IGMET has already set out an aggressive work program," said Suriya Padmanaabhan, TRACIT's representative to the Expert Team. "We are working with the UPU to increase the ability of designated postal operators to better detect illicit products in small packages."

About TRACIT

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) is an independent, private sector initiative to drive change to mitigate the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across industry sectors most impacted by illicit trade.

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