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Upgrading Watson

by Slobodan Bošković, SEESAC Project Officer/Advisor and Juliana Buzi, SEESAC Project Specialist

When it comes to real-life crime, if police and forensic agencies are the Sherlocks, their equipment is definitely the "Watson".

It is the combination of the expert's eye and the latest in crime-fighting tech that leads to the crucial "Aha!" moment.

Marking, tracing, registering and storing data records on each and every firearm they encounter, investigators and forensic lab staff in particular turns to their equipment for vital support – the yin to their yang.

But Watson ages.

Time takes its toll and technology advances. And as criminals become savvier, so too do our crime fighters.

It is with this in mind that UNDP's arms control programme handed over 220,098 euros worth of IT equipment to the police in Tirana and Belgrade. This included computers to scanners, from servers to software for ballistics identification, even a mini-ballistic and chemical laboratory.

An upgraded "Watson" here can bring about three concrete changes on the ground:

1) Police will be better equipped

To determine where they came from and where they were heading, police need to be able to trace weapons.

For this tracing to take place, weapons need to be marked and records need to be kept regarding their ownership and movement.

In using the new hardware and software, police are better equipped to have accurate records to discern markings on guns, conduct ballistic analyses to trace ammunition, compare evidence and determine when and how the gun was being used.

2) #FollowTheBullet

Guns move without respect for national borders.

We at SEESAC believe that regional problems require regional solutions. By using the improved equipment, police and forensic staff are able to exchange information on weapons with their other colleagues in South East Europe more quickly.

They are all also working together with their counterparts like EUROPOL and INTERPOL to address this problem together.

3) Towards a #SaferRegion



Just before our events in Tirana and Belgrade, the world saw the ratification of 17 Global Goals to guide our development aims for the next fifteen years.

Goal 16 specifically sets out to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies.'

The amplified abilities of the crime fighters in the region has a positive ripple effect for our neighbours. As communities become safer, the society at large becomes more peaceful.

How will you know if Watson manages to fulfil his promises, fostering safety, security, and development at home and abroad?

Elementary. Just watch this space and follow #SaferRegion on Twitter.

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South Eastern and Eastern Europe
Clearinghouse for the Control of Small
Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)

Bulevar Zorana Đinđića 64
11000 Belgrade
Serbia
Telephone:
(+381) 11 415 5300
Fax: (+381) 415 5499
E-mail: seesac@undp.org

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