



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

“Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism”

27 June 2019, New York

Statement by USG Vladimir Voronkov, UNOCT

Mr. Minister,
Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my gratitude to the Permanent Missions of Niger, Norway, Qatar, Tunisia as well as UNODC for inviting me to speak at this important event.

I would also like to congratulate UNODC on the launch of the handbook on “Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism.” I think it is a very important step forward.

Discussions on this issue are timely given the importance of integrating a gender perspective into criminal justice approaches to counter-terrorism.

This is due to the increasing recognition of the wide range of roles that women and girls play in both preventing and supporting terrorism. They can be both victims and perpetrators.

The manipulation of gender norms and stereotypes by terrorist organizations for recruitment and operational purposes is a fact of life.

Women are a significant share of those involved in perpetrating terrorist acts in their own countries.

It is important to understand the backgrounds and motivations of these women in order to develop relevant, appropriate, and context-specific criminal justice responses. Prevention is crucial in this regard.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Secretary-General Guterres has been deeply concerned with the plight of women linked with designated terrorist groups, many of whom are stranded in Iraq and Syria, sometimes along with their children.

He asked the United Nations system to prioritize this issue and requested the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism to coordinate an inter-agency effort to ensure an “all of UN” approach.

As part of this, the United Nations has developed a set of “Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with Links to United Nations Listed Terrorist Groups.”

These principles have been disseminated across the United Nations system, including to all United Nations Resident Coordinators and to the heads of Special Political Missions and Peacekeeping Operations. It has also been shared with the Member States.

The Principles are primarily intended to guide UN actions on the ground to offer practical assistance to Member States. At the same time, they lay out critical human rights and humanitarian principles as well as specific obligations with regards to women, to ensure that they are treated in accordance with international law, from a gender perspective.

I would like to praise, in this regard, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation for repatriating their nationals—women, children, and men — from detention camps in the territory of Iraq and Syria.

For example, between January and May 2019, the Kazakh authorities reported having repatriated a total of 516 of their citizens from Syria, including 357 children, mostly under the age of seven.

Gender responsive criminal justice approaches should address the particular needs of women during all phases, including detention and interrogation.

They must also protect women and support those who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Promoting and supporting criminal justice responses to terrorism and the protection of human rights, a fundamental fourth Pillar of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, have been priorities of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and its United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.

I would like to commend UNODC's leadership in the context of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and its Working Group on criminal justice responses to terrorism.

My Office is also working in this area. For example, in response to requests from Member States, we are developing a wide-reaching programme to support the prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters and their families, including women, boys, and girls, in line with the Key Principles.

It is important to ensure that our assistance mainstreams gender and that women play a key role in their design and implementation.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the State of Qatar for its generous contribution to UNOCT.

I look forward to continuing and enhancing our cooperation with all of you, Member States, Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, and civil society around the world on this very important issue.

Thank you very much for your attention.