



VIRTUAL COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

6-10 JULY 2020

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Video message HRVP Borrell

Introductory remarks during the opening of UNOCT Virtual Counter Terrorism

(pre-recorded, for use on 6 July)

Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. Under Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

[Introduction]

It is a great honour for me to be here with you today – albeit by online means. I thank you, Under Secretary General Voronkov, Vladimir, for your invitation to say a few words at the opening of UN Virtual CT Week.

[COVID-19 requires collective action]

The past months have been a great test for humanity and the multilateral system. More than ever before, collective action is required, as the Covid-19 virus does not recognize national borders drawn-up by mankind. We are all at risk, as the Pandemic is exposing not only the vulnerabilities of the most fragile countries, but also of the most powerful ones. The crisis deepens existing conflicts and generates new geopolitical tensions. It is



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therefore vital that we stand together, and uphold the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its very centre, 75 years after its creation. I have fully supported, from the very beginning, the call of Secretary-General, my friend Antonio Guterres, for the international community to work together to respond to a crisis which unfortunately is still far from over.

[Need to better understand the implications of the Pandemic for global terrorism]

Covid-19 affects all areas of life and will also have its implications for global security. This includes terrorism, which sadly continues to be one of most important threats to international peace and stability. We need to develop a common understanding of the implications of the Pandemic on counter terrorism efforts across the world. It is true that, in some places, the crisis has led to a reduction of terrorist activity, mainly due to the mobilisation of state security services. But in other regions, terrorism and human suffering caused by it continue unabated. The EU remains committed to stability in those theatres: together with local authorities, community actors, the UN and the international community, with diplomatic efforts, programmes to support development and with military and civilian missions. We need to stay vigilant, as new social and political grievances caused by the economic downturn will provide fertile breeding ground, both in the streets and online.

[New Council Conclusions on Counter Terrorism come at a timely moment]

It is in this light that I am pleased that EU Member States last month reiterated their commitment to further strengthen the fight against terrorism in its external dimension. They restated their commitment to the values that lie at the base of the EU's approach in countering terrorism and violent extremism. From respect of human rights, to a strong commitment to the principles and objectives of humanitarian action, and a particular focus on prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism.

[Strategic partnerships are key to our approach, the UN at its core]



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None of us can fight terrorism alone. The EU will continue to strengthen its partnerships with the leading global actors, first and foremost with the United Nations. We already have a solid base for further cooperation, including a regular High Level Political Dialogue on counter terrorism jointly led by UNOCT and the European External Action Service, and a growing portfolio of concrete actions on the ground. The Review of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy foreseen for next year will be an important moment to take stock and define the way forward together with all UN Member States. As always, you can count on our active engagement and support.

[Conclusion]

Thank you again, Mr Secretary General, for this opportunity. I wish you and colleagues an insightful and productive week.