



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

Statement by

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2020 Chairmanship OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference

***Effective Partnerships against Terrorism and Violent Extremism and Radicalization that
Lead to Terrorism***

14 September 2020

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address you at the opening of the 2020 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on Effective Partnerships against Terrorism and Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism.

I would like to commend the Albanian OSCE Chairmanship for convening this important event.

As the largest regional security organization, the OSCE continues to demonstrate leadership in addressing the most pressing issues facing the world.

I commend the OSCE for helping to sustain the momentum in multilateral efforts to counter terrorism despite the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I indicated to the UN Security Council last month, while the terrorist threat coming from ISIL and its affiliates has not been eliminated, in non-conflict zones the threat seems to have decreased, at least over the past six months.

But in conflict zones, the threat has increased, as shown by a surge in ISIL activity in Iraq and Syria, and among some of its regional affiliates.

There is also a continuing trend of attacks by individuals inspired online and acting alone or in small groups. And the growing threat from neo-Nazi, white supremacist, anti-Semitic and other hate groups resorting to terrorism.

These worrying developments were confirmed during the United Nations Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week, which my Office organized in July.

I would like to reiterate my appreciation to Mr. Thomas Greminger, former Secretary-General of the OSCE, for addressing the closing session of this unique and innovative event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The COVID-19 crisis has produced a number of global inter-connected security, socio-economic and human rights challenges.

The pandemic is exacerbating grievances, undermining social cohesion and fueling conflicts - and could likely act as a catalyst in the spread of terrorism and violent extremism conducive for terrorism.

We must emerge from the COVID-19 crisis stronger and more unified in our collective fight against terrorism.

We need to enhance global, regional and national counter-terrorism partnerships.

The United Nations has strengthened its inter-agency coordination under the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which brings together more than 40 UN entities and international partners.

In March, my Office launched the online Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform to facilitate collaboration among Counter-Terrorism Compact entities, as well as information-exchange and engagement with Member States.

The Global Compact entities, together with our partners from civil society, international and regional organizations and the private sector, are providing capacity-building and technical assistance to requesting Member States in support of their efforts to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which will be reviewed for the seventh time next year, and relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

The support provided by our programmes covers a range of critical areas including countering terrorist travel; addressing foreign terrorist fighters and their dependents including prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration; countering the financing of terrorism; promoting youth engagement; strengthening cyber and border security; supporting victims of terrorism; upholding human rights while countering terrorism; protecting vulnerable targets; mainstreaming gender; strengthening sports security; preventing and countering violent

extremism conducive to terrorism; building up inter-agency coordination “fusion cells”; and countering terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material, among other topics.

In all these areas, I have prioritized building stronger partnerships with regional organizations.

And I am proud of the practical work that my Office has done with the OSCE in recent years, as set out in our joint Action Plan for 2019-2021. Let me give you some examples:

- Last February, the OSCE and UNOCT joined efforts with Switzerland to organize a Regional High-Level Conference in Vienna on addressing current challenges related to foreign terrorist fighters.
- On countering terrorist travel, we piloted an annual Passenger Data Seminar last year and I hope that the OSCE will host a regional informal working group on passenger data next year.
- My Office is also working with the OSCE to tackle terrorist use of the Internet. For example, last year, together with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA), we conducted a successful training course on countering the use of the Internet for propaganda and recruitment purposes for Central Asian States.
- Next month, we will jointly convene a regional workshop for Central Asian States on the delivery of effective online counter-terrorism investigations.
- Discussions are underway on conducting a joint UNOCT-OSCE capacity-building exercise on countering the financing of terrorism.
- Finally, I would also like to mention our excellent cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE and its Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism, which I had the honor to address last June.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Defeating terrorism will not be possible through government or international organizations efforts alone.

We need an inclusive whole-of-society approach.

Public-private partnerships, particularly with technology companies, are essential to address the misuse of information and communication technologies by terrorists.

My Office is building a closer partnership with the industry-led Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, which works to prevent terrorists from exploiting the Internet and social media.

Civil society organizations and victims' associations are ideally placed to promote the rights and address the needs of victims of terrorism.

To further advance this topic, together with the Government of Spain we plan to organize a Regional Conference in Malaga next year dedicated to engaging civil society, supporting victims and promoting human rights while countering terrorism.

Civil society can also play a key role in addressing the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon as outlined in Security Council resolution 2396 (2017).

The situation of thousands of women and children in camps in Iraq and northeast Syria remains dire, is untenable and requires urgent action.

Last year, the United Nations Secretary-General adopted Key Principles for the Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children to provide guidance on the treatment of women and children associated with UN-listed terrorist groups.

This year, my Office has spearheaded the joint effort of fifteen United Nations entities to develop a Global Framework on UN support to Member States on individuals returned from Syria and Iraq, ensuring comprehensive human rights-based and age- and gender-sensitive approaches.

I would like to commend those OSCE Member States that have repatriated their nationals from Iraq and Syria, and call on other concerned states to follow their example.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we continue to deal with the wide-ranging impacts of the global pandemic, we must remain vigilant to the evolving terrorist threat.

We must build a strong web of partners, utilizing capabilities and expertise both within and outside government.

We must develop and strengthen counter-terrorism partnerships at all levels, learning from the global COVID-19 response.

And we must seize this opportunity for positive sustainable change, to recover better, and to build more peaceful and resilient societies.

I wish you a productive conference.

Thank you.