



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

4 December 2017 - Bamako, Mali

Remarks to the International Community by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism

His Excellence Mister Thierno Amadou Diallo, Minister of Religious Affairs and Worship,
Excellencies Ambassadors and Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Mali,
SRSG Annadif and Colleagues of MINUSMA,
Colleagues Heads of UN Agencies and Programmes in Mali,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to meet you all this evening and to have this opportunity to exchange views with you on how best to support Mali's efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

Before I proceed with my remarks, I would like to request a minute of silence to honor the people of Mali, the security forces, the MINUSMA personnel and the international forces who have lost their lives as a result of terrorist attacks.

[STOP for minute of silence]

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I come here as the Head of the new UN Office of Counter Terrorism, which was recently established as one of the first reform efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres in the field of peace and security. And I have chosen to come to Mali and to the Sahel as my first official field visit, to demonstrate the priority that we give to the challenges and efforts undertaken in this region.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Government and the people and security forces of Mali to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

I would also like to pay tribute to the work being done by a variety of actors, civil society, community leaders, women's groups, UN and MINUSMA colleagues, international partners, under challenging circumstances characterized by all-too-frequent terrorist attacks.

The Secretary General has emphasized three points that we must always bear in mind if we are to succeed in fighting terrorism:

First, terrorism cannot be associated with any one religion, ethnicity or race.

Second, the best remedy against terrorism is prevention, in particular the prevention of violent extremism that can be conducive to terrorism.

And third, it is crucial to strengthen counter-terrorism coordination mechanisms and work towards a Global Partnership to Counter Terrorism. The Secretary-General will be convening a Summit of Counter Terrorism Agencies in June 2018 at UN Headquarters to establish this partnership, focusing on a number of key developments such as increasing international cooperation for Counter Terrorism, communication strategies and recruitment on the internet, misuse of technologies, practical ways to exchange information, foreign terrorist fighters, youth engagement and the role of the UN in promoting coordination.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I come here to listen, to learn, to understand the priorities of the Government of Mali, to offer support and to mobilize the support of the international community. Our aim is to work with the UN family and other bilateral and multilateral partners to better support the Malian Government to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.

In that respect, I would like to commend the Government of Mali for the development of a National Strategy on Counter Terrorism and on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, which we hope will soon be adopted by Cabinet.

This strategy, with a sound foundation on good governance, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality, will provide the Government and the people of Mali with an integrated, multidimensional policy to counter terror and prevent radicalization. The United Nations is ready to support the implementation of this strategy, under the full ownership of the Government of Mali, accompanying Mali to become a pioneer in efforts to prevent violent extremism.

We are also working closely with the region and in support of the Secretariat of the G5 Sahel to implement a regional initiative as part of our Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism (I-ACT), a package of projects designed to promote the role of education, support the role of women, promote criminal justice, and support border management, among others.

We need a clear partnership that brings together all stakeholders to prevent communities from sinking into violent extremism and radicalization. We all have a role to play. The United Nations remains committed to responding to this challenge and will move with Mali to strengthen hope, peace and inclusion. I look forward to hearing your views tonight on how best to work together to achieve this goal.

Thank you. Merci.