



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Closing Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

High-Level International Conference “Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism”

Dushanbe, 4 May 2018

Your Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs Aslov,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been a long but very productive day.

Everyone in this room knows that the fight against terrorist groups such as ISIL, Al-Qaida and Boko Haram is far from over. This remains a truly global challenge that demands an urgent and concerted multilateral response.

The adoption of the Dushanbe Declaration sends out a clear message to terrorists and violent extremists around the world: we are united; we are committed; and we will succeed.

I want to highlight three key points that struck me in our excellent discussions today.

First, we need a sustained focus on prevention. Military and security measures against terrorism are important, but we also need to address the underlying conditions that are conducive to young men and women being lured by terrorism and violent extremism.

This means winning the hearts and minds of our young people. Most new recruits to terrorist groups are between 17 and 27 years old. These groups often exploit feelings of disillusionment and alienation, offering a twisted sense of purpose to disaffected young people, including women and girls.

Nothing justifies terrorism, but we know that factors such as protracted conflicts, discrimination, corruption, and economic and social marginalization, can all play a role in transforming ideas and grievances into destructive action.

We must harness the energy and creativity of 1.8 billion young people around the world by investing in their futures through increased education and employment opportunities. We also must empower them by giving them the tools they need to combat oppressive terrorist.

Second, we must ensure that we continue to respect human rights while fighting terrorism. As the Secretary-General said in his landmark speech in London in November - "Terrorism is fundamentally the denial and destruction of human rights, and the fight against terrorism will never succeed by perpetuating the same denial and destruction".

Third, implementation should be our watchword.

We already have a strong international counter-terrorism framework through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as nineteen international conventions and many regional instruments.

They are true manifestations of the international rule of law. But signing them, adopting them or ratifying them is not enough. More needs to be done to implement them.

I hope that the forthcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will be an opportunity to take stock on where implementation by Member States is working well and identify where the United Nations can provide further capacity-building assistance.

Excellencies,

The fight against terrorism is one of the greatest challenges of our times.

Terrorist groups have adapted and evolved their tactics to maximize their ability to spread fear, sow discontent and harm our communities.

We must also adapt and evolve so we can stay at least one step ahead of the terrorist threat of tomorrow.

If we fail in this challenge, we will be condemning future generations to the same terror that our generation has endured.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, you have the full support of the United Nations in your efforts.

We look forward to continuing to play our part to help strengthen international cooperation to protect all our citizens from terrorism and violent extremism.

Thank you.