



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Statement of Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism

UN Security Council Debate on Afghanistan 26 June 2018

Thank you, Mr. President!

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking the Russian Presidency of the Security Council and members of the Security Council for this opportunity to speak about the challenges that Afghanistan faces when it comes to preventing and countering terrorism.

Last month when I was briefing the Security Council on the outcomes of my mission to Iraq together with ASG Michele Coninx, I started with expressing our solidarity with the victims of multiple terrorist attacks in many regions of the world, including in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the deadly violence continues across Afghanistan. According to UNAMA, there were 5,675 security incidents between 15 February and 15 May. The use of improvised explosive devices caused 1,018 civilian casualties (311 persons killed and 707 injured), comprising 45 percent of all civilian casualties. The recent examples are two heinous terrorist attacks that took place in Nangarhar, on 16 and 17 June, which resulted in at least 43 people killed and 45 injured, and a suicide bombing in Kabul on 11 June, which claimed lives of 17 people and injured at least 40. I would like to express my sincere condolences to the Government of Afghanistan.

Such attacks target government officials, Afghan police and security forces, but also civilian targets causing deaths of innocent people and instilling fear throughout the country.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has made countering terrorism and prevention of violent extremism the highest priorities in his agenda. In just two days from now he will be hosting in New York a first ever High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States.

We hope this Conference will provide an opportunity for frank and candid discussions among counter-terrorism practitioners and will give a boost to international counter-terrorism cooperation.

The international community has a solid foundation on which to build. The international legal framework, including counter-terrorism conventions and protocols, relevant Security Council resolutions and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which Member States are currently reviewing for the sixth time, all provide this foundation.

But having this framework is not enough. stronger focus on implementation is needed. Afghanistan genuinely needs and continues to request legal technical assistance and capacity building projects to strengthen its national criminal justice framework to combat terrorism.

I am grateful for the information provided in this regard by Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

The Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, acting on behalf of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, conducted a visit to Afghanistan in early 2017 to monitor Afghanistan's implementation of Security Council resolution 1373, 1624 and 2178; and identify its related technical assistance needs.

In October 2017 the Counter-Terrorism Committee approved the mission report, which identifies 24 priority areas where Afghanistan would benefit from receiving technical assistance, including with regard to legal matters, international cooperation, countering the financing of terrorism, law enforcement and border security, and countering radicalization and incitement to commit terrorist acts.

To support the Afghanistan's implementation efforts, the Counter-Terrorism Committee held an informal meeting on 28 November 2017 to discuss the challenges, with a particular focus on the 24 priority needs. On behalf of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, I participated in the meeting, together with the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan, a representative of Afghanistan's National Security Council, UNAMA and other relevant UN entities and INTERPOL.

Mr. President,

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has been in collaboration with government of Afghanistan on how it can best support Afghanistan's needs in the area of countering terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, both at national and regional levels, based on the CTED's priority recommendations.

In May, UNOCT and UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia located in Ashgabat launched the third phase of the Joint Plan of Action on the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy entitled "Towards a Comprehensive Implementation of United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia". This new initiative sheds light on the emerging challenges faced by the region including the spillover of the conflict from Afghanistan. I am delighted that Afghanistan has actively collaborated with the UN both on the development and implementation of this Plan.

I hope that Afghani counterparts will participate in UN upcoming trainings on border security, countering the use of Internet for propaganda and recruitment purposes by terrorists and tackling drug trafficking as a means to finance terrorism, organized under the umbrella of the above mentioned Joint Plan of Action.

Terrorism clearly has a very real and direct impact on the enjoyment of human rights. Any counter-terrorism efforts should be on the respect of human rights and the rule of law. UNOCT stands ready to provide capacity building in this regard.

Mr. President,

Allow me to express my strong support for all the Afghan victims and survivors of terrorism and praise the resilience of the Afghan people. The leadership of Afghanistan helped to establish the International Day to commemorate Victims of Terrorism on 21 August through the General Assembly resolution 72/165 last year.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has recently launched a multi-million dollar Victims of Terrorism Programme that will stand in solidarity with victims, raise awareness on their needs and work toward the fulfillment of their rights through practical activities, such as:

- building the capacity of victims to put forward counter narratives to those of violent extremism conducive to terrorism;
- strengthening mechanisms to provide practical resources to victims, through the UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal; and
- building the capacity of victims' associations and Member States to better support and assist victims of terrorism.

UNOCT will continue working closely with Afghanistan and other Member States on supporting victims of terrorism, including by producing a documentary focused on Afghanistan in our Victims of Terrorism Documentary series project, implemented by UNOCT in collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information.

To further raise awareness on the issue of victims of terrorism, I would like to invite distinguished UN delegates to a side-event in the framework of the High-Level Conference of heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies organized by UN Office of Counter-Terrorism entitled "Standing in Solidarity for the Rights of Victims of Terrorism", which will be held today in Conference Room 1 at 6:15pm.

I thank you for your attention.