



High-level Conference on the Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism in Budapest concludes

Budapest, 8 November 2019 – The Regional Conference on “Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism: Regional Policy Responses and Risk Mitigation”, co-organized by the Government of Hungary and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), concluded today in Budapest, Hungary.

The Conference brought together over 200 participants from 61 Member States as well as international, regional and civil society organizations who examined strategies addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism through three key thematic areas. These included addressing terrorist narratives, the risks posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters and engaging youth in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

At the closing session, Mr. Voronkov thanked the Government of Hungary for co-chairing the Conference and all the participants for the fruitful discussions. He commended the achievements of this regional conference, which is part of a series of Regional Conferences that UNOCT has organized to give new impetus to multilateral cooperation in addressing the evolving threat of terrorism and to help promote national and regional ownership of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy. “Our discussions during the conference generated many innovative ideas and practical actions not only for this region, but at the global level,” he said.

[On behalf of the two Co-chairs, the Under-Secretary-General presented the key conclusions of the conference and a vision for the way forward.](#) He stated that the conference underlined the need to further strengthen international and regional cooperation, including sharing of good practices and lessons learned to prevent radicalization and fully address the conditions that fuel the lure of terrorism, especially at the grassroots level. “Participants discussed creative ways to address terrorist propaganda and hate speech in all forms. They stressed the need to foster public-private partnerships to both timely remove online terrorist content and to effectively reach out to vulnerable audiences with alternative narratives,” he added.

The discussions during the conference have confirmed that concerns remain about the challenges posed by foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators. The conference highlighted that urgent attention and political leadership are needed to ensure adequate protection and support of vulnerable individuals as well as accountability for serious crimes, including terrorism, war crimes, crimes against humanity and gender-related crimes.

The conference reaffirmed that “whole-of-society” approaches are the most effective way to prevent and counter terrorism and that we must do more to listen to youth perspectives and engage young people to help shape counter-terrorism strategies.

Mr. Voronkov also reported the need to increase support to victims and survivors of terrorism adding that they manifest resilience in the face of terror and that their stories could play an important role in countering the appeal of terrorism.

Finally, the Under-Secretary-General welcomed the views of the Conference on how the United Nations can better support Member States in tackling terrorism. The United Nations must continue to respond to Member States capacity building and technical assistance needs with a view to achieve lasting impact on the ground based on thorough analyses of comparative advantage of what Member States can do better on bilateral basis and what the United Nations could do better. “Guided by the principle of national ownership and leadership in countering terrorism, we must continue to strengthen our cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations to ensure seamless and coordinated support to Member States,” he underscored.

“This conference has enabled us to reaffirm our commitment, align our actions and goals, and pursue an inclusive approach, which is crucial to prevent radicalization to terrorism in this region and across the world,” Mr. Voronkov concluded on behalf of the Co-chairs.

Participating at the closing ceremony, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Hungary, Mr. Sándor Pintér, recalled the country’s efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, including the creation of a specialized Counter-Terrorism Information and Criminal Analysis Centre, a sound legal counter-terrorism framework and implementing Passenger Name Records (PNR) regulations, among other measures. “These measures have proven to be successful, as no significant terrorist activities against Hungary have occurred,” he stressed. He warned against the threat of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and noted that Hungary “has provided help to neighboring countries in identifying individuals and reintegrating them into their societies.”

Mr. Gilles de Kerchove, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator of the European Union reiterated his warnings on hate speech and on-line terrorist content as crucial drivers of violent extremism. He also emphasized that accountability for terrorist crimes, upholding humanitarian considerations, protecting children and giving voice to young people, are key factors in fostering prevention.

This Conference is the fifth in a series of regional conferences on counter-terrorism that follow-up on the first-ever UN High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism of Member States, which focused on “strengthening international cooperation to combat the evolving threat of terrorism,” and was held in New York on June 28-29, 2018 under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres. These conferences are taking place around the world, at the initiative of Member States, to strengthen regional cooperation on common counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism priorities. The outcomes and recommendations of these conferences will feed into the second High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, which will take place in New York in July 2020 and inform design and implementation of technical assistance by the UNOCT and its partners.

For more information, contact Gerardl@un.org or visit: bit.ly/OCT-RegionalConferences and bit.ly/HU2019UN