

**Video Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov**  
**Under-Secretary-General**  
**United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**  
**Executive Director, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre**

**“Ensuring the Effective Implementation of Countering the Financing of  
Terrorism Measures while Safeguarding Civic Space”**

**Virtual Initiative Launch Event**  
**7:00am; 13 October 2020**

Distinguished Participants,

I would like to warmly welcome all of you to this launch of the joint GCTF-UN Initiative on “Ensuring the Effective Implementation of Countering the Financing of Terrorism Measures while Safeguarding Civic Space”.

The United Nations is pleased to co-lead this initiative with the Kingdom of Morocco and the Kingdom of the Netherlands

We live in challenging times, with a COVID-19 pandemic putting unprecedented stress on societies, whole nations and the entire international community.

Governments are struggling to contain the virus and mitigate the wide-ranging impact and implications of the worst global ‘human crisis’ since World War Two.

Long before the pandemic, civil society has played a vital role alongside communities, governments and international organizations in efforts to address humanitarian needs, sustain peace, promote respect for human right and the rule of law, and achieve Sustainable Development.

Civil society also makes important contributions to preventing and countering terrorism as both the General Assembly and the Security Council has recognized.

Women and youth groups, community-based organizations, charities, religious organizations, human rights defenders, to name just a few, are indispensable partners at the grassroots level to strengthen social cohesion, build resilience and

leave no one behind in addressing the conditions conducive to violent extremism and terrorism, some of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is therefore imperative that efforts to counter terrorist financing do not come at the cost of undermining the very fabric that makes societies strong, inclusive and peaceful.

We need to craft and implement measures that ensure terrorists cannot raise, move, store or use funds for their heinous goals - while at the same time safeguarding civic space.

We need ensure an enabling environment for civil society, while at the same time protecting non-profit organizations from criminal abuse, including for terrorism financing.

Yet, in his report earlier this year on the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Secretary-General Guterres noted that “counter-terrorism measures, when applied arbitrarily, unnecessarily or disproportionately, contribute to the shrinking of civic space.”

He noted that “in some cases counter-terrorism measures are adversely affecting principled humanitarian action, compounding the vulnerabilities of those in need and playing into terrorist narratives.”

Measures to counter terrorist financing, like any measure to prevent or counter terrorism, must comply with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.

In its landmark resolution 2462, of 2019, the Security Council underscored both the need for States to step up their efforts on countering the financing of terrorism, and the importance of protecting human rights and principled humanitarian action.

The Security Council specifically called on UNOCT to enhance coordination with the aim of delivering integrated technical assistance on counter-terrorist financing measures.

My Office attaches high importance to this mandate and I am pleased that we are strengthening our partnership with the GCTF in this regard.

Through the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in my Office, we are working with a wide range of entities across the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to promote the implementation of resolution 2462 – including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, UNODC and the 1267 Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

UNCCT recently launched a new global capacity-building programme to support national and regional efforts, raise awareness and build capacity to suppress terrorist financing and protect financial flows from terrorist abuse.

I invite all Governments to collaborate under our global programme by offering their expertise and financial support.

We are committed to meaningfully engage civil society in this endeavour.

Dear Colleagues,

Today we launch the second GCTF Initiative co-led by the United Nations.

This initiative and our joint work on watch-listing are solid examples of a growing, action-oriented partnership with the GCTF.

I look forward to further strengthening this collaboration as we near multiple milestones: the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, its 7<sup>th</sup> biennial review, and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GCTF.

I wish you a productive meeting.

Thank you.