



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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

**Virtual Briefing to Member States on the UNOCT Programme Office for
Counter-terrorism and Training in Africa in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco**

22 October 2020

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to our joint briefing with His Excellency Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations, to inform you about the UNOCT Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa, which will be established in Rabat.

Let me begin by thanking the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, in particular His Excellency Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, with whom I had the pleasure to sign earlier this month the agreements establishing the UNOCT Programme Office in Rabat and Morocco's financial support to it.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Hilale for his remarks, as well as his strong support and personal engagement to establish UNOCT's Rabat programme office.

I also want to acknowledge the participation today of Ms. Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Morocco, and thank her for her support.

My Office looks forward to working closely with her and the United Nations Country Team, as we continue to leverage the expertise and capacities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities operating on the ground to deliver coordinated and complementary counter-terrorism technical assistance.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is expanding its engagement with the field in order to deliver more impactful, cost-efficient and sustainable, "all-of-UN" technical and capacity-building support to Member States, regional organizations, civil society partners and other counter-terrorism stakeholders.

In partnership with host Governments, we have established a regional programme support office in Budapest and a liaison presence in Brussels. We have deployed individual UNOCT staff to Ashgabat, Baghdad, Bangkok, Bishkek, Dhaka, and Nouakchott, and will soon launch a programme office on behavioural insights in Doha.

At the same time, Africa remains a priority for the Secretary-General and my Office.

The increase in the frequency and lethality of terrorist attacks in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, Mozambique, Somalia and other parts of Africa shows that more needs to be done to address the terrorist threat in the continent. This includes enhancing regional cooperation and sharing of information, expertise and best practices to prevent and counter terrorism.

As UNOCT's first *programme* office in Africa, the Rabat office will serve as a state-of-the-art training hub for the development and delivery of counter-terrorism training for law enforcement and border security officers in Africa, with an initial focus on the Sahel region.

In partnership with participating States' national training and academic institutions, the training hub will develop human rights-compliant training curricula tailored to the needs and priorities of requesting beneficiaries.

It will provide certified specialized training on border security and management, prison management, and prevention, deradicalization and reintegration, among other areas.

A key expected contribution of the Rabat office will be to strengthen national and regional capacities to investigate terrorist plots, including through sharing of information and evidence with national, regional and international authorities in accordance with human rights.

That is why I am confident that the training hub will make an important contribution to countering terrorism in Africa and beyond, by enhancing the knowledge and providing skills and tools to practitioners, promoting good practices, and facilitating cooperation among counter-terrorism, law enforcement and border security officials.

Going forward, we will focus our efforts on operationalizing the Rabat programme office by equipping it with qualified technical expertise, developing its programme of work, and mobilizing the funding necessary to sustain its operations.

I take this opportunity to call on Member States to consider making a financial contribution to the Rabat programme office. An estimated 14 million U.S. dollars is needed for the first five years of operation. A figure that includes staffing and operational costs, as well as costs related to the implementation of the programme of work, and a figure that would be much higher if we were to implement these projects from New York.

I thank the Kingdom of Morocco for its financial contribution, as well as its offer of technical expertise and in-kind support through its relevant institutions. Your financial support will help more countries in Africa build their capacity and reinforce their ability to prevent and combat terrorism.

I would like to re-iterate my gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco for its close collaboration with UNOCT and for hosting our Rabat programme office, which is yet another mark of its commitment to multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation.

I look forward to working with all of you to ensure that this office achieves its full potential, and welcome any comments and questions you may have.

Thank you.