



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)**

Closing Remarks of Mr. Jehangir Khan, Director United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network and United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre joint *Virtual Strategic Chemical Attack Table-Top Exercise*

21 September 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to close this *Virtual Strategic Chemical Attack Table-Top Exercise*, which brought together strategic and tactical leaders from many cities around the world as well as experts from several international organizations.

Following the successful joint organization of the *Virtual Strategic Bioterrorism Table-Top Exercise* this June, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Counter Terrorism Preparedness Network (CTPN) decided to embark in this second activity focusing on chemical threats.

In this regard, I would like to convey my appreciation to Mr. Andrew Roe, Commissioner, London Fire Brigade, United Kingdom, for joining us in the opening of the event as well as our partners in CTPN for working closely with UNCCT staff in making this exercise successful.

I would also like to thank all the participants for actively engaging both in the break-out groups and the plenary discussions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, stated last November that “*while terrorism continues to pose a threat for the whole world, Chemical, Biological, radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) terrorism is a particular issue of concern for Member States and the international community alike.*”

He also stressed that “*we must remain vigilant as any possibility of terrorists accessing and using CBRN weapons and materials poses a serious threat to international peace and security.*”

The use of chemical weapons by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) in Syria and Iraq is a stark reminder of the horrible crimes committed by this terrorist group.

The initial findings of the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism for Syria and latest report of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) in Iraq, released in May 2021, confirmed the atrocities of chemical and biological terrorism and its horrendous consequences on thousands of civilians which were injured or killed.

It is also worth mentioning that in October 2020, the Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) announced that 79 tons of sulfuric acid were seized from Al-Shabaab.

In this context, allow me to highlight that the risk of non-State actors acquiring lethal technologies and weapons is still as much of a challenge for international peace and security as it was when the Security Council adopted resolution 1540 in 2004.

During the latest review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, conducted last June, the United Nations General Assembly urged all Member States to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction, their means of delivery and related materials, equipment and technologies related to their manufacture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNCCT is supporting Member States at the global, regional and national levels to prevent and counter CBRN terrorism. This year we conducted capacity-building and outreach activities for more than 1000 officials and we hope to resume our work in the field soon.

For example, in 2020 UNCCT worked closely with Iraq in countering the threat of chemical and biological clandestine terrorist laboratories. In addition, in 2021 UNCCT launched six training courses focusing on combating the threat of chemical terrorism and developing countermeasures. Last but not least, since 2016 UNCCT and the OPCW have been leading a joint project on ensuring international interagency interoperability to respond to chemical and biological attacks.

Today, UNCCT partnered with CTPN to provide an opportunity to strategic and tactical leaders from across CTPN cities to take a deep-dive into this priority area alongside with international subject matter experts. The exercise reflected on how multi-agency preparedness and response arrangements could be enhanced, and resilience developed, with a specific focus on the city level.

In closing, I would like to highlight that UNCCT remains committed to assisting Member States in building their capacities in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Thank you.