

Press release

Launch of the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees

New York, 29 September 2021 –The Republic of Iraq and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, along with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), jointly launched the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees during a side event on the margins of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Today, thousands of suspected foreign terrorist fighters are held in detention facilities, while at least 42,000 foreign women and children remain in overcrowded camps and detention centers in northeast Syria. The protracted humanitarian situation in these camps and detention facilities is unsustainable from both a humanitarian and a security perspective. In response, the United Nations has come together to support Member States willing to repatriate their nationals from Iraq and Syria by developing a Global Framework for UN Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees (Global Framework).

UN Secretary-General António Guterres [highlighted](#) in his recorded opening statement that “The United Nations has developed a Global Framework that provides integrated ‘all-of-UN’ technical and financial support that addresses the humanitarian and protection needs of returnees from Iraq and Syria while also responding to accountability and security concerns.” Secretary-General Guterres added: “This Framework offers human rights-based, age-appropriate, and gender-responsive solutions.”

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) [stressed](#) that “Not only does the Global Framework support Member States to protect and address the needs of returnees but it also builds the capacity of Member States to respond to security concerns and to promote accountability. This includes support to develop comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies as outlined in Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017).” He also reiterated UNOCT’s support, in partnership with UNICEF and other UN entities, for Member States that are repatriating their nationals: “We will do so in a manner that ensures security and accountability, reduces the risk of recidivism and terrorist recruitment and movement, while protecting the human rights of all.”

Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF [said](#): “We remain concerned about the situation of thousands of foreign children and families in detention centers and closed camps in Syria and Iraq. Some of these children have spent half of their childhood in limbo, with barely any access to education, health care, clean water, or other essential services. Their circumstances may be complex, but the decision to help them is a simple one. And we have seen that solutions are

possible. That's why UNICEF is proud to co-lead this Global Framework – a unique partnership to solve a critical contemporary problem.”

To support the Global Framework, a dedicated Multi-Partner Trust Fund has been established to enable rapid, coherent and coordinated delivery across both of its objectives. The Secretary-General urged the donor community “to support this effort by contributing to the Global Framework’s Multi-Partner-Trust-Fund.”

Following the opening remarks, the remainder of the event was moderated by Ms. Miwa Kato, Director of the Division for Operations of UNODC. **Ms. Åsa Regnér, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for Policy, Programme, Civil Society and Intergovernmental Support, UN Women**, and **Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**, highlighted human rights and gender considerations of the Global Framework.

Ms. Michèle Coninx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, then shared insights on joint scoping exercises, the Global Framework’s first step of implementation in priority countries. This was followed by interventions from representatives of Iraq and Uzbekistan on the implementation of the Global Framework in their countries.

The event also featured **Ms. Ilaria Carnevali, Deputy Executive Coordinator, UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office**, who introduced the Global Framework dedicated funding mechanism. **Mr. Huib Mijnders, International Counter-Terrorism Envoy, Kingdom of the Netherlands** and **Mr. Timothy Pounds, Deputy Coordinator for Regional and Multilateral Affairs, Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State**, discussed their existing support to the implementation of the Global Framework.

At the conclusion of the event, **Mr. Pekka Haavisto, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland**, underscored that the launch of the Global Framework is “a sign of [the] UN’s commitment to find solutions to this incredibly difficult and politically sensitive issue. It is bringing together our counter-terrorism objectives and human rights of children in particular. Both are necessary and mutually compatible.”

This virtual event was broadcast live on [UNWEBTV](#) and was attended by more than 260 representatives from Member States, international and regional organizations, United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, academia, think tanks and civil society organizations.

The Global Framework and Multi-Partner Trust Fund

The Global Framework is co-chaired by UNOCT and UNICEF and enables “all-of-UN” support to Member States on individuals returning from Iraq and Syria, combining human rights-based, age-appropriate and gender-responsive approaches to address the different needs of women, men, girls and boys.

All support is grounded in national legal frameworks and fully compliant with international law, including international human rights, international humanitarian, and international refugee law. Designed in 2020, the Global Framework is already being used to support implementation in Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

To enable rapid, coherent and coordinated delivery across both the development/recovery and the security/accountability objectives, the Global Framework is supported by a dedicated pooled fund mechanism administered by the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO). Funding through the MPTF is channeled through two distinct funding streams –in line with the Global Framework’s objectives. One stream is allocated to supporting protection, humanitarian and recovery activities that prioritize children and caregiver-focused interventions, while the other is allocated to supporting accountability and security interventions for returning adults.

Contributions are accepted from Member States, regional bodies, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, businesses, foundations, and individuals

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