



PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of heads of counter-terrorism and security agencies takes place in Marrakech to enhance capacity- building and training in West Africa and the Sahel

Marrakesh, 23 June 2021 – H.E. Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and H.E. Mr. Mohamed Yassin Mansouri, Director General of the General Directorate for Studies and Documentation of the Kingdom of Morocco, co-chaired the opening ceremony of the High-Level event of Heads of Counter-Terrorism and Security Agencies in Africa, in Marrakesh, Morocco today.

Considering the vital work of the counter-terrorism and security agencies in the fight against terrorism, the event aimed to provide participants an opportunity to discuss challenges and ways to strengthen regional counter-terrorism cooperation and identify capacity-building needs for long term resilience.

In his opening statement, Under-Secretary-General Voronkov [said](#) that the meeting is taking place at a time when terrorism and violent extremism are assuming unprecedented scales of expansion and intensity within and beyond the African continent. “My Office remains committed to supporting you in responding to the terrorist threat in the region and will move with you to strengthen hope, peace and inclusion,” he added.

The High-Level event gathered over 80 participants including 25 heads of security agencies mainly from the Sahel, West and Central Africa as well as Mozambique.

Mr. Voronkov also welcomed the participation of the high-level keynote speakers including Special Representative of the Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Annadif Khatir Mahamat Saleh and the Head of Defense and Security Department G5 Sahel Général Mohamed Ely Znagui. The co-chairs of the Africa Focus Group of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, namely Italy, Morocco and Niger, were also in attendance.

The event was organized by the UNOCT Programme Office in Rabat for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa, which on 24 June marks its first anniversary since it was established in Rabat with the support of the Kingdom of Morocco. This Programme Office is mandated to develop and implement key counter-terrorism training programmes and initiatives to support requesting Member States from Africa. The Office has been closely cooperating with national, regional and international partners to put forward sustained and practical counter-terrorism capacity-building programmes for the countries of the region.

For more information, please contact gerardl@un.org, UNOCT Public Information Officer