



## 2023 Counter-Terrorism Week SIDE EVENTS

19–23 JUNE 2023

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### Press Release

## Enhancing multilateralism and reinforcing nuclear security: EU support to the UN in promoting the universalization and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)

**New York, 19 June 2023** – The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Union (EU) held a hybrid side event on the margins of the United Nations 2023 Counter-Terrorism Week, convening over 120 representatives from Member States and international and regional organizations.

The event raised awareness of the importance of the universalization and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and demonstrated the strong partnership between the European Union and the United Nations on enhancing multilateralism and strengthening nuclear security through its four-and-a-half-year capacity building project.

Moreover, the side event provided a platform for Member States to share their experience, raised awareness of the threat of nuclear terrorism, the international legal framework, and the technical assistance available and showcased the significant work that UNOCT and UNODC have conducted in this area.

During the welcoming remarks session, **Mr. Raffi Gregorian, Director, and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, UNOCT**, emphasized that “today’s meeting showcased efforts of Member States, the United Nations, and the European Union in countering nuclear terrorism. UNOCT looks forward to continuing partnership with UNODC and the European Union on the next phase of the joint project.”

Similarly, **Mr. Masood Karimipour, Chief of Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC**, emphasized that “given the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear or other radioactive material for criminal purposes, prevention and suppression is fundamental, and they lie at the core of ICSANT.”

**Amb. Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**, stated “One of the challenges we are facing today is the real risk of nuclear and other radioactive material falling into the wrong hands. So, it is very fitting we discuss it in the context of the Counter-Terrorism Week. This underlines the growing importance of safety and security of nuclear facilities and nuclear material, as well as of the relevant international instruments.”

During the first session of the event, officials from Member States that have engaged in the project shared their experiences in ratifying and implementing ICSANT in their countries. These included France, Ghana, Nigeria, Paraguay and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

**Ms. Jeanne Laterrade, Deputy Director for the Fight against Terrorism and Organised Crime, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France**, underlined “the good cooperation between France and UNOCT with regard to the organisation of the Lutetia regional table-top exercise and workshop on radiological/nuclear detection based on information and links to traditional national security, organised in Paris in March 2023 and emphasized the importance of these types of exercises for the effective implementation of ICSANT.”

**Ms. Jennifer Adjetey Armah, Senior Legal Officer, Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Ghana** indicated that “Ghana is party to 18 of the 19 international legal instruments against terrorism and recognizes that ICSANT is an essential tool for preventing nuclear and radiological terrorism and improving nuclear security worldwide, as the effective incorporation of ICSANT’s requirements into national legislation helps to ensure that there is no safe haven for those committing the offences established by the convention.”

**Mr. George Ehidiamen Edokpa, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations** informed, that “ICSANT is pertinent especially for some countries in Africa, where the expansion of Da’esh and Al Qaeda affiliates has led to a surge in terrorism and greater sophistication in modes of attack. As one of the nations at the forefront of the global fight against terrorism, the Nigerian Government gives due importance to the need to prevent terrorists from accessing such lethal weapons.”

**H.E. Mr. Juan Francisco Facetti, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the United Nations in Vienna** stated, “The widespread use of nuclear and radioactive materials in myriad peaceful applications globally requires that we remain vigilant to ensure that these materials are kept out of the reach of those with criminal intent.”

**Mr. Michael Penny, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federation of Saint Kitts, and Nevis**, stressed the importance of “not letting down the guard and noted that his country recognizes that doing this by ourselves we can get far but that multilateralism will make us go further.”

The second session was dedicated to presentations on the progress made under the current project (January 2019 - June 2023), during which UNOCT and UNODC also highlighted the main priorities to be addressed by the upcoming project (July 2023 - June 2026) in support of the universalization and effective implementation of the ICSANT, including awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.

## **Background**

This event was part of the global project on Promoting Universalization and Effective Implementation of ICSANT, funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by UNOCT/UNCCT and UNODC. ICSANT was adopted in 2005 by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly. It entered into force in 2007 and currently has 120 Parties. The project supports requesting Member States to strengthen legal frameworks and enhance nuclear security. It also seeks to enhance appreciation of the importance of ratifying and effectively implementing the Convention.

The UNOCT Rabat Programme Office presented its various initiatives and innovative training programs designed for African Member States, with the emphasis on five thematic areas, in collaboration with UNOCT's thematic global capacity-building programmes: Counter-Terrorism Investigations (CTI), Border Security Management (BSM), Prison Management (PM), Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism conducive to terrorism (PCVE), and Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR).

The Programme Office organized and delivered its first specialized training curriculum on CTI in 2022, aimed at developing the capacity of law enforcement officials to identify evidence of criminal activity in critical areas, support complex cases, and direct those who gather evidence to support effective counter-terrorism efforts.

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For more information:

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