



Heads of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Bodies conclude joint high-level visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan

Astana, Kazakhstan, 14 July 2023 – Today, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and Ms. Natalia Gherman, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), concluded a three-day high-level visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan at the invitation of the Government.

During the visit, Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Gherman participated in the First Central Asian Peace and Security Forum, hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in Astana on 13 and 14 July with keynote statements, discussing ways of cooperation in the context of global security challenges. Mr. Voronkov noted that “Central Asian countries have made significant progress in the last years in strengthening regional cooperation and international partnership, addressing common issues including terrorism. UNOCT stands ready to actively facilitate all these efforts”.

While recognizing the security challenges faced by Central Asia, as the sub-region that is close to regions marked by terrorist activity, Ms. Gherman noted that there “should be no doubt that strengthening international and regional cooperation to fight terrorism should remain one of the top priorities for the international community. In this regard, Central Asian States are leading by example in demonstrating their strong political will to work together on countering terrorism at the regional level.”

Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Gherman also held a series of joint high-level bilateral meetings with senior officials from the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The aim was to deepen the already fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and Kazakhstan under the umbrella of the Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia and guided by the recommendations stemming from the country assessment visits conducted by CTED, on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, to assess the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions on counter terrorism.

Meeting with H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on Friday, 14 July, the high-level delegation expressed appreciation for Kazakhstan’s engagement in promoting international and regional cooperation in countering terrorism. They also commended Kazakhstan for having set an example for other Member States by repatriating its nationals associated to terrorism from conflict zones. President Tokayev expressed Kazakhstan’s readiness to further engage with the work of UNOCT, CTED and partner entities from the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Gherman also met with H.E. Mr. Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Mr. Marat Akhmetzhanov, Minister of Internal Affairs; Mr. Yermek Sagimbayev, Chair of the National Security Committee; Mr. Berik Asylov, Prosecutor General; Ms. Dinara Zakiyeva, Ombudsperson for Children Rights; and Mr. Zhakip Assanov, Deputy Chair of the Senate of the Parliament; as well as Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey, United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United

Nations Country Team. Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Gherman also held a dedicated meeting with civil society organizations.

During the high-level visit to Astana, Under-Secretary General Voronkov and Ambassador at Large of the Foreign Ministry Mr. Talgat Kaliyev co-chaired a presentation, with Ms. Gherman, to over 70 members of diplomatic corps in Kazakhstan, on UNOCT counter-terrorism & PCVE programmes in Central Asia, delivered with its partners. These included, for instance, the Joint Plan of Action for a Comprehensive Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; Supporting States in Central Asia regarding their nationals returned from conflict zones, principally Syria and Iraq; Detecting, Preventing, and Countering the Financing of Terrorism; Strengthening Member States' Border Management Capacities to Counter Terrorism and Related Transnational Crime and the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters; Addressing the nexus between terrorism and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons; Enhancing Cybersecurity and countering the use of new technologies by terrorists while harnessing their potential responsibly; Countering Threats against Vulnerable Targets; and Strengthening Resilience, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.