



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Opening remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations
Office of Counter-Terrorism**

UNOCT Annual Ambassadorial-level Briefing to Member States (Via Webex Webinar)

**5 March 2024
New York**

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Good morning and welcome to our first Quarterly Briefing to Member States this year. Today, we will share with you the progress made in our joint efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism and present our policy priorities for this year.

Let us begin by watching a short - but I hope meaningful - video on UNOCT's key achievements in 2023.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Despite all the continuous efforts, still we must face the grim reality that terrorism continues to pose a significant threat to international peace and security.

Both Al-Qaida and Da'esh affiliates are capable to organize their heinous attacks, notably in conflict zones in parts of Africa, particularly in West Africa and the Sahel.

Regarding the situation in camps and detention facilities in northeast Syria, where persons with suspected links to Da'esh and other terrorist groups are held, I echo the repeated calls of the Secretary-General for urgent action.

Member States with nationals in these camps need to bring them home with due regard for well-established prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration standards.

Additionally, the exploitation by terrorists of Internet, as well as new and emerging technologies, including unmanned aerial systems and virtual assets, is also very concerning.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

The importance of international counter-terrorism cooperation against this menace cannot be understated, including through the sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned, as well as strengthening existing partnerships and networks.

In this regard, UNOCT will continue to strengthen the implementation of our global capacity-building programmes together with relevant international, regional, and national partners.

My Office is also committed to stepping up its work with Member States to strengthen gender-sensitive and human rights-compliant approaches, whilst promoting a victim-centered approach.

We also look forward to Member States' deliberations at the Summit of the Future in September. I hope that the longstanding consensus among Member States against terrorism as well as the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace will contribute to strengthening multilateral cooperation in the Pact for the Future being currently negotiated.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Countering the increasing terrorism threat in Africa is a priority for the Office.

While we had to postpone the African Counter-Terrorism Summit planned for April 2024, UNOCT will continue to work with African Member States and regional organizations to strengthen cooperation against terrorism in the continent.

These efforts will include providing support to the Government of Nigeria in organizing a High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Ministerial Meeting in Abuja, on 22-23 April.

The meeting will be African-led and African-owned allowing participants to identify tangible ways of strengthening regional cooperation and institution building to address the evolving threat of terrorism in Africa. It will also mobilize more international support and provide tailored capacity building assistance to affected African Member States.

I am grateful to the Government of Nigeria for taking the lead in this important endeavor.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

We are also committed to continue leveraging coordination across the 46 entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

Jointly with CTED and the Resident Coordinator in Benin, UNOCT has started developing a prioritized and coordinated UN technical assistance plan to address needs identified by CTED following its assessment visit to Benin. This pilot initiative could be replicated for other Member States in the future.

With UNODC and IOM, UNOCT has just launched the Integrated Border Stability Mechanism to strengthen border governance in West Africa.

And I am grateful to OHCHR and UN Women for their excellent cooperation in supporting human rights and gender mainstreaming across all our activities.

These are only few examples of coordinated activities of the United Nations system's fight against terrorism.

The Joint Appeal for Counter-Terrorism in Africa, launched by the UN last year, unites 16 UN entities behind one goal: A more visible, transparent, and effective multilateral response to the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Africa.

At the tenth Coordination Committee meeting of the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact held in January, with participation of the Secretary-General, we agreed to a more robust and coordinated response to address the needs of the continent.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

I would like to thank Member States for approving the conversion of 24 existing extrabudgetary positions in UNOCT to the Regular Budget in December 2023. This provides the Office with critical capacity to deliver our core mandated functions of policy leadership and coordination.

Our capacity-building and technical assistance work remains funded from extra-budgetary contributions.

I am proud to report that in 2023, we secured 27.2 million US dollars in pledges from 23 funding partners – a 70 percent increase over 2022.

We are sincerely grateful to the largest donors of the Office activities, the State of Qatar, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And the invaluable support from the European Union, the United Nations Peace and Development Fund, the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Japan, and the Russian Federation.

We also received first-time contributions from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, and Oman, for which we are extremely grateful.

Multilateral cooperation remains a priority for UNOCT. Through 15 High-Level Regional and International Conferences held over the past six years, we have brought together diverse stakeholders, to share good practices and develop innovative partnerships to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

These events have sustained the multilateral momentum on counter-terrorism and strengthened ownership and implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

This year, we are jointly co-organizing with the Caribbean Community and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, a High-Level Regional Conference on Counter-Terrorism in Port-of-Spain, in October.

And with Tajikistan and Kuwait, we aim to jointly organize the Third Dushanbe Process High-Level Conference to broaden the scope and impact of counter-terrorism cooperation well beyond Central Asia.

Another important event planned under the human rights agenda, for October of this year, is the International Conference on Victims of Terrorism in Vitoria organized together with Spain.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

As I conclude, I hope that our discussion today will help address the following issues:

How could we strengthen the counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations system to support those States most affected by terrorism? How could we collaborate better to prevent terrorist attacks from taking place? Which thematic issues concern you the most?

I look forward to hearing your priorities for this year and to continuing our strong partnership in common efforts against terrorism.

Thank you.