



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Briefing on UNOCT to Diplomatic Corps in Tashkent 15 May 2024, Tashkent

Your Excellency Mr. Muzaffarbek Madrakhimov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan,

Excellencies,
Esteemed members of the Tashkent Diplomatic Corps,

I would like to start by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan for hosting this important briefing on UNOCT capacity building activities in Central Asia and thank the members of the diplomatic corps present with us today for their interest and time.

I am also grateful for Uzbekistan's immense support and partnership with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the wider UN family on the counter-terrorism agenda.

I am joined today by Mr. Kaha Imnadze, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Asia and Head of the Centre for Preventative Diplomacy for Central Asia.

UNRCCA has been and continues to be a critical partner to UNOCT, hosting our Liaison presence in Ashgabat through which we coordinate the delivery of our support to Central Asia.

Excellencies,

The spread of terrorism continues to pose a severe threat to global peace and security.

We are still grappling with the aftermath of Da'esh in Iraq and Syria, which had managed to lure an unprecedented number of thousands of individuals.

Here in Central Asia, developments in Afghanistan have raised further security concerns, requiring joint regional and international efforts.

Since its establishment in 2017, UNOCT has worked to spearhead support to Member States in addressing these challenges, guided by the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We provide leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General across the United Nations system, enhance coordination and coherence across the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, and strengthen the delivery of capacity-building assistance to Member States.

It is worth highlighting that Central Asian governments have shown exemplary leadership in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and strengthening their partnership with the United Nations system. They were the first to come together as a region to adopt a Joint Plan of Action over a decade ago.

The United Nations, and UNOCT in particular, has been a proud strategic partner and technical assistance provider under this regional umbrella and at the national level.

UNOCT has been working very closely with Uzbekistan and all our Central Asian partners as part of our long-term commitment. Our partnership allows us to understand Member States' priorities, develop and implement responses, capitalize on lessons learned, and follow up to ensure continued results.

In addition, we leverage the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact – the largest coordination framework in the United Nations system – as well as our partnership with regional organizations active in Central Asia.

Our liaison presence in Ashgabat, our collaboration with UNRCCA and other UN and non-UN partners like CTED, UNODC, UNDP, UNICEF, OSCE, and SCO RATC, as well as our engagement with UN Country Teams, all help ensure alignment of priorities, forward planning and efficient delivery.

We also bring together diverse stakeholders, share good practices and develop innovative partnerships to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism through regional and international conferences.

This November, together with Tajikistan and Kuwait, we aim to jointly organize the next Dushanbe Process High-Level Conference which will be held in Kuwait City from 4 to 5 November 2024, under the proposed theme of " Strengthening International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Building Agile Border Security mechanisms."

Another important event planned for October of this year is the International Conference on Victims of Terrorism in Vitoria supported by the Kingdom of Spain.

UNOCT has provided and continues to offer wide-ranging support across all four pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy at the request of Central Asian Member States.

Today, you will hear in greater detail about some of our work in Central Asia in areas such as:

- Strengthening Resilience, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism;
- Enhancing Cybersecurity and Countering the use of new technologies by terrorists;
- Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Returnees from conflict zones;
- Countering the Financing of Terrorism;
- Strengthening Border Management Capacities to Counter Terrorism;
- Countering Terrorists' Travel;
- Protecting vulnerable targets from terrorist attacks;
- Countering the terrorist use of weapons;
- and other related topics, including ensuring pertinent regional coordination.

All these thematic areas are well reflected in the new Roadmap between UNOCT and Uzbekistan for 2024-2025 that I signed earlier today with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, I would like to note that this work is possible thanks to the generous and continuous support of the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the UN Peace and Development Fund funded by China, the United States of America, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Japan and the Russian Federation, alongside with the other 32 funding partners who have provided continued political and financial support to my Office. Voluntary contributions provide 80 per cent of our annual budget and are critical for the effective delivery of UNOCT's mandate.

The percentage of UNOCT's annual budget that is covered from the UN Regular Budget now makes up twenty percent for our core institutional positions (*this was previously nine percent in 2023 and 3 per cent in 2022*), following the General Assembly's approval of the Secretary-General's budget proposal in December 2023.

Our partnership with Member States is critical for UNOCT to effectively deliver its capacity-building support regionally and globally.

I look forward to an interactive discussion at the end of this briefing.