



## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

### PRESS RELEASE

#### **Head of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office reiterates commitment to support efforts to counter terrorism in Africa**

**Fez, Morocco - 5 June 2024** – Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), concludes a visit to Morocco in which he participated in the *High-Level Event of Heads of African Counter-Terrorism and Security Agencies in Africa*, known as the Marrakech Platform. The event was co-organized by the Kingdom of Morocco and UNOCT through its Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa in Rabat.

The third edition of this two-day event focused on intelligence analysis in the context of counter-terrorism. It aimed to explore the risks and opportunities presented by the rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence, and how to leverage such emerging technologies to counter terrorism, while respecting international law, including human rights.

At the closing session of this annual meeting that he co-chaired with **Mr. Mohamed Yassin Mansouri, Director General of the Moroccan General Directorate for Studies and Documentation, Mr. Voronkov** welcomed the depth and practicalities of the discussions and the spirit of cooperation during the event, which gathered representatives from 54 African Member States, international observers and regional organizations.

*“While important progress has been made by African Member States and international partners to combat terrorism, much remains to be done as the threat posed by Al-Qaida, Da’esh and their affiliates in Africa is increasingly testing the capacities of national security agencies,”* warned the **Under-Secretary-General**.

As the threat continues to evolve, Mr. Voronkov called for counter measures that are as agile and as multifaceted as the threat itself, bearing in mind that terrorism will not be defeated by military force, law enforcement measures and intelligence operations alone. He stressed the need to equally advance prevention efforts, including to address the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

*“Our main objective through this platform remains and will continue to be to create synergies and share our knowledge and collective resources to make significant progress in the fight against terrorism and to strengthen the resilience of our agencies and even our respective nations, in the face of the growing terrorist threat”*, noted **Mr. Mansouri**.

This third iteration of the Marrakech Platform builds on the recommendations of recent events, including the High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Meeting, and the Regional High-Level Event of Heads of Counter-Terrorism and Security Agencies, held in April in Abuja and

Tripoli respectively. Its outcomes will feed into the “Abuja Process”, which is an African-owned and African-led initiative aimed at strengthening counter-terrorism efforts in the continent and providing tailored capacity-building support to affected countries, including through the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities.

In this regard, the **Under-Secretary-General** reiterated the commitment of UNOCT to continue to support Member States in their counter-terrorism efforts. *“We have increasingly invested in delivering comprehensive, tailored, and practical capacity building programmes to African Member States upon request, ensuring that our approaches are grounded in human rights and the rule of law as well as promote the meaningful engagement with civil society, including community and religious leaders,”* he said. *“Looking ahead, UNOCT will continue to increase its support to African Member States, including to implement the recommendations and outcomes of this meeting”.*

During the visit, Mr. Voronkov held bilateral meetings with Moroccan High-level Officials, including H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco, and Mr. Mohamed Yassine Mansouri, Director General of the General Directorate for Studies and Documentation. The Under-Secretary-General expressed his gratitude to the Royal Kingdom of Morocco for hosting and co-organizing this event, as well as for its strong support to UNOCT.

Launched in June 2022, the Marrakech Platform is designed to promote regional cooperation and capacity-building in counter-terrorism in Africa. It provides a unique forum for African counter-terrorism and intelligence agencies to discuss current threats including new and emerging technologies; and to coordinate effective responses to the diverse challenges posed by terrorism on the continent.

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*For more information, please contact the Strategic Communications Team of the Office of Counter-Terrorism at [oct-info@un.org](mailto:oct-info@un.org)*