



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General,
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism [pre-recorded]**

**Side Event: “Building knowledge on counter-terrorism in the age of artificial intelligence: threats,
opportunities and safeguarding human rights”**

29 June 2021, 1.30 p.m.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this very important discussion on counter-terrorism in the age of artificial intelligence and the launch of two reports, developed jointly by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

Over the past decade, we have seen the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence solutions in both the public and private sectors.

The United Nations Secretary-General’s 2019 Strategy on New Technologies acknowledges both great promise and risks that these new technologies bring.

Terrorists have been early adopters of emerging technologies, which tend to be under-regulated and under-governed.

Lack of adequate policies, regulations and governance hinder Member States’ abilities to effectively use predictive artificial intelligence capabilities in a manner that also safeguards human rights, such as the right to privacy and the right of freedom of opinion.

However, if harnessed responsibly, predictive artificial intelligence to counter terrorism might minimize the need for more invasive monitoring of citizens that lead to human rights concerns. In some cases it can even help authorities focus limited resources on the highest threats while facilitating the legitimate movement of persons, such as the use of advance passenger information and passenger name record data that is collected and analyzed in accordance with human rights.

The Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation sets “Supporting Global Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence” as one of the eight key areas of action. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in my Office is responding to this area of action through its Global Counter-Terrorism Programme on Cybersecurity and New Technologies.

This Programme is launching today two reports developed jointly with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Research Institute.

Both reports explore the risk-benefit duality of artificial intelligence in the counter-terrorism context, in order to enable governments, industry, academia and the broader global community to think proactively about what we can do collectively to ensure that new technologies are used to bring good and not harm.

It is also important to look into the human rights perspectives in using artificial intelligence to counter-terrorism.

My Office, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Research Institute and other United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, is providing practical guidance and recommendations to Member States and technology providers on using artificial intelligence to counter-terrorism in full compliance with human rights.

I am particularly grateful to the Governments of Japan and Saudi Arabia for their generous support to our joint research initiative that enables us to take stock of advancements in artificial intelligence from a counter-terrorism perspective.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the international experts who helped in shaping the insights and recommendations of the two reports.

My Office continues to stand ready to support Member States and other counter-terrorism partners in embracing new technologies to counter-terrorism in a responsible and a human-rights compliant manner.

Let me conclude by thanking the Government of Japan, the European Union and our United Nations partners that have jointly organized this side event with us and all the contributors who have joined us today. I wish you a very fruitful discussion that will contribute to our common fight against terrorism.

Thank you.