



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Opening remarks by Dr. Raffi Gregorian
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United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Launch of the United Nations
Manual of Guidance
Countering Kidnapping and Extortion**

**15 September 2021
10:00 – 10:35AM**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the launch of the United Nations Manual of Guidance for Countering Kidnapping and Extortion. I would like to thank everyone who is joining us virtually and everyone attending the event in person in Rabat in UNOCT's newly established field-based programme office, thereby demonstrating our joint commitment to countering terrorism in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The launch of the manual is a part of the joint UNOCT and UNODC Kidnap for Ransom (KFR) Project on *“Enhancing the Capacities and Capabilities of Member States to Prevent, Investigate and Counter Kidnapping-For-Ransom, Including the Maritime element”*, which was launched in February of this year. The UNOCT partnered with the UNODC to implement this important project, demonstrating our commitment to an “All-of-UN” approach to combating terrorism.

I would also like to thank our donor, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for providing great support and expertise in the implementation of this Project and for their direct involvement in producing the 2021 version of the UN Manual of Guidance for Countering Kidnapping and Extortion.

We have all seen the international headlines about humanitarian aid workers, school children, and business executives being kidnapped for ransom. There are also many lower profile cases, all of which help generate funds for terrorist organisations.

Kidnap for ransom is a nexus crime, providing huge profits for terrorist and other violent extremist organisations as well as organised crime groups. Kidnapping and maritime kidnapping has been identified by several Member States, as one of the top organised crime threats in their national security strategies.

In recent years, Member States representatives and counter-terrorism officials have expressed concerns over the limited capacities of several countries, especially fragile and conflict-affected States, to enable their respective criminal justice, law enforcement institutions and security services to effectively prevent, manage and investigate kidnap cases using the latest proven methods, technologies and techniques. This is further complicated by differing cultural and professional practices when the victims may be nationals of one country, the kidnapping occurred in a second country, and the kidnapers are from a third one. This makes clear the need to have common, standardized guidance and professional training curriculum and the guidance and training they need to conduct all aspects of investigations related to kidnap cases is crucial to the effective response of the criminal justice system against kidnap threats and terrorism in general.

It should go without saying that developing counter-terrorism and law enforcement officials' capacity to investigate kidnap cases, to make well-formulated decisions and gather evidence in support of ethical and professional investigative activity is essential for counter-terrorism efforts.

And as the nature and severity of crime changes, so must the skills of those that have to deal with it. Law enforcement agencies will need to attract the best professionals and give them the training and equipment they need to deal with changing requirements. And when law enforcement agencies are better at preventing, investigating, and resolving terrorism and organized crime cases, which will give the public greater confidence in their response.

The best way to address the new policing challenges with a smaller resource base, without reducing the quality of services, is by transforming the approach to counter-terrorism policing and by raising professional standards through standardized guidance, such as the UN Manual of Guidance for Countering Kidnapping and Extortion and relevant advanced training. Working in close partnership with criminal justice, law enforcement and security services, training schools and academia will help develop, maintain, and update the curriculum, meeting the evolving professional requirements of law enforcement officers and staff.

The UN Manual of Guidance for Countering Kidnapping and Extortion provides a plethora of good practices, tactics and strategies identified by experienced practitioners in the field of kidnapping investigation from around the world. It was designed to be of assistance to policymakers, senior law enforcement officials and practitioners involved in the prevention, management and investigation of kidnapping and extortion offences. It also provides highly valuable guidance to those engaged in training development.

In closing, I would like to thank again our donor, the United Kingdom Home Office, without whom this event would not be possible, the United Kingdom National Crime Agency and the Federal Office of Police of Switzerland for providing their expertise for this manual.

While much work lies ahead, I am confident that the continued implementation of the project will contribute to the multilateral efforts to have a more secure and prosperous world safe from terrorism.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to give the floor to the Rt Hon Damian Hinds, the Minister of State for Security of the United Kingdom.

Sir, the floor is yours.