



Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets

Implemented in partnership with:



UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE (CTED)



UNAOC
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



UNICRI
United Nations Interregional
Crime and Justice Research Institute

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the United Nations Network of Experts on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets Against Terrorist Attacks

New York, 15 February 2022 – Today, UNOCT launched the United Nations Global Network of Experts on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets against Terrorist Attacks through an online event that gathered close to 200 senior officials, practitioners and experts from Member States, international and regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

This Global Network of experts and practitioners on the protection of critical infrastructure and “soft” targets seeks to foster synergies between relevant stakeholders across the world from both the public and private sectors as well as academia, civil society, international and regional organizations. It was established in November 2021 and already counts close to 150 members. The Network is hosted online on the [UNOCT Connect & Learn Platform](#), allowing more enriching interactions among experts through a social media community, giving them access to a library of international good practices on vulnerable targets protection and, in the future, providing access to relevant e-learning courses.

Today’s [launch event](#) was opened by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), Mr. Vladimir Voronkov; the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani; and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador Mr. Cho Hyun.

Mr. Voronkov called on Member States and all relevant stakeholders to work together to address the increasing terrorist threat against vulnerable targets. He stressed that “the Global Network will contribute to this effort by fostering synergies between experts from the public and private sectors as well as academia, civil society, international and regional organizations.”

Ambassador Al-Thani noted that the [Global Programme to Counter Terrorist Attacks against Vulnerable Targets](#) is beneficial in supporting the efforts of Member States to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks against critical targets. She commended the Programme for having yielded, in a short period, numerous tangible products—one of which being the Global Network to be launched today.

The State of Qatar is the main funder of the Programme, which is implemented by UNOCT in partnership with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and in consultation with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

Ambassador Cho emphasized that countering terrorism is a long-term process requiring comprehensive strategies and united actions among all stakeholders. He expressed concerns about the impact of the pandemic on terrorist radicalization and recruitment online, especially among young people who were vulnerable to disinformation. “I worry about possible terrorist attacks on vulnerable “soft” targets, which might occur when lockdowns ease across the world,” he said while

expressing hope that the UNOCT Connect & Learn platform would play a crucial role as a tool for strengthening capacities against terrorist attacks on vulnerable targets.

The Republic of Korea generously funds the [UNOCT Connect & Learn Platform](#) which hosts the Global Network of Experts formally launched today.

The high-level opening was followed by a technical session, which included expert speakers from Member States, regional organizations and civil society, who discussed specific case studies and good practices with a focus on the protection against terrorist attacks of both critical infrastructure—such as energy facilities, transportation systems, or water supplies—and “soft targets”—such as urban centres, tourist venues, religious sites and major cultural and sports events.

For more information, please contact:

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[Launch event webpage](#)