



## UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Briefing by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,  
Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Meeting of the Africa Group to the United Nations  
17 March 2022**

Your Excellency, Ambassador Nkopane Raseeng Monyane, Chair of the African Group, and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the UN, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address such a distinguished group of delegates and am grateful to Ambassador Monyane for giving me the opportunity to do so.

Today, I would like brief on the terrorism landscape in Africa and the support provided by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to African Member States.

I look forward to hearing your valuable perspectives on this important matter.

As you are aware, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations remains a pressing and evolving global challenge. It continues to rip the social fabric that binds our shared humanity, and has caused lasting damages to individuals, families, communities and countries.

In UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres remarks to the General Assembly on his priorities for 2022, he highlighted that terrorism remains a constant threat, further destabilizing some of the most fragile countries in the world. He also expressed the UN's commitment to support robust African forces and interventions to tackle terrorism across Africa, during the 35<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union held last month.

Unfortunately, the threat posed by terrorist groups to international peace and security continues to grow.

The 14th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh - published in January – describes that the most alarming development over the past six months has been

the expansion of Da'esh affiliates in Central, Eastern and Western Africa which could have serious and lasting repercussions on the continent and beyond.

In West Africa, Da'esh and Al-Qaida affiliates have made decisive progress by exploiting local grievances, overwhelming stretched security forces and exacerbating intercommunal tensions.

In Central and East Africa, a regional terrorism threat is characterized by weapons proliferation, intensified recruitment efforts and terrorist tactics linked to Da'esh affiliates in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique.

Likewise, the latest report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team highlights that the advancement of Da'esh and Al-Qaida affiliates in Africa remains deeply concerning to Member States.

Of particular note is that Al-Qaida affiliates in both Somalia and the Sahel have continued to grow in strength and ambition, leaving Member States concerned that they have been inspired by the example of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Despite significant efforts at national and regional levels, and substantial international support, terrorist activity is increasing in several regions of Africa.

Therefore, a global response is urgently needed to support the efforts of African countries and regional organizations.

During the Second UN Counter-Terrorism Week organized by my Office in June last year, Member States highlighted the need to strengthen counter-terrorism support to Africa, as well as address its interplay with conflict, organized crime, governance challenges and development gaps. This was capped by the adoption of a consensus resolution on the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

My Office has since continued to cooperate with the African Union in line with the outcomes of the African Regional High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2019; and the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the AU Commission in June 2018.

I am glad to share that preparations are underway for the establishment of a UN-AU Technical Working Group on Countering Terrorism and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

To strengthen cooperation with regional organizations, my Office is developing a Memoranda of Understanding with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the Mano River Union (MRU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We are also engaging with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) against growing terrorist threat in that region.

Additionally, we and our Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact partners are increasingly supporting requesting Member States and regional organizations in the continent.

The 2021-2022 Multi-Year Appeal for Counter-Terrorism, launched in June last year, aims to mobilize resources for the implementation of 52 projects by United Nations entities across all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Of the total \$179 million projected for programming, 20 programmes with an estimated value of \$75 million would focus on Africa.

My Office has also increased its presence in Africa to deliver cost-efficient and coordinated capacity-building activities closer to our beneficiaries and partners. Our Programme Office in Rabat, which functions as a counter-terrorism training centre for security, law enforcement and judicial officers has the focus on the Sahel region; while our Programme Office in Nairobi, which we launched earlier this month, will support Member States in Eastern Africa. We appreciate the support and hospitality of the Governments of Morocco and Kenya.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight a few programmes implemented by my Office in Africa:

First, the “Countering Terrorist Travel Programme” supports Member States to detect and prevent the movement of terrorists and serious criminals, through the use of advance passenger information and passenger name record data. Nineteen of its 51 beneficiaries are African Member States.

Second, under our Border Security and Management Programme, we support African Member States in strengthening their capacities to effectively monitor cross-border movement of people. Over the past three years, 11 African Member States have received technical assistance to implement good practices, including the responsible use and sharing of biometrics in counter-terrorism.

Third, the “Global Programme on Interagency Coordination (Fusion Cells),” launched in partnership with CTED, UNPOL, INTERPOL and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, is implemented in Botswana, Ghana, Togo, and Uganda. My Office has also supported the establishment of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre of the Southern African Development Community.

Fourth, the “Counter-Terrorism Investigations Programme,” which was launched in January 2021, will supports Member States to develop and implement comprehensive investigative strategies to address terrorism and its nexus with organized crime.

Under that Programme, a joint UNOCT and UNODC “Kidnap for Ransom (KFR)” project, aims to support Member States to manage, investigate and negotiate kidnap and extortion offences, and includes a maritime security component.

Fifth, our “Global Programme to Counter Terrorist Attacks against Vulnerable Targets” is working with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo and Tunisia to strengthen their institutional and operational framework to address threats against critical infrastructure and “soft targets,” such as religious sites.

Lastly, through our “Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration,” we have supported Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia to address the challenges associated with individuals formerly associated with terrorist groups. We have also supported Tunisia and Uganda in managing violent extremist prisoners and preventing terrorist radicalization in prison.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you that my Office is planning to organize a briefing for African Counter-Terrorism experts in April that will take place in New York, and will include a presentation of comprehensive UNOCT capacity building programmes in Africa.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

Prevention is also a key component of the mandate of my Office.

We are investing in prevention measures across Africa, including to counter terrorist narratives and empower young people. Support has been provided to several countries, with much of our work delivered in close partnership with the Intergovernmental Authority for Development.

Under our “Global Sport Programme on the Security of Major Sporting Events and the use of Sport and its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism,” we recently supported Cameroon with the preparations for the African Nations Championship (CHAN) and the Total Energies Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), which the country recently hosted.

Looking forward, I would like to mention that my Office will be organizing a series of events engaging African Member States, including a ‘High-Level Parliamentary Conference on understanding the terrorist threat in Africa’, that will be held next week on the margins of the ‘Annual Forum of Beneficiaries of Technical Assistance’ in Doha, and a High-level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter Terrorism, in Malaga, Spain in May.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations remains committed to its partnership with African Member States and firmly anchored in the rule of law, human rights and gender equality.

The UN Secretary-General report on Our Common Agenda offers a fresh opportunity “to re-think and re-position our approach to peace in Africa, and ensure that our peace architecture is fit-for-purpose to address the rapid shifts and changes we see across the continent and around the world.”

I call on you to redouble your efforts to contain and reduce the threat of terrorism in Africa, to back security measures by investing in prevention and building resilience, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda of the African Union.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with all of you in our fight against terrorism

Thank you.