



High-Level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM



GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA Y COOPERACIÓN

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PRESS RELEASE

HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN COUNTER-TERRORISM OPENS IN MALAGA

Participants advocate for inclusive and human rights-compliant terrorism responses and a greater role for civil society

MALAGA (Spain), 10 May 2022 – A two-day High-Level International conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism, jointly organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Kingdom of Spain, opened today in Málaga. The conference is bringing together Member States, international organizations, civil society and human rights defenders for a robust and practical exchange on how to formulate human rights and rule of law-compliant responses to terrorism and ensure that Civil Society can meaningfully engage with counter-terrorism efforts.

Addressing the opening ceremony by video message, **United Nations Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres** highlighted that anchoring terrorism responses in the rule of law, human rights, and gender equality is essential for ensuring their effectiveness. “As a moral duty, a legal obligation, and a strategic imperative — let’s put human rights where they belong: front and centre in the fight against terror”, the Secretary-General said.

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism**, stressed that “Countering terrorism helps protect human rights, but only if human rights are protected while countering terrorism.” He also highlighted UNOCT’s commitment to enhance its Civil Society engagement and facilitate direct dialogue with the Office’s programme managers.

Addressing the opening ceremony alongside the United Nations, **H.E. José Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain** said that “we have high hopes

for this Conference. The diversity of the themes is a true reflection of the comprehensive nature of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in its seventh review, which was co-facilitated by Spain and adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in June last year”.

The opening session of the conference will be followed by a High-Level Ministerial Segment and several thematic sessions focusing on Human Rights, the rule of law and principled humanitarian action in the context of counter-terrorism efforts; support for victims and survivors of terrorism; strengthening Civil Society efforts for preventing and countering terrorism; and the role of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Architecture. The High-Level Conference will culminate in an outcome document developed by UNOCT and the Kingdom of Spain, in consultation with civil society.

Against the backdrop of a proliferating threat of terrorism across the globe and with it, an increase in legislation and policies to counter terrorism, this high-level gathering is the UN’s first in-person conference dedicated to human rights and civil society in the fight against terrorism.

Ahead of the main conference, the Kingdom of Spain and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, hosted a Civil Society Workshop on Enhancing Civil Society Leadership and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Counter-Terrorism. This workshop as well as a series of six side events preceded the conference’s plenary discussions and aimed to accelerate global momentum and international commitment towards implementing the United Nations’ Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a balanced manner.

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