



**Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**

**Signing Ceremony of Memorandum of Understanding between
the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, represented by the State Customs Committee,
and United Nations, represented by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism,
within the scope of the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme**

10 June 2022, 8 a.m. EST

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Colonel-General Mr. Safar Mehdiyev, Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and his team for the hard work and efforts leading up to this signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Our Memorandum of Understanding is a symbol of the solid partnership and mutual commitment between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in the implementation of the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, to assist Azerbaijan in enhancing its detection capabilities using passenger data.

The Republic of Azerbaijan was one of the first beneficiaries of the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme. And through an ‘all-of-UN’ effort, we are supporting Azerbaijan across four key pillars of the programme:

(i) Development of necessary legislative frameworks regulating the collection, transmission, use, retention, and sharing of passenger data, in compliance with internationally recognized standards and human rights;

(ii) the institutional set-up of Azerbaijan’s detection centre, also known as a Passenger Information Unit (PIU), and the establishment of operational capacity;

(iii) close cooperation with the transport industry to ensure technical connectivity, and;

(iv) technical support, including the license and deployment of the UN’s specialized ‘goTravel’ software system.

I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on the thirty-year anniversary of the establishment of the State Customs Agency in Azerbaijan and thirty-year anniversary of Azerbaijan's membership to the United Nations. My sincere words of congratulations.

I am pleased that Azerbaijan inaugurated its Customs Passenger Information Unit on 25 January 2022, the establishment of which was supported by the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme and which will operate the programme's 'goTravel' software solution. Our delegation led by Ms. Bradley and supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, were present at the opening of the Passenger Information Unit in Baku.

We also recently concluded a very successful five-day in-person training course on countering terrorist travel which was held from 23-27 May 2022 in Baku and attended by 35 representatives coming from 10 government agencies involved in Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) implementation in your country.

This demonstrates a strong national inter-agency coordination structure on API and PNR created in Azerbaijan under the leadership of the State Customs Committee.

We also organized an in-person study visit for the officials of Azerbaijan to the French Passenger Information Unit in August last year and are working now towards organizing another study-visit to the Hungarian Passenger Information Unit later this year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the donors who have supported the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, namely the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the European Union, the United States of America, the State of Qatar, Australia, Japan, India, Germany, and Hungary for their generous contributions which have enabled the Programme's implementation around the world.

Indeed, in addition to Azerbaijan, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has welcomed over 50 beneficiary Member States to this global partnership since its launch over three years ago in May 2019.

In conclusion, allow me to also thank Azerbaijan for its active participation in the regional informal working group on API and PNR for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which is a joint initiative between my Office and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Mr. Mehdiyev, thank you once again for forging this important partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

I thank you for your attention.