



UNOCT



OSCE



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

International and Regional Border Security and
Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism
and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists

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**Thematic Session II: The Phenomenon of FTFs and Its Implications for the Central Asian
Region and Beyond and Addressing Related Border Security Funding Needs through the
Support of the International Community**

18 October 2022, 2.30 p.m.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to address you at this important and timely session focusing on the evolving transnational threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters that continues to present complex long-term challenges across the world, including the Central Asian region.

Following the rise of Da'esh nearly a decade ago, the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon gained a new dimension, with thousands of foreign volunteers from all over the world, including from Central Asian States, traveling to conflict zones in Iraq and Syria.

With the group's territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, many surviving foreign terrorist fighters have since returned, attempted to return, or relocated to other conflict zones, creating various challenges in the areas of prevention, protection, detection, prosecution, repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Over the years, Member States have strengthened border security, legal frameworks, and information sharing to counter the foreign terrorist fighters threat.

The current threat landscape, complicated by the continuing turmoil in Afghanistan, the continued flow of foreign terrorist fighters and funds for terrorist purposes, transnational organized crime, the illicit trafficking of arms, persons, and drugs across borders, and the misuse of new and emerging technologies, requires enhanced cooperation, coordination, and information sharing among Central Asian States and the broader support of the international community.

Dear colleagues,

The diverse representation in this Conference, bringing together Member States from all regions, international and regional organizations, academia, civil society, and the private sector, is encouraging in this regard. It shows that there is a shared concern among all stakeholders to counter terrorism and prevent the movement of terrorists, as well as broad agreement on the need to raise and sustain the resources required to address related challenges collectively.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), working in partnership with other UN entities, supports Central Asian States in addressing the different dimensions of the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon through its global and regional programmes such as through the Global Framework on UN Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees, the Joint Plan of Action, STRIVE Asia and others.

At UNOCT, we are also proud to lead and coordinate an 'all-of-United Nations' approach to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism through the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

The Counter-Terrorism Compact, which consists of 41 UN entities as well as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Financial Action Task Force, serves as the primary institutional framework for the coordination of counter-terrorism efforts to support Member States in their implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Compact's eight thematic inter-agency working groups address all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and include a dedicated working group on border management and law enforcement.

Ensuring sustainable and predictable funding for counter-terrorism programmes and projects implemented by Counter-Terrorism Compact entities in Central Asia and the broader region is a focus of the working group I chair on resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation and is essential for multilateral action.

In this regard, we invite all partners present to support the United Nations Multi-Year Appeal for Counter-Terrorism. The Multi-Year Appeal consolidates initiatives from 12 entities from across the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact to deliver multi-partner projects and programmes that transcend borders, actors and thematic silos with emphasis on human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Central Asian region cluster of the Appeal includes six inter-agency initiatives with a total funding volume of \$18 million that deliver targeted activities in Central Asia across a wide range of topics. I take this opportunity to invite you all to join us for our side event tomorrow morning from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. showcasing how the Multi-Year Appeal can support our joint resource mobilization efforts for various counter-terrorism projects and initiatives in Central Asia.

The event will feature presentations of four UN inter-agency flagship initiatives across Central Asia that exemplify the kind of integrated approaches that the Appeal supports and that will bring together voices from UN entities in the field as well as perspectives from Member States on the value of multilateral action and the need for sustained, well-coordinated funding.

As a successful fundraising example, we recently received confirmation of financial commitment from the United Nations Peace and Development Fund (China-funded) to support the implementation of the Counter Terrorism Early Warning Network in Central Asia launched in June this year. This Early Warning Network is one of the main initiatives jointly administered with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) within the scope of the Joint Plan of Action Phase IV project.

Dear colleagues,

As we have gathered here to support the Member States of Central Asia in their efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, next year – the year 2023 - will be the year of Africa for UNOCT. This will entail increased prioritization of engagement with the continent, culminating

in our high-level Counter-Terrorism Summit on “Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institutional Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism in Africa, which will take place in Abuja in October next year. This Summit is part of our efforts to mobilize more international support for African States affected by terrorism and violent extremism. We count on your support and full engagement to ensure delivery of an impactful and outcomes-focused Summit.

In closing, let me reiterate the readiness of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, together with our Counter-Terrorism Compact partners, to continue to work closely with our Central Asian partners and the global counter-terrorism community. We look forward to discussing opportunities for deepening our collaboration for preventing and countering terrorism across the region.

Thank you.