



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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

Ministerial-level opening of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Special Meeting on “Countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes”

New Delhi, India, 29 October 2022

Thank you Madam Chair,
Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to address the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, and for convening this special meeting to consider the important theme of ‘Countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes’.

Mr. Minister,

Thank you for the announcement of the next contribution by the Republic of India to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. I also sincerely thank the Government of India for warm hospitality, and I stand in solidarity with all victims of terrorism.

I also thank Mr. Weixiong Chen and his colleagues in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate for the close cooperation with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the excellent organization of this meeting.

The role of new and emerging technologies in fundamentally transforming all facets of our lives is beyond question. They have proven their value as indispensable tools for advancing peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.

However, terrorists often misuse and abuse these technologies to advance their agendas, thereby undermining international peace and security.

As I briefed on behalf of the Secretary General the Security Council in August, Da’esh, for example, has significantly increased its use of unmanned aerial systems in northern Iraq during the past year.

Terrorists also increasingly utilize information and communications technologies, in particular the Internet and social media, including gaming platforms, to commit, incite, recruit for, fund and plan attacks.

In his August report on terrorist attacks based on xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, the Secretary-General notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated the threat of terrorist attacks on this basis.

This is due to the exploitation by terrorists and other groups of increased online presence and social isolation to grow and diversify their support base, radicalize and recruit new members, as well as expand their reach and influence.

As new technologies emerge and become more widely available, Member States are confronted with the urgent need to address the multiple and complex challenges they pose.

These include identifying, monitoring, investigating and prosecuting terrorist activities involving the use of new technologies, as well as tackling terrorist propaganda and online incitement, taking into account the context of different applicable legal frameworks.

In all of this, we must consider the broad human rights implications of the use of new technologies in counter-terrorism activities. This includes ensuring that counter-terrorism measures are fully compliant with the right to privacy, data protection, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association, as well as freedom of religion or belief.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

My Office works with its partners, including through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, to support Member States to leverage new technologies for counter-terrorism, while also addressing the risks posed by their misuse for terrorist purposes.

We do so in three different ways.

First, by offering technological solutions such as goTravel software to identify, detect, intercept and prevent the travel of terrorists and other serious criminals. We are also exploring the development of goFintel software to counter the financing of terrorism.

These tools support Member States to better adapt and respond to the complex challenges of data collection, analysis and dissemination in counter-terrorism.

Second, by enhancing the capacities of requesting Member States on the application of new technologies for counter-terrorism.

As part of these efforts, we provide capacity-building support on the use of unmanned aerial systems for monitoring and surveillance, cybersecurity, as well as digital data collection and digital forensics for investigations, prosecution and adjudication of terrorist offenses.

And third, by building upon a vast network of partners to exchange views and promote innovative solutions on the responsible use of technologies.

In this context, I can mention the Second Counter-Terrorism Week which my Office hosted at the United Nations Headquarters in June 2021, which addressed the transformative role of new technologies in counter-terrorism – a theme that also featured prominently in the latest, seventh, review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Building partnerships for the responsible use of technology also involves producing joint research to inform and shape debates on the use of technology in counter-terrorism.

Examples of these efforts include two reports produced jointly by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and my Office on the malicious use of artificial intelligence for terrorist purposes and the opportunities that this technology provides in countering terrorism.

Furthermore, our partnership with the International Police Criminal Organization resulted in the production of a handbook for law enforcement on the use of the Internet and social media for counter-terrorism investigations.

Moving forward, my Office will continue to work with its United Nations and other partners to advance the Secretary-General's vision in his report "Our Common Agenda" to address the risks posed by new technologies to peace and security and use its potential for the common good.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

The growing availability of new and emerging technologies and their increasing and evolving use by terrorist groups result in significant challenges for Member States.

We must work together with all relevant stakeholders, including governments, local actors, academia, civil society, and the private sector, to address and mitigate those risks, while harnessing our capabilities to use such technologies to counter the spread of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

I am confident that this special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, as well as the forthcoming eighth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, will provide further direction in that regard.

UNOCT will continue to work closely with the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and Member States to promote the coordinated, human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive use of new and emerging technologies to prevent and counter terrorism.

Thank you.