



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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

**2023 High-level International Symposium on Counter-Terrorism hosted by the Korean
National Police Agency**

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Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank His Excellency Yoon Hee Geun (*yun he goon*), Commissioner General of the Korean National Police Agency, for inviting me to address you at this internationally renowned Symposium.

I am also pleased that former United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon is joining us today. He played an instrumental role in advancing the work of the United Nations in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism during his tenure at the Organization.

Excellencies,

Terrorism remains a pressing threat to international peace and security.

The linkages between terrorism and conflict, as well as the expansion of terrorism to parts of Africa remain significant concerns. According to the recently published 2023 Global Terrorism Index, the ten countries most impacted by terrorism are involved in armed conflicts.

Terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates continue to adapt to new realities and exploit such vulnerabilities, despite leadership losses over the years.

The appalling humanitarian situation in the camps and detention facilities in Iraq and north-east Syria also presents conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, requiring urgent, decisive action.

Another key area of concern, that is most relevant and timely for today's discussion, is the

exploitation of new and emerging technologies by terrorist groups. While new scientific developments and emerging technologies are transforming our lives in positive ways, some of these technologies present significant potential for misuse by terrorists.

For instance, terrorist use of uncrewed aircraft systems is increasing as drone technology is evolving rapidly and becoming widely available.

Even more worrisome is that some of these systems can be used to deliver chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials. As we have already seen Da'esh do with chemical weapons, the prospect of non-state actors, including terrorists, acquiring, and using weapons of mass destruction is increasing, following the technological advancements, as well as the expansion of illegal and legal commercial channels.

Excellencies,

To effectively address such diverse and complex terrorist threats from new and emerging technologies, we must strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation. We also must ensure that our collective response is sustainable, human rights-compliant and gender-responsive.

In this context, allow me to highlight some of UNOCT's recent capacity-building activities.

UNOCT continues to provide Member States with support on leveraging and countering Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems in the context of countering terrorism.

Our relevant Programme will soon launch a global report, developed jointly with Conflict Armament Research, on the acquisition, weaponization and deployment of uncrewed aircraft systems for terrorism-related purposes.

I take this opportunity to thank Professor Kang Wook, from the Korea National Police University, for his participation in the consultations on global uncrewed aircraft systems threats organized in January this year. UNOCT is also working closely with the Korean Presidential Security Service on the development of a joint training programme on VIP protection against uncrewed aircraft systems threats.

I look forward to continuing our cooperation with relevant entities in the Republic of Korea in this and other initiatives.

Strengthening the capacities of African countries in tackling terrorism is another key priority for UNOCT.

Our Programme Offices in Rabat, Morocco and Nairobi, Kenya, provide critical support to national and regional partners in the continent.

And to mobilize more international support for African Member States affected by terrorism, UNOCT plans to co-organize an African Counter-Terrorism Summit with the Government of

Nigeria on the theme of “Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institution Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism in Africa” in Abuja, at the end of this year or in the first quarter of 2024. We welcome the engagement of the Republic of Korea in this process.

Excellencies,

My Office will continue to explore a wide range of new capacity-building programmatic activities and count on the support of the Republic of Korea to ensure their successful delivery.

I would like to commend the Republic of Korea for its substantial contribution to global counter-terrorism efforts.

Let me also reiterate my gratitude to the Korean National Police Agency. I look forward to continuing productive relations between our two organizations.

You can count on the steadfast support of UNOCT to meet the challenges posed by the threat of terrorism.

I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.