



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)**

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

**“Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism in Asia
(STRIVE ASIA) - A joint EU- UN partnership”**

26 September 2019 - New York

Director Geiger,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to this important event, which is co-organized by my Office and the European Union, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Development Programme.

The United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism highly values the relationship we have developed with the European Union and its Member States.

In little more than two years since my Office was established, this relationship has already led to tangible results.

I would like to highlight the signing of the first UN-EU Framework on Counter-Terrorism, which was also endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU in April 2019.

The Framework spells out our shared objectives in promoting the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, including to foster regional cooperation and to collaborate in providing coordinated and effective capacity-building assistance on preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

As a step forward towards these objectives, the UN and the EU agreed to engage in Central, South and Southeast Asia, at the national and regional levels, following the interest expressed by the countries concerned.

The launch of the UN-EU STRIVE Asia programme today is the start of this new journey together, drawing on our respective strengths and experiences.

The Programme will capitalize both on the UN's own engagement through its various programs and mechanisms, benefiting for example from the excellent work carried out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and on a body of knowledge built by the EU through its previous implementation under the "STRIVE" banner, for example in the Horn of Africa, to deepen the understanding of the drivers of violent extremism through evidence-based analysis.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Violent extremism conducive to terrorism continues to pose a significant threat to international peace and security.

We are constantly reminded of the devastating effects that it has on the lives and livelihoods of innocent people, undermining development and aggravating conflicts.

The call made by the Secretary-General in 2016 for a comprehensive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to preventing violent extremism remains, today, as pressing and relevant as ever.

My Office is committed to continue working with all the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities and our international partners in helping Member States, upon their request, to implement such an approach in practice.

The STRIVE ASIA programme is a testament to this commitment.

The initiative brings together three UN Global Compact entities with extensive technical knowledge and operational expertise who, under the overall coordination of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Centre of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, join forces with a major international partner, the EU, in a holistic effort to address the strategic, institutional and operational dimensions of the imperative of prevention.

I would like to commend the Member States in Central, South and South East Asia for recognizing, at the highest political levels, the importance of proactively addressing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and for the concrete steps that they have already taken to this end.

Some of these steps include the development of joint strategies and action plans to implement the United Nations Global Counter -Terrorism Strategy and to prevent and counter violent extremism.

They also include other measures to deal, for example, with the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by the reintegration and rehabilitation of terrorist offenders, including foreign terrorist fighters.

However, while much progress has been made, uprooting terrorism is a long-term enterprise, intertwined with broader goals and objectives, such as the realization of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

There is no quick fix.

Initiatives such as STRIVE ASIA have been deliberately designed to accompany and support the efforts of Member States, which have the primary responsibility, leadership, and ownership to prevent terrorism, in accordance with international standards, including human rights and the rule of law.

In doing so, the United Nations is committed, as matter of prerequisite, to work in, and promote close collaboration with national governments, regional bodies, but also civil society organizations and other key stakeholders, which have unique and proven contributions to make.

On that note, allow me to extend a very warm welcome to the distinguished representatives from both government agencies and civil society organizations from Central and South East Asia who have accepted our invitation to share their knowledge and insights with the rest of the participants at this meeting.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by reiterating our gratitude to the European Union for its generous contribution to the STRIVE ASIA programme, to the Member States of Central, South and South East Asia for their confidence and readiness to work with us, and by warmly inviting other partners to join forces with us in these efforts.

I wish you all a productive and fruitful discussion.

Thank you.