



COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

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THE ROLE OF THE COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE AND ITS EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORT

For decades, the United Nations system, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Organization's funds, agencies and programmes, has been addressing the issue of terrorism. The Security Council's establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2001 and, later, of its Executive Directorate (CTED), marked a turning point in the overall counter-terrorism effort within the United Nations system.

International Instruments

Terrorism has been on the international agenda since 1934, when the League of Nations took the first major step towards outlawing the scourge by discussing a draft convention for the prevention and punishment of terrorism. Although the Convention was eventually adopted in 1937, it never came into force.

The international community, now working through the General Assembly and the United Nations specialized agencies, has since adopted 16 international counter-terrorism legal instruments dealing with issues ranging from the hijacking of airlines and taking of hostages to the possible use of nuclear weapons by terrorists. Member States are currently working on the draft of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

Security Council Resolutions

The Security Council has also adopted several resolutions aimed at combating terrorism, the most notable of which followed the events of 11 September 2001.

Resolution 1373 (2001), adopted on 28 September of that year, framed a broad counter-terrorism mandate for the international community and established the Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor and assist States' implementation of the resolution.

Since then, the Committee, comprising all 15 members of the Security Council, has played a leading role in gathering what experts consider the world's largest body of information on the counter-terrorism capacity of each of the 192 United Nations Member States. In March 2004 under resolution 1535 (2004), the Security Council established the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to further assist the work of the Committee and thus to strengthen States' capacity to combat terrorism. (*For more information about the Committee and CTED, please see Fact Sheet No. 2.*)

The Security Council has also established other subsidiary bodies dealing with various aspects of counter-terrorism. Even prior to the events of 11 September 2001, when the Council focused on adopting sanctions against countries considered non-cooperative on terrorism issues, it had at its disposal a strong counter-terrorism mechanism: the Security Council Committee established by resolution 1267 (1999) on Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities (the "Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee"). Also made up of all the Council members, this Committee was established in 1999 with the task of monitoring compliance with the sanctions directed against the Taliban; in 2000 the sanctions were also applied to members of Al-Qaida as designated by the 1267 Committee.

In 2004 the Security Council addressed weapons of mass destruction, including the possibility that non-State actors could access such weapons, in resolution 1540 (2004), which

was adopted unanimously on 28 April. Among other things, the resolution requires States to refrain from supporting non-State actors that attempt to acquire, use or transfer nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems. It also requires States to take and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of such weapons and their delivery means.

That same year, the Council adopted resolution 1566 (2004), in which it established a working group to recommend practical measures that could be taken against terrorist individuals, groups or entities not covered by the 1267 Committee's work, as well as explore the possibility of setting up a compensation fund for victims of terrorism.

On 14 September 2005, during the United Nations World Summit, the Council adopted resolution 1624 (2005), which deals with the issue of incitement to commit acts of terrorism, and directed the Counter-Terrorism Committee to include in its dialogue with Member States their efforts to implement the resolution. (*For more information about resolution 1624 (2005), please see Fact Sheet No. 5.*)

United Nations System-Wide Actions

Member States also receive assistance with their counter-terrorism efforts through the work of various United Nations departments, programmes and specialized agencies. The Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), for example, provides countries with assistance on counter-terrorism legislation; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) addresses developmental and governance issues in a broad context of counter-terrorism work; the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) focuses on nuclear terrorism and the World Health Organization (WHO) on bio-terrorism. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) have been addressing the issue of the security of commercial aviation and of ships and port facilities, respectively, for decades. Other non-UN entities with a key role include the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

The 2005 World Summit

Meeting in a World Summit in New York from 14 to 16 September 2005, all United Nations Member States agreed on a clear and unqualified condemnation of terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes."

World leaders also agreed to make every effort to reach agreement on a common definition of terrorism and to finalize a comprehensive convention on combating terrorism and welcomed the elements of strategy put forward by the Secretary-General in Madrid. They also asked the General Assembly to further develop this strategy with the aim of promoting comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses to terrorism at the national, regional and international levels.

UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

On 8 September 2006 the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/60/288 to create a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, marking the first time that all Member States have agreed to a common strategic and operational approach to fighting terrorism. (*For more information about the strategy, please see Background Note.*)

The Assembly's strategy stemmed from ideas put forward by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan to bring all the various counter-terrorism activities of the United Nations system into a common strategic framework.

The blueprint builds on the consistent, unequivocal condemnation of terrorism by Member States and seeks to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of countries and the United Nations to prevent and combat terrorism, all while ensuring the protection of human rights and upholding the rule of law.

Some of the new initiatives include voluntarily putting in place systems of assistance that would address the needs of victims of terrorism and their families; and involving civil society, regional and subregional organizations in the fight against terrorism and developing partnerships with the private sector to prevent terrorist attacks.

In September 2008, the General Assembly held a two-day meeting to review implementation of the Strategy and adopted resolution A/RES/62/272 reaffirming its support for the Strategy.

