



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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

**UNOCT Quarterly Briefing to Member States
8 September 2025, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, Conference Room 3**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the second Quarterly Briefing organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism this year.

I want to start on a positive note amidst the challenges and uncertainty that the United Nations is facing. The counter-terrorism efforts of the Organization are on a solid footing: they enjoy continued consensus among Member States, and the strong engagement of both the General Assembly and the Security Council.

With your support and at your request, the United Nations system is delivering. I think I can speak on behalf of my UN colleagues to stress that we are grateful for your trust and investment in multilateralism.

Of course, we can and should always seek to improve. But it is important to approach this with optimism and confidence that we are on the right track and need to go on.

The 80th session of the General Assembly will soon begin. This landmark session will also see next year the 9th review and 20th anniversary of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. UNOCT, as secretariat for this Member State-led process, will do its utmost to help preserve the consensus that underpins the Strategy.

And still before the end of this year, our partners from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate will celebrate their own 20th birthday. I would like to congratulate Assistant Secretary-General Natalia Gherman and her team and express our sincere appreciation for the unique role they play in the UN counter-terrorism architecture.

Dear Colleagues,

In a few days world leaders will congregate in these Halls for the high-level week and its General Debate. We will be listening attentively to their concerns, their expectations – and their commitments with

respect to global challenges, including the persisting threat of terrorism. There will be two high-level events on counter-terrorism, supported by UNOCT.

First, on 24 September, Spain and Iraq will convene as co-chairs a ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism.

This has now become a deeply meaningful tradition, on the heels of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, which we commemorate every 21st August to remind ourselves of the purpose of our efforts. With the participation of the Secretary-General, we recognized the leadership of victims and survivors who, “United by Hope,” are coming together to drive change.

I want to acknowledge in particular the dedication of the many women who are member of the Victims of Terrorism Associations Network launched in April by my Office. This is a good illustration of our commitment to strengthen the equal, full, and meaningful participation of women in counter-terrorism. UN Women recognized these efforts of UNOCT in 2024 as meeting or exceeding 15 out of 17 system-wide performance indicators on gender equality.

Second, on 26 September, the Government of the Republic of Iraq, with the support of UNOCT, will host a High-Level International Conference on the Repatriation of Persons from Al-Hol, Surrounding Camps and Places of Detention. The conference will be opened by the President of Republic of Iraq and focus on the ongoing humanitarian, human rights and security crises in the camps and places of detention in northeast Syria, advocating for urgent repatriations. The conference will be an opportunity to showcase the United Nations support to Member States on this complex challenge and encourage Member States who have repatriated their nationals to share good practices.

Dear Colleagues,

I expect there will be also a lot of talk about the UN80 Initiative during the General Debate. With respect to counter-terrorism, I would like to thank Member States for their very active participation in the consultations that we held on 30 June and 7 July, with over 100 delegations and 47 statements delivered.

I was very encouraged by your interest and the detailed discussions. There is a clear expectation that, rather than any structural realignment, we should continue in the spirit of the reform of the UN counter-terrorism architecture in 2017. Member States reaffirmed the policy leadership of UNOCT and its role as central coordinating body to promote and support the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In consultation with our partners, we have put forward several proposals in this sense through the Peace and Security Cluster of UN reform, focused on governance and accountability of UN counter-terrorism efforts. With the support of all participating entities, more can be done to leverage the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact towards more practical, result- and impact-oriented

coordination. The Counter-Terrorism Compact can also serve as umbrella to enhanced partnerships with regional organizations, which was in the focus of the first annual retreat in June.

Dear Colleagues,

UNOCT continues to work hard to respond to requests from Member States for capacity-building and technical assistance. The majority of our programmes are implemented to address recommendations from CTED with one or more Counter-Terrorism Compact partners.

We are committed to better presenting the result of these joint efforts with our beneficiaries and partners – as illustrated by the first consolidated annual report on the work of UNOCT in 2024, which we issued in June and that I encourage you to peruse.

Last year, our global programmes and regional initiatives reached more than 10,000 individuals from over 140 Member States. Just to mention a few concrete examples:

The UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme now provides assistance to 65 Member States. The UN's goTravel software was used to screen 29 million travelers in 2024, across 178,000 flights, generating 2,300 alerts.

In partnership with IOM, UNODC and INTERPOL, UNOCT established the Integrated Border Stability Mechanism (IBSM) in Dakar, Senegal, to support West African States in promoting regional stability through integrated border governance and security.

We soft-launched the goFintel software, enabling advanced tracking of illicit financial flows. And we issued a Handbook on countering the use of virtual assets for terrorist financing.

We assisted 26 Member States in strengthening nuclear forensics and legal frameworks with a focus on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

We strengthened law enforcement capacities in more than 30 countries to use open-source intelligence (OSINT), facial recognition, and darknet and virtual asset investigation tools, in full respect of human rights.

We delivered over 450 hours of operational training in Malaysia and Senegal for law enforcement use of Unmanned Aerial Systems, certifying 32 operators and training 13 national instructors.

We trained 285 law enforcement and security officials from 22 African countries through 17 multilingual courses to enhance intelligence through fusion cells.

We supported 10 Member States in Africa and Central Asia in developing national action plans and building capacity to improve security of critical infrastructure and public places.

We supported the development of a three-year security plan for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations, in partnership with the National Counter-Terrorism Centres of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

We supported the establishment of the Central Asia Regional Expert Council on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees from Conflict Zones.

And we trained 89 young leaders across Africa and South-East Asia, who, in turn, engaged over 1,200 peers and 89 policymakers in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Dear Colleagues,

Last month, I presented to the Security Council together with my colleagues Assistant Secretary-general Gherman and Mr. Colin Smith the Twenty-first report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh. Its findings are sobering: terrorism is evolving faster than our collective response.

Terrorist groups continue to adapt, combining old and new tactics, leveraging organized crime, and harnessing emerging technologies. The rule of law, humanitarian, and human rights challenges in counter-terrorism are ever more complex and urgent.

The United Nations has the diversity of mandates, the tools, expertise, and partnerships needed to support Member States. Predictable and flexible resources are essential to deliver swiftly and impactfully where needs are greatest. Your commitment and support are indispensable: multilateralism is our most effective instrument to confront terrorism and other global challenges.

I am especially grateful to all 46 funding partners of UNOCT, including the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union, the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund (China), Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and the Russian Federation.

As well as the Member States hosting UNOCT Programme Offices: the State of Qatar, Hungary, Iraq, Kenya, the Kingdom of Morocco, and Spain.

Thank you.