



United Nations Global
COUNTER-TERRORISM
Coordination Compact

Tenth United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee Meeting

24-25
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- Opening segment:
regional overview
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Counter-Terrorism
Compact Secretariat

Annex II

25 JANUARY: VIRTUAL



UNOCT

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Opening segment: regional overview

Mr. Rafi Shah

Chief, Policy, Knowledge Management, and Coordination Branch (PKMCB), United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), noted that ensuring international and regional cooperation is imperative for preventing and countering terrorism, highlighting the pivotal role played by the Counter-Terrorism Compact and its Working Groups in facilitating this cooperation. He expressed concern over the surge in terrorist activities in several parts of Africa, both in scale and sophistication, noting that various terrorist groups continue gaining traction across the continent. Mr. Shah also stressed that these groups capitalize on the complexities of conflict, underscoring the imperative of a comprehensive and concerted response that protects and promotes human rights, and upholds the rule of law. Furthermore, he underlined that the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime in several parts of Africa demands our collective attention because it furthers conflict and fragility, and undermines essential development efforts, and reiterated the importance of ensuring robust international and regional cooperation through the Counter-Terrorism Compact and its Working Groups to effectively address the evolving terrorist threat.

Ms. Angele Makombo N'tumba

Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, Southern African Development Community (SADC), touched upon the terrorist threat in the SADC region, noting that even if most SADC Member States are not experiencing direct terrorist activities, some remain vulnerable to terror-related security challenges, mostly related to the planning and financing of these activities. She informed about the presence of terrorist groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ) in Mozambique, which put Member States at risk of hosting cells and training grounds for extremist recruits. Deputy Executive Secretary N'tumba recalled the launch of SADC's Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre (SADC-RCTC) in 2022 to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts among its 16 Member States, noting that this has prompted the development of national counter-terrorism strategies and implementation plans by five SADC Member States. She further noted that the activation of SADC's stand-by force in response to the emergence of ASWJ in Mozambique, significantly neutralized the group and allowed displaced persons to return home, while flagging remaining challenges in addressing the terrorist threat, particularly related to information sharing at national and continental levels.

Session I

Overview of the counter-terrorism landscape in Africa

Mr. Justin Hustwitt

Coordinator of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (1267 Committee Monitoring Team), informed about the upcoming 33rd report of the Monitoring Team, noting with concern certain developments in Africa, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with violence spilling to Uganda, West Africa and the Sahel due to complex situations and the conflation of ethnic and regional disputes in these two areas. He further highlighted an increase in terrorist violence in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as an expansion of terrorism to coastal countries, particularly in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo, and noted that military action in Mali could have implications for greater insecurity in the region, as also disturbing trends in Burkina Faso. As a possible immediate consequence, Mr. Hustwitt flagged a major extension of Da'esh in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), increased military pressure on capital cities, and concern that the group's center of gravity may be shifting from Syria/Iraq to West Africa. On a more positive note, he underscored that much of the continent is not suffering from terrorism, with Mozambique being the best example in counter-terrorism success, and commending national counter-terrorism efforts from governments in North Africa and Somalia's effective military campaign against al-Shabaab. Mr. Hustwitt highlighted four broad tactical trends of concern: (i) a localized détente between Da'esh in Greater Sahara and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) in the Sahel; (ii) a decrease in the number of claimed attacks in several areas, including the Sahel and West Africa, without a reduction in operations; (iii) an increase in the lethality of terrorist attacks, despite a broad reduction in their number and pace; and (iv) Al-Qaida's improvement of the frequency, quality and volume of media output in response to the 7 October 2023 events in Israel and Gaza, with concerns about the exploitation of the situation to recover relevance and tap into popular feelings.

Ms. Kate Fitzpatrick

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Criminal Justice Legal Responses & Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CJLR-CFT), underscored the serious security challenges facing Africa from terrorism and stressed the importance of strengthening the rule of law and criminal justice measures as essential elements in long-term efforts to bring peace. Ms. Fitzpatrick underlined the Working Group's role in supporting these efforts, with its 20 members who have made strides to counter many of the

counter-terrorism-related challenges that the continent is facing. She further emphasized the Working Group's active role to ramp up engagement in Africa, including discussions on technical assistance to Nigeria and the wider region, and recalled the Working Group's initiative on battlefield evidence, benefiting several African Member States. Ms. Fitzpatrick highlighted that the first phase of this initiative focused on the development of guidelines and battlefield evidence, while the second phase, led by UNODC, focuses on the delivery of technical assistance to West African countries and Mozambique. She reaffirmed the need to support African Member States to move away from securitized approaches to counter-terrorism and towards the development and implementation of whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches to combat emerging threats more effectively. In conclusion, Ms. Fitzpatrick reiterated the Working Group's commitment to continuing to contribute to the fight against terrorism.

Ms. Camille Scotto De César

INTERPOL, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Emerging Threats, and Critical Infrastructure Protection (ETCIP), underscored the mandate of the ETCIP Working Group to address emerging terrorist threats, including those related to the misuse of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials and the protection of critical infrastructure. She stressed the increasing role of emerging technologies and their exploitation by terrorist actors, with Africa being targeted. In this regard, she mentioned some initiatives in support of African Member States, including the INTERPOL-UNOCT "CT TECH" Initiative, aimed at strengthening the capacities of law enforcement authorities to counter the exploitation of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, and to leverage these technologies in the fight against terrorism in collaboration with 35 Partner States, of which 15 are from Africa. Ms. Scotto De César further informed about an upcoming report on the Threat of Artificial Intelligence Use for Terrorism Purpose, to be published in February, and recalled the publication of the updated Compendium of Good Practices on the Protection of Critical Infrastructure Against Terrorist Attacks and the consideration of regional legal frameworks, including the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection. She further underlined INTERPOL's key operations in Africa, such as Operation NEPTUNE, regional counter-terrorism operations and Biometric and Border Security Operations, and stressed the significant increase in the publication of terrorism-related INTERPOL Notices, including biometric data. In conclusion, Ms. Scotto De César reaffirmed INTERPOL's commitment to supporting law enforcement worldwide, echoing Secretary-General Guterres' call for a global coalition.

Ms. Jacqueline Seck

Deputy Director, Western Africa Division, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO), underscored the rise in terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel, and recalled that 40% of the Liptako-Gourma region, located between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, remained under the control of violent extremist groups and terrorists, aggravated by the withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). She expressed concern over the continued activities of violent extremist groups and the advancing terrorist threat into coastal African states, and emphasized that Mali has become a stage for a confrontation between JNIM and Da'esh in the Greater Sahara, both vying for control of the territory, its population, and resources. Ms. Seck reaffirmed that the security situation in Niger has been marked by fluctuations over recent years, with a resurgence of terrorist attacks, particularly after the coup in July 2023, stressing that a coordinated international breakthrough is urgently needed. She also emphasized the need to support regional initiatives, highlighting the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023) on the financing of African Union-led peace operations as an opportunity to support these efforts in a predictable way. Furthermore, Ms. Seck noted that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has taken steps towards strengthening integration of the multiplicity of counter-terrorism initiatives in the sub-region to mitigate coordination challenges. In conclusion, she underlined that the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) remains available to provide support to Member States and regional entities to advance counter-terrorism in West Africa.

Session II

Strengthening counter-terrorism coordination through identifying key challenges and gaps; and sharing of best practices and lessons learned

Mr. Mauro Miedico

UNOCT, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (PCVE), stressed the need for increased coordination, particularly from the prevention of violent extremism point of view. He stressed the dichotomy between counter-terrorism initiatives and prevention of violent extremism, noting that securitized approaches are insufficient and sometimes counterproductive if not accompanied by comprehensive preventative engagement. Mr. Miedico underlined the UNOCT-led Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sports and its Values to Prevent Violent Extremism, which focuses on the securitization of sporting events and puts youth and sport values at the center of engagement and alternative strategies. He further emphasized the need to foster cooperation at the regional and sub-regional level. Mr. Miedico reaffirmed the importance of comprehensive and holistic responses at the national level, promoting inter-institutional coordination and rethinking the concept of governance, noting that terrorist acts are more numerous in states with fragile institutions and highlighting the critical need for involving all relevant actors, including national development and social security institutions. He also stressed the importance of 'all-of-society' integration in holistic responses, with a particular focus on youth, education, social development, academia, civil society, civic space, and the private sector in concerted responses to address the root causes of violent extremism. In this regard, Mr. Miedico underscored the significance of the Secretary-General's PVE Action Plan and High-level Action Group, noting the need to put both more at the center of collective PVE efforts.

Ms. Jerena Niyazberdiyeva

UNOCT, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Resource Mobilization, Monitoring and Evaluation (RMME), highlighted the pivotal role of the United Nations in fostering international collaboration, emphasizing the need to bring diverse stakeholders together. She posed critical questions, underscoring the imperative of delivering the best thinking collectively and incentivizing strategic multi-partner initiatives that transcend individual entity perspectives. Ms. Niyazberdiyeva highlighted that a major challenge to adopting a strategic and programmatic approach to counter-terrorism is a project-based funding model. In that context, she recalled the

UN Joint Appeal for Counter-Terrorism in Africa, a new UN system-wide initiative launched in June 2023. Ms. Niyazberdiyeva explained that the Joint Appeal brings together 16 Counter-Terrorism Compact entities supporting ten multi-partner initiatives, with the objective of steering a new generation of UN-system action for a more visible, transparent, and effective multilateral contribution to the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) in Africa. Sharing initial lessons learned from previous appeals, she highlighted the success of this initiative in fostering collaboration, leveraging expertise, and focusing on human rights and gender-responsive approaches, further stressing the importance of the Joint Appeal's strategic approach, which has already been recognized by prospective funding partners like the Republic of Korea. Additionally, Ms. Niyazberdiyeva recalled that the Working Group's workplan for 2024-2026 and the eighth GCTS review resolution underscore the importance of establishing a common results framework across all UN entities, and noted that the Working Group has started to tackle monitoring and evaluation gaps through initiatives such as the Compendium of Good Practices, a collaborative effort with the European Union, and the establishment of an Monitoring and Evaluation Community of Practice. She concluded by highlighting the importance of establishing a unified results framework to help measure the success of our common efforts in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, and informed of consultations with entities in the next months to collectively chart the way forward.

Ms. Anne-Maria Seesmaa

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Border Management and Law Enforcement Relating to Counter-Terrorism (BMLE), underscored key challenges and outlined actions to strengthen collective efforts in Africa. She emphasized the Working Group's focus on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons, citing the success of the joint initiative launched in 2023, including regional workshops promoting technical guidelines aligned with Security Council resolution 2370 (2017). Ms. Seesmaa noted the Working Group's efforts to promote its Compendium on the responsible use and sharing of biometrics in counter-terrorism and the Counter-terrorism watchlisting toolkit developed under the GCTF watchlisting initiative, co-led by the United States and the UN. She further stressed the limited capacity to detect potential terrorists at African borders, advocating for increased promotion of these tools, and reported on the Working Group's support for the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, facilitating the global implementation of Advanced Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR). Despite initial gaps in data collection, she emphasized the significant progress made by African Member States in the last three years, expressed concern about challenges in establishing preventative mechanisms due to institutional structures which limit the flow of threat information required to perform aviation security activities. Ms. Seesmaa also highlighted the Working Group's support to the development

of the the non-binding guiding principles on “the threats posed by the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for terrorist purposes”, and to the UNOCT-led Programme on Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems (AROS), and announced the initiation of a joint project to develop a guidance/manual for systematic risk management methodology, enabling African states to focus resources on terrorism-related vulnerabilities. Moreover, she noted that the Working Group will also prioritize human rights considerations, incorporating briefings by regional organizations like the African Union and its African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).

Mr. Rio Hada

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Protecting and Promoting Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Supporting Victims of Terrorism (HRRoL-VoT), underscored the Working Group’s ongoing support to Member States and other Compact Working Groups in ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law in counter-terrorism efforts. He stressed the importance of the work done by the members of the Working Group in Africa, where they have been jointly and individually implementing capacity-building and technical assistance projects, including in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, as well as in East Africa. Mr. Hada underlined the necessity for the UN system to ensure coordinated and coherent efforts in the complex landscape of counter-terrorism, with human rights as a central focus. However, he highlighted the challenges that remain, including the selective implementation of human rights standards and the disproportionate impact of counter-terrorism measures on specific communities. He reiterated that human rights are non-negotiable, and no counter-terrorism or national security goal can justify violating international human rights law or international humanitarian law. Mr. Hada also recalled the recent pledges made by 153 Member States to uphold human rights, including in areas relevant to counter-terrorism, as a significant step forward, and emphasized the importance of the ratification and implementation of international human rights treaties alongside counter-terrorism conventions. Looking forward, Mr. Hada welcomed the adoption of the Compact’s 2024-2026 Joint Programme of Work (JPoW) and stressed the need for greater coherence and collaboration across its Working Groups, underlining the critical role of civil society and victims of terrorism in these efforts.

Mr. Pranab Kumar Das

Director for Compliance and Facilitation, World Customs Organization (WCO), underscored the severe impact of terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel region, emphasizing the continuous targeting of civilians by non-state violent extremist groups. Since the adoption of the Punta Cana Resolution in 2015, he highlighted that the WCO has actively worked to involve its Member

Customs administrations in counter-terrorism activities, aligning with relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Mr. Das recalled WCO's field research on fragile borders in West and Central Africa and the MENA region, leading to a revised approach in capacity-building and the development of new tools. He stressed the success of the WCO West Africa Security Project, launched in 2022 and funded by Germany, which focuses on building capacity and knowledge for customs officials in Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana, ensuring trade facilitation while preventing misuse for illicit purposes. Mr. Das reaffirmed the project's extension to 2024, including Benin and Nigeria, with The Gambia joining the gender equality and diversity component. He emphasized the importance of collaboration between national customs, law enforcement, and security agencies, citing recent operational activities. On the latter, Mr. Das mentioned the latest operation codenamed 'Antale' in November 2023 which was conducted in conjunction with INTERPOL. He stressed WCO's commitment to working closely with the Counter-Terrorism Compact and other partners for effective coordination, expressing confidence in making a positive impact together for a better future.

Session III

UN Counter-Terrorism Compact's coordination with regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector in preventing and countering terrorism in Africa

Mr. Ahmed Seif El-Dawla

[CTED, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies \(NARS\)](#), underscored the importance of comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism strategies, emphasizing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, human rights and gender mainstreaming, and meaningful consultation with stakeholders. Mr. El-Dawla highlighted efforts in different regions, including Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Southeast Europe, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and lessons learned shared from the Council of Europe's regional counter-terrorism strategy, with plans to replicate engagements in Africa. He informed of potential cooperation on national counter-terrorism strategies with the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), commended gender-mainstreaming efforts throughout Counter-Terrorism Compact activities, and indicated plans to explore discussions on regional practices and lessons learned. Finally, Mr. El-Dawla underscored the importance of direct engagement with UN Country Teams for developing national counter-terrorism strategies, highlighted the tenth anniversary of the 2013 Bogota Principles, and made a call for a Review Conference in 2024.

Ms. Florence Nakazibwe

[Senior Legal Adviser-Africa, International Center for Not-For Profit Law \(ICNL\)](#), underscored the critical need for coordinated counter-terrorism efforts in Africa involving regional mechanisms, the private sector, and civil society. She stressed the Counter-Terrorism Compact's positive commitment for recognizing the strategic role of civil society in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa. Recalling persistent gaps in civil society engagement, Ms. Nakazibwe emphasized the whole-of-society approach and urged the UN and its Member States to provide accessible avenues for community engagement. Civil society, as a key intermediary, possess the expertise to contribute to effective strategies addressing security threats. Ms. Nakazibwe highlighted the various ways civil society organizations in Africa have supported counter-terrorism, including training law enforcement agencies and implementing PCVE programmes. She further expressed concern about the growing misuse of counter-terrorism measures by governments,

limiting civil society's engagement and democratic freedoms, and called for human rights due diligence on these measures, criticizing the security-focused and non-transparent nature of counterterrorism policy spaces. Ms. Nakazibwe urged the African Union and Regional Economic Communities to promote inclusive approaches, prioritizing human rights in counterterrorism initiatives, and endorsed the proposed technical assistance project in Benin as an opportunity to build a model for Africa, emphasizing the importance of human rights, participation, transparency, and inclusivity. In conclusion, she called on the UN and stakeholders to foster a conducive environment for civil society, establish inclusive spaces for engagement, and ensure their involvement in national capacity-building efforts under the GCTS.

Ms. Nihal Saad

Director, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), highlighted the multifaceted challenges Africa faces due to injustices, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. She underscored the malicious exploitation of these vulnerabilities by radical and terrorist groups to recruit youth, emphasizing the need for flexible, collaborative, and innovative strategies at global, regional, and national levels. Ms. Saad reaffirmed the importance of Africa-led solutions and stressed the essential role of diverse partnerships. She emphasized the significance of engaging civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, and regional organizations to enhance understanding, foster learning, and drive innovation. MS. Saad recalled UNAOC's longstanding collaboration with CSOs, particularly through the Youth Solidarity Fund, supporting youth-led projects promoting social cohesion, and further emphasized UNAOC's partnership with the private sector through the "Intercultural Innovation Hub," which supports innovative grassroots projects with financial grants and holistic coaching. Ms. Saad highlighted the importance of collaboration with regional organizations, informing of UNAOC's joint effort with UNOCT and the African Union in organizing the UN-African Union Sports Council Youth Forum forum aimed at raising awareness of the role of sport in PVE and gather recommendations for integrating young people into organizing major sporting events.

Updates from the Global Compact Secretariat

Ms. Elisabeth Neugebauer

Team Leader, Counter-Terrorism Compact Team, UNOCT, provided a comprehensive update on the Counter-Terrorism Compact's achievements in 2023, including Working Groups' progress on the implementation of the Options Paper to enhance regional coordination, adopted by the Coordination Committee in December 2021, and the publication of a dedicated Member State page on the Compact Coordination Platform, and outlined the strategic priorities for 2024-2026. She emphasized the importance of collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector, and informed about UN-Habitat's interest to join the Compact as an observer in 2024, and the proposed launch of a new Compact Working Group dedicated to behavioral sciences to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. Ms. Neugebauer concluded by noting ongoing resource mobilization plans for future joint initiatives and activities under the Counter-Terrorism Compact framework.

Written contribution

Dr. Robin Geiss

Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), underscored the institute's contribution to the UN's "whole-of-system" approach to countering threats posed by the acquisition and use of conventional weapons by terrorists. He highlighted the key research areas and tools deemed crucial for discussing best practices in preventing and countering terrorism, with a specified focus on counter-terrorism coordination in Africa, which includes: (i) technical guidelines to facilitate implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons; (ii) a Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool; and (iii) UNIDIR's ongoing support since 2016 for 12 African States to comprehensively assess their Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) capabilities. Dr. Geiss highlighted that in January 2024, UNIDIR will release a study on trends in the use of uncrewed systems by non-state armed groups in Africa, underscoring its role in informing appropriate national and regional strategies, policies, and countermeasures. He noted the well-established linkages between the proliferation of conventional weapons and violent extremism in West Africa and highlighted the regional seminar co-organized by UNIDIR, Switzerland, and the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) in December 2023, where experts urged for a joined-up approach for preventing violent extremism and managing weapons.