

Eleventh Meeting of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact
Committee New York, 5 February 2025

The Pact for the Future and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact: Strengthening Policy Interventions and Building Member State Capacities to Prevent and Counter Terrorism

Remarks of **Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela**, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- Insecurity, terrorism and violence remain key drivers of forced displacement, while also posing a threat to those compelled to leave their homes, returnees as well as the communities hosting them. Women and children are particularly affected, as they are exposed to gender-based violence and exploitation, while youth are often targeted by armed groups for recruitment. Older people and persons with disabilities are also particularly at risk.
- Responses to these and other crises must not be focused on security alone. The humanitarian and protection needs of those impacted by conflict and violence, including threats resulting from terrorism and violent extremism, must be factored into counter-terrorism approaches by the UN and Member States.
- In this context, UNHCR welcomes the emphasis on adherence to international law as a key principle to inform counter-terrorism strategies and responses.
- Counter-terrorism measures which are grounded in the rule of law and full respect for human rights are best suited to protect those fleeing persecution, conflict and violence, including terrorism, while also ensuring the security of the host country and its community.
- The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which establishes clear criteria for determining who is a refugee, also provides that persons involved in serious criminality or otherwise posing a threat to the security of host countries would not be entitled to benefit from international refugee protection. Accordingly, international refugee law contains a system of checks and balances, through provisions which take full account of the security interests of States and host communities, while at the same time protecting the rights of refugees.
- From UNHCR's perspective, therefore, promoting accession to the international refugee instruments remains critical – not least in view of the fact that in the vast majority of circumstances, those forcibly displaced by terrorism are victims rather than perpetrators.
- UNHCR also renews its call to address the underlying causes that force people to flee their homes.
- UNHCR remains committed to contributing to efforts within the context of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, and to support States, in line with its

mandate, in their responses to security concerns while upholding international protection principles.