



VIRTUAL COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

6-10 JULY 2020

Opening remarks
Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov
Launch of the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week
6 July 2020, 10 AM

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and honour to open this Virtual Counter Terrorism Week as part of the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations.

I am deeply grateful that we are joined on this occasion by Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

It was his initiative to reform the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture that led to the creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism three years ago.

Has it been a success story? I would not like to presume how the General Assembly will assess UNOCT when it reviews the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in its 75th session.

However, let me make some observations as UNOCT begins its fourth year:

First, although the number of terrorist attacks and fatalities has been declining since the peak reached during the rise of ISIL, terrorism remains a major threat to international peace and security, and some groups are extending their reach into new areas.

Second, over the past three years the Security Council has adopted a number of Chapter VII resolutions establishing a comprehensive set of measures that Member States can use to prevent and counter terrorism.

Third, UNOCT and the other 42 UN entities and partners participating in the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact established by the Secretary-General in 2018, now have more mechanisms to support Member States implement the Global Counter-



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Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council resolutions. Our programmatic activities on this track now have a global and comprehensive approach.

The United Nations is implementing more than 300 counter-terrorism capacity-building projects around the world, including 50 overseen by the Office of Counter-Terrorism benefitting 72 countries.

I think it is therefore safe to say that the United Nations is contributing to the efforts of many Member States and international actors to effectively address the threat of terrorism.

COVID-19 has not changed this positive trend. But we must stay vigilant as terrorists are using innovative tactics and tools to exploit vulnerabilities and conditions conducive to terrorism, many of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

And we must take urgent action to address unresolved issues such as the situation of foreign terrorist fighters and associated women and children detained in camps in Syria and Iraq.

While we look forward to the postponed review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, today we have an opportunity to jointly reflect on the “Strategic and Practical Challenges of Countering Terrorism in a Global Pandemic Environment”.

This webinar sets the scene for the week, with a forward-looking focus on the “Contours, Pivot Points and Benefits of Multilateral Collaboration” in a post COVID-19 world, and the implications for counter-terrorism.

In subsequent sessions, representatives from Member States, United Nations entities, civil society and the private sector will address specific counter-terrorism topics in light of the COVID-19 crisis across all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

We will discuss how the United Nations can better support Member States’ counter-terrorism efforts, including through UNOCT’s and its partners global flagship capacity-building programmes, namely:



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To counter terrorist travel, financing and access to weapons;

To support Member States' repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, sensitive to age and gender, in full compliance with international law;

To prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism;

To promote and protect human rights as the bedrock of counter-terrorism efforts;

And to support the rights and address the needs of victims of terrorism.

There will also be a virtual exhibition showcasing the work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre – a capacity-building Centre of Excellence serving Member States and the international community.

To conclude, I would like to sincerely thank our largest donors - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the European Union – as well as all 31 countries that are contributing to UNOCT's Trust Fund. My Office would not be able to function without their generous support.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my honour to give the floor to Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his keynote address.

Sir, the floor is yours.