



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism

**Diplomatic Club
3 March 2018, Cairo**

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my distinct honour and pleasure to address this distinguished audience of political leaders, senior government officials, diplomats and experts.

I am very pleased to be here in Egypt, a land of ancient wonders and proud people whose creativity and achievements have contributed so much to human mankind.

I would like to thank the Government of Egypt for the warm hospitality that has been extended to me, and thank all of you for being here this evening to engage with me.

Excellencies,

I have come to Egypt to discuss one of the world's greatest challenges today – the scourge of terrorism.

The threat is of course not new, and Egypt has, unfortunately, a long and proven experience on the frontline of international efforts to combat terrorism.

From the outset I would like to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifices of the Egyptian people who are showing determination and resilience. I extend my heartfelt compassion and solidarity with the victims of terrorism in Egypt.

I come with a simple message. Nothing can ever justify terrorism. Terrorism is an affront to human dignity. The fight against terrorism should therefore bring us all together.

The fight against terrorism in Egypt, in Belgium, in Russia, in Indonesia, in Trinidad and Tobago or anywhere – should matter to everyone. No country can claim

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immunity, either from the threat itself and its potential proliferation – or from the devastating social, economic, cultural and humanitarian consequences of terrorism today.

Excellencies,

ISIL has suffered a series of devastating military setbacks in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and the southern Philippines.

Yet, it is not the time for complacency. ISIL and its affiliates continue to pose a significant and evolving threat around the world, and so does Al-Qaida and its affiliates.

Terrorism remains an unprecedented threat to international peace, security and development.

As conflicts have grown in intensity and number over the past decade, terrorist attacks have increased and spread, destroying societies and destabilizing entire regions.

The threat from terrorism transcends cultures and geographical boundaries and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group.

Excellencies,

The threat of terrorism is constantly evolving. We need to stay at least one step ahead to anticipate, prevent and counter new attacks. Terrorists are not sitting idle. They are actively on the look-out for the next blow they can inflict, the new opportunity they can exploit.

New technologies in the areas of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, drones and the Internet have the potential to deliver great benefits to people around the world. However, the darker side of these technologies allows the most poisonous of ideas to flow encrypted across borders at the touch of a button or the tap of a tweet.

We need to remain united and focused to counter these emerging threats.

In this regard, I would like to salute the leadership demonstrated by Egypt during its Chairmanship of the Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee on 2016-2017. A number of crucial resolutions were adopted by the Council during these two years to upgrade the counter-terrorism responses of Member States.

Let me highlight in particular the adoption of Resolution 2354 on countering terrorist narratives, which was championed by Egypt and co-sponsored by 60 Member States.

“Guns, Gates and Guards” are no longer enough. We must confront terrorism on the emotional and ideological level to win hearts and minds, especially of the youth. This has become an essential component of our fight – perhaps even the most decisive battlefield if we want to not only win the fight, but win the peace.

Excellencies,

The United Nations Secretary-General has made preventing and countering terrorism one of his top priorities. He has emphasized two key themes in his vision of the fight against terrorism, within a framework based on human rights and the rule of law: first – promoting international cooperation and second –prevention in the spirit of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

To help translate this vision into practice, the Secretary-General’s first reform initiative was to create the Office of Counter-Terrorism to provide strategic leadership to United Nations counter-terrorism efforts.

Building on this, the Secretary-General signed two weeks ago the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, to further strengthen the coordination and coherence in the counter-terrorism work of thirty-six different United Nations entities, plus INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization.

Our focus now is to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation by ensuring a new spirit of partnership to address the deficit in cooperation at the global, regional and national levels.

There is an urgent need for governments and security and law enforcements agencies to collaborate and consult far more effectively in fighting terrorist groups, in accordance with all their obligations under international law.

It is time for a new era of practical cooperation and information-sharing to deny terrorist any opportunity, any vulnerability, any chance.

To play its part, the United Nations Secretary-General will convene a High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States on 28 and 29 June. The Conference will aim to enhance cooperation, the exchange of information in a timely and secure manner, and develop new and innovative ways to tackle terrorism.

Excellencies,

In the coming month, the Member States of the United Nations will review the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The review and

the High-Level Conference will be held back to back during the last week of June—the first “counter-terrorism week” ever held at the United Nations.

Prior to the review of the Strategy, the Secretary General will issue a report sharing his assessment of the work achieved by the United Nations and recommendations to strengthen the response of the international community.

I hope that the review will not only maintain but reinforce international consensus against terrorism and set a clear direction for all our common efforts over the next two years.

To fight terrorism is a direct responsibility of a sovereign State. While acknowledging this primary national role, at the United Nations we are committed to increase our support to Member States, at their request, in scope, effectiveness and impact. We are ready to up our efforts.

Let me highlight, by the way, an example of this commitment: the UN-wide Foreign Terrorist Fighters Capacity-Building Implementation Plan, which includes 50 projects, from 13 different entities, addressing the whole life cycle of the phenomenon, from prevention up to prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration.

We are also strengthening our partnerships with regional organizations, which are key allies in the fight against terrorism, including the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Excellencies,

Everyone in this room knows that the fight against ISIL and its affiliates is far from over. We must remain committed and united in countering this scourge.

As the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, I have offered to all Member States my deep personal commitment to this objective.

I started my new job just over 6 months ago and I am grateful for the consistent and strong support extended by Egypt to my Office and to me personally. I am very much encouraged by my consultations here in Cairo and I look forward to strengthening this partnership in concrete areas.

Thank you.