

As delivered



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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

**International Research-To-Practice Conference
on Priorities of International Cooperation in Countering
Extremism and Terrorism
*3 April 2018, Moscow***

**Dear Vladimir Aleksandrovich,
Dear Oleg Vladimirovich,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

At the outset I would like to thank the organizers of today's important conference, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, for their hospitality and for having invited me to contribute to this forum bridging the research and the practice on counter-terrorism.

I am delighted to be in my home city of Moscow and to address such an honorable and expert audience of counter-terrorism professionals.

The Russian Federation has significant valuable experience in many formats of addressing the threat of terrorism. Russia shares these expertise, good practices and lessons learnt with other Member States of the United Nations, including in Central Asia, South and South-East Asia, Middle East and other regions, which are fighting the scourge of terrorism. It is important that no country feels alone in the fight against this challenge.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since starting my new leadership role at the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in September last year, I have visited a number of countries, such as Egypt, Mali, Mauritania, Iraq – which suffered from terrorist aggression. These places and many others around the world are ravaged by the scourge of terrorism. Terrorists are killing people, targeting

the prospects of economic development and trying to undermine the governance in these states. Yet the Governments and people of these countries are demonstrating resilience to this ominous challenge.

Outlawed in Russia ISIL and Al Qaida have suffered major setbacks on the battlefields in Iraq and Syria. The counter-terrorism action of the international community, including that of the Russian Federation, is well appreciated. But there is no room for self-complacency. Terrorism is not expected to subside soon.

In the face of this daunting challenge, we must remain vigilant and committed. Terrorism is a complex and a global scourge. Porous borders and instability in some parts of the world have created security vacuums, allowing terrorist groups to establish safe havens, operate transnationally, and cause large-scale death and destruction.

Terrorists prey on vulnerable communities and individuals to gain more sympathizers and recruit additional members to their ranks. Cyberspace is the new frontline in preventing and countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

Terrorists are offering a twisted sense of purpose and belonging to disaffected young people, boys and girls alike. They are trying to manipulate the youth, exploiting grievances and amplifying the reach of their messages.

A number of States which lack resources and sometimes expert training and tools, must contend with technologically well-equipped, skillfully trained and ideologically committed terrorist fighters.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, has made countering terrorism one of his top priorities. To win this battle, we must outrun terrorists for at least one step.

We have no troops, no security services. We use “soft power” to prevent terrorism, to increase the resilience of States and societies.

The United Nations is committed to stepping up its assistance to Member States to face the multifaceted threat of terrorism. The UN Office of Counter-Terrorism through its UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), is already implementing over 40 counter-terrorism capacity-building projects at the request of Member States.

For example, to help young people become resilient to radicalization, UNCCT is supporting the technical and vocational training institutes in Bangladesh and Pakistan. We are working in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to provide knowledge, tools, and best practices to the principals and managers of these institutes so they can be effective in helping students build their skills and acquire decent employment. We will soon launch an equivalent project in Iraq's Fallujah, which have severely suffered from terrorism.

We are also working on countering the financing of terrorism, which should remain a cornerstone of counter-terrorism efforts. We have developed twelve training modules on effective designations and freezing techniques to enhance the understanding, skills and experience of financial regulatory officials, ministries and private sector entities on international standards, with due regard given to Member States' international human rights and humanitarian obligations.

In order to help Member States improve their border security and management, UNCCT is providing support with regard to Advance Passenger Information (API) requirements, enhancing awareness of border security and management good practices, supporting the development of national border management strategies and action plans, improving cross-border cooperation and institutional training, as well as enhancing aviation security.

We have also developed a comprehensive United Nations wide Foreign Terrorist Fighters Capacity Building Implementation Plan. It includes several projects related to prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration to support Member States in their efforts to address returning foreign terrorist fighters. Thirty-five of the fifty projects under the plan have been either completed or are being implemented.

UNCCT is fully committed to supporting the victims of terrorism, including by enhancing the specialised UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, drawing on practical knowledge and skills of victims of terrorism to counter the narrative of violent extremism. We are also encouraging Member States to help victims of terrorism.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to stress that the primary responsibility for countering terrorism rests with sovereign states. Interference in their internal affairs is not acceptable under any pretext. There is a strong international framework that guides the work of the United Nations, in support and always at the request of its Member States. I cannot but underscore the importance of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted by consensus in 2006. I hope

that the sixth review of the Strategy in the coming month will further reinforce this international consensus and set a clear direction for our common efforts over the next years.

The Secretary-General has prioritized counter-terrorism on the UN agenda. Therefore, his first reform initiative was to establish in June last year the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. One of its main tasks is to promote coordination and coherence in the efforts of thirty-five different United Nations entities, plus INTERPOL, World Customs Organization and Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

To further enhance coordination the Secretary-General Guterres signed in February the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact with the principals of all these entities. The Global Compact will be instrumental in breaking the silos inside the UN in the area of preventing and countering terrorism.

In the context of the reform, the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres will convene a High-Level Conference of Head of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States on 28 and 29 June in New York, under the overall theme of “Strengthening international cooperation against to combat the evolving threat of terrorism”.

The High-Level Conference will facilitate discussions on four key topics: (1) sharing of information, expertise and resources; (2) addressing violent extremism when conducive to terrorism, including the misuse of new technologies; (3) addressing the Foreign Terrorist Fighters phenomenon; and (4) the role of the United Nations in supporting Member States and promoting international cooperation.

We expect that this High-Level Conference will gather the senior-most officials in charge of counter-terrorism from 193 UN Member States, including Ministers of Interior, heads of law-enforcement and intelligence agencies, and national counter-terrorism coordinators.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Everyone in this room knows that the fight against terrorism is yet far from being over. We have a long way ahead of us, and there is much more that we can – and that we need to do without delay.

We should unite behind the common priorities and a shared understanding of how to advance in practice towards our main goal of defeating terrorism. I am confident that today’s Conference will contribute to forging this understanding.

You have the full support of the United Nations and my assurances that we will continue to play our part in helping strengthen international cooperation to rescue peoples of the world from the scourge of terrorism.

I thank you for your attention.