



## **Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism calls for full respect for Human Rights while Countering Terrorism in Geneva**

**Geneva, 11 September 2018** – Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) concluded a visit to Switzerland at the invitation of the Swiss Government.

“Switzerland has been a strong supporter of the United Nations in its global efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism and we look forward to strengthening our partnership,” said Mr. Voronkov, who held extensive bilateral meetings in Bern and in Geneva. He thanked the Swiss Government for its support to UNOCT as a donor and as an active Member of the Advisory Board of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, the capacity building arm of UNOCT. Mr. Voronkov and senior Swiss authorities, including Foreign Affairs State Secretary Pascale Baeriswyl, and Federal Intelligence Service Director Jean-Philippe Gaudin, exchanged views on common priorities, including preventing violent extremism, foreign terrorist fighters returnees and their families, aviation security and supporting victims of terrorism, among others.

On the margins of the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council, the Under-Secretary-General participated in a special event on the importance of respecting human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. “Effective counter-terrorism measures and protection of human rights are not conflicting goals, but complementary and mutually reinforcing”, Mr. Voronkov [said](#) at the event, which was co-organized by Switzerland, Mexico, UNOCT and the Office of The High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

At the event, Mr. Voronkov also launched the UNOCT [Reference Guide on Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism](#). This publication proposes overarching, substantive and procedural principles for countries to consider in developing national and regional plans of action to prevent violent extremism (PVE), taking into account the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Security Council resolutions, the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action for PVE and other relevant documents. It recommends an inclusive and participatory process involving governmental and non-governmental partners to help build resilience to terrorism as part of a “whole of society” approach under the leadership of national authorities. Participants of the event welcomed the Guide, and expressed support for the work that UNOCT and OHCHR are undertaking to support Member States’ efforts to uphold human rights while countering terrorism.

Strengthening UNOCT’s collaboration with civil society organizations was also a key priority of this side-event, and of the visit. Mr. Voronkov met with various civil society representatives at a breakfast discussion organized by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and met separately with the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). During these meetings, civil society representatives welcome UNOCT’s efforts to engage with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders around the world.

Mr. Voronkov also participated in an Executive Briefing hosted by UNOG Director General, Mr. Michael Moller, to inform Permanent Missions to the UN in Geneva, international and regional organizations and UN entities on the work of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, which was established in June 2017 to provide leadership on the implementation of General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates, to enhance coordination and coherence, and to strengthen the delivery of the United Nations counter-terrorism capacity building assistance to Member States.

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