



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Remarks by UN Under-Secretary-General  
Mr. Vladimir Voronkov**

**2019 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference  
*Bratislava, 25-26 March 2019***

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First, I would like to warmly congratulate the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship and State Secretary Lukáš Parížek for convening this successful conference.

I am always impressed by the regional leadership of the OSCE with its unique membership and partnerships for cooperation, and its comprehensive approach to security, including in combating terrorism.

Opportunities such as this conference are essential to sustain the momentum in our collective effort to respond to the evolving and multifaceted threat from terrorism and terrorist radicalization.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Indeed, we cannot afford complacency. Terrorism remains a serious global threat and challenge.

Following its territorial collapse, ISIL is transforming into a covert network that remains a threat as a global organization with centralized leadership.

Its toxic propaganda continues to grow and spread online, moving between platforms and embedding in the Dark Web.

The return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters and their family members is presenting Member States with a range of complex legal and social issues to break the cycle of violence.

I am particularly concerned about the fate of children associated with FTFs, including European FTFs, who are stranded in Syria and Iraq, with their mothers or orphaned. It's important that the States of origin of these minors find a human rights-based solution, respectful of the rule of law and the international legal framework.

And the threat of terrorism is not limited to ISIL, Al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab or Boko Haram.

Terrorist tactics appeal to individuals driven by intolerance and hatred in all its ugly forms – misogyny, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, hate against Muslims.

We were all shocked and appalled by the heinous terrorist attacks in New Zealand earlier this month against two mosques.

My thoughts are with the victims, the survivors and their families.

We must be vigilant and proactive about the terrorist threat from racial supremacists and far-right groups.

This is a growing global threat and we need to share information and cooperate to tackle it as such.

Terrorism does not occur in a vacuum and we should be alarmed by the rise in hate speech around the world.

This larger menace to human rights, social stability and security calls for urgent action by governments and all sectors of society.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Over the past two days you have taken stock of efforts across the OSCE area to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

I would like to share four points that are guiding the work of the United Nations as we respond to growing demand for support from Member States, under the leadership of Secretary-General Guterres, based on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council resolutions.

**First**, we need more emphasis on encouraging local solutions.

We need two-way dialogue and partnerships to bridge the global counter-terrorism agenda, national leadership and policies, with local realities.

Local stakeholders, including civil society, contribute vital insights to understand what the drivers of terrorist radicalization are in each context and how best to address them.

National authorities will be more effective by empowering local actors to help devise and deliver tailored programmes to strengthen community resilience and turn away vulnerable individuals from violence.

**Second**, we need to scale up our work supporting the victims of terrorism, which will assist our wider efforts to build resilience.

Victims of terrorism can be extremely powerful messengers. When we highlight their voices, uphold their rights and provide them with support and justice, we are also rejecting the dehumanizing and divisive narratives of terrorists.

Last year, we commemorated for the first time on 21 August the “International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism”.

During next year’s UN Counter-Terrorism Week, my Office will seek to convene in New York the first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism to bring them to the table, at the center of our efforts. Spain has expressed readiness to take the lead in organizing this event.

**Third**, we are a little less gender-blind today in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

There is growing awareness that taking gender aspects into account is a prerequisite to be effective, including for rehabilitation and reintegration.

But we still have long way to go in practice to apply gender analysis, and to ensure women’s leadership and participation in preventing and countering terrorism.

**Fourth**, we need to engage and invest in our youth as partners rather than as a risk we need to mitigate.

They are an incredible source of energy, innovation and indeed resilience to safeguard their families and their communities.

My Office is currently developing a new global youth programme, in consultation with youth. We plan to launch it to mark the first anniversary of the UN Youth 2030 Strategy next fall. In parallel, we have started consultations with our Member States on how to use sport as a preventive tool against radicalization.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Last October, I had the honor to address the OSCE Permanent Council to share my thoughts on opportunities to strengthen cooperation between UNOCT and the OSCE.

I had also signed with Secretary-General Greminger a Memorandum of Understanding to lay the groundwork for action-oriented collaboration. Both organizations are now working closely together to develop a biennial Plan of Action envisaged by the MoU.

The Plan will include projects to strengthen the capacities of states in Central Asia on most pressing counter-terrorism issues, such as border security. It will be guided by key recommendations of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

We are already working closely with the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia – UNRCCA on this.

We are also working together to organize regional events to follow-up on the first UN High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, which UNOCT organized last June in New York. Joint conferences will be held in Tajikistan in May and in Belarus in September. Switzerland has also indicated its interest to organize one of these Conferences in Vienna, at OSCE premises, early next year.

Last but not least, we are ready to strengthen our cooperation with OSCE in the implementation of our flagship project on Advanced Passenger Information and Passenger Name Records—or API/PNR. I would like to invite OSCE to take part in the launching event of this project, which will be held in New York on 7 May.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Last year my Office focused on developing the frameworks for stronger partnerships – within the UN, through the launch of a Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact bringing together 38 entities – and externally with our regional partners, such as the OSCE.

Now we are focused on the practical implementation of these frameworks to deliver real impact on the ground. I look forward to working with all of you on this.

Thank you.