



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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

Signature of MoU between UNOCT and Italian Guardia di Finanza

28 March 2019

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Good morning.

I would like to warmly thank Commanding General Mr. Giorgio Toschi and the Guardia di Finanza for inviting me to your Plenary Meeting of international experts here at your Headquarters in Rome, in this beautiful hall. It is an honor for me to address such a distinguished audience. Mr. de Kerchove, thank you for the excellent cooperation and your encouraging words.

I would like to convey the best regards of Secretary-General Guterres to all of you.

This is an important day in the fight to counter financing of terrorism. First, later today, the Security Council will adopt a landmark resolution on Countering the Financing of Terrorism. I will also be briefing the Council via video connection on this issue.

Second, we are signing here today a Memorandum of Understanding between the Italian Guardia di Finanza and the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) for capacity-building collaboration in this very field.

The signing of this MoU between our offices is not the start of collaboration between UNOCT and the Guardia di Finanza. Instead, it formalizes the already ongoing dialogue and cooperation between both our entities and provides a basis to take it to a more ambitious level.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My Office was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2017, upon recommendation from the Secretary-General, with five key functions:

(1) providing leadership on counter-terrorism mandates conferred by the General Assembly; (2) strengthening coordination and coherence across the UN system; (3) providing capacity building assistance to Member States; (4) increasing visibility and resource mobilisation; and (5) ensuring that due priority is given to counter-terrorism in the UN system.

Countering the financing of terrorism has been a long-standing priority for the United Nations. The international community cannot be successful in its efforts to prevent and counter

this scourge unless we deny terrorists the means to finance themselves, their networks and operations.

The threat of terrorism is transnational and constantly evolving, and so is the threat of terrorism financing. It intersects with other serious crimes – illicit trafficking in drugs, organized crime – and exploit vulnerabilities in financial systems, non-profit sectors, and new technologies.

Supporting the efforts of Member States to counter the financing of terrorism is a key priority for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which brings together, under the leadership of UNOCT, 36 UN entities as well as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization.

This is also a priority for my Office as a provider of capacity-building assistance, through the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre.

Since 2014, the Counter-Terrorism Centre has provided technical assistance to more than 70 Member States and regional bodies in this field.

Our beneficiaries have included policy makers and experts from the public sector, such as law enforcement and financial intelligence units, but also members of the private sector and civil society organizations.

We have developed a Global Capacity-Building Programme on “Countering the Financing of Terrorism Through Effective National and Regional Action”, which seeks to build awareness of good practices, share knowledge and contribute to effective implementation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations.

This is done through focused trainings that leverage the expertise of other UN entities and international partners, including on implementing targeted sanctions and asset-freezing mechanisms, financial intelligence sharing, public-private partnerships, and use of new technologies.

To address the threat in a holistic manner, this Global Programme encompasses issues such as money and value transfer systems, kidnapping for ransom, national risk assessments, cash couriers and new payment methods, including mobile payment services and virtual assets, as well as the protection of the Non-Profit Organization sector against terrorist abuse.

In order to identify potential beneficiary countries and customize our support we collaborate closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as the UN bodies mandated to assess the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, namely the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the ISIL/AL-Qaida Sanctions Analytical and Monitoring Team.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thanks to the Memorandum of Understanding we are signing today, the United Nations and requesting Member States will be able to benefit from Italy’s long-standing experience and expertise in fighting economic and financial crime, based on the rule of law. Besides supporting

the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, it will be a most useful resource for all entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, to whom we will also make available the benefits of this cooperation.

To effectively counter terrorist financing, we need to robustly strengthen capacity in financial investigations, and ensure the development of investigative strategies for the disruption of financial flows directed at terrorist organizations and individuals. The strong expertise of the Guardia di Finanza in both areas represents an invaluable contribution to more effective action against the financing of terrorism.

We also need to conduct critical risk assessments, particularly of vulnerabilities in the financial and non-financial sectors. Here again, the Guardia di Finanza and the Italian Financial Intelligence Unit have strong expertise that the United Nations can draw on, to support our capacity building work.

I am also fully aware of the Guardia di Finanza's pursuit of excellence in the training of officers from a range of Member States and the development of state-of-the art curricula in this regard. The Economic and Financial Police School of the Guardia di Finanza is one of its kind, with a strong reputation worldwide.

I look forward to further cooperation between the Guardia and UNOCT, particularly in supporting Member States who are interested in benefitting from Italy's leading expertise in preventing and combatting financial crime and terrorism.

In this regard, I would also like to commend Italy's commitment to international cooperation as shown through the joint programme between the Guardia di Finanza and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy to provide capacity-building to other countries and partner entities.

Finally, I would also like to thank Commanding General Giorgio Toschi for deciding to synchronize the yearly planning of international courses with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's work, so as match the needs of my Office's capacity building activities.

I am convinced that our cooperation with Guardia di Finanza will strengthen the provision of capacity-building and sharing of expertise through the United Nations in the critical area of countering the financing of terrorism.

Thank you.