



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

#140 Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Parliamentarians play a crucial role in the fight against terrorism

Doha, 10 April 2019 – Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, the Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), participated in the 140th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) representing the UN Secretary-General António Guterres in Doha, Qatar.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony together with His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani Emir of Qatar and other dignitaries, Mr. Voronkov introduced the [video message](#) of the UN Secretary-General who welcomed the focus of the Assembly on education for peace and the rule of law, and on advancing joint efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism. The Secretary-General underscored the “vital roles that parliaments play as defenders of democracy”.

“The United Nations is grateful to participate in this Assembly to deepen the partnerships between our organizations. We are working together - through a significant five-year joint UN-IPU initiative - on the role of parliaments in addressing terrorism and violent extremism, which is vital if we want to be successful in curbing this scourge,” Mr. Voronkov added.

Mr. Voronkov also co-chaired a joint UN-IPU panel discussion on counter-terrorism and violent extremism entitled “From international resolutions to national legislations: Bridging the implementation gap”.

Mr. Voronkov described the joint IPU-UN initiative to support parliamentary actions on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. This initiative includes supporting national parliaments in promoting a balanced implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in collaboration with the civil society, women and youth. It also promotes international cooperation among relevant parliamentary committees.

“Bringing national counter-terrorism legal frameworks in line with relevant United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and international Counter-terrorism instruments is a key priority for the United Nations. The Joint Programme addresses this by facilitating the implementation of international requirements at the national levels,” he said.

The event had a special focus on victims of terrorism, including through the testimonial of a survivor, Ms. Falmata Bunu, a young community leader from a displacement camp in Maiduguri, Nigeria, who escaped after being abducted by Boko Haram at the age of 14. All participating parliamentarians paid tribute to her and to all the victims of terrorism around the world. Mr. Voronkov highlighted the plight of the victims and advocated for supporting their rights. He announced that UNOCT will convene a first ever Congress of Victims of Terrorism in New York, in 2020.

Mr. Voronkov also briefed the IPU first Committee on Peace and Security on the work of UNOCT. The Under-Secretary-General highlighted priority areas in which the parliamentarians play a critical role such as countering the financing of terrorism. He also stressed the urgency to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, especially the situation faced by women and children with links to terrorist groups, in a manner that is in full compliance with international law, particularly humanitarian and human rights law.

“Where necessary, Member States and the UN must address the Protection, Prosecution, Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration aspects of those detained in their home country or abroad,” he stated.

Mr. Voronkov also emphasized the need to address the abuse of new technologies and internet by terrorist groups and to approach prevention in a more holistic manner working with local communities at the grassroots level and all stakeholders, mainly civil society and non-governmental organizations.

On the margins of the assembly, Mr. Voronkov held a number of bilateral meetings with Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliaments, including from China, Niger, Nigeria, Kenya, Kuwait, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Russian Federation, Pakistan and Portugal. He spoke with the IPU President, H.E. Mr. Gabriela Cuevas Barron and the IPU Secretary General, Mr. Martin Choungong.

The Under-Secretary General met with H.E. Mr. Ahmed Bin Abdulla Bin Zaid Al-Mahmoud Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar; H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar; H. E. Yousef Al-Othman Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Qatar, and with Qatari National Counterterrorism Committee Chairman, H.E. Major General Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Ansari.

The Head of UNOCT discussed issues related to the protection of critical infrastructures including sports venues with the International Center on Sports Security (ICSS) based in Doha.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), was established in June 2017 to provide leadership on the implementation of General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates, to enhance coordination and coherence through the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact, and to strengthen the delivery of the United Nations counter-terrorism capacity building assistance to Member States, through the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT).

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