



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian  
Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Side event: Building best practice and using human rights-compliant digital methods to address the evolving threat from terrorist financing**

## **Opening Remarks**

**20 June 2023, 13.15 – 14.30  
UNHQ Conference Room 11/Cisco WebEx (hybrid)**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure to welcome you all to this side-event co-organized with the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the UN Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Royal United Services Institute, and the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law.

Terrorism poses a serious challenge, not only to security and stability, but also to the very tenets of the rule of law, the enjoyment of human rights, and civilization itself.

But terrorism isn't sui generis. Funding is its lifeblood. To secure the resources they need, terrorists undermine the stability and integrity of financial services.

And they are good at hiding their transactions, which often are in much smaller quantities than, say, organized crime uses to launder money.

We all know that terrorist groups are adaptive and learning organizations, meaning the terrorist threat continually evolves. In recent years we have seen the emergence of new methods used by terrorists to raise, move, and use resources, including using cryptocurrencies, the dark web, crowd-funding, and mobile payment systems. The complexity of the terrorist landscape requires us to constantly adapt our strategies grounded in a better understanding of the threat, and where financial intelligence is used to support law enforcement investigations.

New and emerging technologies offer unprecedented opportunities in terms of innovation, financial inclusion, and enhanced capacity to detect, prevent and counter money laundering, financing of terrorism, and other serious predicate crimes.

For this reason, UNOCT, with support from the Netherlands and in partnership with the UN Office of Information and Communications Technology, has been working to develop “goFintel,” - a frontier IT solution to help financial intelligence units to enhance their capability to analyse complex financial transactions to counter terrorist financing and money laundering.

The experience of the past two decades decidedly shows that grounding our counter-terrorism measures in human rights and the rule of law is a prerequisite of effective and sustainable efforts to address the scourge of terrorism, including its financing.

We are especially cognizant of the challenges digital technologies may pose to human rights, including to the rights to freedom of movement, expression, association and assembly, the right to privacy, and the right to be free from discrimination.

Consequently, we are committed to developing and delivering goFinTel pursuant to a consultative process that will also explore the modalities to strengthen human rights due diligence policies, processes, and practices for the use of digital technologies, in line with international human rights law and relevant UN policies and guidance, including the system-wide Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

It is also our priority to promote the adoption of specific safeguards at the UN level and by Member States to prevent, mitigate and remedy violations of internationally recognized human rights in the context of digital technology use.

Dear Colleagues,

We look forward to our continuing engagement with our UN and other partners, including from academia and civil society, to ensure concerted action to prevent and disrupt illicit financial flows intended for terrorist purposes, in line with international human rights norms and standards.

I look forward to a fruitful discussion.

Thank you.