



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)**

**Opening remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and Executive Director,
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre**

***Regional workshop for East Africa: countering terrorist use of improvised explosive
devices and small arms and light weapons***

12 September 2023

Excellency Dmitry Maksimychev, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Kenya,

Under-Secretary-General Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi,

Distinguished representatives of the Republic of Kenya,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this *regional workshop on Countering terrorist use of improvised explosive devices and small arms and light weapons in East Africa*.

This workshop is held within the framework of a project generously funded by the Russian Federation on “*Building capacity to eliminate the supply of weapons to terrorists in Africa*”.

The impact of illicit weapons flows throughout Africa is a serious concern for the international community and Member States on the continent. The large availability of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition as well as the proliferation of improvised explosive devices escalates local disputes and enables terrorists, organized criminals, and armed groups to control territory.

In its resolution on the eighth review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in June, the General Assembly reiterated the importance of preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit use of small arms and light weapons by terrorists.

It condemned the continued flow of small arms and light weapons, improvised explosive devices and unmanned aircraft systems to and between terrorists, and encouraged Member States to prevent and disrupt procurement networks for such weapons.

The use of improvised explosive devices by Al-Shabaab, including person-borne devices, has steadily grown over the years and is particularly acute.

Statistics from the United Nations Mine Action Service reveal that in Somalia, the threat of improvised explosive devices disproportionately impacts civilians, who have made up 59 per cent of all related casualties since 2022.

Within the context of this challenge, the Security Council adopted resolution 2370 on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons, including small arms and light weapons, improvised explosive devices and unmanned aircraft systems.

In 2020, UNOCT undertook to develop technical guidelines to support the implementation of this resolution, working hand-in-hand with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

This work has benefitted from the framework provided by the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which brings together 46 United Nations and partner entities, like INTERPOL.

We have since been working hard to promote the use of the guidelines in 31 Member States.

In line with these efforts, this regional workshop will provide an opportunity for Member States in East Africa to hear from the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center in UNOCT and 12 international and regional organizations on concrete tools and best practices to prevent terrorists from acquiring these deadly weapons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations is fully committed to supporting Member States' efforts to control and regulate small arms and light weapons in an integrated and holistic manner. This requires context-specific considerations, and actions well beyond national security institutions only.

In his recent policy brief on A New Agenda for Peace, Secretary-General António Guterres proposed a series of recommendations to reduce the human cost of weapons. These recommendations, building upon his own An Agenda for Disarmament, include stopping the use of improvised explosive devices by terrorists and other non-state armed groups.

UNOCT's Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons has already benefitted 8,000 participants from over 100 Member States since 2018 – and we stand ready to do more together with our partners.

Allow me to also convey my deepest appreciation to the United Nations Office in Nairobi, in particular to Madam Director-General, and the Government of Kenya for their support, as well as to my colleagues in New York, Madrid, and Nairobi for making this workshop possible.

My sincere thanks to the Russian Federation for its support to UNOCT's work in addressing the nexus between terrorism and illicit flows of weapons, and in promoting the implementation of resolution 2370 (2017).

I am confident these efforts will contribute to our common goal of making the world both more secure and free from terrorism.

Thank you.