

PRESS RELEASE

UNOCT and United States support Central Asian countries in countering terrorist use of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives materials

Almaty, March 8, 2024 – The United States and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) partnered with Kazakhstan to co-host a four-day workshop to enhance regional cooperation on counterterrorism and develop national exercises to counter chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosives (CBRNE) terrorism threats, in Almaty, on 4 - 7 March 2024.

The four-day *Strengthening Partner Nations' Capacity on Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Terrorism Exercise Programs* workshop included more than 25 participants from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, as well as a subject matter expert from the U.S. Department of Energy.

The workshop provided hands-on experience to counterterrorism, CBRNE, and exercise professionals from Central Asian partner countries to develop interactive tabletop exercises and evaluation plans to address realistic CBRNE terrorism threats.

National exercise programs for WMD terrorism are a valuable component of the C5+1 Diplomatic Platform and promote regional cooperation, information sharing, capacity building, standardization of procedures, crisis management, and diplomatic dialogue. Their aim is to support a more resilient and coordinated response to potential WMD threats in the Central Asian region.

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Steven Siqueira, Deputy Director UNOCT**, emphasized the importance of this workshop, stating, *"Our office is mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations to strengthen capacity-building support to Members States to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We look forward to working with you to counter this threat in the Central Asian region."*

Consul General Michelle Yerkin, U.S. Consulate Almaty, further confirmed that *"this workshop is an excellent example of our shared commitment and our common interest to address the real security concerns we all face. We must cooperate to build more effective, accountable security forces that respect people's rights."*

The workshop is part of a series of events led by the Office of Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism (WMDT) in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation at the U.S. Department of State and the second of four regionally focused WMDT-UNOCT multilateral workshops. It is organized in partnership with the [UNOCT Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons](#).

The United States reaffirmed that it values its partnership with Kazakhstan and all the members of the C5+1 Diplomatic Platform and strongly supports regional efforts to enhance and promote regional stability.

“We support the implementation of the UN Program on WMD and CBRN materials, as well as the UN’s efforts to reduce risks in preventing their proliferation. This workshop is a confirmation of the commitment of the Central Asian countries and the UN to joint efforts to ensure international peace and security,” stated **Mr. Bakytzhan Bulegenov, Almaty Representative of the Kazakhstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

For more information: oct-info@un.org