



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Mauro Miedico,
Director, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre**

**United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
Quarterly Briefing to Member States
(via Microsoft Teams Platform)**

12 December 2024

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear colleagues,

Good morning. Welcome to the final UNOCT briefing to Member States this year.

During this meeting, we will review the progress we made in our joint counter-terrorism efforts since our last briefing, in July.

We are grateful for the enduring support and contributions of Member States and United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, which made our achievements possible.

I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to Professor Kula Ishmael Theletsane, representing the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Mr. Manuel Del Rosario Vela, representing the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Spain to the United Nations.

Their participation today underscores the critical importance of strategic partnerships in our shared endeavor and I look forward to their remarks.

The 79th Session of the UN General Assembly unequivocally reaffirmed the high priority accorded to counter-terrorism by Member States.

116 Member States directly addressed terrorism, counter-terrorism, or violent extremism during the high-level debate, representing a significant increase compared to recent years.

Their statements emphasized the devastating impact of terrorism, particularly in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, and the Middle East, underscoring its intricate links to armed conflict and transnational organized crime, and highlighting the transformative role of emerging technologies in this complex landscape.

The Summit of the Future further underscored the urgent need for enhanced multilateral cooperation and capacity-building to address global challenges, including counter-terrorism, as highlighted in a dedicated session led by UNOCT.

The resultant Pact for the Future incorporates robust commitments to upholding international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the implementation of "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approaches to preventing and countering terrorism.

To solidify these commitments and ensure effective implementation, UNOCT proposes convening an international conference on the Pact for the Future in 2025.

As the 20th anniversary of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy approaches, robust collaboration with all partners remains paramount.

Since July, UNOCT has spearheaded several impactful high-level regional conferences and dialogues addressing diverse counter-terrorism challenges.

These events fostered synergistic collaborations among Member States, UN Global Compact entities, international and regional organizations, civil society, youth and women's groups, human rights experts, and the private sector, facilitating the exchange of best practices and innovative partnerships to combat the evolving terrorist threat.

Key achievements include:

The inaugural High-Level Strategic Dialogue between the Kingdom of Morocco and UNOCT, held in September 2024, identified mechanisms to support Member States to address the escalating terrorist activities in parts of Africa, leveraging our UNOCT Programme Office in Rabat.

The UN International Conference on Victims of Terrorism, co-hosted with the Kingdom of Spain in Vitoria-Gasteiz in October, brought together over 400 participants, including 66 Member States and numerous victims' organizations, reinforcing solidarity with victims of terrorism and promoting a victim-centered approach. Mr. Manuel Del Rosario Vela will provide further details on this critical event.

The High-Level Conference on 'Strengthening International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Building Agile Border Security Mechanisms: the Kuwait phase of the Dushanbe Process' co-organized with the governments of Tajikistan and the State of Kuwait in November, resulted in the "Kuwait Declaration on Border Security and Management."

The Declaration provides a robust framework for enhanced border security and counter-terrorism cooperation, particularly in addressing the use of new technologies by terrorist groups.

The Sixth High-Level Strategic Dialogue between the State of Qatar and UNOCT, held in November, reviewed the progress made by UNOCT in the implementation of its mandate in the last year, thanks in large part to our vital partnership with the State of Qatar, and discussed our mutual priorities for the year ahead.

The sixth EU-UN Leaders' Dialogue on counter-terrorism in December reinforced the strategic partnership between the European Union and the UN, focusing on shared priorities in Africa, Central Asia, and Iraq, emphasizing technology, prevention, and youth empowerment.

UNOCT and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the founding partner of UNCCT, continues to strengthen their strategic partnership and explore new avenues of cooperation. Earlier this year, the Secretary-General renewed the UNCCT Advisory Board term, with H.E. Amb. Abdulaziz AlWasil, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to continue to serve as the Chair of the Board. We welcome the United Arab Emirates as a new member of the Board, and we extend our gratitude to all members for the continued guidance provided to the Centre on its capacity building efforts.

UNOCT also formalized seven new partnerships through Memoranda of Understanding with regional organizations and other key counter-terrorism partners, focusing on parliamentary engagement, disrupting the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized, and preventing terrorist travel.

Professor Theletsane will elaborate on our strengthened cooperation with the Southern African Development Community.

UNOCT developed a comprehensive Capacity Building Package to Counter-Terrorism in Africa and has continued to work to mobilize resources to provide the needed support to African Member States to address the priorities they identified at two key events:

- The High-Level Meeting on "Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institution Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism" held in April 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria and
- The 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, held in May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

We call upon Member States to support the UNOCT Capacity Building Package to Counter-Terrorism in Africa, given its critical nature.

Meanwhile, the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact continues to foster robust coordination among its 46 entities within and beyond the UN system.

Following the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Committee meeting held in January, we are refining our collective response to Member States' needs, particularly in Africa, through our 2024-2026 Joint Programme of Work.

The February 2025 Coordination Committee meeting will further align the work of Compact entities with the guiding principles enshrined within the New Agenda for Peace and the Pact for the Future.

We plan a retreat for Counter-Terrorism Compact entities and regional partners from Africa and Central Asia and will leverage the new Behavioral Insights Working Group to implement the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on behavioral science.

UNOCT's integration into the UN Sustainable Development Group has further strengthened our collaboration with Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, fostering a more holistic and responsive approach to counter-terrorism in some of the most impacted areas.

Our enhanced knowledge management system has improved collaboration, policy development, and accountability.

Recent achievements include the publication of the *“Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da’esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat,”* published in July, and the establishment of a common Repatriation Repository for individuals from Northeast Syria.

In addition, significant progress has been made in developing mechanisms to measure the impact of UN system efforts in support of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, ahead of its 20th-anniversary review in 2026.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Subsequent presentations during this meeting will detail specific achievements and plans.

We are deeply grateful for the strong partnerships we have forged with Member States and other key partners and stakeholders, upon which our continued success relies.

Thank you for your kind attention.