

**Keynote Address by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General
the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

***World Summit on Counter-Terrorism
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Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism for this opportunity to address the twenty-first World Summit on Counter-Terrorism.

It is my pleasure to join you today, just a few days after we concluded the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism, organized by my Office in New York.

The Global Congress served as a critical forum to promote the rights of victims, address their needs, and shed light on the scope of challenges confronting them worldwide.

I am always humbled by the resilience and incredible courage of survivors of terrorism. They remind us why we need to act with resolve and solidarity to break free from terrorist violence.

Regrettably, the threat of terrorism has not diminished. It remains persistent and diversified.

Its impact continues to be felt across the globe.

Terrorist groups continue to exploit governance fragilities, local grievances, and inequality to incite and stage attacks. They undermine confidence in public institutions to advance their agenda.

They have made use of social restrictions and economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as our increased reliance on information and communication technologies during this period, to propagate hatred, recruit supporters, and fundraise transnationally.

Conflict-affected regions have been particularly impacted, with terrorist groups exploiting power vacuums, conflict dynamics, and human suffering.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The international community's united front against terrorism, reaffirmed during the seventh biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June last year, has yielded positive results over the years.

But, a number of key priorities continue to require our collective action. Allow me to highlight some of those here:

First, we need to promote inclusive multilateralism.

This is indispensable to safeguard the values of the United Nations Charter that terrorism threatens.

It is also the driving force behind the Secretary-General's proposal for a New Agenda for Peace, contained in his landmark report "Our Common Agenda".

The Secretary-General's Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which is the primary institutional vehicle for the coordination and coherence of United Nations counter-terrorism efforts, will continue to play an important role in this regard.

Second, we must ensure accountability for international crimes committed by terrorist groups and urgently facilitate the repatriation of third country nationals in camps and other facilities in north-east Syria and Iraq.

Despite some progress, tens of thousands of individuals, including more than 27,000 children from Iraq and some 60 other countries, remain deprived of their basic rights and at growing risk of radicalization and recruitment.

My Office, together with the United Nations Children's Fund, leads the Global Framework of 15 United Nations entities established to provide requesting States with comprehensive support for the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of persons returned from Syria and Iraq.

Third, we need to take urgent action to counter the spread of terrorism across Africa.

According to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index, nearly half of all deaths attributed to terrorism globally in the past year occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida and Da'esh, and their regional affiliates, have intensified their attacks and expanded their reach in Central, Southern, East and West Africa, most recently in littoral countries.

Strengthening the capacities of African countries in tackling terrorism is a key priority for my Office. We have established new Programme Offices in Rabat and Nairobi to provide critical support to national and regional partners in the continent.

My Office is also organizing a High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Summit next year in Nigeria to address some of these issues at a strategic level.

Fourth, we need to remain vigilant and to anticipate and adapt to the evolving threat posed by terrorists.

This is particularly relevant given the development of new technologies and capabilities that have a significant potential for misuse for terrorist purposes.

The increase of terrorist attacks based on xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, is also significant.

As requested by the General Assembly in its seventh review resolution of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Secretary-General has just issued a report on this matter.

The report advances our understanding of the motivations, objectives, and organization of such groups, as well as some emerging responses. Yet, additional data is still required to fully grasp the scope and nature of the threat.

The Secretary-General has encouraged Member States to develop and implement comprehensive national plans to address this threat, and my Office stands ready to provide necessary support in this area.

Fifth, we need to adopt holistic, multi-dimensional, human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches.

Respect for the rule of law and effective mainstreaming of human rights and gender are fundamental to sustainable counter-terrorism responses.

This was reaffirmed during the first United Nations High-Level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism, held by my Office and the Kingdom of Spain in May in Malaga.

We also need to continue investing in prevention and building resilience through meaningful engagement with local communities.

This requires strengthening the role of civil society as a key partner, including enabling women's leadership and full and effective participation.

My Office has taken concrete steps to integrate civil society across all areas of its work, including in our high-level conferences and capacity-building work.

We also hold regular round tables with civil society actors and host a dedicated online community on our Connect and Learn Platform to facilitate information sharing and coordination.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Addressing terrorism requires sustained political will as well as effective international and regional cooperation.

The eighth biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy next year will offer another opportunity for the General Assembly to take stock and craft a solid road map for our collective efforts in the years ahead.

You can count on the steadfast support of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to meet the challenges posed by the threat of terrorism.

I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.