



PRESS RELEASE

Heads of United Nations counter-terrorism bodies and Kenya renew joint commitment to address terrorism

Nairobi, 31 July 2018 – Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and Ms. Michèle Coninx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), today concluded a joint visit to Kenya at the invitation of the Government. They were accompanied by Mr. Alexander Avanesov, Global Programme Manager and Special Advisor on Preventing of Violent Extremism, UN Development Programme, and a representative from the Security Council Monitoring Team.

The visit illustrated a new emphasis on “speaking with one UN voice” on counter-terrorism with increased coordination and coherence in United Nations technical assistance to Kenya’s and regional efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

“Kenya has a strong legal framework and has made remarkable progress in preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism. I commend the focus on resilience and on prevention. We have agreed with the Government to launch an increased programme of cooperation and capacity building and to share Kenya’s good practices”, said Mr. Voronkov.

During meetings with high-ranking officials – including the Minister of Education, the Cabinet Secretary of Devolution, and high-level officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Police, Defence, and the National Counter-Terrorism Centre – the joint delegation discussed priorities of the Government and recommendations previously identified by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee and endorsed by the Government. They agreed on concrete areas where the United Nations can provide technical assistance. These areas will include border management, including both aviation and maritime security, support to returnees, capacity building for security forces, women empowerment in countering/ preventing violent terrorism; vocational training for youth, strategic communication to counter narratives and support to victims.

“We are impressed by the sophistication of the government’s approach to address complex challenges on the ground and their response to some of the newer requirements of the Security Council, particularly their programme to deal with returnees,” remarked Ms. Coninx. “Their efforts to bring together national, county and civil society initiatives under a coherent umbrella also embrace a whole of society approach that is very welcome.” Mr. Avanesov added that the “Localization of preventing violent extremism (PVE) activities and innovative approaches in providing opportunities to the young population is one of the best practices of the UN system in Kenya.”

The delegation also met with representatives of the diplomatic community, as well as with the Acting Director-General of the UN Office in Nairobi, the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN Country Team, UN regional directors, and with local government officials and civil society organizations, including women's groups, in Kwale county, region of Mombasa.

At the conclusion of the visit, the delegation reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to support Kenya in its efforts to counter terrorism. Prior to visiting Kenya, the delegation completed a visit to Nigeria, including to Maiduguri, Borno State.

Background

This joint visit was conducted within the framework of the joint efforts of UNOCT and CTED to facilitate the delivery of counter-terrorism related technical assistance to Member States in accordance with Security Council resolution 2395 (2017), in which the Security Council underscored the need for the two entities to work closely together, within their respective mandates, to ensure balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Mandated by the General Assembly, UNOCT was established in June 2017 to provide leadership to the implementation of General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates, to enhance coordination and coherence, and to strengthen the delivery of the United Nations counter-terrorism capacity building assistance to Member States.

Established by the Security Council, CTED is a Special Political Mission of the United Nations, tasked with assisting the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee in monitoring the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant counter-terrorism resolutions. CTED conducts independent country assessments that constitute the basis for the concerned technical assistance and capacity-building projects.

CTED has conducted three country visits to Kenya: a comprehensive visit in 2005; a follow-up visit in 2008; and another follow-up visit in 2016. CTED has engaged with the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), the primary counter-terrorism coordinating body in Kenya, as well as with other authorities. The country visit report for the 2016 visit, approved in early 2017 by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, together with an updated Overview of Implementation Assessment (OIA) for Kenya, anchored a proposed list of priority technical assistance needs that was shared with the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations in 2017. These included, inter alia, (a) the provision of training to investigators vis-à-vis digital forensics; (b) the implementation of Advance Passenger Information (API) systems in the three major international airports; and (c) the development of a legal framework to deal with returning foreign terrorist fighters, including prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies.

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