

## HIGH-LEVEL PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

*“Understanding the terrorist threat in Africa: new challenges and necessary measures”*

**30-31 March 2022**

Doha, the State of Qatar

*(In-person and online)*

## Outcome Document

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) [Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism](#), in partnership with the [African Parliamentary Union](#) (APU) and with the support of the [Shura Council of the State of Qatar](#) co-organized a High-Level Parliamentary Conference “Understanding the terrorist threat in Africa: new challenges and necessary measures”. The Conference was held in Doha, the State of Qatar, on 30-31 March 2022, and was attended by 115 in-person and over 50 online participants.

Parliamentarians of 23 African countries<sup>1</sup>including Speakers of 5 Parliaments, attended the conference in-person, along with representatives of parliamentary assemblies of the African Parliamentary Union (APU), the Arab Parliament (AP), the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Interparliamentary Committee of G5 Sahel (IP G5 Sahel), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE (OSCE-PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TURKPA), as well as representatives from the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), INTERPOL, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The conference was held across four sections, followed by a joint closing segment. Session 1 focussed on the main current and emerging terrorist threats in the African continent. Session 2 discussed the necessary measures to mitigate, prevent and address the current and emerging threats. Session 3 explored international technical assistance programmes and projects on countering terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism (CT&PVE). Session 4 covered the needs of the parliaments in Africa for technical assistance and capacity building in CT&PVE. The Conference concluded with a call for a set of measures that contribute to the establishment of an effective CT&PVE network of African parliamentarians.

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<sup>1</sup> Algeria, Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guinee Equatoriale, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, Togo, and Zimbabwe

## Executive Summary

The high-level parliamentary concluded with a call for a set of measures that contribute to the establishment of an effective CT&PVE network of African parliamentarians.

**The UNOCT Parliamentary Engagement Office, in collaboration with APU, will establish a working group on Africa to design concrete plans of actions for future engagement.**

This working group will discuss thematic elements and sub-regional aspects, with a strong emphasis on national engagement, cross-fertilization and south-south cooperation. The approach will include long term sustained actions and PVE strategies on education, civil society, sports, and youth engagement, while also adhering to the immediate and urgent security needs on countering terrorism that parliaments need support with. The aim of the working group is to prioritize engagement at the national level, starting with a clear analysis of in-country CT capabilities and legislation, and identifying partners within the UN system, civil society, and regional assemblies that can provide support in reviewing the current capacities and recommend plans of actions.

**Parliamentary advocates on CT&PVE will be set up at the national level to sensitize the population.**

Raising the awareness of parliamentarians in Africa and involving civil society organizations and local communities is an important step in addressing the threat of terrorism. Solutions will not come from outside but will be developed at the local level, with regional, sub-regional and international focus. The working group on Africa will work towards the creation of a strong network of parliamentary advocates on counter-terrorism efforts. These parliamentary advocates will hold dedicated parliamentary meetings and serve as communication mechanisms with the population at large and the media. Preventive measures and awareness raising activities with civil society and local representatives will contribute to the collective CT&PVE efforts. Furthermore, dedicated parliamentary meetings will be organized to link regional or sub-regional CT strategies, such as that of SADC and ECOWAS, to national legislations and plans of actions. These meetings will also focus on thematic elements, such as a dedicated parliamentary meeting on community engagement in preventing radicalization and extremism. In addition, best practices at the national level will be shared with other countries and parliaments.

**The UNOCT Parliamentary Engagement Office, in collaboration with APU, will also create a network of Parliamentary Delegations to represent their respective parliaments for future collaboration.**

UNOCT and the APU will send out an official communication to countries and parliamentary assemblies to designate a Parliamentary Delegation to represent their parliaments in future communication with the UNOCT Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement.

## Session Outlines

Throughout the sessions, parliamentarians noted the importance of ownership among African states and of representation of African states when leading CT&PVE efforts in the continent, both at the regional and international levels.

### **Session 1: Main current and emerging terrorist threats in the African continent**

The first session discussed the main security challenges and emerging terrorist threats of countries and their root-causes, and likely projections and scenarios regarding these threats. The issue of terrorism and Boko Haram was described, not only as a national problem to contain, but as a major national challenge that led to the closure of schools, affecting the agricultural system and socio-cultural groups. The importance of demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers was also referenced. The lack of internal political stability had also led to the spread of terrorism and extremism. The challenges on structural development of the countries of the Sahel were also mentioned, with specific reference to the closure of 500 schools. Conflicts over natural resources, climate change, COVID-19, smuggling and human trafficking also lead to increased terrorist activities. The use of online media for propaganda, recruitment, and radicalization and unemployment with youth and religious intolerance were referenced for creating division and leading to extremism. Countries expressed the need to have training on CT intelligence and the need for multilateral cooperation and collaboration at the community level. The role of parliamentarians was emphasized through constitutional efforts and in establishing collaboration between the legislature and the executive powers in the development of CT policies.

### **Session 2: Measures to mitigate, prevent and address the current and emerging threats**

Session two discussed the measures to mitigate, prevent, and address the current and emerging threats. The relevant measures to be immediately undertaken included the establishment of joint border security mechanisms to enhance regional early warning signals; cooperation between different services on intelligence, law enforcement, and biometrics; combatting the use of terrorist ideologies on social media; developing national laws and regulations regarding CT and realigning local legislation with existing constitutions; and designing rehabilitation programmes with a focus on education. It was also noted that African countries are at different levels of development, for which national and regional training from UNOCT and other agencies should be tailored at. Participants strongly suggested that there was no need to develop a new strategy, but rather focusing on the existing CT strategies and adopting a proactive and multidimensional approach on CT&PVE. The role of the parliaments in

Africa in the development, implementation, and coordination of these measures was emphasized through bilateral and multilateral collaboration, and by adopting a holistic approach on addressing the factors that are conducive to the spread of terrorism.

The “Call for the Sahel” initiative was among the existing CT& PVE strategies that were referenced at the event. It resulted from the Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism, which was organized together with UNOCT, IPU and UNODC. The G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee mentioned their CT forum, which was established among 29 states and the European Union to share information and intelligence on border crossing of those returning from conflict zones. The Mano River Union referred to the establishment of 38 joint border units among four intersection countries to increase the security across the borders. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the “Accra Initiative” among Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo was also referenced, along with national initiatives that included cross-fertilization and collaboration. OSCE mentioned their policy guidance through comprehensive resolutions on implementing the international CT framework and their special committee on countering terrorism. ECOWAS referred to its judicial framework for CT to support member states. representatives of countries and regional organizations also mentioned their MoUs with UNOCT. These MoUs provide framework on the scope and modalities of cooperation and capacity building regarding PVE/CT, based on a rule of law and a human-rights centered approach.

### **Session 3: International technical assistance programmes and projects on CT&PVE**

The third session explored International technical assistance programmes and projects on CT&PVE that are implemented in Africa, and the ways in which these programmes could support parliamentarians on CT&PVE efforts. The Speakers included representatives of international organizations, such as INTERPOL, UNDP, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and the Tegla Loroupe Foundation. UNOCT further discussed its programmes in the African continent, through presentations from the UNOCT Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Rabat; the UNOCT Programme Office in Madrid and their Global Programme to Counter Terrorist Attacks against Vulnerable Targets; and the UNOCT Programme Office on Countering Terrorist Travel in Budapest. In addition, various UNOCT programmes were presented, including the Global Fusion Cells, the Global Programme on PCVE, Surge Capacity, the Border Security and Management, and the Preventing and Responding to WMD/CBRN Terrorism.

### **Session 4: Needs of the parliaments in Africa for technical assistance and capacity building**

The fourth and final session concluded with an open discussion on the needs of the parliaments in Africa for technical assistance and capacity building in specific areas of CT&PVE, and the call for a set of measures that contribute to the establishment of an effective and dedicated CT&PVE network of African parliamentarians. These measures include the establishment of a working group on Africa to design concrete plans of actions for future engagement; setting up

parliamentary advocates on CT&PVE at the national level to sensitize the population; and creating a network of CT&PVE Parliamentary Delegations to represent their parliaments.

Furthermore, UNOCT launched the Online Network for Parliamentarians during the High-Level Conference for Parliamentarians from African States. This online platform will be used to and build the capacity of parliamentarians worldwide in their efforts to counter terrorism. Parliamentarians, parliamentary assemblies, or civil society organizations that work with parliamentarians, can join this network though the following [link](#).

[Event Webpage](#)

[Press Release](#)