



VIRTUAL COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

6-10 JULY 2020

Webinar I: Post COVID-19 World Contours, Pivot Points and Benefits of Multilateral Collaboration

6 July, 10:00-12:00 EST

Concept Note

In light of the unprecedented circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations has been postponed in tandem with the decision of the General Assembly to hold the seventh biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy during its 75th session instead of June 2020. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is thus convening a scaled-down *virtual* counter-terrorism week to enable a collective reflection among Member States, United Nations entities and other stakeholders, on the implications of the COVID-19 crisis for counter-terrorism, Member States' priorities in this regard and the United Nations' work to support them.

Just as we commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations and reflect on the "world we want and the United Nations we need," the COVID-19 pandemic is presenting the international community with possibly the worst crisis since the Second World War. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called this a "human crisis" that has attacked societies at the core, killing people and upending lives. The livelihoods and the rights of millions are at stake, especially among those most vulnerable, women and youth. Millions of people have been put out of jobs and millions of children out of education. Hate speech and stigma have spread like wildfire. Inequalities, simmering grievances and fractures have been laid bare, within and between countries. Opportunities and risks presented by new technologies have come to the fore.

The broad ramifications of the COVID-19 crisis are set to have lasting consequences for multilateral cooperation and across the three interlinked pillars of the United Nations – sustainable development, sustaining peace, and universal human rights. The international community is focusing on the urgent health, humanitarian, human rights and economic impacts of the pandemic, and the opportunity to recover together and become more resilient. Secretary-General Guterres has called for a global ceasefire, international solidarity and



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partnerships to unite in fighting the virus. Twenty-first century multilateralism and massive investments are needed to green and transform economies, build inclusive and peaceful societies, and prevent disastrous setbacks just as we embarked on a decade of action to deliver the sustainable development goals.

In these unprecedented and unpredictable times, we are yet to fully grasp the implications of the COVID-19 crisis for national, regional and international efforts to prevent and counter terrorism. Amid the suffering and disruption generated by the virus, terrorists have sought to exploit the pandemic to validate their narratives, foster hate and division, inspire and recruit followers, and launch new attacks. The pandemic and its fallout are exacerbating socio-economic and political challenges recognized by the General Assembly as conducive to the spread of terrorism. It has exposed vulnerabilities to new and emerging forms and manifestations of terrorism, such as bioterrorism, misuse of the Internet and cyberattacks, and racially and ethnically motivated terrorism and violent extremism.

To help it keep pace with the evolving and transnational threat of terrorism, the international community will need a common and forward-looking reflection on the post-COVID-19 world if it is to harness the energy of multilateralism and to address the impact of the pandemic. This Webinar provides an opportunity for that discussion.

Key Issues to be addressed:

- *What is the short- to medium-term impact of COVID-19 on societies, businesses, governments and international and regional organisations?*
- *How will societies evolve and respond to social and technological changes in the post-COVID 19 environment?*
- *How to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic: how do we harness a “whole-of-society” approach and greater international collaboration, including how to leverage existing multilateral platforms?*
- *What is the impact of COVID-19 on international efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and the underlying spread of violent extremism, including from a gender perspective?*