



2021-2022 United Nations Multi-Year Appeal for Counter-Terrorism



Strengthening Resilience and Capacity of Critical Infrastructures (Including Airports) Against Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS): An Emerging Terrorist Threat in Central, South and South-East Asia, Southern and West Africa, Middle East and Latin America

This project aims to strengthen the resilience and capacity of critical infrastructures (including airports) against Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), an emerging terrorist threat in Central, South and South-East Asia, Southern and West Africa, Middle East and Latin America.

Description of the Project

This objective of this project is to strengthen the capacity of eight (8) priority countries in Central, South and South East Asia, Southern and West Africa, the Middle East and Latin America against terrorist UAS related activities, strategies and attacks. Such activities are likely to increase in frequency, potency and impact in a rapidly evolving threat and risk landscape. This project also aims to implement UN Security Council resolutions 2341 (2017), 2370 (2017) and 2482 (2019), which intersect to tackle the protection of critical infrastructure, preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons and the nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime (including UAS). Further, 'The protection of critical infrastructures against terrorist attacks: Compendium of good practices', the Global Counterterrorism Forum's 'Antalya Memorandum on the Protection of Soft Targets in a Counterterrorism Context' and the 'Berlin Memorandum on Good Practices for Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems, all highlight terrorist use of drones against critical infrastructure as a potential threat which could have a devastating impact if realized.

The results of the project include the following: (i) Strengthened counter-UAS technical capability for public stakeholders engaged in protecting critical infrastructures from emerging terrorist threats and risks posed by all forms of UAS, including through strengthened prevention, preparedness and planning; (ii) Increased counter-UAS resilience, capability and interoperability (operational, functional and/or technical) for protecting critical infrastructures through strengthened regulatory environment, and national/international cooperation (including multi-agency). The project will focus especially on legal, operational and institutional aspects (including through increased sharing of information and good practices based on a rigorous analysis of UAS incursions and hostile reconnaissance for future attacks globally); (iii) Improved situational awareness of public stakeholders to recognize and identify risks posed by UAS, including critical infrastructure operators, national officials and institutions with counter-UAS responsibilities. Improvement target areas will range from crime prevention, incident response/management through to criminal justice responses, leading to appropriate, proportionate and effective responses.

Rationale

A rapidly growing area of international security concern relates to UAS related technological innovations which have not been confined to defence or commercial enterprise. Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) condemns the flow of weapons, including UAS, to and between ISIL, Al-Qaida, their affiliates and associated groups, illegal armed groups and criminals, while also encouraging Member States to prevent and disrupt procurement networks for such weapons, systems and components between ISIL, Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. Security Council resolution 2341 (2017) calls upon Member States to consider developing or further improving their strategies for reducing risks to critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks, which should include, inter alia, assessing and raising awareness of the relevant risks, taking preparedness measures, including effective responses to such attacks, as well as promoting better interoperability in security and consequence management, and facilitating effective interaction of all stakeholders involved. Security Council resolution 2322 (2016) calls upon all States to enhance cooperation to deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support, commit terrorist acts, or provide safe havens.

Some terrorist organisations, especially Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Boko Haram, were especially active in this area. Both ISIL and various branches of Al-Qaida (most prominently Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula) have not just encouraged attacks, but have publicly provided and regularly updated techniques and approaches for attacking soft targets. These techniques include the use of UAS. Consequently, the threat landscape is increasingly complex and multi-layered, posing escalating and significant risks to national critical infrastructures, including airports, ports, chemical facilities, oil and gas installations, power grids, defence establishments, as well as stadiums, public markets and major VIP events.

Despite the significant investment of defence and law enforcement resources, effectively countering the increasing threat posed by terrorist use of UAS is increasingly challenging. Though the threats posed by ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraq and Syria have diminished significantly, a key concern is that the groups' UAS technical know-how has been exported globally through the return of its foreign fighters to their country of origin, including to Central, South Asia, South-East Asia and the Middle East. The use of UAS has also been noted in Mozambique. This carries with it the potential to influence the capabilities and methodologies of local terrorist groups.

The complex ,multi-faceted, evolving nature of threats and risks posed by all forms of UAS requires the development and implementation of a fully integrated, multi-stakeholder approach, in order to improve current levels of critical infrastructure resilience and criminal justice responses. Such an approach is necessary to address existing vulnerabilities attributable to gaps/inconsistencies within national/ international frameworks and operating procedures, and limitations with incident planning, management and recovery training.

Outcomes

The project seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Strengthened counter-UAS resilience and capability for public stakeholders engaged in protecting critical infrastructures from emerging terrorist threats and risks posed by all forms of UAS, including through strengthened prevention, preparedness and planning;

Outcome 2: Increased counter-UAS resilience, capability and interoperability (operational, functional and/or technical) for protecting critical infrastructures through strengthened regulatory environment and national/international cooperation (including multi-agency). The project will focus especially on legal, operational and institutional aspects; (including through increased sharing of information and good practices based on rigorous analysis of UAS incursions and hostile reconnaissance for future attacks globally);

Outcome 3: Improved situational awareness of public stakeholders to recognize and identify UAS, including critical infrastructure operators, national officials and institutions with counter-UAS responsibilities. Improvement target areas will range from crime prevention, incident response/management through to criminal justice responses, leading to appropriate, proportionate and effective responses.

This includes the development of critical tools, standard operating procedures and encourage legislative/regulatory/administrative revisions or additions underpinned by principles and good practices transferable to any counter-UAS resilience context, including but not limited to critical infrastructures and strengthened national legislation, regulations and related administrative measures for countering UAS as an emerging terrorist threat through the effective criminalization, prevention, incident response and post-incident investigation and prosecution of related crimes and perpetrators, in accordance with the rule of law, international instruments and standards.

Outputs/Indicative Activities

The project will seek to implement the indicative activities below:

- Facilitation of a generic counter-UAS threat, risk and vulnerability self-assessment audit tool for critical infrastructures;
- Development of a generic counter-UAS planning tool for critical infrastructures;
- Development of generic counter-UAS standard operating procedures (SOPs) for critical infrastructures;
- Adaptation of generic counter-UAS tools (audit and planning) and standard operating procedures to national critical infrastructure contexts (for example, sector and/or geographical risk specific);
- Comprehensive review of relevant national laws, regulations and administrative orders in each participating country, and, where necessary, encourage the development of new, or amended laws and regulations for building counter-UAS resilience and capacity as an emerging terrorist threat, in accordance with relevant international instruments and standards; and according to technical needs identified. This output will not duplicate assessments on legislation by CTC/CTED.
- National officials and operators trained on the international framework and standards for building counter-UAS resilience and capacity as an emerging terrorist threat, facilitating enhanced inter-agency and inter-stakeholder engagement and cooperation; and
- Development of tailored national training curricula and resources, disseminated to relevant national training institutions, line agencies and officials with responsibilities for building counter-UAS resilience and capacity as an emerging terrorist threat.

Human Rights Mainstreaming

Human rights will be fully integrated into and streamlined as a central pillar of the project. UNODC will comply with the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HDRPP), including conducting an assessment of the potential risks and benefits involved in providing support. Legislative advice will be based on the universal legal framework against terrorism as well as the overall HR international framework, Covenants and Conventions. Programming will stress the importance of rule of law based and human rights compliant procedures to build trust with regional Member States. As the project may be implemented in countries currently involved in armed conflict, due attention will also be paid to international humanitarian law. This will include relevant consideration as to critical infrastructure which may include civilian objects. Relevant considerations will be reflected, as appropriate.

Gender Mainstreaming

The proposed programme will pay due attention to gender mainstreaming and relevant measures will be identified and implemented during programme activities. In all invitation letters and material sent to participating institutions, UNODC will strongly encourage national counterparts to nominate women as participants in all programme activities.

Budget

\$1,000,000.00

Pillar

Pillar II -Measures to prevent and Combat Terrorism

Project Status

Concept

Implementation Period

2021-2022

UN Org

UNODC

UN Global CT Compact Partners

Countries

Central Asia, South and South East Asia, Southern Africa, West Africa, Middle East, Latin America

Current Donors

This project is currently unfunded.