



Statement for Mr. Rafi Shah, Chief of PKMCB and Secretary of the Global Compact Secretariat, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Counter-Terrorism Compact Retreat

"Strengthening Partnerships Between Regional Organizations and the UN Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact through policy interventions and capacity building"

25 June 2025

10 a.m. - 12 p.m. EST

UNHQ Conference Room 8

Opening Statement

Good morning, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, and dear friends.

I am Rafi Shah, Chief of Policy, Knowledge Management, and Coordination Branch of UNOCT, and Head of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Secretariat.

Allow me first to warmly welcome and express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the presence and leadership of Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, who is Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. Her Excellency Sheikha Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations. Her leadership and the State of Qatar's financial support has

significantly helped the Compact in maturing into a robust mechanism that coordinates counter-terrorism efforts effectively across multiple levels with over 1000 focal points of entities, Member States, Regional Organisations and other stakeholders. I also warmly welcome Ms. Natalia Gherman, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, a strong UNOCT partner and whose CTED holds the most chairs of the Compact Working Groups.

I am also pleased to acknowledge the esteemed participation of our distinguished guests: His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Ambassador and Head of the European Union Delegation; Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the African Union; His Excellency Mr. Maged Abdelfattah Abdelaziz, Ambassador and Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States; His Excellency Mr. Hameed Ajibaiye Opeloyeru, Ambassador and Permanent Observer for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; His Excellency Mr. Khalid Sulaiman Abdul Rahman Ba Omar, Ambassador and Permanent Observer for the Gulf Cooperation Council; and representatives from the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism.

It is also my honor to acknowledge the participation of H.E. Ms. Zsuzsanna Horváth, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Ulugbek Lapasov, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations and the representatives of Ghana, Russian Federation and China, with thank thanks to China for their new financial contribution to the Compact

Excellencies,

Today's retreat is timely and necessary. The Compact serves four critical coordination roles: coordination and coherence among UN counter-terrorism entities; coordination and coherence as well as collaboration with Member States in countering terrorism; coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism efforts

with international and regional organizations; and coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism activities with other stakeholders.

In recent years, we have made considerable strides in enhancing our collaboration with regional organizations. It is important to elevate our cooperation with regional organizations even further, emphasizing more regular, effective, and systematic exchanges of information. Practically, this means establishing clear communication channels with regional entities, scheduling frequent consultations and joint briefings, leveraging digital platforms for real-time updates and coordinated responses, and creating mechanisms for continuous feedback and joint evaluations. Today's retreat is designed to achieve these objectives.

Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

After the High-Level Opening Sessions, we will have two thematic sessions.

The first thematic session will focus on understanding and addressing the specific capacity-building challenges at the regional level—particularly in West Africa, East Africa, the Gulf Cooperation region, and Central Asia. We will explore how UNOCT and the Compact entities can offer tailored and sustainable assistance that aligns closely with regional priorities. This session will also highlight the importance of context-sensitive programming, local ownership, and ensuring our collective interventions are responsive to specific regional dynamics and challenges. Mr. Mauro Medico, Director UNCCT, and Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism will chair this session.

The second thematic session will examine UN coordination priorities and the role of Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Groups in engaging effectively with regional partners. Here, we will look at methods to enhance coherence, avoid duplication, and ensure complementarity of efforts across our various activities. This session will also underscore the role played by Compact Working Groups in informing the designing and implementation of results-oriented programs in partnership with regional entities, thereby ensuring regional coordination is impactful. This session will be chaired by Ms. Sarah Douglas, Deputy Chief of the Peace and Security Office, of UN Women, and Chair of the Counter-Terrorism

Compact Working Group on Adopting a Gender-Sensitive Approach to Preventing & Countering Terrorism.

Strengthening information flows and collaboration requires continuous dialogue and a proactive approach to addressing gaps swiftly and efficiently. The Compact's Joint Programme of Work 2024-2026 provides a structured roadmap for our collective action, ensuring inclusivity, human rights-based approaches, and gender-responsive programming. We look forward to fruitful discussions today that will further strengthen our partnerships and enhance our collective capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to the evolving threat of terrorism.

Thank you.

Closing

Thank you, excellencies and distinguished colleagues, for your thoughtful contributions throughout this high-level segment. The diversity of voices represented today underscores our shared commitment to cooperation in the face of the evolving threat of terrorism.

We will now transition to the next phase of the event: two thematic interactive sessions that will delve deeper into the key issues raised this morning. I encourage you to remain engaged and carry forward the momentum and spirit of collaboration into the discussions ahead.

Thank you once again for your time and meaningful participation.