

Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,

Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

High-level event on the UN Secretary-General's report on terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief

30 November 2022

Good morning, dear colleagues,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to this event introducing the first report of the United Nations Secretary-General on terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief.

I take this opportunity to thank all the Member States, regional organizations, Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities and civil society organizations who provided valuable input for the preparation of this report.

The report offers an initial take on a complex phenomenon, and recognizes that although these attacks are not a new phenomenon, they have evolved significantly over the past decade.

However, during the preparation of this report, it became clear that more research and data is needed to further advance our understanding of the full scope and nature of the threat posed by terrorist attacks perpetrated on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief.

I want to note one caveat: while this report of the Secretary-General addresses the request of Member States to review the threat, it is the first of its kind and should be taken as an initial contribution for further discussion, and not as a definitive statement on the threat.

The report reiterates that Al-Qaida, Da'esh and other affiliates continue to pose the most significant terrorist threat to international peace and security. However, terrorist attacks based

on xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, are of growing concern, particularly given their transnational nature. Also, it is the transnational dimension of this threat that has evolved and expanded the most during the last decade, prompting the United Nations to remain seized of its implications.

Actors perpetrating such attacks exploit digital spaces such as social media and video game platforms to: build networks; increase their reach and influence; recruit and mobilize supporters and fundraise; communicate; plan and train for attacks; spread conspiracy theories; and incite violence against ethnic, religious, gender and minority groups.

The report further acknowledges that the potentially broad categories of violence that might fall within the scope of such terminology create challenges not only to our understanding of the threat, but also to our response mechanisms. Hence, we should not forget the lessons we have learned so far this century, as we face these challenges together.

It is therefore essential that we respond to this threat in a comprehensive fashion, including by integrating human rights, gender analyses, and rule of law considerations in our responses.

The Secretary-General underlines that it is the primary responsibility of Member States to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. I therefore underscore that Member States should strengthen international cooperation to share knowledge, expertise and resources in this complex domain.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

The Secretary-General's report is a starting point for exploring opportunities, discussing gaps and challenges, and articulating effective responses to this new and emerging threat.

Today's event is a step forward in addressing terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including terrorist acts based on xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion and belief.

You can count on the commitment and continued support of my Office in this regard.

I look forward to a fruitful discussion.

And I thank you.