

## Information Note<sup>1</sup>

**Event:** Emerging Threats: Responding to the Rising Threat of Bio and Cyber Terrorism, an interactive discussion as part of the UN OCT Virtual Counter - Terrorism week devoted to Strategic and Practical Challenges of Countering Terrorism in a Global Pandemic Environment

**Organizers:** UN Office of Counter-Terrorism

**Date and Venue:** 6 July 2020, on the MS Teams platform

**Participants:** H.E. Ms. Lana Nusseibeh, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations  
Mr. Kevin Sheehan, Assistant Director, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Explosives and Vulnerable Targets Sub-Directorate (CBRNE & VT SD), INTERPOL  
Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs  
Dr. Maurizio Barbeschi, Senior Adviser to the Executive Director, Health Emergencies, World Health Organization  
Mr. Frederic Poudevigne, Emergency Management Specialist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Ms. Kiersten Todt, Managing Director, Cyber Readiness Institute  
Ms. Cindy Termorshuizen, Director General, International Security Policy, Global Affairs Canada  
Mr. Florentino Manalastas, Acting Chair, Program Management Center of the Anti-Terrorism Council, Republic of the Philippines  
The 1540 Expert

### **Background**

In preambular paragraphs to resolution 1540 (2004) the Security Council expressed grave concern at the threat of terrorism and the risk that non-State

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<sup>1</sup> For information – not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

actors may acquire, develop, traffic in or use nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery. The Security Council recognised the need to enhance coordination of efforts on national, subregional, regional and international levels in order to strengthen a global response to this serious challenge and threat to international security.

Under OP 11 (e) of resolution 1540 (2004) the Security Council requested the 1540 Committee to provide opportunities for interaction with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations to promote implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

In a preambular paragraph of resolution 1977 (2011) the Security Council recognized the need to enhance coordination of efforts at national, regional, subregional and international levels, as appropriate, in order to strengthen a global response to the serious challenge and threat to international peace and security posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

By means of a letter to the Chair of the 1540 Committee dated 26 June 2020, Mr Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, invited the 1540 Chair to nominate a member of the Group of Experts supporting the Committee to participate as a speaker during an interactive discussion taking place as part of the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week. The overarching theme of the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week would be “Strategic and Practical Challenges of Countering Terrorism in a Global Pandemic Environment.” The interactive discussion would take place under the specific theme “Emerging Threats: Responding to the Rising Threat of Bio and Cyber Terrorism”.

### **Highlights**

The virtual discussion was opened by the Moderator, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. She noted that the Covid-19 pandemic was having an unprecedented impact on States’ human and physical infrastructures. States were responding to the pandemic by deploying a number of tools, including large-scale testing, use of physical protection equipment and tracing technologies. Terrorists were however exploiting the situation, for example by the creation of large numbers of websites spreading false information about Covid-19. There were also

incidents of attacks on health-care workers. The current interactive discussion was a timely opportunity to consider the threat of bio and cyber terrorism in the context of Covid-19.

The 1540 Expert described the objectives of resolution 1540 (2004) and the obligations imposed on Member States to implement measures to control proliferation of WMD by non-State actors. The mandate of the 1540 Committee was to report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), to promote the full implementation of the resolution and facilitate technical assistance. The Expert described the Comprehensive Review, noting that the policy of the Committee was to ensure that Member States, as well as international, regional and subregional organizations and civil society, as appropriate, would be able to contribute fully to the Committee's deliberations.

The subsequent discussion was a useful opportunity to hear the opinions of a range of relevant speakers about the threat of bio and cyber terrorism during the Covid-19 pandemic. Several of these speakers recognized the relevance of resolution 1540 (2004) in providing a framework of requirements relevant to the threat from bioterrorism. During a period in which, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 1540 Committee is unable to conduct its usual range of outreach activities these discussions were a valuable opportunity to describe the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004) and progress of the Comprehensive Review to this audience.

### **Additional Comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at [1540experts@un.org](mailto:1540experts@un.org)