

## **UN Special Meeting on Kidnapping for Ransom**

*24 November 2014*

### **Side Event: “Facilitating Technical Assistance to Member States on Kidnapping for Ransom and Hostage-taking Committed by Terrorist Groups”**

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#### **“Kidnapping for Ransom - the OSCE as a Regional Approach”**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Counter-terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and its Director, Jean-Paul Laborde, for offering the OSCE the opportunity to contribute to the discussion today on kidnapping for ransom. I would like to also acknowledge my panel colleagues, with whom the OSCE has a history of a solid co-operation, Mr. Mauro Medico, from UNODC; XXX from the GCTF and XXX from UNCCT.

#### **UNSCR 2133 and Why the OSCE has Become Involved**

The use of kidnapping for ransom (KFR) by terrorists to finance their activities is of major concern to the international community, and also to the OSCE. Our participating States now recognize even more that ransom payments to terrorist groups are major sources of income for and that ransom payments support recruitment efforts, strengthen their operational capabilities, and incentivize future incidents of kidnapping for ransom.

Under this year’s Swiss Chairmanship, the OSCE raised the level of activity on these issues. Thanks to the UK Chair of the Security Committee, the issue of terrorist financing, particularly kidnapping for ransom, was first discussed as a priority in the March Security Committee. In that meeting, where I had also the opportunity to intervene, our British colleague Nicholas Fulton, of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office introduced the Security Council Resolution 2133; Christian Larson, from the OSCE Office of the Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities, presented financial aspects of kidnapping for ransom. Moreover, Stephan Husy, Swiss Ambassador at Large for Counter-Terrorism, presented Switzerland’s views on kidnapping for ransom in the context of counter-terrorism; and he emphasized three important elements of a successful no-ransom policy: Prevention, outreach and international co-operation.

#### **In what way should the OSCE be dealing with the KFR issue?**

OSCE participating States either border or lie very close to the regions most affected today by UN-designated terrorist groups such as ISIL and which by kidnappings for ransom is a

source of funding. It is important that for the OSCE to acknowledge and discuss the increasing terrorist threats to participating States and OSCE Partners for Cooperation – particularly as the Partners overlap with these regions.

The OSCE's believes strongly in its role as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter – we share the need for regional organizations to play a leading role in implementing, on the ground, the commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations.

The UN can rely on cooperation with the OSCE. The OSCE, as a regional organization can help, in an effective and efficient manner, implement UN resolutions. This year, as previously mentioned, the OSCE has taken a strong role in addressing KFR and resolution 2133 calls explicitly on states to increase regional and sub-regional co-operation to counter kidnapping for ransom.

How? There are three features of the OSCE itself that are important to mention although they are hopefully not new to this knowledgeable group: its wide membership; its comprehensive approach to security; and its organizational structure dealing with terrorism. These three established capacities within our regional security organization – often referred to as spanning from Vancouver to Vladivostok- help us discuss counter terrorism in a cross dimensional and comprehensive manner, often seeking better harmonization of policies.

### **Permanent Council Decision 1063, OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism**

In the Permanent Council Decision on the OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism, participating States agreed that, in light of the multifaceted and evolving terrorist threat, the OSCE will remain flexible in its thematic focus and promote regular dialogue, with experts, policy makers and civil society actors to discuss best practices to prevent and combat current and new terrorist threats. One of these strategic focus areas is to promote the implementation of the international legal framework against terrorism and to enhance international legal co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism.

The OSCE, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has sought to organize OSCE-wide, regional, sub-regional and national conferences, workshops and trainings to promote ratification and to assist, including with training, in the implementation of the international legal framework against terrorism. Concerning the kidnapping-for-ransom-relevant three Conventions (Terrorism Financing, Hostage-Taking and Diplomatic Agents), all 57 OSCE participating States and all 11 Partners for Co-operation have ratified the first one; and almost all of them are also parties to the Hostages and Diplomatic Agents Conventions.

One important component of the OSCE's concept of security is its emphasis on a co-operative approach to reach such a high-level of ratification. In this regard, we also closely collaborate with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), -thanks again Jean-Paul- ; with the Council of Europe (CoE), and with other international and regional

organizations throughout the OSCE region and beyond with whom we have an excellent co-operation history, having recently organized jointly several successful events at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. We certainly plan to continue such collaboration in the field of countering kidnapping for ransom, as we already did this fall with a workshop in Malta that I will discuss more in detail shortly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Beyond ratification, practical implementation of the international legal framework against terrorism for the OSCE means that its participating States undertake every effort to prevent kidnapping for ransom and hostage-taking from happening. In other words: legislation, regulations and investigation techniques have to reflect a proactive and forward-looking approach, anticipating terrorist kidnapping methods and tactics, criminalizing and timely investigating preparatory acts, such as the preparation or acquisition of fake documents, weapons and explosive substances; recruitment and training, and thwarting terrorist movements and terrorists' getting ransom payments for financing their criminal activities.

In this respect, the OSCE provides assistance to requesting participating States and organize training and capacity building activities for law enforcement and judicial officials; and workshops with the engagement of civil society. At this point let me bring to your attention the importance of engaging with the civil society and the private sector in responding to kidnappings without ransom payments: Non-Governmental Organizations and the business community are quite often the victims of Kidnapping for Ransom.

### **Interlaken Conference (KFR session) and Malta KFR workshop**

The Chairmanship Counterterrorism Conference in Interlaken had focused sessions on both kidnapping for ransom and foreign terrorist fighters and brought together senior CT coordinators from participating States, as well as high level participants from the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, UNODC, EU, Interpol, among others.

Following this, the OSCE and the UNODC organized jointly last September a Mediterranean Regional Expert Workshop on Terrorist Kidnapping and Hostage-Taking, hosted by Malta, which focused on exchanging information and good practices, and to strengthen cooperation in particular with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation. This workshop was an expert follow-up of the political discussion on Kidnapping for Ransom held in Interlaken; it is important because it gathered judicial and law enforcement experts from around the Mediterranean, who discussed practical steps to enhance kidnapping prevention measures; practices to free hostages; and initiatives to protect victims.

The conclusions and recommendations from both events included, *inter alia*, first that the OSCE should support, under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the UN CTED, in the implementation of the UNSCR 2133. That would also imply continuing our co-operation with the UNODC, supporting Member States' efforts to ratify and to strengthen implementation of the International Legal Framework against terrorism.

Moreover, we all should work to ensure close cooperation, exchange of experiences and support capacity-building initiatives and networking among all relevant agencies

(intelligence, law enforcement, judiciary and others) to prevent, manage and investigate and prosecute kidnapping and hostage-taking cases. Moreover States should establish preventive measures, engaging the civil society (for example, the media) and the business community.

It was repeatedly recommended to reinforce specific training for practitioners to investigate kidnappings, including negotiation techniques, tracing financial flows from ransom, and operational techniques to safely release hostages; moreover, experts suggested organizing workshops and table top exercises to prepare government officials and other high risk personnel to understand and to face this threat; finally, experts endorsed to consider the establishment, at the appropriate international level of a directory of contact points to facilitate a systematic regular information exchange on kidnapping and hostage-taking.

## **The OSCE Draft Declaration on KFR**

On the basis of discussions held in Interlaken Conference and at the Malta Regional Expert Workshop, the Swiss Chairmanship has circulated a Draft Declaration on Kidnapping for Ransom that recalls United Nations instruments concerning the fight against kidnapping and hostage-taking.

Condemning incidents of kidnapping and hostage-taking committed by terrorist groups for any purpose, the draft declaration recognizes the need to give careful consideration to protection the lives of hostages, and it gathers elements of UNSCR 2133 calling participating States to prevent terrorists from benefiting directly or indirectly from ransom payments or from political concessions and to secure the safe release of hostages.

Moreover, the Draft Declaration invites participating States, *inter alia*, to strengthen co-operation, also with public-private partnerships; to develop programs to assist victims, and to support capacity building initiatives and exchanges. In practical terms, we are ready to promote our participating States' initiatives and to co-operate with international and regional organizations in providing assistance in training, capacity building and exchange of experiences, engaging the civil society and the private sector.

As we expect the Draft Declaration will be adopted within two weeks at the OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Basel (Switzerland), the document will call upon OSCE executive structures (including the Action against Terrorism Unit) to support our participating States in those endeavors.

## **Offering OSCE collaboration**

Dear colleagues,

The OSCE has worked throughout 2013 to be a highly relevant forum for dialogue on KFR topic and the OSCE can be considered a reliable and important partner on these counter terrorism issues.

Not only can the OSCE bring states together, it can also utilize its existing structures with the capacity to act, including its network of field operations. Indeed, our team works to enhance coordination and coherence across the 16 field operations as well as the Office of Democratic

Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the other Executive structures, in order to implement the participating States common commitments and build capacities of participating States where needed.

In this context, we are ready to further cooperate with all of you on this panel and other international and regional organizations and entities. We will support, as recommended in Malta workshop, the organization of capacity building for practitioners, and specialized training and exercises for investigators, negotiators and staff of special units; effective practices and ideas presented in Malta's workshop including those outlined in the GCTF Algiers Memorandum and the recently updated United Nations Counter Kidnapping Manual.

We can offer an information resource through not only action-oriented workshops and seminars, but also can think about new avenues of collaboration through activities like top-table, e-learning, knowledge videos and ways to help assess implementation of KFR-relevant commitments.

I strongly believe that strategically the OSCE is a well-suited match to work together with UN entities to implement the global CT framework and that there can be no argument against closer collaboration, mutually reinforcing each other's efforts. We welcome an interesting and useful exchange of views on the OSCE activities and hearing your views on continued and enhanced efforts.

Thank you for your attention.