

The Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate

Countering the scourge of terrorism has been on the agenda of the United Nations for decades. Since the 1960s, the Organization has worked to bring the international community together to prevent and counter terrorism, notably developing the [international counter-terrorism legal framework](#) to help States combat the threat collectively.

In the aftermath of the 11 September attacks against the United States in 2001, the Security Council unanimously adopted [resolution 1373 \(2001\)](#), a far-reaching resolution (adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and therefore binding on all Member States), which charted the way forward in the fight against terrorism. The resolution also established the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which consists of all 15 members of the Security Council, to monitor the implementation of its provisions. The Committee is supported in its work by its [Executive Directorate \(CTED\)](#), which implements the Committee's policy decisions and conduct expert assessments of Member States.

Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) requires all Member States to implement a number of measures to enhance their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home, in their regions, and around the world. In particular, Member States are required to:

- Criminalize the financing of terrorism
- Freeze without delay any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism
- Deny all forms of financial support for terrorist groups
- Suppress the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists
- Share information with other Governments on any groups practising or planning terrorist acts
- Cooperate with other Governments in the investigation, detection, arrest, extradition and prosecution of those involved in such acts
- Criminalize active and passive assistance for terrorism in domestic law and bring violators to justice
- Implement effective border-control measures.

Reflecting the international community's determination to address the root causes of terrorism, the Council's [resolution 1624 \(2005\)](#) directs the CTC to help States prevent incitement to commit terrorist acts and calls on States to prevent and prohibit incitement; strengthen international cooperation and border control; and enhance dialogue and understanding among civilizations. States must ensure that any measures they take to implement the resolution comply with all of their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law, and humanitarian law.

In September 2014, in response to an unprecedented flow of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), the Security Council adopted [resolution 2178 \(2014\)](#). According to this resolution, Member States shall prevent and suppress the recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, and the financing of their travel and or their activities.

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

In 2004, the Council created the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to strengthen and coordinate the monitoring process. CTED is headed by an [Executive Director, at the level of Assistant Secretary-General](#). In its resolution 2129 (2013), which extends CTED's mandate until 31 December 2017, the Council notes that new terrorist trends are emerging and that the terrorist threat "has become more diffuse, with an increase, in various regions of the world, of terrorist acts, including those motivated by intolerance and extremism."

The resolution also calls on the CTC and CTED to be more active in combating violent extremism and to focus on prevention in their response to the global terrorist threat.

CTED consists of around 40 staff members, around half of whom are legal experts tasked with analysing reports submitted to the CTC by States on their progress in implementing resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005). CTED also has two human rights officers.

CTED is divided into two sections: the Assessment and Technical Assistance Office (ATAO) and the Administrative and Information Office (AIO). The ATAO is divided into three geographical clusters to enable its experts to specialize in particular world regions.

As well as assisting the Committee to monitor the status of implementation of the relevant Council resolutions, CTED identifies States' technical assistance needs and works with its partners to facilitate the delivery of targeted assistance with a view to strengthening States' counter-terrorism capacities. It uses two main tools in its dialogue with States: the Detailed Implementation Assessment (DIS) and country visits conducted with the approval of the host Government. The DIS helps CTED and the Committee to understand and define the counter-terrorism situation in each State. It is shared only with the State concerned and is prepared on the basis of information provided by the State concerned, international organizations, and other public sources.

The information gathered is also used to produce [global surveys](#) of the implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) in all the world's regions and subregions. Regarded as the most comprehensive analytical documents on counter-terrorism in the UN system, they serve to identify where progress has been made and where gaps remain, as well as to indicate where the international community might most usefully focus its efforts. The surveys also contain global assessments of Member States' efforts across all major thematic areas addressed by the two resolutions.

International counter-terrorism instruments

Around two-thirds of UN Member States have either ratified or acceded to at least 10 of the 19 [international counter-terrorism legal instruments](#) and all have signed or become parties to at least one. These instruments define specific crimes as terrorist acts in areas as diverse as the hijacking of planes, the taking of hostages, the financing of terrorism, the marking of explosives, and the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Partner organizations



CTED
Counter-Terrorism Committee
Executive Directorate

The CTC and CTED are actively engaged in working with various international, regional, and subregional organizations to counter terrorism. The Committee has held a number of special meetings and events with these organizations and their experts regularly participate in workshops organized by CTED on a variety of thematic and regional issues. They also take part in the country visits conducted by CTED on behalf of the Committee.

Country visits

The purpose of the country visits conducted by CTED on behalf of the Committee is to work with Member States to assess its overall national counter-terrorism efforts, its strengths, weaknesses and technical assistance needs; good practices employed in the implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), and 2178 (2014); and terrorism trends and challenges. The visiting teams are led by CTED and include experts from organizations such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO). International, regional, and subregional organizations such as the African Union and the European Union, and representatives of specialized bodies and institutions with expertise in specific aspects of counter-terrorism, also take part in the visits.

In order to ensure a needs-based and flexible response, the Committee conducts eight types of visit, each tailored to the specific context. Focused visits, for example, are tailored to the circumstances of the country concerned and the nature of the terrorist threat it faces. During comprehensive visits, the expert teams compile their observations into a report and make recommendations for action. The expert teams also identify Member States' technical assistance needs, primarily in the following areas:

- **Counter-terrorism legislation:** offences; penalties; competence of the courts; criminal procedure; special investigation measures; legislation on weapons, explosives and dangerous substances; and legislation on asylum and immigration.
- **Measures to prevent the use of assets for criminal purposes:** anti-money-laundering legislation, legislation against the financing of terrorism, supervision of the non-financial sector, structures for oversight of the financial system, and mechanisms for freezing terrorist assets.
- **Effectiveness of law enforcement services:** counter-terrorism machinery, coordination of services, early-warning systems, and methods for combating and preventing criminal activities linked to terrorism.
- **International cooperation:** machinery for international cooperation in criminal matters, status of ratification of the international counter-terrorism instruments, modalities for, and effectiveness of judicial cooperation and police cooperation, and modalities for cooperation with regional and international organizations.
- **Border control:** control of cross-border movement of persons and goods, control and security of cargo, mechanisms for the issuance and control of identity and travel documents, methods for the prevention and detection of document forgery and fraud, and aviation and maritime security.

Comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism strategies

[Security Council resolution 1963 \(2010\)](#) encourages CTED to assist Member States to develop comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism strategies.

Having visited over half of the 193 Member States of the United Nations since its establishment in 2001, the Committee has effectively become the central repository of the Organization's terrorist threat assessments. The national and regional threat assessments prepared by CTED on behalf of the Committee are intended to help States define and develop their strategies. CTED also builds upon those assessments in its work with other United Nations entities and external partners. This not only ensures full use of available resources, but helps to prevent reporting fatigue, duplication, and overlap. Most importantly, it enables the United Nations to deliver as one.

For those States and regional organizations wishing to develop national or regional strategies, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and CTED work with Member States to develop a set of international principles. CTED also shares advice on effective implementation mechanisms and encourages Member States to adopt a holistic approach that goes beyond law enforcement infrastructures to include the socio-economic, political, educational, developmental, human rights, and rule-of-law dimensions.

Technical assistance and best practices

The Committee and CTED are committed to helping States strengthen their capacities to combat terrorism by facilitating technical assistance. The Committee identifies States' needs on the basis of information submitted by States and information gathered at regional and thematic workshops organized by CTED or during on-site visits. The Committee then consults with relevant national authorities and potential donors. The areas in which donor organizations and States can provide assistance are compiled in a database.

The Committee also compiles and promotes best practices developed by various international and regional organizations for the implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014).

Facilitating the provision of technical assistance

One of the main tasks of the Committee and CTED is to facilitate the provision of technical assistance to Member States in order to enhance their capacity to implement resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), and 2178 (2014). In doing so, they must adapt their approach to the constantly evolving nature of the global terrorist threat.

Priority is given to States visited by the Committee. Follow-up visits enable CTED to review and adjust priority needs, and focused visits to high-capacity States help CTED to identify new donors, as well as areas in which they can be most effective in providing assistance. Over the past decade, the approaches taken in facilitating technical assistance delivery have evolved considerably in response to Member States' changing needs.

Regional and thematic approaches. Consisting of a series of linked events that examine regional or thematic issues in depth and involve interaction with numerous international and regional organizations.

Increased focus on implementation and prevention issues. CTED promotes measures to tackle the planning, preparation and financing of terrorism; terrorist recruitment and radicalization leading to violence; and countering incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance.

New counter-terrorism entities. CTED develops cooperative and coordinated approaches with organizations and entities delivering counter-terrorism-related technical assistance. Their number, roles and operational scope have expanded significantly.

Integration of human rights. CTED works consistently to ensure that relevant human rights and rule-of-law aspects are integrated into assistance delivery.

Spin-off activities. Many activities carried out alone or with donor States and partner organizations have generated further regional or bilateral initiatives, many of which are multifaceted and are implemented over a period of several years in various regions of the world.

CTED Trust Fund. The creation of the CTED Trust Fund, in 2011, has enabled CTED to pursue a more structured approach.

Counter-terrorism and human rights

Terrorism poses a serious threat, not only to international peace and security, but also to the enjoyment of human rights and social and economic development. Member States are therefore under a human rights obligation to safeguard the security of their citizens, including through effective counter-terrorism measures.

The relationship between counter-terrorism and human rights has attracted considerable interest since the establishment of the CTC in 2001. Beginning with its adoption of resolution [1456 \(2003\)](#), the Security Council has consistently affirmed that States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee, and international humanitarian law.

The Committee began moving towards a more proactive human rights policy after the Council established CTED in 2004. Pursuant to resolution 1624 (2005), in particular, the Executive Directorate is tasked with taking account of relevant human rights obligations in the course of its activities, as well as liaising with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other human rights organizations.

More recently, the Council has underscored that effective counter-terrorism measures and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and constitute an essential part of successful counter-terrorism efforts. In its resolution 2178 (2014), the Council states that failure to comply with these and other international obligations, including under the Charter of the United Nations, fosters a sense of impunity and is one of the factors contributing to increased radicalization.

The Committee and CTED now routinely integrate relevant human rights concerns in all their activities, including in the preparation of country assessments, country visits, the facilitation of technical assistance, and other interactions with Member States. Where appropriate, and in consultation with the CTC and relevant Member States, CTED also engages with civil society and other non-Governmental actors.

Resolution 1624 (2005)

Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), which addresses incitement to commit terrorist acts, calls on Member States to prohibit by law incitement, prevent such conduct and deny safe haven to anyone “with respect to whom there is credible and relevant information giving serious reasons for considering that they have been guilty of such conduct”.

The resolution stresses that States must ensure that any measures they take to implement the resolution comply with all of their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law, and humanitarian law. The resolution’s preamble highlights the relevance of the right to freedom of expression and the right to seek asylum in the context of counter-incitement measures. It also states that incitement poses a serious and growing danger to the enjoyment of human rights.

In addition to calling on States to continue international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, the Council directs the CTC to include in its own dialogue with Member States their efforts to implement the resolution. A summary of their responses is periodically submitted to the Committee. CTED also discusses resolution 1624 (2005) with Member States during country visits and prepares a [global survey](#) of Member States' implementation efforts.

CTED facilitates regional workshops on the implementation of the resolution, in which participants discuss the need to prohibit and prevent incitement within a criminal law framework and the importance of countering incitement through dialogue that involves different sectors of society. The participants include representatives of local communities, the private sector, civil society, and the media. The workshops also address the need to combat incitement and violent extremism through comprehensive strategies that encompass legal, law enforcement, and social policy aspects.