

Concept note

Open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on the nexus between international terrorism and transnational organized crime

United Nations Headquarters, New York; Conference Room 3

Monday, 8 October 2018

I. Background

1. The Security Council has recognized, and expressed concern at, the connection between transnational organized crime and terrorism in several of its resolutions, including resolutions 1373 (2001), 2195 (2014), 2322 (2016), 2347 (2017) and 2368 (2017), and more recently in its Presidential Statement [S/PRST/2018/9](#) of 8 May 2018. The Council has also referred to the links between terrorist activities and specific forms of crime, including trafficking in persons (resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017)), drug trafficking (presidential statements 2010/4, of 24 February 2010; 2012/16, of 25 April 2012; and 2013/22, of 18 December 2013), trafficking in firearms (resolution 2370 (2017)), and illicit trade in market oil, other natural resources, and extortion (resolutions 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015) and 2368 (2017)). The General Assembly, noting also the growing links between transnational organized crime and terrorist crimes, adopted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, as an effective tool for international cooperation to address inter alia these links.

2. Terrorists may benefit directly or indirectly from transnational organized crime, whether financially or operationally. From a financing perspective, direct or indirect involvement in illegal activities represents an attractive source of funding. With respect to operational support, terrorists may use services provided by organized criminal groups, including the counterfeiting of travel documents, the provision of firearms, and the use of trafficking and smuggling routes to relocate from conflict zones.

3. The interactions and synergies between terrorists and criminal groups may take a number of forms, ranging from simple coexistence in the same territory, to the development of ad hoc alliances based on a common interest, and even to convergence of activities/ merging. Research and cases suggest that the main form of interaction is the ad hoc opportunistic alliance. However, owing to the constantly evolving relations between terrorism and organized crime, the remote nature of the locations in which their interactions may occur, and

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the limited availability of information, it is difficult to assess the extent and nature of the crime/terror nexus in different contexts and to gather related evidence and practices to address the nexus. It is therefore essential to (i) better understand the nexus; (ii) identify criminal proceeds used to fund terrorists; and (iii) ensure that Member States are able to prosecute the terrorists benefitting from transnational organized crime, the criminals who work with them, and the financiers who make the proceeds of crime available.

II. Objectives of open briefing

4. In its presidential statement 2018/9, of 8 May 2018, the Council notes that “the nature and scope of the linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime vary by context” and encourages “Member States, as well as international, regional, sub-regional organizations and fora to continue conducting research to better understand the nature and scope of the links that may exist between terrorists and transnational organized criminals”. Pursuant to the list of CTC meetings and briefings for 2018 as agreed upon by the Committee, the open briefing will be organized in close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), in view of their considerable expertise in these areas. Its purpose will be to help strengthen understanding of the nexus and practices to address it, based on recent analysis of three specific criminal activities: human trafficking, drug trafficking, and firearms trafficking. It is expected that the outcomes of the discussions will provide the basis for the organization of a joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) on the nexus between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, requested by the Security Council on its Presidential Statement [S/PRST/2018/9](#) of 8 May 2018, which will focus on regional specificities, as well as on strategies to address the potential nexus.

III. Format of discussions

5. The panelists will include representatives of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), UNICRI, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNODC, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization (WCO), The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and Small Arms Survey. The introductory session will provide a general overview of the interactions between terrorist and organized-criminal groups and highlight some of the contextual factors and vulnerabilities that may trigger the nexus, as well the main forms of contact and cooperation between terrorist and organized-criminal groups. It will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

6. The introductory session will be followed by three thematic panel discussions, each of which will lead to a question-and-answer session. The first panel will address the issue of

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trafficking in persons where it is committed for the purpose of supporting terrorism (whether for recruitment, as a terrorist strategy, or as a source of funding). During this panel, CTED will outline the main findings of its analysis pursuant to resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017) aimed at identifying the nexus between human trafficking and terrorism. The second panel will focus on the nexus between drugs and terrorism and the involvement of terrorists in illicit drug trafficking. UNODC will describe the involvement of terrorists in illicit drug trafficking, based on the analysis included in the World Drug Report 2017. The third panel will focus on the linkages between terrorism and illicit trafficking in firearms, including initiatives currently being undertaken by, inter alia, INTERPOL, UNODC and the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

IV. Date and venue

7. The open briefing will be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, in Conference Room 3, on 8 October 2018, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

V. Outcomes

8. A Chair's summary highlighting the main points and conclusions of each session, will be prepared and circulated shortly after the Open briefing.

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Agenda

10.00–10.10 Opening statements

- H.E. Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee
- Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

10.10–10.40 The nexus between international terrorism and transnational organized crime: general insights and possible responses

The discussions will focus on the main forms of interaction between terrorist and criminal groups and on “push-and-pull” factors in the establishment of a nexus.

- Ms. Laura Adal, Senior Analyst, Global Initiative
- Mr. Leif Villadsen, Senior Programme Officer, UNICRI

10.40–11.25 Session I: The nexus between human trafficking and terrorism

Each panelist will deliver a 5-10-minute presentation on the use of human trafficking to support terrorism (whether for recruitment, as a terrorist strategy, or as a source of funding). The presentations will be followed by a Q&A session.

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee

Rapporteur: CTED

Panelists:

- Mr. Tonderai Chikuhwa, Chief of Staff and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict
- Ms. Delphine Schantz, Senior Legal Officer, CTED

11.25–12.10 Session II: The nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism

Each panelist will deliver a 5-10-minute presentation on the direct or indirect involvement of terrorist groups in drug trafficking. The presentations will be followed by a Q&A session.

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee

Rapporteur: CTED

Panelists:

- Dr. Thomas Pietschmann, Senior Research Officer, UNODC
- Ms. Tamara Makarenko, Consultant, UNICRI
- Mr. Chris Howley, Counsellor, WCO

12.10–12.55 Session III: The nexus between arms trafficking and terrorism

Each panelist will deliver a 7-minute presentation on terrorist involvement in arms trafficking and on the connections between organized criminal groups and terrorists for the purposes of acquiring weapons. The presentations will be followed by a Q&A session.

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee

Rapporteur: CTED

Panelists:

- Mr. Matt Schroeder, Senior Researcher, Small Arms Survey
- Ms. Simonetta Grassi, Head of the Global Firearms Programme, UNODC
- Mr. Daniel Prins, Conventional Arms Branch Chief, UNODA
- Mr. Dritan Shema, Criminal Intelligence Officer, Interpol (via VTC)

12.55–1.00 Concluding remarks

- H.E. Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee