

**Virtual open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on
“Terrorist threats to civil aviation, the status of implementation of Security
Council resolution 2309 (2016), and follow-up to the civil aviation-related
provisions of Council resolution 2396 (2017)”**

Wednesday, 2 December 2020, 10.00 a.m.–12.00 p.m. EST

Concept note

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2309 (2016), adopted on 22 September 2016, the Security Council expresses “particular concern” that terrorist groups are actively seeking ways to defeat or circumvent aviation security, and calls on States to strengthen and promote the effective application of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and to assist ICAO to continue to enhance audit, capacity development, and training programmes to support their implementation.
2. In the same resolution, the Council affirms the role of ICAO as the United Nations organization responsible for developing international aviation security standards, monitoring their implementation by States, and assisting States to comply with those standards, and calls on all States to work with ICAO to ensure that those standards are reviewed and adapted to effectively address the threat posed by terrorists targeting civil aviation.
3. The Council also notes with concern that the “terrorism threat has become more diffuse”, with an increase, in various regions of the world, of terrorist acts, including those motivated by intolerance or violent extremism; expresses its determination to combat that threat; and expresses grave concern at terrorist attacks against civil aviation and the fact that civil aviation may be used as a transportation means by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs).
4. Furthermore, the Council calls on all States to, inter alia, ensure that effective, risk-based measures are in place at the airports within their jurisdiction; take all necessary steps to ensure that measures such as effective quality control and oversight processes, and the promotion of an effective security culture within all organizations involved in civil aviation, are effectively implemented on the ground on a continuing and sustainable basis; ensure that such measures take into account the potential role of those with privileged access to areas, knowledge or information that may assist terrorists in planning or conducting attacks; and urgently address any gaps or vulnerabilities that may be highlighted by ICAO or national self-risk assessment or audit processes.
5. In addition, all States should strengthen security screening procedures and maximize the promotion, utilization and sharing of new technologies and innovative techniques that maximize the capability to detect explosives and other threats. States that are able to do so are urged to

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

assist in the delivery of effective and targeted capacity development, training and other necessary resources, technical assistance, technology transfers and programmes.

6. On 7 July 2017, as requested by the Council in its resolution 2309 (2016), the Counter-Terrorism Committee held a special meeting, in cooperation with ICAO, on the issue of terrorist threats to civil aviation. In September 2017, the Council held a meeting on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, particularly focusing on aviation security.

7. Terrorist groups continue to perceive attacks against international civil aviation as an effective way to cause substantial loss of life, economic damage and disruption. Because of the global, interconnected nature of the international civil aviation industry, Member States of all regions are potentially vulnerable to such attacks.

8. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) plays a central role in supporting and implementing the policy decisions of the Council and the Committee, assisting them to define the international counter-terrorism agenda, and assessing States' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, including in relation to civil aviation. The assessments prepared by CTED on the Committee's behalf include recommendations for addressing the challenges and gaps identified with respect to civil aviation in line with the Committee visit framework and CTED technical guide on assisting Member States in implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions.

9. Those assessments make clear that many States continue to lack the capacity and resources required to implement effective measures to strengthen civil aviation security, including oversight capacity, screening and security checks, quality controls and effective security culture.

10. The international aviation sector also faces a number of new and emerging security risks and threats. The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted the international aviation industry. The use of information technology (IT) for malicious purposes represents a growing global threat. Critical civil aviation infrastructures are vulnerable to potential attacks, including through the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for terrorist purposes.

11. In its assessments, CTED notes the need for States to introduce Passenger Name Record (PNR) data and advance passenger information (API) systems in accordance with the Council resolution 2396 (2017) and the Security Council Guiding Principles on Foreign Terrorist Fighters: The 2015 Madrid Guiding Principles + 2018 Addendum (S/2015/939 and S/2018/117).

12. CTED leads the assessment component of the Global Counter-Terrorism Travel Programme, which aims to increase the overall number of States using API and PNR, in compliance with Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019), ICAO SARPs, and domestic and international legal obligations, and in full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

13. The Committee, CTED and ICAO have developed a strong partnership in this area, which includes the participation of ICAO experts in the Committee's country visits, special meetings and open briefings, as well as in various CTED activities. CTED and ICAO also continue to

cooperate closely on other initiatives relating to the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions within the framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Working Groups on Border Management and Law Enforcement and Emerging threats and Critical-Infrastructure Protection.

II. Objective of briefing

14. In view of the continuing terrorist and other security threats to international air transport operations and infrastructures, there remains a need to strengthen the political will and engagement of all relevant stakeholders to enhance implementation of existing international standards and recommended practices. Many States are unable to do so because they lack the necessary capacities. Moreover, the level of implementation varies considerably across regions.

15. The objective of the proposed briefing would be to enable the Committee to engage with States and relevant international and regional organizations on the terrorist threat to international civil aviation and also identify ways to strengthen and promote the implementation of international aviation security standards and recommended practices, and international cooperation and assistance opportunities in that regard.

16. The briefing would seek to address challenges, gaps and vulnerabilities relevant to civil aviation within the counter-terrorism context, as well as policies, instruments and tools developed to effectively manage risks to civil aviation and enhance effective implementation of resolution 2309 (2016) and other relevant resolutions (e.g., resolution 2396 (2017)), including the promotion of an effective and sustainable security culture, including through capacity development and training.

17. Member States would be encouraged to share information about their progress in implementing Council resolutions 2309 (2016), 2341 (2017) and 2396 (2017). The briefing would also aim to identify ways to further strengthen and promote their implementation.

18. Lastly, the briefing would also provide updates on recent developments with respect to the relevant international aviation security standards and recommended practices (including the establishment of the ICAO standards and recommended practices for the collection, use, processing and protection of PNR data consistent with Council resolution 2396 (2017)).

III. Format and topics of discussions

19. The proposed briefing would consist of an opening session, which would be followed by a main session featuring presentations by a panel of experts on various aspects of the implementation of Council resolution 2309 (2016) and other relevant resolutions, in particular the aviation security-related provisions of resolution 2396 (2017).

20. In order to encourage interactive discussions, the main session would be followed by an interactive question-and-answer session. Lastly, there would be a brief closing session.

21. The Committee Chair would act as Chair and moderator.

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

22. The briefing would be held via Cisco WebEx, with special privileges for Committee members and CTED.

23. United Nations accredited non-governmental organizations would be able to submit questions to the panelists via e-mail to seesmaa@un.org by Friday, 27 November 2020.

24. An annotated agenda and meeting documentation would be posted on the Committee's website.

IV. Venue and date

25. The proposed briefing would be streamed live on UNTV on Wednesday, 2 December 2020, from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. EST.

V. Expected outcome

26. The participants would identify challenges, gaps and vulnerabilities relevant to civil aviation in the counter-terrorism context, as well as policies, instruments and tools developed to effectively manage risks to civil aviation and enhance effective implementation of resolution 2309 (2016) and other relevant resolutions (e.g., resolution 2396 (2017)), including the promotion of an effective and sustainable security culture, including through capacity development and training.

27. Subject to prior consultations with the Committee, CTED would prepare and submit to the Committee a summary report on the outcomes of the meeting.

VI. Communications

28. CTED would promote the briefing through the appropriate channels. A press release would be issued following the briefing.