

**Briefing of the Security Council on
Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts**

Thursday, 19 August 2021, 10.00 a.m.-1.00 p.m.

Statement of

**Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx,
Executive Director, CTED**

Thank you, Mr. President,

I thank you for the opportunity to brief the Council on the Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh and the continued efforts of the United Nations and Member States to counter the threat.

First, however, in commemoration of the fourth International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, I would like to pay tribute to the victims of terrorism as we stand in solidarity with the survivors and their families.

And I, too, wish to echo the Secretary-General's appeal to the Security Council to take all possible steps to ensure that the rapidly evolving situation in Afghanistan does not result in Afghanistan being used as a safe haven for terrorism.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for his overview of the report and to commend both the United Nation Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Analytical and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee for their invaluable contributions to the report.

Mr. President, excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

Despite welcome progress in the roll out of vaccines, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have negative impacts across most policy areas over the past six months.

However, as we outlined in CTED’s most recent analytical paper – published in June 2021 – COVID-19’s impact on terrorism and counter-terrorism has been more mixed.

In many non-conflict zones, pandemic-related restrictions have continued to help suppress terrorist activity.

In conflict zones, however, where the impact of pandemic-related restrictions is limited, the increasing interplay between terrorism, fragility and conflict has caused the terrorist threat to grow.

Indeed, Da’esh and its affiliates continued to pose a significant threat in West, East and Central Africa and Afghanistan, while simultaneously prioritizing their efforts to regroup and resurge in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

CTED’s analytical paper also emphasized the pandemic’s worrying impacts on humanitarian programming across the world, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

We continue to be concerned by the dire situation faced by those individuals – mainly women and children – with presumed links to Da’esh.

Through the virtual component of the Counter-Terrorism Committee’s recent hybrid assessment visits to both Iraq and to Member States from which FTFs had travelled to the conflict zones, CTED has continued to monitor compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Although United Nations entities continue to promote the safe, voluntary, and human rights-compliant return of foreign nationals from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, many remain stranded in crowded camps with limited access to essential services, due process, and fair trial.

These concerns have only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The Secretary-General's report highlights violence in the camps, enforced disappearances and other human rights abuses as serious concerns, in addition to forced returns, the prevention of return and the discriminatory treatment of families with a perceived link to Da'esh.

Further efforts are needed to create conditions under which social cohesion can be promoted and further Da'esh violence prevented, while ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Mr. President, excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

These challenges remind us yet again of the critical need for us to strengthen national, regional, and international counter-terrorism efforts.

In this regard, I welcome the discussions held during recent hybrid assessment visits, the 2021 Counter-Terrorism Week, and its side-events on new threats and challenges and how best to marshal our collective efforts to address them.

I also welcome the Counter Terrorism Committee's approval of the revised overview of implementation assessment and the electronic detailed implementation survey in March 2021, which were developed by CTED in accordance with resolution 2395 (2017).

These new analytical tools will help CTED to improve our monitoring of the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions by Member States in a timely manner and will greatly enhance CTED quantitative and qualitative analytical capabilities as required under resolution 2395 (2017).

They are also expected to support Member State efforts to adopt comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism approaches.

It is also important to reflect on other examples of progress made over the past six months.

Criminal justice responses, international judicial cooperation and the development of comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies have continued to be significant priorities for CTED and many of our UN partners.

CTED, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNOCT, has supported efforts to increase cooperation in investigations and prosecutions at the national and local levels in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin.

In March, CTED, UNOCT and UNODC jointly held a regional workshop that promoted gender-responsive approaches in PRR strategies in the Lake Chad Basin.

There has also been welcome progress in the development of good practices in international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation, including in relation to judicial cooperation, mutual legal assistance, and extradition in terrorism cases.

CTED and our partners further supported the Maldives and the Philippines on the use of the Internet and social media in counter-terrorism investigations.

And CTED, together with UNODC, continued to tailor their South Asia Regional Toolkit for Judges to the national contexts of the Maldives and Pakistan.

Mr. President, excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

CTED's analysis suggests that terrorists and terrorist groups, including Da'esh, are exploring alternative methods of moving funds, due to the impact of pandemic-related measures on money-transfer networks.

The use of social media crowdfunding campaigns for Da'esh fighters and their relatives in camps in the Syrian Arab Republic also remains an ongoing challenge.

To address these challenges, CTED, in cooperation with other UN entities, continues to work together with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), FATF-style regional bodies and the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

And due to the terrorism financing risks associated with the illicit trade in natural resources, CTED, together with the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), supported the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group in implementing its regional operational plan for combating the financing of terrorism.

CTED continued to play a key role in facilitating technical assistance, including by leading virtual consultation missions which fall under the "All-of-UN approach" UNOCT-UNCCT Global programmes, and by supporting activities on topics including terrorism-arms-crime nexus, protection of vulnerable targets, fusions cells and countering terrorist travel.

CTED and UNODC also held a workshop to promote relevant Security Council resolutions and offer expertise to Nigerian law enforcement officers in the application of international best practices regarding intelligence collection and analysis.

Mr. President, excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

Da'esh and its affiliates remain a significant concern and threat to international peace and security.

The upcoming joint open briefing on ISIL in Africa of 18 October will allow us to further explore the recent evolution of these affiliates on the African continent.

A comprehensive, coordinated, “One-UN” approach remains crucial to develop and implement effective counter-terrorism measures while also addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

And of course, we must do so while ensuring that our multi-lateral counter-terrorism efforts do no harm.

In closing, I would like to express my hope that the forthcoming CTC special meeting on the 20th years of anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001) on 13 September 2021 will serve as a forum to further enhance and strengthen our multilateral counter-terrorism efforts.

Thank you, Mr. President.