

**Statement by Mr. Muhammad Rafiuddin Shah,  
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United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Open Briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on the work of the Counter-Terrorism  
Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) with the Member States of South and South-  
East Asia, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2395 (2017)**

**14 February 2022, 10:00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.**

Your Excellency Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee,  
Mr. Weixiong Chen, Acting Executive Director, CTED  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my sincere pleasure to join you all today.

On behalf of Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, I would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Tirumurti for inviting the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to brief you on our collaboration with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) in South and South-East Asia.

I would also like to thank the Members of the Counter-Terrorism Committee for their support to the work of UNOCT.

Last year, we marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of this Committee by the Security Council, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

In June last year, we also concluded the Second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations with the consensus adoption of a strong resolution for the seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 15 years after its adoption.

The review resolution charts an important path forward to address an evolving terrorist threat, in an uncertain world, over the next decade.

The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in its recent report explained, and also highlighted by CTED Colleague a short while ago, there are serious concerns about the resurgence of a safe haven in Afghanistan for international terrorist activity, and about social media messaging, which could be used as a recruitment tool around the world. The latest report of the MT provides valuable analysis of the terrorist threat in the region.

We are pleased to note, both Indonesia and the Philippines have seen significant counter-terrorism gains, leading to an overall decline in terrorist activity and cautious optimism that the operational capability of several groups in the South-East Asian region may have been significantly degraded.

At the same time, the threat of lone actor or inspired attacks by radicalized individuals remains a concern.

We would like to thank South and South-East Asian Member States for their constructive role in the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy review process to bring about consensus – including Indonesia as co-Chair of the Group of Friends on Preventing Violent Extremism, and facilitator of cluster negotiations on vulnerable targets.

The review resolution introduced new language on several key aspects.

This includes references to sports and physical activities for prevention efforts, the critical role of community leaders and the importance of promoting pluralism to counter the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

It further acknowledges the needs to prevent prisons from serving as potential incubators for terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

We commend the efforts in the region to prevent and counter violent extremism, including through the demand-driven support to Member States such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines, and in collaboration with regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We would also like to encourage Member States in the region to work with UNOCT and CTED in line with OP100 of the Strategy resolution to develop national and regional plans of action for coordinated capacity-building and technical assistance.

Mr. Chair,

The review resolution expressed great appreciation for the counter-terrorism work of the UN system, including the important role of the Secretary-General's Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, of which CTED is a key member entity and contributes immensely through its chair of many important working groups.

UNOCT continues to draw on the advice and assessment of the Directorate in identifying beneficiary countries and their technical assistance needs.

This methodology has been instrumental in tailoring our capacity-building assistance to Member States in South and South-East Asia.

A key example is our **Countering Terrorist Travel Programme**, which successfully partners with CTED in its outreach and engagement with Member States prioritized by the Committee.

This global flagship programme is an excellent example of an 'All-of-UN' capacity-building initiative providing tangible and impactful results in enhancing border-control measures in both sub-regions.

Significant advancements have been made in Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and the Philippines to support authorities to collect and analyze Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record data to detect and prevent the travel of foreign terrorist fighters, through intelligence-led targeting and screening against national and international watchlists.

To promote regional cooperation, an informal working group on passenger data within South and South East Asia will be established this year, to share good practices and lessons learned, and ensure the sustainability of our collective UN efforts.

Closely aligned with these efforts is our **Threat Assessment Models for Aviation Security**, launched in September last year.

This initiative seeks to enhance interagency cooperation and information exchange to prevent terrorist acts against civil aviation.

The Programme recently expanded to deliver support to South-East Asia, with a focus on Viet Nam and the Philippines.

Under our **Global Programme on Cybersecurity and New Technologies**, UNOCT has enhanced the skills of 326 officials from Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Maldives and the Philippines on online counter-terrorism investigations, including social media, dark web and virtual assets.

These efforts are in response to Committee recommendations on the use of special investigative measures and digital evidence, and on measures to prevent the terrorist use of information and communication technologies.

This initiative is funded by the Government of Japan and implemented in close collaboration with CTED, as well as INTERPOL and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute.

We have also launched a report on countering terrorism online through Artificial Intelligence, specifically tailored for law enforcement and counter-terrorism agencies in South & South-East Asia.

At the country level, UNOCT is actively engaged in the **UN Joint Programme on Human Rights for the Philippines**, which was launched in July last year, and is co-implemented with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The Programme includes a component on human rights-based approaches to counter terrorism, designed in response to the second follow-up visit of the Committee to the Philippines in October 2019, and incorporates activities aimed at addressing some of the human rights and legislative recommendations of the Committee.

In Indonesia, we are part of the **UN Peace Hub** – an internal coordination platform under the Resident Coordinator’s leadership that convenes eight other UN entities.

The Peace Hub ensures a coherent and collaborative approach to counter-terrorism cooperation, stemming from the recommendations following CTED's follow-up visit in 2019.

These include support for the implementation of national action plans on prevention and countering violent extremism, working with law enforcement and correction authorities, as well as countering the financing of terrorism.

We have also increased our presence in the region, deploying national and international staff to Bangkok, Dhaka, Jakarta and Manila to advance our work on human rights, API/PNR and preventing and countering violent extremism.

These efforts will also help to facilitate coordination and coherence to advance the implementation of Security Council requirements on counter-terrorism in the region.

Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNOCT values its cooperation with CTED, which has been instrumental in enhancing our delivery of tailored capacity-building support in South and South-East Asia.

We look forward to strengthening this important partnership to address the counter-terrorism needs of Member States in the region.

Thank you.