

**Meeting of the Security Council on the
Seventeenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by
Da'esh to international peace and security and the range of United
Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the
threat**

25 August 2023

Statement of Ms. Natalia Gherman, Executive Director, CTED

Madam President, excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

My sincere thanks to the members of this Council for the opportunity to brief you on the 17th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for his overview and to commend both the UNOCT and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team for the close collaboration in formulating the report.

Madam President,

As the 17th report makes clear, Da'esh remains agile and ambitious, despite its diminished territorial control.

In my briefing, I will highlight four key trends from the reporting period.

***First*, terrorist activity has continued to occur predominantly in the context of existing conflict.**

A fragmented geopolitical landscape, including the presence of terrorist groups operating across multiple regions, the emergence of new conflict areas, and growing complexities in armed conflict situations have created additional challenges for Member States and made the resolution of conflicts more difficult.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, this trend requires a comprehensive approach that integrates a wilful pursuit of peace, while also addressing the root causes of violence and conditions that may be conducive to radicalization to terrorism, rather than continuing solely with over-securitised responses in countering terrorism.

***Second*, the report welcomes the continued efforts of Member States to repatriate its citizens from the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, including some for the first time, which is a commendable development.**

We must acknowledge the complex challenges Member States face in addressing the dire situation in the camps in north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, especially with regards to women and children associated with Da'esh foreign terrorist fighters.

At the same time, we must also recall the responsibility of Member States to bring terrorists to justice, and to demonstrate international cooperation in efforts to do so. This also requires whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches to the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters.

The United Nations continues to assist Member States who are facing the challenges related to the return of their nationals, including through the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq Third Country National Returnees. Through that framework, the United Nations is providing support on legal protection for children, security and accountability for adults, rehabilitation and transitional services, and reintegration.

***Third*, the Da'esh operational presence in parts of Africa continues to evolve.**

It is therefore essential for the United Nations to provide tailored and comprehensive support to African Member States to boost their capacity in addressing underlying conditions conducive to terrorism, and strengthening criminal justice responses to terrorism, border management responses, and efforts to counter the financing of terrorism.

In this reporting period, United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities strengthened their partnerships with some African countries to respond to evolving threats, particularly in and around East Africa and West Africa, especially in the Sahel.

Entities' efforts focused on countering the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, responding to the nexus between organized crime and terrorism, preventing terrorist travel, protecting vulnerable targets, and mainstreaming gender and human rights-based responses to terrorism.

This year, CTED, acting on behalf of the Counter Terrorism Committee, completed its first comprehensive assessment visits to Benin in March and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July. The visits focused on issues such as the terrorism threat, countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism, criminal justice responses,

countering terrorism financing, law enforcement measures and border management, international cooperation, and human rights and gender dimensions.

***Fourth*, the United Nations has stepped up its efforts on holding Da'esh accountable for its crimes.**

In this regard, CTED continued to assess criminal justice frameworks to enhance accountability for terrorist acts in accordance with relevant Council resolutions and international standards.

CTED partnered with the United Nations Team of Experts on Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict to explore criminal justice avenues for sexual and gender-based violence when committed by a designated terrorist group or with terrorist intent.

Drawing from practitioners' experiences in the field and the perspectives of civil society, it was clear that only through accountability and justice can we begin to address the fear and devastation that terrorism inflicts on individuals, communities, and nations.

Madam President, excellencies,

To successfully counter the complex threat of Da'esh and other terrorist groups, we need to learn from past experience, while we are identifying and addressing new and emerging threats.

In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Committee and CTED continue to work with our partners to explore how new technological tools and applications, such as generative AI, machine-learning systems, and other emerging cyber-based platforms, can be used to identify threats and enhance States' counter-terrorism capabilities.

Following the adoption of the Delhi Declaration, CTED has been consulting UN partners, think tanks, civil society, academia, and the private sector to develop a set of non-binding guiding principles for Member States.

The principles will assist Member States in preventing, detecting and disrupting the use of emerging financial technologies; information and communications technologies; and unmanned aircraft systems for terrorist purposes.

To further support Member States' efforts to counter the financing of terrorism, CTED also released two thematic summary assessments

of gaps and areas requiring further action to implement Security Council resolutions related to terrorist financing.

These assessments are aimed at informing the design of targeted technical assistance and capacity-building programmes by UNOCT and other implementing agencies and are accessible on CTED's website.

Madam President,

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that it is critical that our counter terrorism measures are part of a comprehensive approach to addressing the threat of terrorism.

Our efforts must be evidence-based, tailored, age and gender-responsive, and human rights-compliant.

They must devote additional and sufficient resources towards prevention.

In addition, we will continue to engage a diverse range of stakeholders – including academia and research partners, community and religious leaders, civil society organizations, women and youth representatives, and the private sector.

Madam President,

In conclusion, let me reiterate CTED's commitment to the successful implementation of its mandate, under the policy guidance of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and in support of Member States' efforts to countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Thank you, Madam President.