

Joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh) Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)

“The nexus between international terrorism and organized crime”

*Friday, 26 April 2019,
United Nations Headquarters, New York, Conference Room 2*

Concept note

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 resolution 2462 (2019) as well as in its presidential statement of 8 May 2018 ([S/PRST/2018/9](#)). The Council has also referred to the links between terrorist activities and specific forms of crime, including trafficking in persons (Council resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017)); drug trafficking (presidential statements of 24 February 2010 (S/PRST/2010/4), 25 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/16), and 18 December 2013 (S/PRST/2013/22,); trafficking in firearms (Council resolution 2370 (2017)), and illicit trade in market oil, other natural resources, and extortion (Council resolutions 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015) and 2368 (2017)).

2. The General Assembly, also noting existing, growing or potential links between transnational organized crime and terrorism in some cases, has adopted the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocols (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, and Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition) with a view to promoting international cooperation in addressing those links.

3. The Security Council also recognizes the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as the principal policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and as the governing body for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in those fields. The General Assembly has adopted resolutions originating from the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice that promote consideration of the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism, in some cases, particularly in the delivery of technical assistance, including in its resolutions 72/194 (2017), 70/177 (2015), and 68/187 (2013).

4. On 8 October 2018, the Counter-Terrorism Committee held an open briefing to help strengthen understanding of the nexus as it pertains to criminal activities linked to trafficking in

persons, drugs, and arms and to initiate discussion of related contextual factors, vulnerabilities, and possible responses. The open briefing was organized by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), acting in close cooperation with UNODC and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).

5. In its eighth report on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2019/103), the Secretary-General recalled that addressing the potential nexus between international terrorism and transnational organized crime remained a priority for United Nations entities and Member States. The Secretary-General also referred to the connection between the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara with transnational crime (including the smuggling of spare automobile parts and illegal mining) and stressed that West Africa's artisanal gold-mining sector could be vulnerable to exploitation for terrorism-financing purposes. The Secretary-General further noted that cells of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) were expected to support themselves through a variety of activities, including extortion, kidnapping for ransom or other criminal activity, and that radicalization of criminals in the prison system, notably in Europe, remained a significant challenge.

6. The twenty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertaking and entities (S/2019/50) referred to instances of overlap between international terrorism and transnational organized crime. It noted that, although there was limited evidence of a systemic nexus between the above terrorist groups and transnational organized crime, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team had received information concerning the involvement of terrorist affiliates in cross-border criminal activity, notably in the Sahel. Terrorist groups operating in that region were involved in smuggling and related criminal activities, such as kidnapping for ransom and trafficking in narcotics, weapons and gasoline. The ninth report of the Analytical and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan (S/2018/466) highlighted that, in 2017, the total opium production and Taliban income from the narcotics trade had increased dramatically and noted that the Taliban were directly involved in the production, processing and trafficking of virtually all heroin produced in, and exported from Afghanistan. Even though the international narcotics trade remained the Taliban's main source of income, they were also involved in the illegal extraction of natural resources and extortion from commercial mining operations.

7. The interactions and synergies between terrorists and criminal groups may take a number of forms, including simple coexistence in the same territory, the development of ad hoc alliances based on a common interest, and the convergence or merging of activities. Research and cases suggest that one of the main forms of interaction is the ad hoc opportunistic alliance. Even though terrorist groups and criminal groups pursue different goals, they may share certain methods, including the strategic use of violence and recruitment from among the same pool of people. Terrorist groups may engage directly in criminal activities, or benefit indirectly from them, by imposing taxes on criminal groups operating in terrorist-controlled areas. Furthermore, they may rely on criminal groups for the provision of services, including the procurement of firearms, the counterfeiting of identity documents, and the use of trafficking and smuggling routes to relocate from conflict zones. Even in regions where the nexus between terrorism and organized crime may

not be as relevant, there appear to be potential links between certain other forms of criminality and terrorism perpetrated within a State or neighbourhood. Thus, it may be appropriate to investigate terrorism cases by using or adapting methods that have proven successful in cases of transnational organized crime.

II. Objectives of joint special meeting

8. In its presidential statement of 8 May 2018 (S/PRST/2018/9), the Security 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, subregional organizations and forums to continue conducting research to better understand the nature and scope of the links that may exist between terrorists and transnational organized criminals”. Furthermore, the Council requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Committee pursuant to Council resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) to hold a special joint meeting, within 12 months, on the nexus between international terrorism and transnational organized crime. Building on the outcomes of the open briefing, the proposed joint special meeting will address regional specificities, as well as strategies, responses, and lessons learned in addressing the linkages, and underline the need for strengthened domestic, regional and international cooperation in that regard.

III. Format of discussions

9. The panellists will include representatives of Member States, international and regional organizations, academic institutions, and member entities of CTED’s Global Research Network. The introductory session will provide an overview of the types of interaction between organized crime and terrorism. Individual terrorists and terrorist groups may be involved in different types of crimes — from petty crimes to international illicit traffics — and establish relations with both transnational criminal groups and local or individual criminals. As such interactions can take many forms, it is proposed, for the purpose of the joint special meeting, to consider a broad definition of “crime” in order to facilitate comprehensive discussion and analysis of different regional contexts.

10. The introductory session will be followed by four regional panel discussions, focusing on, respectively, Latin America, West Africa, Europe, and Asia (Central, South and South-East). Each session will begin with a general presentation on the occurrence of the linkages in the region, with a view to providing an overview of (i) any identified form of interaction between terrorist groups and criminal groups; and (ii) terrorists’ direct or indirect involvement in criminal activities. Panellists will then discuss the experiences and lessons learned of one or more Member States or an international or regional organization, in order to detect and address the terror/crime linkages. Each regional discussion will include a question-and-answer session.

11. The final panel discussion will focus on existing initiatives in this area, as well as on possible elements of integrated and operational responses to the nexus (including through the establishment of an appropriate criminal-justice framework), the law enforcement response, and ways to enhance information-sharing by agencies responsible for counter-terrorism and organized crime (including those responsible for anti-money-laundering/counter-financing of terrorism).

IV. Date and venue

12. The joint special meeting will be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, in Conference Room 2, on Friday, 26 April 2019, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

V. Expected outcomes

13. A Chairs' summary, highlighting the main points and conclusions of each session, will be circulated shortly after the joint special meeting.