



United Nations Security Council
Counter-Terrorism Committee
Executive Directorate (CTED)

**High-Level International Conference
“International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation
to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists”**

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**Statement of
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Excellencies, distinguished participants,

I wish to thank the organizers for inviting me to address today’s important Conference, hosted by the Government of Tajikistan in the beautiful city of Dushanbe.

The focus of the conference on border security and management is of paramount importance for Central Asia. Its immediate proximity to regions marked by terrorist activity, including the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, illicit drugs and arms trafficking, makes Central Asia vulnerable to security challenges and places the region at the forefront of the international fight against terrorism.

The recent report of the UN Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da’esh to international peace and security underlines notable progress made in Central Asia in strengthening international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation and coordination.

There is no doubt that strengthening border security should become one of the top priorities for Central Asian Member States, as thousands of individuals from Central Asia previously travelled to the conflict zones of the Middle East to join the ranks of foreign terrorist fighters, where they acquired the skills necessary to carry out terrorist attacks, and to incite and recruit others to commit terrorist acts. The return of such individuals to their countries of origin or relocation to third countries poses new challenges to Member States.

Border protection and management in Central Asia continues to be hampered by porous border, insufficient resources and poor infrastructure.

Developments in neighbouring Afghanistan have also raised global concerns about the possibility of it becoming a safe haven for Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups with ties to the Central Asian region and beyond. Multiple reports suggest that ISIL-Khorasan Province has increased its presence in northern and eastern Afghanistan. This terrorist group includes fighters from Central Asia, who have reportedly increased activities in the north.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (or “CTED”) has for many years been engaged in constructive dialogue with the Governments of Central Asian States on their counter-terrorism efforts, under the policy guidance of the Committee and under the mandate of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Firstly, acting on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, we conduct expert assessments of States’ implementation of the relevant Council resolutions.

In view of the strategic importance of the Central Asian region in the fight against terrorism, some States of the region have been visited more than once. CTED has maintained a good counter-terrorism profile of these States.

Secondly, our technical expertise enables us to work on a broad spectrum of thematic issues. They include law enforcement and border management; counter-financing of terrorism; legal and criminal justice; and countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Across all of these issues, we ensure that measures to be taken by States be human rights compliant and gender-sensitive.

Working closely with UNOCT and other UN partners, CTED has also led the national capacity-building consultations under the “All-of-UN” umbrella to Central Asian States on various aspects of counter-terrorism, such as denying terrorists’ access to small arms

and light weapons, increase the use of biometrics and introduce API/PNR systems to strengthen border control and management.

Third, CTED has an important role in facilitating the provision of technical assistance to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism. We do it based on our knowledge of Member States' implementation progress, shortfalls and new challenges from our engagements and assessment visits.

In this area, Central Asian Member States benefit from the Joint Plan of Action (JPoA) to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was designed to ensure the delivery of tailored counter-terrorism technical assistance for capacity-building in accordance with the Strategy's four pillars.

Over the 10 years of the JPoA's existence, CTED has continued to ensure that the counter-terrorism technical assistance provided to Central Asian States under the Plan is fully aligned with the recommendations of the Committee's country assessment visits, including in the area of addressing the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon in a human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive manner.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Our work also focuses on promoting the global dissemination of effective practices.

In a number of resolutions, the Security Council has called on Member States to take action to address the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. Notably, the Council called on States to develop and implement *comprehensive* and *tailored* prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR) strategies for suspected terrorists, including returning foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members.

I would like to stress that the Council noted that comprehensive and tailored PRR strategies must be developed in accordance with international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law, and be age-sensitive and gender-responsive.

Many Central Asian States were among the first to respond and show their leadership in bringing their nationals back home from the conflict zones, particularly women and children. In doing so, they have often showcased the “whole-of-society” and “whole-of-government” approaches to the rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children, meaningfully involving civil society and different agencies and ministries within Government.

Their practices have generated valuable experience for other Member States who are facing the return of their nationals. We continue to be concerned at the dire situation faced by individuals – the majority of whom are women and children with presumed links to Da’esh – who continue to be held in camps and detention facilities with limited access to essential services, due process, and fair trial safeguards.

United Nations entities have continued to promote the safe, voluntary, and human rights- and gender- compliant return of foreign nationals from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

In this regard, the work of the “Global Framework of UN Support to Third Country Returnees from Syria and Iraq”, which is also being implemented in many Central Asian states, represents an important resource for Member States.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

The security threats posed by terrorist groups, and notably by foreign terrorist fighters, underline the critical need for states of the region and beyond to strengthen national, regional, and international cooperation in countering terrorism and to enhance border security.

I commend the States of Central Asia for their continued political will to work together at the regional level in addressing these threats.

I assure you that CTED will continue to remain engaged in the ongoing dialogue with States of the region and and continue its excellent cooperation with its partners within

and outside the United Nations to achieve our common objective, which will be safer world, free from terrorism.

Thank you.