

Security Council meeting on the eighteenth report of the Secretary-General 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

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Statement by

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Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to brief the Security Council on the eighteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh and on United Nations efforts to support Member States in addressing the threat.

I would like to thank the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, headed by Under-Secretary-General Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, led by Mr. Justin Hustwitt, and all our other United Nations partners for their

close collaboration with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) on the report.

I also wish to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Mr. Jürgen Stock, and thank him for the close partnership that INTERPOL has maintained with CTED over the years.

Madam President,

The transnational and decentralized character of the threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates continues to demand a nimble international strategy focussing on multilateralism, information-sharing, and cooperation across borders.

Da'esh and its affiliates are becoming more ingrained in parts of the African continent.

They are exploiting the political instability and expanding their radius of influence, their operations and their territorial control in the Sahel, with growing concerns for coastal West Africa.

The African continent now accounts for approximately half of terrorist acts worldwide, with central Sahel accounting for about 25 per cent of such attacks.

It is a priority of the United Nations' counter-terrorism architecture to support African Member States and partners in addressing these trends.

Meanwhile, enduring challenges persist in the Middle East and South-East and Central Asia, with indications that Da'esh is attempting to resurge in those subregions as well.

CTED remains committed to supporting all United Nations Member States in countering the threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates, including their attempts to regroup.

On behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, CTED assesses and facilitates technical assistance delivery for the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism.

Based on our recommendations and analysis, several initiatives have been implemented by United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism

Coordination Compact entities to address the threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates.

These initiatives include supporting the prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals in a human-rights compliant, gender-responsive and age-appropriate manner.

Additionally, they involve developing technical assistance plans in support of Governments' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, such as the one recently adopted in Benin.

United Nations entities are also engaged in strengthening States' capacity to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons, protect vulnerable targets, and disrupt terrorist travel under the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme.

In addition, United Nations partners act to stem terrorism financing and Da'esh's use of information and communication technologies, develop counter-terrorist narratives, strengthen the resilience of societies, and support the reconstruction of cultural heritage sites.

Madam President,

Among all this important work, I wish to highlight two areas of priority for CTED.

***First*, addressing the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.**

Incidents around the world demonstrate that terrorists, including Da'esh, increasingly use unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for intelligence gathering and attacks.

These groups' sophistication in producing small-sized and inexpensive weaponized UAS is increasing too.

To address this growing concern, in December, the Counter-Terrorism Committee adopted the Abu Dhabi Guiding Principles.

These non-binding principles are intended to guide Member States in their responses to the threats posed by the use of UAS for terrorist purposes, including against critical infrastructure and soft targets, and provide a framework for United Nations entities to design appropriate capacity-building initiatives.

This year, the Counter-Terrorism Committee also expects to adopt non-binding guiding principles on preventing, detecting and disrupting the use for terrorist purposes of new and emerging financial technologies, as well as information and communications technologies.

In light of the rapid technological advances in these fields, public-private partnerships are essential to counter the use of technologies for terrorist purposes.

This is a key findings of CTED’s recent analytical brief on “Establishing effective public-private partnerships on countering the financing of terrorism”, launched last week.

Second, ensuring accountability and justice.

This year will mark 10 years since the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014) on the prosecution, reintegration and rehabilitation of foreign terrorist fighters.

Bringing terrorists to justice is an important commitment of all United Nations partners who have continued supporting

accountability efforts for the crimes committed by Da’esh in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as in the Sahel and Maghreb, and in Europe.

The recommendations and analysis that CTED provides to Member States have also increasingly focused on ensuring accountability and justice for terrorist-related crimes, by applying the relevant legal frameworks, and to prosecute all acts of violence committed by terrorists.

The prosecution rate for sexual and gender-based violence crimes remains low despite these types of crimes being a recurring tactic of terrorist groups, including Da’esh and its affiliates, as we have seen in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Nigeria.

Last November, CTED published a landmark report entitled “Towards meaningful accountability for sexual and gender-based violence linked to terrorism”.

We are grateful to Switzerland for their support in the completion of this important initiative.

Madam President,

As the threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates evolves and spreads, CTED will continue to cooperate closely with Member States, United Nations entities, international and regional and subregional organizations, civil society, and the private sector.

I wish to reiterate the full commitment of my Office to actively support this Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee in combatting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Thank you, Madam President.