

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)
Committee on South and South-East Asia

14 February 2022, 10.00 a.m.-1.00 p.m. EST (15:00 – 16:00 (VIE) / 9:00-10:00 (NY))

10.10-11.10 Session I: Introductory panel on United Nations dialogue with Member States of South and South-East Asia

Mr. Masood Karimipour, Chief, Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC

I am pleased to report that UNODC has established partnerships with and has been delivering terrorism prevention technical assistance to South Asian and South-East Asian states, thanks to our field-based presence and engagements on the ground.

We also continue to enjoy excellent partnership with the CTC and contributing to one another's expertise. One way we do this is by regularly contributing to CTC country visits, including those in South Asia and South-East Asia, such as those to Maldives, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

Specifically, the CTED assessments inform the development of some of our CT programming and in turn, we have been able to work with Member States in responding to CTED's recommendations.

Importantly, the need for technical assistance remains, as the terrorism threat continues to evolve, including due to the pandemic.

According to the recent report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (S/2022/83), while some Member States in South-East Asia have indeed reported successes in disrupting ISIL- and Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorism, concern nevertheless remains due to "the potential creation of a safe haven in Afghanistan for terrorist activity."

The report also points out that the ongoing covid19 pandemic, while on the one-hand, impeding cross-border travel and thus decreasing threats arising from flows of fighters and wider terrorist travel, on the other hand, it also continues to increase opportunities for online recruitment and radicalization.

Fortunately, the complementarities and synergies between CTED and UNODC serve to enhance the effectiveness of technical assistance being provided to countries in the region.

Joint CTED/UNODC Programming in South Asia and South-East Asia

One vehicle through which this is done is through joint programming.

For example, UNODC, in collaboration with CTED and OCT, continues to partner with the Government of Indonesia on the joint project "Strengthening supervision and

community-based treatment for rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-terrorist offenders by probation and parole officers”.

The project is based on findings from CTED’s assessment visit to Indonesia conducted on behalf of the CTC in 2019.

The project aims to enhance the management and community supervision of terrorists and violent extremist offenders in Indonesia, in support of their successful disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration into communities.

We look forward to continuing to partner with CTED and OCT on Phase III of the programme.

Another example of CTED’s and UNODC’s partnership and joint programming is the UN Global Initiative on Handling Electronic Evidence, which also includes the International Association of Prosecutors. Although this project is global in scope, it has included, and in some cases applied to, South Asian and South-east Asian countries.

This initiative has informed the development of numerous practical tools and resources, including the Electronic Evidence Hub on our online SHERLOC portal, as well as a guide specifically tailored to Pakistan (“*Practical Guide to the Handling of Electronic Evidence across Borders*”).

Countries in the region also continue to participate in the initiative including in the process of updating the (2007) “*UNODC Model Law on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters*”.

Just last year, we also launched - together with CTED – *the Data Disclosure Framework (DDF)* - a practical tool which outlines practices developed by international service providers in responding to data requests submitted by foreign criminal justice authorities.

In addition, under the framework of a project for Sri Lanka in 2020, the CTED South Asia Regional Toolkit for Judges was used as a foundation for technical assistance. Together, we worked on tailoring the Toolkit - developed by CTED - for select countries.

The toolkit – which was developed following the dramatic rise in terrorist activities across the globe, including in South Asia - focuses on the region as a whole and provides practice-oriented guidance on the foundations for effective adjudication, judicial management of proceedings and international cooperation in terrorism matters.

Furthermore, under the framework of the UN Counter Terrorist Travel Programme led by UNOCT, we, along with other implementing partners, including CTED, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Office of Information and Computer Technology (OICT,) and INTERPOL, have been supporting Member States to build capacity to detect and counter terrorists and serious criminals by using passenger information.

In the context of this initiative, UNODC contributed to the legal and operational sessions of the national consultations led by CTED and coordinated with UNOCT, in Maldives (2020), Philippines (2020) and Sri Lanka (2019).

In the case of the Philippines, UNODC staff who are based in the region supported the Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Name Record (API/PNR) deep dive mission and the development of a roadmap for the UN CT Travel Programme, in 2020.

UNODC assistance in South Asia and South-East Asia

In addition to joint CTED-UNODC joint programming and tool development, I would like to briefly highlight a few select examples of other assistance provided by UNODC in the region.

Recently, we have developed two regional online networks of PVE practitioners.

The first, for South Asian countries (SAN-PVE), was recently launched in December. It is the first of its kind in the region and includes Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The second, for South-East Asian countries (SEAN-PVE), is to be launched next month. Its development has been coordinated with representatives of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The two platforms will facilitate regional cooperation and sharing of knowledge and best practices, and development, or implementation of, national PVE frameworks.

I am also pleased to report that among the over 60 evidence-based tools and publications that TPB has produced, there are some which are specifically tailored to South Asia and South-East Asian Member States.

For example, we now have a training module on the *“Investigation, prosecution and adjudication of complex terrorist cases in South and Southeast Asia”*. In addition, very recently we completed another one on *“gender dimensions of criminal justice responses to terrorism”*, tailored specifically to the national contexts of Bangladesh and the Maldives.

Furthermore, UNODC has also supported the development and/or implementation of National Action Plans on Preventing and/or Countering Violent Extremism in Maldives, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. This has been accomplished through the technical assistance UNODC provided through consultative meetings and capacity building workshops.

More specifically, Maldives adopted the National Action Plan on P/CVE in 2020, following assistance provided by the UN, including UNODC.

UNODC has also worked with Member States to develop broader counter-terrorism action plans, such as for Sri Lanka. Immediately following the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks that killed 269 people and injured many more, UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch responded quickly. Based on urgent consultations with the UN Resident Coordinator, the national leadership, and various stakeholders in Colombo a broad programme of support and a national Plan of Action terrorism prevention was developed and implemented, even during Covid restrictions.

The project in partnership with INTERPOL, aimed at building institutional capacity to effectively prevent, detect, investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate terrorism cases in Sri Lanka, in line with international legal instruments, norms, and standards. UNDP also contributed through other related pillars.

The feedback we have received from national counterparts regarding the impact of UNODC's assistance has been positive. The official investigation of the Easter Sunday attacks have resulted in the prosecution of two dozen individuals whose cases are currently being adjudicated in the courts of Sri Lanka.

In another example of UNODC's timely response to the needs of the Member States, when there was an Improvised Explosive Device used in an assassination attempt on the life of a political leader in the Maldives in May 2021, UNODC was able to offer immediate on-the-ground technical assistance through expertise on the investigation of IED explosives.

UNODC also works on the national level with the countries in South-East Asia. For example, we are working with the Philippines to build capacity in countering the financing of terrorism, providing legislative assistance, developing good practices for evidence collection, enhancing border security and responding to Foreign Terrorist Fighter movements and related illicit trafficking flows.

In UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch, we pride ourselves in delivering concrete, timely and impactful technical assistance when Member States call for UN support.

In closing, I would like to reiterate UNODC's readiness and commitment to support our Member States in South Asia and South-East Asia, in line with CTED recommendations.