

**Virtual open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on
“The threat of terrorism in Latin America and the Caribbean”**

Monday, 14 December 2020, 10.00 a.m.–11.30 a.m. (EST)

Opening remarks of

**Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninx,
Executive Director, CTED**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Allow me to begin by thanking our partners for participating in today’s open briefing.

As the world continues to be confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic, the global terrorist threat continues unabated.

Just like COVID-19, terrorism knows no boundaries.

The threat to Latin America and the Caribbean stems from a range of sources, including lone actors targeting public places and sophisticated attacks on critical infrastructure.

And the chilling prospect of terrorists trafficking in or using chemical, biological or radioactive weapons cannot be discounted.

Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), the States of Latin America and the Caribbean have made considerable progress in strengthening their

criminal-justice and operational capacities to detect, disrupt and prosecute terrorist networks.

Over two-thirds of the region's States have recently adopted counter-terrorism legislation in compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 19 international counter-terrorism instruments.

A number of States have also enhanced intelligence-sharing partnerships and cooperation to combat terrorism financing and trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

And all CARICOM Member States are now compliant with advance passenger information requirements.

I commend the work of individual Member States, as well as those of our United Nations and regional partners that have provided them with critical support over the past two decades, particularly within the frameworks of CARICOM and OAS/CICTE.

However, the terrorism landscape has changed significantly since the adoption of resolution 1373.

Terrorists are determined — possibly more determined than ever in the current pandemic context — to exploit any vulnerabilities in our counter-terrorism strategies and systems.

In many States, weak investigative and forensic capacities and limited financial and human resources continue to impede progress.

The widespread availability of terrorist propaganda online during lengthy periods of confinement remains worrying.

And foreign terrorist fighters may take advantage of porous maritime borders to relocate or return to the region.

We are also aware that the pandemic may exacerbate inequalities and social isolation, thereby undermining resilience against terrorist recruitment.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Now is the time for us to marshal all our resources to prevent the current health and economic crises (which have taken such a devastating toll on the region) from spiralling into a security crisis.

But we must also ensure that our responses remain tailored, gender-sensitive and respect human rights and the rule of law.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), let us take this opportunity to redouble our efforts to strengthen multilateral and regional collaboration, build new partnerships, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

The victims of terrorism deserve nothing less.

Thank you.