



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

## **Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

### **Open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on Central Asia:**

**2 July 2018, CR4**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra of Peru, in his capacity as Chairman, Ms. Michèle Coninx, Executive Director, CTED, and members of the Counter-Terrorism Committee for inviting me to the Open Briefing on Central Asia of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. It is a pleasure to see here my old friend SRSR Gherman.

Central Asia and the wider region currently face increasing security challenges. One of them is return of FTF to the region. It's a point of very strong concern of international community including the leaders of Central Asian states.

Central Asian countries bordering Afghanistan also carry an important responsibility to contribute to cross-border cooperation to ensure secure borders, as well as integrated regional approaches to economic and social development.

These challenges need to be addressed comprehensively, in the interest of the region and the rest of the world.

Excellencies,

Five countries of this region have adopted with support of UN the Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia.

It was the first regional initiative of its kind in the world. Still the only. Offers are in stage of preparation.

Regional cooperation guided by the Joint Plan of Action has enabled the countries to make good progress on cross-border issues such as countering the financing of terrorism, enhancing border security, fostering dialogue with religious institutions and leaders, and highlighting the role of the media in addressing terrorism and violent extremism.

Last June in Ashgabat, Secretary-General António Guterres chaired a High-level Dialogue on Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia.

This event gathered leaders from five countries to look back on what has been achieved and look ahead to how we can enhance our cooperation.

As a follow-up to the request from the Central Asian countries in addressing new challenges faced by the region, my office, together with the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Ashgabat (UNRCCA) and other regional partners, have jointly developed a new regional project to contribute to the comprehensive approach in preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism in the region. This new project is considered the third phase of the JPoA.

The initiation of this new phase includes a new level of cooperation between OCT and CTED.

On 21 December 2017 unanimously adopting resolution 2395 (2017) the Council stressed the importance of strong coordination between the CTED and UNOCT in engaging with Member States, as well as with all other relevant organizations, to improve the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

A number of recommendations from CTED's assessments for Central Asia have been incorporated into the third phase of the JPoA including:

- 1) Strengthening sub-regional and international mechanisms for cooperation and exchange of information and intelligence;
- 2) Addressing, in collaboration with communities and civil society organizations, the grievances that fuel violent extremism and radicalization, including human rights violations, lack of transparency and corruption, and socio-political alienation;
- 3) Enhancing the development and implementation of comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for persons involved in terrorist activity (including returning FTFs and their families) and de-radicalization of prison inmates.

Excellencies,

I would like to highlight that three concrete activities have been implemented since February in line with CTED's recommendations.

On 23 February, UNCCT – a part of UNOCT and UNRCCA jointly organized a regional coordination meeting in Istanbul. This meeting was the first regional coordination meeting since the creation of the JPoA in Central Asia. 14 practitioners from eight regional organizations shared their plans for activities on counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism in their respective countries.

On 30 April, together with Ms. Coninx, I participated in a High-Level Meeting and launch of the third phase of the JPoA in Ashgabat, which included representatives from all five Central Asian countries.

The third activity was held on 21-22 May in Astana, Kazakhstan, organized by UNRCCA and UNOCT/UNCCT, which provided an opportunity to discuss drivers of violent extremism and terrorism in the region, allowed for the exchange of good practices and lessons learned in implementing Pillar 1 of the JPoA in Central Asia at both national and regional levels.

Over the coming months, planned activities include providing trainings on border security and management in the context of stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, countering the use of the Internet for propaganda and recruitment purposes by terrorists and tackling narcotics trafficking as a means to finance terrorism through intensified cooperation. Other capacity-building activities will include the support for the management of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) and the prevention of radicalization in prisons in accordance with human rights.

Finally, in order to meet the rapid growth of expectation of Central Asian countries, we are also exploring the option to establish a regional capacity building and training centre.

Building a strong partnership between UNOCT and CTED is a key part of these broader efforts to enhance international counter- terrorism cooperation. The implementation of the third phase of JPoA in Central Asia has set an example for closer practical cooperation between our two entities.

Thank you.