



VIRTUAL COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

6-10 JULY 2020

Remarks of Ms. Ghada Fathi Waly, UNODC Executive Director
CT Week: Webinar I: Post COVID-19 World: Contours, Pivot Points and
Benefits of Multilateral Collaboration
VTC, 6 July 2020, 16:00

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

My thanks to USG Voronkov and my fellow panellists. It is an honour to join you for this important and interesting discussion.

Even as we meet today, the contours and pivot points of the post-pandemic world are still being defined, and the COVID-19 crisis is far from over.

But one aspect that we can be sure of is that the post-COVID-19 world will be a poorer world, where inequalities threaten to cast a larger shadow over efforts to achieve sustainable development, peace and security, and to hinder the shared fight against terrorism.

Between 71 and 100 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty, according to the World Bank.



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In the first month of the crisis, ILO estimates that the earnings of the nearly 1.6 billion workers in the informal economy declined by 60 per cent.

Almost 77 percent of the world's young workers are employed in the informal sector, unable to do their jobs remotely and with no access to social protection.

A poorer and less protected world is one that is more vulnerable to exploitation – by organized crime groups, by the profiteering and the corrupt, and by terrorists.

With youth and marginalized groups facing limited prospects for jobs or other opportunities, terrorists will certainly seek to capitalize on their frustrations.

A 2019 study by the World Bank examining data from IS recruits identified lack of economic opportunities in the form of unemployment as a key driver of radicalization.

Online propaganda from al-Qaeda and IS has already incorporated the virus into narratives aimed at recruiting followers or inciting violence.

To better protect our post-COVID world from the threat of terrorism, we need to advance integrated, whole-of-society responses that on the one hand, address root causes and decrease vulnerabilities, and that on the other hand address linkages with crime, so we can stop the flow of recruits as well as the flow of terrorist funding.



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First and foremost, that means building back better by redoubling efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, to address multidimensional poverty and improve social protection.

Greater support needs to be channelled to the developing world, where recovery from the pandemic will be hardest and where the youth population is growing fastest.

Secondly, comprehensive development responses must be coupled with effective law enforcement action to identify and disrupt links between terrorist networks and transnational organized crime.

Terrorists generate funds from illicit trafficking in goods, drugs, natural resources and antiquities, as well as kidnapping for ransom, extortion and more.

UNODC's Global Firearms Arms Study, which will be launched next week, identifies ways terrorists benefit from cooperation with organized crime, including through financial support as well as provision of training, safe havens and weapons.

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Only last week, Italian authorities reported seizing 14 tonnes of counterfeit Captagon pills, with an estimated value of one billion euros, believed to be manufactured by IS in Syria.

The 84 million pills, which may be a world-record seizure of illicit amphetamines, appears to be an alarming escalation in attempts by IS to generate funds, and demands urgent international action.

UNODC has broad mandates dealing with organized crime, terrorism, drugs and corruption, which has enabled our Office to provide comprehensive technical assistance to strengthen Member State responses across the criminal justice chain.

Such action includes securing borders, airports and seaports against illegal transit of persons and cargo; building specialized capacities to investigate money laundering and use of cryptocurrencies for terrorist financing; and strengthening the skills of prosecutors and judicial authorities to bring perpetrators to justice.

UNODC has embedded trainers into coast guards in the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, providing direct support to Member States, and helping to disrupt the heroin flows that support terrorism in Afghanistan; the charcoal trade that supports Al Shabaab in Somalia; and the flow of arms between terrorist groups in East Africa and the Middle East.

Last year, UNODC supported Member States to carry out 800 seizures of illicit goods in the same stream of global commerce used by terrorists for trafficking.



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The international community has increasingly recognized the threat of the terrorism - organized crime nexus, as seen by UN Security Council Resolution 2482, adopted in 2019.

UNODC is currently working with OCT on the Report of the Secretary General on SCR 2482, which will be presented in August and will highlight a number of good practices being implemented by Member States to address the linkages between terrorism and organized crime.

As one example, the Multi-Agency Task Force for the MENA region supported by UNODC since 2017 facilitates the exchange of information between law enforcement and judicial focal points.

Through this mechanism, a terrorist attack was intercepted in 2018, while a terrorist suspect was successfully extradited last year.

COVID-19 lockdown measures and related travel and meeting restrictions have complicated such information exchange and support, increasing the need for agile responses drawing on available technologies.



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UNODC has responded with innovative delivery of legislative assistance and capacity building, including through our online Counter-Terrorism Learning Platform, which has more than 3,000 members from 135 countries.

More than 300 officials have been trained online since the start of the pandemic, on cross-border requests for electronic evidence and other topics. Forthcoming courses will address open-source intelligence and social media investigations.

The platform also offers a secure online space for prosecutors, investigators and the judiciary to address matters related to electronic evidence in terrorism and organized crime cases.

Finally, our counter-terrorism responses in the post-COVID world must put a stronger focus on prevention.

Prevention should most of all target youth, including by countering the use of the internet for exploitation or recruitment.

UNODC is also using sports-based programmes to address risk factors and build youth resilience.

We have developed a technical guide on preventing violent extremism through sports, and we are supporting Member States and civil society groups to share their experiences with sports-based programmes.

Victim-centred approaches are another critical part of prevention.



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Victims and survivors of terrorism need and deserve support in their own right. They also represent our most important allies in countering terrorist narratives, to prevent people from being recruited or victimized by terrorists in future.

To further strengthen Member States capacities, UNODC is working with OCT and the Inter-Parliamentary Union on model provisions to assist victims of terrorism, including through greater coordination between law enforcement, relevant agencies and civil society.

Prevention efforts also need to enable the engagement and leadership of women, who are often targeted by terrorists, including through sexual and gender-based violence.

Women and girls are also recruited for operations, and some have committed offences while being victims of coercion and terror themselves.

Criminal justice must be gender-sensitive in order to address these complex dynamics.

UNODC has published a “Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism”, and is now assisting governments to develop measures to respond to specific challenges facing women and girls, including stigma and discrimination, as well as to support effective rehabilitation and reintegration.



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Governments also need to take steps to improve representation of women in policing and criminal justice, to increase access to services and build community trust, which is crucial to effective terrorism prevention.

Assistance must further address prevention of radicalization to violence in prison settings, which are acutely vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 and which represent a potential breeding ground for terrorists.

In addition to supporting responses to stop the spread of the virus in prisons in Africa, South America and other regions, UNODC is also implementing programmes on the management of violent extremist prisoners, prevention of radicalization to violence, and social reintegration to prevent recidivism.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I will conclude by reaffirming UNODC's commitment to strengthening multilateral collaboration against terrorism, in our work with OCT, including through our forthcoming joint plan of action, as well as with all our UN, private sector and civil society partners.



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Our collective solutions must be coordinated and cohesive, strengthening whole-of-society responses, and drawing on the whole-of-UN to maximize effectiveness. Together, we can promote greater inclusion and greater resilience to prevent and counter terrorist exploitation of the COVID-19 crisis and our recovery.

Thank you.