



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)

Opening Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov
Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
Executive Director, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre

Official Launch of the UNCCT-CEPOL Joint Online Training Module on the “Air Travel Cycle”

Online Training Module Launch
10:00 am - 11:00am; 18 December 2020

Dr. Detlef Schröder,
Mr. Gilles de Kerchove,
Ms. Hilde Hardeman,
Mr. Laurent Muschel,
Excellencies, Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to participate in the official launch of the “Air Travel Cycle” online training module, which is an example of the successful cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations.

I wish to thank Dr. Schröder for his leadership, vision, and commitment to this joint initiative between the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) in my Office and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).

The serious threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) returning to their countries of origin or nationality, or relocating to third countries, is a complex phenomenon that makes us reconsider existing strategies to prevent and counter terrorism.

Many countries lack the ability to track the movement of FTFs, including of their nationals returning home. This creates a potential major national and regional security risk as FTFs often possess operational experience and ties to global terrorism.

It is therefore critical to develop effective and dynamic responses to prevent and detect terrorist travel, and disrupt the organized criminal networks that facilitate it.

Since these threats do not respect national borders, addressing them requires a comprehensive, multidimensional, integrated, coordinated and human rights-compliant border security and management approach, with prevention as a top priority.

The wave of terrorist attacks that recently hit Europe highlights the urgent need to intensify national and regional efforts to strengthen security and controls in land, air and sea borders.

Only a coordinated border security and management approach will be effective in countering the terrorist threats.

While routinely touted as critical components of border security and management, consistent coordination, cooperation and information sharing have historically been difficult to achieve and remain substantive challenge.

Front-line border and law enforcement officials need to have appropriate access to intelligence, biometrics, Advance Passenger Information (API), Passenger Name Record (PNR), and financial data to effectively identify and intercept criminal actors, known or suspected terrorists, and foreign terrorist fighters.

And the holders of that information need to put in place the necessary arrangements that allow it to be shared in real time with all necessary precautions.

Those on the front line also need advanced training to gain the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use such data. Law enforcement agencies play a fundamental role in this regard, making sure that their officers are knowledgeable and well trained.

Within the framework of the UNCCT - CEPOL partnership, we have developed three specialized training modules that seek to raise awareness and enhance the understanding of key concepts and strategies in three priority areas:

- First, good practices on border security and management in the context of counter-terrorism, including strategies for enhancing intra and inter-agency cooperation;
- Second, recommended practices for the responsible collection, use and sharing of biometric data to counter terrorism; and,
- Third, respect for human rights in border security and management and screening at borders.

The programmatic cooperation between CEPOL and UNCCT reflects our deep commitment to promote multilateral and regional counter-terrorism cooperation to stay ahead of the curve and effectively address the ever-changing terrorist threat.

Our organizations are well positioned to assist Member States in this regard, strengthening their capacities to prevent the movement of terrorists through air, land, and sea borders.

The challenge ahead requires that we work together and build partnerships to promote secure borders and ensure the efficient and safe movement of people.

It is true that we face a persistent, adaptative and unprecedented terrorist threat. But it is also true that we have an unprecedented level of national, regional and international commitment to achieve a future without terrorism.

Today's event - the launch the UNCCT-CEPOL training is an excellent example in this regard.

Thank you.