



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Opening Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter- Terrorism

First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism

**9:30, Thursday, 9 September 2021,
Austria Center, Vienna**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Assemblies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you today to the “First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism,” jointly organized by my Office, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

It is a privilege to be back in the beautiful city of Vienna and an honour to deliver my remarks alongside His Excellency Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, Speaker of the National Council of the Republic of Austria, His Excellency Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the IPU, Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the IPU, and Ms. Ghada Fathy Ismail Waly, Executive Director of UNODC and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna.

Dear colleagues,

Terrorism remains one of the most serious challenges to international peace and security. It undermines the Sustainable Development Goals and violates universal human rights.

Despite the significant progress we have made in our fight against terrorism, the threat has diversified, endangering hard-earned gains in many countries across the globe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted counter-terrorism efforts.

The hasty developments in Afghanistan - which can have significant human rights implications, especially for women and children - are a clear reminder that we must redouble our efforts to ensure that no country is used as a platform or safe haven for terrorism.

Earlier this year, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to counter the complex challenges associated with terrorism.

The Second United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week, which my Office held last June, included the biennial High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States convened under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres. It provided a deeper understanding of the transformative impact of new technologies on both terrorism and our counter-terrorism efforts.

More than 1,000 participants representing 147 Member States, 38 United Nations entities, 28 international and regional organizations, 88 civil society and private sector organizations attended the 13 interactive sessions. And over 10,000 attendees tuned in to the 36 side events. Very impressive data, meaning that counter-terrorism is really at the top of the international agenda.

An equally important development during the Counter-Terrorism Week was the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of the seventh biennial review resolution of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to guide our counter-terrorism efforts for the next two years.

It features a range of priority areas identified by Member States, from preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism and strengthened attention to human rights, to enhancing law enforcement and criminal justice responses to terrorism.

I look forward to working together with parliamentarians and parliaments worldwide to advance the implementation of this important resolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

To counter current terrorist threats, five overarching priority areas for global action emerged over the course of the Counter-Terrorism Week, which I would like to share with you.

First, the need to urgently address the complex legacies of Da'esh crimes in Iraq and Syria including through the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters and their families. Threat from Da'esh is still real and high, let's take for example the recent terrorist attack in New Zealand.

Second, how to better support African countries and regional partners to address the increase in terrorist activity in some parts of the continent.

My Office has been continuously working with our partners from the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to further strengthen capacity-building assistance to African countries.

To this end, my Office recently launched a Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in north Africa, based in Rabat, Morocco. West Africa and the Sahel will be among the top priority areas of this Office.

Third is the need for concerted action to address the rise in terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief.

This is an alarming issue that has become the number one national security threat for many countries in Europe, North America and Oceania, with an increasingly transnational dimension.

Fourth, how to upgrade our technological awareness, capabilities, and preparedness to counter terrorism.

And fifth, is the need for increased attention to the rule of law and human rights, including with respect to gender equality and the rights of the child, upholding the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, as well as principled humanitarian action.

Distinguished Members of Parliament,
Dear Colleagues,

In this dynamic and rapidly evolving security landscape, legislators play a critical role in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

We rely on parliamentarians to work hand-in-hand with governments to adopt strong, robust and transparent laws, budgets and policies to fund and implement the international legal framework against terrorism.

I am therefore delighted to announce that on 16th June, my office launched a Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement based in Doha, with the generous support and hospitality of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar.

The Programme Office will serve as a global hub to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue, building upon core parliamentary functions and partnerships with multilateral parliamentary assemblies.

The Office will initially have three main functions:

- Firstly, supporting Parliaments in research, analysis and normative work, including the formulation of counter-terrorism policies and strategies;
- Secondly, providing technical assistance to enhance parliamentary core functions on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism;
- And thirdly, fostering coordination, and building regional and global partnerships.

To further support parliamentarians around the world, my Office will soon release a 'Parliamentary Guide to Facilitate the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.'

This new tool, a joint effort with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, seeks to raise awareness of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and their implications for the day-to-day work of parliamentarians.

Additionally, my Office, together with IPU and UNODC, is developing 'Model Legislative Provisions to Support and Protect the Rights and Needs

of Victims of Terrorism,' which will be presented in depth during the second session of this Summit.

I am also pleased to announce that, together with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, we are developing a "Parliamentary Handbook on Security Council resolution 1373," as well as a "Compendium of Existing Good Practices on Data Protection Rules to Facilitate International Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism," in partnership with CTED and UNODC.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Summit comes at a critical time as the international community grapples with complex challenges in a world shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your deliberations here today will aid in identifying concrete and lasting solutions to sustain multilateral counter-terrorism cooperation.

Let me conclude by reiterating the commitment of my Office to supporting the global parliamentary community and promoting inter-parliamentary collaboration to achieve a safer world – one without terrorism – for present and future generations.

I thank you for your attention.