



**Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General, UNOCT  
Seventh ministerial meeting of the EU Internet Forum**

**Hybrid, 8 December 2021, 8:30 EST**

**Topical debate 2: Countering violent extremism and terrorism online –  
emerging challenges**

Commissioner Johansson,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

I am glad to be invited to contribute to this discussion today and to address a possible nexus between gaming and extremism from the perspective of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

It is clear that the use of the digital gaming space by terrorists and violent extremists, and other challenges being discussed today, can only be addressed through multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation with industry and civil society.

I thank Ms. Schlegel and Mr. Rasmussen for their excellent presentations in emphasizing this.

While video games bring close to three people together online across languages, gender, ethnicity, and age, this booming industry and its ever-expanding communities exist in a largely unmonitored space.

The exponential development of video games is an indication of its potential. Among many possible uses, they can be leveraged as immersive tools for education and intercultural dialogue and can foster a sense of community and social cohesion.

But terrorists across the whole ideological spectrum have also seen this potential and have increasingly been exploiting it over the past decade.

To address this phenomenon, we are seeing some good initiatives, such as the efforts of the European Union's Radicalization Awareness Network, and the launch in October of an Extremism and Gaming Research Network by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI).

Yet, a global policy dialogue on this topic is needed.

We need to understand the various dimensions of this threat. This is why the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) has developed a pilot project on the Intersection between Video Games and Violent Extremism.

This week we convened an initial Expert Roundtable to expand our engagement, bringing together academics, policy makers, the private sector, and industry stakeholders. We were delighted that the European Commission joined us to share findings from the work of the EU Internet Forum.

As a next step towards building a coherent, inclusive, and multilateral response, UNOCT will host a High-Level Event on this issue early next year.

We will continue to collaborate closely with the European Union, and the tech industry, to harness all the benefits of gaming, while enhancing the resilience of the gamers to violent extremism.

We will also start to implement the UNOCT-INTERPOL action “CT TECH,” funded by the EU to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement and criminal justice authorities to counter the exploitation of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

UNOCT has also collaborated with the European Union to better understand the emerging threat of terrorist use of Artificial Intelligence online, for example through social media bots, computer vision or “deep fakes”.

The Second United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States held in June 2021 addressed the impact of new and emerging technologies on countering terrorism. Its deliberations highlighted the importance of partnerships that leverage the unique entry-points, capabilities and insights from Member States, civil society and the private sector.

I look forward to the continued and enhanced partnership of my Office with all stakeholders to counter violent extremism and terrorism online.

Thank you.