



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Opening remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Ministerial-Level Meeting of African Member States on the 2024 African Counter-Terrorism Summit**

**“Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institution Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism in Africa”**

***(Nelson Mandela Conference Room, Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations (fifth floor, 305 East 47th Street, New York)***

***21 September 2023, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm***

Your Excellency, Ms. Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General,

Your Excellency, Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, National Security Advisor of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security of the African Union,

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you today, to this Ministerial-Level Meeting of African Member States on the Counter-Terrorism Summit to be held in Abuja, in April 2024.

Allow me at the outset to express my sincere condolences and solidarity with those affected by the devastating earthquake in Morocco and massive floods in Libya. My heart goes out to those who lost their lives, loved ones and properties in those devastating calamities.

In the same vein, my deepest condolences extend to all victims of terror attacks in Africa. Our unwavering efforts to forge a united front against terrorism are resolutely dedicated to them.

I think that issues of the victims of terrorism should be a part of the Summit’s agenda.

Today's important gathering has been made possible through our collaborative efforts with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the invaluable support of the African Union.

This ministerial meeting is intended to gather your views, expectations, and ambitions for the African Counter Terrorism Summit.

I therefore invite all African Member States and regional organizations to engage and share their thoughts.

By engaging in these discussions, we will help set the priorities for the upcoming Summit, focusing on robust action-oriented measures that lean on institutional and homegrown strategies to tackle terrorism in Africa.

It will also help embed African responses into the global and multilateral counter-terrorism efforts and thus make the international community's response to this threat fit for purpose.

In this regard, resource mobilization, sharing of expertise, and diverse partnerships to prevent and counter terrorism will be crucial.

It is our hope that the Abuja Summit will mark a pivotal moment in Africa's fight against terrorism, emphasizing the need for tangible outcomes that are African-led and African-owned.

Excellencies,

Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates, have exploited instability and conflict to increase their activities and intensify attacks across the continent.

Although Da'esh and Al-Qaida continue to suffer leadership losses and the total number of terrorism-related deaths declined worldwide last year, terrorism is actually growing in parts of Africa, with the Sahel now considered to be the epicentre of terrorism.

In East Africa, Al-Shabaab continues to target officials and peacekeepers in Somalia, while there is the risk that Al-Qaida and Da'esh may exploit the instability in Sudan.

In the Great Lakes region, the threat posed by the Allied Democratic Forces continues unabated.

In North Africa, Da'esh and Al-Qaida may appear weakened, but conditions conducive to resurgence persist, including the return of foreign terrorist fighters and the release of prisoners.

The increased sophistication and lethality of attacks, with the use of improvised explosive devices and new technologies like drones, is an additional source of concern.

Excellencies,

Together we have a number of strategies, tools, and resources to fight terrorism.

First and foremost is the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which the General Assembly reviewed this past June and reaffirmed its consensus on whole-of-society, human rights, and rule of law-based approaches for preventing and countering terrorism.

The Secretary-General's policy brief on "A New Agenda for Peace," recognizes terrorism as a global threat and addresses the value of collective security and international cooperation in tackling the root causes of violence. It calls for guaranteed funding, including through assessed contributions, for peace enforcement missions and counter-terrorism operations, led by African partners with a UN Security Council mandate under Chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter.

We have bodies like the new Nigerian National Counter Terrorism Center in Abuja, the SADC Counterterrorism Center in Tanzania, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism in Algiers, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and our Rabat and Nairobi Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa that can all serve as essential foundations for expertise and resources.

And we have everything the African Union, the regional economic communities, and various initiatives all bring to the table.

Excellencies,

Your leadership and engagement will be critical to ensuring momentum and the success of the Summit.

I am sure that I do not need to say this – but allow me to be clear, we are not coming with pre-determined ideas about outcomes of the Summit. This has to be African-owned, African-led, and African-determined.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to each of you for your presence and participation today. I eagerly anticipate a stimulating and productive discussion.

Thank you.