



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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

2024 High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Meeting

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

Abuja, Nigeria, 22 April 2024

Your Excellency, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Your Excellency, Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana,
Your Excellency, Faure Gnassingbe, President of Togo,
UN Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed,

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by acknowledging the exemplary leadership of the Government of Nigeria in organizing this timely and important event.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is honored to be part of and to support this Meeting aimed at addressing the evolving threat of terrorism on the continent.

I commend African Member States and regional organizations for their tireless efforts in countering this scourge that has affected the lives and well being of millions of people.

Excellencies,

Terrorism is a threat to international peace and security, particularly in Africa where its impact is most felt.

Da’esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates have made some significant gains in the Sahel and are moving southward to the Gulf of Guinea.

In Southern and Central Africa, groups affiliated to Da’esh remain a concern, notably in northern Mozambique despite the successful regional counter-terrorism efforts and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

And in East Africa, Al-Shabaab in Somalia is a threat despite heavy losses, while Sudan is a transit place for fighters traveling to Libya, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

Excellencies,

To effectively counter terrorism, African regional organizations have an important role to play.

We have some regional initiatives, from the the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin, and the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique.

These regional arrangements require support and long term commitment from the international community.

The UN Secretary-General's policy brief on "A New Agenda for Peace" calls for guaranteed funding, 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.

Excellencies,

The success of the United Nations in Africa hinges on our commitment to support African-led solutions to African challenges.

In this regard, I am pleased to highlight the work of UNOCT's programme offices in Nairobi and Rabat, which implement innovative capacity-building initiatives that draw upon African expertise.

A similar approach is used to implement our global programmes across the continent, including establishing fusion cells, enhancing border security, conducting investigations, countering cyber threats, and countering the financing of terrorism, amongst others.

This work is done together with our United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact partners, some of which are represented here today.

We recognize no that single actor can resolve today's threats to peace and security alone. Instead, we need multiple actors working together, with solutions grounded in strong national ownership, and supported by funding partners.

A step-change in our commitment to address those complex challenges is the launch of the United Nations Joint Appeal for Counter-Terrorism in Africa which brings together 16 UN entities in support of 10 new multi-partner initiatives across the continent.

It tackles critical areas including border management and countering terrorism travel in Africa, the nexus between terrorism and organized crime, preventing violent extremism, gender equality and human rights.

I urge you all to support the Appeal and join us in delivering collaborative, results-focused solutions.

Excellencies,

Our commitment to a human-rights-based and rule of law, gender-responsive, and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is unwavering.

The full and meaningful engagement of young people is indispensable for success in the fight against terrorism.

I am proud to share that our Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme has trained young leaders here in Nigeria to develop effective solutions for violent extremism.

Effectively preventing terrorism in Africa necessitates a whole-of-society approach that includes governmental bodies, civil society, academia, and religious institutions.

Civil society play a vital role in reaching communities vulnerable to radicalization. We continue to engage them to address the root causes of violent extremism.

I am pleased that UNOCT facilitated the participation in today's meeting of 10 civil society organizations from across Africa.

Excellencies,

We are five months to the UN *Summit of the Future*, which will be an important opportunity to reinvigorate multilateralism to achieve a more peaceful and sustainable future.

I hope today's Meeting leads us in the same direction in what I will call the "Abuja Process", an Africa led and Africa owned process.

I also hope that we can build on the momentum generated from this Meeting and translate its aspirations into tangible and action-oriented outcomes.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can achieve this, and to further discussions on the Abuja Process.

In closing, I would like to thank the State of Qatar, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines for their financial contributions in supporting the organization of this event.

Together, let us continue to work towards a safer and more secure Africa.

Thank you.