



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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

**Third High-Level Meeting of the Marrakech Platform**

**The Evolving Field of Intelligence Analysis in the Context of Counter-Terrorism  
Fez, Morocco, 4 June 2024**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to this third edition of the “Marrakech Platform” of Heads of Counter-Terrorism and Security Agencies.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for its continued support to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and for hosting today’s meeting in the historic city of Fez.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates, and to Mr. Mohamed Yassine Mansouri, Director General of the General Directorate for Studies and Documentation, for their warm hospitality and strong support of UNOCT’s Programme Office and Training Center for Counter-Terrorism in Africa, based in Rabat.

Allow me to start with a few observations on the current terrorism landscape in Africa. Despite the significant efforts made by counter-terrorism and security agencies, African Member States are paying a heavy toll.

Da’esh, Al-Qaida and their regional affiliates continue to exploit political instability and socioeconomic grievances as well as intensify attacks in parts of Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most impacted by terrorism, notably the Sahel which accounts for almost half of all terrorism deaths in 2023. And developments in other parts of the continent are worrying, including the persistent terrorist threat in northern Mozambique, Somalia and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The situation on the continent continues to deteriorate and the increasingly complex nature of this threat requires multilateral and multi-agency cooperation.

Today, increasing geopolitical tensions are having an impact on the continent. It is our collective responsibility to stand with and support African Member States in their efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

The United Nations will continue to work closely with African Member States and regional organizations. Last week, in commemoration of Africa Day, Secretary General Guterres called on the international community to, I quote, “renew our pledge to stand with all Africans in their quest to lead their continent — and our world — into a peaceful and prosperous future for all.”

We also look forward to Member States deliberations at the United Nations Summit of the Future in September. I hope the longstanding consensus among Member States against terrorism will contribute to strengthening multilateral cooperation in the Pact for the Future being negotiated.

This meeting of the Marrakech Platform provides a unique forum for African counter-terrorism and intelligence agencies to discuss current threats including new and emerging technologies and effective responses.

The meeting continues to expand with new Member States and additional requests to join, which confirms its added value, and the commitment of all Member States present today to strengthen regional and international cooperation.

Excellencies,

Africa remains a priority for the United Nations Office of Counter -Terrorism. Last month, the Government of Nigeria organized with the support of my Office, a High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Meeting, in Abuja.

On this occasion, participants reiterated the importance of African-led and African-owned approaches to countering terrorism. They renewed their commitment to:

- Enhance cooperation and collaboration amongst African Member States and regional organizations in combatting terrorism and violent extremism;
- Intensify collective security efforts, through joint operations and extradition agreements, as well as establish platforms to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned;
- Explore innovative approaches for countering online radicalization and exposure of African Youths to violent extremist tendencies and the recruitment efforts by terrorist groups; and
- Leverage opportunities offered by digital tools, including artificial intelligence, to strengthen their counter-terrorism and preventive measures.

The Marrakech Platform plays a critical role in that regard, and in the framework of the “Abuja Process” which will focus on translating those commitments into concrete deliverables.

Also, the work of the agencies you lead will be vital in this regard. The sharing of experiences and expertise is critical for the success of our common endeavors in the continent. For instance, we will discuss today counter radicalization approaches through the lens of intelligence agencies.

Excellencies,

In his New Agenda for Peace, Secretary-General Guterres highlighted that Artificial Intelligence was both “an enabling and a disruptive technology increasingly integrated into a broad array of civilian, military and dual-use applications”.

However, this powerful technology can be misused and create life-threatening risks. Terrorist groups have been early adopters of emerging technologies: they already utilize social networks, online gaming platforms, and other digital tools for radicalization, recruitment and coordination.

But Artificial Intelligence also provides powerful new opportunities for counter-terrorism at both operational and strategic levels.

It allows your services to effectively process and analyze massive amounts of data, detect patterns of suspicious activities and inform strategic decisions more rapidly and accurately.

However, achieving this still requires a serious investment in capacity building, and close collaboration between public authorities, the private sector, academia, and civil society.

In this regard, I would like to recall the adoption on 21 March by the General Assembly of a Resolution on "Seizing the Opportunities Offered by Safe, Secure, and Reliable Artificial Intelligence Systems for Sustainable Development". This landmark resolution emphasizes the need to respect human rights in the design, development, deployment, and use of Artificial Intelligence.

It urges Member States and other stakeholders to unite in supporting approaches and regulations.

Excellencies,

I want to conclude by urging all delegations to actively participate in discussions, share your experience and expectations and needs for support.

As mandated by the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, my Office will continue to support Member States, upon request, for the challenges and opportunities that new technologies provide.

Tomorrow, my staff will provide you with an overview of the technical assistance UNOCT can offer and our expanding range of capacity-building initiatives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank again the Kingdom of Morocco, and our observers, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and other donors of UNOCT activities, for their steadfast support and generous contributions.

Excellencies,

We are committed to supporting your agencies in fulfilling your critical functions, particularly those related to analyzing data and using new technology.

I therefore look forward to hearing your views and feedback to ensure that my Office continues to provide valuable and tailored capacity-building support.

Thank you.