



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Mr. Raffi Gregorian, Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Life After ISIS: Returning Individuals with Links to Terrorist Groups from Syria and Iraq and the UN
Support available to Member States through the Global Framework**

**24 June
12.30 pm – 2.00 pm EST**

Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Helping Member States deal with the multidimensional challenges related to the return of third country nationals from Syria and Iraq remains a top priority for the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the UN system.

Colleagues today have highlighted the dire humanitarian conditions, the recent escalation of violence, the serious human rights concerns, the rise in violent extremist activity and the threat of a large scale COVID-19 outbreak in camps and detention facilities in northeast Syria and Iraq. Urgent action is clearly needed.

Within a month of the territorial collapse of ISIL in March 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General issued Key Principles to guide UN support to Member States for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with Links to UN Listed Terrorist Groups.

The Secretary-General also called on the UN system to leverage and coordinate existing UN mandates and capacities to come together in support of Member States.

This call goes to the very core of UNOCT's mandate to enhance UN coordination and strengthen the provision of capacity-building support for the comprehensive implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by Member States.

There is a clear and common understanding across the UN system that the complex challenges Member States face in addressing the situation of foreign terrorist fighters and their family members stranded in Syria and Iraq require an innovative and joint approach which leverages humanitarian, human rights and security mandates.

That is why last August UNOCT and UNICEF developed the UN's Global Framework involving 13 other participating UN entities.

Under the Global Framework, we stand ready to provide, upon request, "all-of-UN" assistance along two distinct yet complementary pillars:

- A recovery and development pillar, coordinated by UNICEF, which responds to the humanitarian and protection needs of returning children and adults; and
- A security and accountability pillar, coordinated by UNOCT, which promotes security and addresses accountability in the repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration process for returning adults. This pillar builds Member State capacity to conduct investigations and prosecutions, using age- and gender-sensitive, human rights-centered methods.

The discussion today and the documentary we just watched highlighted the often-overlapping roles of individuals associated with terrorist groups.

The Global Framework recognizes that the distinction between victims and perpetrators can be non-binary, which underscores the need for differentiated, case-by-case approaches.

It also recognizes the need to protect populations from possible security risks posed by returnees as well as the need to protect returnees from risks they may face.

It promotes rehabilitation and reintegration both within criminal justice procedures as well as within non-criminal justice procedures, as appropriate, and includes social programmes in community-based settings.

Dear Colleagues,

Bringing terrorists to justice is not only a requirement under international law and Security Council resolutions. It is a precondition for building peace.

Ensuring accountability is an imperative for Member States to break cycles of violence, provide justice to victims, promote reconciliation and community cohesion.

Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are already receiving support under the Global Framework, which is adaptable to any country of return that has repatriated or is willing to repatriate its nationals.

To ensure continuity and balanced implementation of these "All-of-UN" efforts, partners under the Global Framework are in the process of establishing a pooled fund, which will open to contributions from donors in the coming weeks.

I would like to thank those donors already supporting the Global Framework, namely, the European Union, the United States and the Netherlands.

Whether through awareness raising, advocacy leadership, direct cooperation or donations, I strongly encourage Member States to provide additional support to this important initiative.

Thank you.