



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)**

**Dr. Jehangir Khan, Director of the
United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre**

Towards sustainable peace: implementing screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies in the Lake Chad Basin, a regional and national challenge

28 June 2021

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this discussion on our collective efforts to build sustainable peace in the Lake Chad Basin through the national and regional implementation of screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (SPRR) strategies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Niger and the Lake Chad Basin Commission as well as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate for jointly convening this event and providing an opportunity to reflect on past efforts and contemplate future priorities on SPRR.

Colleagues,

Boko Haram continues to threaten the peace, stability and livelihood of communities across the Lake Chad Basin. It is with grave concern that we have watched the situation in the region develop into one of the largest humanitarian emergencies in the world, with terrorism having compounded the effects of climate change, displacement and socio-economic challenges.

The crimes and destructive tactics of Boko Haram fuel conflict, widely undermine the human rights of affected communities and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities of the most at-risk populations.

Too many women and girls across the region continue to suffer at the hands of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence and other violations of their rights. Boko Haram has continued its attempts to deny women and girls access to education, independence and financial autonomy, which are all fundamental building blocks for the social, political and economic development of all communities.

Over the past year, COVID-19 has only heightened the threat of terrorism in the region. Boko Haram is exploiting the pandemic to amplify misinformation, weaken social cohesion, disrupt stabilization efforts and thwart socioeconomic and human development opportunities.

Colleagues,

To address our shared global concern for the threat of terrorism, the Security Council has called upon Member States to ensure that those who commit terrorist acts are held to account and to develop comprehensive and tailored strategies to prosecute suspected individuals whom they have reasonable grounds to believe are terrorists and to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society.

In the Lake Chad Basin, the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram affected Areas has further shaped a coordinated regional approach to these international obligations.

Countries in the region are taking a stand against impunity and investing in measures to ensure accountability as fundamental steps toward a more peaceful and secure future. There has been commendable progress in implementing the Regional Strategy, its pillar on SPRR, and the relevant Security Council requirements.

To support Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria to meet persistent challenges posed by international and regional obligations UNOCT/UNCCT, UNODC and CTED are implementing a joint programme to support the development and implementation of SPRR strategies for Boko Haram-associated persons.

One of the project's objectives is to assist Lake Chad Basin countries to translate gender considerations in SPRR strategies into practice, in compliance with international requirements and regional frameworks.

To this end, UNOCT/UNCCT, UNODC, CTED and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, organized a regional expert consultation on the gender dimensions of SPRR approaches for persons associated with Boko Haram in March 2021. The workshop convened government officials and other relevant stakeholders from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria as well as international experts. Together workshop participants elaborated a set of recommendations to mainstream gender perspectives throughout the implementation of the regional SPRR Strategy, which will be available to support stakeholders in the coming weeks.

The workshop highlighted that association with Boko Haram often manifests into a combination of roles, including as victims, supporters, facilitators, and perpetrators. Hence, any approach to SPRR must recognize nuances in regard to the degree of agency, culpability and criminal responsibility of individuals, which must be determined on a case-by-case basis and upholding fair trial and due process standards.

In addition to these efforts on the ground UNOCT/UNCCT, CTED and UNODC are currently working to develop a Compendium on the PRR practices of Member States, which will collect and document challenges, lessons learned, best practices and policy recommendations. It will be produced through eight consultations at regional and sub-regional, levels, including with the Lake Chad Basin. I trust that the Compendium will be a key source of support to stakeholders developing and implementing PRR strategies.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude let me assure you that UNOCT will remain a committed and reliable partner to the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin region and we look forward to continuing our work to unite against the scourge of terrorism in these countries.

Only as trusted partners can we work together to restore justice and hold those to account who have caused undue suffering for too long.

Thank you.