



2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

21-30 JUNE

PRESS RELEASE

The United Nations Secretary-General highlights responsible use of new technologies in counter-terrorism efforts as Second Counter-Terrorism Week concludes

New York, 30 June 2021 - Convened under the auspices of Secretary-General António Guterres, the Second United Nations High-Level Conference of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States on “*Countering and Preventing Terrorism in the Age of Transformative Technologies: Addressing the Challenges of the New Decade*” concluded today. Organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the High-Level Conference featured 13 interactive sessions in both hybrid and online format, convening almost 1,000 participants from 147 Member States, 28 international and regional organizations, 88 civil society, academic, and private sector organizations, and 38 United Nations entities over the course of three days.

The Conference took place as the United Nations gets ready to mark the 15th anniversary of the General Assembly’s adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It has provided a timely opportunity to convene a global audience of world leaders, policymakers, practitioners and experts to discuss current and evolving counter-terrorism challenges in the new digital decade and assess the impact of new and emerging technologies on counter-terrorism efforts, from harnessing their potential to mitigating unintended risks.

In line with the Secretary-General’s vision to promote a reinvigorated, networked multilateralism, the Conference served to strengthen international and regional cooperation, promote the sharing of expertise and experiences, and jointly address critical thematic issues in counter-terrorism. Participants shared insights on using digital tools and other technologies for prevention and highlighted the imperative of upholding human rights and promoting age and gender sensitive responses to counter-terrorism in the age of transformative technologies.

Speaking at the closing session, Secretary-General Guterres highlighted the “need to be resolute, principled and forward-looking in our pursuit of a world free from terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.” He called for an end to “vicious cycles of underdevelopment, state fragility and violence”, and underscored the “joint responsibility to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism” and “to do more to meet the needs of victims and survivors”. “National ownership is essential, as are the contributions that civil society and the private sector have to make,” he added.

The Secretary-General outlined strategic imperatives for global collaboration going forward: “First, tackling and staying ahead of the misuse of new technologies by terrorists, and ensuring we harness these technologies responsibly to protect societies and bring terrorists to justice. Second, investing in prevention and resilience to address the conflicts, bigotry, human rights abuses and development setbacks that spur terrorism. Third, anchoring counter-terrorism efforts in human rights, gender equality and the rule of law.”

In his closing remarks, the Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, thanked all speakers and UNOCT donors, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Qatar, for their financial support to the Office’s mandate from the General Assembly. Sharing the initial outcomes and recommendations from the Second Counter-Terrorism Week, he highlighted that the deliberations have enabled “a better understanding of the impact of new technologies on both the conditions conducive to terrorism and our counter-terrorism efforts.” He added that “the international community cannot afford to leave any country behind: solidarity is in our common interest. It is clear that a terrorist safe haven anywhere is a threat everywhere.” Mr. Voronkov concluded by stressing the importance of the adoption of a substantive, forward-looking, and consensus-based review resolution of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to guide counter-terrorism efforts for the next two years.

The High-Level Conference follows the First High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism convened by the Secretary-General in 2018 in New York, and forms an integral part of the Counter-Terrorism Week held every two years at the United Nations, coinciding with the General Assembly’s biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. UNOCT organized a Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week in July 2020 due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Second Counter-Terrorism Week held from 21-30 June 2021 consisted of the Second High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and 36 thematic side events co-organized by Member States, UN entities, international and regional organizations and civil society, 14 of which were organized together with UNOCT.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit: <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/2021-counter-terrorism-week>
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