



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Remarks by
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Security Dialogue: OSCE's role and commitments to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms: trends and challenges

**[pre-recorded statement]
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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to address this Joint Meeting of the Permanent Council and Forum for Security Co-operation. Given my personal and my Office's long-standing engagement with OSCE, it is always a pleasure to contribute to these forums and discussions.

Two weeks ago, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres convened the Second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations, which featured the General Assembly's seventh review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the second High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States.

The review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy culminated in a substantive and forward-looking General Assembly resolution to guide the UN's counter-terrorism efforts over the next two years.

The High-Level Conference got together more than two thousand in-person and online participants from Member States, international and regional organizations, United Nations entities, civil society and the private sector. Side Events engaged more than ten thousand participants.

The theme of the conference was the impact of new and emerging technologies on counter-terrorism. Participants recognized the need to harness the enormous potential of technologies, but also to mitigate the unintended risks, for example related to human rights, and by denying terrorists the use of these technologies for their own nefarious purposes.

The organization of the Conference emanated from Secretary-General Guterres' vision to promote a networked global counter-terrorism response anchored in multilateralism, including through the organization of regional conferences.

One such conference, jointly organised by my Office, OSCE and Switzerland in February 2020 just before the pandemic, covered the challenges posed by foreign terrorist fighters and the children and women associated with them. This topic got a lot of attention during Counter-Terrorism Week.

Allow me to briefly highlight five main outcomes of the CT Week discussions:

First, we discussed how to urgently deal with the complex legacies from ISIL's crimes in Iraq and Syria, including bringing foreign terrorist fighters to justice, addressing terrorist radicalization in prison and fostering rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorism offenders, as well as address the situation of tens of thousands of children and other individuals stranded in camps. They are in dire need of protection, repatriation and rehabilitation.

Second, the need to urgently address the increasing terrorist threat in parts of Africa, where the security situation is rapidly deteriorating in a complex interplay of conflict, development challenges, and human rights abuses, fuelling grievances and instability.

Third, we underscored the need to take concerted action to tackle the growing, transnational terrorist threat from small groups and lone actors motivated by xenophobia, racism, misogyny and other forms of intolerance, which has been exacerbated by the surge in online hate, conspiracy theories, and anti-government sentiment during the pandemic.

Fourth, increased attention to the rule of law and human rights, including with respect to gender equality and the rights of the child, upholding the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, as well as principled humanitarian action in Member States' efforts and United Nations capacity-building support.

And fifth, how to upgrade our technological awareness, capabilities, and preparedness to counter terrorism in the age of transformative technologies.

The Conference also underscored the need to understand and address the vulnerabilities to cyber-attacks and linkages to cybercrime, which spiked during COVID-19; as well as the more complex money trail to terrorism, including through blockchain and crowdfunding.

In today's high-tech environment, especially when so many people spend a big part of their daily lives in cyberspace, countering the spread of terrorist content online and avoiding the spread of hate speech through algorithms and online echo chambers, including video gaming platforms, is not a luxury. It is essential.

New technologies have also exposed a greater need to strengthen the protection of vulnerable targets, given terrorists' interest in using Artificial Intelligence, 3D printing, and unmanned aerial systems and other transformative technologies.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The vast potential of new technologies to enhance monitoring, preparedness, law enforcement and criminal justice capabilities was clearly evident in discussions during CT Week. For instance, 'Big Data' technologies allow us to collect, analyze, use and share information to identify terrorism-related threats in ways that we have not seen before.

Biometrics and digital forensics can help to catch and prosecute suspected terrorists – although much more is needed to build national capacities to responsibly collect, preserve and use digital evidence in courts.

To understand and address both the positive and negative impacts of new technologies, we need to establish partnerships that leverage unique entry-points, capabilities and insights from Member States, regional organizations, civil society and the private sector.

It is also imperative to strengthen international and regional cooperation in that regard. We addressed this in a dedicated session during the high-level conference, in which OSCE Secretary General Schmid outlined the organization's comprehensive approach to security and called for harnessing the power of international cooperation to address the terrorist threat, especially in light of additional grievances triggered by the pandemic.

The session further highlighted our shared interest and commitment to ensuring the compliance of counter-terrorism efforts with the rule of law and human rights, not just for more impactful and lasting outcomes, but also to avoid playing into the terrorists' hands in provoking disproportionate responses.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Against this background, I am grateful that the partnership between the OSCE and my Office is built on a solid foundation, including the 2019-2021 Joint Action Plan. We have advanced our practical collaboration and mutually benefited from expertise in our respective organizations on countering terrorist travel and border security management, for instance through our annual Passenger Data Seminars.

In light of the challenges identified throughout Counter-Terrorism Week, it is very timely to increase cooperation between our organizations on countering the financing of terrorism and the use of new technologies and the Internet. I have previously discussed this with Secretary General Schmid, and I hope we can deepen our institutional dialogue on these issues.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I look forward to deepening cooperation between OSCE and UNOCT and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Compact entities to counter the scourge of terrorism through enhanced multilateral cooperation.

I wish you a very successful meeting and productive deliberations. I thank you.