



Second United Nations
**HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
ON COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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Statement by Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President for the European Commission

Second United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States

Opening Session 28 June 2021, 9.00 a.m.

Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. Under Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you, Mr Secretary General, for your invitation to speak at this UN High Level Conference on Counter Terrorism.

We meet at a pivotal moment and the Covid-19 crisis has seriously affected the lives of many, in particularly in countries already marked by conflict and instability.

The threat landscape is becoming more complex, with longstanding security challenges compounded by new emerging threats. New social and economic grievances provide fertile ground for recruitment by violent extremist groups.

Look, for example, at the Sahel. The instability in Sahel and in parts of East Africa, while spreading in the whole region, for example in Mozambique, asks for a response from the international community, in close cooperation with the affected countries and regional efforts and regional actors.

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

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Transformative technologies and digital developments help us to counter terrorism more effectively, but also create new challenges, for example when cryptocurrencies are used to finance terrorist groups and plan attacks. It's timely to focus on the impact of such technologies and during the Conference this week you will do so.

In today's environment, it is fundamental that new policies and practices to counter violent extremism safeguard the human rights of all citizens, it's all about it. To safeguard the human rights of all citizens. Under no circumstances should efforts to combat terrorism ever serve as a pretext to violate human rights. This is a very important issue. To fight terrorism has to be done with full respect for human rights. If not, we are going to slide down. We are going to lose our legitimacy. The fundamental principle is at the heart of the EU's approach in the fight against terrorism. An integrated approach, that draws on different strengths and assets and that has prevention as its core objective, is the most effective approach to address the multifaceted threat of terrorism today.

And nobody can fight terrorism alone. That's why the European Union is cooperating closely with the UN and other multilateral partners to tackle global terrorism and other violent forms of extremism, transnational organised crime and cybercrime, money laundering and terrorism financing. The EU will continue to strengthen its partnerships, first and foremost with the United Nations. I am pleased that the EU-UN High Level Political Dialogue on Counter Terrorism took place last December and that the EU and the UN are working together on a growing portfolio of joint activities on the ground.

This year, we remember the gruesome terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, twenty years ago. Twenty years on, our experience has shown that there are no easy answers, or quick solutions to the threat of terrorism. We need to continuously to examine our actions and approaches, and draw the right lessons to strengthen our collective action against terrorism. That is the way forward, to make the world a safer place, free of fear, free of violence. And for that, you can always count on the support of the European Union.

Many thanks for your attention.

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