



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

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**Statement by Ms. Miwa Kato, Director, Division for Operations, United Nations Office on
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**Second United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of
Member States**

**Breakout session B: Demands of a new decade and strengthening a criminal justice response
to countering terrorism**

29 June 2021, 3 – 4:30 p.m.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the Second UN High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and our panel discussion of the “Demands of a new decade and strengthening a criminal justice response to countering terrorism”.

My name is Miwa Kato. I am the Director of Division for Operations in the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. And I have the honor of serving as Chair for this panel discussion.

We are fortunate to have an outstanding panel of counter-terrorism leaders whose ideas today will advance our collective thinking to produce not only a stronger but also a smarter criminal justice system response to terrorism.

National criminal justice institutions are at the front lines of responding to terrorism. Therefore, it is critical that national laws and institutions reflect international obligations, and that the international community should provide support, as requested.

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

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At the same time, terrorism and violent extremism do not happen in a vacuum. There are many factors that contribute as drivers, enablers, or aggravators to create the conditions in which terrorism and violent extremism can take place. And along the way, there are also many opportunities for countries, through their criminal justice system--as well as other institutions and civil society--to counter such conditions and narratives that may lead to radicalization, recruitment, and criminal actions that produce terrorism. Adopting a comprehensive, integrated, and whole-of-society strategic and operational approach is imperative and requires the inclusive engagement of youth, women and civil society, among others.

At UNODC, given our wide-ranging and cross-cutting mandates on prevention of crime and terrorism, we have been responding to Member States' calls for support, through such inclusive, comprehensive and integrated approaches. This includes building capacities of national institutions to seize opportunities to include young people and women as agents of change; also to recognize linkages among terrorism, organized crime, and financing of terrorism through illicit trafficking and other crimes to generate funds for terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters; and how to disrupt these through the use of electronic evidence, intelligence-led and open-source investigations, and battlefield evidence, countering the use of the Internet, more effective policing of borders, sharing of information across borders, and through mutual legal assistance; and to seize opportunities to rehabilitate and re-integrate suspects and prisoners, thus preventing future attacks; and--to make all of the above legally possible--to strengthen normative frameworks so that legal tools, authorities, and procedures are established, in line with international standards, due process, and human rights; and last, but not least, to ensure victims and survivors of terrorism are given a voice and receive justice and protection.

Our extensive field presence - 115 offices in 80 countries – has given us the privilege of working with national policymakers and frontline responders alike to deliver tailored and timely support. Based on this engagement with our partners, we have seen examples of countries embracing such inclusive and integrated approaches—such as inclusion of women as investigators--to achieve better results, to prevent terrorism, and to save lives.

Yet, other challenges remain. Among these, are the evolving use of technology by terrorist and criminal organizations, as Member States work to catch up and get one step ahead of them.

And more recently, we witnessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Criminal justice institutions were shut down or slowed down, severely limiting investigations and legal proceedings. In the post-pandemic world, let us commit to build back better, by supporting Member States build more modernized institutions to be more resilient against disruptions and

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

disasters. On the bright side, we also learned the valuable lesson that entities, like UNODC, that base their assets in the field where the needs are, can continue to deliver despite travel restrictions. And to also adapt, by delivering expertise online where we trained more than 2000 professionals during the pandemic. These can be best practices, as we look past the pandemic, to make the most of precious resources to support Member States.

Let us now turn to our distinguished panel to discuss how we can better help Member States. Here are some guiding topics for our discussion:

- Practices and challenges in strengthening criminal justice responses to terrorism in line with international standards;
- The use of evidence, while complying with international standards, and with specific regard to interviewing women and children;
- Support to victims of terrorism by the criminal justice system, and civil society.
- The use of technology to strengthen criminal justice systems' response to terrorism.

I would like to kindly remind our speakers, both panelists and participants from the floor, to kindly limit their interventions to the time allotted. Thank you in advance.

CLOSING REMARKS

Many thanks to our distinguished panel for their very valuable comments and contributions.

The unique perspectives of our panelists allowed for a rich discussion of the most pressing challenges faced by Member States and opportunities for us to work together to find solutions. And it is reassuring to hear common themes and threads that connect our collective thinking. Here are some of them:

Inclusive and integrated national strategic and operational approaches produce better opportunities for cooperation among stakeholders and therefore better results in preventing and countering terrorism.

Multi-agency cooperation and the intersectionality of important actors both within and beyond the security sector – including, civil society organizations, victims of terrorism, women and children, youth, among others – is critical.

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

Cross-border, regional and international cooperation can be further strengthened to share information, monitor borders, facilitate mutual legal assistance, access evidence, and disrupt illicit activities that facilitate and finance terrorism.

While the needs are enormous and requirements are always evolving, there is good cause for optimism, given the degree of cooperation extended by Member States who have requested our support in these areas:

For example, several of our panelists today highlighted the links between terrorism and organized crime. In fact, just last year, amid the pandemic, UNODC and UNOCT surveyed Member States and developed a joint Report of the Secretary-General on actions taken by Member States and UN entities to address the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime as mandated by UN Security Council resolution 2882 (2019). Member States cooperated with the UN on this front, even as they struggled with the pandemic's fallout. This was an important step that will produce better support to Member States to disrupt funding for terrorism.

In encouraging a more inclusive role for women, UNODC has been training criminal justice policymakers and practitioners on gender dimensions of criminal justice responses to terrorism.

UNODC, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and UNOCT are in partnership to develop model legal provisions to support victims of terrorism, to be finalized this year.

As terrorists exploit digital tools to recruit, radicalize and operationalize, they become vulnerable to detection and disruption through the same digital sphere.

We are supporting Member States with specialized skills and legal channels to access electronic evidence to investigate and prosecute terrorism related crimes, and even prevent attacks, save lives, and protect national economies. UNODC and CTED and International Association of Prosecutors have produced practical solutions, a guidebook, and a network, the Global Initiative on Digital Evidence, to build Member States' capacities.

As the world economy hobbles back on the road to recovery from the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and as global travel resumes, new opportunities also arise for terrorist to travel, raise funds and plan attacks. Therefore, we must remain vigilant. The international community must remain engaged and re-invest in programmes to build capacity of Member States, to modernize and mobilize their criminal justice systems.

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

Counter-terrorism laws, strategies, and institutions, can become more inclusive and integrated. More segments of society can be convinced to become allies to help counter the corrupt narrative of radicalization that often target the marginalized. Criminal justice systems' outreach to civil society, the youth, women, and minorities, and addressing the inequalities and inequities that fracture societies, all can help inoculate a society from the risks of radicalization to violent extremism, help victims and survivors of terrorism, and heal communities.

At UNODC, we remain fully committed to this cause and will continue, in partnership with all Global Compact partners, to support Member States build stronger and smarter criminal justice responses to preventing and countering terrorism.

Thank you so very much to our distinguished panel and to all participants.