



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

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

Session V: The imperative of strengthening international and regional cooperation to counter-terrorism in the new decade

30 June 2021, 10 a.m.

Under-Secretary General Voronkov,
Excellences,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) for inviting the OSCE to this Conference. I am honored to contribute to this aptly titled session on the imperative of strengthening international and regional cooperation.

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its severe disruptions to economies and local communities around the world, has added grist to the mill of violent movements that feed on discontent. Our vigilance is needed more than ever, and so is our ability to harness the power of international co-operation to effectively address this shared threat.

But one thing must be clear. New counter-terrorism laws and security measures must not encroach on civic space or come at the expense of freedom of association and other

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fundamental freedoms. Respect for human rights and inclusivity are essential aspects of our efforts to tackle terrorism. They lead to stronger buy-in, more transparency, greater trust and more sustainable impact.

These key principles are also highlighted a recent [report](#) that we issued together with UNOCT and Switzerland on addressing the challenges posed by returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and their families. The report is one of the outcomes of the High-level Conference on Foreign Terrorist Fighters co-organized with the OSCE Albanian Chairpersonship last year. Promoting the rule of law in the context of investigating, prosecuting and rehabilitating terrorist offenders continues to be an important aspect of our work.

In line with our comprehensive approach to security, we have been fostering close collaboration with the UN and other partners in a number of areas.

Allow me to highlight some examples:

In 2019, the OSCE and UNOCT signed a Biennial Action Plan, followed by the immediate implementation of joint activities on Critical Infrastructure and Vulnerable Target Protection; Border Security; and Countering Terrorist Use of the Internet. Combining efforts and expertise has clearly been beneficial for both of us.

For the third year in a row, the OSCE and UNOCT are co-organizing an OSCE-wide Seminar on Passenger Data Exchange (*October 2021*). This annual event serves to support OSCE participating States in implementing passenger data systems and enhancing the security of international air travel as mandated in UN Security Council Resolutions 2396 and 2178.

Together with UNOCT, we are launching an Informal Working Group on Passenger Data (IWG) for participating States from the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. It will provide a forum for working-level, technical discussions on good practices and cooperative efforts across several themes in passenger data cooperation. The initiative originated in UNOCT but the OSCE will serve as coordinator moving forward. Given our expertise, existing network partnerships and field presence across the region, we very much expect to make a strong contribution to our common efforts in this area.

Now let me turn to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), headquartered in Vienna like ourselves, and a valued and trusted partner for many years. Together, we are pursuing a well-established training programme on countering terrorist financing that has been rolled out to eight countries in Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe. As part of a set of progressively

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advanced courses, we have most recently added a module on preventing the abuse of NGOs for terrorist financing purposes.

I wish to acknowledge our long-standing relationship with the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN CTED). We are pleased to contribute experts to their assessment visits in the OSCE area.

In addition to these partnerships with our UN counterparts, we enjoy close ties with the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Last but not least, I wish to highlight the value we attach to platforms such as the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, and our fruitful collaboration with a large number of civil society organizations that contribute their expertise to many of our projects, in particular in prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Ladies and gentlemen,

All of us convened here today rely on effective collaboration. I wish to thank our partners and all participants in this Forum for their commitment to addressing the terrorist threat together. Let me reiterate the readiness of my Organization to continue to strengthen collaboration at the regional and sub-regional level.

I wish all of us fruitful and interesting discussions, and renewed impetus for effective common action.

Thank you.