



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Video remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General of the
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**OSCE Regional Policy Dialogue with Legislators from South-Eastern Europe on the
Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration
of Foreign Terrorist Fighters**

14 – 15 October 2021, Vienna, Austria

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you for the *Regional Policy Dialogue with Legislators from South-Eastern Europe on the Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters*, organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Secretariat and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The threats that foreign terrorist fighters pose are felt around the world.

Two and a half years have passed since the territorial defeat of Da'esh. Yet, many foreign terrorist fighters and their families remain stranded in Syria and Iraq – a situation that enables impunity for perpetrators and denies protection and justice to victims of those heinous acts.

Additionally, those who have been left behind in camps in North-Eastern Syria and Iraq, many of whom are women and children, face dire living conditions and lack basic needs.

The recent escalation of violence in these camps and the continued threat of COVID-19 highlight the urgent need for Member States to repatriate, prosecute, rehabilitate, and reintegrate their nationals.

The status quo presents serious protection, human rights, and counter-terrorism concerns, as was highlighted by Member States during the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and also raised by Member States during the General Debate in NY in September.

Today, the situation in Afghanistan has made the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon even more urgent and complex.

And parliamentarians play a vital role in addressing it.

Excellencies,

United Nations Security Council resolutions 1373, 2178, 2349, and 2396 set down the requirements for Member States to develop and implement prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies, including for suspected foreign terrorist fighters and their families, as well as criminalizing various acts associated with terrorism and holding those implicated accountable.

In addition, the Madrid Guiding principles of 2015 and 2018 provide the practical tools for Member States to implement these obligations.

Policymakers and legislators carry an important responsibility: to provide the legislative frameworks and resources that enable the security, social, and criminal justice systems to uphold these obligations and the guidance provided by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.

Recognizing this, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), with the generous support of the State of Qatar, has established a new Programme Office in Doha.

This Office, together with the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), is already undertaking practical work relevant for today's discussion, including developing a 'Parliamentary Handbook on Resolution 1373'.

Excellencies,

As Member States and their parliamentarians around the world are facing pressing issues related to foreign terrorist fighters, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of UNOCT has offered guidance, coordination and capacity building through the Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR).

PRR strategies aim to reconcile security considerations with a dignified and human rights-based approach that restores lives, and helps with the healing processes of individuals and communities with a view to rehabilitate them back into society. Without comprehensive PRR

responses, there are significant risks of shattered lives, broken communities, and recurring cycles of violence.

With that in mind, it is of utmost importance that PRR approaches take steps to avoid the marginalization and stigmatization of returnees and their families in an effort to thwart future radicalization.

A Compendium of Member States' PRR practices and policy recommendations developed by UNOCT in partnership with CTED and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) will be available to Member States in early 2022.

This essential resource collects good practices and lessons learned from 31 countries worldwide. In South-Eastern Europe, Member State practices will be collected in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and North Macedonia.

Excellencies,

During the 76th United Nations General Assembly, we formally launched the Global Framework for UN Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees and its dedicated Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

The Global Framework supports Member States to protect and address the needs of returnees while also building the capacity needed to respond to security concerns and to ensure accountability.

My Office coordinates the Global Framework together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to facilitate PRR support to requesting Member States.

This Framework, which we have already started implementing in Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, offers us a way forward.

Excellencies,

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.

Our practical collaboration is especially advanced on countering terrorist travel and border security management, including our annual Passenger Data Seminars. As you will discuss today, these can be directly relevant to addressing the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon.

I am pleased that OSCE Members are increasingly interested in being the beneficiaries of the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme to advance API/PNR capacities.

Excellencies,

Let me conclude by reiterating my gratitude for this timely discussion and conveying my commitment to supporting the global parliamentary community to achieve a safer world, one without terrorism, for present and future generations.

I thank you.