



Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian
Deputy Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism

Third 2021 Quarterly Briefing to Member States
29 October 2021, 10:00 - 13:00

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear colleagues and friends,

Good morning. Welcome to this year's Third UNOCT Quarterly Briefing to Member States.

We are honoured to be joined today by His Excellency, Mr. Bakhtiyor Ibragimov, Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

In June, my Office organized the United Nations' second Counter-Terrorism Week which delivered three significant achievements.

First, the primary outcome of CT Week was the consensus adoption of the seventh biennial review resolution of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly to guide global counter-terrorism efforts for the next two years. It is the most comprehensive review to date, with 53 entirely new paragraphs.

UNOCT served as the substantive secretariat for that process. We commend and re-state our appreciation to the co-facilitators, Oman, and Spain, for steering the negotiations to a successful outcome and all Member States for their constructive approach.

We welcome the resolution's emphasis on:

1. Terrorism based on xenophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief,
2. Addressing the use of new technologies for terrorist purposes and responsibly harnessing their potential,

3. Repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration, especially of children, and
4. Strengthening the rule of law, human rights, and gender equality.

We are all actively working to integrate the outcomes of the review into our work, building on the gains from the reform of the UN counter-terrorism architecture. We are grateful for Member States' support and guidance, in this regard.

Second, the Second High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States brought together nearly 2,150 participants from Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society and private sector organizations, and United Nations entities.

The conference enhanced our understanding of the transformative impact of new technologies on both terrorism and counter-terrorism efforts.

Third, on the margins of that Conference, Member States, United Nations entities, civil society, and private sector organizations partnered to organize a series of 36 online side events.

Approximately 10,000 participants attended these side events, which saw an additional 15,000 views on UN WebTV. These events helped put the spotlight on specific counter-terrorism challenges and good practices and contributed significantly to the overall success of the Second Counter-Terrorism Week.

We will share a report of the High-Level conference soon.

The concerns highlighted during the Second Counter-Terrorism Week also featured prominently during the General Debate of the 76th session of the General Assembly last month. Some 110 Member States highlighted terrorism among the urgent, global challenges facing the international community.

Over 70 Member States underscored the importance of international and regional cooperation. In addition, twice as many Member States as last year emphasized human rights and the rule of law as the bedrock of counter-terrorism.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

I also wish to highlight the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism held on 20 August, as well as the commemorative event organized by my Office at the 9/11 Memorial in New York on 20 September, which was attended by Heads of State and Government, Ministers and Permanent Representatives on the eve of the General Debate.

These events were deeply moving, and galvanizing, and availed us the opportunity to renew our commitment to support the victims of terrorism worldwide. I thank all victims of terrorism for their indispensable contributions in this regard.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

Since our last quarterly briefing, we have witnessed significant developments across the terrorism landscape in which UNOCT's mandate for policy leadership, coordination, and capacity-building functions has been very active. The 13th Report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh, prepared by UNOCT, CTED, and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, and presented to the Security Council in August, covering the period before 15 August, highlighted particularly worrying developments in Afghanistan and several parts of Africa.

In response to recent developments in Afghanistan, Mr. Voronkov and I have been closely engaged in different UN fora, including the Executive and Deputies Committees, to understand the implications of the Taliban takeover on the terrorism landscape.

In our engagement with UN entities and Member States, Mr. Voronkov and I have stressed that many of the Taliban's caretaker cabinet members are subject to Security Council sanctions.

It is thus not only manifestly counterproductive but also legally impossible for UNOCT to engage with the de facto authorities and the country. So, we will instead prioritize providing counter-terrorism advice and assistance to neighboring countries and the broader region in their efforts against the ensuing increasing threat.

During the Sixth Meeting of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee on 8 October, Member States and UN entities reiterated that the country should never again be used as a platform for terrorist groups and recommended to strengthen support to neighbouring countries to prevent any spill-over of insecurity, and to countries further afield, which could face terrorist groups emboldened by the Taliban take-over.

Moving on from Afghanistan, let me now turn to more prosaic matters.

In recent months, we have increasingly used the Compact platform to enhance our engagement with our Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) partners and expanded our support to Member States through this platform.

On October 1st, UNOCT launched the innovative new UNOCT “Connect & Learn” platform, featuring a Communities of Practice forum and eLearning opportunities to complement our in-person activities.

UNOCT is currently finalizing a Gender Policy and Action Plan, and have started to develop a Global Gender programme. Also, in partnership with Canada and the GCTF, UNOCT is finalizing a Gender & Identities Platform. We are also in the final stages of developing a new Global Human Rights Programme.

Since the last briefing to the Member States, UNCCT completed a draft of the new Programme Framework for the period 2022-2025 under the overarching framework of UNOCT’s first ever Strategic Plan and Programme Framework (SPPF).

Reflecting UNCCT’s evaluative culture, the UNOCT SPPF is strongly informed by the recommendations of the KPMG evaluation. In line with one of the recommendations, the SPPF ensures programmatic alignment between UNCCT and SPIB. Essentially the Strategic Plan and Programme Framework explains how the Office operationalizes its General Assembly mandate.

In a moment, my colleagues will provide you with further information on our recent and planned coordination and capacity-building activities as well as the new Multi-Year Appeal that was launched in September.

Finally, let me close by expressing my deep appreciation to all our donors, notably Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as well as the EU and the other 34 Member States who have provided 97% of the budget we need to carry out our General Assembly mandate and help Member States implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

As many of you know from the negotiations during the 7th review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, UNOCT only has eight posts funded by the UN Regular Budget, despite the General Assembly having resolved in 2017 that UNOCT have adequate resources to carry out its core functions.

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's generous 2011 contribution will be exhausted by next year and the vital funding we receive from the State of Qatar to establish and carry out our core functions is set to end in 2023, we look forward to the Fifth Committee's consideration in due course of the technical assessment of UNOCT's budget called for by the General Assembly in June.

Thank you.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

And with that, it is now my pleasure to give the floor to Her Excellency Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani for some pre-recorded remarks.

You have the floor, Excellency.

Thank you.