



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Statement by Mr. Raffi Gregorian,
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**3rd No Money For Terror Ministerial Conference on
Counter-Terrorism Financing**

Session 4: International Co-operation to address challenges in combating terrorist financing

19 November 2022, New Delhi, India

Thank you, Madam Moderator

Honorable Chair
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the Government of India for its hospitality and for convening this third “No Money For Terror” ministerial and inviting the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to address you today. I am pleased to be here with our two closest UN partners, CTED and UNODC, with whom we work on a variety of high-impact global programmes, like our Countering Terrorist Travel.

It has been 23 years since the Security Council imposed sanctions on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban and 21 years since it adopted resolution 1373 in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. UJNSCR 1373 obliged all Member States to make the financing of terrorism a serious criminal offence and, among other things, to prevent those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts from using their territories for those purposes against other State or their citizens.

While the original leaders of Al-Qaeda and its spawn from Iraq, Da’esh, have been removed from the battlefield and the so-called Islamic State territorially defeated, terrorism remains a major threat to international peace and security, with both groups expanding in Africa and continuing to harbor intentions to reconstitute their external operations capabilities. In addition, we have seen a renewed rise in terrorist activity motivated by xenophobia, racism or other forms of

intolerance, including on the basis of religion or belief. But one thing has not changed: financing remains the lifeblood of terrorism, and countering it is key to effectively addressing this scourge.

Terrorist groups continue to generate funds for their activities through legal and illegal means, including the abuse of legitimate enterprises and non-profit organizations, donations, crowdfunding, and the proceeds of criminal activity.

In addition to using cash and traditional avenues to finance their activities, they have been innovating and using new financial means, such as virtual assets. As payment technologies develop and become more available, terrorists will likely use such means even more extensively, especially due to the speed and confidentiality they can provide.

Moreover, social media and other online technologies continue to play an evolving role as platforms for terrorism financing, including the use of encrypted communications and the dark web.

We can also expect that terrorists will continue innovating online gaming platforms and even the metaverse as means to perpetuate their narratives and raise funds through cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens.

We also observe that the exploitation, trade and trafficking of natural resources are sometimes used by terrorist groups to finance their activities.

Beyond the diversification of their sources of income, terrorist groups have demonstrated their resilience to maintain control over funding flows. Having once disposed as much as several hundred million dollars, Da'esh leadership today still reportedly controls approximately \$25 million in reserves, with some reporting as high as \$50 million, and continues to direct funding transfers to global affiliates. These are still sizeable sums, when one considers Al-Qaida is estimated to have spent between \$400,000 - \$500,000 to carry out the 9/11 attacks.

These trends underline the need for our continued commitment and concerted action to prevent and disrupt illicit financial flows intended for terrorist purposes.

And as for any efforts to counter terrorism, strengthened international cooperation and coordination is critical given that terrorist financing has such a transnational character.

This requires timely, adequate and relevant information and evidence-exchange at the regional and international levels, with a particular focus on supporting the development of Financial

Information-Sharing Partnerships with the private sector, to enable law enforcement information to be proactively shared both ways.

It also requires all stakeholders to work together to better identify and address terrorist financing risks, to assess the impact of counter-terrorism financing measures, such as de-risking, and to prioritize our resources and efforts.

In the meantime, strengthened cooperation in countering terrorism financing should not come at the cost of undermining civic space and principled humanitarian action.

The experience of the past two decades decidedly shows that grounding countering terrorism measure, including CFT, in human rights, the rule of law and gender is a prerequisite of effective and sustainable results.

Countering the financing of terrorism remains a high priority for the United Nations and one of the key pillars of our counter-terrorism efforts. Over the years, the Security Council and the General Assembly have underscored the strategic importance of suppressing terrorists' abilities to raise, move and use financial resources to advance their agenda.

Particularly relevant to our session today is Security Council resolution 2462 (2019) and the General Assembly's resolution following its 7th biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, both which call for strengthened cooperation and improved information-sharing capabilities, including among law enforcement, intelligence, security services and financial intelligence units.

Less than a month ago, the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee recognized in its Delhi Declaration the opportunities, but also the risks of misuse, of innovations in financial technologies and the need to strengthen Member States' capabilities to handle increasingly complex terrorism financing cases, including in partnership with the private sector.

The Office of Counter-Terrorism supports Member States in these efforts, in cooperation with the FATF-Style Regional Bodies, academia, civil society, regional organizations and our 44 other Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact partners, which now included FATF.

Since 2020, UNOCT's Global Programme on Countering the Financing of Terrorism, with support from India, France, the Netherlands, and Saudi Arabia has provided training to over 5,500 officials from 45 Member States.

And with support from the Netherlands and academic research institutes in South Korea and the UK, the Global CFT Programme, in partnership with the UN Office of Information and Communications Technology, has been working to develop “goFintel”, a frontier technology solution for financial intelligence units to address just the sorts of challenges we have discussed for the past two days—of finding that proverbial needle in a haystack. It will provide FIUs that have to handle large financial flows an AI-assisted capability to analyze complex patterns of conventional and new forms of financial transactions to counter terrorist financing and other serious crimes, adding an important new tool that will be able to work alone or in tandem with UNODC’s goAML.

We will conduct multi-stakeholder discussions, including with NPOs on integrating a risk-based approach and human rights due diligence in the development of this technology. And given what I have heard at this conference, I am interested in exploring how these systems can work together with goTravel, the CT Travel Programme’s API/PNR analysis software that can link with INTERPOL and other multinational, bilateral, and national databases and watchlists.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

No country can defeat terrorism on its own. It is only through strong international cooperation and coordination that we will be able to achieve concrete, effective, proportionate and sustainable results in our struggle against terrorism financing.

Thank you.