UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

21–30 JUNE

2021 **COUNTER-TERRORISM** WEEK

VISIBILITY REPORT

" Member States have the ultimate responsibility to prevent technologies from falling into terrorist hands. We cannot afford anyone lagging behind due to a lack of capability or adequate regulation.

At the same time, new technologies need to be harnessed responsibly for counter-terrorism, within the framework of the rule of law and human rights.
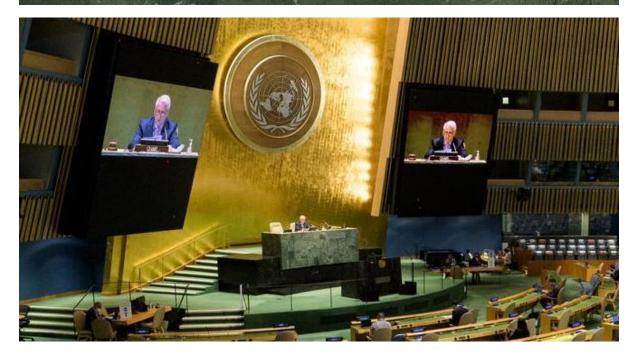
It is especially urgent that States develop the capabilities to collect, use and exchange electronic evidence of terrorist activity online and offline.

Drones, biometrics, Artificial Intelligence and big data offer new tools to protect vulnerable targets, thwart attacks and bring terrorists to justice."

Mr. Antonio Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General

2021 Counter-Terrorism Week
HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM
OPENING SESSION – 28 JUNE 2021

Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, briefs reporters on the High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism. At left is Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General (30 June 2021). UN Photo/Mark Garten.

Raffi Gregorian, Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, chairs the second United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States (28-30 June 2021). UN Photo/Manuel Elías

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Foreword

By Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Many of the technologies that have emerged over the past two decades have transformed how people live, communicate, learn, and think.[1] These technologies have contributed to improving human lives and moving the sustainable development agenda forward. But some have also been used maliciously or have had unintended negative consequences. As a case in point, technological advances have made it attractive for terrorists, their violent extremist supporters, and their criminal associates to exploit the Internet, social media, encrypted communication, and the dark web to facilitate various nefarious activities. Rapid advances in artificial intelligence, robotics technology, 3-D printing, big data, algorithmic filters, and biotechnology present multiple opportunities for terrorist exploitation.

At the same time, Member States, United Nations entities, and international and regional organizations have used these same technologies to gather, use and share information, detect, and prevent acts of terrorism, and bring perpetrators to justice. The media and civil society have also made innovative use of modern technologies to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding, promote pluralism, tolerance, and coexistence, and foster counter-terrorist narratives and an environment inimical to hate speech and incitement to terrorism.

Social distancing, quarantines and other measures to contain and fight the COVID-19 virus over the past year have accelerated the use of, and dependence on, transformative technologies across societies and sectors. While of tremendous benefit to public health, such measures have also exacerbated the digital divide within and across countries, raised concerns about the responsible development and use of new technologies, including for law-enforcement purposes, and highlighted vulnerabilities to new and emerging forms of terrorism.

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1   A list of the transformative technologies, systems and applications and their terrorism-related risks and counter-terrorism opportunities is annexed to the present report.

During the First High-Level Conference of the Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, convened on 28-29 June 2018 by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, participants expressed concern at the widespread use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) by terrorists to spread their ideologies and coordinate attacks. Subsequent high-level regional conferences organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in partnership with Member States[2] also underlined the need for more guidance on practical measures to address, in compliance with international law, terrorist exploitation of ICTs.

Member States echoed this during the 2020 Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week, organized by UNOCT in July 2020. They warned that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic would likely lead to more diverse terrorist threats, including cyber disruption of critical infrastructure. Member States deemed the misuse of digital technologies and social media to spread terrorist narratives the most pressing issue requiring urgent joint action from governments, social media, technology companies, and civil society. They emphasized the need to protect freedom of expression and beliefs while addressing the impacts of transformative technologies on counter-terrorism-related challenges and opportunities.

In response to these concerns, the Secretary-General convened on 28-30 June 2021 the Second High-Level Conference of the Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, under the overarching theme of "Countering and Preventing Terrorism in the Age of Transformative Technologies: Addressing the Challenges of the New Decade." The Conference, held in a hybrid format, featured 13 interactive sessions with 85 eminent speakers. It was attended by over 2,000 in-person and online participants representing 147 Member States, 38 United Nations entities, 28 international and regional organizations, and 88 civil society and private sector organizations.

Under the Secretary-General's leadership, the High-Level Conference, and the 36 side-events held on its margins, saw productive exchanges among a broad range of stakeholders, fostering a shared understanding of counter-terrorism challenges in the new decade and practical ideas on how to partner and move forward to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council resolutions. The discussions echoed the priorities addressed during the seventh review of the Strategy and the resulting comprehensive and forward-looking

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2 In Vienna, Austria (February, 2020), Minsk, Belarus (September, 2019), Budapest, Hungary (November, 2019), Nairobi, Kenya (July, 2019), Ulan Bator, Mongolia (June, 2019), Dushanbe, Tajikistan (May, 2019), and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (December, 2019).

resolution 75/291 adopted by consensus by the General Assembly on 30 June 2021, marking the end of the Second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations.

Looking ahead, UNOCT will work with its partners to raise awareness of the outcomes of the seventh review of the Strategy and the main threats, trends, challenges, lessons learned, and approaches to addressing those issues identified by participants during the Second Counter-Terrorism Week. We will provide policy leadership on priority issues identified by Member States and strengthen related capacity-building support, upon request. We will support a human-rights reset for counter-terrorism and strengthen our engagement with civil society organizations, local communities, academia and the private sector to empower and support all relevant stakeholders to address the full range of persistent, new, and emerging counter-terrorism issues.

To do so, we will consolidate the gains from the reform of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture, working closely with United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities and relevant international, regional, and subregional organizations to ensure a coordinated and sustainable approach, anchored in national ownership.

I express my profound gratitude to Secretary-General Guterres for convening the Conference. I also acknowledge and thank our eminent speakers and the State of Qatar, whose core financial support for my Office, along with that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, made this event possible.

This report sets out several proposals for strengthening partnerships to prevent and counter terrorism in a new decade of reinvigorated and networked multilateralism. I look forward to working closely with Member States and all our partners to further strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation.

Vladimir Voronkov
Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Opening Session

Countering and Preventing Terrorism in the Age of Transformative Technologies - Addressing the Challenges of the New Decade

The opening session, chaired by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, framed the focus of the High-Level Conference on preventing and countering terrorism in the age of transformative technologies. The United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and the President of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, participated in the opening session with eminent speakers representing Member States, regional and subregional organizations, and civil society from around the world. The Secretary-General's keynote address set the tone for subsequent discussions, in which broad consensus emerged on the need to build resilience, strengthen efforts to promote and protect human rights while preventing and countering terrorism, and address the challenges and opportunities of transformative technologies.

Mr. António Guterres

Secretary-General of the United Nations, expressed concern at the rapid spread of terrorism in Africa, and the challenge posed by thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and their family members who remain in detention and displacement camps in Iraq and northeastern Syria, most of whom are women and children. He expressed alarm at the rise of xenophobia, racism, intolerance, and sectarian violence in various parts of the world. He emphasized the need for the international community to rise to the challenges of new technologies, including nurturing the opportunities they present and mitigating the risks. He specifically noted the need to strengthen international efforts to address the counter-terrorism risks related to cyberattacks, encryption, blockchain, drones, 3-D printing, and deep fakes. In mapping out the way forward, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for consistent, coordinated, and comprehensive efforts across countries, sectors, and disciplines anchored in human rights and the rule of law, focusing on prevention and resilience.

Mr. Volkan Bozkır

The President of the United Nations General Assembly similarly expressed concern over increasing instability and insecurity in parts of Africa and the potential for the COVID-19 pandemic to exacerbate social and economic grievances conducive to terrorist radicalization and recruitment. He specifically highlighted the need to address the use of cryptocurrencies to finance terrorist attacks.

H.E. Dr. Mohamed Al-Hassan

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman, and Co-Facilitator of the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, called on the international community to act in a spirit of collective responsibility against terrorism. He stressed the need to research the "root causes" of terrorism and place international law at the center of all counter-terrorism measures. He also called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to consider upgrading UNOCT to a department, given the priority attached by Member States to counter-terrorism and growing interest in the support provided by this Office.

H.E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations and Co-Facilititator of the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, highlighted that the consensus achieved on the review process sends a strong political message of unity against terrorism. He also noted that the creation and development of UNOCT with extra-budgetary funding serves as a positive example of multilateralism that now requires consolidation and sustainable finances and called for more guidance on countering the use of new technologies for terrorist purposes.

The eminent speakers and participants agreed on the urgent need to increase international cooperation to tackle the threats and challenges posed by terrorism highlighted. Participants assessed that the COVID-19 pandemic had intensified the use of the Internet and other digital technologies, with profound social and economic impacts, presenting both opportunities and risks, including for counter-terrorism. They emphasized the risks and challenges related to terrorists' use of the internet and social media to recruit and move funds, as well as terrorists' actual and potential use of increasingly accessible technologies such as artificial intelligence and unmanned aircraft systems ("drones"), including for surveillance, disruption or weaponization.

Participants stressed the need to step up knowledge-sharing, technical assistance, and capacity-building, as well as develop further guidance on countering the misuse of new technologies for terrorist purposes while strengthening their responsible use for counter-terrorism, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights, including those of privacy and freedom of expression. Finally, several participants highlighted UNOCT's central role in global counter-terrorism efforts, commended its efforts to step up its field presence, and underlined the need to provide the resources required for the Office to carry out its mandated functions.

Participants highlighted seven urgent strategic priorities to address the counter-terrorism challenges of the new decade:

1. **Tackling the complex legacies from Da'esh's crimes in Iraq and Syria**: This requires bringing foreign terrorist fighters to justice to break the cycle of violence as well as addressing the situation of tens of thousands of individuals, primarily women and children, stranded in camps in northeast Syria and Iraq, in dire need of protection and repatriation. To move forward, it is essential to ensure accountability for all international crimes committed in the conflict zones, promote human rights-based, age- and gender-sensitive approaches to prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration, and uphold the rights and needs of victims.

2. **Containing and reversing the spread of terrorism in parts of Africa**, where the security situation is rapidly deteriorating in a complex interplay of conflict, lack of development, human rights abuses, and violations, fueling grievances and instability. In 2020, around 90 percent of all terrorist attacks occurred in Member States or regions already suffering from armed conflicts, including several States in Africa, adding to their already enormous multidimensional challenges

3. **Taking concerted action to tackle the growing, transnational terrorist threat from attacks based on xenophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance**. Often laced with misogyny, this threat has been boosted by the surge in online hate, conspiracy theories, and anti-government sentiment during the COVID-19 pandemic, just as many people, and especially the youth, were confined at home and spending more time on the Internet, with limited or no access to education, employment, training, or social activities

4   **Tackling and staying ahead of terrorists' misuse of new technologies and harnessing these technologies responsibly to prevent and counter terrorism, bring terrorists to justice, strengthen preparedness, and mitigate the outcomes of terrorist attacks.** Technologies, systems, and applications that may present significant terrorism-related risks and counter-terrorism opportunities include 3D printing; artificial intelligence (AI); autonomous weapons systems; biometric systems; biotechnology; internet and other media; internet anonymization services; virtual private networks (VPN); dark web and darknet; end-to-end encrypted messengers; online gaming; smart cities; unmanned aircraft systems (UAS); virtual assets; and virtual payment systems *(see Annex II)*.

5   **Anchoring all counter-terrorism measures in international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and gender equality.** The United Nations Secretary-General called for a human-rights reset for counter-terrorism, and there has been a renewed focus over the past months on the need to protect and enable principled humanitarian action in situations impacted by terrorism

6   **Making a bold investment in prevention and building enduring resilience to address the conflicts, weak governance, bigotry, human rights abuses and violations, and development setbacks that spur terrorism.** Several participants stressed that technology is not the primary challenge with respect to terrorism, but rather terrorist narratives and the underlying grievances they feed on, including social and political grievances, mistrust in government, lack of human rights, and lack of economic opportunities and political participation, especially for young people.

7   **Maintaining the momentum to increase support to victims of terrorism**. Victims and survivors of terrorism make critical contributions to countering the appeal of terrorism, promoting justice and accountability, and building a shared common memory. Victims and their families should be provided with proper legal, medical, psychosocial, and financial support and assistance immediately after an attack and in the long term.

Sessions

SESSION I: The global scourge of terrorism – Assessment of current threats and emerging trends for the new decade

The first thematic session, **chaired by Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED),** was open to Member States only, in a hybrid format. It featured presentations by heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States, representatives of United Nations entities with counter-terrorism mandates, and INTERPOL. Member States made interventions from the floor during the session's interactive segment. The session focused on identifying and analyzing current threats and emerging trends for the new decade. Discussions centered on terrorist exploitation of transformative technologies, the evolution and impact of terrorism on different countries, and regions, and practical approaches for leveraging new technologies to prevent and counter terrorism.

Participants agreed that although the international community had made significant progress in the fight against terrorism, the threat has persisted and diversified. Several countries and regions, particularly those already suffering from armed conflict, have faced an increase in terrorist activity, which gained further momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants noted that terrorists widely use virtual platforms for propaganda and recruitment purposes, encrypted communications tools to plan attacks, and virtual assets and blockchain-based cryptocurrencies to raise and move funds. While the tragic terrorist attack against a synagogue in Halle, Germany, in October 2019, highlights the risks stemming from 3-D printed firearms, rapid developments in, and easier access to, artificial intelligence and drone technology was assessed as allowing terrorists to reduce the financial and human costs of carrying out attacks, conduct surveillance activities, cause disruption, and spread terror.

Participants assessed that the largest threat continued to stem mainly from Da'esh, Al-Qaida, and their affiliates, as they seek to make a come-back in Iraq and Syria, spoil the perspectives for peace in Afghanistan, expand and entrench themselves across Africa, and inspire so-called "lone actors" worldwide. They observed that the threat had already increased in conflict zones and fragile regions during the COVID-19 pandemic especially in Afghanistan, Syria, the Sahel, West Africa, and, most recently, in East and Southern Africa. Participants anticipated that the threat could spread to other parts of Africa, insecurity in Afghanistan could spill over into Central and South Asia, and the threat could also increase in non-conflict areas such as in South-East Asia.

It was noted that the threat environment in the new decade would be shaped by the medium- to long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasingly transnational threat of racially- or ethnically-motivated terrorism, advances in new-generation technology, and the increased and more sophisticated linkages between organized crime and terrorism. While assessments at the Conference were that terrorists were likely to resort to inspired lone-actor or small-cell attacks outside conflict zones, participants warned that terrorist groups could regain the capacity to orchestrate large, international attacks in the coming year and will continue to attempt to procure hazardous biological and chemical agents. The need to strengthen international cooperation and capacity-building to reduce the digital gap and improve the increasingly uneven operational capacities worldwide was also emphasized.

Building on the conclusions of the opening session, participants highlighted five main risk areas that could continue to shape the terrorist threat in the new decade, namely that:

1   **Terrorism could continue to increase in conflict zones and spread or "spillover" from conflict zones to nearby States.**

2   **Lone-actor and small-cell attacks could increase in non-conflict areas** in the coming months, as COVID-19 restrictions on travel and public gatherings ease worldwide. Terrorist use of transformative technologies could increase the rate and lethality of such attacks

3   **The increasing linkages between transnational organized crime and terrorism including for terrorism financing**, will provide terrorists with new fundraising opportunities and greater access to weapons, equipment, and potential new recruits.

4   **Terrorists are keen to adapt to using transformative technologies**, including virtual platforms, encrypted communications tools, virtual assets and blockchain-based cryptocurrencies, 3-D printed weapons, artificial intelligence, and drones.

5   **International terrorist groups may be attempting to procure hazardous biological and chemical agents.**

SESSION II: Parallel break-out discussions – Prevention in the Age of Transformative Technologies

The second thematic session was open to all participants and was entirely online, with interactive participation from the virtual floor. It consisted of **three parallel breakout discussions**, focusing on three critical issues on the prevention agenda, with presentations by representatives of Member States, United Nations entities, civil society organizations, including research organizations, the private sector, and multi-stakeholder platforms worldwide

Breakout Session A

Breakout Session A was chaired by His Excellency Major General Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al-Ansari, Chairman of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee of the State of Qatar. Participants discussed challenges and good practices for countering threats against major sporting events, and the use of sports and their values as a tool to build resilience and prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism. They also explored the benefits of insights from behavioural science to identify risk and resilience factors and develop empirically validated intervention programmes. Participants acknowledged that because prevention takes longer to deliver results and its impacts are less immediately visible, this could reduce the incentive to invest in prevention. However, prevention was more likely to have a profound, long-lasting, and positive impact on communities over time. They stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic should serve as a wake-up call to strengthen preparedness and invest in individuals and communities.

Participants stressed the power of sport in building personal and cultural bridges, strengthening resilience, and supporting rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and recommended leveraging peer group-focused sports and preventing violent extremism initiatives in this regard. Participants highlighted the potential for behavioural insights to improve the understanding of risk and resilience factors, help ensure the robust evaluation of capacity-building programs, strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, and complement individual intervention tools and education. Finally, participants stressed that prevention efforts should focus on vulnerable sectors of society, including migrant workers, and young people, while avoiding their stigmatization, by emphasizing resilience and empowerment.

Breakout Session B

Breakout Session B was chaired by Mr. John Frank, Vice President for United Nations Affairs at Microsoft. Participants assessed existing options and generated new ideas to prevent the misuse of cyberspace and new technologies for terrorist purposes. They noted that terrorists were increasingly using global social media platforms, messenger services, and crowdfunding websites for recruitment, propaganda, planning, and financing purposes. While smaller online platforms presented significant risks of misuse, regulation efforts frequently overlooked their roles. They highlighted the need to apply the March 2021 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) guidance for a risk-based approach to virtual assets.[3]

Participants also underscored the need to develop analytical frameworks to anticipate and proactively address the misuse of new technological developments. They noted that constructive multi-stakeholder approaches and public-private partnerships were needed to harness technologies' full potential to prevent and counter terrorism. The Christchurch Call was highlighted as a successful commitment by governments and technology companies to work collaboratively to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. Participants further stressed the need to promote global digital inclusion, awareness, citizenship, and access to digital information. Finally, they emphasized the need to strengthen the implementation of key international instruments on bio- and cyber-security, and share biometric data for counter-terrorism purposes in strict compliance with international law.

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3 http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/recommendations/RBA-VA-VASPs.pdf

Breakout Session C

Breakout Session C was chaired by Ms. Jennifer Loten, Director General, International Crime and Terrorism Bureau in Canada. Participants reviewed tools and strategies to ensure systematic, coherent, and structured engagement between Member States, international and regional organizations, and civil society to strengthen prevention efforts. They stressed the critical role of civil society in building resilience to terrorist radicalization, increasing accountability for terrorism and other serious international crimes, addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, mitigating its impacts on communities, and supporting the victims of terrorism.

Participants also stressed the need to engage with civil society organizations and local communities, systematically and meaningfully, in developing, implementing, and monitoring initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism (PCVE), and strengthen support and protection for such actors. They expressed concern over instances of misuse of counter-terrorism laws and measures to suppress dissent and restrict civic space, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also noted that the fast-increasing use of several technologies, including biometrics and artificial intelligence, has outpaced the development of legislative and policy frameworks to prevent potential negative impacts on human rights.

Building on the conclusions of the previous sessions, participants highlighted seven key areas requiring further attention to strengthen prevention in the age of transformative technologies, namely:

1   **Developing and implementing whole-of-society, multi-disciplinary prevention approaches that integrate the power of sport, behavioral science, and transformative technologies to build more inclusive and resilient societies.**

2   **Promoting global digital inclusion, awareness, citizenship, and access, including by stepping-up capacity-building.**

3   **Developing analytical frameworks, skills, transparency, and oversight to anticipate and proactively address terrorist use of new and emerging technologies**.

4	**Strengthening the implementation of international requirements and applying existing guidance to address the risks related to bio- and cybersecurity, and terrorist use of virtual assets for financing purposes**.
5	**International terrorist groups may be attempting to procure hazardous biological and chemical agents.**
6	**Developing guidelines on engagement with civil society organizations and local communities and ensuring their systematic and meaningful inclusion and participation in decision-making processes.**
7	**Increasing political and financial support to, and protection for civil society actors, including by addressing the potential negative impacts of counter-terrorism measures on civil society**

SESSION III: Upholding human rights and promoting gender responsiveness while countering terrorism in the age of transformative technologies

The third thematic session, **chaired by Mr. Raffi Gregorian, Director of UNOCT and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General**, was held in an open, hybrid format. It featured presentations by participating United Nations entities and agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and multi-stakeholder platforms, with various interventions from the floor during the interactive segment.

Participants considered challenges and good practices for ensuring full compliance with human rights and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism, supporting and protecting the victims and survivors of terrorism, ensuring that all counter-terrorism measures fully comply with Member States' obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and promoting gender responsiveness while countering terrorism in the new decade.

Participants reiterated that technological innovations can and should be leveraged to support efforts to improve the human condition, promote and uphold human rights, and achieve gender equality. Unfortunately, however, terrorist groups are seeking to use, or have already used, those same technologies to advance their objectives, spread hatred and disinformation, and carry out attacks, resulting in human rights abuses. Discussions further emphasized the legal, policy, and practical challenges in addressing the use of new technologies for terrorism purposes, and conversely to counter terrorism, while upholding human rights, including gender equality.

Participants noted that efforts to moderate potentially harmful content on the Internet and social media risked undue interference with fundamental freedoms and creating a "chilling effect," dissuading social media users from expressing themselves in a manner that may amount to legally protected speech in certain jurisdictions. They also highlighted that the increasing use of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and biometric identifiers for surveillance, screening and targeting systems presented risks related to privacy and discrimination, noting that the datasets informing many of these applications contain racial and gender biases, potentially leading to prohibited profiling and misidentification on a systematic scale. Such practices could exacerbate discrimination, compound violations of civil and political rights, and alienate communities in a way that terrorists can exploit. Participants cautioned against using new technologies for counter-terrorism purposes in contexts with evident patterns of human rights violations.

Participants noted that public and private sector actors often overlook the gender dimensions of new technologies, often wrongly perceived as gender-neutral. Consequently, they typically base their strategies to reduce the risks presented by new technologies on unchecked gendered assumptions. For example, participants high-lighted that online terrorist recruitment efforts often specifically target women, who may face fewer restrictions on their abilities to engage and communicate in the online space compared with the offline space. Participants also highlighted that counter-terrorism policies and measures that directly target or indirectly impact women often failed to appreciate the vulnerability of those women or the reasons for their conduct. Participants specifically noted the need to consider the gender dimensions in handling cases of ancillary offenses that could involve varying degrees of coercion, such as providing support to male family members.

Participants stressed the need for a gender- and human rights analysis of the impacts of measures to address terrorists' exploitation of new technologies and the use of new technologies for counter-terrorism purposes, and the critical need to include civil society,

academia, and industry in this analysis. They emphasized the need for robust laws, regulations, and measures to protect privacy and prevent discrimination and gender biases in the use of transformative technologies. They called for a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to using new technologies by design, from the outset, as a shared responsibility of both governments and the private sector. The discussions emphasized that given the rapid development and adoption of new technologies, their impacts on international human rights, including their potential for gendered harm, must be monitored continuously.

Participants highlighted the benefits of providing training and support to both men and women, including young people and individuals from marginalized communities, to strengthen their digital literacy and online advocacy capacities to produce and disseminate through social media alternative narratives to hate speech and incitement to violence. They also stressed the need to mainstream human rights and gender-perspectives, including through a gender marker system, in all counter-terrorism capacity-building projects and programmes. Finally, they emphasized the need for concrete efforts to ensure the effective and meaningful participation and leadership of women in decision-making processes related to the use of ICTs in the context of international security.

Building on the conclusions of the previous sessions, participants called for increased efforts for the implementation of five approaches to strengthen efforts to uphold human rights and promote gender responsiveness while countering terrorism in the age of transformative technologies, namely:

1   **Developing a human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to the use of new technologies by design from the outset, as a shared responsibility of both governments and the private sector.**

2   **Ensuring women's meaningful participation and leadership in decision-making processes related to the use of ICTs in the context of counter-terrorism and security.**

3   **Developing a collaborative approach, including civil society, academia, and industry partners, to analyze and continuously monitor human rights and gender dimensions of new technologies in a counter-terrorism context.**

4	**Providing training to men and women, including young people and marginalized communities, to support their capacities to disseminate alternative narratives to hate speech through social media**.

5	**Mainstreaming human rights and gender perspectives, including through a gender marker system, in all counter-terrorism capacity-building projects and programs.**

SESSION IV: Parallel breakout discussions: Responding to new and evolving counter-terrorism challenges in the new decade

The fourth thematic session, held in an open online format, featured presentations by a diverse panel, including representatives of Member States, regional and subregional organizations, United Nations entities and agencies, non-governmental, civil society and humanitarian organizations, academia, research institutes, think-tanks, and the media. The **three parallel breakout discussions** focused on three critical issues for responding to new and evolving counter-terrorism challenges in the new decade, with interactive segments

Breakout Session A

Breakout Session A was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations. Participants reviewed the opportunities for addressing the challenges of the new decade. They expressed concern regarding the complex interplay between terrorism, protracted armed conflict, and climate change. They also highlighted the evolving terrorist threats related to maritime security, cybersecurity, and attacks against soft targets. While maritime security efforts have primarily focused on large commercial vessels, small vessels remain highly vulnerable to exploitation, which could contribute to terrorist financing and access to weapons. Participants noted for instance that terrorists could use small vessels to deliver Waterborne, Improvised Explosive Devices (WBIEDs).

Participants called for the strengthening of international cooperation to develop and employ tech-based solutions to disrupt terrorist activity and empower civil society organizations to participate meaningfully in counter-terrorism efforts. They highlighted the need for more effective implementation of Security Council requirements and recommendations on watch-listing, aviation, and maritime security and expanding INTERPOL connectivity to frontline law enforcement officers at airports, seaports, and land border crossings. They also encouraged further synergies between UNOCT and CTED, particularly regarding cyber-security, addressing terrorist radicalization, and countering terrorism financing. Finally, participants noted the critical importance of engaging the tech sector to counter terrorist exploitation of digital platforms, including through content moderation, while protecting fundamental freedoms.

Breakout Session B

Breakout Session B was chaired by Ms. Miwa Kato, Director, Division for Operations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Participants discussed the criminal justice system's role in addressing terrorism-related legal, practical, and policy issues in the new decade. They highlighted the urgent need to hold terrorists accountable for severe human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including sexual- and gender-based violence, recruitment and exploitation of children, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. They underscored the need to consider the gender and age dimensions in terrorism-related cases, including cases involving women or children as victims or witnesses or cases involving women or children who may have been accuse of, or convicted for, crimes. They highlighted the contributions from grassroots civil society organizations towards helping victims overcome their trauma, seek justice and accountability, rehabilitate, and reintegrate back into society, and build a shared social memory as a bulwark against terrorism.

Participants noted that the increasing overlap between terrorism, armed conflict, and organized crime presented complex challenges for criminal justice systems. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had caused or exacerbated delays or limitations for investigations, procedures, and trials in many Member States. Participants also expressed concern regarding the risks related to the spread of violent extremism and terrorist recruitment in prisons. Participants highlighted the need to strengthen domestic coordination within and beyond the security sectors, and public-private partnerships, to monitor the Internet and financial flows and improve the use of electronic, financial, and so-called "battlefield" evidence. Finally, they called for increased information sharing, judicial cooperation, and mutual legal assistance at the bilateral and multilateral levels,

as well as stepping-up capacity-building to address terrorism in the new decade, including terrorist use of transformative technologies.

Breakout Session C

During Breakout Session C, **chaired by Mr. Raffi Gregorian, Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT**, participants explored the needs and challenges related to protecting, repatriating, rehabilitating, and reintegrating women, and children with links to United Nations-listed terrorist groups. They expressed grave concerns regarding the humanitarian and security situation faced by women and children affiliated with foreign terrorist fighters in camps in northeastern Syria, where they have been stranded for more than two years. They noted that 62,000 people remained in Al Hol camp, two-thirds of whom are children, and around 10,000 of whom are so-called third country nationals. They observed that the conditions in the camp fell far below international standards in terms of access to food, water, health care, and education. They also highlighted the increased risks of violence, terrorist indoctrination and recruitment within the camps, the lack of justice and accountability, and the illegal transfer of funds to individuals associated with Da'esh in the camps.

Several participants implored Member States to repatriate, prosecute, rehabilitate, and reintegrate their nationals, noting that delaying repatriation was likely to render the prospects for rehabilitation and reintegration more difficult. Some Several Member States described their successful efforts to repatriate, rehabilitate and reintegrate children, which had continued despite the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. They emphasized the high potential for successfully rehabilitating children and the need for a comprehensive approach to such efforts, including support to facilitate family contacts, access to documentation, education, healthcare, and to address the risks of social stigmatization. It was also stressed that children in the camps must be treated primarily as victims and that they were entitled to special care and assistance. Participants welcomed and highlighted the support available from the United Nations through the Global Framework on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees coordinated by UNOCT and UNICEF to address the urgent needs of requesting Member States and to ensure a human rights-based age and gender-responsive approach.

Building on the conclusions of the previous sessions, participants called for increased efforts on six approaches to strengthen efforts to respond to new and evolving counter-terrorism challenges in the new decade:

1   **Ensuring accountability for all serious international crimes committed by terrorists, including human rights violations, war crimes, crimes against humanity, sexual- and gender-based crimes, and the recruitment or exploitation of children.**

2   **Stepping-up multilateral and comprehensive efforts to repatriate, prosecute, rehabilitate, and reintegrate foreign nationals in camps in northeast Syria and Iraq, in a lawful and human rights-compliant manner, paying particular attention to the rights and needs of women and children, and building on United Nations guidance and support.**

3   **Supporting grassroots civil society organizations to help victims overcome their trauma, seek justice and accountability, rehabilitate, and reintegrate into society, and build a shared social memory as a bulwark against terrorism.**

4   **Ensuring that the criminal justice system strictly upholds international human rights standards, considers gender and age dimensions, adheres to a victim-centered approach, and provides adequate protection to, and engagement with, vulnerable witnesses.**

5   **Strengthening international cooperation, domestic inter-agency coordination, and public-private partnerships to develop and employ technology-based solutions to disrupt terrorist activity, monitor the Internet and financial flows effectively, address terrorists' misuse of transformative technologies, and bring terrorists to justice.**

6   **Strengthening the implementation of Security Council requirements on watch-listing, aviation, and maritime security and expanding INTERPOL connectivity to frontline States.**

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

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, chaired the fifth and final thematic session, held in a hybrid format. It featured presentations by Member States and regional and subregional organizations. Participants discussed challenges and opportunities for strengthening bilateral, regional, and international counter-terrorism cooperation, including to support requesting Member States to address persistent legal, policy, practical and operational gaps. They reviewed lessons learned and good practices in developing national and regional plans of action to prevent and counter terrorism and considered how existing international legal cooperation instruments and tools can be further refined, and their implementation improved, including by making better use of technologies and capacity-building.

Participants stressed that while the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as the 19 international conventions and protocols against terrorism provided a robust global framework, much more could and needed to be done to strengthen practical regional and international counter-terrorism cooperation, specifically in response to the misuse of new technologies. They noted that, although the last two decades had seen significant progress in enhancing such cooperation, international legal, law enforcement, and border security efforts continued to face persistent legal, political, and practical challenges.

It was noted that strong international and regional cooperation was necessary to address terrorist exploitation of ICTs and the potential use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) materials; counter terrorist travel and terrorism financing; bring terrorists to justice; repatriate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate their family members as appropriate; and support the victims of terrorism worldwide. Enhanced international and regional coordination and collaboration were also identified as critical to anticipate how the terrorist threat will morph and to prevent terrorist groups from spreading further, including in Africa.

Participants stressed that, while Member States bear the primary responsibility for countering terrorism, the United Nations and other international, regional, and subregional organizations can contribute to a robust and networked response. They emphasized that regional and subregional organizations have acted as critical force-multipliers, highlighting their roles in formulating comprehensive and integrated regional counter-terrorism strategies, and designing and delivering tailored and sustainable capacity-building support. Participants stressed the need to incentivize integrated, global and regional cooperation and to provide regional organizations further opportunities to participate actively in global initiatives. They also recommended more regular dialogue among international and regional organizations.

Participants also underscored the importance of peer-to-peer exchanges and capacity-building support for developing policies, strategies and legislation, and adequate regional response mechanisms. They noted that both informal cooperation approaches and formal cooperation mechanisms were vital and recommended expanding international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation among Member States to include the private sector, especially technology companies. Participants further stressed that effective counter-terrorism responses require a broad range of coordinated measures to strengthen Member States' capacities to tackle the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

Building on the outcomes of the previous sessions, participants highlighted four key approaches to strengthening international and regional cooperation to counter terrorism in the new decade:

1   **Drawing on the comparative advantages of the United Nations, international, regional, and subregional organizations to contribute to a robust and networked response, formulate comprehensive and integrated regional counter-terrorism strategies, and design and deliver tailored and sustainable capacity-building support.**

2   **Incentivizing integrated, global and regional cooperation, and providing regional organizations further opportunities to participate actively in global initiatives.**

3   **Facilitating more regular dialogue and peer-to-peer exchanges among international regional and subregional organizations and strengthening both formal and informal cooperation approaches and mechanisms**.

4   **Expanding international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation among Member States to include the private sector, especially technology companies**.

Closing Session

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), delivered a Chair's Summary of the High-Level Conference. He recalled that the idea of organizing biennial high-level conferences on counter-terrorism emanated from the Secretary-General's vision to promote a networked global counter-terrorism response supported by regional conferences. He welcomed the richness of the discussions during the five thematic sessions which had advanced this goal, leading to a better understanding of the impact of new technologies on both the conditions conducive to terrorism, the evolving forms and manifestations of the threat, and counter-terrorism efforts. At the same time, the discussions had reiterated the crucial need to continue strengthening efforts to address traditional, low-tech tactics, which remained the primary terrorist threat faced by most countries, while preparing for tomorrow's threats.

Mr. Voronkov described three areas that UNOCT would focus on immediately to address some of the urgent needs and priorities highlighted during the High-Level Conference:

1. UNOCT would finalize its international policy and organizational arrangements to further mainstream gender and human rights issues throughout all its programming.

2. UNOCT would step up its support for Africa through its new counter-terrorism training hub in Rabat, Morocco, and a forthcoming regional capacity-building office in the UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

3. UNOCT would increase its support to Member States to set up inter-agency coordination mechanisms for counter-terrorism

Mr. António Guterres

The High-Level Conference was closed with a video-message from the United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres. The Secretary-General reiterated the need for the international community to be resolute, principled, and forward-looking in its pursuit of a world free from terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. He noted that while terrorism was a significant obstacle to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, development setbacks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, provided fertile ground for terrorists' agendas to take root. He emphasized the need to end the vicious cycles of underdevelopment, state fragility, and violence, highlighting that addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism is a joint responsibility and the need to do more to meet the needs of victims and survivors. He recalled that national ownership was essential, as are contributions from civil society and the private sector. The Secretary-General concluded by highlighting three strategic imperatives that demand sustained attention and collaboration:.

1. Tackling and staying ahead of the use of new technologies for terrorist purposes, while harnessing these technologies responsibly to protect societies and bring terrorists to justice.

2. Investing in prevention and resilience to address the conflicts, bigotry, human rights violations and abuses, and development setbacks that spur terrorism.

3. Anchoring counter-terrorism efforts in human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law.

Summary of Side Events

1. Building National Capacities to Counter Terrorist Travel: Highlighting Achievements, Impact and Lessons Learned from the Field

This event, organised by UNOCT's Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, highlighted perspectives on using technology to prevent and counter terrorist threats through travel data collection and analysis, while upholding human rights. UNOCT emphasised the importance of adopting an all-of UN approach to support Member States in building their capacity to detect and counter terrorists by using advance passenger information (API) and passenger name record (PNR) data. Speakers explained that the Programme has developed guidance materials, tools, and capacity building support; noting that the UN goTravel software has been deployed to several Member States. Representatives from Azerbaijan, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, and The Gambia shared their experiences and identified good practices in the implementation of the Programme and commended United Nations assistance in deploying API/PNR frameworks. Emphasis was put on the need to engage human rights bodies and data protection authorities at the early stages of project and product development.

2. Programming for the Future: Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism in the Digital Decade

This event was hosted by UNOCT and the State of Qatar to highlight the potential of applying Behavioural Insights (BI) research to counter-terrorism programming related to the Internet, strategic communications, and youth engagement. The State of Qatar referred to the recent opening of UNOCT's BI Hub in Doha, Qatar, as a demonstration of their shared commitment to supporting emerging work in this cross-disciplinary approach. UNOCT stressed the importance of the BI Hub as a centre for global research on this topic. The successes of BI approaches in other areas, such as public health, were highlighted along with various pilot initiatives to test BI in the counter-terrorism context. The event highlighted the possibility for behavioural science to be incorporated into existing preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) programs, leveraging existing work and adding another layer to current approaches. Speakers acknowledged

that although BI was a nascent area with respect to counter-terrorism, the BI Hub in Doha was well-positioned to provide capacity-building support for approaches, demonstrating promising results. In addition, the importance of recognizing social contexts was stressed, most notably social exclusion, as well as the disaggregation of data, by age and gender.

3. Responding to New and Evolving Challenges in the Next Decade: Lessons from Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Somalia

This event, organised by the State of Qatar, Somalia and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) examined prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration (PRR) efforts in Somalia, identifying important lessons on sustainable ways to end terrorism. Speakers highlighted the importance of adopting a whole-of-society and "mixed" approach to rehabilitation and reintegration, incorporating psychological support, economic opportunities, and civic engagement. Panellists noted that rehabilitation programs should endeavour to "re-humanize" combatants through dialogue and participation, rebuilding trust and social ties with communities, and addressing the mental health needs of former fighters. They recommended that national governments, working with international organizations, traditional leaders, religious institutions, local governments, and civil society, should ensure that PRR programmes were community-centred and tailored to local contexts.

4. Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism and Prevention Methods

This side event was organised by the Governments of Turkey and Australia. Panellists presented their respective national counter-terrorism and PCVE action plans and offered suggestions for whole-of-society efforts to prevent and counter the drivers of terrorist radicalization, which were linked to social exclusion, abuse within family circles, and religious and cultural discrimination. Suggested solutions included promoting tolerance, democratic values, and fostering community belonging. ICTs were highlighted as tools to continue to advance the implementation of national action plans during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in developing strong counter-narratives. At the same time, participants highlighted the abuse of ICTs by terrorists and violent extremists, including from the "far-right", to radicalize, recruit and incite to violence globally, especially among the youth.

5. Innovative Ways for Counter-Terrorism Training and Capacity Building: Opening of the New UNOCT Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa

This side event was hosted by UNOCT and the Kingdom of Morocco to inaugurate the new UNOCT Programme Office for training in Rabat, which would initially focus on the Sahel and support requesting Member States in North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Representatives from the Kingdom of Morocco emphasized that the growing terrorist threat in Africa needed be met with enhanced capacities, systemic cooperation between African countries, and support from the international community. UNOCT explained the vision and mission of its Training Office in Rabat as a hub for the development and delivery of tailored and human rights-compliant counter-terrorism policing and border security management training programmes through a holistic all-of-UN approach. community-centred and tailored to local contexts.

6. Life After ISIS: A Discussion on Repatriating Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Family Members

This side event, organized by Kazakhstan, the United States, UNOCT, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), emphasized the immediate need for screening, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration (SPPR) of returnees, and focused on the challenges faced by women and children with links to foreign terrorist fighters stranded in Syria and Iraq. Participants described the humanitarian crisis in detention and displacement camps, inadequate access to food, clean water, medicine, and shelter. Thousands of children lacked access to basic resources and education, making them vulnerable to indoctrination by terrorist elements. Women had also been disproportionately impacted, facing physical and psychological risks including retributive violence, the statelessness of their children and prosecutions that failed to properly consider the broad range of women's roles. Repatriation was advocated as the only human rights compliant course of action. Speakers noted that SPRR initiatives for returnees were essential. Such programs should be human rights-compliant, and gender- and age-sensitive, account for mental health considerations, and protect family units among returnees. Support from the United Nations was offered through its Global Framework on United Nations Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees, coordinated by UNOCT and UNICEF.

7. Preventing Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons: Towards Technical Guidelines to Facilitate the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2370 (2017), Related Good Practices and International Standards

This side event was hosted by CTED, in co-operation with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) in UNOCT, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)and sponsored by the Russian Federation. UNOCT and CTED spoke about the threat posed by terrorist access to weapons, which is exacerbated by the growing nexus between terrorism, arms trafficking, and criminal networks. The event highlighted the legislative, administrative, and operational level responses and capacities required to prevent, detect, and counter terrorists' acquisition, illicit trafficking, and use of weapons. Participants pointed to illegal cross-border flows, diversion from stockpiles, and illicit production and procurement as compounding the challenges in eliminating terrorist access to weapons. They noted that Security Council resolution 2370 (2017) was the first resolution to address the links between terrorism and the supply of weapons, while the terrorism-arms-crime nexus was otherwise addressed in a fragmented way.

8. Safeguarding Humanitarian Action in Counter-Terrorism Contexts: Addressing the Challenges of the New Decade

This event was organised by the International Peace Institute and Germany and sponsored by Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Spain, and Switzerland. The event emphasized the need for a safe dialogue between key stakeholders working in the humanitarian and counter-terrorism fields, whether inside or outside the United Nations system; Member States were called upon to uphold international humanitarian law. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) urged that counter-terrorism frameworks should ensure respect for international humanitarian law and highlighted the humanitarian exemption foreseen under the Somalia sanction regime as a best practice for facilitating humanitarian assistance in a counter-terrorism context. UNOCT emphasized that human rights and gender-sensitive strategies for counter-terrorism and PCVE were key to addressing humanitarian crises and shared how this was accounted for in its capacity-building initiatives, including the Global Framework on United Nations Support on Syria/Iraq Third Country National Returnees, UNOCT's Victims of Terrorism Support Program, and Global Programme on Countering the Financing of Terrorism in response to Security Council resolution 2462 (2019).

9. From Online Hate to Offline Violence: Addressing and Countering Hate Speech and Violent Extremism through Education in a Digital World

This side event was organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Jordan and Norway as Chairs of the Group of Friends on Preventing Violent Extremism, and co-organized by the Offices of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Special Representative on Violence against Children. It addressed the online and off-line nexus of hate speech and violent extremism in the digital age. While education was highlighted as critical tool for prevention, to be harnessed globally, speakers recognized the need for a multi-sectoral, whole-society approach in decision-making processes to address hate speech and violent extremism. Children and youth were also identified as critical actors of change in developing and promoting counter-narratives based on respect for human rights, as well as the need for a gender transformative approach to countering violent extremism. The event proposed key recommendations for fostering ICT literacy. Hate speech was also raised as a key concern and a potential indicator for atrocity crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Links between hate speech, racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Muslim sentiments were also discussed, all of which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants stressed the need for youth-led, peer-to-peer learning to enhance the role of youth in countering hate speech, youth-empowerment policies, investment in youth-led initiatives, as well as putting the perspectives of young people and children at the forefront of decision-making processes.

10. High-Level Side Event on Terrorist Financing Vulnerabilities in the Post-COVID Landscape

This high-level side event was hosted by France, India, UNODC, UNOCT, CTED, and the 1267 Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and emphasised the importance of continued focus and international cooperation to counter the financing of terrorism. Panellists discussed the role of emerging technologies, including digital currency and blockchain, in the context of the post-COVID-19 landscape. They noted that it was vital that such assets be subject to anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) legislation. Panellists also noted that the pandemic had increased the use of online fundraising, and delays in developing effective regulatory framework to address digital currency and blockchain technologies. Speakers stressed the need for engagement and partnership with the private sector, noting that harnessing multisectoral expertise was vital to ensuring responsible use of emerging technologies.

11. The Importance of Model Legal Provisions to Strengthen Comprehensive National Action Plans for Victims of Terrorism

The side-event was hosted by the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, UNOCT/UNCCT, the Office of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, UNODC, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The event discussed the development of national comprehensive assistance plans and legal frameworks to best support victims of terrorism. Participants noted the role of Member States in providing support over different phases of recovery, echoing that support for victims should be available immediately after an attack and for as long as it is needed, including in cases of long-term disabilities. Participants stressed the need for a victim-centric approach to all counter-terrorism efforts and for the international community to work together to uphold victims' rights and needs. They also highlighted the need for support, remembrance, and recognition for victims of terrorism, and to provide psycho-social support consistently throughout recovery processes and in the longer term.

12. The Opportunities and Challenges Presented by Online and AI Tools for the Prevention of Violent Extremism

This event was hosted by the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Participants highlighted the commitment to engage a multi-stakeholder approach in developing efficient responses to existing threats and establishing legal frameworks for the use of online data to protect engaging actors. They noted that civil society organizations are key partners to ensure that artificial intelligence (AI) tools are utilised in a human-rights compliant manner. They also highlighted the lack of contextualized data to develop AI tools that fit specific regional contexts. Participants proposed establishing a stakeholder fund to support small tech companies and platforms to make the necessary investments in monitoring tools. They encouraged stronger partnerships between civil society and tech companies to support effective online counter- terrorist narratives. They encouraged a proactive approach, where actors aiming to prevent violent extremism continuously adapt and develop new strategies to positively use emerging platforms, technology, and AI tools.

13. Beyond Territorial Defeat of Terrorist Groups: The Way Forward to Lasting Peace

This side event was organised by the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding and Women in International Security – Horn of Africa with the participation of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. The event included representatives of Member States, and civil society, with expertise from various backgrounds, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. It provided an opportunity to define coherent and comprehensive efforts on prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had reversed economic growth on the African continent, driving vulnerable populations towards violent extremism and diverting resources from PCVE. Panellists particularly advocated for PCVE programmes that responded to economic disparities, building trust in government, and expanding prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration programmes on the continent. Overall, speakers emphasized the need for increased regional and continental cooperation as part of a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to countering terrorism.

14. Launch of the Report on Advances in Science and Technology to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Terrorism

This side event was organized by UNOCT and UNICRI and sponsored by Iraq to launch their joint report on Science, Technology, and Innovation: Understanding Advancements from the Perspective of Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism. The report highlights how advances in science and technology could increase terrorist access to, and deployment of, WMDs, and the innovative ways in which technology could be applied to counter these threats. Expert panel discussions, involving the FBI and other representatives from the United States, INTERPOL, and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), provided a platform to enhance understanding of the risks associated with the misuse of science and technology to perpetrate terrorist attacks, and how it could be most effectively used in global counter-terrorism efforts.

15. Towards Ensuring Comprehensive and Meaningful Accountability: Linkages Between Terrorism and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law

This side event, organised by CTED and United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), in partnership with Switzerland, explored accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and

genocide committed by terrorist groups. It underscored that the rule of law is a cornerstone for international peace and security. Panellists highlighted links between terrorism and international crimes, noting that violence committed during conflict can constitute both war crimes and terrorism. The event discussed the challenges faced by Member States when prosecuting such crimes, including the difficulties in obtaining evidence. UNITAD shared how its work in collecting, analysing, and presenting evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh could support Member States in overcoming these complex barriers. UNITAD also highlighted the importance of harnessing technology and adopting a gendered approach in criminal prosecutions. Panellists explored the impact of Da'esh's violence on survivors, including survivors of sexual- and gender-based violence.

16. Training on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

This side event was organised by HAKI Africa, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the National Counter terrorism Centre of Kenya, and co-sponsored by the Netherlands. Speakers emphasized how human rights-based approaches address "push and pull" factors that contribute to violent extremism and terrorist radicalization. HAKI Africa emphasized that initiatives should adhere to five key human rights principles: participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and legality. Representatives of Kenya explained how the judiciary plays a key role in the fight against terrorism by embracing this approach though the development and streamlining of several guidelines and policies. They also highlighted Kenya's experience in developing and implementing County Action Plans for countering violent extremism across all its counties, following a multi-sectorial approach and with an emphasis on embracing technology and consulting civil society organisations such as HAKI Africa.

17. Engagement of CSOs in the Management of VEPs and Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons

This side event was organised by the European Union, the Netherlands, Tunisia, UNOCT, UNODC, and CTED, to highlight how civil society organizations can contribute, as credible and trusted service providers, to the management and rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs). Speakers highlighted the importance of adopting a whole-of-society approach that prioritizes the social, emotional, and psychological needs of VEPs. Coordination among regional partners, with the support of United Nations agencies and Member States, was deemed crucial to effective programming and strategies that reduce

the threat of terrorist radicalisation in prisons and enhance empowerment and growth of societies. Participants noted that although governments bear the primary responsibility for countering terrorism and violent extremism, civil society, including youth, family units, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, were vital partners.

18. Enhancing Civil Society Engagement in UN Counterterrorism and P/CVE Efforts

This side event was hosted by Switzerland and the Global Center on Cooperative Security, as part of an ongoing Global Center project that explores different models for strengthening civil society engagement in counter-terrorism and PCVE efforts to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and 2016 Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism. The event marked the launch of a global process to examine recommendations for multi-stakeholder collaborations on PCVE efforts. Speakers highlighted lessons learned from engagement models between multilateral organisations and civil society, including the Financial Action Task Force and its engagement with Global NPO Coalition on FATF. These experiences underlined the critical importance of civil society in having a seat at the table in intergovernmental policymaking and programming materials affecting their work.

19. Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Countering Violent Extremism

This side event was organised by Tunisia and CTED to explore the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on Member States' counter terrorism efforts. Participants noted that the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and CTED, together with other United Nations and partnering entities, have continued their constructive engagement and dialogue with Member States in virtual settings. Hybrid assessments have proven effective tools to monitor, facilitate, and promote Member States' efforts to implement relevant Security Council resolutions on terrorism. Panellists welcomed CTED's role in monitoring challenges relating to the pandemic's impact on terrorism, counter-terrorism, and countering violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, including by producing a series of analytical reports on the subject. CTED's Global Research Network (GRN) discussed issues stemming from the pandemic, including surging inequality, online misinformation campaigns, and reduced government capacities. Conclusions from the event drew attention to the recurring issue of defining terrorism, the need to incorporate emerging trends into counter-terrorism policies, and the importance of

strengthening cooperation with Member States, United Nations partners, international and regional organisations, the private sector, civil society, and academia.

20. Handling Terrorist Content Online: Toward Transparency

This side event, hosted by CTED, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), and the Tech Against Terrorism initiative, with the support of Canada, explored the roles of civil society and the private sector in moderating online content. CTED highlighted the importance of adopting a whole-of-society approach to addressing online terrorist content, while upholding human rights. The representative of Canada echoed these remarks, noting the need for transparency to ensure that monitoring policies do not have unintended negative biases towards certain communities. During the panel discussion, representatives from different sectors, including the private sector, highlighted the work underway to achieve greater transparency regarding the regulation of online content. Civil society representatives discussed issues surrounding defining terrorist content on major media platforms, and the rights of users to a meaningful appeal mechanism when such content is removed from online platforms. The importance of developing a framework of trust between governments, civil society and the private sector was echoed throughout the event.

21. Towards Sustainable Peace: Implementing Screening, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Strategies in the Lake Chad Basin, a Regional and National Challenge

This side-event was organised by CTED, UNOCT, UNODC, and co-sponsored by Niger and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Panellists detailed progress in the implementation of screening, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration (SPRR) strategies to address terrorism at the regional and national levels. The African Union Commission described the challenges involved in the management of persons associated with Boko Haram, particularly regarding the need to balance security, human rights, and the need for comprehensive policy guidance. Speakers also focused on the Lake Chad Basin region's various challenges. For example, Chad highlighted the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities, which could increase terrorist groups' footholds and children's vulnerabilities to forced recruitment. Participants also stressed the need for increased cross-border coordination, sharing lessons learned, tailoring SPRR strategies to gender and age sensitivities, and fostering collaboration between local, and national authorities.

22. Trends in Financing Far Right Violent Extremism

This side event was hosted by the World Jewish Congress in cooperation with Germany, Austria, and the Global Project against Hate and Extremism. Speakers highlighted that "far-right" violent extremism is often unsanctioned due to the lack of an international definition of terrorism. Panellists also drew attention to the growing risks stemming from emerging technologies, such as their use in terrorist financing and the challenges in combating these threats. Experts addressed the misuse of online platforms such as Clubhouse and Telegram by violent extremist groups for fundraising purposes, including through the sale of hate merchandise. They also highlighted far-right violent extremists' preferred use of cryptocurrencies and proposed solutions to track financial transactions, such as employing crypto-analysis. Overall, the event emphasized the need to develop, tighten, and prioritize the regulation of crypto-coins to avoid the unregulated transfers of funds.

23. Integrating Gender into Cybersecurity and New Technologies in the Fight Against Terrorism

The event was organized by Canada, Norway, Thailand, UNCCT/UNOCT, CTED, and UNDP. Guest speakers discussed the online dimensions of gender-based violence and their linkages with different forms of extremism, gender-specific online countermeasures, and the dangers of including technology in policies and practices that neglect human rights and gender mainstreaming. Panellists also shared good practices in gender mainstreaming at the local and national level. Human Rights Watch underscored that technology cannot fix flawed counter-terrorism policies, and its potential to harm human rights and gender equality. UNODC noted that artificial intelligence tools may perpetuate gender bias and gender discrimination in their design and testing, while Norway shared how it has addressed these issues in its National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence. Panellists emphasized the need to make digital spaces less violent towards women and to address informal barriers for women's engagement in technology, such as hostile work environments.

24. Launch of the United Nations Consolidated Multi-Year Appeal for 2021-2022

The side event, organized by UNOCT, UNODC, and CTED introduced the 2021-2022 United Nations Multi-Year Appeal for Counter-Terrorism, as a tool for coordinating United Nations resource mobilization efforts. UNOCT presented the Appeal as a consolidated request from Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities for sustainable, diversified funding to support the needs of Member States, and highlighted the

importance of integrating human rights and gender mainstreaming. CTED stressed the importance of linking resource mobilization efforts to priority recommendations identified by the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee to maximize impact. Member States and partners were encouraged to invest in counter-terrorism efforts to manage risks and to create a stable international system. The Multi-Year Appeal was welcomed as a crucial step towards a coherent assessment of United Nations resource-needs, and as a transparent process for liaising with donors. The event featured discussions on global thematic programmes, as well as regional and country-specific proposals under all four Pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

25. Commercial Unmanned Aircraft Systems in Counter-Terrorism Contexts

This side event was organised by UNOCT with the participation of representatives from the State of Qatar, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the United Nations Department of Operational Support, the United Nations Department of Peace Operations and the EU Office of Migration and Home Affairs. The event highlighted the need for coordination against threats associated with the misuse of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) for terrorist purposes. Member States discussed the benefits of using UAS to support counter-terrorism efforts, highlighting the role of the United Nations' UAS coordination team. The event discussed priorities, challenges, and experiences related to the use of UAS for both terrorism and counter-terrorism efforts. The representative of the State of Qatar and other speakers highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships. The United States emphasised the importance of building upon the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) Berlin Memorandum of on Good Practices for Countering Terrorist Use of UAS.

26. Building Knowledge on Counterterrorism in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Threats, Opportunities and Safeguarding Human Rights

This side event, organized by UNOCT, UNICRI, in cooperation with CTED, OHCHR, Japan and the EU, examined the role of artificial intelligence in counter terrorism. Speakers noted that terrorists have been early adopters of emerging technologies, and voiced concerns regarding the lack of adequate regulation and policies, which present risks to fundamental human rights, such as the right of privacy and freedom of opinion. They also noted that artificial intelligence played a key role in countering terrorist threats, including by supporting investigations, protecting public spaces, and supporting risk and vulnerability assessments. Speakers observed that its use should be harnessed in line with international law, including international human rights law, and monitored by

independent oversight mechanisms. Speakers further acknowledged the dual nature of artificial intelligence as a tool that could foster social progress and innovation, on the one hand, and present a potential threat to security that can amplify existing vulnerabilities, on the other. Participants provided recommendations regarding its use for counter-terrorism efforts, highlighting the importance of risk management to address its possible negative impacts on society and fundamental human rights.

27. Operationalising a 'Do No Harm' Approach to PCVE

The side event was organised by the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) in cooperation with the EU and promoted the first-of-its-kind training curriculum on the design and implementation of multi-actor intervention programmes for PCVE, while considering local contexts and needs. The IIJ provided an overview of the structure and contents of the training curriculum and its modules, including on partnership-building, case management, conducting assessments, implementing tailor-made interventions, monitoring and evaluation, and navigating stigmatization. Participants also discussed its real-life applications. A civil society representative from Kenya highlighted the challenges that traditionally hinder PCVE activities in her community, and how this curriculum could contribute to address them. The Danish Centre for Prevention of Extremism and the Counter-Terrorism National Coordinator of North Macedonia described their secondary and tertiary prevention models respectively, which rely on the concept of multi-actor coordination and collaboration.

28. Securing Vulnerable Targets from Terrorist Attacks: Challenges and opportunities of Major Sporting Event security governance

This side event, organised by UNOCT in collaboration with UNICRI, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), launched the United Nations Global Guide on the Security of Major Sporting Events: Promoting Sustainable Security & Legacies. The guide was designed to assist Member States with complex security and policing operations, such as securing locations, developing and implementing cybersecurity measures, managing, and responding to attacks, and ensuring effective crowd control, communication, and first response operations. Panellists highlighted the importance of adopting the good practices outlined in the guide, which was prepared in close consultation with CTED, and incorporates contributions from Member States, international and regional organisations, sports associations, private entities, and academia. Together with the Guide for Major Sporting Events Security, the United Nations Global Sports Program is working on the preparation

of a Guide for Policymakers for the Use of Sport for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and a Training Handbook to assist public authorities and sports federations to utilize sporting events for PVE goals.

29. Making a Case for Fusion Cells: Key Lessons Learned from Global Partners

The event, organised by CTED and Norway, examined how Fusion Cells contribute to comprehensive coordination systems, whereby agencies working under clear mandates cooperate based on trust and transparency. Speakers discussed building stronger partnerships to support Member States' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, and human rights considerations in the context of using Fusion Cells. Experts agreed that one of the primary benefits of Fusion Cells is enhancing interagency cooperation at the local, national, and international levels, and laterally across national agencies and government bodies. They emphasised the need for clear mandates, particularly in producing threat assessments, creating interagency synergies, and providing support during times of crises. They further highlighted the importance of developing personal inter-agency relationships to avoid duplication and facilitate the effective sharing of information, through secure systems and databases. They recommended that the Centre staff be on rotation with their respective agency and identified adaptability as a key principle of fusion cells.

30. Mainstreaming Counter-Terrorism Responses Across Parliamentary Functions

This side event was organised by UNOCT and the Shura Council of the State of Qatar, and co-sponsored by Indonesia and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM). This was the first event by the UNOCT Program Office on Parliamentary Engagement based in Doha, State of Qatar. The representatives of UNOCT and the Shura Council stressed the importance of cooperation among governments and parliaments to ensure a balanced and integrated implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council resolutions, and other international terrorism-related instruments. UNOCT and PAM presented a new "Parliamentary Guide to Facilitate the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy," to assist with the integration of international counter-terrorism obligations into national legislation. Parliamentarians were also encouraged to participate in the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, which will be co-organized by UNOCT, IPU and UNODC in Vienna, Austria on 9 September 2021.

31. Strengthening Multilateral Cooperation on Counterterrorism: The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and its Growing Partnership with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum

The side event, organised by UNOCT and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), examined cooperation between the Forum and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to exchange information and mobilize expertise in support of Member States' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism. The event highlighted collaboration on the GCTF Watchlisting Guidance Manual Initiative in the West Africa region, and the contributions of the GCTF-inspired institutions to the broader UN-GCTF relationship. UNOCT highlighted that enhancing partnerships with the GCTF has been one of the core priorities of the Counter-Terrorism Compact while the co-Chairs of the GCTF welcomed the growing cooperation with the United Nations and emphasized the importance of establishing fluid and open channels to discuss emerging threats. CTED stressed that the GCTF has provided an essential multilateral platform for its members to share expertise, strategies, and good practices.

32. Towards a New Era: Introducing CTC and CTED Electronic Assessment and Analytics Tools

The side event, organised by Tunisia, in its capacity as the Chair of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and CTED, introduced the CTC and CTED's new electronic assessment tools, noting that those tools would enhance the Committee and CTED's abilities to monitor, promote, and facilitate Member States' implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. CTED stressed that the new cloud-based assessment and analytical portal would enable it to bring its findings and recommendations more effectively to the attention of Member States, donors, recipients, UNOCT, and other United Nations bodies. The new portal will integrate all relevant Security Council resolutions, address a broader range of terrorism-related areas, facilitate the identification of technical assistance needs, and support the production of analysis and reports. UNOCT expressed support for the new tools as the basis for the design and planning of the Office's capacity-building activities.

33. A Perfect Storm: White Supremacists, Conspiracy Theories and Violent Extremism

The side event was organised by The Soufan Center, in partnership with the Airey Neave Trust, and co-hosted by the United States, the United Kingdom, Finland, and Germany. Panellists highlighted the transnational nature of "far-right" violent extremist threats, noting that the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic had offered violent extremists with opportunities to exploit grievances related to the pandemic. Experts pointed to the increased use by violent extremists of online resources to network, recruit and distribute propaganda as evidence of the evolving nature of this threat. They also emphasized the importance of education and dialogue in the aftermath of attacks, and the criticality of targeted and nuanced interventions for disengagement. Based on lessons learned from research and measures employed over the past two decades to counter Al-Qaida, Da'esh, and their affiliates, the panellists recommended a whole-of-society approach in countering transnational racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism and far-right terrorism, including leveraging community and international cooperation to prevent radicalization to violence, identify existing terrorist networks and rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremists.

34. Prevention and the Misuse of New Communications Platforms

The side event was organised by UNOCT/UNCCT, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UNAOC, and CTED. Speakers discussed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on online violent extremist content, increased utilization of digital spaces, and the proliferation of conspiracy theories, and violent extremist narratives. Participants noted that COVID-19 conspiracies had acted as "force multipliers" while pandemic-related lockdown measures had acted as a "speed multipliers," due to both stress and algorithm-suggesting content. Speakers further voiced their support for counter-messaging programs to counter terrorist and violent extremist content. The event launched the Empowering Dialogue and Interfaith Networks - EDIN campaign website and showcased participants from the EDIN project led by UNAOC and UNCCT, which provides young religious leaders and media makers with a peer-to-peer learning space to build their capacity to prevent sectarian violence and counter terrorist narratives online. Speakers highlighted efforts by governments, civil society, and technology companies to combat terrorist exploitation of online platforms. TikTok presented its actions to detect and remove violent extremism content, combining technological tools and human moderators, while CTED presented its achievements through country assessment visits and the work of Tech Against Terrorism.

Annex

List of transformative technologies, systems, and applications: Terrorism-related risks and counter-terrorism opportunities

1. **3D printing** may be defined as the action or process of making a physical object from a three-dimensional digital model, typically by laying down many thin layers of a material in succession. In 2019, the Wall Street Journal reported on an early example of the misuse of 3D printing technologies for terrorist purposes.[4] As 3D printing technologies advance and become increasingly accessible and affordable, they will present terrorists, including lone actors, with significant opportunities to carry out attacks using simple, lethal, and hard-to-trace homemade guns.

2. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is a branch of computer science dealing with the simulation of intelligent behavior in computers. AI and **AI-powered technologies** [5] present significant potential to strengthen law enforcement capacities to identify objects or persons of interest, extract and analyse information from text-based sources, optimize law enforcement resources [6] and support the creation of "**smart cities**."[7] Using AI for law enforcement purposes raises serious human rights considerations, including with respect to privacy, data protection, and algorithmic bias.[8] AI also presents opportunities for terrorists to conceive and plan

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[4] Is **3-D** Printing the Future of **Terrorism," the Wall Street Journal, 25 October 2019,** at: Is 3-D Printing the Future of Terrorism? - WSJ (last accessed 3 June 2021)

[5] Relevant technologies, systems and applications include, for example (1) Algorithmic Filters, (2) Audio processing, (3) Autonomous weapons systems, (4) Data Airlock and Harmful Materials Recognition, (5) Fake videos or images ("Deep-fakes"), Major Events Screening and Surveillance (6), (7) Natural Language Processing, (8) Recommender System, (9) Resource Optimization (Law Enforcement), (10) Robotics, (11) Smart cities, (12) Smart policing, and (13) Visual processing.

[6] *Second Interpol-Unicri Report On Artificial Intelligence For Law Enforcement* (2020) at UNICRI-INTERPOL_Report_Towards_Responsible_AI_Innovation_0.pdf

[7] For example, the Oslo Police District of Norway has been working with partners both within the police force, industry and academia to explore the application of A.I. to create more user-sensitive non-intrusive surveillance systems in smart cities. See: *Second Interpol-Unicri Report On Artificial Intelligence For Law Enforcement* (2020) at UNICRI-INTERPOL_Report_Towards_Responsible_AI_Innovation_0.pdf

[8] *Second Interpol-Unicri Report On Artificial Intelligence For Law Enforcement* (2020) at: UNICRI-INTERPOL_Report_Towards_Responsible_AI_Innovation_0.pdf, and General Recommendation No.36. Preventing and Combating Racial Profiling by Law Enforcement Officials (CERD/C/GC/36), 24 Nov 2020, at OHCHR | UN Committee issues recommendations to combat racial profiling

attacks, lower the financial and human costs of carrying out attacks, evade detection and conceal evidence. AI is enabling the programming of **audio and video deep-fakes** that could challenge identity verification and create impersonations to fuel conspiracy theories and hatred.[9]

3. **Autonomous weapons systems** cover a wide spectrum of potential weapons systems, including fully autonomous weapons that can launch attacks without any human involvement and semi-autonomous weapons that require affirmative human action to execute a mission. Advancing AI technologies and their increasing integration in autonomous weapons systems are anticipated to lead to more autonomous and far more dangerous weapons.[10]

4. **Biometric systems:** In its resolution 2396 (2017), the Security Council *"decides that* Member States shall develop and implement systems to collect biometric data, which could include fingerprints, photographs, facial recognition, and other relevant identifying biometric data, to responsibly and properly identify terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters, in compliance with domestic law and international human rights law."[11] Developing and maintaining such systems presents practical and legal challenges, including ensuring compliance with international human rights law. Member States should apply the Security Council Guiding Principles on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (Madrid Guiding Principles and its Addendum),[12] and may wish to consider the guidance provided in the United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices For the Responsible Use and Sharing of Biometrics in Counter Terrorism (2018),[13] and the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center report "Use of Biometric Data to Identify Terrorists: Best Practice or Risky Business?, prepared under the aegis of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.[14]

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[9] *Activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Report of the Secretary Genera*l (26 Feb 2020); and UNICRI-INTERPOL_Report_Towards_Responsible_AI_Innovation_0.pdf, page 11

[10] United Nations Security Council. Counter-terrorism Committee Executive Directorate: "Greater efforts needed to address the potential risks posed by terrorist use of unmanned aircraft systems: CTED Trends Alert," "(2019) at: https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/CTED-UAS-Trends-Alert-Final_17_May_2019.pdf

[11] (S/RES/2396 (2017), para. 15.

[12] Security Council Guiding Principles on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (S/2015/939 and S/2018/1177) at: Security-Council-Guiding-Principles-on-Foreign-Terrorist-Fighters.pdf

[13] United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices For the Responsible Use & Sharing of Biometrics in Counter-Terrorism In association with the Biometrics Institute, (2018) at Microsoft Word - Compendium Final Draft June 18.docx

[14] *Use of Biometric Data to Identify Terrorists: Best Practice or Risky Business*?, University of Minnesota Human Rights Center (2019), at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/Use-Biometric-Data-Report.pdf

5. **<u>Biotechnology:</u>** The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted global vulnerabilities to the possibility of bioterrorism. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy calls upon Member States, international organizations, and the UN System to ensure that advances in biotechnology are not used for terrorist purposes; improve border and customs controls to prevent and detect illicit trafficking of biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and materials; and improve coordination in planning a response to a terrorist attack using chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, or materials. In its resolution 1373 (2001), the UN Security Council specifically addressed the threat of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear terrorism. It recognized the connection between international terrorism and, inter alia, the illegal movement of such materials. In its resolution 1540 (2004), the Council affirmed that the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

6. **<u>Internet and other media:</u>** In the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/72/284), Member States expressed "concern at the increasing use, in a globalized society, by terrorists and their supporters, of information and communications technologies, in particular the Internet and other media, and the use of such technologies, to commit, incite, recruit for, fund or plan terrorist acts." In its resolution 2396 (2017), the Security Council expressed concern that terrorists may craft distorted narratives to polarize local communities, recruit supporters and foreign terrorist fighters, mobilize resources, and win support from sympathizers, including through the Internet and social media. The Security Council Guiding Principles on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (Madrid Guiding Principles and its Addendum) provide guidance both for countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes and for collecting, handling, preserving, and sharing information obtained from ICT for counter-terrorism purposes while protecting and protecting internationally protected human rights.[15]

7. **<u>Internet anonymization services, virtual private networks (VPN), dark web, darknet, and end-to-end encrypted messengers:</u>** Numerous encryption tools and anonymizing software are readily available online for download, and powerful end-to-end **encryption** technologies are now commonly embedded in electronic devices and online messaging apps. On personal computers, the de facto standard and freely available Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) software provide the same encryption grade

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[15] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, esp. art. 19, para. 3

used by the military to convert messages (or even entire files) into encrypted text that can be copy/pasted anywhere. Terrorists have exploited these technologies to communicate and store information, avoid detection and incrimination, and secretly plan terrorist attacks. While terrorists typically rely on open internet sources for recruitment and propaganda purposes, they are more likely to use encryption and the **dark web for communications** and transactions that lead to violent acts. *While end-to-end encryption itself often cannot be broken, intelligence agencies have been able to hack the software on the ends.* Technology companies, civil liberties advocates, and national government officials have widely argued that creating "backdoors" for law enforcement agencies to retrieve communications would do more harm than good.[16]

8. **Online gaming:** The online gaming industry has become one of the fastest-growing digital media segments. Terrorist groups have used online gaming to spread hate speech and terrorist content and groom and lure young recruits.[17] **CTED's** Tech Against Terrorism initiative researchers have identified how otherwise inoffensive online game creation systems have been misused by so-called right-wing extremists to recreate playable versions of infamous far-right atrocities, including Anders Breivik's 2011 attack on the Norwegian island of Utoya, the 2019 mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the 2019 terrorist attack in El Paso, Texas. Online games can also be used to encourage critical thinking and build resilience to misinformation, hate speech and terrorist narratives. The abilities of online games to build resilience to misinformation, hate speech and terrorism narratives may be short-lived, however, and should be complemented through a comprehensive educational approach.

9. **Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS)** ("drones") consist of an unmanned aircraft and its associated elements, including a remote pilot and a communication system between the two. While drones were initially developed for military use, advancing UAS technology has made it increasingly affordable and accessible for a wide range of uses. There have already been several examples of terrorists' use of weaponized UAS for surveillance, reconnaissance, propaganda, and attacks. In addressing the potential risks posed by UAS, States should consider the potential impact that their

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[16] Combating Terrorism Center at West Point: "How Terrorists use Encryption," "(June 2016), at Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (usma.edu)

[17] *Activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Report of the Secretary-General*, 26 Feb 2020.

responses could have on internationally protected human rights, especially when using UAS themselves.[18]

10. **Smart cities** may be defined as urban areas that use different types of electronic methods and sensors to collect data from citizens, devices, buildings and assets to gain insights to manage assets, resources and community services efficiently and improve operations across the city. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in "smart cities" can be used to autonomously detect, analyze and understand actions and events to improve, recognize and predict security threats in transportation hubs, infrastructures and sensitive locations. The CTED-UNOCT Compendium of Good Practices for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure Against Terrorist Attacks (2018) warns that "increased connectivity may also increase the attack surface and therefore expose critical infrastructure to a high risk of manipulation." Building more secure smart cities also presents essential human rights considerations, including privacy, data protection, algorithmic bias and non-discrimination.

11. **Virtual assets and payment systems:** In its resolution 2462 (2019), the Security Council "**c**alls upon all States to enhance the traceability and transparency of financial transactions, in compliance with international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law, including through assessing and addressing potential risks associated with virtual assets and as appropriate, the risks of new financial instruments, including but not limited to crowd-funding platforms, that may be abused for terrorist financing purposes and taking steps to ensure that providers of such assets are subject to anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT obligations)."[19] The Council encourages Member States to apply risk-based anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regulations to virtual asset service providers and identify effective systems to conduct risk-based monitoring or supervision of virtual asset service providers.[20]

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[18] *Greater Efforts Needed to Address the Potential Risks Posed by Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems: CTED Trends Alert* (2019), at CTED TRENDS ALERT (un.org)

[19] S/RES/2462 (2019) Para 20

[20] S/RES/2462 (2019) Para 21

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