



**Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Director,
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**GCTF Side event: Addressing the Challenges Related to the Reintegration and
Rehabilitation of FTFs and their Associated Family Members**

2 May 2023, Cairo, Egypt

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to speak at today's event dedicated to addressing the challenges related to the reintegration and rehabilitation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and their associated family members.

I would like to start by thanking the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group, co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia, and the Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Working Group, co-chaired by Jordan and the United States, for co-organizing this important workshop.

I had very much wanted to be there in person, but thanks to the post-Covid multiverse, I am able to address you while being in an airplane due to land in Cairo later today.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) recognizes and commends the efforts of Member States to repatriate, rehabilitate and reintegrate their nationals from conflict zones.

The most acute challenge in this area remains the tens of thousands of fighters and associated family members languishing in camps in northeast Syria. Although Member States have repatriated, reintegrated and/or held accountable several thousand people since 2019, it remains no secret that much more still needs to be done.

Time continues to work against us all.

The entirely predictable security threat that continues to incubate in camps in northeast Syria more than four years after the territorial defeat of Da'esh's so-called caliphate is bad enough. But the deprivation of various human rights of the tens of thousands of children stuck in camps ought to weigh heavily on the conscience of the international community.

That being said, we know that states that have decided to repatriate their nationals must overcome operational and technical barriers to repatriation, concern about insufficient rehabilitative capacity, difficulties in determining nationality, absence of legitimate documentation of individuals, issues with declaring the death of a person who went missing in the conflict zone, as well as trauma and stigma, to name but a few.

Nevertheless, if we are to head off the security, human rights, and humanitarian tragedies taking place in plain sight, it is imperative that Member States address these challenges. That is why events such as this one are so important to helping Member States understand that it is not only possible to do the right thing, it is also possible to do it right -- and in a way that mitigates risk over the long-run.

Thankfully, we know what to do. The Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee has provided an international framework for prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR) of FTFs and accompanying family members in a series of three landmark resolutions: 1373 from 2001, 2178 from 2014, which was inspired by the GCTF's Hague-Marrakech memorandum, and 2396 (2017). We also have more granular guidance in the form of the CTC's Madrid Guiding Principles.

These resolutions and principles call on Member States to employ a holistic yet individualized response by bringing terrorists to justice, and by developing and implementing comprehensive and tailored PRR strategies for individuals Member States have reasonable grounds to believe are terrorists, including accompanying family members.

However, given that Member States around the world continue to face PRR challenges, UNOCT, through its Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, offers guidance, coordination and, upon request, capacity-building support. In the true spirit of an all-of-UN approach, such assistance can be offered by the Global Programme on PRR in cooperation with other UN entities.

We do recognize that only a genuinely coordinated approach on all levels - international, regional, national and local - between a broad range of stakeholders, such as international and regional organizations, government departments and agencies as well as civil society, including community, women and youth leaders, can render responses fit for purpose.

That is why UNOCT and UNICEF developed and co-chair the Global Framework for UN Support on Syria / Iraq Third Country National Returnees, which brings together 15 UN entities to support Member States on the protection, prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of returning individuals from Syria and Iraq. The Global Framework is currently being implemented in Iraq and Central Asia, effectively addressing many of the challenges I had mentioned earlier in a human rights-compliant, gender-sensitive and age-appropriate manner.

In addition to the Global Framework and other projects implemented by UNOCT and UN partners, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Office on Drugs and Crime and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate are jointly developing a PRR Compendium, which will help Member States navigate these challenges by facilitating information exchange on thematic areas and current practices pertaining to PRR.

Let me conclude by reiterating that UNOCT stands ready to continue supporting United Nations Member States in the development and implementation of PRR approaches for FTFs and their family members in a manner that upholds human rights, addresses security and

accountability, and contributes to the peaceful life of individuals, families, communities and societies.

Thank you very much for the opportunity for UNOCT to participate in today's workshop. I look forward to seeing you all later!