



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,  
Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism**

**Closing Session of the Third United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads  
of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States  
20 June 2023**

Excellencies,  
Mayor Adams,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now time to conclude what I hope you all agree has been a rich and productive Conference.

I am grateful to all those who helped make it a success – from our 58 session chairs and panelists to our 10 eminent speakers, as well as the 60 interventions from the floor.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for convening this Conference, and for his leadership and support in reinvigorating multilateralism to counter-terrorism.

And to you – the more than 1,000 participants who attended this Conference, representing 160 Member States, 23 regional and international organizations, 23 United Nations entities, as well as 135 representatives from academia, civil society, and private sector.

I am thankful to everyone who traveled to New York to make this Week a success, including the co-organizers of the 40 side events.

The side events cover a wide range of issues, including Counter Terrorism Travel; Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism; programmes in terrorism-affected regions of Africa, Support for Victims of Terrorism; Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration; new technologies; engagement of Civil Society Organizations, and other related global initiatives.

We are grateful to all co-organizers for sharing their success stories, lessons learned, and good practices, and collaborating in a robust whole-of-society approach to address our common Counter-Terrorism challenges. This is a great example of multilateralism in action.

Dear Colleagues,

In September, my Office will provide a detailed report of the Conference, summarizing the discussions and outcomes in consultation with our partners.

For now, let me highlight some initial conclusions and recommendations that emerged over the course of the two days. I will begin with the five most important cross-cutting issues emphasized by participants.

First, throughout the Conference, we exchanged views on the importance of effective law enforcement mechanisms. Equally important is the capacity building for law enforcement officials through technical assistance and institutional cooperation. All Member States, International and Regional Organizations, private sector, and civil society partners need to join hands to ensure that critical capacity-building assistance is available for those who need it the most, especially in the extremely challenged and vulnerable regions of the world.

Second, as noted by the Secretary-General during his opening remarks, “Human rights can be the greatest weapon we have in fighting terrorism”.

Indeed, grounding our individual and joint actions in good governance, the rule of law, and the full realization of human rights is a precondition for successful and sustainable efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Third, it is essential that we continue to mainstream gender perspectives, advance gender equality and ensure women’s meaningful participation in our common fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

Fourth, we must stand in solidarity with, and strengthen support to, victims of terrorism, building on the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism held in September last year.

Yesterday’s dedication of a Solidarity Tree in the gardens of the United Nations Headquarters honors victims of terrorism around the world and symbolizes the resolve of the international community to put victims at the center of global counter-terrorism efforts.

Lastly, we heard yesterday from two female returnees from the Al Hol camp. Their testimony was a strong reminder that more needs to be done to bring foreign terrorist fighters to justice, as well as address the comprehensive and complex issues faced by tens of thousands of individuals, especially children and women, stranded in camps and detention facilities in dire circumstances.

I commend the progress in repatriating nationals from conflict zones and encourage Member States to strengthen their efforts in this respect. The United Nations stands ready to provide support to ensure human-rights-based and gender-responsive prosecution, as appropriate, as well as the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees.

Dear Colleagues,

Throughout the Conference, we heard about the necessity of reinvigorated multilateralism in counter-terrorism. It is important that we convert that sentiment into practical plans to achieve this vision.

Since its launch five years ago, the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact has demonstrated that effective coordination and meaningful cooperation are essential to counter-terrorism.

To advance multilateral collaboration in support of Member States, the Compact will continue strengthening partnerships and cooperation with regional organizations and fostering joint planning and resource mobilization.

A number of participants emphasized the importance of implementation of regional counter-terrorism strategies, including by establishing new regional fora and structures and holding joint counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism initiatives.

Participants also underscored the importance of engagement with, and ownership by different stakeholders to strengthen whole-of-society approaches, including working closely with civil society, victims of terrorism, religious leaders, women, and young people to shape more effective counter-terrorism responses, policies, and programmes.

There was a strong call for the international community to keep pace and even get ahead of with the evolving terrorism threat.

This includes addressing terrorist attacks based on xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, as well as the terrorist use of new and emerging technologies.

Participants encouraged strengthened financial support for United Nations capacity-building programmes, to make them fit for purpose.

They also emphasized the need to give new impetus and strategic direction to address the terrorist threat in Africa. My Office stands ready to deliver more capacity-building and technical assistance to African Member States, in collaboration with UN Global Compact entities, the African Union, and other regional and sub regional organizations in the continent.

In this regard, the African Counter-Terrorism Summit in Nigeria next year will be instrumental in gathering more international support for these efforts.

There were also strong appeals for a new generation of robust peace enforcement missions and counter-terrorism operations, led by the African Union with a Security Council mandate under Chapter VII and with guaranteed, predictable funding.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is emblematic of the multilateral resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Tomorrow, the General Assembly will hold a plenary session to formally review the Strategy and adopt a review resolution to take stock of the current terrorist landscape and guide our counter-terrorism efforts over the next few years.

Recognizing the significant advances that were made during the seventh review two years ago, Member States have opted for a less ambitious review this year, as noted by Ambassador Rae yesterday. I understand the new resolution is set to cover significant developments since 2021, while making some progress in a few substantive areas.

I congratulate the co-facilitators of the review of the Strategy, Ambassador Rae of Canada and Ambassador Ladeb of Tunisia, who have taken us to this point under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly.

I am also deeply grateful to Member States for their willingness to negotiate in good faith, as well as for their unwavering commitment to maintain consensus.

Preserving this consensus behind the Strategy will symbolize our unity and the significance of multilateral cooperation in our efforts to prevent and counter-terrorism.

It is in this spirit that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, as one of the four co-leads, contributed to the development of the New Agenda for Peace, proposed by the Secretary-General in Our Common Agenda.

The New Agenda for Peace offers us an opportunity to strengthen existing capacities and boost synergies across the United Nations' prevention efforts.

To ensure that it reflects Member States' aspirations to strengthen multilateral responses to terrorism, we have sought common ground to address this threat in all its forms and manifestations, by advancing bold yet realistic ideas for more effective responses across the United Nations system.

Allow me to also express my sincere gratitude to our donors, especially the two largest contributors to UNOCT's budget and programmes: the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Dear Participants,

A future without terrorism is possible. I strongly believe in this vision. I am profoundly grateful to you for your contributions and engagement in the counter-terrorism work of the United Nations.

Thank you.