



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian  
Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General,  
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Side event on Preventing and Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS): Good Practices and Trends in the Acquisition, Weaponization, and Deployment of UAS**

**21 June 2023**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this side event and thank Conflict Armament Research, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States, for co-hosting this event with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

There has been increasing concern regarding the use of unmanned aircraft systems for terrorist purposes, as seen in the Delhi Declaration signed in October by the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Recent evidence demonstrates that the acquisition of UAS software and components, as well as their weaponization and deployment by terrorist groups has increased over the past few years, from Aum Shinrikyo's failed 1994 tests to spray sarin gas from a remote-controlled helicopter, to the foiled 2010 plot to fly an explosives-laden remote-controlled aircraft into the Pentagon, to Da'esh's use of drones for reconnaissance and even swarm attacks.

This threat, coupled with the increased availability and affordability of UAS and similar systems, increases the potential for non-state actors to plan and orchestrate terrorist acts.

In 2017, the Security Council passed resolution 2370 dedicated to preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons and condemning their continuing flow, including UAS. The following year, the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) issued the 2018 Berlin Memorandum on Good Practices for Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly expressed concerns over the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes and

requested UNOCT and relevant entities to support innovative approaches and measures to help Member States leverage new technologies to prevent and counter terrorism.

In 2021, UNOCT launched its Global Programme on Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems (AROS). This Programme raises awareness on, and promotes the exchange of, good practices and guidance related to such systems; enhances the capacity of Member States to investigate and counter terrorist threats related to these systems; and enhances the capacity of Member States to use these systems to prevent and counter terrorism in compliance with their obligations under international law.

I would like to acknowledge all our programme partners, namely CTED, ICAO, UNGSC, and our friends at CAR.

Equally important has been our engagement with academia and civil society, which has provided us with valuable perspectives and expertise.

In a few minutes, we will discuss the UNOCT-Conflict Armament Research Global Report on the Acquisition, Weaponization, and Deployment of UAS by Non-state Actors for Terrorism-related Purposes.

The report involved direct and extensive consultations with Member States, researchers and scholars, private sector entities, and intergovernmental bodies.

Dear Colleagues,

I am thrilled to have such a diverse group of experts joining us today to share their experiences and discuss the key challenges, opportunities, and good practices for preventing and countering the terrorist use of UAS.

I am confident that today's introduction of the Global Report, as well as the subsequent discussion on the way forward, will set a strong foundation towards the development of effective international responses to the terrorist use of UAS.

Thank you.