

**Opening and Closing Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian,
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Quarterly Briefing to Member States

(Microsoft Teams Platform)

19 December 2022, 10:00– 12:30

(Opening Remarks)

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

I would first like to highlight some of the global events we organized, as well as the various reports and guidance materials that we have prepared regarding Member States' priority counter-terrorism challenges.

On 26 July, the Secretary-General issued his 15th report on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security and the range of UN efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

The report details the evolving terrorist threat, particularly in societies impacted by conflict, and the measures taken by Member States to address it, with the support of the United Nations.

We thank the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) for our excellent cooperation in preparing the latest report.

On 3 August, the Secretary-General issued his report on terrorist attacks based on xenophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance or in the name of religion or belief (XRIRB).

The report, which was prepared by UNOCT in response to the General Assembly's request last year, advances an initial understanding of this emerging threat.

Let me use this opportunity to re-state UNOCT's appreciation to the Member States, regional organizations, Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, and civil society organizations that provided valuable inputs for this first ever report.

We also thank the key stakeholders, practitioners, and expert researchers who contributed to the High-Level event that we organized on 30 November to present the report's main findings and discuss its programmatic implications.

On 6 September, in partnership with CTED, UNICRI, and UNAOC and with the strong support of the State of Qatar, we launched five new specialized guides on the protection of vulnerable targets against terrorist attacks.

These modules present international good practices for preventing, responding to, and recovering from terrorist attacks against vulnerable targets, including urban centres, tourism venues, and religious sites, as well as measures to address the cross-cutting threat of unmanned aircraft systems.

From 8 to 9 September here in New York, we held the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism, which brought together more than 600 in-person participants, including close to 100 victims of terrorism from 25 countries across the globe.

It concluded with a Chair's Summary comprising a 7-point action plan to guide the international agenda in advancing the rights and needs of victims of terrorism.

In addition, a new research report titled "Examining the Intersection between Gaming and Violent Extremism," Commissioned by UNOCT was launched during a virtual high-level event on 5 October.

This report provides – for the first time - evidence-based understanding of how extremists and terrorists exploit online video games and adjacent platforms to identify, groom, and recruit new followers, as well as to communicate, raise funds, and even train for attacks. We are grateful to all the stakeholders and experts who contributed valuable insights for its preparation.

Second, UNOCT has continued to engage closely with Member States, regional organizations, and other key partners to support regional efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.

In this regard, I especially want to highlight the International High-Level Conference on "International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists" that took place on 18-19 October in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Over 700 participants at the Conference discussed the border security challenges and needs of Central Asian States and we thank the Republic of Tajikistan, UNRCCA, the OSCE and the European Union for co-organizing the event with us, and the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their support for the event.

His Excellency Mr. Jonibek Hikmat, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations will discuss the outcomes of this conference in a moment.

On 4-5 October, UNCCT and the Indonesian National Counter Terrorism Agency jointly hosted a Regional Conference on 'Enhancing Resilience to Violent Extremism among Migrant Workers in Southeast Asia' held in Jakarta.

The conference follows the completion of an innovative research project and a virtual workshop with civil society organizations.

Third, I am pleased that the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact has continued to foster ever greater coherence within and beyond the UN system in support of Member States' counter-terrorism efforts.

Since our last briefing, we have stepped-up efforts to enhance our engagement with Member States by inviting some of them to brief the eight thematic Compact Working Groups. A number of States were also invited to the Compact's Coordination Committee meetings, chaired by Under-Secretary-General Voronkov.

In addition, the close and mutually reinforcing relationship between the Counter-Terrorism Compact and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) continues to evolve, particularly through the implementation of the Joint Options Paper adopted in September.

Our critical partnership with the GCTF has contributed to our understanding and expertise in several key areas, including on the use of new and emerging technologies for counter-terrorism purposes and mainstreaming gender in all activities.

Fourth, our excellent partnerships with civil society and the private sector have also continued to yield positive results.

This year, as part of our ongoing series, we hosted three Civil Society Roundtables, including one held just last month.

The roundtables offer a platform for frank exchange between UNOCT and civil society organizations on human rights and civic space, youth engagement and empowerment, and African security, including interactive briefings by and with UNOCT programme managers.

On 10-12 October, we delivered a Youth Policy Dialogue in Thailand with young leaders from South and Southeast Asia.

Following several months of training, peer engagement, research, and policy analysis work, the young leaders at the event pitched a set of policy recommendations to decision-makers.

In the year ahead, we are confident that Member States and UN entities that attended the Dialogue will continue to work with these young leaders to take their recommendations forward.

In November, UNOCT hosted an event on “Safeguarding the Metaverse from Terrorism and Violent Extremism,” as part of its “Safeguarding Digital Spaces” series, bringing together participants from the public and private sectors, civil society, and academia.

That concludes my opening remarks and I thank you for your attention.

[Closing remarks]

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear colleagues,

As we heard today, UNOCT has continued to make strong progress throughout the past year in delivering on our mandated functions in support of Member States’ efforts to address the evolving terrorist threat.

In 2023, UNOCT will be stepping up cooperation with African Member States and regional organizations as strategic priorities.

As you already heard, in October, UNOCT will co-organize with the Government of Nigeria, a High-Level African Counter-Terrorism Summit and other partners on the theme “Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institutional Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism in Africa” in Abuja.

The Summit will form an essential part of our efforts to mobilize more international support for African Member States affected by terrorism and violent extremism and to reverse the worrying terrorist trend in parts of the continent. Hopefully we’ll come up with significant concrete outcomes, to allow us to do that.

To this end, our Programme Offices in Nairobi, Kenya, and Rabat, Morocco, will be essential in facilitating regional capacity-building and cooperation.

As we heard earlier, in January, we will convene the Ninth Coordination Committee Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Compact, which will be opened by the United Nations Secretary-General and focus on evidence-based and data-centric responses to terrorism.

At the end of February next year, we will also publish the Secretary-General's biennial report on the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and look forward to supporting Canada and Tunisia as co-facilitators and all Member States in their efforts on the Strategy's eighth review. We also will work with our DPPA, DPO, and UNODA partners on developing and launching the Secretary-General's *New Agenda for Peace*.

Finally, we look forward to working with our partners, in consultation with CTED, to support requesting Member States to apply the guidance outlined in the Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, adopted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee in October of this year.

During our Ambassadorial-level Annual Briefing to Member States, which will be held at the beginning of next year, Under-Secretary-General Voronkov will provide a more detailed overview of our planned activities.

Before we conclude, I would like to reiterate our deep appreciation for the continuing strong political, financial, and technical support of our 36 donors, and our partners around the world.

We are particularly grateful to the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia whose combined contributions account for 74% of total funding to the UN Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism.

That being said, given the ongoing deliberations in the Fifth Committee, it would be remiss of me not to mention that UNOCT has had to rely on voluntary contributions from Qatar for positions performing leadership, policy, coordination, and other perennial, non-programmatic functions.

Dozens of Member States wrote the Secretary-General four years ago asking that UNOCT be given the regular budget resources it needed for these functions, as the General Assembly asked in 2017. Only two posts were provided at that time

As you know, the General Assembly debated this issue in last year's seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, concluding with a request for the Secretary-General to conduct the technical assessment of UNOCT's needs. This he did and the outcome was reflected in his 2023 budget request to convert 25 XB-funded positions in 2023, and 24 in 2024. If approved, this request would result in having about 25% of UNOCT's total number of personnel on the regular budget, with the remaining, almost entirely programmatic staff, remaining XB funded.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Happy holidays, and best wishes for the year ahead.