

FRAMEWORK ON COUNTER-TERRORISM
BETWEEN
THE UNITED NATIONS
AND
THE EUROPEAN UNION

The United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) (hereinafter referred to as the “Sides”) share a deep conviction in and commitment to promoting multilateralism to address the global challenges the international community faces today, including the scourge of terrorism. The Sides share common values, based on the Charter of the United Nations, and firmly believe in the need to strengthen international law and standards, and to ensure respect for the rule of law and human rights. It is in the interest of the both organisations to work together to promote these ideas.

On 25 May 2018, the Sides held in Brussels their first Counter-Terrorism (CT) Political Dialogue since the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). Co-chaired by the UNOCT and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and with participation of the European Commission, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, and the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the dialogue reaffirmed the common determination and mutual interest of the Sides in strengthening their partnership on CT. This document was developed as an agreed follow-up to the above-mentioned Dialogue to provide an informal framework to guide the Sides’ cooperation in the area of CT over the next two years.

I. Background

Preventing and countering the complex and evolving threat of terrorism is a shared priority of the Sides. Building on their long standing and positive relationship, the Sides are determined to engage in a more structured and focused partnership to counter terrorism and to prevent violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism. The overall political and legal framework for these efforts is provided by the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), relevant Security Council resolutions, the international instruments against terrorism, and international law, including human rights, international humanitarian law, and international refugee law. The EU is guided by its Global Strategy, European Agenda on Security, Internal Security Strategy, CT strategy, 19 June 2017 Council conclusions on EU External Action on Counterterrorism as well as its European Consensus on Development.

Recent institutional developments have strengthened the respective ability of the Sides to contribute effectively to the fight against terrorism. The establishment of the UNOCT under the leadership of an Under-Secretary-General, the enhanced working relationship between the UNOCT and CTED based on Security Council resolution 2395 (2017), and the adoption of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Coordination Compact on 23 February 2018, should enable the UN to take on a stronger leadership role globally on matters of Counter-Terrorism and the prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE), and support its Member States more effectively. On the EU side, in addition to the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, the clear framework set out in the European Agenda on Security to work better together on security, and the establishment of the Commissioner for the Security Union, aim to ensure that the EU remains a frontline actor in countering terrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism.

II. Objectives of the UN-EU Framework on Counter-Terrorism

Against this background, this Framework identifies the following areas in which cooperation may be pursued, subject to the Sides' respective mandates, governing regulations, rules, policies and procedures:

- (1) Keeping abreast of evolving trends and challenges associated to the multifaceted threat of terrorism, and jointly advancing policy thinking for early and effective responses.
- (2) Strengthening the global consensus against terrorism and violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism, advocating for the full implementation of international obligations, commitments and standards against terrorism, including the UN GCTS, and, in this context, the UN SG's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as well as relevant Security Council resolutions.
- (3) Fostering global, inter-regional and regional cooperation against terrorism.
- (4) Contributing to the balanced implementation of the UN GCTS, particularly in relation to the respect and protection of human rights, and the promotion of the rule of law, while respecting international humanitarian law, gender- and age-sensitive approaches to countering terrorism and the P/CVE, as and when conducive to terrorism.
- (5) Collaborating, where feasible, on the identification of technical assistance needs and the mobilization of resources to provide coordinated and effective capacity-building assistance on CT and P/CVE as and when conducive to terrorism to requesting countries, taking account of the recommendations of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).

III. Framework on Counter-Terrorism

- (1) The Framework between the UN and the EU on CT will be coordinated by the UNOCT and the EEAS, with the European Commission services, without prejudice to existing roles, responsibilities, as well as relationships between the UN, and its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and the EU, including European Commission services and agencies.
- (2) The Sides intend to hold annual EU-UN political dialogues on CT, co-chaired respectively by the UNOCT Under-Secretary-General and the EEAS Deputy Secretary-General for CSDP and crisis response, involving each Side's relevant entities and services.
- (3) Without prejudice to other existing frameworks, and within the Sides' respective mandates, capacities and decision making-processes, a list of recurrent and other meeting opportunities may be established where both Sides seek to coordinate the advancement of the objectives of this Framework, as well as sharing lessons and of good practices.
- (4) Cooperation on CT should usefully also complement other UN-EU strategic partnerships such as those in the area of peace operations, crisis management and conflict prevention.
- (5) Focal points may be designated in UNOCT and the EEAS respectively to work on the preparation and follow up to the political dialogues in consultation with other relevant UN and EU entities. The UNOCT intends to establish a presence in Brussels, through the UN Liaison Office on Peace and Security to facilitate contact.

- (6) Both Sides intend to designate focal points at field level, where relevant, in order to ensure regular contact and coordination at field level including with respect to follow up projects designed or based on the UN CTC/CTED assessment visits. Subject to the Sides' respective confidentiality obligations and in accordance with the Sides' regulations, rules, policies and procedures, focal points should feed information to joint meetings where required.
- (7) Joint thematic and geographic priorities may be updated, considering the evolving terrorist threat and challenges, to guide cooperation both at headquarters and field level.
- (8) Staff familiarisation events may be organized whenever needed (e.g., following significant staff turnover or major restructuring processes).

IV. Priorities for the period 2018-2020

Based on the UN-EU CT Political Dialogue held on 25 May 2018 in Brussels, the Sides identified the following specific priorities in which cooperation may be pursued, subject to their respective mandates, governing regulations, rules, policies and procedures, for the period until the next review of the UN GCTS in 2020. The Sides may designate focal points for each of these priorities to ensure follow-up.

<p>Biennial reviews of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy</p> <p><i>The Sides intend to coordinate closely to promote the implementation of the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly for the Sixth Biennial Review of the UN GCTS and consult each other in the run-up to the Seventh Biennial Review to facilitate the adoption of a new resolution by consensus.</i></p>
<p>Engagement in Africa</p> <p><i>The Sides are both concerned over the threat of terrorism and radicalization leading to terrorism in Africa, where some countries are heavily affected yet face acute capacity challenges to respond effectively. Demand for support from individual countries as well as regional organizations in Africa is growing and both the Sides seek to respond positively. Coordination is imperative to make best use of available resources and ensure coherent engagement.</i></p>
<p>Engagement in Central, South and Southeast Asia</p> <p><i>The Sides seek to step up their respective engagement on CT and P/CVE, as and when conducive to terrorism, in Central, South and Southeast Asia, at the national and regional levels in consultation with the countries concerned. Countries in the regions have expressed strong interest for increased cooperation with, and international support from, the Sides, notably on CT matters and on prevention.</i></p>
<p>Engagement with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)</p> <p><i>The Sides intend to enhance their CT cooperation and coordination vis-à-vis the MENA region. This requires a comprehensive approach and support for combining effective law enforcement and criminal justice responses based on the rule of law, with measures to build resilience and prevent the resurgence of violent extremism conducive to terrorism. In the case of Iraq, the UNOCT and the UN CTED have developed a joined-up approach, based on Security Council resolution 2395 (2017), to promote the implementation of relevant Security</i></p>

Council resolutions and the UN GCTS and the 16 priority recommendations agreed upon by Iraq and the UN CTC/CTED following the latter's 2015 assessment visit.

Addressing the evolving threat of foreign terrorist fighters

The Sides intend to strengthen their cooperation and coordinate their efforts to raise awareness of and, where possible, support the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions including 2178 (2014), 2322 (2016) and 2396 (2017), which set forth measures to respond to the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), to promote effective responses to the evolving threat of FTFs in compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and with international law, including international criminal law, international human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.

Preventing/Countering violent extremism

The Sides intend to enhance their cooperation and coordination on preventing/countering violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism, consistent with the comprehensive approach of the UN GCTS and the relevant Security Council resolutions taking in to account the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.