



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Side-Event on Countering Terrorism with New and Emerging Technologies

CR6, 11:00am, 26 September 2019

Your Excellency, Mr. Vladimir Makei,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Republic of Belarus for organizing this side-event with my Office to share and discuss the key outcomes from the International High-Level Conference that we held earlier this month in Minsk on “Countering Terrorism through Innovative Approaches and the Use of New and Emerging Technologies”.

This conference was the fourth in a series of regional conferences organized by UNOCT in partnership with Member States to promote international cooperation on key counter-terrorism priorities, as a follow-up to the 2018 High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States.

The next regional conferences are planned with CARICOM in Trinidad and Tobago in October, in Hungary in November—and allow me to thank Minister Szijjártó for being with us today—, in the United Arab Emirates in December, and at the headquarters of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna early next year, with the support of Switzerland.

These regional conferences will feed into the Second Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations next summer, when the Secretary-General will convene the first-ever Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism and the Second United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies. These major events will take place back-to-back with the seventh biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

A key aspect of the four regional conferences held so far has been the strong participation by Member States in the region concerned, and in particular by the host countries.

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We were honored that the Conference in Minsk was opened by His Excellency Mr. Alexander Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Belarus.

The Conference gathered close to four hundred participants from fifty-five countries and ten international and regional organizations, as well as representatives from civil society, academia and the private sector, from across Europe, Asia, North America, the Middle East and North Africa.

It provided a platform for Member States to discuss terrorist exploitation of technologies, and to share innovative approaches to counter this threat, while at the same time highlighting the tremendous potential of new technologies to prevent and counter terrorism.

The Conference underscored the need to enhance cooperation in practical and operational areas both within regions and between different regions, such as sharing biometric information to prevent terrorist travel.

It also underlined the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach involving governments, the private sector, civil society, international and regional organizations, and all those who can make a difference in building resilient societies.

Moving forward, my Office will explore the feasibility of establishing a coordination platform for information and knowledge sharing on terrorist abuse of new technologies.

UNOCT will also continue to provide capacity-building support to Member States to help them address this complex and evolving threat, in close collaboration with our partners from the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact such as CTED, UNICRI, UNODA, UNODC and INTERPOL.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Terrorists are opportunistic and adapt extremely fast. They are constantly on the look-out to take advantage of any vulnerability or any possibility to exploit new technologies to recruit, communicate, finance themselves, plan and carry out attacks.

We must come together now, and we must do it fast, to mitigate this threat and ensure that new technologies remain a force for good rather than a force for evil.

I look forward to having a thought-provoking exchange of views this morning on the nexus between technology and terrorism and the need for multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation for security, human rights and sustainable development in the digital era.

I would like to reiterate my deepest gratitude to the Republic of Belarus for its leadership and support in delivering both the conference in Minsk earlier this month and this side-event.

I would now like to open the floor for your comments and observations.

Thank you.