UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO COUNTER TERRORIST THREATS AGAINST VULNERABLE TARGETS

HIGH-LEVEL LAUNCH EVENT OF FIVE THEMATIC MODULES TO PROTECT VULNERABLE TARGETS AGAINST TERRORIST ATTACKS

Concept Note

10:00 – 11:45 AM (EST/New York time)
6 September 2022
Online, in English

REGISTER by clicking HERE

1. Background

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy highlights the need for Member States to improve security and protection of vulnerable targets, including public places (or ‘soft targets’) and critical infrastructure, which was also reiterated in the seventh review of the Strategy and its resolution A/RES/75/291 (i.e. preamble and operative paragraphs 69, 71, 73, 74).

The United Nations Security Council has also addressed this topic. Of particular importance in this context are resolutions 2341 and 2396 (2017). Furthermore, in 2018, the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee endorsed the Addendum to the 2015 Madrid Guiding Principles containing two specific additional good practices on the protection of vulnerable targets (Guiding Principles 50 and 51).

In this context, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) is supporting Member States in their efforts to address terrorist threats to vulnerable targets by leading the implementation of the United Nations Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.
(CTED), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and in consultation with INTERPOL.

The mandate of this Global Programme covers both critical infrastructure and “soft” targets. It aims at identifying and sharing policies and good practices to understand, prevent and counter terrorist threats against vulnerable targets; strengthening Member States’ capacity to develop comprehensive and collaborative strategies including through public-private partnerships; and providing, upon request, tailored capacity-building to prevent, protect, mitigate, investigate, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks against vulnerable targets, including urban centres and major touristic venues, religious sites, and the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).

2. Thematic Modules on Vulnerable Targets Protection

The development of new innovative knowledge products and resources is one of the top priorities of the Programme. These tools and publications serve as a strong substantive basis for the tailored technical assistance provided to Member States, both online and in-person.

To systematize and harmonize the knowledge, existing resources and good practices, UNOCT has produced five specialized modules with a focus on the protection of particularly vulnerable places. These thematic modules complement the 2018 United Nations Compendium of Good Practices on the Protection of Critical Infrastructure (CIP) against Terrorist Attacks by focusing on public places/"soft" targets as distinct types of sites worthy of a dedicated security approach. In the coming months, UNOCT along with CTED and INTERPOL, and in coordination with the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Working Group on Emerging Threats and CIP, will also release an updated version of the CIP Compendium.

The five new thematic modules on public places/"soft" targets are as follows:
(i) an introductory module on the protection of “soft" targets;
(ii) a thematic module on the protection of touristic venues;
(iii) a thematic module on the protection of religious sites and places of worship;
(iv) a thematic module on the protection of urban centres; and
(v) a thematic module on threats posed by unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to vulnerable targets.

The thematic modules feature a comprehensive selection of case studies, good practices and recommended tools from around the world to help policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and experts from the public and private sectors, civil society and academia strengthen the protection of vulnerable targets.

The modules, which have been produced thanks to the generous funding of the State of Qatar, are available in English, Arabic, French and Russian. In addition to being developed by a specialized expert in consultation with other UNOCT, CTED, UNICRI and UNAOC staff, these five new handbooks benefitted from a comprehensive review process from specialized UN entities under the umbrella of the Global Compact Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection.
3. High-Level Launch

The high-level launch will take place online, in English only, from 10 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. (New York time) on 6 September 2022. The programme will include the following:

1. High-level session (45 min, 8 min per speaker)
   - Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, UNOCT
   - H.E. Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations in New York
   - Mr. Weixiong Chen, Acting Executive Director, CTED
   - Ms Antonia Marie De Meo, Director of UNICRI
   - Ms. Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for the High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

2. Expert panel: (45 mins)
   - Presentation of the five specialized modules by UNOCT
   - Experts from 2-3 Member States

3. Closing (3-5 min)

Audience:
- Member States
- Global Network of Experts on Vulnerable Targets Protection
- IROs
- CSOs
- Academia
- Private sector
- Global Compact entities