

**Virtual open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on  
“The threat of terrorism in Latin America and the Caribbean”**

*Monday, 14 December 2020, 10.00 a.m.–12.00 p.m. EST*

**Draft concept note**

**I. Introduction**

1. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), the Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress in their efforts to strengthen their counter-terrorism measures,<sup>1</sup> focusing on, inter alia, ratifying the international and regional counter-terrorism instruments (including the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism) and enhancing their law-enforcement and border-security capacities (including maritime and aviation security, customs, immigration, and intelligence-sharing); critical infrastructure protection (including cybersecurity, major-event security, and tourism security), and counter-financing of terrorism capacities.

2. The threat of terrorism in Latin America and the Caribbean remains generally low. However, Governments are aware of the evolving and decentralized threat posed by international terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da’esh) and Al-Qaida.<sup>2</sup> The risk of recruitment to terrorism and radicalization to violent extremism conducive to terrorism, the growing volume and accessibility of terrorist propaganda, and the potential exploitation of the banking system and informal economies of many States to fund terrorist networks remain matters of concern. Moreover, because of its geography, the region is vulnerable to maritime criminal activity, including the smuggling of drugs; small arms and light weapons (SALW); people; and chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) materials.

3. In its resolution 2482 (2019), the Security Council expressed its concern that terrorists can benefit from organized crime, whether domestic or transnational, as a source of financing or logistical support, while recognizing that the nature and scope of the linkages between terrorism and organized crime vary by context. The Resolution also called on Member States to increase the awareness, training and capacity of relevant practitioners in correctional systems on the linkages between terrorism and organized crime, including where perpetrators of petty crime may be exploited or recruited by terrorists, as perpetrators of such crimes can develop and have actively pursued those linkages and other networks in prison settings.

4. Nor is the region immune to the threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). By the start of 2018, more than 200 FTFs from States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had reportedly travelled to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of illicit trafficking routes throughout the Caribbean Basin and Latin America raises the risk that organized criminal groups and violent gangs may be enlisted to facilitate the undetected departure

---

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the present concept note, the Latin America and Caribbean region includes the Member States of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

<sup>2</sup> See the "III Hemispheric Ministerial Conference to Fight Terrorism" Ministerial Statement, 19 and 20 January 2020, Bogotá Colombia.

<sup>3</sup> CARICOM Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2018, p. 5.

## **Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)**

and return of FTFs in the region. In addition, the increased frequency of terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure and “soft” targets, including public spaces associated with tourism, major events and places of worship, globally, is a further matter of concern.

5. Governments of the region have strengthened their cooperation and coordination, particularly within the framework of CARICOM and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States (OAS/CICTE). Member States have also enhanced their cooperation with the Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs), namely the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) and the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT). In February 2018, the Caribbean region approved a common strategy to counter terrorism within CARICOM. Also in 2018, an International Criminal Police organization (INTERPOL) Liaison Office was established in CARICOM’s Implementing Agency for Crime and Security’s Joint Regional Communication Centre (JRCC) to support police cooperation in the Caribbean. In October 2019, OAS launched the Inter-American Network on Counter-Terrorism, a project aimed at strengthening inter-State cooperation by facilitating real-time sharing of operational information among counter-terrorism authorities.

6. Although Member States of the region have made notable improvements in their counter-terrorism capacities, including by enhancing partnerships at the international, regional and subregional levels, there remain a number of challenges, including lack of national counter-terrorism strategies (that integrate law enforcement measures and address socio-economic, human rights, gender and rule of law components) and judicial and prosecutorial capacities; limited use of special investigative techniques and witness-protection measures; shortcomings in forensic capacity, porous coastlines, lack of financial and human resources and low capacity to counter online radicalization and violent extremist propaganda conducive to terrorism. There is also a need to enhance measures to prevent and suppress terrorism financing, including with respect to alternative remittance systems (ARS), the cross-border movement of cash (cash couriers), and new technologies (financial services linked to mobile services, Internet and store cards).

7. The COVID-19 pandemic presents unique challenges globally. In particular, measures taken by States to redirect their resources, attention and policies may result in more fragmented or isolated national responses to terrorism. The pandemic may also provide an opportunity for terrorist organizations and individuals to exploit the region’s counter-terrorism vulnerabilities.

## **II. Objective of proposed open briefing**

8. The objectives of the proposed virtual open briefing are to facilitate discussion of the current and evolving threat of terrorism in Latin America and the Caribbean and to identify progress achieved and remaining gaps in implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions and international standards, as well as the related technical assistance needs in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law. The briefing will also provide an opportunity for the Counter-Terrorism Committee to promote regional, cross-regional and international cooperation to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

## **III. Format of discussions and topics**

## **Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)**

9. The proposed briefing will include a panel of experts from relevant United Nations specialized agencies and other international, regional and subregional organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), OAS/CICTE and CARICOM IMPACS. The initial presentations will be followed by an interactive question-and-answer session; and the briefing will conclude with a closing session. The Committee Chair will act as Chair and moderator. The briefing will be held via Cisco WebEx, with special privileges for Committee members, guest speakers, and CTED.

10. An annotated agenda and meeting documentation will be posted on the Committee's website.

### **IV. Date and venue**

11. The virtual open briefing will be streamed live on UNTV on Monday, 14 December 2020, from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. EST.

### **V. Outcome**

12. Subject to prior consultations with the Committee, CTED will prepare and submit to the Committee a summary report on the outcomes of the meeting.

### **VI. Communications**

13. CTED will promote the virtual open briefing through the appropriate channels. A press release may be issued following the event.