



Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is my great pleasure to conclude this Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week. The first of its kind in the United Nations. And the first of its kind in the framework of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

I am grateful to the eminent persons who inspired our discussions, especially United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and European Union High Representative Josep Borell.

My deep

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the international community with one of the greatest challenges since the creation of the United Nations 75 years ago – testing national resilience, international solidarity and multilateral cooperation.

While our attention is rightly focused on fighting the virus, we cannot pause our efforts to prevent and counter the global threat of terrorism. As the Secretary-General underscored, we need to keep up the momentum.

This week was a unique opportunity to reflect together on the implications of the COVID-19 crisis on counter-terrorism, Member States' priorities in this context, and how the United Nations system and its partners can support them.

I would like to briefly set out the key conclusions from our discussions.

First, we heard in the high-level opening that a strategic investment in preparedness is needed to help build resilient societies able to cope with the unpredictable environment and global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including terrorism.

COVID-19 has highlighted, and it could also exacerbate, old and new challenges and fault-lines that terrorists are keen to exploit, including socio-economic inequalities, weak governance, political disenfranchisement, human rights abuses, and the misuse of new technologies.

Second, we need to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation at all levels in order to “build back better”. This requires a renewed, collective commitment guided by the United Nations Charter and international law.

To achieve this, we need to build on the Secretary-General’s call to harness “the power of multilateralism.”

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions provide the normative basis for strong, holistic and collective action against the transnational scourge of terrorism.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact serves as a dynamic platform to further strengthen multilateral cooperation and enhance coordination and coherence in the delivery of United Nations technical assistance to Member States.

I would especially like to thank the State of Qatar in this regard for its financial contribution which made possible the development of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform.

Third, all events underscored the need to fully respect human rights and the rule of law in the fight against terrorism.

This is integral to the whole United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, not just its fourth pillar, and has been consistently reaffirmed by the Security Council.

But we also heard that much more is needed to translate this into practice – to move from words to concrete action, ensuring that measures to counter terrorism do not shrink civic space or hinder humanitarian activities.

I want to reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations System in this regard, guided by the Secretary-General'





Civil society actors make crucial contributions to the kind of bottom-up prevention efforts that resonate with local communities.

We need a massive investment in young people, gender-sensitive and youth-driven initiatives if we want to build healthy and inclusive societies.

Seventh, we discussed ongoing challenges to address the threat posed by thousands of foreign terrorist fighters.

The international community must continue to prioritize international cooperation and technical assistance so that Member States can detect terrorists and interdict their movement; investigate, apprehend and bring them to justice, in accordance with international law.

I would like to echo the grave concerns expressed by several participants regarding women and children with suspected links to United Nations listed terrorist groups who remain stranded in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.

COVID-19 is compounding their already dire humanitarian, human rights and security situation, and deterring repatriation efforts.

I urge Member States to take swift action regarding their nationals to meet their international obligations and prevent this issue being used to radicalize future generations. Its very important to be fast in this regard.

Eighth, I would like to pay tribute to the compelling stories we heard about the plight of victims of terrorism. They are our reason of being and we need to make sure others don't suffer the way they have.



We heard how the pandemic has placed additional burdens on victims and survivors by adding to their trauma.

The response to the pandemic should not stop the hard-fought progress made to uphold the rights and address the needs of victims.

These discussions will feed into the first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism that we will hold next year.

