Press Release

The international community reaffirms its commitment to work together to
fight terrorism and violent extremism amidst the global pandemic

New York, 10 July 2020 – The Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week organised by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) concluded its discussions on Friday. The week’s discussions focused on the strategic and practical
challenges of countering terrorism in a global pandemic environment. Over 1000 participants from 134 Member
States, 47 international and regional organisations, 88 civil society organisations and private sector entities attended
the week’s events, which was the first of its kind held by the United Nations.

“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,” the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, said at the
high-level closing session today [statement]. The world, he added, “is rightly focused on fighting the virus, but
because terrorists are exploiting the situation, we cannot pause our efforts to prevent and counter the global threat
of terrorism... This week was a unique opportunity to collectively reflect on these matters and listen to Member
States’ priorities.”

Reiterating the call of the United Nations’ Secretary-General António Guterres to harness “the power of
multilateralism”, Mr. Voronkov told the session attendees that “we need to strengthen multilateralism and
international cooperation at all levels in order to ‘build back better’.” As mentioned in the opening of the Virtual
Counter-Terrorism Week, the pace of digital transformation has been accelerated by COVID-19 which needs to be
addressed more strategically at national as well as international levels.

Mr. Voronkov presented the key conclusions of the week’s discussions, stressing the need for strategic investment
in prevention and preparedness in order to help build resilient societies, capable of coping with terrorism in an
unpredictable environment.

We are confronting “a threat that comes from transnational networks like ISIL and Al-Qaida, their regional affiliates
and seasoned fighters; but also, from individuals and groups acting alone; and from neo-Nazis, white supremacists
and new forms of racially, ethnically, politically and ideologically motivated acts of terrorism,” Mr. Voronkov Q
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are in “dire and complex humanitarian, human rights and security situation,” said Mr. Voronkov urging Member
States to take swift action to meet their international obligations and prevent the situation from being used by
terrorists to radicalise future generations.
Mr. Voronkov also paid tribute to victims of terrorism across the world. “We heard how the pandemic has placed
additional burdens on victims and survivors by adding to their trauma,” he said. “The response to the pandemic
should not stop the hard-fought progress made to uphold the rights and address the needs of victims.” He confirmed
that the first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism will be held in 2021.
Mr. Voronkov emphasised the critical importance of adopting whole-of-society approaches and respecting human
rights and the rule of law in the fight against terrorism, in line with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the
Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights. We need “to move from words to concrete action, ensuring
that measures to counter terrorism do not shrink civic space or hinder humanitarian activities” said the Under-

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For more information: x Visit: www.un.org/counterterrorism/2020-counter-terrorism-week x Mr. Voronkov’s statement:
https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/200710_usg_vctwk_closing_r
emarks.pdf x Contact: gerardl@un.org x Follow us on Twitter @UN_OCT and through the Week’s key hashtags: #VirtualCTWeek #UNCCTExpo
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