

VTC of the Security Council

Monday, 23 November 2020, 3.00 p.m., EST

Joint briefing of the three Security Council subsidiary bodies

Statement of

**H.E. Mr Tarek Ladeb,
Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee**

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

On behalf of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism; and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), I have the honour to deliver a joint statement on cooperation between the three committees and their respective expert groups.

Earlier this year, societies around the world were suddenly and dramatically transformed by the onset of COVID-19.

Against that backdrop, the CTC, the “1267 Committee”, and their respective expert groups expressed concern that terrorists and violent extremist groups would seek to exploit the global disruption caused by the pandemic.

Those concerns were reiterated in the *Eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2020/744)*, which was prepared by the Counter-Terrorism Committee

Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and other United Nations entities and international organizations.

The report noted a surge in the activity of ISIL and some of its regional affiliates in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as in other regions (particularly in Asia and Africa).

It noted that ISIL had not been able to re-establish its operational capability, but that the pandemic's impact on its propaganda, recruitment and fundraising activities remained unclear.

The CTC, the “1267 Committee”, and their respective expert groups consider that the pandemic's socio-economic, political, health and humanitarian impacts may exacerbate conditions conducive to terrorism and increase the global terrorist threats, not only in areas where non-State armed groups and terrorist groups are particularly active, but also outside conflict zones.

Over recent months, the CTC and the “1267 Committee” have adopted a number of response measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and the opportunities that it may create for terrorists and non-State armed groups by reminding Member States of their obligation to effectively implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, in full compliance with international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

Despite the travel restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic, the three committees have ensured business continuity by adapting their working methods to the temporary virtual environment and ensuring regular communication with international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as UN entities,

particularly within the framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact (to which the three expert groups belong).

During the period 2019-2020, the Committees and their respective expert groups have stepped up their regular joint consultations.

The quarterly updates that used to be delivered by the Monitoring Team to CTED now also include the experts of the “1540 Committee”.

This regular exchange among the expert groups helps strengthen the flow of information and communication on issues of common concern.

Their discussions focus on the level of the global threat, on the analysis of particular issues, and on coordination (with respect in particular to postponed visits to, or engagement with, Member States).

Assistant Secretary-General Coninx, the CTED Executive Director, and the Coordinators of the two Expert Groups have also continued to meet regularly to discuss cooperation and coordination matters.

Experts of the Monitoring Team have attended briefings organized by CTED with UN entities, UN Country Teams, and academic experts.

The three expert groups intend to continue organizing similar events on a virtual basis for the remainder of this year and next, for as long as the restrictions on in-person meetings and travel persist.

In February, the CTED Executive Director and the Coordinator of the Monitoring Team held a joint high-level political consultation in Indonesia (the first of its kind), together with Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, to follow-up on the Counter-Terrorism Committee's 2007 and 2019 visit recommendations.

The three committees consider such coordinated activities to be an extremely useful way to strengthen their respective dialogues with Member States and help ensure their full and effective implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The three committees and their respective expert groups have also continued to coordinate in assisting Member States to counter terrorism financing and proliferation financing.

The three expert groups, as appropriate, continued to interact with the Financial Action Task Force, including its regional bodies, within the framework of the coordinated UN delegation led by CTED.

The experts of CTED and the Monitoring Team attended the most recent FATF plenary and working group meetings in order to ensure synergies between the work of the their respective Committees and the work of FATF, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions.

COVID-19 restrictions imposed by Member States have significantly constrained the movement of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, which was required to postpone a number of important field trips and regional events.

In June, CTED and the Monitoring Team issued a joint report on actions taken by Member States to disrupt terrorism financing, in relation to the implementation of resolution 2462 (2019).

The report was based on a survey submitted to the wider Membership and to which answers from 112 Member States were received.

The questionnaire’s findings demonstrate Member States’ commitment to denying terrorist groups access to funds and financial services and highlight the vital role played by United Nations sanctions (especially asset-freezing measures) in that regard.

The report also provides a unique overview of the measures and good practices implemented by Member States in this area, as well as the remaining obstacles and challenges.

Member States indicated that they continued to face challenges with respect to, inter alia, the institutionalization of public/private partnerships, the integration of human rights obligations into CFT measures, and cooperation with civil society actors in developing policies to ensure risk-based supervision of the non-profit sector.

Despite the significant progress achieved through increased joint informal consultations and coordination, pandemic-related restrictions have resulted in the postponement of many of the three committees’ core activities.

This included the postponement of a number of country visits to be conducted by CTED on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to assess Member States’ counter-terrorism strengths, weaknesses and technical assistance needs in implementing resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions.

It also included the postponement of the joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the “1267 Committee” on terrorism-financing threats and trends and the implementation of resolution 2462 (2019).

That meeting was mandated by resolution 2462 (2019) and was to feature a presentation, to the wider Membership, of the above-mentioned joint CTED-

Monitoring Team report on actions taken by Member States to disrupt terrorism financing.

It was also necessary to postpone the Comprehensive Review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), which was to be held prior to the renewal of the Committee's mandate, in April next year.

A number of other planned events of the "1540 Committee" have been postponed to 2021, with the exception of the updating of the Committee's matrices and other activities that can be undertaken in an online format.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Terrorism and proliferation continue to pose a grave threat to international peace and security.

Terrorists and terrorist organizations, and their affiliates and cells, continue to adapt their tactics and methods, as do non-State armed groups.

As the world and the UN continue to adapt to the ongoing impact of the pandemic, it is essential that the three Committees and their respective expert groups pursue their close cooperation and continue to ensure a coordinated response to the challenges imposed by the pandemic to business continuity, with the aim of addressing a global security landscape that has become yet more complex and unpredictable.

We shall continue to collaborate to identify and address the significant new and emerging challenges faced by Member States, including the abuse of new technologies for terrorist and proliferation purposes.

It is possible that the global increase in online presence during the pandemic will spark a new wave of innovation, which, in the hands of non-State actors, and terrorists in particular, could potentially have devastating consequences.

At the same time, however, innovation can help counter terrorist and proliferation activity.

The use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), for example, is being explored for that purpose (as the three expert groups have learned from Global Coordination Compact briefings).

The three committees may further explore the implications of this and other emerging issues.

They will continue to provide guidance and direction to their expert groups in enhancing their collaboration and cooperation in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Council resolutions.

The impact of the pandemic and the resulting security challenges underline more than ever the importance of ensuring close collaboration and coordination between the three committees and their respective experts' groups.

Thank you.