



PRESS RELEASE

Heads of United Nations counter-terrorism bodies conclude joint visit to Nigeria

Abuja, 26 July 2018 – Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), today concluded a joint visit to Nigeria at the invitation of the Government. They were accompanied by Mr. Alexander Avanesov, Global Programme Manager and Special Advisor on Preventing Violent Extremism, UN Development Programme (UNDP), and a representative of the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The objective of the visit was to identify, in close consultation with the Government, concrete areas where the United Nations can provide technical assistance in order to enhance Nigeria's efforts to address the threat posed by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in the country and in the sub-region. The process took account of recommendations previously identified by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee and endorsed by the Government.

The joint delegation met with high-ranking officials in Nigeria, including the Vice-President, Mr. Yemi Osinbajo, and key Ministers and heads of agencies, as well as the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, women's groups, the United Nations Country Team and representatives of the diplomatic community.

Mr. Voronkov complimented the Government for the strong cooperation with the United Nations and the adoption of the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Plan of Action. "The Government of Nigeria has a strong legal framework to combat terrorism. We want to do more to assist the Government to implement this framework in an inclusive manner and in accordance with international standards," he said.

"The Government has made remarkable progress in countering terrorism and in addressing violent extremism in a challenging and complex environment. Despite the continuing asymmetric threat posed by Boko Haram, authorities have mobilized their capacities to develop rehabilitation and reintegration programmes with limited resources," Ms. Coninsx stated.

Pointing to the nexus between security and development, Ms. Coninsx added that "addressing underlying conditions that may be conducive to terrorism and a cycle of violent extremism requires a long-term commitment, adequate resources, and coordinated support by the Government with all partners – from the military, to justice, to women's affairs, including civil society."

Mr. Alexander Avanesov said that "the joint delegation witnessed the strong need and political will of national partners, including civil society, to focus on the prevention of violent extremism through development and local initiatives, with particular attention to youth and women, as well as reintegration and rehabilitation programmes."

The joint delegation visited the Bulumkutu Transit Centre in Maiduguri, Borno State, where they met the Theater Commander and civil society organizations, as well as boys and girls participating in the rehabilitation programmes. They also visited Abuja international airport, where they were briefed on challenges related to aviation security and on the impact of the capacity-building programme provided to airport staff through the support of UNOCT.

At the conclusion of the visit, the joint delegation reiterated the strong commitment of the United Nations to support Nigeria and to provide technical assistance in seven priority areas. These include (i) the implementation of the National Action Plan in accordance with the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy; (ii) the prevention of violent extremism, and support to rehabilitation and reintegration processes; (iii) the provision of support to criminal justice processes, in compliance with the rule of law and human rights principles; (iv) the empowerment of women and girls to counter terrorism and violent extremism, (v) aviation and maritime security, (vi) border management; and (vii) strategic communication to prevent violent extremism.

Background

This joint visit was conducted within the framework of the shared efforts of UNOCT and CTED to facilitate the delivery of counter-terrorism related technical assistance to Member States in accordance with Security Council resolution 2395 (2017).

Mandated by the General Assembly, UNOCT was established in June 2017 to provide leadership to the implementation of General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates, to enhance coordination and coherence, and to strengthen the delivery of the United Nations counter-terrorism capacity building assistance to Member States. In the past years, UNOCT and its predecessor have supported several projects to assist the Nigerian Government's counter-terrorism efforts – particularly on border security and management. The Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism (I-ACT) initiative was implemented in Nigeria in January 2012. It includes capacity-building projects on the promotion of peace and counter-terrorism education, law enforcement, and criminal justice measures.

Established by the Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) is a Special Political Mission of the United Nations, tasked with assisting the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee in monitoring the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant counter-terrorism resolutions. CTED conducts independent country assessments that constitute the basis for the concerned technical assistance and capacity-building projects. CTED has been working closely with Nigeria for over 10 years, including through the conduct of three assessments: a comprehensive visit (November 2006), a follow-up visit (October 2015), and a regional joint high-level visit (February 2017).

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