



Republic of Kenya



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Press Release

African countries agree to strengthen cooperation and regional partnerships to prevent and counter terrorism

Nairobi, 11 July 2019 - A landmark African Regional Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism concluded today. The conference, hosted by the Republic of Kenya and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, was the largest ever meeting of African states on counter-terrorism. 1497 delegates from Member States, International and Regional Organisations, the United Nations' entities and 55 civil society organisations, including women organisations and youth groups participated in the conference and its 13 side events to enhance collaboration and support implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta President of Kenya, the United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres inaugurated the conference. The high-level sessions of the conference showcased the important work undertaken by African governments to address the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism. They enabled senior officials to share good practices and generated innovative ideas and practical actions to be implemented at global, regional, national and local levels.

The conference also included a collective commitment to build new and strengthened partnerships, both between African states, and between Africa states and the rest of the international community, including the United Nations.

Dr. Fred Matiang'i, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya co-chaired the concluding session of the conference and emphasized, "we have to deliver as government to close the gaps that terrorists exploit to radicalise and recruit. A major deliverable is to do more to minimise corruption and impunity by those in positions of responsibility in the government, private sector and civil society. The abuse of power to illegally grab public resources is one of the greatest enablers of terrorism. Corruption is everywhere in the world, but Africa must make special efforts to fight this vice if we are to have a secure Africa. Here in Kenya, we have openly taken on this fight and we believe that we will be able to demonstrate to the citizens of Kenya, and to the world, that no one is above the law."

While presenting the [Co-chairs' summary](#) of the conference, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, underscored "the need to share critical information, good practices and lessons learned in a more proactive way between African countries to build trust, knowledge and institutional capacities". He called for "a bold new partnership between African countries to tackle the scourge of terrorism" which required "strengthened African regional and sub-regional counter-terrorism cooperation, based on the structures, objectives, principles and values of the African Peace and Security Architecture". He also emphasised the need to benefit from the creative energy of youth, promote gender sensitive approaches to countering terrorism and engagement with civil society.

To address multiple dimensions of African counter-terrorism efforts, Member States, the United Nations entities and civil society partners organised 13 side events around the conference. These side events were an important complement to the work of the conference and reflected and amplified core themes of the conference.



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A key message of these events is the urgent need to build a genuine partnership with African youth; to engage young men and women in leadership roles to counter and prevent extremist violence and conflict across the continent. The discussions also highlighted numerous bottom-up, youth led good practices that are contributing to the Silencing the Guns initiative, from organising sports events, conducting civic education, to innovative art projects.

The side events also focused on links between transnational organised crime and terrorism, disengagement and reintegration, Daesh propaganda, cross border approaches to violent extremism, correlation between climate change and violent extremism, and above all gender dimension of countering terrorism and the role of women and girls in and under Al-Shabab.

On the margins of the Conference, Under-Secretary-General Voronkov held bilateral meetings with the heads of delegation of Algeria, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ghana, Iraq, Morocco, Namibia, Palestine, and Sri Lanka, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Discussions focused on how to strengthen international cooperation to advance key priorities, including aviation security, prevention of violent extremism, support to victims of terrorism and countering the financing of terrorism.

This event is part of a broader series of regional conferences to provide Member States with a platform to exchange information, expertise and resources, develop partnerships, and collectively address a range of critical counter-terrorism issues. Throughout 2019 and 2020 Member States are organizing these conferences to address common regional challenges as a follow-up to the High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States that took place in New York in June 2018. The outcomes and recommendations of the Nairobi and other regional conferences will feed into the second High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, which will take place in New York in June 2020.

Background information on the Regional Conferences:

On 28-29 June 2018, the Secretary-General convened the first-ever United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States. As a key outcome of the conference, the Secretary-General announced that in the lead-up to 2020 UN Counter-Terrorism Week, the United Nations would liaise with Member States to organize regional events on key thematic issues, in order to address the regional challenges of countering terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. UNOCT has therefore supported interested Member States to organize joint regional conferences. The conferences address particular challenges within the respective regions, and provide Member States with forums to share best practices. They also serve to advance regional solutions, as well as to strengthen international cooperation against terrorism. The outcomes of all regional events, including the African Regional conference, will directly contribute to the second UN CT Week to be held in June 2020.

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