

## Combating Terrorism: Why the UN Matters

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- 1) The United Nations matters a great deal in the fight against terrorism. The UN is a particularly important venue for addressing terrorism in three respects – its universality, the breadth of the challenge, and the tools for addressing the challenge:
  - Universality – terrorism is a global problem and the UN has global reach. (Citizens of more than 90 nations died on September 11.) The UN General Assembly adopted a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in September 2006 – it represents the first time all 192 UN Member States have agreed to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism.
  - Breadth of the Challenge – the Strategy covers issues reflected throughout the UN system, including what are known as “conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism,” such as prolonged unresolved conflicts, lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, socio-economic marginalization, etc. These types of issues fall within the scope of many UN entities, making the UN an appropriate place to address the breadth of the challenge we face with terrorism.
  - Tools for Addressing the Challenge – the UN has the appropriate tools to help prevent and combat terrorism. It can offer Member States counter-terrorism related technical assistance and guidance through the facilitation of UN entities and organizations.
- 2) The UN counter-terrorism machinery includes a number of counter-terrorism related bodies:
  - The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) deal in large part with the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1373 on international cooperation to combat threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.
  - The 1267 Committee and its Monitoring Team are concerned with Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities.

- The 1540 Committee monitors Member States' compliance with Security Council Resolution 1540, which calls on States to prevent non-State actors (including terrorist groups) from accessing weapons of mass destruction.
- The Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna provides assistance to States in the legal and related aspects of counter-terrorism.
- The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) coordinates counter-terrorism action across the UN system. The CTITF was established by the Secretary-General in 2005 as a coordinating and information-sharing body that serves as a forum to discuss strategic issues and ensure coherent action on counter-terrorism among 24 UN system entities.
- More information on these bodies and on the counter-terrorism work of the UN can be accessed at the webpage on UN Action to Counter Terrorism, [www.un.org/terrorism](http://www.un.org/terrorism).

3) CTITF is working on a number of counter-terrorism challenges, including:

- Radicalization and extremism that lead to terrorism. (It is important to examine the process of radicalization.)
- The financing of terrorism. (A truly global phenomenon.)
- Assistance to Member States in implementing the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and building their counter-terrorism capacity.
- Protecting vulnerable targets. (Civilian populations in public places are particularly vulnerable targets. The UN itself can also be a target for terrorists.)
- Supporting and highlighting victims of terrorism (Victims of terrorism are a testimony to the world of the unjustifiable consequences of terrorism. This is also an example of an issue in which civil society groups can engage with the UN Strategy).

4) Looking forward, the key is implementation of the Strategy and the active role of Member States in this regard. Terrorism is not just a national problem, but a global one, and in this respect, the UN remains critical.