

**Update on actions during 2003 by the United Nations Department of Public Information in response to the recommendations of the Security Council Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism**

**Recommendation 5:** The Department of Public Information requested, in consultation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to publish a digest of the core jurisprudence of international and regional human rights bodies on the protection of human rights in the struggle against terrorism.

- In accordance with recommendation 5, following receipt from OHCHR of the text of the “Digest of Jurisprudence of the UN and Regional Organizations on the Protection of Human Rights While Countering Terrorism”, DPI prepared the Digest for publication. This included preparing the layout, proofreading the text, conceiving and executing the design of the publication (which included submitting samples of possible covers for approval by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights). The final text was published in October 2003.

**Recommendation 7:** The United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, should deliver a consistent, clear, principled message when addressing the issue of terrorism, including on targeting of unarmed civilians, avenues to enable citizens to express concerns, military force, and human rights.

- The message laid down by the Policy Working Group has been used consistently by DPI spokespersons and speakers on the subject of terrorism. DPI staff have participated in a number of public events, seminars, panels, etc., in which they have seized the opportunity to promote this message.
- A decision needs to be taken by the EOSG as to whether they wish the Secretary-General to be more clearly identified with this issue in the international community’s mind and whether to bring the moral authority of the organization to bear in a targeted and strategic fashion through the Secretary-General.

**Recommendation 8:** The Department of Information should initiate a review of how the UN can reach local populations that support terrorist aims, in a forma that is designed to be “heard” by those communities.

- As part of the review called for by the Group, all 77 of the **United Nations Information Centres** (UNICs) were contacted and asked to provide input on how to implement the recommendations of the Policy Working Group to “reach local populations that support terrorist aims”. A number of UNICs expressed the view that this recommendation is in practice extremely difficult to implement, given both the political and resource constraints under which the UN works in the countries concerned. A review has now been produced, illustrating that a number of relevant activities are already taking place subject to budget considerations and local conditions. This review, entitled “United Nations Information Centre

Activities to Counter Terrorism” is presented in a framework which may serve as an illustrative guide to future activities.

- A preliminary assessment of some of the difficulties several UNICs are facing include the following: possible government objections to DPI programmes which may be viewed as interference in internal affairs; potential problems with Ministries of Education in this regard; need for educational materials for schools to promote (religious) tolerance and respect for diversity; difficulties in getting local religious leaders and NGOs to espouse the UN’s approach; lack of a definition of terrorism and, by extension, concerns expressed by many in populations we wish to reach of double standards, in particular when defining who is or who is not a terrorist. The wording of the PWG’s recommendation (“reaching local populations that support terrorist aims”) poses problems in this regard. The UNODC suggested finding different language (while retaining the intent) such as “helping communities to fight terrorism.”

**Recommendation 9:** Review and enhance the outreach of the UN information centres to civil society, including institutes and think-tanks in Arabic-speaking countries.

- A review of “UN Information Centre Activities to Counter Terrorism” has been produced and circulated to UNICs as a guide to future activities.
- A meeting of UN communications specialists from the Middle East region, convened at HQ between 2 and 5 September, discussed issues of relevance to this recommendation. DPI urged all participants to submit contributions to this recommendation, as well as recommendation 8, as a matter of priority.
- As part of DPI’s efforts to strengthen its capacity in this area, new posts have been advertised in a number of UNICs in the Middle East.
- In view of the Pew Poll in May (in which Osama bin Laden was chosen as one of the three political “leaders” most trusted to “do the right thing” by the Muslim publics in Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Palestinian Authority) DPI is conscious that the United Nations must win a new PR war (which has been waged very effectively by Al Qaeda) and to unambiguously convey the message that under no circumstances is the targeting of unarmed civilians justified.

**UNIS and UNICs** have undertaken a number of activities to enhance outreach to civil society and to inform the public about UN activities in the area of counter-terrorism. In 2003, these activities included the following (see the review of “UN Information Centre Activities to Counter Terrorism” for further information):

- UNIS-Vienna held a Journalist Forum on Terrorism and the Media in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in November 2003, which brought together 17 media representatives from Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia to hear briefings on the work of the UN against international terrorism,

- the work of the Vienna-based programmes, the linkages between drug trafficking/organized crime and terrorism and potential threats of nuclear terrorism. The workshop also explored the complexities facing media in covering terrorism.
- UNIC Bogota distributed to national and international media the Secretary-General's statement condemning the 6 February terrorist attack at Nugal Club.
  - UNIC Bucharest: assisted the "Economistul" newspaper in publishing a series of articles on terrorism, human development, poverty and the environment.
  - UNIC Cairo disseminated the statement of the Secretary-General to the Security Council Ministerial Meeting "Terrorism as a Threat to International Peace and Security" to all Egyptian and Arab newspapers and news agencies.
  - UNIC Colombo: The Sri Lanka Army in Panagoda [a suburb of Colombo] invited the National Information Officer to give a lecture on "The United Nations Role in the Fight against Global Terrorism" to senior Army officers. He also spoke on the UN role in fighting terrorism at the Sri Lanka Military Academy.
  - UNIC Harare: the Director spoke on issues related to global terrorism in a public lecture organized by the Association for Defence, Peace and Strategic Studies at the University of Zimbabwe.
  - UNIC Islamabad's weekly newsletter (with bi-monthly version in Urdu) features UN-based stories related to counter-terrorism, such as Security Council and General Assembly debates and resolutions.
  - UNIC Lisbon translated into Portuguese the brochure "The Counter-Terrorism Committee: Security Council contribution to the fight against Terrorism" (produced by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the UN and distributed with the assistance of DPI). It was posted on the Centre's webpage and its electronic version was made available to UNIC Rio, UNDP offices in Portuguese-speaking African countries and Brazil, UN Peace Missions in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste and Timor-Leste's Permanent Mission to the UN.
  - UNIC Lome with "Radio Zephyr", a private radio station in Lomé, produced a special programme on the UN, focusing initially on the Charter and purposes and principles of the Organization. The UNIC placed the Secretary-General's statement on terrorism in a local newspaper and three radio stations.
  - UNIC Mexico: the Director gave a lecture at the "International Book Fair" on terrorism, international peace and security.
  - UNIC Nairobi: an article entitled "Rights Threatened in Combating Terror," by a UNIC Information Officer was published in the Daily Nation "Gigiri Notebook". The article focused on international terrorism and its effects on Kenya.
  - UNIC New Delhi: The UNIC Director attended an International Youth Conference Against Terrorism which was organized in New Delhi by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, the youth wing of the ruling party BJP. The UNIC Director participated in a working group and made a statement at the closing session presided over by the Deputy Prime Minister of India. The UNIC Director also took part in a panel discussion of the recently published book "Dealing With Global Terrorism - The Way Forward" by Maj. Gen (Ret.) Vinod Saigal.
  - UNIC Ouagadougou briefed a group of senior high school students of "Lycée Nelson Mandela". Copies of the brochure "The Counter-Terrorism Committee: Security Council contribution to the fight against Terrorism" were distributed.

- UNIC Paris: the Director delivered a lecture on terrorism at a conference on "International security and globalization" in Nice, organized by the Institute of Peace Law and Development (Nice University). The Director also gave several interviews following the attack on the UN Office in Baghdad.
- UNIC Rabat: the official Arabic translation of the Secretary-General's statement to the Security Council Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism as a Threat to International Peace and Security was disseminated as an UNIC press release.
- UNIC Rome prepared a press release to announce the forthcoming UN event "Focus 2003: Treaties Against Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism", to be held in New York in September. The UN publication under the same title and press release were distributed to Italian institutions, media, NGOs and others.
- UNIC Sydney: the Director gave a number of interviews to the press following the attack on the UN building in Baghdad, including to ABC's 7:30 Report, SBS Television News, Radio New Zealand, Radio 2SM, Radio 2GB.
- The UN Information Office together with the Tashkent Aviation Institute organized a two-day Model UN Security Council with participation of 70 students from five universities of Tashkent. The theme was "Anti-terrorist and peacekeeping operations towards ensuring the safety of civil aviation".
- UNIC Tunis added a special page on terrorism to its website.

**Recommendation 10:** The activities of the UN related to the fight against terrorism should be promoted.

- DPI continues to promote the work of UN bodies dealing with terrorism, in particular that of the CTC. Its Special Meeting of 7 March with representatives of international, regional and sub-regional organizations received particular attention and press attendance. The work of such bodies has been widely publicized by **UN radio, TV, photo, print, webcast and DPI's press services**. DPI also keeps current the page on "UN Actions Against Terrorism" on the UN website.
- The CTC Special Meeting and other UN activities related to counter-terrorism received extensive coverage on the **UN News Centre**, now available on the Internet in all official languages. The News Centre and its special page on terrorism continued to serve as a focal point of text, visual and audio news on developments, including UN counter-terrorism, and is linked to many other sources of information. Its E-mail news service has more than 20,000 subscribers (English and French) in some 130 countries.
- A growing number of external web sites, including media outlets and educational and non-governmental organizations, published UN News Service stories and created links to the UN News Centre and its News Focus page on terrorism. Among those web sites are the Small Islands Developing States Network, American Society of International Law, Harvard Law School Library, Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Human Rights Education Organization, The Centre for Counterterrorism Studies, Maghreb Arab Press, Global Security.org, PreventConflict.org, PositiveUniverse.org and others.

- DPI staff have assisted DPA and staff of the Monitoring Group with improving the website for the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267. The DPI **Website Section** has been working with DPA to maintain the web site of the CTC in Arabic, Chinese and Russian and will be assisting the Committee to render the new design of the CTC site in those languages.
- *UN Chronicle* articles related to terrorism included: Issue 1, 2003 – “UNconventional: A Point of View. Who Should Lead Our Anti-terrorism Efforts?”, “Cloning Concerns; The Criminal Court”: including coverage of Sixth Committee debate on terrorism; Issue 2, 2003 – “Protecting the Protectors’: Strengthening Staff Security: Priorities and Challenges”; Issue 3, 2003 – included several pieces on the attack on UN headquarters in Baghdad. On line materials included “Multilateral cooperation needed to respond to international security challenges”—on UN meeting on international peace and security (6 August); UN Chronicle E-Alert “One month later: human security and dignity - fulfilling the promise of the UN” (19 August).
- The UN guides often include terrorism and the UN’s role in their talks. On 19 November 2003, Michael Chandler, the Chairman of the Monitoring Group of the Security Council’s Al-Qaida and Taliban Committee, briefed the UN guides. In addition, the DPI Group Programmes Unit organized 31 briefings on the subject of terrorism with a total attendance of 1301 individuals. The DPI Public Inquiries Unit fielded over 600 queries on the topic of terrorism this year until November, including over 100 in each month between February and April.
- The DPI focal point for public information efforts on terrorism has answered numerous media queries on the issue, in consultation with CTC staff and the Monitoring Group (whose reports have elicited particular interest), and recently arranged for the UN’s Legal Counsel to be interviewed on a BBC news programme concerning the definition of terrorism.

**Recommendation 11:** Continue emphasizing the importance to the fight against terrorism of existing United Nations work in the areas of human rights, democratic capacity building, and social and economic justice.

#### **DPI/NGO Conference, Briefings and Panel Discussion in 2003:**

The 56<sup>th</sup> DPI/NGO Annual Conference (8-10 September 2003) entitled “Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations” dealt with the non-military aspects of countering terrorism, focussing in part on the root causes of terrorism and efforts by United Nations and civil society partners to eradicate terrorism and other causes for violent conflict. A record 2,000 representatives from more than 600 UN-affiliated NGOs in 86 countries attended the Conference.

There have been a number of NGO Briefings or Panel Discussions conducted by the NGO Section of DPI that have discussed terrorism and the UN's counter-terrorism efforts in 2003. These include in particular:

24 April: "*Update on the Work of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee*," attended by more than 150 people, and featuring presentations by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, DPA and the Permanent Mission of Spain to the UN.

2 May: "*The Media and Armed Conflict*," in observance of the World Press Freedom Day (3 May). This panel discussion featured the Deputy Secretary-General, among others from the UN system and the press; was moderated by Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information and by over 400 people.

Other related NGO briefings include:

23 January 2003: "Prejudice: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Arab/Israeli Relations."

30 January: "Preventing Violence, Promoting Health: Shared Strategies."

13 March: "Update on the Situation in Côte D'Ivoire."

10 April: "The Ongoing Role of the United Nations in the Face of Crises."

17 April: "Opium Economy in Afghanistan: A Setback for Drug Control?"

22 May: "The Peacekeeper Experience."

29 May: An observance of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

22 January: "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: New Perspectives on Old Menaces"

29 January: "UN Report Initiatives: the High Level Panel to Study Global Security Threats, Challenges and Changes," and

18 March: "Rwanda Ten Years After: Overcoming the Genocide."

#### **UN Radio activities:**

UN Radio produced a series of magazines and feature programmes on the issues of terrorism in various languages. Among them are:

**English Unit:** 2.5 minute features on daily live broadcast:

"Countries Express Views on Combating Terrorism (21 Feb 03);

"UN Counter-Terrorist Committee meets Regional Organizations" (4 Mar 03);

"Special Rapporteur speaks on Torture, Terrorism and Human Rights (4 Apr 03);

“Counter-Terrorism Committee Assesses Progress and Setback” (23 July 03);  
“Sanctions Committee against Al-Qaeda urges Vigilance by States” (29 July 03);

15-minute taped programmes:

“Spain warns the International Community against complacency in fight against terrorism” (Caribbean News - May 03);  
“Grenada on problems war causes international community”(Caribbean News – Feb 03)

#### **Chinese Unit:**

High-level meeting on terrorism, March 2003; News bulletins included Security Council anti-terrorism committee briefings and reports of the panel on Al-Qaeda.

#### **Russian Unit:**

Seven news stories and four reports on terrorism, including “Russia, USA and IAEA discuss ways to protect radioactive wastes against terrorist attacks” - August 28;  
“Counter-terrorist Committee adds a Name of Chechen Separatist to Al-Qaeda Suspect list” (13 August); “Russia suggests Creation of Special Anti-terrorist Fund,” (23 July).

#### **French Unit: News/Live broadcast**

Reports include: Security Council on Terrorism (20 Feb.); Secretary-General’s Statement on better Cooperation on Terrorism (6 March); Committee of Human Rights statements (17 March); Security Council Debate on Iraq (28 March); Special Rapporteur on religion freedom and terrorism (9 April); HCR concerned about security in Afghanistan (14 April); Spain’s Prime Minister Aznar (Spain took presidency of SC Com. on Terrorism (7 May); Secretary-General condemned terrorist attack in Casablanca and two in Israel (19 May); .Backgrounder on UN Commission on crime prevention (Vienna 13-22 May); Secretary-General concerned by violence caused by Palestinians (19 May); Small arms Conference in New York started - (mentioned terrorism) (7 July); Security Council on terrorism (23 July); Security Council considers report on terrorism (29 July); 8/7 - Vieira de Mello condemned latest terrorist attack (Jordan office) (8 July); SG condemned two attacks in Israel (12 August); Lockerbie UK draft resolution - Families of UTA attack interviewed (18 August); Attack against UN - Special Edition (19-29 August); Security Council on draft resolution to lift sanctions against Libya (1 Sept.); Secretary-General condemned attacks in Israel (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv) (20 September); Security Council lifted sanctions against Libya (12 Sept.); T. R. Larsen concerned about terrorism in Middle East (15 Sept); New terrorist attack against UN HQ in Iraq (22 Sept.)