

5th Biennial Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

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For the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), it is an honour to participate in the fifth review of the *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. The OSCE is a valuable partner to effectively prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism. In implementing the *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, the OSCE uses its comparative advantages to: generate political will among its 57 participating States; raise awareness among state authorities, civil society and the private sector; and build capacity on the ground.

The OSCE has undertaken several key activities since the last review in 2014 – firstly to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, and secondly to prevent the movement of foreign terrorist fighters. We would also like to offer three recommendations for improving collaboration between the UN and regional organizations, in particular the OSCE.

Our Mandate in Counter-terrorism

As the largest regional security arrangements under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is committed to support the implementation of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We base our action on a comprehensive mandate agreed by consensus by our 57 participating States from Vancouver to Vladivostok, via Vienna.

In light of the global rise in terrorist incidents, this mandate has been reaffirmed and strengthened. In 2014, the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel pledged our support to the implementation of UNSCR 2178 (2014) on the phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters. In December last year, the Ministerial Council in Belgrade adopted a comprehensive Declaration on *Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT)* as well as a second Declaration underscoring our co-operation as a regional body. The VERLT Declaration identifies a number of good practices, also reflected in the UN *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* presented by the UN Secretary General in January this year.

The Plan of Action was welcomed by the German OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretary General. We believe it can play a critical role in galvanizing the implementation of the *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, in particular Pillar One. The OSCE particularly welcomes the emphasis that the plan places on enhancing efforts at the regional level.

Turning to our Key Supporting Activities since the 2014 Review

Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism has remained a strategic priority for the OSCE over the past two years.

Awareness-Raising / Political Will

We have pursued our decade-old efforts to raise awareness and facilitate the exchange of good practices on countering incitement to terrorism and countering terrorist radicalization, while upholding human rights and the rule of law.

The OSCE Chairmanships in 2015 and 2016, respectively Serbia and Germany, convened OSCE-wide conferences at the level of national counter-terrorism co-ordinators focused on preventing and countering VERLT.

We are also working hard to strengthen our engagement and collaboration with the United Nations, other regional organizations, OSCE Partners for Co-operation and many others. For example, the OSCE drafted the *good practices document on women and countering violent extremism* which was adopted by the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) last September and recognised by UN Security Council resolution 2242 (2015).

The OSCE Transnational Threats Department is working jointly with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media regarding counter-terrorism policies and media freedom and responsibilities. We held an initial workshop in Bucharest in October last year and we will follow up in Sarajevo in September focused on countering VERLT online. Parallel to these discussions, we are developing an OSCE e-learning module on Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes with the support of international experts, including from the UN.

Capacity-Building

The OSCE is assisting several of its participating States to develop and implement comprehensive national strategies and action plans to counter violent extremism and terrorism. The development of such plans is one of the key recommendations of the UN Secretary General in his report on implementation of the Global CT Strategy.

We are also launching a new initiative “*Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism*” initiative – LIVE – to build capacity at the grassroots level. The aim is to empower local civil society leaders, including women and youth, to speak up and mobilize their community against violent extremism.

And recently we organized several innovative training activities, including social media training for youth on countering violent extremist narratives, and table-top exercises to promote inter-agency co-ordination. We are also developing a training for police officers on the role of community policing in preventing terrorism and countering VERLT. The training is based on a joint guidebook of the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

All these activities are contributing to our communication campaign, “*OSCE united in countering violent extremism*” (#UnitedCVE). The campaign kick-started last year and seeks to leverage the potential of social media to engage and rally youth and civil society in support of the global consensus against violent extremism. We have achieved an unprecedented outreach of 9 million people in less than a year.

Preventing the Movement of FTFs is highlighted in the UN Secretary General’s report on implementation of the CT Strategy. It points to 3 areas where more efforts are required: 1) strengthening border control capacity; 2) enhancing the use of Advance Passenger Information (API); and 3) increasing the use of INTERPOL databases. The OSCE’s travel document security programme focusses specifically on these work streams in order to implement UN Security Council Resolution 2178.

Strengthening Border Control

Although the use of technology at the border has increased, the importance of having border officers with the ability detect FTFs, has also increased. Therefore, we organize a series of national trainings on the latest forgery techniques in passports, and we are developing a mobile training team to support States in identifying foreign terrorist fighters. We also have a dedicated

Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, which holds both monthly and annual staff courses for border guards.

Enhancing the Use of API

The OSCE is a partner in the global project led by the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre to Raise Awareness on API and is co-hosting the third regional workshop in Vienna next month. In addition, we have been consistently briefing our 57 participating States on the requirement that airlines provide States with API, in accordance with Resolution 2178.

The German OSCE Chairmanship is currently negotiating a politically-binding commitment which would call on States to implement API exchange programmes within the existing internationally-agreed standards to prevent the movement of FTFs.

And finally, we are working on capacity-building in order to support and assist States in the establishment of API systems, in cooperation with relevant international organizations.

Increasing the use of INTERPOL databases

The OSCE has previously adopted by consensus decisions on the use of Interpol databases. The challenge, as highlighted by the UN SG, is to increase the use of these databases. Therefore, as part of the API decision to be negotiated, we are making a push to increase the political will for establishing automated cross-checking of data against Interpol databases. On the capacity-building front, the OSCE is working with INTERPOL to increase access at border control points to INTERPOL databases.

Conclusion

In summary, the OSCE is a valuable partner to effectively prevent violent extremism and to counter terrorism. On implementation: our existing capacity-building projects to counter violent extremism and to enhance traveller identification at the border make us well-placed to partner with international organizations in supporting States. On awareness-raising: we use a combination of conferences, targeted workshops, online campaigning, and focal point networks to raise awareness of the commitments in the UN CT Strategy and how States can implement them. On political will: the OSCE increases standards and norms through the adoption of politically-binding decisions by consensus among the 57 participating States.

As a final word, we would like to offer three points about OSCE collaboration with the UN: First, UN entities, co-ordinated through the CTITF, should fully embrace regional organizations such as the OSCE at the beginning of the planning process whenever possible. Structurally the OSCE has programme managers dedicated to all the aspects of the UN Global Strategy, which allow our joint efforts to be more sustainable and effective.

Secondly, our activities require a mechanism that allows funding to be shared between organizational structures – this allows much needed grant money to a partner organization to leverage regional capacity when the grant terms reinforce joint activities through sub-granting.

Thirdly, our aim for two years from now – during the sixth biennial CT Strategy Review – should be even more confidence and efficiency in transforming a number of positive words expressed today into sustainable action. This will allow us to unlock the needed human resources for the countries that are most often the beneficiary of workshops, trainings, and other events – otherwise, we would not have matched development goals with sustainable counter-terrorism action.

In closing, the OSCE stands ready to remain a substantive contributor in generating political will, raising awareness and building capacity while implementing the UN Global CT Strategy in the OSCE area.