

## PRELIMINARY DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

### UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

#### *FOR A FUTURE FREE FROM TERRORISM: BUILDING RESILIENCE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY THROUGH THE RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS*

10-11 May 2022, Málaga, Spain

#### **Introduction**

The High-Level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism is in follow-up to the *Virtual Dialogue with Human Rights and Civil Society Partners on Building a Better Paradigm to Prevent and Counter Terrorism*, organized by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Kingdom of Spain in May 2021. The Conference will bring together Member States, UN entities, international and regional organizations, human rights and civil society partners, experts and other stakeholders for a robust and practical exchange of innovative ideas and experiences on how to build resilience and effectively embed human rights and the rule of law into the international community's response to terrorism.

#### **Conference Structure**

This two-day Conference will be structured as follows:

1. Session I: Human Rights and the Rule of Law as the Cornerstone of Effective Counter-Terrorism Efforts

This Session will highlight case studies on the benefits of promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law in counter-terrorism efforts, as well as practical guidance on how to integrate counter-terrorism approaches with human rights protection. It will also consider the gender dimensions of counter-terrorism efforts, including addressing the threats to women human rights defenders and peacebuilders in line with Security Council resolution 2493 (2019). Discussions will include good practices in the treatment of children in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including actions taken by Member States aimed at preventing the stigmatization of children with links to UN-listed terrorist groups.

2. Session II: Facilitating Principled Humanitarian Action to Build Resilience to Terrorism

This Session will showcase the negative impact of the shrinking humanitarian space on efforts to prevent and uproot terrorism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role and impact on civil society organizations operating in these areas, as well as highlight international cooperation efforts and success stories in this regard. Moreover, it will underscore practical steps and good practices in the development and implementation of counter-terrorism legislation, policies, measures and operations to safeguard and facilitate principled humanitarian action.

3. Session III: Upholding the Rights and Needs of Victims and Survivors of Terrorism

Looking ahead to the upcoming first UN Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism to be held later this year, this Session will highlight the essential elements to develop national comprehensive assistance plans to support the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, including assistance and support, remembrance and recognition, access to justice and compensation. It will also include victims' stories told in their own voices, showcasing their experiences, and using the platform to advocate for their rights and needs.

4. Session IV: Way Forward to Ensure an Enabling Environment for Civil Society on Preventing and Countering Terrorism

This Session will focus the negative impact of the shrinking civic space on efforts to prevent and uproot terrorism, as well as good practices in the development and implementation of counter-terrorism legislation, policies and measures to preserve an enabling environment for civil society. Participants will reflect on the outcome of the seventh biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and make recommendations on how to strengthen dialogue between civil society and Member States under the auspices of the United Nations. It will also highlight UNOCT's progressive engagement with a diverse group of civil society organizations through its regional and international high-level conferences, capacity-building programmes and roll-out of its CSO Engagement Strategy.

5. Session V: The Role of the United Nations and the Counter-Terrorism Architecture

The Session will give an overview of the UN's counter-terrorism priorities and efforts to date, including through its pivotal policy, leadership and coordination role within the UN system, as well as its critical capacity-building programmes. It will also discuss how to sustain the efforts of Member States and civil society partners to strengthen the counter-terrorism work of the UN-system to better address new and emerging challenges, as well as identified capacity gaps and needs, including those exposed by the pandemic. It will further explore how the UN counter-terrorism architecture could strengthen partnership building and multilateral cooperation to advance mandate delivery, as well as national and regional ownership of the Strategy.

### **Participation and Format**

- The official opening session will take place at the ministerial level on the evening of 10 May, followed by a social event hosted by the Government of Spain. Another ministerial session is planned for the morning of 11 May.
- UNOCT and the Permanent Mission of Spain will consult widely with stakeholders on preparations for the Conference, including with civil society groups, Member States, OHCHR, UN Women, the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights, and other members of the Global Compact Working Group on Human Rights/Victims.
- The Conference will be held in-person.
- Civil society representatives will participate across all working sessions, including as co-moderators.
- A series of other activities are also planned on 9 May 2022.
- Panels will be diverse and inclusive with gender parity and geographical balance among speakers in all sessions.

### **Outcomes**

The discussions will be summarized in a co-chair's summary, highlighting how respect for human rights and a 'whole-of-society' approach is fundamental to effectively prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, in line with the Secretary-General's *Call to Action on Human Rights* and his landmark report on *Our Common Agenda*. The Conference outcomes and summary will include practical ideas and recommendations to strengthen the role of human rights and civil society actors to advance the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

## **Points of Contact**

### **UNOCT:**

- Mr. Muhammad Rafiuddin Shah ([shah4@un.org](mailto:shah4@un.org)) - Overall Coordinator
- Mr. Rajiv Ramlal ([ramlalr@un.org](mailto:ramlalr@un.org)) - Organizational matters
- Ms. Veronic Wright ([veronic.wright@un.org](mailto:veronic.wright@un.org)) - Human Rights and Gender Unit
- Ms. Laila Ezzarqui ([ezzarqui@un.org](mailto:ezzarqui@un.org)) - Side events
- Mr. Ignacio Ibanez, ([ibanezi@un.org](mailto:ibanezi@un.org)) - UNOCT Madrid Office
- Ms. Ana Izar ([izar@un.org](mailto:izar@un.org)) - Victims of Terrorism
- Mr. Laurence Gerard ([gerardl@un.org](mailto:gerardl@un.org)) - Communications
- Ms. Ruth Kiragu ([kiragu1@un.org](mailto:kiragu1@un.org)) - Organizational matters
- Mr. George Kostakis ([kostakis@un.org](mailto:kostakis@un.org)) - Logistics

### **Kingdom of Spain:**

- Mr. Alberto de la Calle ([Alberto.delacalle@maec.es](mailto:Alberto.delacalle@maec.es)), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Kingdom of Spain, Madrid
- Mr. David Izquierdo ( [David.izquierdo@maec.es](mailto:David.izquierdo@maec.es)) - Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Spain, New York