



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

International and Regional Border Security and
Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and
Prevent the Movement of Terrorists

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN • 18-19 OCTOBER 2022

Concept Note

Rationale and Background

This two-day conference is jointly co-organized by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the State of Qatar. The conference is aimed at promoting cooperation on a number of topical border security management issues outlined in the seventh review resolution of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) A/RES/75/291 adopted by the General Assembly in June 2021 and in the related Security Council Resolutions 1373 (2001), 1540 (2004), 2178 (2014), 2309 (2016), 2396 (2017), and 2482 (2019). Both the GCTS review resolution and the Security Council resolutions call upon Member States to step up national efforts and bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and international cooperation, as appropriate, to improve border and customs controls in order to **prevent and detect the movement of terrorists, and prevent and detect the illicit trafficking** of, inter alia, small arms and light weapons, conventional ammunition and explosives, and nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons and materials, in accordance with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law. The resolutions also request Member States to strengthen their efforts to curtail the threat posed by terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), through the adoption of measures on border security and management, criminal justice, and information-sharing, consistent with domestic and international law.

Conference Objectives

The Conference will focus on the prevention of terrorists and terrorist groups' movement, effective border management and related counter-terrorism measures. The event is convened as a follow-up to the “Dushanbe process” launched in May 2018, when the High-Level International Conference on "Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism" (Dushanbe, 3-4 May 2018) was jointly convened in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, UN entities, the OSCE and the EU, and the first UNOCT High-Level Conference on “International and Regional Cooperation on Countering Terrorism and its Financing Through Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime” (Dushanbe, 16-17 May 2019).

Conference Structure

The Conference will comprise a High-Level Opening Session, Heads of Delegation Session, four Thematic Working Sessions and a Closing Session.

Thematic Session I: Regional Border Security Challenges: Identifying Threats, Risks and Avenues for Improvement

Key issues to be addressed:

- This session will focus on an analysis of the current regional border security challenges in Central Asia and beyond, including the identification of threats and risks in the management of borders in the context of countering terrorism. Attention will be paid to key challenges at the national and regional level and how to, inter alia, strengthen effective information sharing among law enforcement and border management stakeholders consistent with domestic and international law.
- The session will also include a discussion of potential linkages between transnational organized crime and terrorism and presentation of related instruments to address and counter them.
- It will examine current trends in terrorist movements across borders and how these trends influence the threat landscape in different regions.
- Participants will also look at the current trends of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, conventional ammunition and explosives, and nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological weapons and materials and potential linkages with terrorist organizations.

Thematic Session II: The Phenomenon of FTFs and Its Implications for the Central Asian Region and Beyond and Addressing Related Border Security Needs through the Support of the International Community

Key issues to be addressed:

- This Session will examine current trends in the movement of FTFs and how to strengthen international and regional cooperation to counter FTF flows in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian and refugee law, including through a gender and age perspective. It will also address the border security needs of the Central Asian States and how to leverage increased international support, including funding, to meet those needs.
- Are existing instruments sufficient to identify and effectively prevent the movement of FTFs? What can Member States, international and regional organizations, UN entities, and other stakeholders do to strengthen existing mechanisms and/or establish new ones, as appropriate?
- How can stakeholders promote and enhance the exchange of operational information regarding detection or movements of terrorists or terrorist networks, including FTFs with full respect for human rights?
- How can stakeholders ensure that relevant measures and instruments are implemented in compliance with human rights and in an age- and gender sensitive manner?
- What are the effective operational measures at the border for countering and preventing the travel of FTFs?
- What are international good practices and policies to build inter-agency cooperation, as well as effective investigative techniques and prosecutorial strategies in accordance with domestic and international law?
- What are the current border security challenges confronting the Central Asian States and its implications on the threat landscape?
- Are the current border security funding needs of Central Asian States being adequately resourced? What are the gaps?
- How can the international community, including donor partners, better support these States in meeting their needs through the mobilization of additional resources?

Thematic Session III: Towards Effective Rule of Law Based Border Security Management Strategies and Whole-of-Society Solutions

Key issues to be addressed:

- What are the main features of effective, rule of law based and human rights-compliant counter-terrorism border security policies? Are there good examples of border management strategies which are aimed at preventing the movement of terrorists, including FTFs?
- What are the existing technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives to supporting national stakeholders in implementing a whole-of-society approach?
- How are Member States implementing the requirement to develop comprehensive and integrated national strategies to ensure an effective and holistic rule of law-based and human rights-compliant approach in countering terrorism in BSM? Are there good examples of effective border management strategies to prevent the movement of FTFs?
- This session will also place emphasis on how to ensure gender-sensitive, human rights-compliant policies, humanitarian responsiveness, and how to improve engagement with civil society in BSM.

Thematic Session IV: Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation on Border Security and Management in the Counter-Terrorism Context: The Way Forward

Key issues to be addressed:

- Lessons learned from BSM capacity-building policies and programmes implemented at the national, regional, and global levels.
- Responsible use of biometrics – its value for BSM in a demanding post-COVID-19 travel environment – balancing identity verification with effective data protection, rule of law and human rights, in particular the right to privacy.
- Innovative measures and tools such as API/PNR, AI, and other cutting-edge examples for early detection, information exchange and countering the threat of terrorists and serious criminals – legal, technical, and operational aspects.
- Best practices for enhancing cross-border cooperation, including through the establishment of regional informal working groups on API/PNR.

Venue, Format, and Participation

The Conference will be held in person on 18-19 October 2022 in the Dushanbe State Complex (“Kokhi Somon”) located at 122, Rudaki Ave., Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The working languages of the Conference will be English and Russian.

The Conference will bring together representatives from the UN Member States, particularly from Central Asia, Asia Pacific, Europe, and other parts of the world, engaged in efforts to prevent the movement of terrorists, as well as representatives of international and regional organizations, UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, civil society organizations and experts. Representatives of counter-terrorism, border security, and criminal justice entities, human rights bodies/entities as well as agencies involved in counter-terrorism (CT) and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) efforts will also be invited to participate.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the Conference will include the adoption of the “Dushanbe Declaration on Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists”, and a Co-Chairs’ Summary of Conference discussions to be shared during the Closing Session of the Conference.