

Terrorism Financing and the Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters Workshop:



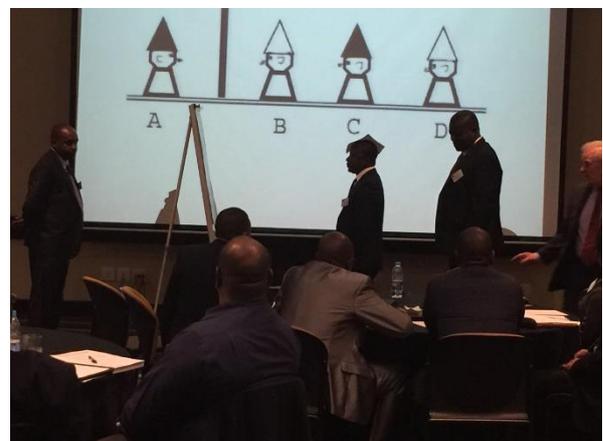
According to the UN Security Council, terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and associated groups have attracted over 30,000 Foreign Terrorist Fighters from over 100 Member States. Increasingly, terrorist groups are working to radicalize individuals and incite them to leave their homes to become foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). These groups leverage the Internet and social media for recruitment and threaten global security.

In view of these developments, a 3-day workshop on *Terrorist Financing and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters* for senior managers at various law enforcement institutions from 15 Southern and Eastern African countries was held in Pretoria, South Africa from 28 February to 02 March.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Fitz-Roy Drayton from UNODC highlighted the need for senior managers in enabling measures to combat terrorism financing. He added that the Balkan Route, which was the traditional route for smuggling heroin, has progressively become more difficult for traffickers and as a result, they have resorted to transporting drugs by road to the coast of the Indian Ocean. From there, the drugs are transported by sea to the Swahili coast, and then to Southern Africa. Mr. Drayton emphasized the “need to squeeze the flow of funding to the terrorist groups in order to stop the recruitment of FTFs who constitute a serious threat to their States of origin, transit, destination, as well as the neighbouring zones of armed conflict.”

The value of “Information Sharing”

“Information sharing and international cooperation were the theme of the workshop. As Terrorism Financing and FTFs are by nature international, combating them domestically will not be effective. Therefore, the workshop’s main objective was to enhance internal and international cooperation. These topics were emphasized through group discussions and interactive case studies.



Case studies

During the workshop, case studies were used to illustrate the importance of international cooperation.

CASE Study 1: In December 2014, three individuals – two men aged 18 and 27, and a 15-year-old boy – wanted in Spain on terrorism-related charges, were arrested in Bulgaria at a border checkpoint with Turkey, just hours after INTERPOL issued an alert. They were believed to be heading to join insurgents in Syria.

Case Study 2: Thanks to Belgium's decision to issue an international alert through INTERPOL, an individual wanted for terrorist offences was apprehended in Lebanon on his way to Syria in October 2014.

In both cases, the effectiveness of information sharing is evident. Therefore information sharing is crucial in identifying foreign terrorist fighters and preventing the funding of terrorist activities across borders.

Other activities during the workshop included:

- Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of current infrastructures in combating terrorism;
- Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of terrorist organisations;
- A critical analysis of the terrorist funding cycle – raise- store- move and use;
- Terrorist funding case studies;
- Multi-Agency and public-private partnerships; and
- Preparation of National Risk Assessments.

Practitioners in this field need channels to share experiences and information across borders. The ARINSA network brings together investigators, prosecutors and various law enforcement agents from 12 countries in Southern Africa for operational exchanges on anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing. The network meets regularly with member countries mostly from Southern Africa and other international organizations to foster international cooperation and exchange information on best practices and achievements in tracing the proceeds of crime.

Future Training

At the end of the workshop, it was agreed that the senior managers would select candidates from within their respective departments to receive operationally centred workshops from UNODC. The senior managers will meet again in December 2017 to review progress.