

Assisting States to provide a criminal justice response to terrorism

“A rule-of-law-based criminal justice response is a key prerequisite in countering terrorism, and is dependent on Member States’ full implementation of the global legal framework against terrorism. That work has come a long way, but much still needs to be done. The Terrorism Prevention Branch is strongly committed to continue helping requesting States with technical assistance to strengthen their criminal justice capacity in dealing with terrorism.”

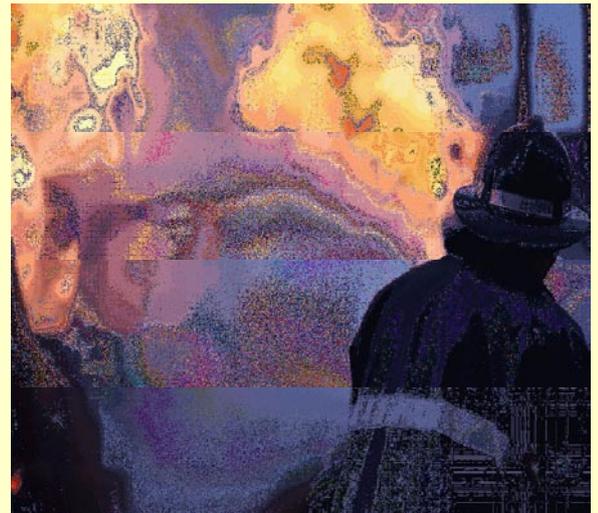
– Cecilia Ruthström-Ruin, Chief, Terrorism Prevention Branch

Threats and challenges posed by terrorism

Terrorism takes many forms. Car bombings, aircraft hijacking, hostage taking and financing of terrorism are all among the criminal acts covered by the global legal framework against terrorism.

Terrorism poses fundamental challenges to the international community and risks undermining the core values of the United Nations: the rule of law, respect for human rights, protection of civilians, tolerance among people and nations and the peaceful resolution of conflict. It also threatens human security and can have a devastating impact on development and sustainable peace.

Experience has shown that no country is immune to terrorism, irrespective of the political structure or level of development. Both national action and international cooperation are therefore central to any effort to address this global threat. A key element is to strengthen the capacity of national criminal justice systems to bring perpetrators to justice in compliance with the international legal regime against terrorism and the rule of law.



To be effective, the global response to terrorism needs to be comprehensive and follow a criminal justice-based approach, preventing terrorist incidents from taking place and providing an adequate response to terrorist violence.

Perpetrators of terrorist crimes should be brought to trial, either in their own country or in another country (through extradition), in order to make the world inhospitable to offenders.

Terrorism Prevention Branch

Mandate

In 2002, the General Assembly approved an expanded programme of activities for the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC.

The focus of the Branch is to assist requesting States in legal and other aspects related to counter terrorism, especially for ratifying and implementing the international legal instruments against terrorism and strengthening the capacity of national criminal justice systems to apply provisions of these instruments in compliance with the rule of law.

The Branch's mandate has been strengthened through resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, including Assembly resolution 60/288 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Key objectives

- Assist States in achieving full **ratification** of the international legal instruments against terrorism
- Help States develop and apply **domestic legislation** for the implementation of those instruments
- Provide **capacity-building** assistance, including by training criminal justice officials, to strengthen the criminal justice system
- Facilitate **international cooperation** in criminal matters pertaining to terrorism
- Strengthen **collaboration** on legal aspects of counter-terrorism between the Terrorism Prevention Branch and relevant subregional, regional and international organizations.

- The functions of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate and of the Terrorism Prevention Branch are complementary and mutually supportive. The work of the Committee and its Executive Directorate guides UNODC technical assistance delivery
- The Terrorism Prevention Branch also works closely with two other counter-terrorism committees established by the Security Council:
 - The 1267 Committee, concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities
 - The 1540 Committee, concerning the prevention of non-State actors (including terrorist groups) from accessing weapons of mass destruction
- UNODC actively participates in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to assure that its counter-terrorism work is carried out in the broader context of the United Nations-system-wide efforts.

Terrorism Prevention Branch

UNODC's *Global Project on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Terrorism* provides the overall framework for delivering technical counter-terrorism assistance to States.



The Terrorism Prevention Branch brings together expertise from different areas, such as crime prevention, criminal justice, international development cooperation and programme management.

The Branch is increasingly placing experts in the field, and the field office experts cover most of Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Between 2002 and 2009, 22 donors contributed more than US\$ 40 million to technical assistance activities carried out by the Branch.

Measuring progress and impact

According to the results of a comprehensive independent evaluation, Member States appreciate the activities of the Terrorism Prevention Branch and consider the Global Project on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Terrorism to make a valuable contribution to their efforts to counter terrorism.

Indicators for measuring the success of the Branch's work include the number of **ratifications** of the international counter-terrorism instruments, the number of **Member States assisted by the Branch**, the number of **legislative amendments or new laws**, and the number of **officials trained** in the universal instruments and international cooperation.



International workshop on national counter terrorism focal points, Vienna 12 -13 October, 2009

Terrorism Prevention Branch

Achievements (2002-2009)

168 States were assisted by the Branch

69 of which prepared new or revised counter-terrorism legislation

9,200 national justice officials were trained

18 technical assistance tools and publications were developed

515 new ratifications by Member States assisted by the Branch

The way forward

To meet the evolving needs of Member States, the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC is increasing its focus on:

- (1) Building the knowledge base and training tools on key issues and challenges, including :
 - o **Chemical, biological, radiological** and **nuclear** terrorism
 - o **Victims** of terrorism
 - o **Financing** of terrorism
 - o **Maritime** issues
 - o Use of the **Internet** for terrorist purposes

(2) Providing long-term, in-depth customized assistance on the ground, reaching out to criminal justice officials involved in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism cases.

- (3) Developing comprehensive technical assistance packages that will enable criminal justice officials to deal with a range of crimes potentially linked to terrorism.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) meets with the families of the victims and survivors of the bombing of the United Nations complex in Algiers.
Photo: Evan Schneider/UN Ph