

**Open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on  
“Border control and security in the context of counter-terrorism”**

*Thursday, 31 August 2023, 10.00 a.m.–12.00 p.m., EDT*

**Concept note**

**I. Introduction**

1. In its resolution 1373 (2001), the Security Council decided, among other things, that all States shall prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents. Effective border management is of particular importance with respect to foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), as reflected in resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017). Furthermore, in its resolution 2482 (2019), the Council calls upon Member States, including through relevant central and competent authorities, to strengthen border management, including by increasing awareness, training and capacity of relevant practitioners in border control, including with relevant organizations, to investigate and prosecute terrorists and terrorist groups and transnational organized criminals working with them, and to effectively identify and prevent their movement.

2. Border control is the last line of defence against the illegal cross-border movement of terrorists, including FTFs, goods and cargo. To effectively screen travellers prior to departure and arrival, but also at ports of entry, a combination of several mechanisms needs to be in place, depending on whether the border is an air, maritime or land border. In its Addendum to the guiding principles on foreign terrorist fighters (2018) (S/2018/1177), the Security Council provides further elements for States to strengthen their implementation of measures on border security and information-sharing, including improving capabilities for detecting and interdicting terrorist travel including ensuring effective use of advanced passenger information (API), passenger name record (PNR) data; developing watch lists and databases and sharing information through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms; and developing biometric systems and ensuring their responsible use.

3. Coordinated border management (CBM) strategies, which require close coordination among the competent authorities, have proven to be a highly effective tool for efficiently and effectively managing national borders. In its 2018 Madrid Guiding Principles (S/2018/1177), the Security Council calls upon States to consider incorporating CBM principles, as appropriate, in order to enhance the effectiveness of border controls aimed at detecting and preventing movement of terrorists and FTFs and preventing organized crime.

4. Maintaining secure air, land, and maritime borders is a challenge all Member States face. Many States struggle to ensure basic security measures, including the screening of goods and the cross-checking of travellers by air against national and international counter-terrorism watch lists and databases. Security Council resolution 2309 (2016) focuses specifically on terrorist threats to civil aviation. It highlights several steps for Member States in order to strengthen their

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implementation of security-related International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices.

5. Land borders can be very lengthy and porous and thus difficult to monitor. Maintaining the integrity of maritime borders and policing relevant maritime zones require a high level of technical capacity and resources to effectively patrol often vast maritime zones and maintain a presence at maritime ports of entry. Special measures to enhance maritime security are set forth in the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which is a comprehensive set of measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities for the contracting parties to the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS Convention).

6. A number of States have taken steps to strengthen border control and security, including making more effective use of INTERPOL databases to conduct screening to detect and identify FTFs. Many States have integrated the INTERPOL I-24/7 police communication system, which provides secure access to the various INTERPOL databases, into their national systems and some States have extended access to the network beyond their National Central Bureaux to other national law enforcement entities, including front-line officers at ports of entry.

7. In furtherance of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) and the standard established by ICAO, in its resolutions 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019), the Security Council decided that all Member States shall establish API systems and develop the capability to collect, process and analyse PNR data. Even though many States have begun to develop API and PNR capabilities, many also continue to struggle with the coherent implementation of these highly complex and technical systems and frameworks. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) is a partner of the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, which supports Member States in the holistic implementation of API and PNR systems.

8. In its resolution 2396 (2017), the Council decided that Member States shall develop and implement systems to collect biometric data, which could include fingerprints, photographs, facial recognition, and other relevant identifying biometric data, in order to responsibly and properly identify terrorists, including FTFs, in compliance with domestic law and international human rights law. The aim of the *United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices for the Responsible Use and Sharing of Biometrics in Counter-Terrorism* is to assist States in their efforts to implement resolution 2396 (2017).

9. The assessments prepared by CTED on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee revealed major gaps in a number of States' implementation of the border security requirements set forth in resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2178 (2014), and 2396 (2017) and other relevant resolutions, including the analysis of passenger data, the screening of individuals against watch lists and databases, the use of biometrics in counter-terrorism, and screening of goods. The assessments include recommendations to rectify those gaps in accordance with international obligations. Efforts related to border management should be comprehensive, human rights-compliant, non-discriminatory, and include gender- and age-sensitive perspectives.

## **II. Objective of briefing**

10. In view of the continued terrorist and other security threats, there remains a need for Member States to strengthen border security and prevent the movement of terrorists, including FTFs, or terrorist groups and transnational organized criminals. The level of implementation of effective border management-related strategies, action plans and other measures varies considerably across regions.

11. The purpose of the open briefing would be to update Member States on the latest developments in this area, including by presenting on Member States' obligations related to preventing terrorist travel, including to prevent the undetected travel of FTFs from or through their territories, especially returning and relocating FTFs. The briefing would focus on identifying key elements of a coordinated approach to border management strategy and border controls in the counter-terrorism context.

12. The briefing would also seek Member States' views on issues, current trends, challenges, and gaps in countering terrorism and organized crime from a border management and control perspective, which would benefit from further discussion at the international level. Current key issues in this area would include, for example, developments relating to the introduction and implementation of border management and border control strategies for air, land and sea borders, effective border control at ports of entry, monitoring of borders, screening of people and cargo, maintenance and access to national databases and watch lists, responsible use of biometrics, processing of travellers and passenger data, and access to INTERPOL tools and resources, while in respect of international obligations.

13. Member States will be encouraged to share information about their experiences and practices in implementing measures in border management, control and security in the context of counter-terrorism and in implementing resolutions 1373 (2001), 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017) and other relevant resolutions.

## **III. Format and topics of discussions**

14. The proposed briefing will consist of an opening segment, to be followed by a main segment featuring presentations by a panel of experts on various aspects of border control and security in the context of counter-terrorism.

15. In order to encourage an interactive discussion, the main segment will be followed by a question-and-answer segment and a brief closing segment.

16. The Committee Chair will act as Chair and moderator.

17. The briefing will be held in person at United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 4.

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18. An annotated agenda and meeting documentation will be posted on the Committee's website. Participants are required to complete the online registration form, which is accessible through this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/be3s5B7kzh>.

### **IV. Venue and date**

19. The proposed open briefing will be streamed live on UN Web TV on 31 August 2023, from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m., EDT.

### **V. Expected outcome**

20. The participants will identify challenges, gaps and vulnerabilities; good practices in border management, control and security in the context of counter-terrorism; and policies, instruments and tools developed to effectively manage borders and implement resolutions 1373 (2001), 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017) and other relevant resolutions in a manner consistent with international law.

### **VI. Communications**

21. CTED will promote the briefing through the appropriate channels. A press release may be issued following the briefing.