

## United States Mission to the OSCE

# Countering Terrorism



As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Harry Kamian  
to the Joint Meeting of the Forum for Security Cooperation and  
Permanent Council  
Vienna, February 26, 2020

Madam Chair, Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank Albania and Turkey for convening this joint FSC-PC today. I wish to thank the speakers who have highlighted the challenges Turkey and the international community face in this regard. On September 11, 2001 when the United States suffered the largest terrorist attack on our homeland, I was serving in the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. Over the ensuing months and years, as the United States and the international community worked together to respond to these attacks, I developed an appreciation for the challenges Turkey faces in combating terrorism. I also appreciate how terrorist and associated threats have evolved, as the Turkish Director General noted in her opening remarks.

Madam Chair, participating States should be proud of the work the OSCE has done in the realm of combatting terrorism. The United States is especially supportive of the OSCE's *Action against Terrorism Unit's (ATU) efforts in Preventing and Combatting Violent Extremism and Radicalization Leading to Terrorism (P/CVERLT)*. The OSCE is well-positioned to provide participating States with a wealth of resources to assist in this kind of programming. Madam Deputy Minister, I share your view that the OSCE can benefit from exchanging information and sharing lessons learned with other international organizations in strengthening our efforts to combat violent extremism. By sharing our national experiences here, we gain insight so we can better attune our respective authorities to the best counterterrorism practices. In doing so, we must prioritize our commitments to the protection of civilian lives and to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, not least freedom of expression. Counterterrorism activities must not be used to justify indiscriminate civilian harm, human rights violations, or oppressive law enforcement tactics, and we should push back against repressive measures that hamper freedom of expression and limit access to and use of an open, reliable, and secure Internet.

Madam Director General, we agree that foreign terrorist fighters pose a serious threat to our collective security and call on all participating States to show our collective response to address these threats. The joint OSCE and UN conference on addressing the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters earlier this month in Vienna is another concrete example of how participating States can share best practices. Madam Deputy Minister, we agree the May counterterrorism conference hosted by the Albanian Chair in Tirana

offers a useful opportunity to build upon the successful foreign terrorist fighter conference in Vienna in February and the United States looks forward to actively participating.

Madam Chair, we appreciate the efforts of the Turkish Chairmanship to highlight counterterrorism within the mandate of the FSC. We acknowledge that other areas of the FSC's work, such as combating the spread of small arms and light weapons and the Code of Conduct questionnaire, can contribute to our efforts to counter terrorism. Identifying opportunities and implementing effective means to prevent and combat terrorism remains at the top of American foreign policy priorities. In this regard, implementation of *UN Security Council Resolution 1540* on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors should remain a topic high on the FSC's agenda. Last week's FSC on UNSCR 1540 was especially important and timely in light of the OSCE's participation in the 2020-2021 *Comprehensive Review* of UNSCR 1540.

Madam Deputy Minister, you are right, counterterrorism requires more than a politico-military approach. It requires a comprehensive multi-faceted approach. The threat from terrorism is multidimensional and we need to continue to address the topic appropriately across all dimensions of security. Ambassador Bush, we welcome the comprehensive approach to counterterrorism you introduced as the chair of First Dimension Security Committee, as well as your commitment to including representatives from the field missions in all of your committee meetings.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.