



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Programme Office in Dushanbe
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Statement for press briefing by OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger following closing of the conference “Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism, Dushanbe 4 May 2018

I would like to begin by thanking the Government of Tajikistan, and in particular President Rahmon, for hosting this important high-level international conference.

The conference offered an excellent opportunity to reinforce co-operation and share experiences in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

The threat to security and stability in the region is very real. As many other countries around the world, Central Asian states have been a source of foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. Now many of them are returning back home. And some Central Asian countries border on regions strongly influenced by terrorist organizations.

I welcome Tajikistan’s commitment to addressing these challenges, including in partnership with the OSCE.

The OSCE, as an inclusive platform for dialogue and joint action, is well equipped to contribute to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

Our Secretariat, Field Operations and Institutions assist participating States in developing comprehensive, balanced and coordinated responses to these challenges. Notably, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe helped Tajikistan draft its National Strategy on Countering Terrorism and Extremism.

The Secretariat’s Transnational Threats Department works closely with all our Central Asian Field Operations on capacity building and other efforts to prevent terrorism and violent extremism.

The OSCE encourages the development of nuanced approaches that address legitimate security concerns while ensuring respect for human rights. Counter-terrorism legislation should criminalize acts of violence or incitement to violence, while respecting the freedom to express views that we may not agree with.

Indiscriminate counter-terrorism policies can alienate segments of the population, which could lead to their radicalization and violence. In other words, such policies could actually push people toward violent extremism and terrorism. Instead of repressing diverse voices, it is far more effective to let them be heard and to engage with them.

Law enforcement measures alone cannot defeat terrorism and violent extremism, without parallel efforts being invested in prevention. In this spirit, Tajikistan – with the OSCE’s

support – established Public Councils in various regions to engage at the local level and strengthen co-operation between police and local communities.

Capacity building is also essential. The deployment of a mobile training team to the OSCE Border Management Staff College, here in Dushanbe, is one good example of how the OSCE supports this. Its aim is to strengthen the capacity of border officials in detecting foreign terrorist fighters. Another example is the joint OSCE/UNODC training programme for countering the financial terrorism, which now Tajikistan will also be benefitting from.

All too often youth is considered as part of the problem. We must think about how to empower young people as part of our work to prevent violent extremism and to build more resilient societies.

The fight against radicalization leading to violent extremism or terrorism is not a battle any country can win alone. A comprehensive and co-operative approach of OSCE participating States, multilateral organizations and civil society is needed if we are to succeed. In that spirit, I thank once again the Government of Tajikistan for its contribution, through this Conference, to our common efforts.