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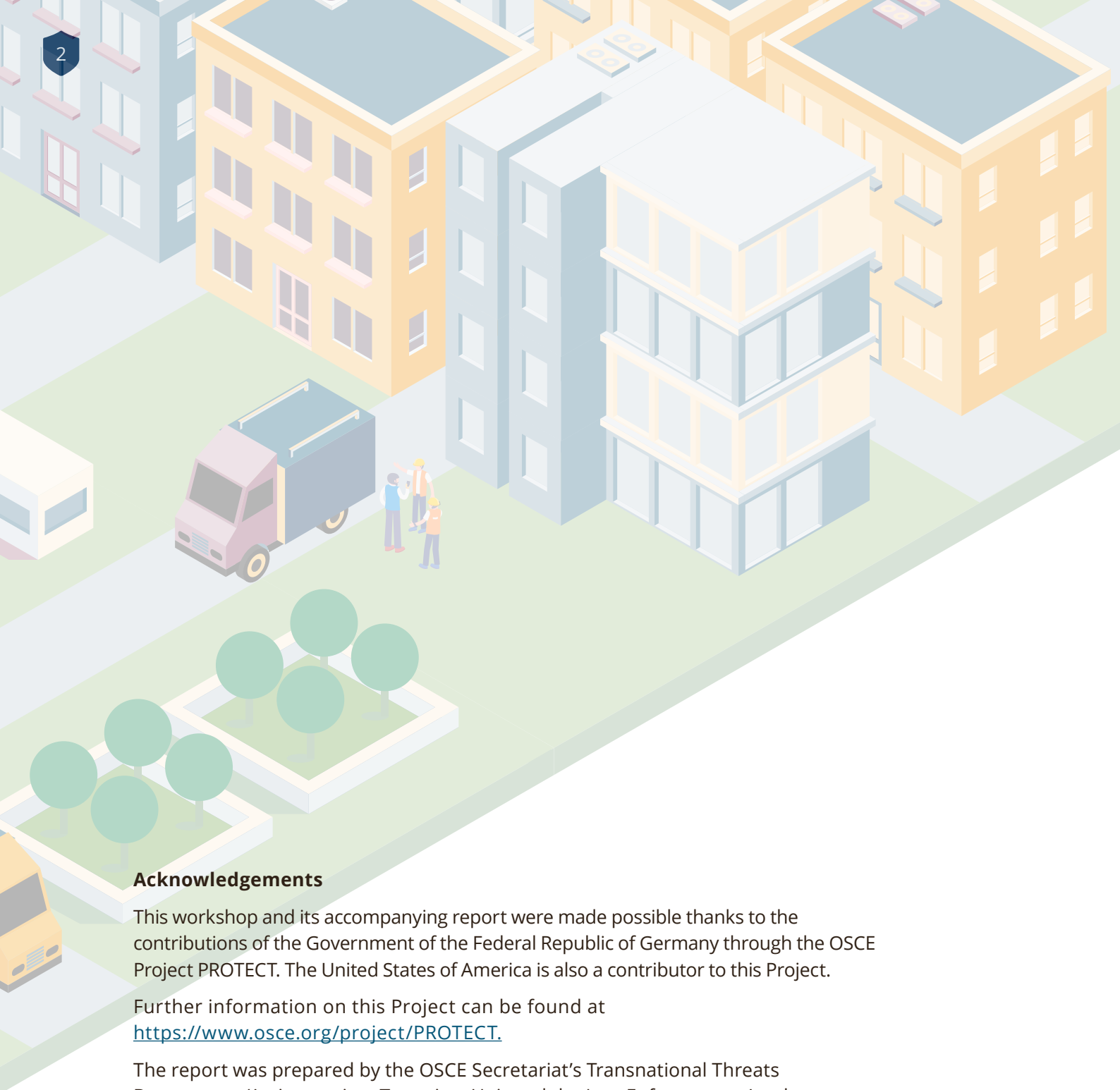
PROTECT

Project on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets from Terrorist Attacks

Workshop Report

Central Asia Regional Workshop on the Protection of Soft Targets from Terrorist Attacks

27-28 May 2024, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

Co-organized with the Law Enforcement Academy under the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Acknowledgements

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↗ Event Summary

Within the framework of the OSCE's Project PROTECT, the Action against Terrorism Unit of the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department (TNTD/ATU) and the Law Enforcement Academy under the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, with the support of the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, held a regional workshop dedicated to the protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks in Astana on 27 and 28 May 2024.

The TNTD/ATU gathered over 50 national and international experts for the first regional activity of the OSCE's Project PROTECT. Participants included national expert delegations from the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as international experts from the Czech Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, France, United States of America, OSCE Programme Office in Astana, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, United Nations (UN) Office of Counter-Terrorism, UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Centre for Sport Security and the Strong Cities Network.

↗ Background

Across the OSCE area, public places continue to be targeted by terrorists and violent extremists of all ideological backgrounds. In recent years, terrorists and violent extremists have attacked schools, sporting events, transport hubs, shopping centres, houses of worship, hotels, tourist sites and other soft targets. These attacks mirror terrorist propaganda across the ideological spectrum which in many cases favours attacks on soft targets. Therefore, it is highly important that the OSCE participating States (pS) and other concerned stakeholders engage in a concerted dialogue and exchange on good practices, experiences and challenges regarding the protection of soft targets in order to keep communities safe. This is all the more vital as the capabilities of terrorist groups grow in the OSCE area and beyond, such as in Afghanistan where according to the UN in 2024 *"a high concentration of terrorist groups [...] undermines the security situation in the region"* with Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIL-K) posing the greatest threat[1].

While preventing terrorist attacks on soft targets is a complex and location-specific task, there is great value in sharing experiences and knowledge across borders. Despite the location-specific complexity of protecting soft targets, there are common baseline approaches to this task, such as the need for effective public-private partnerships, contingency and emergency response planning, inter-agency collaboration, co-operation with local communities and other areas. Exploring these commonalities is important for building effective soft targets protection frameworks. Moreover, many pS have developed innovative practices which enable them to better protect soft targets in their national context. Facilitating an exchange of these practices among pS as well as with civil society and others is a valuable task for raising the collective security of the pS – and part of the impetus for this workshop.

> **What is a "Soft Target"?**
> There is no standard definition for a soft target at the OSCE nor the United Nations. Generally, the term encompasses spaces which are open to the public and lack comprehensive access control such as schools, hotels, places of worship, shopping streets or sporting events. They can be owned and operated by either public or private actors. They can also encompass temporary (concerts, parades) and fixed locations (hotels, transport facilities, places of worship).

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1 Paragraph 72, Thirty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2610 (2021) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities. (S/2024/92), January 2024.

↗ Workshop Objective

Mindful of the dynamic terrorist threat landscape and the value of exchanging good practices across the OSCE area, the objective of this workshop was to provide a forum for Central Asian pS, international and regional organizations involved in operating or protecting soft targets across the OSCE area, and other stakeholders to network and share their good practices, experiences and challenges related to the protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks.

↗ OSCE and International Policy Framework

The protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks is deeply embedded in OSCE and UN commitments on countering terrorism. In the OSCE's 2012 Consolidated Framework for the Fight Against Terrorism[2], the pS called on the OSCE to "*[i]mprove the security of international transportation and of other critical infrastructure*", much of which includes soft targets such as airport check-in halls, train stations, metro stations and commercial venues. Therefore, for more than a decade, the Organization has built expertise in improving the security of these spaces through facilitating the exchange of good practices, building national technical capacity, and encouraging cross-border co-operation between governments, the private sector[3], civil society and others.

Moreover as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE supports the UN with maintaining peace and security at the regional level. This includes facilitating the implementation of relevant resolutions such as UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2396 (2017) which calls on UN Member States to establish and strengthen national, regional and international partnerships with public and private stakeholders where needed, to "*share information and experience in order to prevent, protect, mitigate, investigate, respond to and recover from damage from terrorist attacks against "soft" targets*", and "*to develop appropriate capacity to implement contingency and response plans with regard to attacks on "soft" targets*".

In addition to reinforcing points made in UNSCR 2396 (2017), the 2023 8th Review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy also makes important reference to the role of regional organizations, such as the OSCE, in global efforts to enhance the protection of soft targets[4]. Through this workshop, the OSCE contributed to the effective implementation of this resolution and other UN commitments.

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2   OSCE Permanent Council Decision 1063 (2012).

3   In line with OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 5/07 on public-private partnerships in countering terrorism.

4   Operative paragraph 77, A/RES/77/298 (2023).

↗ Project PROTECT

In support of the aforementioned OSCE and UN decisions, in 2023 the TNTD/ATU launched Project PROTECT[5]. The aim of Project PROTECT is to enhance national approaches across the OSCE area on the protection of vulnerable targets from terrorist threats and other hazards. "Vulnerable targets" as a phrase includes both critical infrastructure and soft targets, however, where needed, Project PROTECT's activities focus on critical infrastructure, soft targets or both. For example, this workshop focused solely on soft targets protection.

Project PROTECT is a multi-faceted initiative designed to build both national capacity and regional networks through three pillars:

Pillar 1:
Consolidating and disseminating specialized guidance and good practices on the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks from across the OSCE area.

Pillar 2:
Enhancing national capacity to effectively protect vulnerable targets from terrorist attacks and other hazards through in-country awareness-raising
and training.

Pillar 3:
Facilitating regional co-operation and dialogue among pS and other stakeholders on the effective protection of vulnerable targets, including through public-private partnerships and engagement with civil society.

Project PROTECT is an extrabudgetary project of the TNTD/ATU. It is currently funded by the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America. This workshop was funded by the Federal Republic of Germany.

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5   https://www.osce.org/project/PROTECT.

↗ Event Proceedings

The workshop's design was interactive in nature with a blend of national presentations from all five Central Asian pS, break-out working groups and thematic panels designed to engage participants from different professional backgrounds and solicit their views.

Figure 1 Workshop Opening Session

The workshop was opened by several high-level speakers, including the Rector of the Academy of Law Enforcement Agencies at the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Marat Seksembayev, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Ambassador Monika Iwersen, Head of TNTD/ATU, Mr. Irfan Saeed, and Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, H.E. Ambassador Volker Frobarth.

↗ Thematic Session: Protecting Soft Targets from a Site-specific Perspective

Soft targets encompass a range of sites and spaces from temporary events, such as parades and festivals to fixed locations, such as airports, houses of worship and schools. Despite the variety of spaces included in the term "soft targets", there are commonalities such as the need for effective public-private partnerships, contingency and emergency response plans, inter-agency collaboration and co-operation with local communities. This session explored these commonalities, while also highlighting some of the nuanced considerations security practitioners must make when protecting specific types of soft targets.

Ms. Agnieszka Maja Mizgalska of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) provided an aviation security perspective on the protection of the landside areas of airports. Historically, these landside areas have been targeted by terrorist actors using firearms or improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (including person- and vehicle-borne IEDs and IEDs placed inside or near key points at an airport). Mindful of this threat, Ms. Mizgalska explained that ICAO works with its Member States to develop an Aviation Security Global Risk Context Statement, updated on a yearly basis, which provides tailored Standards and Recommended Practices to civil aviation authorities around the world.
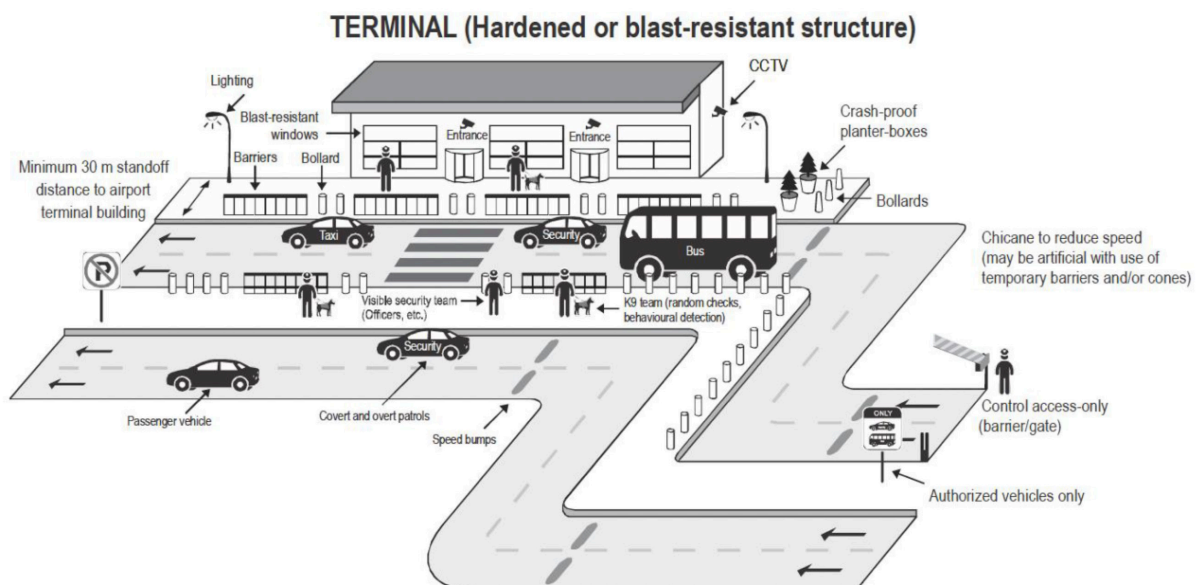

Figure 2 Example of an airport's landside area's security measures from the ICAO Aviation Security Manual Document 8973.

ICAO also provides dedicated guidance on possible landside measures for passenger terminal areas (see Figure 2), such as the use of canines, bollards, barriers, chicanes, closed-circuit television, blast-resistant windows, etc., alongside

effective staff training and public awareness practices to encourage a security culture[6] and the reporting of suspicious behaviour.

Mr. Duccio Mazarese of the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) presented on effective practices for enhancing the security of tourist sites and major events around the world. Similar to airports, tourist sites and major events have been attacked by terrorists and thus require enhanced security. In contrast to airports, however, tourist sites cannot be gated for several reasons, including considerations around strict security as a deterrent for holidaymakers. In addition, Mr. Mazarese explained the challenge for law enforcement in providing security to visitors at a tourist site given, *inter alia*, the range of languages spoken, the limited duration of their stay and the varying perceptions of security/bias they may have.

Therefore, in its work, UNICRI focuses on the development of effective tourism safety and security plans which incorporates three main areas of work: inter-agency co-ordination to enhance safety, security and service, public-private partnerships, and the involvement of local communities. Mr. Mazarese's remarks covered several good practices UNICRI has identified with the Organization of American States in the course of their work on tourism security. These include ensuring a strong focus on human rights protections when elaborating security plans, establishing a co-ordination mechanism for relevant agencies and stakeholders, adopting a clear communication strategy, and elaborating crime prevention and mitigation plans.

Mr. Massimiliano Montanari of the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) explored the security of major sporting events. For the ICSS, security did not begin on the first day of a given event, but rather well in advance. Before an event takes place, Mr. Montanari explained the importance of integrating technical security considerations into the initial bidding or even the exploratory process for a major sporting event, aligning legal and institutional frameworks to upcoming major sporting events, enhancing stakeholder co-operation (including locally, internationally and across sectors), building effective communication strategies, and constructing comprehensive security plans. In his view, all of this builds toward a secure major sporting event which, according to recent terrorist propaganda, remains a target for attack.

He briefed the audience about the tools developed by the ICSS, jointly with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), UNICRI and the UN Alliance of Civilizations, for policymakers and practitioners as well as the online courses developed jointly with the UN Institute for Training and Research on the safety and security of sporting events. As a timely reminder, he recalled the long-standing co-operation between the ICSS and the World Ethnosport Federation, the umbrella federation of the World Nomad Games, which will be hosted by the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2024.

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6 To learn more about ICAO's Security Culture efforts, see: https://www.icao.int/Security/Security-Culture/Pages/default.aspx

⬈ Thematic Session: Legislative and Policy Approaches to Soft Targets Protection from Across the International Community

Preventing terrorist attacks on soft targets is a complex and location-specific task. To support local practitioners with their protective duties, many pS have enacted laws and policies, which define protective tasks for soft target operators and in some cases provide criteria for what consitites a soft target (or a similar term in the official language of the State) at the national level. Other States take a different approach, including through city-level ordnances/laws, policies or other tools. This session explored the diversity of legislative and policy aproaches to soft targets protection across the OSCE area and beyond.

Mr. Bauyrzhan Pazylov of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan delivered a presentation on the National Law on Combating Terrorism and Government Decree No. 234 "On Approval of the Rules and Criteria for Classifying Objects as Vulnerable to Terrorist Attacks." These documents provide criteria for identifying, inter alia, places of mass public gatherings, determining such objects and defining the competencies of state bodies in the event of a terrorist attack. Mr. Pazylov also referred to the updated instruction "On Approval of the Instruction on Organizing Anti-Terrorist Protection of Objects Vulnerable to Terrorist Attacks, operating in the Field of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan", which details the requirements for organizing access control, security and the necessary security equipment.

Ms. Olga Lanchenko of the UNOCT shared her organization's experience in building UN Member States' capacity to protect soft targets against terrorist attacks throughout the past four years of the UN Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats Against Vulnerable Targets. Ms. Lanchenko began with the UN policy framework on vulnerable targets protection in a counter-terrorism context, including relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, stressing the prerogative of Member States to define what constitutes their vulnerable targets and the importance of a balanced, risk-informed approach that takes into account threats to soft targets, in addition to critical infrastructure. Ms. Lanchenko also provided examples of criticality principles used in some countries to define sectors, sites and assets, examples of terrorist attacks on vulnerable spaces, including religious sites and educational institutions, and insights on major capacity gaps and needs identified as priorities by several Member States. In response to these gaps and needs, UNOCT has produced five modules with a focus on soft targets protection, available in Russian, English and other languages.

↗ Thematic Session: Experiences and Perspectives on Securing Soft Targets while Protecting Human Rights

Enacting security measures in the name of soft targets protection can at times impact an individual's human rights and fundamental freedoms. For example, the use of closed-circuit television to monitor public spaces can impact an individual's data privacy. Ensuring a balance between effective security of soft targets and the protection of human rights is an ongoing effort for many governments. In this session, experiences and perspectives on striking this balance were shared.

Ms. Barbara Paoletti, representative for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs in the United States of America's (U.S.) Department of State, discussed the importance of the protection of soft targets and countering and preventing violent extremism while also protecting human rights and civil liberties. Ms. Paoletti emphasized that this approach should begin with a core belief: respecting civil liberties is itself a means of advancing security and is critical to building trust and partnerships between the security sector and communities. She noted that the goals of advancing security and respecting civil liberties are mutually reinforcing and that a strictly securitized approach to

Figure 3 Extract from the OSCE Practice Guide on Understanding Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes: Addressing the Security Needs of Muslim Communities.

advancing counterterrorism efforts can sometimes do more harm than good. Ms. Paoletti highlighted some good practices from the U.S. government's experience such as developing and implementing guiding strategies (for example the 2021 U.S. National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism), community engagement initiatives such as community led and neighbourhood partnerships, and the provision of grants to local communities and non-profit organizations. These efforts allow communities to take the lead in establishing appropriate and relevant plans that would work to protect their public spaces, like schools and houses of worship. Each of these practices builds towards enhanced security and safety for public spaces and communities while also protecting individuals' human rights and civil liberties.

Ms. Sabrina Saoudi of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) focused on the security needs of Muslim communities, their houses of worship and other religious sites. She began with a review of the OSCE's commitments and decisions on the prevention of intolerance, discrimination and hate crimes. As the Advisor on Combatting Intolerance against Muslims, she spoke specifically on addressing and ensuring the security concerns of Muslim communities – highlighting ten practical steps to respond to this challenge from the OSCE Practice Guide on Understanding Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes: Addressing the Security Needs of Muslim Communities (see Figure 3). ODIHR has also produced several other guides related to hate crimes.

⬈ Thematic Session: Multi-level Co-operation to Enhance the Security of Soft Targets

Ensuring the security of soft targets from terrorist attacks is a joint responsibility. It involves international, national, regional and local stakeholders working together, leveraging each stakeholder's skills, mandate and added value. In this session, the role of local stakeholders at the city and community levels was explored.

It is often said that every disaster, including a terrorist attack, is first and foremost local. First responders at an incident scene are likely city-level stakeholders including police, ambulance and fire services. Moreover, the impacts of an attack are often most deeply felt at the local level. This brings into focus the need to hear from the local government stakeholders when discussing soft targets protection from terrorist attacks. Mr. Simeon Dukić of the Strong Cities Network built on this with a focus on the role mayors and the cities they lead play in building inclusivity, addressing hate and polarization while also engaging in soft target protection and incident response. In his remarks, Mr. Dukić highlighted the importance of mayoral leadership both pre- and post-incident and its central role in maintaining a given community's trust in local government, which can often be affected following a terrorist attack. Mr. Dukić also stressed the importance of continuous city-led community engagement to maintain and strengthen pre-existing, trusted and long-term relationships that can be leveraged for post-incident/crisis response.

Continuing on the role of cities, Mr. Holger Albrecht of the Berlin Police presented on the role of police in protecting public spaces and events in the Federal Republic of Germany's capital. In his remarks, Mr. Albrecht covered a range of areas in which the Berlin Police provides advice to operators of soft targets and public spaces including:

technical and structure measures for public spaces such as hostile vehicle mitigation measures, access management systems, alarm systems, target hardening measures, etc.,

organizational measures such as the development of a site's security concept, emergency plans and evacuation routes, general threat management, etc.,

personnel measures such as regular security briefings and training courses, first aid training courses, personal protective equipment, psychosocial support services (including emergency care for emergency service personnel, victims and relatives after an incident), etc.

Shifting from the city to the community level, the last two speakers in this session covered the role of community policing in enhancing community safety and security and identifying individuals at risk of violence. Ms. Nina LindheTell of the OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit discussed the unique value of community policing to the protection of soft targets from terrorist attacks. In her view, community policing can be a tool to build trust and support for the police within communities. This can then be used to empower communities with knowledge and raise awareness of the signs of radicalization to violence, enabling early intervention and community-oriented approaches to violence prevention. Community policing initiatives, such as police-public partnerships, can also provide unique access to local stakeholder groups which are either those affected by terrorist attacks or those responsible for operating soft targets such as youth, women, faith-based organizations and religious groups, civil society organizations, small- and medium-sized business, and ethnic minorities.

Ms. Elmira Khissamutdinova of the OSCE Programme Office in Astana presented on the Office's work on community policing in the Republic of Kazakhstan. A recent major initiative of note included a community policing project in the Karaganda region. As part of their work, the Office surveyed the population in 2020-2021 (over 70,000) in order to better understand perceptions of safety, public trust in the police and the public's readiness to co-operate with the police. The results were used to target interventions and enhance partnerships between the police and local communities in order to address common concerns such as, *inter alia*, criminality, traffic safety and triggers of radicalization to violence. Such community policing initiatives can be seen as tools to strengthen local trust and confidence in security services and bring them closer to communities, better enabling them to identify individuals vulnerable to radicalization to violence.

↗ Break-out Working Group Discussions

On two occasions during the workshop, participants were divided into small groups and worked through several scenario exercises. The scenarios included a bomb threat at a shopping mall, an active shooter in a school and a credible threat of an attack on a major sporting event using a drone. For each scenario, participants were asked to explain the priority measures they would take in their national context in response to each scenario, to identify the governmental and non-governmental entities involved (nationally and locally) in the response and to determine effective messaging for the public. By pairing participants from different pS in each group, experts were able to share their views in their national capacity, identify common approaches and areas of divergence as well as solicit novel practices from neighbouring countries.

↗ Spotlight Session: Protecting Schools from Terrorist Attacks

Across the OSCE area, the protection of schools from active shooters, terrorists and other security threats is a major concern. In order to effectively protect these spaces, collaboration is required from a range of actors including those in the security and educational professions. This session explored different approaches to the protection of schools, universities and other educational facilities.

Ms. Isabelle Nougarede-Duvivier of France's Agency for French Education Abroad discussed her Agency's approach to preparing France's 496 schools abroad for emergency situations, including active shooter and terrorist threats. This approach rests on two pillars: the preparation of a standard security plan for each school (in French: *Plan particulier de mise en sûreté* or PPMS) and the creation and maintenance of a security culture in each school involving students, professors, school staff and parents. In her remarks, Ms. Nougarede-Duvivier explained the process for developing the PPMS at each school including the establishment of a multi-stakeholder group and the definition of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency, the organization of a simulation drill, and the communication of relevant information to students, professors, school staff and parents. She emphasized the importance of running drills to ensure that the PPMS works properly and is well understood by everyone, as well as familiarizing students, professors, school staff and parents with appropriate behaviour in the event of an emergency.
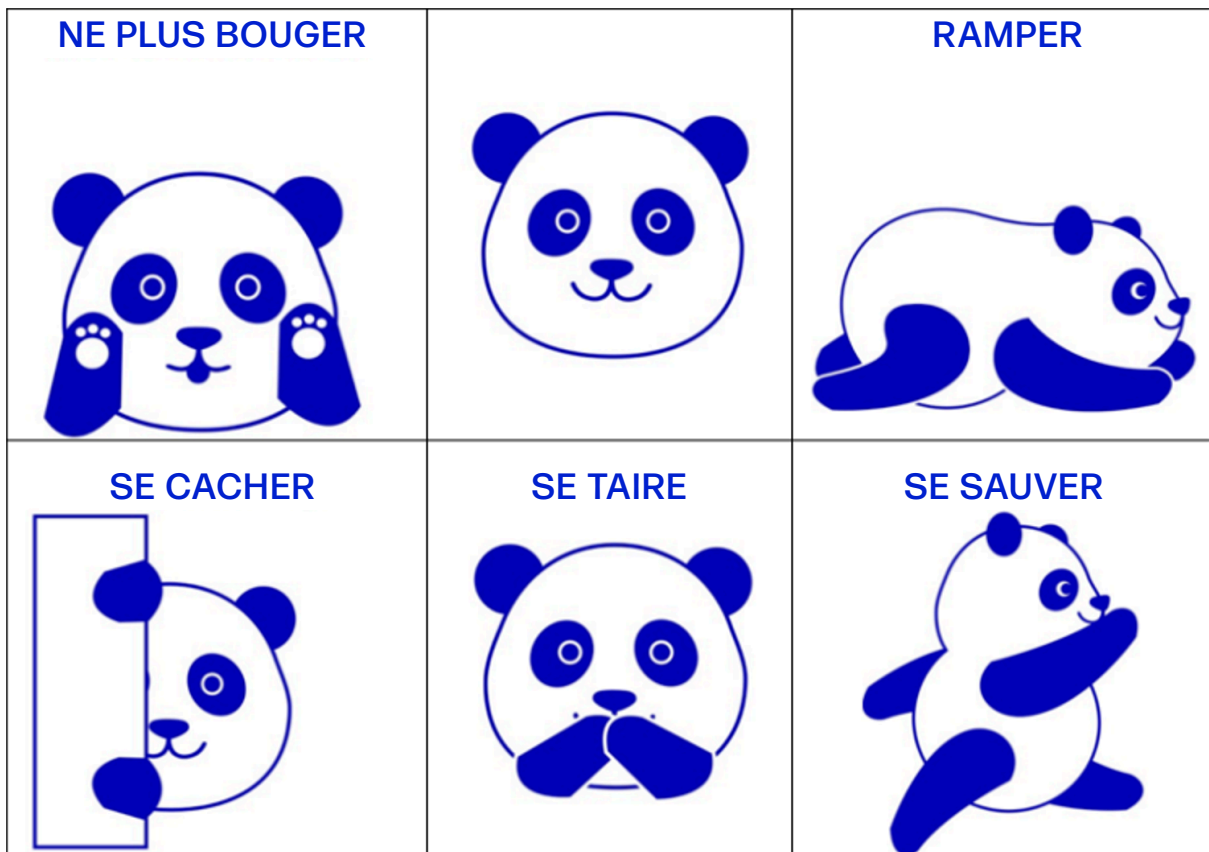
| NE PLUS BOUGER | | RAMPER |
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Figure 4 Example of the Agency for French Education Abroad's simulation drill training for kindergarten students.

In terms of the second pillar, the creation and maintenance of a security culture in each school, Ms. Nougarede-Duvivier briefed on their unique approach to training students of all ages, including those at a kindergarten level, in some cases by making the training a game (see Figure 4). By tailoring their training and awareness-raising to the appropriate level, Ms. Nougarede-Duvivier explained that schools are better able to instil a security culture for all ages of students, young and old.

Speaking from the Czech Republic's Ministry of the Interior, Ms. Veronika Roubíček Šternová reviewed their principles of soft target hardening. The experience of the Czech Republic was vitally important to this session following the 21 December 2023 mass shooting at Charles University in Prague. In her remarks, Ms. Roubíček Šternová provided a high-level overview of the incident, noting that official investigations are ongoing. She then presented ten principles of soft target hardening from her Ministry's perspective including working closely with local staff at soft targets, encouraging enhanced security awareness coupled with yearly trainings for soft target operators, and developing a pre-approved co-ordination plan in the event of an incident (see Figure 5). These principles applied equally to schools, universities and other educational facilities as well as other soft targets.
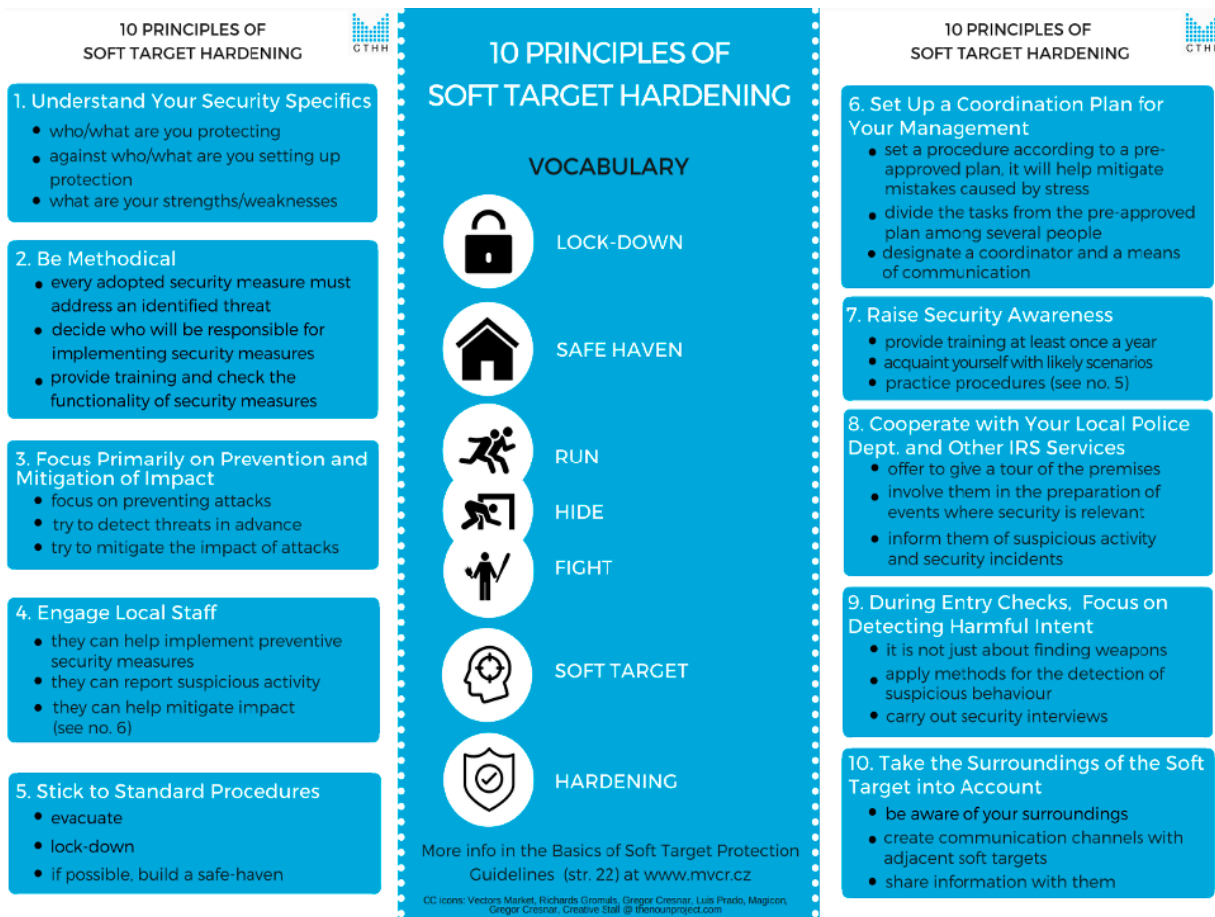
Figure 5 Czech Republic Ministry of the Interior's 10 Principles of Soft Target Hardening

Mr. Holger Albrecht of the Berlin Police presented on his city's work in targeted violence prevention, with a focus on school security. He explained that in Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany more broadly, public schools are considered open facilities with low security measures (with the exception of specific higher-risk facilities) and thus the protective approach taken by the Berlin Police rests on two pillars: (1) preventing targeted violence before it happens and (2) enacting security measures in the event of an emergency.

Building on his remarks from the Thematic Session on Multi-level Co-operation to Enhance the Security of Soft Targets, Mr. Albrecht briefed on several measures which had been enacted by the Berlin Police in co-operation with other local authorities at schools, including structural and technical security measures (i.e. ensuring facility blueprints for every school are filed with the police, equipping all schools with an orientation system for police and emergency services (see Figure 6), organization measures (i.e. establishing and maintaining emergency plans for all schools) and personnel measures (i.e. running mandatory threat alarm exercises with police and teaching staff).

This session's final speaker, Mr. Nurgali Rakhimov of the Law Enforcement Academy under the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan spoke about major causes of terrorism at schools and put forward proposals to improve the security of educational institutions. In his remarks, Mr. Rakhimov analysed some of the key characteristics of criminals who had committed armed attacks on educational

Figure 6 Example of an orientation system for police and emergency services at a public school in Berlin

institutions in recent years. He also emphasized the importance of identifying incidents of bullying in educational institutions and working to support adolescents with psychological problems who may be at risk of committing an act of violence against other students and/or staff. He concluded by providing some positive examples of effective prevention efforts, including through training for students and staff on personal security measures.

Project **PROTECT** Overview

The OSCE's Project on the Protection of Vulnerable Targets from Terrorist Attacks, or Project PROTECT, enhances national approaches across the OSCE area to the protection of vulnerable targets from terrorist threats and other hazards through the provision of specialized guidance, technical assistance and opportunities for regional co-operation and dialogue on effective security practices.