



Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian,
Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General and Director,
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

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INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States for inviting me to its twenty-third regular session to discuss trends, challenges, and practices in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Let me begin with a brief overview of the terrorist threat.

Although overall terrorism-related deaths declined somewhat last year and Da'esh and Al-Qaida continue to suffer leadership losses, terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security, set back sustainable development, and undermine human rights and civil liberties. Both groups continue to harbor aspirations to resume external operations.

The threat is particularly grave in sub-Saharan Africa, which the Global Terrorism Index now considers to be the epicenter of terrorism.

Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaida's affiliate in the Horn of Africa, remains a serious danger, although the efforts of the African Union and Somali security forces now have the group on the backfoot in some parts of the country.

The expansion of Da'esh and its affiliates in Central and Southeastern Africa, but especially in West Africa and the Sahel, is particularly worrying, with terrorists now controlling as much or more than 40 percent of the territory of Burkina Faso, and the Al-Qaida associated Jama'at Nusrat Al-Islam Wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and other groups probing southward into countries along the Gulf of Guinea littoral.

The interaction between transnational organized crime and terrorist groups in West Africa is another source of concern. Given that the region has long been a major trafficking route for cocaine from South America and the Caribbean, what is happening on th

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The UN General Assembly has made clear that more comprehensive, human-rights compliant and gender-sensitive approaches that prioritize prevention and tackle the underlying drivers of terrorism and violent extremism are needed.reu