First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism

Report on the Summit
Vienna, Austria, 9 September 2021
Contents

Executive summary ................................................................. 4

Opening session ..................................................................... 6
  Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, Speaker of the Austrian National Council 6
  Mr Duarte Pacheco, Speaker of the IPU President ....................... 6

Keynote address ..................................................................... 7
  Ms. Ghada Waly, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive
  Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ................. 7
  Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-
  Terrorism (UNOCT) .................................................................... 7
  Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU ....................... 7

Interactive debates ................................................................. 8

Session 1: Parliamentary response to support the victims of terrorism .................. 8
  Moderator: Mr. Reinhold Lopatka, President of the High-Level Advisory Group on
  Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism ............................................. 8
  Panellists: Ms. Nadia Ghulam Dastgir, victim of terrorism, Afghanistan, member of the NGO
  “Ponts per la Pau” ........................................................................ 9
  Mr. Abdi Yusuf Hassan, MP of the National Assembly of Kenya, victim of terrorism ...... 9
  Ms. Pramila Patten, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on
  Sexual Violence in Conflict and Acting Executive Director of UN Women ............ 9

Testimonies of the victims of terrorism ........................................... 8
  Mr. Imrana Buba, Founder of the Youth Coalition Against Terrorism (YOCAT) .......... 8
  Ms. Falmata Buna, a young victim and survivor of the terrorism ......................... 9

Presentation of the model legislative provisions to support and protect the victims of terrorism ......................................... 10
  Panellists: Mr. David Alamos, Acting Chief of the Office on Parliamentary Engagement
  at UNOCT ................................................................................... 10
  Mr. Nikolaj West, Senior Terrorism Prevention Expert, UNODC ...................... 10

Launch of the IPU tools ................................................................ 10

Session 2: Role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization
  and hate speech ...................................................................... 11
  Moderator: Ms. Jacqueline Oduol, Kenya Vice-Chair of the High-Level Advisory Group
  on Countering Terrorism .............................................................. 11
  Panellists: Mr. Mohamed Mokhtar Gomaa, President of the Supreme Council for
  Islamic Affairs ............................................................................ 11
  Ms. Shazia Jannat Marri, MP of the National Assembly of Pakistan ................. 11
  Ms. Agnes Vadai, MP of the National Assembly of Hungary ....................... 11
  Ms. Arianna Lepore, Coordinator, Global Initiative on Electronic Evidence, Terrorism
  Prevention Branch, UNODC ....................................................... 11

Session 3: The call for the Sahel ............................................................ 12
  Moderator: Mr. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Member of the Federal National Council of the
  United Arab Emirates and Member of the IPU Executive Committee ............ 13
Presentation of overview of terrorism in the Sahel

Mr. Serge Stroobants, Director for Europe and the MENA Region at the Institute for Economics and Peace

Mr. Alhatikou Dagamaissa, Project Manager at International Alert

Ms. Elena Rigacci Hay, Chief of the Sub-Saharan Africa Section of the Terrorism Prevention Branch at UNODC

Ms. Snezana Visnijc, Programme Officer for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa at UNOCT

Panellist: Mr. Jean Marie Traore, Secretary-General of the G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee

Mr. Adel bin Abdulrahman Al-Asoomi, President of the Arab Parliament

Mr. Gennaro Migliore, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

Message from the Afghan delegation

Closing remarks from the IPU Secretary general

Annex
The First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism (1GPSCT) was held on 9 September 2021 in Vienna, Austria. Parliamentarians discussed how to build pathways to peace and a better future for the victims of terrorism, with a special focus on the Sahel region.

The 1GPSCT was part of the IPU’s Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Programme and was jointly organized by the IPU and the United Nations (UNODC and UNOCT).

The 1GPSCT was held in person across four sessions: a high-level segment followed by three thematic interactive sessions. Session 1 focused on parliamentary responses to support the victims of terrorism. Session 2 explored the role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech. Session 3 covered the call of the Sahel and the launch of the IPU’s counter-terrorism tools for parliamentarians (interactive map and mobile application).

The outcome of the deliberations of the 1GPSCT was a Joint Declaration, the Call of the Sahel, in which parliamentarians called for support for peace and sustainable development in the Sahel, where terrorist groups have exploited the COVID-19 pandemic and remain a significant threat to international peace and security.
Executive summary

The 1GPCST, approved by the IPU’s governing bodies, took place on 9 September 2021 in Vienna, the day after the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. The Summit was funded by the IPU and it was agreed that it would be held every two years.

The Summit allowed parliamentarians to identify lasting solutions and parliamentary contributions to global efforts in counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, as well as the best ways for parliamentarians to address the different causes of terrorism and violent extremism, and to find appropriate measures that could be implemented to enact positive and real impact on the ground and within communities. The ultimate goal of the Summit was to advance peace and sustainable development in regions where terrorist groups had exploited the COVID-19 pandemic and remained a significant threat to international peace and security, such as in the countries of the Sahel.

The Summit brought together various stakeholders, including parliamentarians from around the world, representatives of the United Nations, experts, members of regional Parliamentary Assemblies, victims of terrorism, representatives of civil society and community leaders.

The Summit included a high-level session and three thematic interactive sessions.

The distinguished participants of the high-level session were the Speaker of the Austrian National Council, the IPU President, the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

Session 1: Parliamentary response to support the victims of terrorism

The first session started with an address to the global parliamentary community and the United Nations by victims of terrorism, who provided their testimonies and perspectives to help with the search for real solutions. Since 2016, the IPU has increased its efforts to raise global awareness about the victims of terrorism, and since 2017, it has organized sessions with victims from the Sahel region and the Middle East to bring forward a strong counter-narrative to terrorism. In the same session, the joint work of the IPU, UNODC and UNOCT on the development of model legislative provisions for victims of terrorism was presented.

Session 2: Role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech

Terrorists and extremist groups tend to target marginalized areas, taking advantage of local problems to recruit young citizens in vulnerable life situations. As a result, it was agreed in the second session that it was important to address the root causes and underlying conditions that may lead individuals to join these terrorist or extremist groups.

Parliamentarians must therefore step up their work with key regional and community actors. A particular focus should be placed on the role of women, youth, local stakeholders and civil society, including religious and community leaders, to work together on the prevention of violence, strengthening resilience against radicalization and hate speech, and enhancing governance by improving government institutions through greater community engagement.

Session 3: The call of the Sahel

The increasing violence and deteriorating security situation in the Sahel have had a significant negative impact on communities, societies and economies. The region has suffered a devastating surge in terrorist attacks against civilian and military targets. Terrorist groups are present across borders and repeatedly target communities and national institutions through coordinated attacks, taking advantage of porous borders.
The insecurity resulting from armed conflict, terrorism and transnational organized crime renders the countries of the Sahel region increasingly vulnerable and impairs their opportunities for development. Concerted efforts by the governments and parliaments of the region, combined with the support of other regions, is urgently needed in order to tackle these challenges more effectively.

The G5 Sahel created the Joint Task Force in 2017 to strengthen the fight against threats to peace and security, and to bolster development. Its main objectives are to collect, process and share relevant criminal information on a diverse range of actors in a highly complex environment. The numerous challenges that the Sahel faces today require effective counterterrorism measures within a multidimensional approach, in order to cover many different fields, with a greater focus on preventive approaches.

The Summit provided a great opportunity for parliaments, civil society, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to discuss all the issues related to the situation in the Sahel. The Summit culminated in the endorsement of a Joint Declaration, the Call of the Sahel. It was adopted by a strong parliamentary bloc, comprising the IPU, the Arab Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee, whose members have a great commitment to and genuine solidarity with the people of the Sahel. The aim of this parliamentary bloc will be to achieve concrete results by assisting and supporting the countries of the Sahel region through holistic approaches. In order to understand the reasons why the situation in the region has deteriorated and how it has become a significant danger to world peace and security, international cooperation in the region must be reassessed.

In the closing session, it was highlighted that counter-terrorism was a top priority for most parliaments. A theme running throughout the deliberations was the observation that insufficient attention had been paid to the victims of terrorism. Those present were urged to take action to transform victims of terrorism into survivors of terrorism. Parliaments represent the epitome of peaceful coexistence and are in a unique position to nurture a culture of tolerance and respect, and to build a peaceful world free of terrorism and extremism.
Opening session

Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, Speaker of the Austrian National Council, welcomed participants to what, in his view, was a timely event of the utmost importance. Terrorism and violent extremism were multi-dimensional challenges and parliaments had a key role to play in fighting them. The COVID-19 pandemic had shifted attention away from terrorism and terrorists had sought to exploit this opportunity. Austria was deeply concerned about the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, in particular the safety of vulnerable Afghans and the prospects for women and girls in the country.

Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the IPU, evoked the IPU’s long-standing commitment to counter-terrorism and emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of the problem through education, the prevention of hate speech and the elimination of poverty. Parliamentarians needed to set an example, address the financing of terrorism and apply global treaties and conventions in national legislation.
Keynote address

Ms. Ghada Waly, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), outlined the ways in which parliamentarians could tackle the causes and enabling factors of terrorism and violent extremism. Organized crime was frequently a source of funding for terrorism and the growth of the internet had strengthened terrorist networks considerably. The same poverty, inequality and justice that fuelled crime and corruption also fanned the flames of hateful ideologies and terrorism. UNODC aimed to support parliaments in adopting and implementing the ever-expanding international legal framework to combat terrorism, including 19 global conventions against terrorism and two UN conventions on organized crime and corruption. In collaboration with the IPU and UNOCT, UNODC had offered assistance with drafting and reviewing national counter-terrorism legislation around the world and was developing model legislative provisions to help victims of terrorism. A more holistic approach to the prevention of terrorism was required, focusing on building robust institutions and resilient societies. UNODC stood ready to work with parliamentarians to establish a more ambitious and unified framework for legislative and technical assistance to parliaments on counter-terrorism and to support the IPU’s ongoing efforts to build parliamentary networks on the subject.

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), said that terrorism undermined the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and violated universal human rights. The threat of terrorism had diversified, and the COVID-19 pandemic had severely impacted counter-terrorism efforts. Five overarching priority areas for global action had emerged during the recent Second United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week organized by UNOCT in June 2021, namely: to address the complex legacies of Da’esh in Iraq and Syria; to better support African countries to address the increase in terrorist activity in some parts of the region; to address the rise in terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism, intolerance or in the name of religion; to consider ways to upgrade technological awareness, capabilities and preparedness in relation to counter terrorism; and finally to increase the attention paid to the rule of law and human rights, including upholding the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. UNOCT had recently opened a Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Doha, Qatar, which would support parliaments with work on the formulation of counter-terrorism policies, provide technical assistance on means to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, foster coordination and build partnerships. UNOCT remained committed to supporting the global parliamentary community and promoting interparliamentary collaboration to achieve a safer world, free of terrorism, for future generations.

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, noted that the IPU had adopted 13 resolutions on the subject of counter-terrorism over the past two decades. Upon his appointment as Secretary General, he had established a counter-terrorism programme, which had subsequently led to the formation of the IPU’s High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in 2017. The programme had gone on to hold three successful regional conferences and develop a suite of products to unify its counter-terrorism activities. The experience of the programme and these high-level meetings had shown that terrorism could only truly be addressed through the elimination of extremist misconceptions, the protection of human rights and sustainable development. The main focus of the present Summit would be to listen to the victims of terrorism and use their experiences as a guide in the search for solutions. Other sessions would focus on the role of parliaments in the prevention of violent extremism, radicalization and hate speech, and measures that could be taken to address the deteriorating situation in the Sahel.
Interactive debates

Session 1: Parliamentary response to support the victims of terrorism

This session was focused on how the international community could work together in coordination with communities and civil society so that the difficult situation of victims of terrorism ceased to be a forgotten issue. The victims of terrorism addressed the global parliamentary community and the United Nations to provide their perspectives, with the intention of guiding participants in their search for real solutions.

Moderator: President of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, Mr. Reinhold Lopatka. Panelists: Ms. Nadia Ghulam Dastgir, victim of terrorism, Afghanistan, founder of the NGO “Ponts per la Pau”
Mr. Abdi Yusuf Hassan, victim of terrorism, MP of the National Assembly of Kenya
Ms. Pramila Patten, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Acting Executive Director of UN Women.

Mr. Reinhold Lopatka, Member of the Austrian National Council and Chair of the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, moderated the session. In his introductory remarks, he noted that listening to victims of terrorism was the first step for parliamentarians in establishing their needs and rights and developing short- and long-term responses and actions to support them.

Testimonies of the victims of terrorism

Videos from two victims of terrorism were presented:
Mr. Imrana Buba, Founder of the Youth Coalition Against Terrorism (YOCAT)
Ms. Falmata Buna, a young victim and survivor of terrorism

Mr. Imrana Buba of Nigeria, survivor of a deadly attack by Boko Haram in 2010 and founder of the Youth Coalition Against Terrorism (YOCAT) noted that victims of terrorism worldwide were in need of support for their mental as well as their physical health. Supporting victims of terrorism and their families was a moral imperative and a question of promoting, protecting and respecting their human rights.
Ms. Falmata Bunu, a victim of kidnapping by Boko Haram shared her testimony, saying that thousands of men, women, boys and girls had been killed or forced to leave their homes in northeastern Nigeria because of Boko Haram. Her life used to be quiet, peaceful and normal. However, one day in 2015, Boko Haram had captured her village and put her in a camp where they married her off to three different members of the group. She had lived in captivity for 15 months. After trying to escape many times, she had finally succeeded when they attempted to send her on a suicide mission. She had eventually been reunited with her family and currently lived in a camp for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, Nigeria. However, life at the camp was uncomfortable. She hoped for a greater focus on rehabilitation in her society, through learning and education, to enable her to ultimately leave the camp.

Ms. Nadia Ghulam Dastgir, a victim of terrorism in Afghanistan and founder of the Ponts per la pau organization in Catalonia, Spain, spoke of her experiences in Afghanistan and as a refugee in Pakistan. She believed that education was the best defence against the radicalization of young people and that the most common and urgent request among refugee parents and children was for access to education.

Mr. Abdi Yusuf Hassan, a member of parliament from Kenya who had been the victim of a terrorist attack in 2012, spoke of the growth of highly organized terrorist groups in many parts of Africa. In his view, more efforts were needed to establish an appropriate legal framework for the support and compensation of victims of terrorism. A greater focus was needed on the underlying causes of terrorism, including poverty and injustice, including through more investment in education and development.

Ms. Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, said that the appeals of the other panellists for improved education would be conveyed to the Secretary-General accordingly. The COVID-19 pandemic had impacted conflict resolution and peace processes worldwide, opening up a window of opportunity for terrorist groups. Sexual violence was not an inevitable consequence of conflict but a systematic and strategic tactic of war. The prevention of sexual violence must be at the core of counter-terrorism efforts, as combatting sexual violence undermined one of the most effective strategies of terrorist groups.
Presentation of the model legislative provisions to support and protect the victims of terrorism.

A presentation was made on the work that was being carried out by the IPU, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on model legislative provisions to support and protect the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. The work was aimed at strengthening the capacity of national parliaments in this field. The launch of the model legislative provisions is scheduled for 2022.

Panelists: Mr. David Alamos, Acting Chief of the Office on Parliamentary Engagement at UNOCT
Mr. Nikolaj West, Senior Terrorism Prevention Expert, UNODC.

Mr. David Alamos, Acting Chief of the Office on Parliamentary Engagement at UNOCT, introduced the work being done by UNOCT, UNODC and the IPU to develop model legislative provisions for victims of terrorism. The work was based on the principles of solidarity, advocacy, capacity building and technical assistance and aimed to consider the rights and needs of victims of terrorism in terms of compensation, support and access to justice.

Mr. Nikolaj West, Senior Terrorism Prevention Expert at UNODC, added that the approach was principally based on technical assistance, including the review of existing procedures and laws, and the sharing of best practices. The model provisions set out concrete steps for the protection, assistance and support of victims of terrorism through a victim-centred approach that actively engaged victims to fully understand the harm they had suffered and their needs.

Ten delegates, from Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Mozambique, Turkey, Ireland, India, Mali, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and China, also contributed to the discussion.

Launch of the IPU tools

Ambassador Carmen Elena Castillo, Senior Consultant on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism at the IPU, presented two new tools being developed for parliamentarians and due to be launched in January 2022.

The tools aim to utilize communication and technology to help parliamentarians in their efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism. Parliamentarians can obtain first-hand information about counter-terrorism from around the globe. The goal is to raise awareness, increase connectivity, and unify global counter-terrorism efforts through simple but efficient tools. The products were developed thanks to funding from the National People's Congress of China:

- a multi-platform interactive map providing access to an international database on counter-terrorism legislation, information on counter-terrorism committees in each parliament, and other relevant documents, news, articles and information on upcoming events;
- a mobile application aimed at improving outreach and visibility by increasing interconnectivity between parliaments and unifying global counter-terrorism efforts. The IPU Secretariat will develop the second phase of this application, which will provide the possibility for an online conversation with parliamentarians, both individually and in groups, and will have versions in Arabic and Spanish. This phase is being made possible through the financial support of the Arab Parliament.

Both products were initially available in English and French.
Session 2: Role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech

Terrorism is a global challenge that the international community as a whole has to combat effectively. Terrorist and extremist groups tend to target marginalized areas, to recruit young citizens in vulnerable life situations. Parliamentarians must therefore step up their work with key actors in regions and communities, with local stakeholders and civil society, religious and community leaders, to work on the prevention of violence, strengthening resilience against radicalization and hate speech, and enhancing governance by improving government institutions through more community engagement.

Moderator: Vice-Chair of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism, Ms. Jacqueline Oduol, Kenya

Panellists: Mr. Mohamed Mokhtar Gomaa, President of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
Ms. Shazia Jannat Marri, MP of the National Assembly of Pakistan
Ms. Agnes Vadai, MP of the National Assembly of Hungary
Ms. Arianna Lepore, Coordinator, Global Initiative on Electronic Evidence, Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC

Ms. Jacqueline Oduol, Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya and Vice-Chair of the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, moderated the session, which would focus on finding lasting solutions for the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech.

Mr. Mohamed Mokhtar Gomaa, President of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Egypt, said that the first duty of parliamentarians was to preserve the sovereignty of States and institutions. Attempts to fragment the State and the resulting chaos created an enabling environment for terrorism. Terrorism would not be solved through war but through education, cultural change, awareness building, wise religious discourse, economic development and social justice. True religion was about life, not death, and groups that destroyed in the name of religion were in direct violation of the precepts of most faiths.

Ms. Shazia Jannat Marri, Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, said that the root causes of terrorism must be addressed, including instances where people were denied their legitimate rights to self-determination or experienced intolerance towards different cultures and religions. Countries needed to cooperate on counter-terrorism on a global scale, responding to ever-changing patterns of warfare and conflict. The growing misuse of cyberspace was also emerging as a major challenge.

Ms. Agnes Vadai, Member of the National Assembly of Hungary, outlined five specific roles that parliaments should play in countering terrorism. First, MPs must condemn all forms of hate speech, setting an example with their own behaviour. Second, parliaments must ratify relevant regional and international agreements, adopt corresponding new legislation and perform oversight of government bodies dealing with terrorism. Third, parliaments must allocate sufficient funds in their budgets for anti-terrorist programmes, education on acceptance and tolerance, and support for victims. Fourth, parliaments must cooperate on a regional and global scale to share information and experiences relating to counter-terrorism. Finally, MPs must convey the ideals of understanding and tolerance to their constituents and build relationships with civil society.

Ms. Arianna Lepore, Coordinator of the Global Initiative on Electronic Evidence, in the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC, spoke about the weaponization of the COVID-19
pandemic and the growing use of the internet for the training and financing of terrorists. Parliaments needed to establish effective legal frameworks to monitor terrorist communications and remove harmful content online, while also ensuring effective domestic, regional and international cooperation. A whole-society approach was needed to address terrorism, and women and young people were particularly powerful messengers. UNODC stood ready to deploy its convening power to bring together parliaments and governments around the world to implement the outcomes of the present Summit.

Seventeen delegates, from the United Arab Emirates, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bahrain, Russia, Madagascar, Turkey, Hungary, the United Kingdom, France, Iran, Portugal, Ecuador, Syria, Morocco, Ireland, the Francophonie Parliamentary Assembly and Palestine, also contributed to the discussion.

Session 3: The call of the Sahel

The increasing violence and deteriorating security situation in the Sahel region have significantly impacted communities, societies and economies, but also global security.

This session was an opportunity for parliamentarians, civil society, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to join the call for saving the Sahel countries from the plague of terrorism. Participants discussed the problems and challenges that this region was facing and examined real solutions that could support the population and the victims of terrorism in the region.

Moderator: Mr. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Member of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates and Member of the IPU Executive Committee

Presentation of overview of terrorism in the Sahel:
Mr. Serge Stroobants, Director for Europe and the MENA Region at the Institute for Economics and Peace
Mr. Alhatikou Dagamaissa, Project Manager at International Alert
Ms. Elena Rigacci Hay, Chief of the Sub-Saharan Africa Section of the Terrorism Prevention Branch at UNODC
Ms. Snezana Visnjic, Programme Officer for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa at UNOCT

Panellists: Mr. Jean Marie Traore, Secretary-General of the G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee
Mr. Adel bin Abdulrahman Al-Asoomi, President of the Arab Parliament
Mr. Gennaro Migliore, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
Mr. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Member of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates and Member of the IPU Executive Committee, moderated the session, focusing on the particular challenges of counter-terrorism in the Sahel region. A holistic approach was needed to address the situation, including education at all levels, development, security, and a more focused and pragmatic international response.

Mr. Serge Stroobants, Director for Europe and the MENA Region at the Institute for Economics and Peace, gave a presentation on the Global Terrorism Index, noting in particular that the centre of gravity of Islamic State (ISIL) had recently shifted to sub-Saharan Africa and that terrorist attacks in that region had increased just as most other regions were witnessing a decline.

Mr. Alhatikou Dagamaissa, Project Manager at International Alert, said that the Sahel had become a favourable environment for terrorist groups in terms of the availability of finance, support for radical ideologies and a ready supply of disadvantaged young people for such groups to recruit. The military response had been inadequate in the most affected countries and the wider needs of the population needed to be addressed. Programmes of reconciliation and dialogue between States were also sorely needed in the region.

Ms. Elena Rigacci Hay, Chief of the Sub-Saharan Africa Section of the Terrorism Prevention Branch at UNODC, said that both ISIL and Al Qaeda were expanding their networks in the Sahel, often in collusion with organized crime groups. A long-term preventive response was needed, with appropriate action plans to prevent violent extremism. UNODC was providing support to countries aiming to adjust their counter-terrorism legislation.

Ms. Snezana Visnijc, Programme Officer for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa at UNOCT, gave a presentation on the recently opened UNOCT Program Office in Rabat, Morocco, which was intended as a training hub for national and regional capacity-building assistance in the form of accredited training programmes, deployed throughout Africa, but particularly in the Sahel region.

Mr. Jean Marie Traore, Secretary-General of the G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee, gave a presentation on the increase in terrorist incidents and influence in Burkina Faso in recent years. He said that the time had come for the world to listen closely to the people of the Sahel and their needs, and to develop solutions to the situation by working in close collaboration with them.

Mr. Adel bin Abdulrahman Al-Asoomi, President of the Arab Parliament, and Mr. Gennaro Migliore, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, introduced the Call of the Sahel declaration¹, which had been co-instigated by their parliaments alongside the G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee and the IPU. The Sahel had become the global epicentre of terrorist activity and needed urgent attention. To address the problem, people in the region needed to be given the opportunity to live in peace and security and to have trust restored in their State institutions.

Seven delegates, from Niger, Mali, Egypt, Benin, France, the Francophonie Parliamentary Assembly and Turkey, also contributed to the discussion.

Message from the Afghan delegation

Mr. Mohammed Akbar Stanikzai, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Afghanistan, said that terrorism had exacted a high cost in his country, particularly in recent weeks.

He thanked all those countries, as well as the IPU, that had assisted and supported the Afghan people with evacuation and in addressing the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Members of his own delegation attending the events in Vienna that week were still in need of assistance and he appealed to other delegations to do whatever they could to help them.

¹ http://www.ipu.org/file/12350/download
Closing remarks from the IPU Secretary general

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, thanked all the participants and expressed his sense of reassurance that counter-terrorism was a top priority for most parliaments. A running theme through the deliberations had been the observation that insufficient attention was being paid to victims of terrorism and he urged those present to take action to transform victims of terrorism into survivors of terrorism. Parliaments represented the epitome of peaceful coexistence and were in a unique position to nurture a culture of tolerance and respect and build a peaceful world free of terrorism and extremism.

Annex

The following documents are available on the event webpage: https://www.ipu.org/event/first-globalparliamentary-summit-counter-terrorism

Opening statements
Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka,
President of the National Council (Austria)

Mr. Duarte Pacheco,
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Keynote addresses
Ms. Ghada Waly,
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

Mr. Martin Chungong,
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Closing statements
Mr. Martin Chungong,
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

List of participants
The recorded livestream of the Summit is also available here (in English) and here (in original languages).

Photos

Additional information and a full agenda are available at: https://www.ipu.org/event/first-globalparliamentary-summit-counter-terrorism
First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism
9 September 2021 - Vienna, Austria