Building Operational Capacities for the Use of AI in Counter-Terrorism

10.00 – 12.30, 10 December 2025
Conference Room 6,
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a foundational force across daily life, industry, and governance. It is reshaping how sectors process information, generate insights and content, and make decisions, marking a profound shift in the way the world operates.

In the context of counter-terrorism, AI is increasingly being used by law enforcement and counter-terrorism agencies to detect, investigate and counter terrorist networks and activities, assessing operational risks, and detecting and responding to cyber threats targeting critical infrastructure and digital systems — enhancing the speed, accuracy, and effectiveness of responses.

Similarly, terrorist groups and their supporters leverage AI to amplify recruitment efforts, spread disinformation and propaganda, and provide operational guidance and support. For instance, ISIL/Da'esh and Al-Qaeda have used generative AI to produce synthetic media, including fake journalists presenting propaganda as credible reporting and detailed instructional videos with narration to guide attacks. In 2024, an Al-Qaeda-affiliated media group convened a dedicated AI workshop aimed at building broader capabilities in the use of AI-based tools.

Within the United Nations context, the General Assembly, in its eighth review (A/RES/77/298) of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, called for the United Nations system to support innovative measures and approaches to build the capacity of Member States, upon their request, for the challenges and opportunities that new technologies provide, including the human rights aspects, in preventing and countering terrorism. Similarly, in the Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations Security Council equally recognized that "*innovations in technology may offer significant counter-terrorism opportunities*".

In June 2023, the Permanent Missions of the UAE and India organized a joint side event on '*Preventing and Countering the Use of New and Emerging Technologies for Terrorist Purposes: Way Forward for a Holistic Multilateral Response*' during the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week. The event called for a holistic, human rights-respecting approach that aligns with the Delhi Declaration and reinforces international efforts to prevent terrorist use of emerging technologies.

In March 2024, the General Assembly adopted its landmark resolution on AI, entitled "*Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure, and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development*" (A/78/265) aimed at bridging the AI and other digital divides between and within countries and promote safe, secure and trustworthy AI to accelerate progress towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In June 2024, the General Assembly

adopted resolution A/78/311 on *Enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence*, underscoring the importance of strengthening national capacities to harness AI for sustainable development, innovation, and resilience. The resolution also highlights the need for inclusive international cooperation, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing to ensure that all countries can meaningfully participate in and benefit from the advancement of AI.

The *Pact for the Future*, adopted by the General Assembly in 2024 – which calls for accelerated global cooperation on urgent challenges, including digital governance, peace and security, and future generations – positions responsible AI and emerging technologies as vital for strengthening multilateral responses to threats such as terrorism, while safeguarding human rights and dignity. Complementing this, the *Global Digital Compact,* advances a vision for an open, secure, and inclusive digital future, and emphasizes ethical, transparent, and accountable use of technology in areas like law enforcement and counter-terrorism, and promoting international cooperation to prevent misuse and ensure equitable access.

This aligns with the *Delhi Declaration on Countering the Use of New and Emerging Technologies for Terrorist Purposes* and the *Abu Dhabi Guiding Principles on the Use of Advanced Technology in Counter-Terrorism*. These frameworks underscore the importance of international cooperation, public-private partnerships, and human rights-compliant approaches in leveraging new and emerging technologies for counter-terrorism. Additionally, both encourage Member States and the United Nations system to promote responsible innovation, build institutional resilience, and address the dual-use nature through coordinated, inclusive, and forward-looking strategies.

In this context, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) through its Centre for AI and Robotics and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) through its Global Programme on Cybersecurity and New Technologies have worked to advance knowledge and understanding of the potential opportunities and challenges of emerging technologies in law enforcement and counter-terrorism. In particular, through the AI-POL and CT-TECH initiatives, both independently funded by the European Union and implemented in partnership with INTERPOL, UNICRI and UNOCT/UNCCT have sought to build the capacity of law enforcement and counter-terrorism agencies to leverage AI in strengthening public safety and global security.

Objectives

- Deepen understanding of how AI is transforming the counter-terrorism landscape- as a force multiplier for law enforcement and security services, and as a tool that can be exploited by terrorist actors.
- Showcase operational use of AI for counter-terrorism and terrorist purposes, including AI-enabled investigations, threat assessments, the misuse of generative technologies for synthetic media production and cyber-enabled attacks.
- Highlight United Nations capacity-building efforts, including collaboration with academic institutes to develop and integrate AI-based tools.
- Discuss how Member States can respond to evolving threats and harness the potential of responsible, safe, secure, and trustworthy AI in counter-terrorism.

Outcome

- Chair's Summary / Key Takeaways Document to capture the main insights and recommendations from the discussion, to share with participants and frame around opportunities, challenges and next steps for UN.

Agenda

Duration	10 December 2025
Opening Segment	
Moderator: *Mauro Miedico, Director, UNOCT/UNCCT*	
15 mins	**Opening Remarks:** - *H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Issa Abushahab, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations* - *H.E. Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations* - *Alexandre Zouev, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)* - *Christophe Monier, Secretary-General's Representative, Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)*
15 mins	***National Perspectives on Integrating AI, Cybersecurity, and Counter-Terrorism: The UAE*** - *H.E. Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti, Head of the United Arab Emirates Cyber Security Council*
The Strategic Landscape and Operational Capabilities	
Moderator: *Balques Al Radwan, Programme Management Officer, Cyber and New Technologies Unit, UNOCT/UNCCT*	
15 mins	**The Transformative Role of AI in Counter-Terrorism** - *Roy Lindelauf, Professor of Data Science, Netherlands Defence Academy*
15 mins	**Adapting to Shifting Landscapes: Challenges and Opportunities** - *Dr. Sameer Patil, Director, Centre for Security, Strategy and Technology, Observer Research Foundation, India*
15 mins	**Capabilities Demo: Deepfake and Synthetic Media Detection:** - *Eric Eifert, Sr. Research Engineer, Austrian Institute of Technology*
15 mins	**Threats to AI Systems in the Shifting Landscape** - *Eoin Wickens, Director of Threat Intelligence, HiddenLayer*
Scaling up Capabilities	
15 mins	**Advancing Institutional Readiness and Capacities** - *Akvile Giniotiene, Head, Cyber and New Technologies Unit, UNOCT/UNCCT* - *Odhran McCarthy, Liaison Officer and Programme Officer, UNICRI*
15 mins	**Strengthening National Cyber-AI Readiness** - *Carolin Weissman, Lead International Operations, Global Cyber Security Capacity Centre, University of Oxford*
15 mins	**R&D Partnerships and Facilitating Innovation** - *Tom Kirchmaier, Director of the Policing and Crime Research Group, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics*
5 mins	**Observations from CTED Country Visits on the Development of AI Capabilities** - *CTED, Speaker TBC*
Closing Segment	
10 mins	**Q&A, Member State Comments and Closing**
Close of Meeting	

Logistics

The event will take place in-person. Prior registration is requested by all those intending to join. Registration can be completed by clicking here or scanning the QR Code. For any questions regarding this event, please contact:

- Ms. Balques Al Radwan, UNOCT/UNCCT (balques.alradwan@un.org)
- Mr. Odhran McCarthy, UNICRI (odhran.mccarthy@un.org)