



**The UN Security Council: Assessing Twenty Years of Counterterrorism
Roundtable Discussion with Members of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation
Event Summary
June 7, 2022**

Overview

The [Securing the Future Initiative \(SFI\)](#) roundtable discussion on 7 June 2022, co-hosted with the [Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations](#) and [Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations](#), convened representatives from member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the impacts of the UN Security Council's (UNSC) counterterrorism (CT) activities over the past two decades on Muslim-majority countries and the OIC more broadly. It was one of a series of consultations that will ensure that the SFI report and recommendations, which will be published in Fall 2022, benefit from a diversity of views.

Ambassador Arrmanatha Nasir, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN expressed his support for the SFI's mission and thanked the attendees for prioritizing international cooperation in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism. He recalled Indonesia's term as Chair of the 1267 (Al-Qaida and ISIL/Daesh) sanctions committee and their wider experiences as active members of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.¹ He stressed the importance of reflecting on past efforts in order to improve future counterterrorism activities. Nesrine Elmansouri, the representative from the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the UN, also conveyed her support for the SFI's mission and thanked attendees for their willingness to engage on the impacts of UNSC CT activities from across disparate perspectives. She recalled Tunisia's term as former Chair of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), reflecting on the lessons learned and the importance of evaluating past UNSC CT measures. She emphasized how international and regional cooperation is key in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism moving forward.

Below is a summary of key discussion points. It is not a transcript of the event and does not necessarily reflect the views of the co-hosts, the OIC, The Soufan Center, or SFI sponsors.

¹ The terror group known as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is referred to as ISIL/Daesh in the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 1267.





Assessing Impact

Many participants noted that UNSC CT resolutions had encouraged international cooperation on the issue of countering terrorism and violent extremism. However, they pointed to the challenges of assessing their impact. These include the lack of agreed metrics and that outcomes were often interwoven with the impacts of initiatives taken by bilateral partners and other multilateral actors. Participants also stressed the uneven impacts of the UNSC CT work across different countries and communities.

Several attendees pointed out that although there have been positive outcomes of UNSC counterterrorism resolutions, there have also been numerous adverse impacts on states and civil society arising out of UNSC CT measures. These effects are particularly acute in the humanitarian sector, they noted, where legitimate faith-based aid organizations have been effectively shut down by banks' decisions to de-risk their operations.

Participants also stressed that twenty years after the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1373, the UNSC's CT architecture must evolve to meet the changing nature of the threat posed by terrorist organizations globally. The regionalization of terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and Daesh, as well as the rise of far right and white supremacy extremists were all raised as evidence for the need for change. Consequently, while the defeat of Daesh on the battlefield may be considered a success for the Global Coalition, numerous states are still affected by ongoing terrorist violence.

The Importance of Terminology, Focusing on All Forms of Terrorism, Avoiding Discrimination, and Safeguarding Humanitarian Action

Speakers expressed concern that past and ongoing CT activity had resulted in stigmatization of and discrimination against Muslim communities and civil society actors working within them. Many attendees agreed that the designation of only two groups (Al-Qaida and Daesh) by the UNSC 1267 Committee and the narrow focus on the actions of these so called Islamist groups and their affiliates had contributed to the creation of a series of problematic narratives surrounding the fight against terrorism. The consequent association between terrorism and Muslim communities was highlighted as a key concern for many OIC states, and speakers stressed the importance of ensuring the UN was addressing all forms of terrorism, including those involving violent far-right groups. Further, some speakers highlighted the importance of not using terminology that linked groups to a particular religion (e.g., favoring the use of 'Daesh' instead of 'Islamic State'). They emphasized that, as its CT approach evolves, the UNSC should ensure that it avoids discrimination.





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The tensions between counterterrorism and humanitarian action also surfaced as a theme of the discussion, with speakers raising concerns about the unintended consequences of counterterrorism measures on non-governmental actors who were often active in complex terrorism and other conflict-affected zones.

Participants also stressed the need to ensure human rights-compliant responses by the security sector and avoid framing counterterrorism and the protection of human rights as mutually exclusive objectives. One participant said that narratives that portray them as distinct goals hindered international cooperation.

Ensuring Legitimacy of Current and Future UNSC CT Activities

Participants acknowledged the important norm-setting role the UNSC has played on CT particularly through the adoption of Chapter VII resolutions. However, several participants stressed that this role should reside in the General Assembly; its universal membership granted it the legitimacy to adopt globally applicable norms. Participants also noted the important roles of other intergovernmental bodies, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the Financial Action Task Force which have a more diverse range of members and partners and may be better suited to follow up and support implementation of capacity-building efforts than the UNSC. However, it was also pointed out that these bodies were not sufficiently inclusive.

Participants acknowledged the Council’s comparative advantage as an influential body endowed with singular capabilities to rapidly address threats to international peace and security under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. With these unique capabilities in mind, attendees recommended reserving UNSC deliberations where an immediate response to an acute threat is needed. However, some speakers highlighted that the perceived legitimacy of the Security Council’s counterterrorism work was challenged at times by uneven willingness by its own members to implement resolutions, noting that it was essential for many non-permanent members to see the permanent members leading by example in the Council.



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