



**Global Counterterrorism Forum
Official Launch
22 September 2011
New York, NY**

Political Declaration

I. Preamble

Today, we, the governments meeting to launch the Global Counterterrorism Forum, reiterate our enduring and absolute condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Continuing terrorist attacks and attempted attacks demonstrate the global and increasingly geographically diverse threat that confronts us. The growing list of victims of terrorism and their families reminds us of the terrible toll in human lives.

Victims of terrorism and their families from all parts of the world have risen against terrorism in the aftermath of horrific attacks, including by bravely speaking out against violent extremism. We stand with them and their families, and we are committed to ensuring that their voices are heard and that the victims are never forgotten. We stress the importance of assisting and supporting the victims of terrorism and their families.

We acknowledge the necessity of a comprehensive and sustained response to the threat of terrorism, and we reinforce the need to address the conditions conducive to its spread and counter its appeal while recognizing that nothing can excuse or justify acts of terrorism.

We stand together to renew our commitment to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism and to reaffirm our shared determination to bring those responsible for these crimes to justice. We recognize that no state can address this threat alone and pledge to work together to protect our citizens, strengthen global security, foster stability, and help create the conditions for long-term success.

We pay tribute to the remarkable level of international cooperation achieved in counterterrorism, enabling us to weaken the ability of terrorists to recruit, train, fund, and execute attacks.

We stand committed to strengthening this cooperation by creating more opportunities for countries from all regions of the world to engage and develop innovative solutions to this truly global challenge. We recognize the growing number of countries with relevant experience and expertise in countering and preventing terrorism, and we seek to maximize these assets through close cooperation.

We emphasize the need to strengthen the existing framework of international cooperation and build new partnerships, enhance institutional capacity where it is most needed, and develop practitioner networks that will have an enduring impact on our collective efforts to attack the scourge of terrorism.

II. Principles

As a concrete sign of our unified and unwavering commitment to strengthening of civilian-led international counterterrorism cooperation, and to making the international architecture more effective in addressing the evolving threat of terrorism, we hereby establish the Global Counterterrorism Forum (hereinafter “GCTF”) based on our shared affirmation of the following principles:

1. We reaffirm that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nation, culture or social or ethnic group;
2. We underscore our condemnation of all acts of terrorism, which cannot be justified on any grounds whatsoever, and our continuing commitment to oppose terrorism irrespective of the motives of the perpetrators of such acts;
3. We recognize the importance of achieving peaceful solutions to enduring conflicts in many parts of the world, which can fuel violent extremism and terrorism;
4. We recognize that all counterterrorism measures must be fully consistent with international law, in particular the UN Charter, as well as international human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law;

5. We underscore that respecting human rights and the rule of law while combating terrorism, is based on a recognition that they are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and an essential part of a successful counterterrorism effort;
6. We support efforts to develop and implement, comprehensive, long-term, counterterrorism strategies that focus on, *inter alia*,
 - a) identifying and addressing the social, political, and economic conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism which can lead to terrorism, while recognizing that none of these conditions can excuse or justify acts of terrorism;
 - b) building the necessary institutional and other capacities of states to combat terrorism and to address the conditions conducive to its spread and counter violent extremism while respecting human rights and the rule of law,
 - c) strengthening existing and building new public-private partnerships, including between governments, multilateral bodies and civil society;
7. We fully support the central role of the United Nations and the importance of full, comprehensive, and balanced implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN counterterrorism framework more broadly;
8. We seek, as a matter of priority, to develop a close and mutually reinforcing relationship with the UN system, including to ensure that the work of the GCTF is consistent with and reinforces the UN Global Counter- Terrorism Strategy;
9. We emphasize importance of enhancing dialogue among national counterterrorism officials to promote international cooperation and realize implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;
10. We emphasize the important role that regional and sub-regional bodies play in the fight against terrorism;
11. We need to meet the growing needs for enhanced capacity-building by mobilizing existing and additional resources and expertise from leading counterterrorism actors from all regions of the globe;

12. We are cognizant of the importance of engaging and involving civil society and local communities in our counterterrorism efforts as they are critical to building individual and community resilience against violent extremism while simultaneously enhancing trust and strengthening social cohesion;
13. We underscore that violent extremism is not particular to any given region, religion, and culture and we are determined to address this phenomenon in all its forms and manifestations; and
14. We recognize that continuing international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, in an effort to prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures, can help counter the forces that fuel polarization and violent extremism, and will contribute to strengthening the international fight against terrorism.

III. Objectives

1. We intend to create a pragmatic, action-oriented, informal and civilian-led forum that will be consistent with, complement and reinforce the counterterrorism activities of the United Nations and existing regional bodies.
2. We declare that the GCTF's overarching and long-term goal is to reduce the vulnerability of people everywhere to terrorism by effectively preventing, combating, and prosecuting terrorist acts and countering incitement and recruitment to terrorism.
3. To this end, the GCTF's primary objective is to provide a dedicated, informal, multilateral counterterrorism platform for senior policymakers and practitioners from different regions and representing appropriate stakeholders to:
 - a) share experience, expertise, best practices, and assessments on key regional and thematic issues;
 - b) identify and develop innovative solutions for addressing critical counterterrorism gaps and challenges;

- c) mobilize and coordinate existing and additional resources and expertise to build counterterrorism capabilities around the globe in partnership with and according to the particular needs of interested countries, while respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity.
 - d) coordinate and facilitate capacity- and cooperation-building activities;
 - e) develop effective political messaging to counter terrorism and violent extremism;
 - f) support practical initiatives aimed at building the political will and capacity to implement the UN Strategy and the wider UN counterterrorism framework in a balanced manner and serve as an incubator for ideas and initiatives that can be further developed and implemented by the United Nations; and
 - g) promote the development and implementation of comprehensive and integrated regional, sub-regional, and national counterterrorism strategies that are consistent with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the principles in this declaration.
4. Acknowledging that our participation in the Forum is voluntary and is not a legally binding commitment, we intend to establish terms of reference that will allow the Forum to operate in a flexible, transparent, and inclusive manner, while adhering to the above principles and objectives.