

# 'Agile', multilateral response vital to combat terrorism – UN chief Guterres

The complex and evolving nature of terrorism necessitates a response that is as agile and multifaceted as the threat itself, the United Nations Secretary-General said on Thursday.

Addressing a [high-level conference on counter-terrorism](#), [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) underscored that working together must be the “top priority.”

“We must [strengthen the capacities of our counter-terrorism structures](#) and institutions and we must complement our counter-terrorism efforts in the security realm with concerted efforts to identify and address the root causes.”

He also highlighted the need to strengthen resilience and build cohesion in societies.

“Communities and the State need to be joined with the common purpose of rejecting terrorist ideologies and challenging those who espouse them,” stated the UN chief.

Terrorism is a grave and complex threat. Ending it demands that we work together flexibly, intelligently and openly – *Secretary-General Guterres*

Support should also be provided to civil society which has a major role to play in preventing violent extremism and there should be more engagement with women and young people, so they can play “meaningful roles” in combatting the scourge, he added.

Mr. Guterres also cautioned that the “frontline” against terrorism is increasingly in cyberspace, with terrorists exploiting social media, encrypted communications and the so-called “dark web” to spread propaganda and coordinate attacks.

There has also been a shift towards “less sophisticated attacks” against “softer targets” that are more difficult to detect and prevent, he said; noting that following military defeat in one region of the world, foreign terrorist fighters are likely to move elsewhere – either returning home or relocating to other conflict zones.

The transnational nature of terrorism “means we need multilateral cooperation,” he highlighted.

Convened by the Secretary-General on 28-29 June, under the overarching theme of “strengthening international cooperation to combat the evolving threat of terrorism”, the high-level conference aims to forge a new partnership for multilateral cooperation to strengthen the international community’s counter-terrorism efforts.

[“Terrorism is a grave and complex threat](#). Ending it demands that we work together flexibly, intelligently and openly,” said Mr. Guterres.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General outlined the goals of the conference.

These include:

- A strengthened international counter-terrorism cooperation.
- A renewed and sustained focus on preventing terrorism.
- Full respect for human rights while tackling terrorism.
- The need for “strategic investment” in young people to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.
- Recognizing the “tragic human cost” of terrorism.
- And strengthening the role of the United Nations in assisting its Member States to tackle terrorism.