

2026 Counter-Terrorism Week

SIDE EVENTS

1 July 2026

United Nations Headquarters, New York



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



ICAO



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Beyond the runway: Advancing Air Cargo Security: Synergies between the ICAO AVSEC Programme, the UNODC Passenger and Cargo Control Programme (PCCP), the UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Services (LSS), and the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme

Background and Rationale

The security of global transport and logistics networks is critical for both international trade and the protection of civil aviation. Illicit trafficking of drugs, precursors, and other contraband through air cargo and containerized shipping fuels transnational organized crime and can generate financial flows linked to terrorist groups and networks.

At the same time, evolving threats have highlighted the vulnerability of cargo and postal supply chains to malicious exploitation. Recent incidents have demonstrated attempts to conceal Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Improvised Incendiary Devices (IIDs) within cargo and airmail shipments, underscoring the need for stronger risk-based screening and cross-border cooperation across transport sectors.

The global aviation security framework is led by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) under the Convention on International Civil Aviation. Through Annex 17 – Aviation Security, ICAO establishes international Standards and Recommended Practices to safeguard civil aviation from acts of unlawful interference, including requirements for security controls on cargo and mail prior to aircraft loading.

Effective border security and overall border management is essential in countering terrorism because it constitutes the first line of defence against the cross-border movement of terrorists and illicit goods and cargo. The obligations related to border security set forth in resolution 1373 (2001) require action in a number of areas, including immigration and customs control and aviation, and cargo security. In the resolution, the Council also calls upon all States to take the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts; to intensify and accelerate the exchange of operational information; to cooperate in preventing trafficking in arms, explosives and sensitive materials. In its resolution 2309 (2016), the

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Security Council recognizes that terrorist groups may use civil aviation as a means of transport or attack vector, including for moving materials or operatives and obliges states to prevent illicit goods flows through aviation by strengthening security systems, screening, inspection, and risk management especially via ICAO mechanisms. The country assessments conducted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee reveal that many States face challenges in implementing effective control of goods and prevention of illicit flows through aviation.

Within the broader UN counter-terrorism architecture, efforts to secure international transport and trade systems also contribute to the objectives of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which calls for strengthened international cooperation, capacity-building, and measures to prevent terrorists from accessing resources and exploiting global systems. In this regard, coordination among UN entities through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact helps promote integrated and multi-sectoral responses to evolving terrorist threats. Within this framework, enhanced cooperation between aviation authorities, customs administrations, postal operators, law enforcement agencies, and private-sector stakeholders is essential to safeguard global supply chains.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Passenger and Cargo Control Programme (PCCP) works to improve the capacity of Member States and their customs and law enforcement agencies active at air, sea and land borders, to disrupt illicit flows of containers, cargo and mail, intercept high-risk passengers, and identify victims of trafficking, while facilitating legitimate trade and the movement of people.

The UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Services works with PCCP and ICAO AVSEC under the framework of the UNODC Synthetic Drug Strategy to prevent the illicit movement of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals through air routes by strengthening risk-based screening, frontline awareness, interagency coordination, and forensic capacities.

Under the UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, a dedicated Threat Assessment Models capability supports Member States in developing intelligence-led risk assessments for civil aviation security. This initiative was co-established by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and ICAO.

Together, these programmes provide complementary approaches to securing the global supply chain from maritime container flows to air cargo and mail networks while supporting Member States in countering terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Objectives

Aligned with the theme of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week 2026 “A Future Free from Terrorism: Consolidating the Global Commitment to Multi-Stakeholder Approaches to Counter Terrorism through Member States’ Leadership and Action” the side event aims to:

- Highlight how Member States' leadership and operational cooperation can strengthen air cargo security and containerized supply chain controls as part of broader counter-terrorism efforts.
- Discuss emerging threats to aviation cargo and global logistics systems, including attempts to conceal IEDs and IIDs in cargo and postal shipments.
- Share operational experiences and lessons learned from the ICAO and UNODC Programmes, in particular as they relate to Strategic Trade and Export Control, including firearms and their parts, dual-use goods and CBRN materials.
- Promote multi-stakeholder cooperation involving aviation authorities, customs administrations, law enforcement agencies, postal operators, private-sector logistics actors, and forensic laboratories.
- Identify opportunities for strengthened international cooperation, training, and technical assistance to support Member States in implementing risk-based cargo screening and cross-border information sharing.

The side event directly supports the theme of the 2026 United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week “A Future Free from Terrorism: Consolidating the Global Commitment to Multi-Stakeholder Approaches to Counter Terrorism through Member States’ Leadership and Action.” By focusing on the security of air cargo and interconnected global logistics systems, the event highlights a critical yet often under-examined dimension of counter-terrorism: the protection of international supply chains from exploitation by terrorist groups and transnational organized crime networks. Strengthening air cargo and postal security is essential to preventing the movement of explosives, weapons components, precursor chemicals, and other materials that could be used to conduct terrorist attacks. The discussion will therefore emphasize how Member States’ leadership, supported by international frameworks and operational partnerships, can enhance risk-based screening, intelligence-led targeting, and coordinated responses to evolving threats across aviation and trade systems.

The side event also aligns with the strategic focus of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture by promoting integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches that connect aviation security, customs enforcement, law enforcement cooperation, and private-sector engagement. By showcasing the complementary work of the ICAO, UNOCT, UNCTED and UNODC Programmes, the event demonstrates how coordinated capacity-building and operational collaboration can strengthen Member States’ ability to detect and disrupt illicit trafficking while facilitating legitimate trade and travel. In doing so, it contributes to the objectives of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by fostering international cooperation, enhancing border and transport security, and supporting Member States in implementing practical, risk-based measures to prevent terrorists and criminal networks from exploiting global transport and logistics systems.

Format

The event is to be held on **Wednesday 1 July** from **04:30 p.m. to 18:00 p.m.** in person at United Nations Headquarters, **Conference room 12** with hybrid participation available via Webex to accommodate speakers or attendees unable to join physically. The meeting will be conducted in English only, without

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any interpretation. To attend the event, please register [here](#). All registered participants will receive the link to join the event the day before the event.

Expected Outcomes

The event will strengthen awareness of emerging threats to air cargo and global supply chains and demonstrate how multi-stakeholder cooperation led by Member States can enhance security across interconnected transport networks. It will also highlight practical opportunities for operational coordination, capacity-building, and information sharing among Member States and international partners to support global counter-terrorism efforts.

Agenda

Event moderator	Ms. Agnieszka Maja Mizgalska , Aviation Security Technical Officer, Aviation Security Policy, Aviation Security and Facilitation, ICAO
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Opening session 16:30-17:00	Ms. Katie Buckley , Chief, Aviation Security Policy, Transport Canada, Canada Ms. Carmen G. Cantor , Deputy Executive Director, CTED Mr. Christopher Barks , Regional Director, NACC, ICAO
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Panel discussion 17:00-17:45	Ms. Henna Shah , Associate Legal Officer, CTED Mr. Greg Helpin , Senior Security Advisor, Transport Canada, Canada Mr. Luc Hardy , Programme Management Officer, Countering Terrorist Travel Section, Special Projects & Innovation Branch (SPIB), UNOCT Mr. Jeffery Bawa , Synthetic Drug Strategy Regional Coordinator for West and Central Africa, UNODC
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Q/A session 17:45-17:55	Questions from the floor
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Closing session 17:55-18:00	Mr. Christopher Barks , Regional Director, NACC, ICAO
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