



OSCE

**Towards the Implementation of the Joint Plan of Action for the
United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia
Border Security and Management for Countering Terrorism**

4-6 March 2015,

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Summary of Discussions¹

Disclaimer

This report summarizes discussions by participants of the Ashgabat Workshop, and in no way represents the views or analysis of either UNRCCA, CTITF, OSCE or any other participating organization.

In the Joint Plan of Action (JPoA) for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) in Central Asia, adopted in November 2011, Central Asian countries stressed the need for more efforts “aimed at identifying measures to address border management problems in the region.” They also resolved “to enhance national, regional and international cooperation, information exchange and joint training between the police, security agencies and border forces across the region.”

These commitments were the basis of a regional workshop on “Border Security and Management for Countering Terrorism” organized on March 4-6th, 2015 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The workshop was organized by the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) and the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) together with the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) and the OSCE Transnational Threats Department/Action against Terrorism Unit (TNTD/ATU). It was the third workshop organized as part of Phase II of the CTITF and UNRCCA project “Towards a Comprehensive Implementation of the Joint Plan of Action for Central Asia Under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2013-2016)”, with the other two devoted to dialogue with religious institutions to prevent terrorism (Almaty, November 2013) and to engaging the media in countering terrorism (Bishkek, July 2014).

Participants, modality

A total of 66 people participated in the workshop, including:

- *From CA countries:* representatives from the National Security Committees, Ministries of Interiors, State Customs Services and State Border Services: 9 from host country Turkmenistan, 3 from Kazakhstan, 5 from Kyrgyzstan, and 5 from Tajikistan.

¹ This Report has been prepared by Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, CTITF/UNRCCA Consultant, with inputs from Jerome Bouyjou (UNRCCA), Luv Puri (CTITF), Simon Deignan (OSCE TNT/ATU), Albina Yakubova (OSCE TNT/Border Unit), Richard Wheeler (OSCE Centre in Ashgabat), Nodir Khudayberganov (UNRCCA Uzbekistan), Bakhit Abdildina (UNRCCA Kazakhstan) and participants of the Ashgabat Workshop. Translation support was provided by Bahargul Rahmanova (UNRCCA) and logistical support by Aygul Byashimova (UNRCCA).

- *From observer countries:* 2 representatives from Afghanistan (from the Ministry of Interior and from a Research Center), 3 from the Russian Federation (one from the MFA in Moscow and two from the Embassy) and 2 representatives of the embassy of the United States.
- *From regional organizations:* representatives from CIS, EU (represented by the Italian Ambassador in Turkmenistan), OSCE, NATO, SCO, and from the Regional Counter Terrorism Structure of (RCTS) of the SCO.
- *From international organizations:* representatives of the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Monitoring Team, INTERPOL, CTITF Office, IOM, UNAMA, UNDP, UN DPI, UNICRI, UNODC, UN WOMEN and the host organization UNRCCA.
- Experts/trainers from Canada, Estonia, Germany and Switzerland.

The 2.5 days consisted of three parts:

- For the first part, country representatives were encouraged to **share relevant experiences**, including challenges and opportunities in matters related to border security. This half-day was also an opportunity for country representatives to provide updates on the implementation of the relevant elements of the JPoA.
- The second part was devoted to **dialogue and exchanging views and best practices** among participants on various aspects of CT at the border, with a view to elaborating a set of concrete recommendations. These can include:
 - Theme 1: Setting the scene
 - The illegal cross-border movements of terrorists;
 - Movement of foreign fighters;
 - Routes;
 - The nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism.
 - Theme 2: Secure borders
 - Effective surveillance/control of border crossings and green borders.
 - Theme 3: Smart borders
 - Combating illegal trafficking;
 - Improving customs control;
 - Utilizing new technologies.
 - Theme 4: Legal framework
 - Border control for countering terrorism within the rule of law.
 - Theme 5: Assessing and responding to needs for countering terrorism at the border:
 - National needs and possible international assistance.
- The third part was a formal **training** on the theme “Approaches and methodologies for assessing risks and for countering terrorism at the border”, which was be based on presentations of international and regional best practices, case studies and group discussions. The training segment of the workshop focused on topics including:
 - Session 1: Key principles of integrated/cooperative border management including inter-agency cooperation and coordination
 - Session 2: Information gathering, risk assessment and risk analysis methodologies
 - Session 3: Methods of preventing cross-border movements of terrorists: Identification, use of databases, communication and investigation
 - Session 4: A roadmap for follow-up

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Central Asia is increasingly becoming a region threatened by the inflow of criminal elements, including terrorists, but also by the outflow of people being recruited to fight as foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) abroad. It is also a region where there is a large flux of movement of populations and goods, licit and illicit, making border security paramount for stability. Classical measures are not enough: Protracted and new threats in the region demand new types of responses, which participants identified as:

Comprehensive and preventive measures:

- Coordination between different agencies such as national security committees, border guards and police, customs units, police, financial intelligence units, prosecutors etc.
- Synergies between different national strategies, such as counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, integrated border management etc.
- Addressing root causes and preventing the radicalization that could lend itself to violence and terrorism including through enhanced work with families to provide counseling, guidance and support.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Consider reviewing the legal framework and operational practices to enable more efficient co-operation among relevant law enforcement agencies such as national security committees, border guards and police, customs units, police, financial intelligence units, prosecutors both within the countries and at the region level.
- ⇒ Coordination should encompass all stages of the process, from assessment of risks, to data collection, detection, interdiction, prosecution etc.
- ⇒ Co-operation should be enhanced between destination, transit, and home countries through established international networks, such as the OSCE Border Security and Management Network
- ⇒ The prevention of radicalization among idle and disenfranchised youth requires provision of employment opportunities, improving education systems, both the secular and religious, raising awareness, and engaging with families and communities, including those living in border areas.

Cooperation, joint exercises and experience sharing:

- Law enforcement agencies in charge of border security and counter terrorism need to cooperate not only within the country but also across borders, with neighboring countries. International cooperation is also necessary because terrorists can travel far physically themselves or their ideologies through the Internet.
- Joint border activities start with trust and confidence building between neighbors and there are numerous positive examples of cross-border joint patrol of borders in the region. Regional and international organizations have been supporting joint exercises

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Cooperation needs to intensify at the bilateral and regional level but also with partners across different regions around better exit and entry control.
- ⇒ Experience sharing needs to be intensified in the wider region.
- ⇒ Joint patrolling require specific skills, techniques and approaches which call for more

frequent and tailored training and capacity building for border guards/border police.

- ⇒ Adequate bilateral agreements and legal framework are needed to allow and facilitate joint patrol exercises.
- ⇒ More resources are necessary for the effective patrolling of green borders and difficult terrains.
- ⇒ Countries of the region, including Afghanistan, should jointly investigate threats.

Adequate Legal framework, which overcomes new challenges, such as:

- The necessity to update and amend existing legislation to take into account the new phenomenon of FTF.
- The need to conduct counter terrorism activities, including at the borders, in ways that do not violate human rights, rule of law and principles of humanitarian Law.
- Balance to be sought to prevent the misuse of religion for political ends and allowing for freedom of worship and freedom of movement.
- The need to cooperate closely with international organizations on timely information exchange to prevent terrorist groups from using the cover of refugees, irregular migrants or asylum seekers to infiltrate into society.

Recommendations:

- Expertise should be provided for border guards and immigration officials to prevent the movement of FTFs and fulfilling the requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014).
- More training and clear instructions should be provided to border guards and immigration officials on how to conduct a rights-based approach to countering terrorism.
- Closer cooperation between Central Asian states and international organizations, such as UNHCR and the OSCE, is recommended in order to prevent terrorists from using the cover of asylum seekers and refugees.

Improving the flow of data, gathering, sharing, analyzing:

- Data collection is obviously not enough: data should be accessible, shared with all responsible agencies/services and should be analyzed properly.
- Data sharing and use fall short because of the absence of a unified dataset.
- Border guards at the border check points do not have access to all available databases, especially in real time.

Recommendations:

- Unify all data and make them accessible under one unified system.
- Establish passport reading machines in every border crossing points tied to databases.
- Promote the use of INTERPOL Stolen and Lost Travel Document database (SLTD), INTERPOL colour-coded notices and increasing membership in the ICAO public key directory.
- Data should also be properly analyzed and risks assessed through regional cooperation. Joint assessments of information about routes, trends, groups, movements, funding sources etc. should be intensified.

Tools and technologies for surveillance/interdiction, which include:

- Automated verification system.
- Advanced technologies such as introscope monitoring systems and radiometric control.
- The introduction of biometric passports.
- New technologies for customs to recognize false identities.
- Use of canine border programmes as effective ways to detect drugs and explosives.
- Surveillance of banking and financial transactions.
- The need to revamp the old infrastructure at the borders.

Recommendations:

- New information technologies should be promoted at the border, such as advanced passenger information systems, etc.
- Not to neglect the human factor: Training for officers at borders is paramount
- Creation of an inventory of the needs expressed by CA countries in order to match with the supply by donors. Such an inventory could be initiated by a coalition of regional organizations or by UN bodies such as CTED.
- The introduction of new technologies should be coordinated in the region.

Capacity building and training:

- The provision of training needs to be made more coherent, especially given the high turnover of staff and the lack of proper communication or assessment of training needs.
- On the job and on the spot training for deployed border personnel is insufficient
- Training standards provided by various institutions vary significantly
- Training is often provided to individual agencies, in isolation from others players.

Recommendations:

- Establishing common regional training standards.
- Training of trainers for a regional approach to further utilize/spread the expertise.
- CA countries to list the topics/models needed for tailor-made trainings.
- Training should target those specifically present in border areas.
- Avoid the duplication of trainings and instead upgrade with the latest knowledge.
- Systematic involvement of experts with sufficient knowledge of the region.
- A more regional approach is necessary, involving not only Afghans but Uzbek and Chinese officials too.
- Training not just for border guards but also other law enforcement officials for synergies and cooperation.

Matching national needs with donor support:

During the meeting, representatives of Central Asian countries and Afghanistan provided some indications of their needs at the national level while representatives of international and regional organizations talked about what their assistance in the region included. The needs, described below, were in the area of 1) equipment/infrastructure 2) training and 3) information, analysis and threat assessment

Summary of Discussions and Recommendations

Setting the scene: A region with evolving security threats

Borders have two contradictory functions: To create divisions and to forge cooperation. Participants reiterated the need for more cooperation so as to ensure that borders only create barriers for those with malicious intent such as traffickers, criminals, and terrorists while remaining open to facilitate movement, communication and trade.

Central Asian Governments attempt to secure their borders through a variety of measures, including surveillance, physical barriers, joint control operations and patrols, information exchange, intelligence assessment and engagement with border communities on control and policing issues. Nevertheless, challenges – both existing and new - are numerous, prompting the need to review modalities for cooperation.

Cooperation is especially necessary as Central Asia is increasingly becoming a region threatened by the inflow of criminal elements, including terrorists, but also by the outflow of people being recruited to fight as foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in Syria and Iraq. It is also a region where there is a large flux of movement of populations and goods, licit and illicit, making border security paramount for stability. Participants raised five security problems related to borders:

1. First is the presence of various extremist and terrorist networks within the region and in neighboring Afghanistan, many of which have already cultivated regional and even international ties. These include the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jamaat Ansarullah, Islamic Jihad Union, Jundallah, Hiz-ut Tahrir and other organizations in neighboring Afghanistan and China such as Al-Qaida, Taliban, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh), Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and the Islamic Party of Turkestan among others. These groups have the ability to move across borders in order to connect to their sympathizers and networks.
2. A second problem is the inflow of terrorists and traffickers of illicit goods through unchecked borders from neighboring regions where instability rules. The withdrawal of international forces poses concerns for countries that share direct borders with Afghanistan. Tajikistan is especially concerned about recent signs of instability in the Badakhshan province of Afghanistan and in Kunduz where Taliban forces are fighting the government. The border between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan has also become increasingly unstable, with incidents involving the killing of border guards as well as increasingly frequent conflicts over shifting land as a result of the Amu Darya steadily pushing southward. The build-up of terrorist activities on the borders between Central Asia and Afghanistan are worrying, even though it remains unclear whether the groups instigating instability are Central Asian fighters such as members of the IMU, Taliban or members of ISIL/ Daesh, whose presence has allegedly been spotted in northern provinces (Faryab, Kunduz, Badghis and Badakhshan) of Afghanistan. Unlike the Taliban that did not have the ambition to rule over territory outside of Afghanistan, participants expressed concern about the presence of ISIL/Daesh specifically because it allegedly has its eyes on a larger area which it calls 'Khorasan'.
3. A third problem is related to the outflow of persons seeking to join international terrorist groups. A sizeable – and growing - number of Central Asian militant factions

– by some estimates up to 2000 people – have now reportedly joined ISIL/Daesh and Jabhat alNusrah (Support Front) at various locations in Iraq and Syria. Some of these were previously allied with the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban or with the IMU. Others were recruited while they worked as migrant workers in Russia with promises of salvation and wealth living under an Islamic state. They seem to be motivated by ideology, identity, economic resources, community support etc. Governments are worried about their potential return could pose for their secular systems. Better trained, indoctrinated in radical ideology, well connected with global terrorist organizations and ideologically more hardened, these returnees may be waiting for instructions from outside leaders to act within Central Asia. During the workshop, there was exchange of some of the best practices adopted to meet this challenge.

4. A fourth problem is related to the huge movement of people, mostly labor migrants, much of it irregular/illegal. On the one hand, as their remittances contribute substantially to household incomes and to national economies of some countries – although less so in the recent past – efforts should be made to facilitate labor migration. However, since many irregular migrants fall victim to trafficking or sometimes to recruitment by terrorists, and since terrorists sometimes use the cover of being an asylum seeker or labor migrant, measures are also necessary to detect and stop trespassing and abuse.
5. Another problem raised by participants is the nexus between narcotic trafficking and terrorism in the region. Terrorists sometimes collude with traffickers to benefit from proceeds from the drug trade or sometimes even as consumers. While much gains have been made in the past decade in terms of narcotics seizures, effective policing of borders is hampered by geography, weak economy, corruption, deficiencies in intelligence collection and sharing, poorly trained and ill-equipped police and border personnel etc.

What types of responses are required?

Participants agreed that these protracted and new threats require a complex approach to securing borders that goes beyond mere interdiction and border control and starts with political will for cooperation. They identified the following measures to prevent the trespassing of illegal groups and individuals:

Comprehensive and preventive measures

Participants noted that a comprehensive approach is necessary to fighting terrorism at the borders, and that starts with multidimensional cooperation between law enforcement agencies and others. A comprehensive approach entails coordination between different units in charge of different sectors within the country: national security committees, border guards and police, customs units, police, financial intelligence units, prosecutors etc. It also requires synergies and combining different national strategies, such as counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, integrated border management etc.

Cooperation has been successful for example between law enforcement and financial intelligence unit in detecting the sources of funding of terrorists and stopping financial flows. Kyrgyz security agents for example have collaborated with their national Financial

Intelligence Units to freeze money in bank accounts after noticing that the relatives of some Kyrgyz citizens received financial support after their family members left the country.

As one participant put it adequately: border security starts before borders. More investments are also needed in terms of attention, efforts and resources on prevention strategies. Complex, preventive measures to prevent the radicalization that could lend itself to violence eventually requires investments in education, creation of employment and opportunities for young people, and raising awareness about the dangers of radicalization. Correct religious education needs also to be ensured so that the youth do not get recruited in violent movements in the name of ideology. If radicalization has taken place and there are reasons for the family and friends to believe that the person intends to commit a terrorist act or to travel abroad with the intention of doing so, law enforcement agencies need to work more closely with families to provide counseling, guidance and support so that they could convince the person of their misguided path.

Prevention also extends to the border communities that are sometimes implicitly engaged in illegal trafficking. Shadow facilitators who help terrorists cross borders and reach their destination also need to be identified.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Consider reviewing the legal framework and operational practices to enable more efficient co-operation among relevant law enforcement agencies such as national security committees, border guards and police, customs units, police, financial intelligence units, prosecutors both within the countries and at the region level.
- ⇒ Coordination should encompass all stages of the process, from assessment of risks, to data collection, detection, interdiction, prosecution etc.
- ⇒ Co-operation should be enhanced between destination, transit, and home countries through established international networks, such as the OSCE Border Security and Management Network
- ⇒ The prevention of radicalization among idle and disenfranchised youth requires provision of employment opportunities, improving education systems, both the secular and religious, raising awareness, and engaging with families and communities, including those living in border areas.

Cooperation, joint exercises and experience sharing:

Risk management requires securing the border from both sides with an equal level of commitment. Coordination and cooperation between border guards on both side of frontiers as well as between law enforcement agencies in charge of border security and counter terrorism at the regional and bilateral levels are key for ensuring stability. International cooperation is also necessary because terrorists can travel far physically through air travel or their ideologies virtually gaining ground through the Internet.

Central Asian participants talked about the strength of their bilateral relations with each other, cooperation through joint patrolling, exchange of information, joint investigations etc. The fact that border guards in the region have a long history of interaction and share similar training and culture facilitates this cooperation.

Joint border activities start with trust and confidence building between neighbors. Central Asian participants had numerous examples of successful joint exercises and joint patrol in the region, be it the alternative patrolling of the Tajik-Uzbek border (one week carried out by the Tajiks and one week by the Uzbeks); joint control and patrolling of borders between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan which has been specifically successful in the area of ceasing drug trafficking and the smuggling of commodities; Kyrgyz-Kazakh cooperation on alerting about risks by phone or other means of communication; Kyrgyz-Tajik alternate border security on hard to reach mountainous areas on a weekly basis and joint operative search techniques; joint patrol between Chinese and Kazakh border defense troops; and joint crossing points on the Russian-Kazakh border and on the Tajik-Afghan border.

Regional organizations have also been instrumental in forging regional ties. The CIS for example has been spearheading cooperation among law enforcement bodies through annual meetings of head of Border Control agencies, gathering the Committees of Heads of Customs bodies since 1994 and organizing regular information exchanges through the executive body of the Committee headquarters. The CIS joint exercise that took place in Almaty in 2014 which led to improvements in interactions of border units/police and special services. The Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure of the SCO has also been holding annual joint anti-terror drills with the involvement of respective specialized agencies of Member States and hopes that interactions in this sphere could be further strengthened through border cooperation agreement that is expected during the upcoming Ufa summit in 2015. The OSCE has also been working to enhance regional cooperation through its network of field operations and the Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe. Through its KALKAN project, INTERPOL has been supporting cooperation among Central Asia States in enhanced identification of terrorist groups, collecting, sharing and analysing information and intelligence and better access to the INTERPOL databases. Numerous operations have been carried out under KALKAN Project and more operations are planned/expected in 2015.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Cooperation needs to intensify at the bilateral and regional level but also with partners across different regions around better exit and entry control.
- ⇒ Experience sharing needs to be intensified in the wider region.
- ⇒ Joint patrolling require specific skills, techniques and approaches which call for more frequent and tailored training and capacity building for border guards/border police.
- ⇒ Adequate bilateral agreements and legal framework are needed to allow and facilitate joint patrol exercises.
- ⇒ More resources are necessary for the effective patrolling of green borders and difficult terrains.
- ⇒ Countries of the region, including Afghanistan, should jointly investigate terrorist threats.

Adequate Legal framework

Participants discussed the importance of the legal framework that provides the necessary mandate for the activities of intelligence agencies, border police and customs etc. They also recalled that freedom of movement is constitutionally guaranteed and should not be hampered by restrictive border control mechanisms.

The states of the region have developed and are implementing their national border strategies and legislation: Tajikistan is implementing a National Strategy for Border Management 2010-2025. Kazakhstan adopted the Law on State Borders and its 20 sub-legislative normative acts in 2013 which contains basic control procedures at border crossing points with the use of biometric data, inspection, maintenance and surveillance at checkpoints. It also adopted the Law on Customs Service in 2010. Turkmenistan amended its Customs Code in 2011 which, *inter alia*, mandates the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan to take action against terrorism by preventing the unlawful transport across the territory of weapons, ammunition or explosive, poisonous or radioactive substances or materials, in accordance with the Customs Code of 1993, the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2003 and the Customs Service Act of 2010.

While there is an existing legal framework addressing counter-terrorism and trafficking, participants raised a number of specific challenges:

- First is the necessity to update and amend existing legislation to take into account the new phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). UN Security Council Resolution 2178, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, mandates states to prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents...and decides that all States shall ensure their domestic laws and regulations establish serious criminal offences sufficient to provide the ability to prosecute and to penalize...their nationals who travel or attempt to travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, and other individuals who travel or attempt to travel from their territories to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, for the purposes of the perpetration, planning, or preparations of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training.
- Examples were provided from a number of European countries that have amended their counter terrorism legislation to respond to the threat posed by their citizens engaging in, and returning from, conflicts in foreign states. Such measures have included providing additional powers for security agencies, strengthening border security measures, confiscating passports and withdrawing travel documents for those suspected of intending to travel for the purpose of fighting overseas (France, Germany, Canada), etc. But as a participant from Kazakhstan noted, seizure of ID cards is challenging as the Constitution ensures free movement and court decisions need to be applied to restrict moving out of the country. As these legislation amendments are new for Central Asia, support should be provided to Member States, including by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals and Entities. More specifically, Central Asian participants wanted to know about experiences of European countries (especially Germany and France) as to how to recognize intent. While border guards do not have legal ground to stop normal people just because they travel to risk zones, more efforts are needed to find out information and analysis about the travel routes of terrorists and potential fighters, as well as using the INTERPOL records and databases and notices in real time etc.
- A second challenge relates to the need to conduct counter terrorism, including at the borders, in ways that do not hamper or violate human rights, and principles of humanitarian Law. Countries must abide by the mutually complimentary international

commitments they signed up for. A rights-based approach to counter-terrorism is vital in the region and needs to start with properly defining terrorism and implementing the rule of law.

A third challenge is that some of the recent legislation enacted in some countries of the region to prevent radicalization and terrorism may be overly repressive of freedoms such as freedom of religion, which could create backlashes in terms of radicalization. Balance needs to be sought to prevent the use of religion for political ends and to allow for freedom of worship and freedom of movement that is legally bounded by the constitutions.

- Another area that raises much concern for Central Asian law enforcement bodies is the case of refugees and asylum seekers who arrive in the region, sometime from conflict and war zones, and apply to UNHCR for refugee status. While some participants believed that national legislation cannot be applied to this category of people, experts reminded them that according to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, asylum seekers or refugees are not automatically recognized as refugees if they pose threat to national security. Therefore, there should be close coordination with UNHCR and the OSCE. Terrorist groups such as ISIL have been known for misusing the cover of refugees, irregular migrants or asylum seekers to infiltrate into society. This risk calls for specific strategies of cooperation with international organizations on tools such as targeted information collection, timely information exchange, mutual trust and joint actions to tackle these phenomena, proper identification of refugees and the use of INTERPOL databases and orange notices.
- One peculiar legal challenge that was also raised was the case of stateless people, and the continuing practice of denying passports to girls at birth, especially in provinces, leaving women vulnerable and outside of legal framework. People without citizenship become easy targets for recruiters of radical groups.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Expertise should be provided to prevent the movement of FTFs in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014).
- ⇒ More training is necessary to distinguish a law-based and a rights-based approach to countering terrorism through securing borders.
- ⇒ Closer cooperation between Central Asian states and international organizations, such as UNHCR and the OSCE, is recommended in order to prevent terrorists from using the cover of asylum seekers and refugees.

Improving the flow of data, gathering, sharing, analyzing:

Throughout the meeting, participants stressed the need to improve the information flow to facilitate their work: not only by gathering and populating relevant databases, but also by sharing information in real time among relevant law enforcement agencies in different origin and destination countries. Analysis of data also featured high in discussions in order to assess risks and threats to security. Although participants argued that national security representatives were best positioned to gather and analyze information, border guards and police as well as customs officials are not only recipients of data but also could gather necessary information from their own areas of responsibilities.

Since 1994, Kazakhstan for example has been using Berkut, the system of automatic registration of persons who cross the border to which all law enforcement agencies have access. Each Central Asian country has, in addition to its own database, access to a number of different regional and international databases: Among them, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs (CARICC), SCO and CIS databases, as well as the Al-Qaida Sanctions List (previously known as the Consolidated List) maintained by the 1267 Committee. INTERPOL has been helping Central Asian countries to access their international databases, including the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database, although passengers are not checked regularly.

Despite these sources of support, a number of problems were raised during discussions:

- There is a lot of data being collected to identify individuals participating in armed conflict, those on international watch lists, those who have committed ordinary crimes, etc. The problem stems from sharing, using and accessing this data. Data collection is obviously not enough: data should be accessible, shared with all responsible units and analyzed properly.
- Data sharing between countries and adequate use of regional and international databases fall short in the region because of the absence of a unified database among all the different ones.
- Border guards at the border check points do not have access to all these data, especially in real time. This was for example raised as a problem in the case of the vast majority of Central Asian passengers who are not checked against the INTERPOL SLTD database.
- The fact that there are discrepancies in terms of spelling of names and mismatch in characters in names adds to the challenge of passport control at borders.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Efforts should be made as much as possible to unify all data and make them accessible under one unified system. Joint databases should also be considered with Afghanistan, which can include but not limited to wanted criminals, drug dealers, human traffickers and terrorists.
- ⇒ To consider establishing passport reading machines in every border crossing points that is tied to the main databases. This may be an expensive project but should be considered gradually for the long term.
- ⇒ Promote the use of INTERPOL SLTD database and colour-coded notices and increasing membership in the ICAO public key directory.
- ⇒ Data should also be properly analyzed and risks assessed through regional cooperation. Joint assessments of information about routes, trends, groups, movements, funding sources etc. should be intensified.

Tools and technologies for surveillance/interdiction

Participants discussed how terrorists today use new means of communications such as the Internet and social networks, prompting the need for them to also embark on modernization of their communication, detection, verification and surveillance equipment and technologies. Methods for identifying persons of interest and monitoring suspects at the borders are similar

in the region. International organizations have also been engaged in helping upgrade the technical means of border and customs control.

Tools and technologies being used for profiling in the region include:

- Automated verification system for individuals who enter and leave the country.
- Advanced technologies such as introscope monitoring systems and radiometric control at the border crossing points of overland routes, international seaports, airports and railway stations in Kazakhstan.
- The introduction of biometric passports. In Kyrgyzstan a unified citizen register is under development and biometric passports are expected to be issued soon. Tajikistan is also conducting wide-scale issuance of biometric passports to its citizens.
- New technologies for customs to recognize forged identities
- Use of canine border programmes as effective ways to detect drugs and explosives.

Surveillance of banking and financial transactions

Participants also discussed the need to revamp the old infrastructure at the borders, facilities which were mostly created during the Soviet Union and need to be renovated to be fully functional. In Tajikistan, border posts and facilities are undergoing reconstruction and renovation with support from bilateral donors, regional and international organizations. New customs units are also being constructed and equipped with modern means of verification – such as scanners to detect narcotics and explosives - in Turkmenistan. A training center is preparing the new staff to work with the new equipment.

A Canadian expert mentioned the introduction of advanced passenger information on flights or railways system. The new system allows access to passenger records through airlines' reservation systems electronically in advance of travel and matching the information with internal databases or those of international organizations. Russia has been providing a database of new equipment and technologies, shared with all CIS countries, through a specialized unit created within the Agency Rosgranitsa (The Federal Agency for the Development of the State Border Facilities of the Russian Federation created in 2007). Countries can sign contracts directly with this unit on the supply of equipment.

The OSCE through its extensive Travel Document Security programme focuses on identity management (from the cradle to the border), facilitating the use of the INTERPOL I-24/7 databases at the border through training and providing equipment, promoting participation in the ICAO Public Key Directory, and increasing the operational awareness to detect forged documents through training programs and the provision of inspection equipment. Furthermore, the organization supports the implementation of biometric programmes including the conversion to and use of e-passport systems, which contributes to a concept of "open and secure borders" and free movement of people in the OSCE region.

UNODC is implementing a regional programme for assistance to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Their assessment mission revealed 13 most vulnerable border checkpoints following which UNODC supplied screening equipment totaling 1 billion USD.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ New information technologies should be promoted at the border, such as advanced passenger information systems, etc.
- ⇒ While technological and methodological advances are necessary and welcomed, the human factor cannot be neglected and human capital is essential. The education of

officers who control people's movement at borders is crucial so that they could effectively recognize and differentiate between forged and authentic documents.

- ⇒ Given that Central Asian countries have been seeking technical and equipment support for surveillance (drones for surveillance of green borders, machine reading equipment, equipment to search vehicles, dogs for sniffing explosives etc.) an inventory could be made of all these needs in order to match with the supply by donors. Such an inventory could be initiated by a coalition of regional organizations or by UN bodies such as CTED.
- ⇒ The introduction of new technologies should be coordinated in the region as much as possible. Technical and tactical support is often provided at the national level to some countries and not at the regional level. This creates problems in terms of operability, common understanding, synchronizing equipment, enforcing coordination at the regional level between governments, etc.

Capacity building and training

As discussions showed throughout the meeting, and as assessments have proven, the provision of training needs to be made more coherent, especially given the high turnover of staff and the lack of proper communication or assessment of training needs.

Among the inefficiencies raised, were the fact that on the job and on the spot training for deployed border personnel is insufficient; Training standards provided by various institutions vary significantly; training is often provided to individual agencies, in isolation from others players; training modules do not always take the realities of the region into consideration, etc.

A number of remedies were offered to address these deficiencies:

- ⇒ Establishing common regional training standards which can include OSCE travel documents security, profiling and risk analysis training, etc.
- ⇒ Adopting a regional approach with setting up the training of trainers to further utilize/spread the expertise.
- ⇒ Central Asian countries to list the package of topics/modules needed in order to come up with tailor-made capacity building trainings.
- ⇒ Training should target those specifically present in border areas, the first line of border guards as well as provincial administration.
- ⇒ Efforts should be made to avoid the duplication of trainings and instead upgrade with the latest knowledge available.
- ⇒ The involvement of good experts with sufficient knowledge of the region's particularities should be ensured systematically.
- ⇒ While Afghan have frequently participated in the trainings provided by the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) a more regional approach is necessary. For example, Uzbek and Chinese officials should also be more integrated and attend regional meetings/trainings.
- ⇒ Training is necessary not only for border guards but also other law enforcement officials in order to ensure synergies and cooperation.
- ⇒ The capacity of border guards needs to be enhanced on data analytical skills, recognition of false documents, use of databases etc.

Matching national needs with donor support

In the Joint Plan of Action, Central Asian States encouraged continued support by donors for existing border security and management initiatives in the region and their further harmonization. An inventory of national needs and international support around border security issues is needed in the region in order to ensure that support is not provided on an ad hoc basis and meets concrete demands. During the meeting, representatives of Central Asian countries and Afghanistan provided some indications of their needs at the national level while representatives of international and regional organizations talked about what their assistance in the region included.

National needs

Equipment/Infrastructure

- Updated equipment for the Ministry of Interior state security officials, border guards (especially on the Tajik-Afghan border) (Tajikistan).
- Refurbishing the infrastructure and providing equipment on the Tajik-Afghan border.
- Updated infrastructure at border points (Turkmenistan).
- Equipment and advance technology to monitor borders especially in the difficult to reach and remote areas (Afghanistan).

Training

- Training for police and border officers on the latest technologies. Infrastructure and training for radiation control/detection (Kazakhstan).
- Training in detecting forged documents (Tajikistan) and lost passport systems (Kyrgyzstan).
- Continuous training for security forces, in particular in counter-narcotics (Afghanistan).
- Border posts, strengthening capacity of border security agencies.
- Special focus on border communities with more interface with authorities
- Legislative assistance in ways to prevent the movement of potential Foreign Terrorist Fighters through the withdrawal of passports (Kyrgyzstan).

Information, analysis and threat assessment

- Modern risk analysis techniques (Kazakhstan).
- Greater understanding of routes used for illegal migration/travel/smuggling (Kyrgyzstan).
- Real time information sharing using the most up to date systems (Kazakhstan).
- A unified database on cross-border movement to monitor those under surveillance with real-time access to operative/intelligence information among Central Asian states (Tajikistan).
- Information sharing with other states, including Uzbekistan, to trace citizen acting as recruiters in the region (Kyrgyzstan).
- Exchange of information with neighbors on terrorist organizations acting in the region and sharing of experiences in effectively countering terrorism (Turkmenistan).
- Information, data and analysis sharing especially with immediate neighbors (Afghanistan).

Support from regional and international organizations

- One of the CTITF's working groups also deals with border security and management sector. The Group has compiled an extensive tool, Compendium of Border Control Instruments, Standards and Recommended Practices Related to Counter-Terrorism, available online at <https://creator.zoho.com/uncted/bordercontrol#> which Member States can access to learn what other countries are going to improve border security.
- The OSCE Field Operation in Tajikistan, through its Border Management Unit and Border Management Staff College had 46 different training courses available just for the year 2015. Moreover, a one-year distance learning Border Management for Senior Leadership Course (BSMSL) for 23 participants from 11 countries has been launched and is being conducted since September 2013.
- In addition, the OSCE also provides Travel Document Security capacity building trainings in cooperation with ICAO and other interested international bodies. In Central Asia, it has collaborated with ICAO to deliver and carry out respective country assessments before trainings and assistance activities. The OSCE also promotes membership of the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) and provides training in the introduction of electronic Machine Readable Travel Documents.
- The CIS, through its Anti Terrorism Center (CIS) holds trainings for representatives of security structures to share information and exchange experiences. It also has a specialized online database for subscribers. The CIS annual joint operation with border troops with joint follow-up meetings and assessments.
- The United States announced that it provides financial support or is considering providing funding opportunities to a number of programs in the region: OSCE travel document security programs and the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe, UNODC on FTFs in Central Asia, etc.
- The EU CBRN Centers of Excellence Initiative, jointly implemented by UNICRI and the EU Joint Research Center (JRC), works to deliver tailored projects in the area of CBRN risk prevention, preparedness and response, including border management, export control and illicit trafficking. The Initiative covers 8 regions including Central Asia where a regional Secretariat will be set up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Current partner countries include Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- NATO through its Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme with Central Asian states, is ready to assist in capacity building and in the provision of new technologies and in jointly developing training courses. It has conducted joint training on counter-narcotics with UNODC and supported trainings by the OSCE BMSC. It has an Integrity Programme to help strengthen transparency of defense services with Kyrgyzstan being the first to have taken advantage of this program. NATO also remains engaged in Afghanistan and will continue to provide support via its Resolute Support programme, including through a 5 bln. annual contribution to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).
- UNODC provides infrastructure and equipment support, border posts and refurbishing of border facilities, support to Border Liaison Officers at guarding posts, and has helped jumpstart the National Drug Control Agency in Tajikistan.
- INTERPOL has been implementing its KALKAN project as an international operational platform for the fight against terrorism in Central and South Asian and neighboring countries. It stresses the importance of Central Asian states use the Stolen/Lost Travel Document Database and integrate it into their national database.
- The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) offers risk analysis training through its border security programme. They can offer one week

comprehensive border security programme/training course for trainers and border guards.

The EU funded Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA), launched in 2002, has worked on infrastructure renovation and provision of equipment for border guards. It is now entering a phase which is more about capacity building, training, enhancing the professional skills of law enforcement, etc.

Roadmap for follow up

At the end of the training of the third day, participants were asked to get into groups representing their functions (border guards, national security committee representatives, customs officials and representatives of international or regional organizations). They were then asked to outline what they will need to do among their peers as follow up.

Representatives of National Security Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Raise general awareness about linkages, risks, threats, experience sharing etc. ❖ Reinforce intergovernmental and interagency cooperation including mutual exchange of information ❖ Improvement technical facilities ❖ Use new information technologies ❖ Organize trainings to improve skills ❖ Establish and use a unified database on the basis of the ones available through INTERPOL, SCO, CIS, etc.
Border Guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve the exchange of information (level of trust, quality of the information). ❖ Ensure adequate technical equipment and modern technologies for the border control points. ❖ Build the capacity of staff and its professionalization (joint trainings, performance assessment, development of risk management system, etc.).
Customs Officials/ Migration Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve the system of information gathering and risk assessment ❖ Seek a more active exchange of operational information ❖ Ensure closer interaction between stakeholders, at the national, regional and international level
Representatives of National Security Committees	<p>Promote, support and facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Analytical capacity for risk assessment, document analysis, etc. ❖ Joint patrols and operations ❖ Coordinated Responses ❖ Increased use of IT ❖ Integration of the INTERPOL SLTD database, color-coded notices, and use of KALKAN contacts ❖ Improved Machine Readable Travel Documents Security ❖ ICAO Public Key Directory membership ❖ Intelligence sharing about terrorism via different networks.