Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes

Website:
www.un.org/terrorism/internet.shtml

Members:
- Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (1267 Monitoring Team) (lead)
- Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office (lead)
- Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)
- Department of Public Information (DPI)
- International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Additional Partners:
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Purpose:
The Working Group on Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes was established in accordance with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in which member states pledged to "coordinate efforts at the international and regional level to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations on the Internet" and to "use the Internet as a tool for countering the spread of terrorism."[228] As such, the working group addresses challenges posed by terrorist-related activities on the internet, including radicalization, recruitment,

training, operational planning, and fundraising.[229] The working group also seeks ways to use the internet as a counterterrorism tool by offering counternarratives to those promulgated online by terrorists and their supporters.

Led by the Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (henceforth, 1267 Monitoring Team) and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force office, the working group has undertaken a series of initiatives towards these objectives. In November 2008, the group engaged with stakeholders (representatives of the internet sector, civil society, policymakers, etc.) at a meeting to discuss the nature of the threat and international action to combat it. In addition, the group has assembled data on existing measures for countering terrorism on the internet based on responses to a letter of inquiry sent to UN member states and a number of other, open sources. This information formed the basis for the working group's February 2009 report, which provides an overview of the approaches taken by member states to counter terrorist activities on the internet. The report provides an analytical framework to categorize different aspects of the issue, and recommends actions for the United Nations.[230]

In 2010, the working group organized two expert meetings to discuss countering terrorist activities on the internet, the first hosted by the German Foreign Office and the second in collaboration with Microsoft.[231] These discussions have expanded in 2011 to consider countering the appeal to terrorism on the internet through counternarratives, with a conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia bringing this to the forefront.

The working group's Leads have also undertaken efforts to fulfill the objectives of the working group in their respective mandates. The 1267 Monitoring team, for instance, has been working with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) to produce documentaries on repentant terrorists. The first film, entitled *The Terrorist Who Came Home*, is based on an Algerian fighter who chose to renounce violence and rejoin mainstream society; the second film, *Second Chance for Saudi Terrorist*, focuses on the Saudi government's effort to rehabilitate terrorists. An additional film is planned for release in 2012.[232]

Supporting members of the working group have also undertaken measures to address the challenges of countering terrorism on the internet. For example, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has taken steps to address the challenges of cybercrime in the context of terrorism, by providing states with training and assistance to improve related national legislation and state capacities. To this end, UNODC organized an open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group on Cybercrime conference in January 2011.