"Foreign terrorist fighters use a wide variety of techniques to travel to destinations all over the world. With the number of international travellers continuing to increase, it is essential that we develop new and efficient counter-terrorism tools that facilitate rapid, efficient and secure processing at our borders. Given the fast pace of the modern world, biometrics without any doubt is a necessary tool to enhance global security. The United Nations is committed to ensuring that this technology is used in the most sustainable and responsible way possible."

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov
Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

"Terrorists (including foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators) have developed the skills to move across borders without being detected or identified. In this regard, the Security Council recognizes, in its resolution 2396 (2017), the value of the responsible use of biometrics in counter-terrorism. The responsible use of biometrics helps to strengthen the capacity of Member States' law-enforcement and border-control agencies to prevent and counter the movement of terrorists, including FTFs. However, developing and maintaining the technical tools to manage biometric data can be very challenging. Governments must also address the human rights implications of this technology and utilize it in accordance with their international legal obligations."

Ms. Michèle Coninsx
Assistant Secretary-General & Executive Director Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

A SUMMARY OF THE

United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices

FOR THE

Responsible Use and Sharing of Biometrics in Counter-Terrorism

COMPILED BY CTED & UNCCT IN 2018

www.un.org/counterterrorism

www.un.org/sc/ctc/

The Compendium is available at
https://tinyurl.com/y6g9ksu4

UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE (CTED)

BIOMETRICS INSTITUTE

WHAT?

The United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices for the Responsible Use and Sharing of Biometrics in Counter-Terrorism was developed by the United Nations Working Group on Border Management and Law Enforcement Related to Counter-Terrorism, in association with the Biometrics Institute.

The Compendium provides Member States with a high-level overview of biometric technology and operating systems in the context of counter-terrorism. It is aimed primarily at Member States that have little or no experience of biometric applications and that may also face technical assistance and capacity-building challenges when utilizing this technology.

It addresses critical issues such as governance, regulation, data protection, privacy, human rights, and risk-management and vulnerability assessments. Each section includes comprehensive references, as well as a summary of recommended practices. Case studies are introduced throughout the compendium in order to provide examples of good practice and emerging technologies.

It is a living document and version-controlled, in order to ensure that it:

- Remains current and responsive to the rapid pace of technological innovation and scientific development in the field of biometrics
- Remains adaptive and relevant to the constantly evolving threat of terrorism.

WHY?

Foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and other high-risk travellers continue to represent a considerable security threat for the international community. Detecting the cross-border movement of terrorists, including returning and relocating FTFs and their families, to and from conflict zones is a considerable challenge for Member States' border-management and security agencies. Responding to this challenge requires a comprehensive understanding of border management techniques, including the responsible use, collection, storage and sharing of biometrics as a means of countering terrorism. The use of biometric technology, as required by the Security Council in its resolution 2396 (2017), can assist Member States to

detect and identify FTFs, FTF returnees and relocators, and other terrorists. However, it can also pose challenges for at-risk States that lack the capacities required to identify, monitor, classify, investigate and adequately prosecute those who pose a terrorism threat.

HOW?

The compendium is divided into three main sections:

1   An Introduction to Biometric Systems and Identity: introduces the main elements of biometric technology and identity management, including in the fields of forensic science and law-enforcement investigations. Key topics include:

- Biometric Systems and Identity
- System Performance
- The Role of Biometrics Within Forensic Science
- Forensic Science Biometric Databases
- Scientific Interpretation: Identity and Activity

2   Governance and Regulation: covers the governance and regulatory requirements for biometric technology from the perspectives of international law, human rights law, ethical reviews, data-protection requirements and the right to privacy. It considers the potential vulnerabilities of biometric systems and some of the control measures that can be used to mitigate the risks. Key topics include:

- Governance, Regulation & International Law, including Human Rights Law
- Ethics and Biometrics
- Data Protection and the Right to Privacy
- System Risk Management
- International Standards
- Procurement and Resource Management

3   Counter-Terrorism Biometric Systems and Databases: provides a general overview of current counter-terrorism biometric systems and databases across the spectrum of law enforcement, border management and military applications. It also considers the benefits of sharing biometric data at the bilateral, multilateral, regional and global levels and describes how biometric data, when used with other intelligence data, can be used proactively to prevent acts of terrorism, in addition to its traditional role as an investigative tool. Key topics include:

- Counter-Terrorism Biometric Systems, Databases and Watch Lists
- Data-Sharing Protocols and the Lawful Integration of Databases
- Predictive Biometrics: The Proactive Use of Biometric Database Networks to Prevent Terrorist Attacks
- Managing Biometric Outcomes and the Contextual Assessment of Biometric Outputs
- Strategic Objectives and Investigators' Guidelines

NEXT?

The Compendium was developed within the framework of a long-term project aimed at strengthening the capacity of States and relevant international and regional entities to collect, use and share biometric information in a responsible manner to counter terrorism.

The objectives of the project are to raise awareness of regional and international initiatives to promote the use of biometrics; strengthen cooperation and coordination among the relevant entities; enhance the use and sharing of biometrics at the global level, including by promoting the systematic inclusion of biometric information linked to terrorist profiles in INTERPOL databases and notices; and increase the effectiveness of assistance provided to Member States in this area.

As a follow-up to the Compendium, the second phase of the project will aim to strengthen the awareness, knowledge, and capabilities of Member States through targeted regional expert workshops. During the workshops, the Compendium will be used as a practical guidance tool to address measures that should be taken by States to effectively implement the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), as implementing partners, will jointly organize the workshops with the expert assistance of the Biometrics Institute, as well as relevant regional and international organizations. The workshops will provide an opportunity to address developments, including technological, in the field of biometrics in the counter-terrorism context, as well as to engage with Member States that lack the capacity and capability to effectively and properly develop and implement systems to collect and share biometric data.