

**12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI)**  
**Cross-border Cooperation in Central Asia**

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**SESSION 1 - The Role of Border Management in Countering Violent Extremism  
and Cross-border Organised Crime: Challenges and Opportunities**

**SESSION 1: CONCEPT NOTE**

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**Questions for discussion:**

- Changes in each Central Asian country's border management during the last two years (objectives and activities)?
- What are the three most important current actions of your country concerning border management that would have a positive impact in a short term?
- What is your country doing to limit the movement of foreign terrorist fighters (concrete recent initiatives, information sharing on national or bilateral/multilateral level)? What are the lessons learned?

**Key phrases:** **Integrated Border Management (IBM); information sharing and inter-agency cooperation; cross-border movement of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF); enhancing border management capacities to fight cross-border crime.**

**Integrated Border Management**

It is of particular importance to implement the basic principles of Integrated Border Management (IBM) in security sector reforms and to further improve the Central Asian countries' border security systems. The further enhancement of the strategic framework and increased multilateral and bilateral cooperation remain key challenges when it comes to strengthening border security in Central Asia. The international stakeholders are continuing their support in stepping up cooperation with the Central Asian states to improve border security systems in the region. In this regard, the EU-funded BOMCA 9 programme aims at facilitating multilateral, regional and bilateral approaches.

The Republic of Tajikistan IBM Strategy 2010 and the Kyrgyz Republic IBM Strategy 2012 - 2022 are examples of a country's potential to establish a long-term vision and a solid basis for border management and security. After all, international best practice in the field of IBM creation is available to every country.

In 2010, the Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) programme elaborated a “Handbook for Implementing the Integrated Border Management Concept in Central Asia”. The Handbook aims to provide a basis for the consistent implementation of IBM initiatives and worldwide best practices in the Central Asian region. The BOMCA programme offers the opportunity to Central Asian border security agencies to create a new and upgraded version of the IBM Handbook for Central Asia until 2018.

Enhancing border management strategies and facilitating open but at the same time secure borders in line with international human rights obligations would help to counter violent extremism and cross-border organised crime, which remain challenges also in the Central Asia region. In particular, improved inter-agency cooperation and increased use of risk analysis as well as continuous efforts to establish modern IT systems and Advance Passenger Information (API) systems, and connect national IT systems to INTERPOL databases would be a valuable contribution to making borders more secure.

### Foreign Terrorist Fighters

IBM cooperation, existing working mechanisms and effective IBM implementation allow authorities to react efficiently to emerging threats to border security. Cross-border violent extremism and traveling foreign terrorist fighters nowadays are a challenge to existing border management approaches.

Estimations of the numbers of foreign terrorist fighters present in conflict areas in the Middle East vary between 25,000 and 30,000 from more than 100 countries. According to INTERPOL information (announced 18 November 2015) 5,800 foreign terrorist fighters had been identified in INTERPOL systems by the end of 2015. These FTFs have a high possibility of being detected when attempting to cross borders. It is estimated that the number of foreign terrorist fighters originating from the Central Asian region is at least 1,400 (data provided by Central Asian states to the UN Security Council in 2015). Overall, the picture of the region shows that improved border management tools are highly necessary.

There are several measures that can be discussed:

- previous years' good practices of border management agencies implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) Point 2(g)<sup>1</sup> and UN Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005) Point 2<sup>2</sup>;
- good practices in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) Point 2,<sup>3</sup> Point 4,<sup>4</sup> and Point 9<sup>5</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> ...all States shall /.../ 2(g) - 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.

<sup>2</sup> 2. *Calls upon* all States to cooperate, inter alia, to strengthen the security of their international borders, including by combating fraudulent travel documents and, to the extent attainable, by enhancing terrorist screening and passenger security procedures with a view to preventing those guilty of the conduct in paragraph 1 (a) from entering their territory.

<sup>3</sup> 2. *Reaffirms* that all States shall 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, *underscores*, in this regard, the importance of addressing, in accordance with their relevant international obligations, the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, and *encourages* Member States to employ evidence-based traveller risk assessment and

- enhancing international, inter-agency, and intra-service cooperation that aims to support confidence building in local communities in border regions, increase stability and ensure border security.

It would be useful to elaborate a comprehensive overview of considerations in Central Asia about the implementation of Advance Passenger Information (API) systems in international airports. API systems are used by more than 50 countries around the world and it seems that API systems have become more affordable in view of the budget available. However, the issue is not only to procure a particular API system but also to make the according strategy-led changes in national legislation, and to build the necessary capacities in national border management IT systems.

It would be good to improve continuously the security of travel documents including biometrics. Such step would considerably benefit to the quality of border checks.

### **Cross-border crime**

The fight against organised cross-border crime with the aim of reducing non-conventional threats to security remains in the focus of the Central Asian states' international partners, who wish to place greater emphasis on the fight against corruption and illegal arms trafficking from and to Afghanistan. The active participation of Afghanistan is still crucial for the effective fight against cross-border organised crime and drugs transportation.

In today's highly inter-connected world, border management requires increased cooperation and information sharing. One of the tools needed in this context is the development of national IT systems for more comprehensive border checks including the use of finger prints for detection of persons involved in cross-border crime. Securing a border with checkpoints, barbed wire, and watchtowers is no longer enough to make borders impermeable.

According to INTERPOL, Asian organized crime syndicates are behind many serious crimes whose impact is felt at a global level. Their criminal activities are not limited to Asia itself but are carried out in countries all over the world. Major activities of these criminal gangs include drug trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering, extortion and kidnapping. Central Asia's strategic location makes this a global security concern. However, the states of Central Asia cannot fight the problem alone.

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screening procedures including collection and analysis of travel data, without resorting to profiling based on stereotypes founded on grounds of discrimination prohibited by international law;

<sup>4</sup> 4. *Calls upon* all Member States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to cooperate in efforts to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including by preventing the radicalization to terrorism and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, including children, preventing foreign terrorist fighters from crossing their borders;

<sup>5</sup> 9. *Calls upon* Member States to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted entry into or transit through their territories, by means of civil aircraft, of individuals designated by the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011).