

IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MEDIA CONTACT:**

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PRESS RELEASE**A MILESTONE STUDY ASSESSES TWO DECADES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL'S COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS**

A joint project by the Fourth Freedom Forum and The Soufan Center reviews the Security Council's body of work from the aftermath of 9/11 to today's markedly different global terrorism landscape

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(New York, NY – September 23, 2022) The counterterrorism efforts of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) must shift away from reinforcing the status quo to address the diverse and complex drivers of terrorism today, concludes a milestone study. A new report, [Counterterrorism and the United Nations Security Council Since 9/11: Moving Beyond the 2001 Paradigm](#), presents the findings from the Securing the Future Initiative (SFI), a joint project which undertook a year-long independent review of the UNSC's counterterrorism activities over the past two decades. The report highlights the Security Council's important contributions to international peace and security, as well as noting areas of concern and offering recommendations to improve effectiveness in the future.

“Two decades ago, the tragic events of September 11 launched counterterrorism to the forefront of multilateral cooperation,” explains Alistair Millar, President of the Fourth Freedom Forum and co-author of the report. “Unlike twenty years ago, when the consensus demanded an exceptional, global response to terrorism, the challenge today must be right-sized alongside a range of other pressing international priorities.”

Pushing for a paradigm shift

The report sets out a series of recommendations that focus on retaining elements and good practice from existing efforts, while also learning from past missteps and challenges to improve the Security Council's work in the future. “Identifying more effective and sustainable approaches means recognizing the shortcomings of the past. For that, an independent assessment of the UNSC's work over the past two decades is critical,” says The Soufan Center's executive director Naureen Chowdhury Fink, a co-author of the report. “Through consultations with diverse stakeholders, we learned that most criticisms of the Council's counterterrorism work were related to working methods, effectiveness addressing actual terrorist threats, and concerns about the adverse impacts beyond terrorism, especially for human rights and civil society.”

Against that backdrop, the report offers eight recommendations: 1) Identify and apply lessons learned since September 2001. 2) Move from an “exceptionalized” approach to one better integrated into broader UN priorities. 3) Reevaluate the Council's comparative advantages in counterterrorism. 4) Support localized responses by shifting from a “top-down” to a more inclusive and “bottom-up” approach. 5) Prioritize a “Do No Harm” approach to UNSC counterterrorism activities. 6) Adopt a more strategic and restrained approach to any future

Security Council counterterrorism action. 7) Enhance implementation and impact of the existing Council framework. 8) Ensure relevant Security Council sanctions tools are fit for purpose.

“For much of the past two decades, the Security Council’s approach to counterterrorism has prioritized the strengthening of state-level legal and operational capacities, with few guardrails in place to prevent their misuse. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that many UN member states have adopted similar stances, often generating or exacerbating grievances that terrorists exploit to recruit,” notes Eric Rosand, a former senior counterterrorism official at the U.S. Department of State and co-author of the report. “Much as it helped shape the international response to terrorism in 2001, the Council today is uniquely positioned to influence a paradigm shift for multilateral counterterrorism practice. In doing so, it can encourage states to prioritize preventative measures, including by addressing the drivers of the violence.”

ABOUT SFI

The Securing the Future Initiative (SFI) is a joint project of the Fourth Freedom Forum and The Soufan Center. Launched in September 2021, on the twentieth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, SFI has focused its work on providing an independent review and assessment of the United Nations Security Council’s counterterrorism activities over the past two decades. SFI is made possible by the generous support from the European Union and numerous other donors, including the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Visit: <https://sfi-ct.org/>

ABOUT THE FOURTH FREEDOM FORUM

For nearly forty years the Fourth Freedom Forum has conducted research and produced policy relevant recommendations for governments, non-governmental organizations, and multilateral institutions on a number of international peace and security issues. It focuses on sanctions, incentives, and diplomacy; nuclear nonproliferation; counterterrorism and countering violent extremism; human rights and the rule of law; and international cooperation.

Visit: <https://www.fourthfreedomforum.org/>

ABOUT THE SOUFAN CENTER (TSC)

Based in New York, The Soufan Center (TSC) is an independent non-profit center offering research, analysis, and strategic dialogue on global security challenges and foreign policy issues, with a particular focus on counterterrorism, violent extremism, armed conflict, and the rule of law. Follow [@TheSoufanCenter](https://www.thesoufancenter.org) and visit <http://thesoufancenter.org/>

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