



Remarks by Dr Khalid Koser, Executive Director, GCERF
Launch of the 2015 *Global Terrorism Index*
Royal United Services Institute, London, UK
17 November 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am grateful to RUSI for inviting me to join this panel and provide my response to this very important report. I would also like to thank Steve Killelea, not only for the report, but also for his ongoing support for the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund as a member of the Governing Board.

A few words if I may about GCERF: we are a new funding mechanism focusing on supporting local initiatives to prevent violent extremism. We are about to fund our first projects in Bangladesh, Mali, and Nigeria.

Now to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index.

I'd like to congratulate Steve and his team on a substantive, significant and quite brave report.

In the short time available to me I'll speak to three themes. First, some initial and personal responses to the report. Second, why I think the report is genuinely important. And third, in particular in the current climate and after the terrible events in Paris, a few words on migrants and refugees, which is the topic for my short piece in this report with my colleague Amy Cunningham.

On an initial read, three things struck me from the report.

First, it highlights the growing gap between perception and reality. Many people especially in the West consider themselves to be under siege and at risk of terrorism, but the evidence presented here shows that they are not. Managing fear is an important challenge – politicians should allay fears, not aggravate them.

Second, I was struck by the intersection between conflict and terrorism, and the impact on refugee and IDP flows. Another policy challenge is to try to bridge the gap between security and development – both sectors need to be engaged to find solutions to terrorism and its impacts.

Third, the statistics presented here emphasize how concentrated the impact of terrorism is, at least in terms of death and injury, to just a few countries.

There are also three reasons why I think the report is important, and certainly is of use to us at GCERF.

First, it provides an evidence base. People often ask why GCERF is focusing its activities in poorer countries, when rich countries also face a challenge of extremism. The answer is in this report – it is clear that the global burden of terrorism still falls on poorer countries. Nigeria, which is one of

the countries highlighted in the report, is one of the first countries where GCERF is funding projects.

Second, it helps make a clear business case for engaging the private sector. The economic costs of terrorism are immense, as are the opportunity costs of not responding. As a public-private partnership, GCERF seeks to engage private sector partners, and this report will help.

Finally, the report should help promote an objective debate, something that I think is critical in this area but all too often lacking.

To conclude, let me say a few words about migration and refugees. I fear that the attack in Paris will reverse a quite positive response to the refugee crisis in Europe, where citizens have shown their compassion and politicians their leadership. Both are at risk of diminishing now.

We need to understand the risks of securitizing migration. One risk is that we blame the victims – as the Global Terrorism Index shows IDPs and refugees are fleeing terrorism. Another is that we begin to legitimize and normalize extraordinary responses.

I believe the dividends of migrants and refugees in Europe far outweigh the risk. If properly managed, they present an economic opportunity for growth. Europe's values are far too important to sacrifice in a knee jerk reaction. Schengen has been one of the great success stories of post-War Europe.

I implore politicians to weigh the risks carefully and realize the dividends.

To conclude allow me to thank Steve and RUSI again. I look forward to working with you in the future.