United Nations
Interregional Crime and Justice
Research Institute

Beneath the Surface: Terrorist and Violent Extremist Use of the Dark Web and Cybercrime-as-a-Service for Cyber-Attacks

UNICRI-UNCCT/UNOCT Joint Report Launching Event

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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to open today's event in my capacity as the Secretary-General's Representative to the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and to launch this new publication "*Beneath the Surface: Terrorist and Violent Extremist Use of the Dark Web and Cybercrime-as-a-Service for Cyber-Attacks*."

As a member of UNICRI's Board, I follow UNICRI's work from behind the scenes, yet it is always a pleasure to be on the podium as one of the results of its work gets handed over to Member States – particularly when it concerns topics as enigmatic as the dark web and cyber-enabled terrorism.

Allow me to start by extending my thanks to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea for its support in bringing this report before you today and co-organizing this event, deep in the midst of their Presidency of the Security Council. Fresh on the heels of last week's Open Briefing on cybersecurity at the Council, today's event serves to yet again underscore South Korea's commitment to putting cyberspace at the forefront of the international agenda. We are grateful for your support and look forward to deepening our cooperation in this field.

Turning to our friends at the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), little needs to be said. Our partnership has been dynamic and allowed us to explore many nuanced aspects of counter-terrorism – particular in the field of cybersecurity and new technologies. We are excited to see where this study takes us and how we can leverage its recommendations to support Member States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While cyberspace has evolved tremendously over the past number of years, what some refer to as 'cyber-enabled terrorism' is not a new issue. It has long been discussed, with

experts and policymakers alike being concerned about the activities of terrorists in the 'dark corners of the Internet' – the dark web. The rise of cyber-crime-as-a-service has made the threat more complex and disconcerting, particularly as the world witnessed major cyberattacks like the WannaCry Ransomware attack unfold in 2017 – not to mention the countless number of other cyberattacks that have only grown in regularity, scope and scale.

As I have said, the threat of cyber-enabled terrorism is not new. But we lacked a lot of information about it. We did not know what terrorists did in these dark spaces. We did not know if indeed, and precisely how, they interacted with cybercriminal elements. Were they actually procuring services and products on the dark web? Or was this just speculation? Were they accessing specific tools and resources, and how were they being used to further their agendas? Were countermeasures even being effective in disrupting their activities in cyberspace? These are critical gaps in our knowledge. And just the kind of questions we set out to try to address with this report.

As we will hear shortly, the journey has been insightful and provoked many additional questions. It has prompted us to reflect more frankly on the terrorism and the cyber-threat landscape. Cybercrime-as-a-service looms large on the dark web and we must be evermore vigilant of trends and developments in cybercrime when we think of cyber-enabled terrorism.

Allow me to conclude by thanking you all for joining us today. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and views on, what I trust you will agree, is an exciting new contribution to this increasingly relevant topic.