

Statement of the Council of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Heads of State on Countering Radicalization Leading to Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism

The fight of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization against the “three evils” is an important chapter in the story of the organization. The “three evils”, also called “three evil forces,” refer to terrorism, separatism, and extremism. The concept was first defined in June 2001 during the first SCO summit. Taking regional security and stability as a priority, the SCO has been making unremitting efforts to crack down on the “three evils.” The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), an exemplary organization in cooperation in the fight against terrorism, has achieved significant regional and international successes since the early 2000s. The following is the statement on countering terrorism, separatism, and extremism that was declared by the SCO Heads of State at the 2023 summit.



July 04, 2023
New Delhi, India

Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO or Organization),

Adhering to the spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and the pursuit of common development in the

interest of strengthening peace, security, and stability in the region,

Reaffirming the commitment to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, and other provisions of the SCO Charter,

SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure's (RATS) Background and mission

Executive Committee of the SCO RATS

The Agreement on establishment of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure designated as a permanent body of the SCO was signed during a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States on June 7, 2002, in St. Petersburg.

Since its establishment, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO RATS) has made a significant contribution to the development of the Organization and has become its supporting pillar and coordinating center in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism at the re-

gional and global levels.

The international prestige of RATS grows year on year, as it turns into an estimable example of multilateral cooperation that ensures tangible success in the field of security.

At the stage of development of the RATS, the main focus was on the establishment of an organizational and legal framework that determined the principles and areas of cooperation and ensured proper functioning of its working bodies, namely the Council and the Executive Committee.

Later, improvement of the regulatory framework was an important factor for successful implementation of joint measures by the competent authorities of the SCO member states to counter terrorism, extremism and separatism. This work is accompanied by introduction of provisions of relevant international law and



Determined to strengthen SCO law enforcement and security cooperation, promote multi-lateral cooperation, strengthen coordination at the global, regional, and national levels, insist on equal, cooperative, indivisible, comprehensive, and sustainable security, and counter traditional and non-traditional security challenges and threats,

Noting the provisions of the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism; the SCO Convention against Terrorism and the SCO Convention on Countering Extremism; and the Agreement on Cooperation of SCO Member States in the Field of International Information Security,

Calling upon the international community to strengthen global cooperation to combat terrorist threat, with the UN playing a central role through full implementation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in accordance with the UN Charter and

the principles of international law, without politicization and double standards, respecting the sovereignty and independence of all States and to seek consensus on the adoption of a Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism,

Reiterating that any act of terrorism is criminal and unjustifiable,

Emphasising the inadmissibility of States using terrorist, separatist and extremist groups and their accomplices to implement particular political and geopolitical goals,

Recognizing that radicalization leading to terrorism, separatism and extremism has become a global problem, the spread of radical ideologies by terrorist groups and their sponsors, including on the Internet, religious intolerance, aggressive nationalism, ethnic and racial discrimination, ideas of fascism and chauvinism, have a negative impact on the minds and world view of primarily young people,

legal acts of the SCO into national legislations.

As part of the rule-making activities of the RATS, the Conventions of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, as well as decisions that regulate practical cooperation between the competent authorities of the SCO Member States in the field of security and define formats, mechanisms and instruments of their direct interaction when combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, were developed and approved by the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States,

Under the framework of the RATS, with the Executive Committee as a coordinator, targeted work is being carried out to build the counter-terrorism capacity of the SCO member states. To this end, they design and carry out joint practical activities.

Among the most efficient types of activities are the annual Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercises which are being held since 2006. They allow practicing the use of the response mechanisms and training interaction between the competent authorities in order to neutralize various terrorist threats and prevent terrorist attacks.

Each exercise is designed to be as close to real life as possible, reflecting the actual conditions of the operational situation emerging in the SCO space and the tactics of terrorists.

A separate area of ensuring the security of the SCO member states from transnational crimes associated with terrorism, such as illegal migration, smuggling of drugs, weapons, explosives, etc., is the mechanism for interaction between the border services of the competent authorities of the SCO member states.

Noting the increase, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the use by terrorists and their supporters of the Internet and other information and communication technologies, including social networking platforms, for the dissemination and propaganda of radical ideologies for terrorist purposes, including recruitment and incitement to commit terrorist acts as well as the financing, planning and preparation of terrorist activities,

Reaffirming the leading role of States and their competent authorities in countering radicalization leading to terrorism, separatism and extremism, as well as the importance of efforts made in this direction by international and regional organizations,

Advocating active interaction of the SCO with other interested states, regional and international organizations in this field,

Noting the systematic efforts of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) to combat radicalization, including through the implementation of the

2022-2024 Programme of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism,

Hereby declare the following:

Member States, while strongly condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever, and for whatever purpose, stress that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, civilization, nationality, or ethnic group.

Member States will further develop cooperation in countering radicalization that leads to terrorism, separatism, and extremism, including by sharing experiences and best practices, in accordance with the SCO Charter and generally accepted principles and norms of international law.

Member States will continue to implement the SCO 2022-2024 Programme of Cooperation in Countering Terrorism, Extremism, and Separatism

Since 2013, the border services of the competent authorities of the SCO member states have been conducting joint operations on the external and internal sections of their borders.

Under the Joint Working Group of Experts comprising representatives of the competent authorities of the SCO member states and the Executive Committee of the RATS, which has been operating since 2013, measures are taken consistently to prevent terrorists and extremists from abusing the Internet for their criminal purposes. In addition, joint exercises are held to counter terrorist activities in the global network to improve interaction mechanisms.

An important part of improving the system of countering terrorist threats is building the capacity of anti-terrorist structures. A systematic work is carried out to facilitate coordination of personnel

training and further development for anti-terrorist units of the competent authorities of the SCO member states.

In order to consolidate efforts to counter terrorism, separatism and extremism, the SCO RATS develops and strengthens cooperation with international and regional organizations, as well as the competent authorities of the SCO observer states and dialogue partners.

In particular, memorandums and agreements on cooperation were signed with the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council, the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Interpol, the Anti-Terrorism Center (CIS ATC) and the Coordination Service of the Council of Commanders of the Border Troops of the CIS Member States, the

and national programs to counter radicalization.

Member States will exchange practical experience on how to ensure the security of major international events held on the territory of SCO member states.

Member States advocate promoting regional cooperation to counter radical ideologies that lead to terrorism, separatism, and extremism, as well as denying their supporters the means and opportunity to pursue their activities.

Member States will conduct media campaigns at the national level to prevent and counter radicalization leading to terrorism, extremism, and separatism.

Member States will implement programs at the national level to rehabilitate and reintegrate radicalized individuals into society and prevent their return to radical ideology or terrorist activity.

Member States support the important role of the media, civil society, business community, religious, cultural, educational and other organizations in sha-

ping an environment conducive to preventing and countering radicalization.

Member States advocate strengthening the role of women and youth in countering radicalization.

Member states intend to make joint efforts to block and remove radical and terrorist content from the Internet, initiating the necessary measures against identified individuals and entities in accordance with the domestic laws of SCO Member States.

Member States will continue to cooperate in countering radical ideology and propaganda by promoting ideas of peaceful coexistence of states, respect for religious and cultural diversity, social cohesion and dialogue among civilizations.

(Source: Shanghai Cooperation Organization website (2023). Statement of the Council of SCO Heads of State on Countering Radicalization leading to Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism. Retrieved July 15, 2025 from, <https://eng.sectsc.org/20230704/1628358.html>)

Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors (CARICC), the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), African Center for the Study and Research of Terrorism, as well as with the KGB of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, and Counter-Terrorism Coordination Council of Mongolia.

Contacts have been established with dialogue partners, namely the competent authorities of Sri Lanka, Turkey, Cambodia, Nepal, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab

Emirates, Maldives, Myanmar, Kuwait and Bahrain, and work is underway to formalize the relationships.

Officials of the Executive Committee of the RATS regularly participate in the preparation and holding of meetings of the Council of the Heads of State, the Council of the Heads of Government, Secretaries of Security Councils, the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Council of National Coordinators of the SCO Member States.

The key outcomes of the SCO RATS activities are annually reviewed at meetings of the RATS Council and reported to the Council of the Heads of SCO Member States.

(Source: CSTO website, (n.d.). RATS Background and Mission. Retrieved July 15, 2025, from <https://ecrats.org/en/about/history/>)