First Central Asia Regional Expert Council Meeting on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees: Cooperation for Peace and Security

PRESS RELEASE

First meeting of the Regional Expert Council in Central Asia on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees to be held in Tashkent

Tashkent/New York/Vienna, May 8, 2024 -The first meeting of the Regional Expert Council on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees from Conflict Zones in Central Asia will be held on May 14 in Tashkent.

The Regional Expert Council was established at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev in March 2022 in Tashkent at the High-Level International Conference on "Regional cooperation among Central Asian countries within the framework of the Joint Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" and received support from international partners.

The event is organized by the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS), the State Security Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Committee on Family and Women under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), and the Office of the Project Coordinator of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Uzbekistan.

The first meeting of the Regional Expert Council in Tashkent will be attended by high-level representatives of Central Asian states, international organizations such as the United Nations and OSCE, as well as experts in the field of rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict zones, including on issues related to accountability of individuals suspected of committing criminal acts.

The opening ceremony will feature remarks by the Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, Vladimir Voronkov, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Asia and Head of UNRCCA, Kaha Imnadze, the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Weixun Chen, the

OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats, Alena Kupchyna, as well as heads of delegations from the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Representatives of the leadership of international and regional organizations are also invited to the event, including the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Anti-Terrorism Centre, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO RATS), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and UN entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The event will provide a unique platform for sharing experience and lessons learned by Central Asian countries in returning their citizens from conflict zones and institutionalizing and enhancing the effectiveness of regional cooperation in this area, demonstrating the high level of unity among Central Asian states and their readiness to jointly bear common responsibility for ensuring peace and security in the region.

Within the framework of the event, two sessions will also be organized, dedicated to the implementation of a comprehensive intergovernmental approach to the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict zones, as well as enhancing the role of local communities and civil society organizations in ensuring a comprehensive social approach in this area.