



## PRESS RELEASE

### **The UN and IGAD hosts first joint workshop with East African Countries on Preventing Violent Extremism through Strategic and Crisis Communications in Kenya**

**Nairobi, 12 December 2019** –The Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) through the IGAD Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) , organized the first joint regional workshop on Preventing Violent Extremism through Strategic and Crisis Communications at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

In his opening remarks Dr. Raffi Gregorian, Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism said that terrorist and violent extremist groups are using the Internet and communications technologies to spread their hateful ideology and to recruit and finance their activities in increasingly sophisticated ways. “We need to unite and remain alert, prepared with effective responses to prevent and counter their activities including through strategic communications,” he added.

The three-day joint workshop introduced a crisis simulation to illustrate to participants the process and protocols to communications during a crisis, which involves a whole of community approach. This exercise was conducted with communications practitioners, experts, media professionals, academics and government officials from East African countries and international and regional organizations, where they discussed the use of communications as a tool to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

The activities additionally focused on building skills and expertise to responding to a crisis through effective communications, and to consider how governments and communities in East Africa can work together to build social cohesion through communications across borders including in the aftermath of an attack.

At the workshop, ICEPCVE Head of Strategic Communication Grace Omondi spoke about the partnership with the UN to support IGAD Member States to build skills in crisis communications. “We were able to mobilize and bring together at least 20 government representatives from Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda to participate in this 3-day workshop on crisis communication for P/CVE. This is an opportunity for us to share regional experiences and build on country-specific knowledge to enhance how we respond during attacks by violent extremist organizations.”

Dr. Gregorian welcomed the collaboration with IGAD as he emphasized the commitment of the United Nations to work with African countries and regional organizations. “We want to work together with you to facilitate engagement and dialogue, and trial innovative solutions to tackle the vast and complex manifestation of terrorism with countries who are facing the challenge head on, ” he added



encouraging the participants to take this opportunity to develop their networks and find opportunities for collaborations.

Mr. David Njuguna, Media and Communications Trainer, Nairobi Kenya also mentioned the importance of Media a tool in communication. “Learning how to communicate effectively during a crisis is vital. After the workshop, I feel better equipped to train fellow journalists how to create targeted messages and identify the right channels that will reach and impact different target audiences especially during a crisis,” he said at the end of the workshop.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The UNCCT was established in 2011 through an initial contribution from Saudi Arabia of \$10 million to enhance United Nations counter-terrorism efforts, such as providing capacity-building support to Member States for the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In 2014, Saudi Arabia contributed an additional \$100 million to the Centre. In 2017, the Centre was moved to the newly established UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and Mr. Vladimir Voronkov was appointed Executive Director of the Centre.

UNCCT works on all four (4) pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on issues such as addressing the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon; countering the financing of terrorism; enhancing border security and management; promoting human rights while countering terrorism; and supporting victims of terrorism, among others.

Since April 2012, UNCCT has implemented more than 80 capacity-building projects at global, regional and national levels. The Centre focuses its activities on countries and regions where the threat of terrorism is most acute.

The Members of the Advisory Board include: Saudi Arabia (Chair), Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Russian Federation, Pakistan, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island, the United States of America and the European Union (Guest Member).