



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)

Statement for USG Voronkov at the Women, Peace and Security High
Level Side Event:

Women, Peace, and Security Priorities in Contexts Impacted by
Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and in times of Emergency

Friday, 16 October 2020

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Executive Director, dear Phumzile,

It is with great pleasure that my Office is collaborating with UN Women in the organization of this important event, as part of the commemorations of the 20th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325.

This landmark Security Council Resolution recognized the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

It was the first step towards establishing a robust normative framework for women's participation in peace and security governance; conflict prevention and resolution; the protection of women's human rights in conflict and post conflict; and ensuring gender responsive humanitarian programming.

Fifteen years later, in 2015, the Security Council adopted resolution 2242, providing a framework to fully integrate the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

While much progress was made over the past two decades, some aspects of gender equality, including related to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, have recently seen some setbacks.

The dynamics surrounding the current pandemic have only made matters worse: terrorists and violent extremists, most of whom have misogynistic ideologies, often deliberately target women and girls in their effort to terrorize their communities.

The pandemic has also had a complex impact in conflict-affected contexts where terrorist groups are active; increasing, for example, the risks of gender-based and sexual violence for displaced, refugee and marginalized women.

And while women have been at the forefront of the response to the pandemic, their leadership roles have also exposed them to higher risks and greater dangers.

Upholding and protecting the rights of women and promoting their work becomes even more paramount in this context.

Numerous academic studies and policy research have demonstrated the need for - and value of - integrating gender analysis, gender equality, women's rights and women participation in efforts to counter terrorism and prevent and counter violent extremism.

Even so, there are still significant gaps in gender policy, analysis, decision-making and programming which need to be addressed to make these efforts more effective and sustainable, and ensure that we uphold and protect the rights of women and girls in contexts affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

Since my first day as Under-Secretary-General, I have been fully committed to integrating the Women, Peace and Security Agenda into all aspects of UNOCT's work.

This includes, among other things, ensuring that all our programmes and policies reflect gender perspectives and include gender markers on their expected impact.

Leading up to today's event, for example, my Office has supported and collaborated with UN Women to conduct consultations with women-led civil society organizations from the Global South.

These consultations were held on behalf of the Global Compact Gender Working Group, chaired by UN Women and supported by UNOCT.

The level of participation, the richness of the discussions and the many tangible recommendations generated by the consultations give us a renewed sense of urgency to ensure that the voices of women and women's organizations are heard and fully considered in the implementation of our mandate.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman,

I would now like to mention some of the progress that UNOCT has made in our efforts to ensure gender-inclusive counter-terrorism and PCVE programming:

- We have recently approved a global programme on PCVE which is fully gender responsive;

- We are in the process of rolling out a Global Framework for UN Support to Member States that have repatriated, or are committed to repatriating their nationals associated with UN-listed terrorist groups from Syria and Iraq;
- And we have launched the UNOCT Gender Programme which includes mechanisms to ensure that UNOCT's strategic direction, global policy and coordination functions, programming and operational processes are fully aligned with the principles, priorities, practices and knowledge generated through the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

In partnership with CTED, we are also developing a series of Issue Papers to better understand how to integrate gender dimensions into technical areas of counter-terrorism including biometrics, cybersecurity, countering the financing of terrorism and small arms and light weapons.

In January, my Office launched its Civil Society Engagement Strategy which reflects our deep commitment to promoting a 'whole-of-society' approach and the meaningful participation of CSOs, including women-led CSOs, throughout our work and efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.

For the review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2019, UNOCT requested inputs from CSOs, including women-led CSOs. We have recently issued a similar call for inputs in the lead-up to the forthcoming review in 2021.

I am conscious that much more needs to be done to promote the work and protect the rights of women—including women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders—who are engaged in counter-terrorism and PCVE efforts. This includes ensuring their participation and integrating their perspectives into relevant policies and programmes.

More also needs to be done to ensure a thorough understanding of underlying gender and power dynamics in violent extremism and terrorism and to integrate this knowledge into the design of relevant responses.

My Office will continue to strengthen its efforts to integrate gender considerations and the broader Women, Peace and Security agenda into the core of our programmes and policies.

I count on your support to this endeavor and look forward to the discussions and exchanges foreseen in today's event.

Thank you.