



## Press Release

### **UNITAMS, UNCCT and UNESCO enhance the capacities of more than 170+ trainees on combating hate speech and preventing violent extremism in Sudan**

**Khartoum, 31 August 2021** – The United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in coordination with Teeba press, held a series of two-day in-person workshops and roundtable discussions with journalists, young activists and government officials on countering hate speech and preventing violent extremism through Strategic Communications in Sudan from 17- 30 August.

The workshops trained more than 85+ journalists and members of local media agencies from South Kordofan, Darfur, Blue Nile, and Eastern States (Kassala, Red State and Gadarif) – regions most impacted by hate speech and violence motivated by misinformation and disinformation. The workshops with journalists resulted in participants independently producing and collectively signing a “declaration of commitment to combating hate speech and violent extremist narratives in their regions”.

UN teams also provided training for 30+ Sudanese communications officials across government ministries on combating hate speech and preventing violent extremism through government-managed channels of communications.

In her speech at the conclusion of the workshop, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Sudan, H.E. Ms, Taiseer AlNorani, stressed the need for more similar capacity-building initiatives for journalists and media, which contribute to raising public awareness on preventing and combating the spread of hate speech relating to racial, religious, and tribal conflict and terrorism. She also emphasized the need for communications to amplify positive messages that promote social cohesion and resiliency.

Two additional roundtable discussions were held with 28+ youth activists and 20+ media leaders from across Sudan. The roundtable with youth empowered participants in writing their individual commitment to combat hate speech in their communities and advocate for tolerance, peace and harmony in their universities.

At the media leaders’ roundtable attended by the Secretary-General of the National Council for Press & Publication, Mr. Hussamaddin Haidar, and several high-profile figures from the Sudanese media sector, the Minister of Culture and Information, H.E. Mr. Hamza Baloul Al Amir, reiterated his commitment to work together with UNITAMS and all stakeholders to protect the society against hate speech, terrorism and extremism during the transitional period.



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



UNITAMS  
يونيتامس



The workshop closing ceremony was attended by officials from the Government and the United Nations, and media representatives. The Minister of Telecommunications and Digital Transformation of Sudan, H.E. Mr. Hashim Hasabelrasoul, stated “Our country is now embarking on a new era, with a new national vision to promote peace, freedom, and justice. The curtain has dropped on extensive periods of dictatorship, was continues to entrench as discrimination and animosity concepts at the national and international levels through disseminating messages that advocate racial discrimination and hatred. Rising up against hate speech has become one of the highest priorities of the transitional Governments to be among the country's strategic objectives to ensure peaceful and secure coexistence for sustainable development and stable society”.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sudan and Head of UNITAMS, Mr. Volker Perthes, said “When talking about democracy, human rights, and sustainable peace, we must turn our attention to the significant role played by new media technologies. We all witnessed how digital media has become a frontline in the battle against authoritarianism in Sudan and social media's crucial role in the Sudanese revolution. However, while offering opportunities for communication and freedom of opinion, digital platforms have also expanded the power and prospects for hate speech and antagonistic behaviors. I wish to emphasize the need for concerted efforts of the concerned parties, including government, media, international and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, educational and religious institutions, to work hand in hand to disseminate a culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence amongst all social, religious, ethnic, political and cultural components.”

The Head of UNCCT’s Global Programme on PCVE, Ms. Sian Hutchinson, stated through an online message that “We know that violent extremists and terrorists are very effective in weaponising hate speech to polarize society and achieve their goals. There is an urgent need to prevent this division and to address hate speech through a whole-of society approach that is both human rights and gender sensitive.”