



UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM



HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON THE PROTECTION OF MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS AND  
THE USE OF SPORTS' VALUES FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

27 MARCH 2022 - 15:00 - 17:00 DOHA TIME  
DOHA, QATAR (HYBRID EVENT)

## PRESS RELEASE

### UNITED NATIONS EVENT REINFORCES POWER OF SPORTS IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, LAUNCHES YOUTH-FOCUSED CAMPAIGN

#### Safety of sports venues remains key focus of UN programmatic efforts

**Doha, 27 March 2022** – The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) convened a high-level roundtable presenting the achievements of sport values-based initiatives for preventing violent extremism (PVE) while highlighting ongoing efforts on securing major sport events from terrorism threats. Organized by UNOCT's Global Sports Programme on the margins of the 2022 Doha Forum and co-hosted by the State of Qatar, the hybrid event gathered Member States (represented through their national focal points), international organizations, sport federations and civil society organizations.

In his opening remarks, **H.E. Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs** of the State of Qatar expressed his pride for supporting the protection of major sport events, which represent a common good of humanity and the values of sport for fostering communities' cohesion and resilience to violent ideologies. He highlighted that sport should be *“reinforced and used as an extraordinary generator of positive values with unparalleled unifying power”*.

**Mr. Vladimir Voronkov**, Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT stressed that *“Sport inspires people to be better, to aim higher and go further. Its reach extends beyond borders and continues to be a common language for all, especially youth. We must protect and promote these values as part of our commitment to preventing violent extremism.”* He added that the contributions made by National Focal Points are vital to sharing practical knowledge and expertise so that the Global Programme can provide technical assistance for the security of major sporting events and the operationalization of sport-based initiatives within national action plans on prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Mr. Voronkov also thanked Member States, sport federations, UN agencies and civil society organizations for their commitment to support imminent and future priorities of UNOCT sport-focused programming.

At the event, UNOCT announced a Sport for PVE Global Awareness Campaign with the support of FIFA Foundation CEO Yuri Djorkaeff, renowned marathon runner Tegla Loroupe, as well as international football legends Luis Figo and Tim Cahill.

During her intervention, **Tegla Loroupe** stressed that *“Sport gives us the opportunity to run through our problems, rather than away from them. The values and communities we build in sport give us the endurance to persevere.”*

Referring to sports values as a remedy to defend youth from violent extremism and negative messaging, **Luis Figo** emphasized *“Sport unites us. It speaks to us in a language we can all understand. It is for this reason that sport is a powerful tool against hate narrative and violent ideologies.”*

Facilitated by Mr. Mauro Miedico, Deputy Director and Chief, Special Projects and Innovation Branch of UNOCT, the event also featured interventions by Mr. Nasser Al Khori, Programmes Director at Generation Amazing Foundation and Tim Cahill, Qatar Legacy Ambassador and Chief Sports Officer at Aspire Academy. Generation Amazing Foundation is the human and social legacy programme of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, that has positively impacted more than 725,000 people globally since being launched during Qatar’s bid to host the FIFA World Cup™.

A panel discussion on the specific outcomes of the Global Sports Programme featured representatives from UNOCT, UNAOC, UNICRI, and ICSS and discussed the tools and initiatives developed by the Global Sports Programme across its security and PVE workstreams. These include global guides covering the security of major sporting events and the use of sport-based values to prevent violent extremism, a handbook on the integration of sport-based values for PVE purposes into the planning of major sporting events, a global grant initiative supporting civil society organizations implementing sport-based PVE activities, and national focal point networks.

A follow-up discussion with beneficiaries of the UNOCT-led Sports Programme featured interventions of civil society representatives from the Cameroon-based Local Youth Corner and the Integrated Community Development Initiative in Uganda, who presented the preliminary results of the sport-based grassroots-projects for youth funded through the Programme’s Direct Grants Mechanism. Member States and Sport Federation representatives offered testimonies on the use of programmatic guidance produced by the Programme.

#### Additional Quotes:

**H.E. Mr. Hassan Al Thawadi, Secretary General of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy:** “Using the power of sports to provide youth development opportunities has been a key element in our approach to capitalise on the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. We have not only had an impact locally, but through our legacy programme Generation Amazing Foundation, we have been able to reach remote communities around the world and work alongside our partners to create and deliver carefully curated development trainings to youth from those communities.”

**Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC):** “Sport and major sporting events are powerful tools to promote a culture of peace and prevent violent extremism. In this context, it is important to meaningfully engage young people in the design and implementation of sport-based PVE programmes and policies.”

**Mr. Mohammed Hanzab, Chairman of the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS):** At the ICSS, we are very pleased to partner with UNOCT, lead of the Global Programme, UNAOC and UNICRI, for the High-Level Round-Table on the Protection of Major Sporting Events and the use of Sports’ Values for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, hosted by the State of Qatar. In a world increasingly affected by turmoil and widespread violence, major sporting events and sport at large represent important tools at the disposal of policy and decision-makers to foster dialogue and peace. In sport we learn that the opponent

is not an enemy. As such, we need to place the security of sport as a part of our priorities and continue to promote its values to build a new illuminated generation of leaders across nations and sectors.

**Ms. Antonia Marie De Meo, Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI):** “We are proud to be part of the *Global Programme on security of major sporting events and promotion of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism*. Together, we protect sport and use its powerful values to empower communities and promote human rights. Over the past two decades we have developed best practices and technical tools in the field of major events security and prevention of violent extremism. UNICRI’s regional cooperation model is the now the basis of the Global Network of National Focal Points, and through our capacity building expertise we support civil society and youth-led organizations worldwide to build resilience and dialogue.”

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For more information:

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