UN in Partnership with IGAD Centre of Excellence for PCVE Jointly Convene Six Countries to Develop Regional Crisis Communications Strategies in East Africa

Nairobi, 2 June 2022 – The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, (UNOCT/UNCCT) and the IGAD Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) jointly hosted four workshops on strategic and crisis communications in Kampala and Nairobi between 23 May - 1 June.

The workshops aimed to prepare East African governments to respond to crisis situations, such as in the aftermath of a terrorist or violent extremist attack. Over 60 government, civil society representatives and journalists came together to learn about communications strategies used by terrorist and violent extremist before, during and after their attacks, and how to design and implement crisis communications strategies in response to these events.

During the workshops in Nairobi, representatives from Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda also developed a regional communications approach to tackle misinformation and prevent terrorist attacks through effective communications tools.

In a bid to effectively prepare for and communicate during crises, UNOCT/UNCCT has launched a Toolkit on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) through strategic communication. Aimed at addressing misinformation, providing leadership and bringing communities together, this toolkit includes theoretical crisis communication approaches, evidence-based principles, frameworks, best practices, templates and tools that can be easily adapted and quickly activated. Complementing the specialized UNOCT/UNCCT training on crisis communication, the objective of this toolkit is to empower and mobilize Member States, Media, CSOs and other key stakeholders to manage the communications space after a terrorist attack, and sustain social cohesion in order to prevent the spread of violent extremist narratives and misinformation.

Sian Hutchinson, Head of Unit, Global Programme on PCVE, UNOCT/UNCCT stressed that the toolkit aims to strengthen existing Member States' crisis communication systems in response to terrorist events. "UNOCT is supporting Member States and key stakeholders in East Africa and the Horn of Africa to deliver on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) through a whole-of-society approach. The workshops have proved that this toolkit is a highly valuable resource for crisis response that can be used to contribute to the peace and security agenda."

"As a regional body in the Horn and East Africa region, these workshops are providing an opportunity to enhance collaboration between government and civil society to help reduce unilateral and at times incongruent efforts and instead, promote coordination and synergies. This collaboration and the use of the UNOCT/UNCCT Crisis Communications Toolkit has the potential to strengthen future responses to threats and acts of violent extremism," **Dr. Simon Nyambura**, **Director, IGAD Center of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism added.**

*Read more on the UNOCT/UNCCT crisis comms toolkit *published link*

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