



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Message by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

2023 International Women's Day

*“DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality”
aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 67th Session of the Commission on the Status
of Women (CSW-67), “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for
achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”.*

8 March 2023

Today we celebrate International Women's Day. This year's global theme is *“Innovation and technology for gender equality”*.

Free access to the Internet and communication technologies offers unprecedented opportunities for advancement in areas ranging from education to political participation and employment. Geographic isolation and poor technological infrastructure impede this access for men and women. However, in many contexts, women's access is further impeded by social and cultural factors.

Inequalities in the offline world, including gender inequality, are transposed into the digital space. At the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, we know that human rights violations, discrimination and inequalities can contribute to conditions conducive to radicalization to violence.

Terrorist groups use digital technologies for their strategic and tactical purposes, to reach a global audience, coordinate their activities, and plan attacks.

In many contexts, the Internet has become the primary medium to reach and radicalize potential recruits.

Terrorist groups exploit and manipulate gender inequalities, norms, and roles, including violent masculinities, to radicalize and recruit new members.

We therefore cannot afford to ignore the role of gender in counter-terrorism responses.

Women are underrepresented in security and technology sectors, which can lead to an increased rate of gender bias, stereotypes, and gendered harm. Gender equality is enshrined in core human rights treaties and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

The full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in counter-terrorism efforts from design to implementation and evaluation is essential to ensure effective and sustainable counter-terrorism measures.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is committed to gender mainstreaming across our programmes and policies, and placed gender as a strategic goal in our Strategic Plan for 2022-2025.

We are implementing the Gender and Identities Factors Platform, which serves as the knowledge hub in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Our Global Programme on Cybersecurity and New Technologies integrates human rights and gender into its outcomes, including through specific activities for women practitioners.

In partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, my Office is conducting research on human rights aspects of the use of artificial intelligence in counter-terrorism.

On this International Women's Day, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism reiterates its commitment to furthering gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches to counter-terrorism, as well as promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Thank You.