



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

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**Side event on Bridging the gap: connecting research, policy, and practice on masculinities to more effectively prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism**

**Opening Statement**

**Wednesday, 21 June, 13:00 – 14:30 EDT  
UNHQ Conference Room 12**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to help open and participate in this side event, organized jointly with Canada, Mexico, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

As evidenced by successive reviews of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, gender mainstreaming is recognized as being essential for effective and sustainable efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

In 2022, UNOCT launched its Strategic Plan and Results Framework, which identified the need to mainstream human rights and gender across all our programming work, in addition to developing dedicated human rights and gender programmes.

I am pleased to confirm that in 2022, the Office launched both the UNOCT Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Action Plan, and created a Human Rights and Gender Section, which the General Assembly formally approved in December 2022.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Gender mainstreaming in countering terrorism and prevention of violent extremism is critical in a wide range of areas of intervention. It allows for more effective, human rights-based and gender-responsive counter-terrorism measures.

In his report on Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/77/718), the Secretary-General notes, that “it is imperative that measures to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism fully integrate specific and contextualized gender analysis, including on the roles of men, masculinities and structural gender inequality and stereotypes in radicalization, mobilization and recruitment processes.”

The term “masculinities” refers to the socially constructed ideas of what it means to be a man, including such aspects as “norms, practices, social expectations, and power dynamics associated with being a man”.

Terrorists figured this out long ago. They expertly exploit context-specific understandings of masculinities to attract and retain recruits, as well as in making strategic and operational decisions. This is as true for groups like Da’esh as it is for terrorists motivated by xenophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance, including on the basis of religion or belief.

Masculinities are therefore intrinsically linked to the concept of gender in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

For those of you who attended the side-event on PCVE Plans that was held this morning, you will have heard for example how Kenya’s PCVE approach recognizes this and includes practical responses to at risk youth – i.e., at risk young men – with positive mentoring.

Masculinities also shape counter-terrorism institutions and the way they operate.

In recent years, research has significantly advanced understanding of the importance of considering masculinities for gender-responsive measures to prevent and counter-terrorism.

However, there remain a number of misunderstandings around masculinities and how they relate to preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. There is also still a significant gap on how to link existing research with policy and how to operationalize this in interventions aimed at preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

As an important step towards bridging the gap between policy and practice, UNOCT is establishing a “Gender and Identity Factors Platform,” which I am pleased to help launch during this side event.

The Platform will enable policymakers and practitioners to increase their awareness of gender and intersectionality in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

I look forward to today's panel discussion with experts, who will elaborate on existing research and formulate specific recommendations on how the understanding of masculinities can be integrated into counter-terrorism responses.

Thank you.