



## 2021 Counter-Terrorism Week SIDE EVENT



Kingdom of the Netherlands



UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL  
COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE (CTED)



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



UNODC  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

### Press release

#### **Engagement of Civil Society Organizations in the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons**

**New York, 25 June 2021** – The vital role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates with ties to violent extremist groups and organizations was highlighted during a side event on the “*Engagement of Civil Society Organizations in the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons*”. This event was jointly organized by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), together with the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Republic of Tunisia.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2396 (2017) reflected the concern of Member States that prisons may constitute potential incubators for radicalization to violence. Since then, the number of violent extremist prisoners (VEPs) held in prisons around the world has continued to grow, making the management of VEPs and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons all the more important. However, UNSCR 2396 also recognizes that prison settings can also serve to help rehabilitate and prepare for the reintegration of prisoners into society. The implementation of measures that are tailored, proportionate, justified, non-discriminatory, and gender- and age-sensitive can help ensure that breeding grounds for violent extremism can be actively mitigated and addressed.



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Participants noted that although governments bear the primary responsibility for countering terrorism and violent extremism, CSOs have the potential to be vital partners in these efforts. A whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to counter-terrorism – including empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of CSOs to support government efforts — has become increasingly acknowledged.<sup>1</sup>

This virtual event brought together representatives from Member States, international and regional organizations, United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Compact entities and CSOs.

In opening the event, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, highlighted that “prevention of violent extremism cannot be successful without whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches. Prison officers alone cannot tackle the challenges.”

Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninx, Executive Director of CTED noted the skills and experiences that CSOs can offer in supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of VEPs, and recognized that their expertise and credibility among local communities can make them vital partners in addressing the challenges posed by VEPs.

Ms. Miwa Kato, Director, Division for Operations, UNODC, stressed that “civil society is uniquely positioned to contribute, to give prisoners hope, to reform, to rehabilitate, and to re-integrate back into society, as future productive citizens, providers, and parents”.

Event participants discussed concrete examples, key challenges and best practices of CSO engagement in the management of violent extremist prisoners. The event promoted and showcased the active, inclusive and meaningful participation and contributions of CSOs in the reduction of violent extremism in prisons. It also offered a platform enabling policy makers, UN entities and civil society to exchange ideas, including on existing partnerships, collaboration mechanisms, good practices, key challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities and challenges for the way forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), *Technical Guide to the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions (2017) (S/2017/716)*, available from <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CTED-Technical-Guide-2017-compressed.pdf>.



## **Supporting the Management of VEPs and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons**

To support Member States in strengthening the capacity of beneficiary countries to address challenges posed by violent extremist prisoners in full compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and other relevant international standards and norms, including those relating to gender, UNOCT/UNCCT worked closely together with UNODC and CTED on a joint initiative entitled “Supporting the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons”. The project is co-funded by the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS**

#### **H.E. Ms. Yoka M.G. Brandt, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations**

*“Let me stress the importance we attach to accountability. Not only because justice needs to be done, and not only because it is an important element to address the grievances of victims, but also an essential part in a successful and durable process to reintegrate and rehabilitate FTFs in their former communities and society as a whole.”*

#### **H.E. Mr. Tarek Ladeb, Permanent Representative of Tunisia**

*“It is not enough to only listen to the CSOs but we need to build on such discussions to establish real partnerships with different stakeholders on all aspects of our work in prisons.”*

#### **Ms. Indira Aslanova, Representative of the Central Asian PVE Network (CAPVE) (translated from Russian)**

*“Civil society has strong capacities in management, rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners, and CSOs can help to build connecting bridge between incarceration and coming back to the society.”*

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For more information:

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[www.un.org/counterterrorism/CTweek-sidevents](http://www.un.org/counterterrorism/CTweek-sidevents)