



Press release

Integrating Gender into Cybersecurity and New Technologies in the Fight Against Terrorism

New York, 29 June 2021 – The side event on “Integrating Gender into Cybersecurity and New Technologies in the Fight Against Terrorism” was held on 29 June 2021 as part of the Second United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week. The United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism (UNCCT) in the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) co-organized the event with the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the National Security Council of Thailand, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Thailand, Canada and Norway.

Violent extremist and terrorist groups seek to use cybersecurity and new technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and blockchain to recruit, raise funds and operate. At the same time, such technologies offer new ways to analyze trends and developments in violent extremism and strengthen efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism. As such, understanding the ways in which technology design is gendered, as well as the gendered impacts of cybersecurity and new technologies, is essential to avoid bias, and ensure human rights compliance and gender-responsiveness.

The virtual event featured discussions on gender and radicalization online, preventing gender bias in artificial intelligence, integrating gender perspectives into cyber-governance, and the gender-sensitive use of technology to achieve sustainable peace. Global Affairs Canada highlighted ways to advance gender equality in cybersecurity. Representatives from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the National Security Council of Thailand, and UNDP Thailand discussed trends in integrating gender perspectives in policy and programming in Asia and the Pacific.

During his welcoming remarks, the Director of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General Mr. Raffi Gregorian noted that “[t]errorist groups are quick to adapt to new technologies, such as ISIL’s ... sophisticated use of gendered messaging in online recruitment. [Such] tactics are not only gendered in their design and in the way they instrumentalize gender roles and notions of masculinity, but also in the way women and girls, men and boys, and other gender identities experience and react to them. These differences in impact must be measured and accounted for in counter-terrorism and PVE responses.”



2021 Counter-Terrorism Week SIDE EVENT

During his closing remarks, the Chief of Branch at the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate Mr. David Sharia, emphasized that “[u]nderstanding the gendered impacts and gendered biases of cybersecurity and new technologies is essential to creating effective, gender-responsive and human rights-compliant counter-terrorism policies [...] CTED is committed to ensuring that any adverse gender and human rights impacts of counter-terrorism measures are fully taken into account.”

The side event was attended by representatives from Member States, international and regional organizations, and United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Compact entities, and helped raise awareness of challenges, good practices and substantive entry points for the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into counter-terrorism policies and programming that make use of new technologies and cybersecurity.

For more information:

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