



**STATEMENT BY THE UNDP CRISIS BUREAU DEPUTY DIRECTOR, TURHAN SALEH**

10<sup>th</sup> UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee Meeting  
“Strategic Coordination of Counter-Terrorism Initiatives in Africa:  
Challenges and Opportunities”

Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres,  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir  
Voronkov,  
Distinguished delegates, and esteemed colleagues,

It is a privilege to join the 10th meeting of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee Meeting which focuses on the “Strategic Coordination of Counter-Terrorism Initiatives in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities”.

In today’s world we continue to observe an increasing threat of violent extremism. Remarkably, the Sahel region is now the world’s most impacted region, representing 43% of global terrorism deaths.

There is also increasing concern on the spread of violent extremism elsewhere on the continent, including Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Togo.

The data and evidence demonstrate that the path to violent extremism is multifaceted and complex. UNDP’s ground-breaking [\*Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement \(2023\)\*](#) report found that:

- 71% of voluntary recruits mentioned human right abuses or government actions against their family, relatives, and friends as a ‘tipping point’ in their decision to join

extremist groups;

- Lack of job and livelihood opportunities were cited as the most important factor in leading people to join violent extremist groups;
- And notably, 17% of voluntary recruits identified religion as a key driver - reflecting a shift from the common narrative that places religious ideologies as a chief motivating factor for voluntary recruits.

Our second complementary report, [\*Dynamics of Violent Extremism in Africa: Conflict Ecosystems, Political Ecology and the Spread of the Proto-State\*](#) examined the emergence of these violent extremist group exploiting local grievances.

The report highlighted the urgent shift from security-driven responses to development-based approaches emphasizing education, justice, rehabilitation, and community integration.

Today, we gather to strengthen our collaboration and commitment to prevent and support counter terrorism in this vital region. In addition to the new insights gained from these reports and experienced based on UNDP's PVE initiatives in 41 countries across 5 regions, we propose the following:

Firstly, we need a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach addressing both immediate security concerns and root causes of violent extremism.

Investing in education and empowering local communities is crucial. Our analysis projects that just one extra year in school decreases the odds of voluntary recruitment by an extremist group by 13%. Locally led strategies and engaging communities are essential for lasting prevention.

Secondly, innovation and technology must be simultaneously harnessed to remain ahead of the evolving threat.

In our recent internal analysis, malicious actors are exploiting generative AI technologies and using deepfakes and manipulated media content. To prevent and address this issue, UNDP is developing a Toolkit on measuring digital harms to adapt to the evolving use of technologies in the online space to spread hate speech and other harmful content.

Third, partnerships with regional organizations and governments are indispensable.

Collaborative efforts at the regional level remain crucial as violent extremism is not confined to a specific country or region. UNDP newly launched the Atlantic Corridor project (2023-2025), covering Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo. With an aim to address the immediate drivers of radicalization at the sub-regional level. It also provides support to the National PVE Strategies and Action Plans and targeted community-led engagement on livelihoods and resilience.

Finally, coordination among UN Global Counter-Terrorism Compact entities is paramount.

We must enhance information-sharing mechanisms and operational coordination. A united front will not only improve our efficiency but also collectively eradicate violent extremism.

UNDP is actively engaged as one of the vice chairs to the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism working group. UNDP also remains committed to the joint initiatives led by UNOCT, such as Joint Appeal for Africa and the CT/PCVE technical assistance plan for Benin.

In conclusion, our commitment to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact is a testament to our shared determination.

By focusing on concrete recommendations for coordinating efforts in Africa, we can pave the way for a more secure and stable future for the continent and the world.

Let us leave here today united in our resolve to stand against terrorism and work collaboratively towards a safer, more prosperous Africa.

Thank you.