

EMUN 2018

Peacebuilding Commission - Measures to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of young persons by international terrorist groups



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**Measures to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of  
young persons by international terrorist groups**

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**Forum:** | Peacebuilding Commission |

**Issue:** | Measures to prevent the recruitment and radicalization of young persons by international terrorist groups |

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## **Introduction** |

Radicalization of youth is becoming one of the most important threats of international terrorism in the world today.

There are more young people in the world than ever before and highly vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by international terrorist groups.

Globalization and technological advances have provided tools to terrorist groups for disseminating propaganda and communicating with young persons all over the world, far beyond the areas of conflict.

As a result, we have seen during the last years a greater involvement of young persons from different countries in terrorist actions promoted by international terrorists groups. |

## Definition of key-terms

**Radicalization:** the process by which persons move towards the adoption of extreme views, practices or ideologies advocating extreme measures or actions

**Recruitment:** the process of capturing or enlisting new persons to follow the views, practices or ideologies of a certain organization.

**Terrorism:** the United Nations has not adopted a definition of Terrorism, as Member States have not yet been able to reach agreement on various points such as legitimate struggle, right of self determination, the question of armed forces, and not linking the term with any religious faith.

**Violent Extremism:** holding extreme political or ideological views leading to the adoption of illegal violent actions.

**Young persons:** the UN uses the terms youth and young persons to mean those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years of age, with the understanding that member states or other entities may use different definitions.

## General Overview

We witness a spread of terrorist actions in different countries around the globe and, in times of globalization and internet, a stronger participation of individuals of different nationalities, moving across continents.

For example, during the last years violent extremists have been able to recruit over 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters from over 100 Member States to travel to Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen and join the terrorist groups.

Many terrorist actions are far away from areas of open conflict; some directly organized by international terrorist groups with the participation of foreign terrorist fighters that returned to their homeland, and others conducted by individuals with no direct support from terrorist groups but who, following a process of radicalization, endorse their actions.

At the same time we are in an era of peak youth. Half the world is less than 30 years old, mostly living in developing countries. This is the largest youth population there has ever been.

In least developed countries children and adolescents are the fastest growing segment and represent the majority of the population. Young persons are highly unemployed and hindered by lack of education, poverty and discrimination.

In developed countries, although there are great opportunities for youth, inequalities are high with the risk of those disadvantaged being drawn into antisocial conducts.

As highlighted by the Secretary General in his Report on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, for the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, there is a need to take a more comprehensive approach that not only comprises security-based counter terrorism measures but also includes systematic preventive measures to address the drivers of violent extremism that can be conducive to terrorism.

## Major parties involved and their views

**United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**, with the task of (a) providing leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General; (b) coordinating the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force; (c) strengthening the delivery of United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States; (d) improving visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts; and (e) ensuring that due priority is given to counterterrorism across the United Nations system and that the important work on preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the Strategy.

**Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)**, with the mandate to strengthen coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations system, and in particular help Member States implement the four pillars of the UN Global Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on September 8, 2006.

**UN Inter Agency Network on Youth Development**, is a network of UN entities whose work is relevant to youth.

**United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, established in 1945 with the aim of forging peace and security in the world through the collaboration among nations and universal agreements on ethical issues.

**International Terrorist Groups:** the United Nations does not have a general list of terrorist organizations; instead, particular resolutions target different terrorist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida or Boko Haram, among other.

**Russian Federation:** With over 3,500 deaths due to terrorism in the last decade Russia is one of the most affected Member States regarding casualties, as stated by the UNDP. However, terrorist recruitment of young people especially before the age of 21 is also a topic of great concern. In 2017 the Russia State House of Parliament passed a law toughening criminal responsibility for terrorist recruitment for a life sentence. The initiative was developed and organized by deputy Chairman Adalbi Shagoshev to prevent recruitment, incitement, and backrolling of young individuals into terrorism.

**Syrian Arab Republic:** Many young Groups are recruited and taken to Syria in order to be trained by terrorist organizations. The unresolved conflicts in the region give place for these groups to be settled in the country. They are men in the great majority that leave their homes because of their disadvantageous backgrounds and poor education in their native countries.

**Jordan:** Young radicalization and terrorist recruitment remains an issue of great importance in Jordan, despite the state's participation as a US ally to combat ISIS. Multiple terrorist attacks have been carried out by Jordanian youth, because of the economic deprivation and lack of holistic educational systems, together with the strong presence of Islamic discourse present in the country's territory. The Combating Terrorism Center has stated that, since 2013, between 2000 and 4000 Jordanians have fought with the Islamic state, making it one of the world's highest per capita contributors of foreign fighters for ISIS.

**European Union (EU):** Even though there are not many terrorist fighters recruited from Western European Countries, the governments of these Member States have shown great concern in regards to the presence of incitement and recruitment of youth. The Netherlands National coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism has stated over 4,000 foreign terrorist fighters were originally recruited from the European Union with 17% of these individuals being females, and up to 23% being Islamic converts. |

## Timeline of important events/Documents

- December 1994, the General Assembly, by resolution 49/60, approved the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism
- During the 1990's, the Security Council imposed economic sanctions in response to terrorist acts. This changed the attitude of people towards terrorism, and it denounced it as an illegitimate action.
- September 2001, Security Council resolution 1373 was adopted unanimously.
- 2005 the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) was established by the Secretary General.
- September 8, 2006 the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.
- April 23, 2015, meeting of the Security Council, presided by Jordan's Crown Prince, that held the first ever formal debate on "The role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace".
- August 21 & 22, 2015, Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in Amman, Jordan, that, among other, called actions from governments to support young people in preventing violence and violent extremism and to ensure full provision of their human rights.
- October 2016, UNESCO International Conference on Internet and the Radicalization of Youth, held in Quebec, Canada.
- May 24, 2017, meeting of the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2354 urging member states to follow new guidelines on countering terrorist narratives.

## UN involvement

Pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the Security Council.

More recently, following the attacks on September 11, 2001 the Security Council adopted resolution 1373, which sets forth a range of measures to be implemented by Member States in order to address the terrorist threat in a global, coordinated and comprehensive manner, and created the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).

Subsequently, in response to the evolving global terrorism threat, the United Nations has created a number of bodies to deal with terrorism-related issues.

In 2006 the General Assembly, by resolution 60/288, adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which, among other, resolved to undertake measures aimed at addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including pursuing and reinforcing development and social inclusion agendas at every level, recognizing that success in this area, especially on youth unemployment, could reduce marginalization and the subsequent sense of victimization that propels extremism and the recruitment of terrorists (Plan of Action, I.6).

The General Assembly, by its resolution 60/288 of September 8 2006, unanimously adopted the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its Plan of Action, which includes Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

The Security Council of the United Nations has adopted various resolutions calling on Member States to adopt measures to counter the ways that terrorist groups use to spread violent extremism and recruit others to commit terrorist acts, including:

Resolution 1624 (2005), that calls on Member States to adopt measures, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to prohibit by law incitement to commit a terrorist act or acts, and take measures to counter incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance.

Resolution 2178 (2014), that encourages Member States to “engage relevant local communities and nongovernmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment and promoting social inclusion and cohesion”.

Resolution 2354 (2017), that urged Member States to implement the “Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives” that was submitted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee to the Council in April 2017 (S/2017/375), with recommended guidelines and good practices to effectively counter the ways that ISIL (Da’esh), Al Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities use their narratives to encourage, motivate, and recruit others to commit terrorist acts.

On December 2015, the Secretary General presented his Report on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, for the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, in which among other, stresses the need to pay particular attention and empower youth, invest in education, and develop communication strategies to challenge narratives associated with violent extremism. |

## Possible Solutions

First of all, it is important to emphasize that, as recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 2354, terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization.

In order to address this pressing issue, it is necessary to firstly recognize the persisting radicalization and recruitment of young persons by terrorist groups. Hence, raising awareness & understanding on how terrorist groups attempt to recruit and radicalize youths is pivotal.

Reducing factors that create an environment that is conducive to radicalization is critical, as well as encouraging the factors that aim to a more inclusive society.

Furthermore, education and engagement at the global level are crucial factors, for it is the most effective weapon against the lure of the terrorists and extremists. For instance, promoting the education of children from young age, and also the education of adults (parents, teachers, religious leaders, etc.) who are in contact with young persons on how to become aware and address this issue, to counter radicalizing ideologies.

In addition to this, communities should promote greater participation of youth in the discussion and design of initiatives to address this issue by unleashing young people's energy and idealism, and encouraging them to follow their dreams as well as providing tools to make their own local initiatives a reality.

Internet provides an enormous platform to spread the causes of peace, diversity and mutual respect. The development of alternative narratives that challenge the extremist rhetoric through the internet or by other effective means should be promoted.

Finally, to achieve our main aim, different initiatives should be prepared locally, taking into account the particular aspects of each community and engaging members from all across the local community.

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