



The power of youth in countering violence

The UN Office of Counter-Terrorism hosts an interactive dialogue

Baku, 3 May 2019- The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) organized today, jointly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC), a side-event on “Youth Engagement and Vocational Training: Innovative approaches to Address Discrimination, Inequality and Violence”.

With the participation of Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations, the event, which took place in the margins of the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan, focused on the need to further engage and focus on youth as a positive force and a crucial partner in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Opening the side-event, Ms. Sevil Alirzayeva, Chief of the Office of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, underlined that young women and men, boys and girls, are on the frontline, affected by terrorism in multiple ways. “Terrorism robs young people of their lives and opportunities, of their present and their future. Youth, therefore, has as much a stake as anyone in counter-terrorism. We need practical and innovative ways to help them raise and address their concerns and safeguard their peers and communities.”

The event included an interactive dialogue with experts, including Mr. Keneshbek Sainazarov, Regional Director for Central Asia with Search for Common Ground, Ms. Wedad Al-Hassen, Executive Affairs Manager at Hedayah, Mr. Tony Sgro, Chief Executive Officer of Ed Venture Partners, and Mr. Zain Awan, Growth and Operations Manager at Re:Coded. Experts discussed lessons learnt and shared good practices to engage, empower and partner with youth through innovative approaches to build resilience to violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

The ideas and recommendations shared at the event will help inform the development by UNOCT of a comprehensive global Youth Programme, through the United Nations Center for Counter-Terrorism (UNCCT), in order to consolidate, reinforce and advance its current youth engagement activities. The Programme will provide a solid long-term framework within which capacity-building support with and for youth can be offered to Member States on a strategic and sustained basis. This framework will also put in place a modality for collaboration with civil society organizations and the private sector on youth and efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

To reflect the views, needs and aspirations of young people in developing this new youth programme, UNOCT will engage with and consult young people, in the participatory spirit of the UN Youth Strategy. These consultations were launched during the event with an online survey open to all, available here: <https://efm.dfs.un.org/EFM/se/6C6639C017EA0708>. Feedback and suggestions received will help the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism develop its Global Youth Programme and contribute to improve the overall UN responses to address hate speech and intolerance. A number of participants may also be selected to participate in a regional youth consultation workshop.



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These initiatives will further strengthen implementation of UNOCT's mandate, which includes providing leadership on the implementation of General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates, enhancing coordination and coherence, and strengthening the delivery of the United Nations counter-terrorism capacity building assistance to Member States.

Note to the editor:

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism was established through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/291 on 15 June 2017. UNOCT has been working, through the UNCCT, on implementing youth projects, in collaboration with UNESCO and International Labor Organization (ILO), supported by the generous contributions of the Governments of Canada, Japan, Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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