

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AS AND WHEN CONDUCTIVE TO TERRORISM

Joint event highlights need for increased international cooperation and effective community engagement to address the underlying conditions and drivers of terrorism

New York, 12 February 2024 – In commemoration of the [International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism \(PVE\) as and when Conducive to Terrorism](#), entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact convened a special event to highlight the impact of PVE programming at the community level. Organized by the Working Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), the meeting brought together the UN system, Member States, civil society, academia, as well as religious and young leaders working on PVE to renew commitments to collaborate and exchange views on how prevention policies and programme support can best address violent extremism and its drivers.

In his opening remarks as Chair of the PCVE Working Group, **Mauro Miedico, Director of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Centre at the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)** stressed the need for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches in preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism. *“As reaffirmed in the 8th review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, it requires enhanced international cooperation at all levels that offers coordinated, but also inclusive, transparent, human rights-based and gender-responsive policies and programming.”*

He also outlined UNOCT’s increased capacity-building assistance to Member States, highlighting that the Office works closely with local communities and PCVE stakeholders, to identify and protect the most-at-risk populations and increase understanding of the underlying causes that may trigger violent extremism and address them through evidence-based programmes.

Addressing the opening segment, the Vice-chairs of the PCVE Working Group delivered keynote speeches on behalf of their entities.

Helena Sterwe, Team Leader for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted the need to address the conditions and factors that drive individuals to join extremist groups such as poverty, inequality, and exclusion. She added: *“Prevention is our most powerful tool in countering this threat. UNDP calls for a proactive approach that addresses the root causes of violent extremism and promotes resilience and inclusivity.”*

UNDP works to anticipate and [prevent violent extremism](#) in 41 countries. [Through local, national, or regional initiatives](#) such as the Atlantic Corridor project in West Africa, UNDP works directly in communities, answering people’s needs and addressing tensions before they turn into violence.

“No one is born a violent extremist; they are made and fuelled. If we want to build peaceful societies where dialogue and respect for human rights and the rule of law are a norm, we should start as early as possible, on the benches of schools. UNESCO has been stepping up its [programs](#) across all areas of work to equip learners with the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours essential for rejecting violent extremism”,

said **Cecilia Barbieri, Chief of Global Citizenship and Peace Education section at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).**

Ms. Nihal Saad, Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), reaffirmed that terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. *“UNAOC remains committed to speaking out against such offensive discourse and continues to work with relevant stakeholders to advance dialogue, mutual respect, diversity and pluralism as important elements in promoting cooperation and in preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism,”* she said.

While Member States and their respective national institutions have primary responsibility in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia, religious leaders, and the media also play a crucial role.

To support Member States in combatting this threat, the United Nations and its funds, agencies and programmes design and deliver targeted capacity-building initiatives to address the underlying conditions and drivers of violent extremism conducive to terrorism at the global, regional, and country levels, with a focus on human rights and gender mainstreaming, and on developing sustainable partnerships in support of PVE coordination.

The UN coordination on the prevention of violent extremism is led by the [UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact's](#) PCVE Working Group. The objective of the working group is to promote coordination and coherence in the work of the 46 entities signatory to the Counter-Terrorism Compact, within their respective mandate, to support the efforts of Member States to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The working group is chaired by UNOCT, with UNDP, UNESCO and UNOAC as Vice-chairs.

Background

Terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism is a rapidly evolving threat that has grown geographically more diffuse, and ideologically more diverse in the past 20 years. It poses an affront to the very essence of humanity.

Terrorist groups like ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and their affiliates continue to exploit instability and conflict to expand and intensify attacks in many parts of the world. These groups exploit conflict, fragility, poverty, weak governance, and marginalization to recruit and indoctrinate followers including through narratives of grievance and actual or perceived injustice.

To raise awareness of the threats linked to violent extremism and to enhance international cooperation in this regard the General Assembly introduced the International Day for PVE as and when Conducive to Terrorism in its resolution 77/243. Drawing upon the 8th review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the International Day for PVE and related events serve to strengthen the international community's resolve to address the conditions conducive to terrorism.

More Information:

- **Website:** [2024 International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism \(PVE\) as and when Conducive to Terrorism](#)
- **Event Web page:** [Preventing Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism: From Programming to Real-World Impact](#)
- **Hashtag:** #PVEDay
- **Contact:** Laurence Gerard (gerardl@un.org), United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Aimee Brown (aimee.brown@undp.org), UNDP; Alexandra Ilieva (a.ilieva@unesco.org), UNESCO; Julie Ladanani (julie.ladanani@un.org), UNAOC.