

Press Release

UNOCT and IGAD Host Regional Trainings on Gender Mainstreaming in Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Nairobi

Nairobi, 18 February 2025 – The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), through its Gender Unit, is convening two Training of Trainers (ToT) on gender mainstreaming in counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism (CT/PCVE) policies and programmes in Nairobi, Kenya. They are organized in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and in collaboration with the Kenyan National Center for Counter-terrorism (NCTC).

The workshops were designed for governmental and non-governmental actors and are part of UNOCT's Gender and Identity Factors Platform (GIFP), which is generously supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). They aim to strengthen participants' knowledge of gender-responsive and intersectional approaches to CT/PCVE. By equipping gender experts with the necessary skills to train government officials, civil society organizations, and practitioners in their home countries, this initiative seeks to enhance the capacity of national institutions to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into policy development, implementation, and monitoring of CT/PCVE efforts. Participants included 19 governmental and 22 non-governmental representatives from East African Member States, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Officials from UNOCT, IGAD, Canada and the NCTC opened the event.

In a recorded message, **Steven Siqueira, Deputy-Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center of UNOCT** underlined the importance of gender-responsive approaches in CT/PCVE in line with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. "This [workshop] not only supports the application of gender-responsive strategies, but also fosters a community of practice, where good practices can be shared and applied to real-world challenges in order to make a real difference in the lives of women, girls, men, and boys."

H.E. Christopher Thornley, High Commissioner of Canada in Nairobi emphasized Canada's commitment to gender mainstreaming with an intersectional approach. He explained, "Canada has been supportive of UNOCT's ground-breaking Gender and Identity Factors Platform, which has significant potential to support sustainable and effective counterterrorism solutions, including across the African continent."

Mr. Josephat Onyari, IGAD Director of Administration and Finance, reiterated IGAD's commitment to promoting gender-sensitive and intersectional approaches to CT/PCVE in the region. He emphasized, "The IGAD Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism remains committed in supporting its Member States through strategic partnerships as with the UNOCT to appreciate the need to adopt comprehensive and intersectional approaches that integrate gender considerations into CT/PCVE."

Mr. Kibiego Kigen, Director of the NCTC, underscored Kenya's dedication to integrating gender considerations into national counter-terrorism efforts. He highlighted that in an ever-evolving and dynamic space where terrorism and violent extremism threats exist, measures and responses ought to be developed proactively. He further noted that understanding gender dynamics allows security actors and stakeholders to develop targeted responses that address the unique needs of different gender segments in PCVE and accentuated the integration of gender in the revised 2025 National Strategy on Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (NSPCVE).

The digital [Gender and Identity Factors Platform](#) was launched in June 2023 to advance gender and intersectional considerations in CT/PCVE efforts through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and policy support.

Background Information

Violent extremism and terrorism continue to pose significant challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the Sahel region, where extremist groups exploit gaps in counter-terrorism capabilities. The exploitation of gender roles and identities remains a key tactic of terrorist and violent extremist organizations, affecting recruitment strategies and the experiences of those impacted by terrorism. Women and girls face heightened risks of sexual violence, forced recruitment, and socio-economic marginalization, while men and boys are also targeted through distinct radicalization pathways.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as relevant Security Council resolutions, such as resolution 2242 (2015), call for the integration of gender perspectives into counter-terrorism policies and programmes. Gender-sensitive approaches would not only enhance the effectiveness of counter-terrorism strategies but also ensure that responses do not inadvertently exacerbate existing inequalities or grievances that fuel radicalization.

In response to these challenges, UNOCT Gender Unit launched GIFP, with the support of the GAC in June 2023. GIFP serves as a dedicated initiative to advance gender and intersectional considerations in CT/PCVE efforts through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and policy support.

The Training of Trainers in Nairobi is a key component of this effort. In alignment with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, UNOCT through GIFP developed an innovative Training of Trainers Manual, as well as an accompanying online e-learning course, designed to empower experts with the skills and knowledge to integrate gender-responsive approaches in CT/PCVE policies and programmes. Following the training, participants will return to their national country to facilitate further training sessions within respective institutions.

UNOCT with the generous support of GAC, as well as IGAD as a substantive partner, remain committed to advancing gender-responsive and intersectional approaches to counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism, ensuring that policies and programmes reflect the diverse needs and experiences of affected communities.

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