



International Hub on  
**Behavioural Insights  
to Counter Terrorism**

**Soft launch of the International Hub on Behavioural Insights  
to Counter Terrorism,  
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Programme Office, Doha, Qatar**

***Monday, 7 December 2020***

**Opening remarks of**

**Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninx,  
Executive Director, CTED**

*Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Al-Thani;  
Under-Secretary-General Voronkov,  
Distinguished participants,*

Allow me to begin by thanking Under-Secretary General Vladimir Voronkov for inviting me to participate in today's soft launch of the International Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism.

I had the opportunity to learn about Qatar's efforts in this area when I led the assessment visit of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to Qatar in February this year.

Qatar is to be commended for its consistently high level of engagement and dialogue with the Committee and CTED.

I am grateful for the warm reception afforded to myself and my team in Doha.

## **Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)**

During the visit, I met with a number of high-level officials, including the Prime Minister; the State Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Ministers of Finance, Justice, and Social Development; and the Human Rights Commissioner.

Our discussions in Doha were in-depth and wide-ranging.

Among the topics discussed was Qatar's efforts to counter violent extremism.

The work of the International Hub will build upon the research already conducted by Qatar University, through the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute, to develop a global index of vulnerability to violent extremism, which includes human rights and gender considerations.

And this work at the research level is matched by Qatar's commitment to countering violent extremism through education, including through the "Education Above All" Foundation.

I also learned, during our visit, about the work of the Silatech Foundation, which is working to address unemployment among youth and thus help counter violent extremism.

Qatar's commitment to countering violent extremism extends also to the diplomatic arena.

The Government of Qatar has engaged in significant diplomatic efforts for preventive diplomacy and mediation in the wider region, to tackle conflicts that create conditions conducive to violent extremism leading to terrorism.

All these efforts were noted earlier this year by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which commended Qatar for its research in the field of countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and possible strategies for addressing the issue.

## **Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)**

I believe that the work of the International Hub on Behavioural Insights will add a crucial new dimension to our understanding of the factors that may lead to violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

As the Security Council and Counter-Terrorism Committee have both underlined: the threat is complex and requires comprehensive, whole-of-society, human rights compliant and gender sensitive approaches.

This includes, of course, paying due attention to the underlying conditions conducive to terrorism.

As noted in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, those conditions include crucial social factors such as discrimination; marginalization; human rights violations; lack of good governance; and prolonged, unresolved conflict.

Behaviours that contribute to radicalization leading to violence cannot be considered in isolation, but must be understood through a gender lens and connected to the environment in which they occur.

These are all issues that CTED raises in its discussions with States on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

I am confident that the International Hub on Behavioural Insights will take this holistic approach into account in its work.

Let me also suggest, as we face the terrible challenge of the global pandemic, that the International Hub consider looking into new CVE dimensions brought about by COVID-19. CTED published a paper on the impact of the pandemic on counterterrorism and CVE in June of this year, and this has been a topic of interest to our Global Research Network, or GRN.

**Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)**

Perhaps there will be opportunities for the Hub to enhance the perspectives of the members of our GRN, focusing both on the impact of COVID-19 on CVE, and also on innovative approaches for responding to the challenges created by the pandemic.

The findings of the International Hub will, add a vital new dimension to our understanding of the threats of terrorism and violent extremism, and we look forward to applying those findings in our own engagement with Member States.

In conclusion, I wish you success in the launch and future endeavours of the International Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism.

And I look forward to further strengthening our engagement and dialogue with Qatar, including in forthcoming submission of updates on its implementation of the recommendations contained in the Committee's visit report.

*Thank you.*