

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Excellences, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentleman,

Yesterday, over thirty members of the Global Research Network attended a workshop at New York University, looking at emerging trends in terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Participants represented nearly every region of the world, bringing a broad diversity of perspectives and experiences.

The **first session** looked at returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters, or FTFs.

Data collected by the researchers suggested that the challenge faced by different regions varied, as did the approach by Member States in those regions.

This led to differing conclusions regarding how many FTFs had returned, and how many continued to engage in terrorism-related activities.

Despite these variations, the session observed several key returnee trends:

- Firstly, low rates of dis-engagement, particularly in Europe. Returnees were disillusioned with ISIL's implementation of a Caliphate, not necessarily the use of violence or ideology;
- Secondly, the unprecedented number of women that had been located in the conflict zones;
- Thirdly, the unprecedented number of children that had been located in the conflict zones; and finally,
- The prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration challenge, particularly as many terrorist offenders were due to be released from prison in the coming years.

All of these trends suggested that returnees would remain a significant problem for some time.

Although fewer FTFs appear to have relocated, the group highlighted issues this could pose, particularly to Member States with less developed counter-terrorism mechanisms.

Several participants stressed the importance of improved engagement with multilateral information-sharing arrangements, and stronger vetting and risk-assessment procedures.

In **Session 2**, the group focused on countering incitement, violent extremism and terrorist narratives, particularly in the context of resolution 2354.

This calls upon CTED to work with the Global Research Network to identify ways to measure the impact and effectiveness of counter-narratives.

The session discussed the difficulties of comparing CVE or counter-narrative programs, given their differing aims and the importance of local context.

Although researchers had identified some common challenges, and common denominators for an effective approach, many felt that there was still limited evidence of what did and didn't work.

Despite this, participants emphasised the need to:

- (i) Engage in both the online and offline space;
- (ii) Better understand terrorist narratives, and their underlying ideologies; and,
- (iii) Better understand the relationship between non-violent and violent extremism

The group also reiterated the importance of collecting gender disaggregated data. This would improve their understanding of the role of women in CVE, both as a buffer but also as a group that was increasingly susceptible to radicalization.

**Session 3** looked at protecting civilian or soft targets, and the trends that different Member States and regions had experienced.

Researchers contrasted trends in the West - where many recent attacks on soft targets had been unsophisticated and carried out by single perpetrators - with attacks elsewhere, particularly in West Africa, where civilians had been repeatedly attacked by Boko Haram suicide bombers.

Across all regions, terrorist targeting methodology appeared to be driven by technical innovation but also by imitation. Ideas were being exchanged between individuals and groups in the conflict zones, and online, leading to copy-cat attacks.

The workshop highlighted several good practices that Member States had adopted, including:

- Conducting threat analysis and vulnerability assessments;
- Developing public private partnerships, to create layered security; and
- Establishing emergency response procedures.

Noting the difficulty of protecting all potential targets, the group felt that promoting societal resilience was central to reducing the long-term impact of terrorist attacks.

The workshop concluded by looking at future engagement between CTED and the Global Research Network.

Researchers highlighted their strong desire to continue to engage with the CTC via CTED, and support the CTC in its global fight against terrorism. They outlined several ways in which this cooperation could be strengthened further.

Many thanks for your kind attention. A more comprehensive summary of yesterday's discussions will be available on CTED's website soon.