

**High-level event on the engagement of civil society organizations to support
the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of
radicalization to violence in prisons**

Friday, 25 June 2021 12:30 EDT

Virtual statement by

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

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Together with our partners from UNOCT and UNODC and our co-organizers, the Netherlands, Tunisia, and the European Union, CTED, is delighted to welcome you to today's side event.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), terrorism remains one of the most complex and multifaceted threats to international peace and security.

CTED is particularly aware that the challenge of addressing radicalization to violence in prisons and ensuring effective management of violent extremist prisoners (or "VEPs") has grown substantially in recent years as the number of individuals prosecuted and convicted for terrorism-related offences, including foreign terrorist fighters, has increased.

This work has been made all the more difficult by the considerable global challenges that continue to be posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, bringing those responsible for terrorist acts (including of FTFs) to justice through appropriate investigation and prosecution remains a vital step in global efforts to defeat terrorism and violent extremism, as underlined by the Council in its resolution 2396 (2017).

This challenging endeavour requires a multilateral, human rights compliant, and gender-sensitive approach that draws upon the whole-of-society, including Government, law enforcement agencies, correctional systems, and — the focus of today's event — civil society.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

The skills and experiences that CSOs can offer in supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of VEPs are considerable.

Their expertise and credibility among local communities can make them vital partners in addressing the challenges posed by VEPs.

And yet, far too often, they remain under-utilized in such efforts.

We must also be mindful of the difficult and sometimes repressive environments in which CSOs are often forced to operate.

We must do all that we can to help ensure that CSOs are able to conduct their operations in full respect for the rights to personal security, freedom of expression, and freedom of association.

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

I am confident that our discussions today will facilitate a useful exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices regarding Member States' engagement with CSOs in the management of VEPs and others vulnerable to radicalization to violence in prison, and give us a welcome opportunity to hear the voices of civil society organizations on this vital issue.

Thank you.