Statement Delivered on behalf of:

The International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism – Hedayah

at

United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee

Open Meeting

Countering Terrorist Narratives & Preventing the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes.

Wednesday, 23 March 2022

[START]

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Distinguished guests. Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to speak to you today, to address the very important topic of counter narratives,

Given our current global footprint, I would like to take this opportunity to showcase Hedayah's work and methods in countering radical ideology through our counter narratives engagements.

I would like to start off by sharing the story of Fatima, who was abducted by Boko Haram then released many years later. Hedayah identified Fatima, gave her a safe space and a voice & championed her as a "hero of peace".

This is her story from captivity to freedom. (video please)-

The experience we derived from engaging with book-haram victims was the following:

o   Countering radical ideology is very much an offline phenomenon as it is online. Countering radical ideology online is not enough. Communities and villages with little or no access to technology are just as vulnerable as technologically connected communities

o   The narratives that we should be countering, does not only come from Radical and terrorist groups. It can come from mainstream narratives.

In this particular case of Fatima, Hedayah identified that, dealing with victims of terrorism in a stigmatization manner, was enough to create conditions contusive to violent extremism. In this particular scenario, the environment was not created by radical and terrorist groups directly.

○ Identifying the right messenger to carry the right message is just as important the counter narrative.

○ According to Hedayah's method, Counter-narratives is not necessarily a reactionary mechanism, providing alternative narratives may not work in some contexts. Hedayah's approach is conducting Paradigmatic-shifting Narratives.

ISIS Files:

In order to conduct paradigmatic shifting narratives, we as practitioners need to have direct access to the radical narratives themselves, to further understand terrorist ideology and methodology and the online/offline nexus. Upon Daesh's defeat in Mosul. Hedayah housed 1600 primary documents from ISIS themselves. We had direct insights on how daesh ran schools in Mosul and understood firsthand, how Daesh thinks, what goes on behind the scenes in terrorist methodology and more specifically how ISIS incorporates its Indoctrination method within its Narratives.

We have converted what we learned trained religious leaders of different faiths and sects in northern Africa, and used elements such as Art and Gender to propagate our paradigmatic shifting narratives.

We have also trained psychologist to deal with juveniles return back from Syria with great success. These pictures are of the actual people who trained and the youth you see here were once living under ISIS controlled areas in Syria, who are now successfully repatriated.

We have recently developed a video game available on the apple store and google play store that has been downloaded over 50,000 times on android alone, to help provide youth with scenarios of recruitment and enhance their resilience capabilities in real world contexts.

Our counter narratives library with our 679 materials 29 different languages gives us a broad spectrum of how diverse the different types of narratives out there. (Next slide).

Finally, Hedayah is sharing powerful material on the rise of the radical far right or racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism by providing country specific reports by taking into account local and regional drivers to this phenomenon.

Finally, I would like to extend a warm thank you to our good friends at Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, as well as the speakers and day it was a pleasure sharing with you this platform.

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