

UNDP Statement at the Special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on “Security Council resolution 2396 (2017): review of the Madrid Guiding Principles”

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Session VI (16:30)

“The role of the United Nations system in supporting Member States’ efforts to address the evolving threat posed by FTFs, particularly FTF returnees, relocators and their families”

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Afternoon. Thank you to H.E. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, for leading this discussion, and to my fellow panelists for sharing their statements.

I am honored to be invited here to speak on behalf of UNDP on the evolving challenge of Foreign Terrorist Fighter returnees, relocators and their families.

I will address three key issues: First, the importance of **complementing security measures with preventative approaches** that address the drivers and root causes of violent extremism. Second, how **local approaches are vital to success**, drawing on examples from UNDP’s preventative work at global, regional and country level. And third, that **partnerships are critical to deliver holistic support** to Member States.

Let’s start with prevention. At UNDP, we emphasize first the primacy of prevention in tackling violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism, and the nexus between prevention and development in addressing the root causes of the FTF phenomenon.

Our research shows that we **cannot win this battle through hard-line security approaches alone**. On the contrary, they may risk further inflaming violent extremist activity. The UNDP study, Journey to Extremism in Africa, found that 71 percent of recruits say that government action – most often the killing or arrest of a friend or family member – was the tipping point that made them decide to join a violent extremist group.

UNDP’s Global Programme on **Development Solutions for the Prevention of Violent Extremism**, is collaborating very closely and is being supported by the UK, Norway and EU, and other donors, including Japan, Australia, Sweden and Netherlands who offer their support and collaboration at regional and country level to PVE specific or related projects.

Through their support UNDP can continue working **on the relationship between peaceful societies and inclusive development**, rule of law and human rights, anti-corruption, good governance, civic engagement and political participation, and to address the horizontal inequalities that fuel radicalisation that can lead to violent extremism.

This preventive approach is **rooted in Agenda 2030, and in the principle of leaving no one behind**. That means reaching out to the most remote communities and marginalized groups.

It also means helping Member States build open, **equitable, inclusive and pluralist societies** in line with the Secretary General's Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism. And it means building partnerships, not only with UN agencies but also with women, youth, religious leaders and their organizations as champions in PVE. Expanding the available evidence base is essential for preventing radicalization to terrorism, stemming recruitment flows and devising effective rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

At UNDP we also emphasize the importance of working locally. **Context is everything**.

For example, we are working with the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) **to highlight the innovative solutions of local, women-led organizations** who are reintegrating and rehabilitating returnees in their communities.

Members of women's civil society from over 15 countries contributed recommendations to policymakers to design and deliver gender-sensitive strategies for reintegration and rehabilitation. Jointly with ICAN and supporting Member States we will launch this report in January in Oslo, February in NY and March in London. We are also working to support Member States at the country level. In **Kenya**, UNDP mobilized 60 counsellors and psychologists to provide psychosocial support to national rehabilitation and reintegration interventions.

In **Morocco**, UNDP trained prison staff, peer educators and religious advisors to provide vocational training, identify signs of radicalization and disseminate peaceful religious narratives. Over 22,000 inmates in 7 prisons were sensitized in 2017, laying the foundation for their successful reintegration into their communities.

Let's not forget partnership. Partnership is vital to delivering the kind of holistic programming and to combat conflict, contention, apathy and estrangement that has shattered our world.

For example, in the **Lake Chad Basin**, UNDP works in close coordination with CTED, IOM, UNODC and the African Union in support of the Regional Stabilization Strategy, including its DDR pillar on the reintegration of former fighters.

UNDP looks forward to seeing these **three important themes reflected in the renewed Madrid Guiding Principles**.

We believe that is only through a preventative, development-focused approach, local, context-specific solutions and open, inclusive partnership that we will be able to assist Member States as they address the complex challenge of FTF returnees, relocators and their families.

I look forward to listening to the experiences of my fellow panel members and to a frank discussion on the way forward for our work. Thank you for your time.

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