



The Role of Cities in Building Resilience against Radicalisation that Leads to Violent Extremism

**Strong Cities
Network**

Strong Cities Network

- Launched in 2015 at the UN General Assembly
- A **global network of 230+ cities** – big or small, urban or rural – dedicated to preventing hate, extremism and polarisation
- Committed to **inclusive city-led prevention efforts** centered around human rights
- Guided by the needs of its members, able to connect cities across contexts and exchange and **transfer learnings into local action and policy**
- Amplifying the voices of cities and local leaders on the global stage so that relevant **global policies can be informed by those closest to the ground**

About Strong Cities

Catalysing local implementation through Regional Hubs.



Supported by:



PARTNERSHIPS



GLOBAL EXPERT POOL



TECHNICAL SUPPORT FUND



RESOURCE HUB

Why Cities?

- Cities have access, proximity, contextual understanding of and regular interface with local populations.
- They provide social, public health, youth-related, business-oriented, cultural and educational functions – and can coordinate efforts across all such sectors – to build resilience and more broadly support the **implementation of the SDGs.**
- From investing in soft-target protection to engaging youth as partners in promoting peace, fostering inter-communal dialogue, supporting victims of hate and extremism and rehabilitating and reintegrating returnees from conflict zones, **the potential of mayors and the local governments they lead in ensuring the localised implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions is endless.**





The Challenges Cities Face

A lack of mandate
to lead prevention efforts

Limited resources
to develop prevention policies and programmes

Lack of opportunity
to inform the global prevention agenda with
local experience

Bureaucratic constraints
that impede the ability of local actors to lead
prevention initiatives

A lack of expertise
on different manifestations of hate and extremism

What do we do?



Amplify

- The voices of city leaders nationally and globally
- City-led innovation and **mayoral leadership** against hate and extremism

Build

- The capacity of cities to deliver and sustain data-driven prevention efforts
- City-led multi-actor collaboration (incl. youth – city engagement)

Connect

- Cities with each other for sustainable peer-to-peer learning and exchange
- Cities with national, regional and global prevention actors

How Cities Can Build Resilience

Lessons Learned



Integration: Leverage What You Have

Cities can prevent hate, extremism and polarisation even if they lack a specific mandate and dedicated resources to do so by integrating prevention into **existing structures and programmes**.



In Athens (Ohio, US), Strong Cities is **working** with their **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team** to develop a local prevention framework.



In **Zomba (Malawi)**, **hyper-local committees** established originally to address resource grievances are being trained to address inter-community tensions.



In **Elbasan (Albania)**, prevention of hate and extremism is the responsibility of a **Local Safety Council** that carries a broader mandate to enhance public safety and security.

Partnerships: Invest in Communities

Whether its youth, grassroots organisations, religious and other community leaders, cities should tap into community-based actors to help implement relevant local, national and international frameworks.



In **Cape Town (South Africa)**, the City has partnered with the national South African Police Service to train religious leaders on **soft-target protection** so they can support the City with safeguarding places of worship.



In **Wroclaw (Poland)**, the City partners with civil society organisations to provide **restorative justice programmes** for minors that have committed petty crimes, offering them community service as rehabilitation.



In **Sousse (Tunisia)**, the City has established a dedicated **youth municipal committee** to ensure youth needs and concerns inform municipal decision-making.

Transferability: Think Outside the Box

Practices that aren't framed around nor deployed for the sole purpose of countering extremism and terrorism can be just as effective (and are often better received) as those that are.



Neighbourhood Watch

Traditionally an approach to petty crime prevention, the Neighbourhood Watch model is being deployed in **Nansana (Uganda)** to serve as an early-warning mechanism against hate and extremism.



Sports, Arts and Culture

The Mayor of London's (UK) **Shared Endeavour Fund** supports grassroots efforts to use sports and arts to foster inter-communal interactions and create healthy peer networks amongst youth.



Urban Planning and Design

Recognising that feelings of idleness and insecurity are exploited by extremists, **Rabat (Morocco)** consulted youth and CSOs to create safer public spaces where they can engage in healthy (extracurricular) activities.

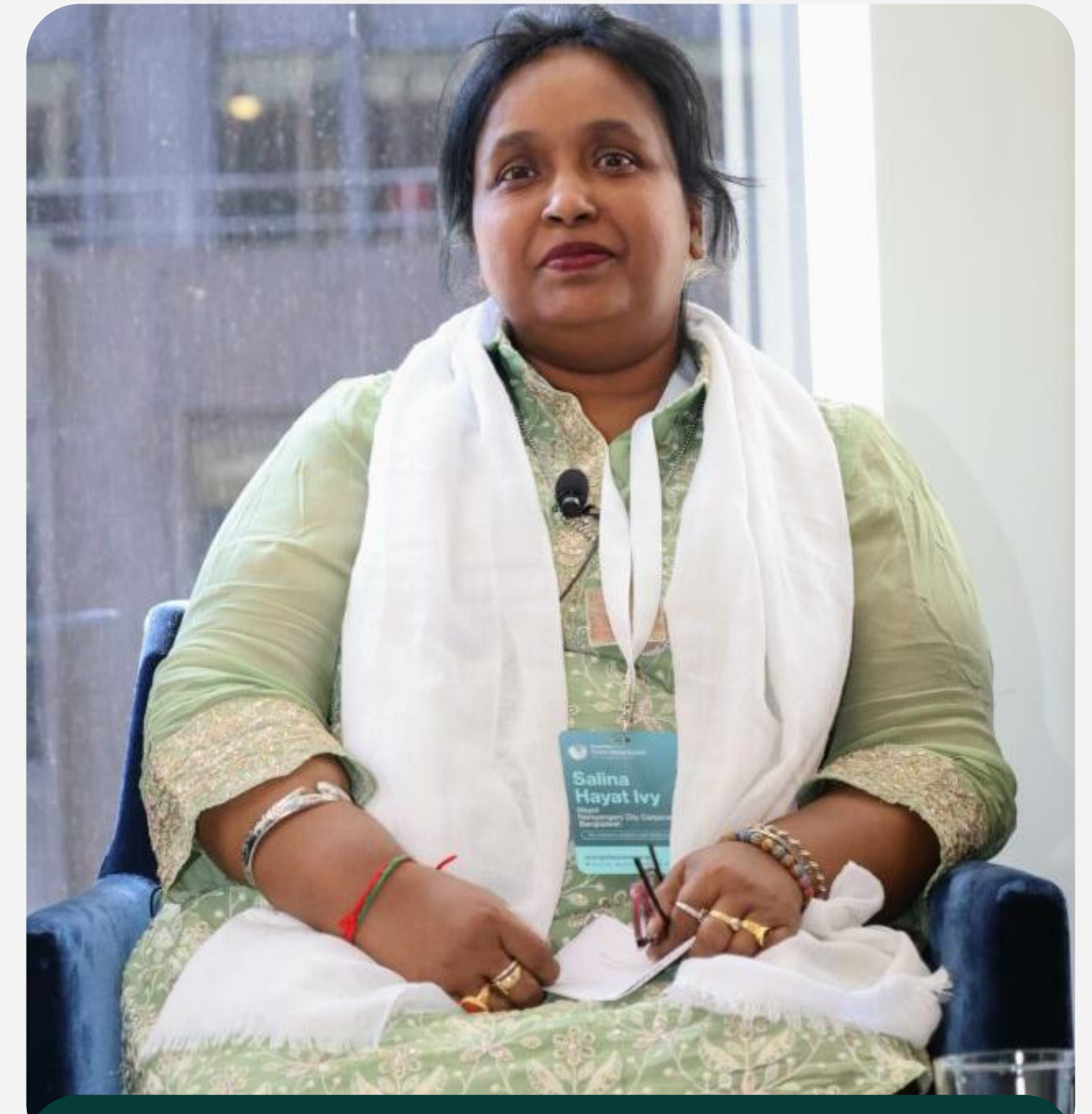
Mayoral Leadership

Do not underestimate the role of mayors and other city leaders in prevention.

As the 'face' of the city, they can take a stand against hate and extremism by promoting an inclusive city identity and otherwise demonstrating – in words and in practice – that **they and the local government they lead are committed to protecting *all* their residents against hate, extremism and polarisation.**



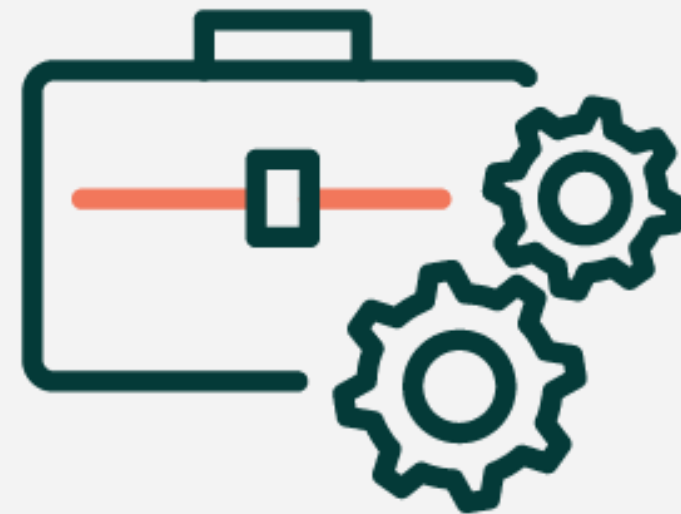
Under the leadership of Mayor Sohi, Edmonton (Canada) developed and is implementing a robust anti-racism strategy.



Mayor Ivy has invested significantly in strengthening engagement with and inclusion of minorities across Narayanganj (Bangladesh).

In Summary: Needs-Driven Local Action


Further showcasing the added value of local governments in effective community resilience-building: because of their access to communities, cities are best-placed to gauge **realities on the ground**, consolidating communities' needs to deploy prevention practices that respond to *actual* rather than assumed local threats and needs.



1. Needs Assessments, informed by communities whether through Town Hall meetings to gauge general sentiment, engagement on specific topics, consultations with local expert organisations, etc.

2. Programme/Practice Development, informed by actual community needs (*for communities, by communities*), in partnership with local actors

3. Coordination, Deployment and Evaluation, with local governments best-placed to coordinate efforts by relevant actors to address local threats and needs



There is so much innovation and potential at the local level.

Whether it is youth-led innovations, community-based projects, existing city-led efforts, there is much that cities can leverage and coordinate to build resilience and prevent hate and extremism.

Cities must be supported to tap into that potential.

*Actors at all levels – national, regional, international – should engage mayors and local governments as **partners** in the development and implementation of their counter-terrorism and broader community safety frameworks.*

Fifth Global Summit

Cape Town, South Africa
3-5 December 2024

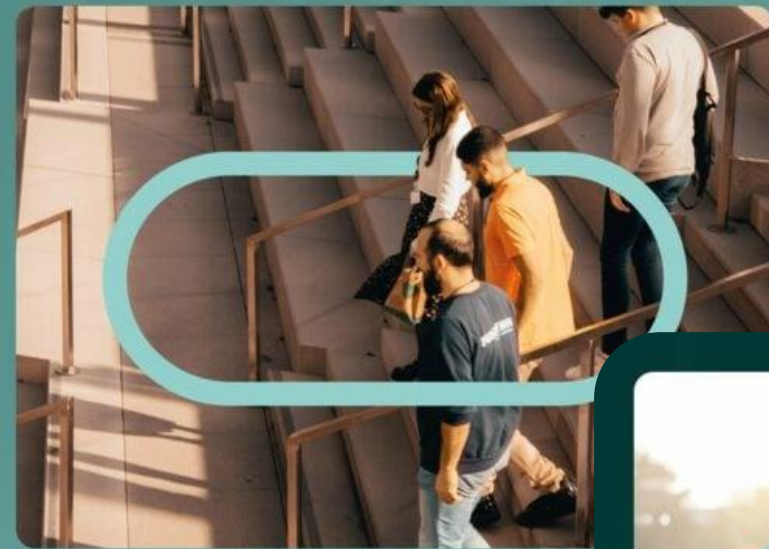
A chance to:

- Showcase mayoral leadership and city innovations in prevention and peacebuilding on a global scale; enhance **global-local cooperation**
- Ensure cities globally shape our priorities for 2025
- Provide a platform to update on new initiatives:
 - Women's Leadership Caucus
 - **New Strong Cities' thematic areas, responding to emerging concerns of cities globally:**
 - Global Crises, Local Impacts
 - Safeguarding Social Cohesion around Elections
 - Addressing Violence against Elected Officials
 - Preventing and Responding to Hate Speech
 - Digital Literacy/Digital Safety
 - Urban Planning and Social Cohesion
 - Cross-Border City-City Collaboration

Spotlight: Resource Hub

An open, living library of tools and guides to support mayors and cities in tackling hate, extremism and polarisation, and strengthening social cohesion. Practical tools, shaped by real-world examples and case studies, to support city-led, whole-of-society approaches to address a complex and evolving threat environment.

- [A Guide for Mayors](#)
- [A Guide for Cities](#)
- [A Guide for City-Led Response](#)
- [National-Local Cooperation Toolkit](#)
- [City Spotlights Library](#)



A Guide For Cities

For Preventing Hate, Extremism & Polarisation

Strong Cities Network



A Guide For Mayors

For Preventing and Responding to Hate, Extremism & Polarisation

September 2023

Strong Cities Network



A Guide For City-Led Response

Strong Cities Network




March 2024



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Strong Cities Network

Eric Rosand, Executive Director
er@strongcitiesnetwork.org

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