Practices and reflections on development, security, and peace in context of violent extremism and terrorism

Side-event of fourth biennial review of

the UN Global Counter-Terrorism strategy

June 10 2014

About the initiative

The side-event 'Practices and reflections on development, security, and peace in context of violent extremism and terrorism' that took place on the 10th of June 2014 follows previous side-events to the bi-annual review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. The idea to involve representatives of civil society in policy-dialogues on counter-terrorism grew out of the thinking and co-operation of two policy analysts of Cordaid, Fulco van Deventer and Lia van Broekhoven (later founders of the Human Security Collective) and a senior research fellow of the International Center on Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), Bibi van Ginkel.

Fulco van Deventer and Lia van Broekhoven have a background in development work and started to look into the implications of counter-terrorism measures on civil society organizations, while observing the relevance of CS work in the prevention of violent extremism[1]. Bibi van Ginkel specializes in UN practice on the legal aspects of counter-terrorism. She has worked on civil society engagement in countering violent extremism. Together with other organizations they have started to organize and stimulate dialogue between civil society and policymakers in the field of Counter-Terrorism.

---

[1] For more information, see for example the report 'Friend not Foe' 2011 and the talk by Human Security Collective associate Ben Hayes at TEDx.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement

Human Security Collective would like to acknowledge the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN for hosting the side event, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) for its logistical support, and Hedayah, Cordaid, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the West-African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) for their collaboration and (financial) support in making this event possible.

Special thanks goes to Marcel van den Bogaard, Maria van Steendelaar (Dutch Permanent Mission) and Fabrizio Trezza (CTITF) for their overall support to the side event.

Introduction

On June 10 2014 the side event 'Practices and reflections on development, security, and peace in context of violent extremism and terrorism' took place in New York. The side event was hosted by the Dutch Permanent Mission to the UN and organized by Human Security Collective (HSC) in collaboration with West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Hedayah, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), Cordaid, United Network of Young Peace builders (UNOY Peacebuilders) and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). The side event took place on the occasion of the UN General Assembly fourth biennial review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism strategy (GA resolution 68/276).

This report shares the main insights and discussions of the four panels of this side-event; 1) A human security approach to countering violent extremism in Mali, 2) Facilitating intra and inter-faith dialogue to prevent and counter violent extremism, 3) Reintegrating violent extremist offenders: a role for governments and communities, and 4) The role of young community leaders in fostering resilient communities. The report includes a short introduction of the multi-stakeholder approach to prevent and mitigate extreme violence. The report closes with recommendations that have been drawn from the different panels of the side-event.

A multi-stakeholder approach to prevent and mitigate extreme violence

The side event hosted by the Dutch Permanent Mission to the UN and organized by Human Security Collective (HSC) in collaboration with West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Hedayah, International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT), Cordaid, United Network of Young Peace builders (UNOY) and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), presented a number of practices and reflections on the prevention and mitigation of threats that may lead to violent extremism and terrorism. The organizers invited panelists from governments, civil society and communities around the globe. Their narratives reflect the characteristics of their geography, their position within their society and community and the topical issues they are involved with: security expertise, conflict mediation, human security, peace building, women's rights, reconciliation, facilitated peer to peer, victims' and perpetrators, intra and inter-faith dialogues and youth leadership.

The four panels of the side event focused on pillar 1 of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which calls for addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Pillar 1 enumerates several such conditions, including: "[p]rolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of the rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and lack of good governance (…)"[2]. Under this pillar Member States also included a direct link to the Millennium Development Goals by reiterating their determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals objectives.

The overarching theme of the panels was a multi-stakeholder approach to prevent and mitigate extreme violence, which is grounded in people's needs and capabilities when dealing with sources of threats. There were four panels to illustrate: 1) A human security approach to countering violent extremism in Mali, 2) Facilitating intra and inter-faith dialogue to prevent and counter violent extremism, 3) Reintegrating violent extremist offenders: a role for governments and communities, and 4) The role of young community leaders in fostering resilient communities. A delegate of the Dutch Mission opened and closed the panels, and each panel was introduced and moderated by one of the organizers.

Policymakers and development donors continue to debate a number of policy frameworks in relation to the UN GCTS and the post 2015 development agenda, including counter-terrorism (CT) measures, preventing and mitigating terrorism through countering violent extremism (CVE) and reducing the appeal to

---

[2] UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, General Assembly Resolution 60/288, adopted on 20 September 2006, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/504/88/PDF/N0550488.pdf?OpenElement

terrorism through dialogue and understanding (DUCAT). The organizers and panelists have been involved in a number of these discussions, each with nuanced differences in the way they substantiate CT, CVE, DUCAT and operationalize initiatives and programs, and therefore developed a side event on this topic that took into consideration multiple stakeholders, angles and viewpoints.

At the side event, the panelists and their practical experiences and reflections in contexts of conflict and violent extremism took center stage. They offered an inside view on their lived realities, which are vital to a sharpening of our understanding of countering terrorism and violent extremism, and to an improvement of programs that are conceived to deal with violent threats or to deal with development and peace building in contexts of violent extremism. Their narratives and anticipated interaction with the audience contributed to a better understanding of the interconnectedness between different policy and implementation frameworks, notably counter terrorism, countering violent extremism, development, human rights and peace building strategies.

Panel 1: Civil Society engagement and a human security approach on countering violent extremism in Mali

The first panel of the day approached the case of violent extremism in Mali through a human security perspective. Northern Mali, part of the Sahel region, is a large, sparsely populated area with porous borders and a weak state presence. These characteristics, together with poverty, community conflicts and unresolved grievances are some of the factors that have led to an increase in organized crime, violent extremism and terrorism in the country over the course of the last decade. The occupation of Northern Mali in 2012 by separatist rebels side-lined by Jihadist groups was broadly covered in the world news, but the crisis did not start in 2012. This panel shared experiences and reflections by representatives of the Malian government, civil society and the international community on how to address violent extremism as part of a multidimensional crisis in Mali and the broader Sahel region.

This panel was organized by Human Security Collective, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the West-African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) as part of their joint project: *Civil Society for a Human Security Strategy in Mali.* This project is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation.

The Ambassador of Mali to the UN, Amb. Sékou Kassé, opened the panel. He reflected upon several initiatives taken by the Malian government to prevent violent extremism and fight terrorism, including ratification of international judicial instruments, the adoption of national law repressing terrorism and the presidency of the ministerial platform to coordinate the Sahel strategies. Mali has developed a strategy, which combines a development angle to fight poverty and a repressive angle to fight terrorism. The Ambassador explained that all these different initiatives are inspired by the UNGCTS and, whether national, regional or international, involve civil

Panelists

Ambassador Mr. S.E.M. Sékou Kassé, Permanent Representative of Mali to the UN

Ms. Oulie Keita, WANEP / Freedom House, Mali

Mr. Michael Merker, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Imam Diallo, Association Malienne pour la Paix et le Salut (AMPS), Mali

Moderator: Mr. Fulco van Deventer, Human Security Collective

society organizations (CSOs). On the role of CSOs: '*One should note that civil society organizations characterized by their proximity to local populations can signalize security issues early and address them towards the authorities'.* He also emphasized the essential role that civil society plays to inform and raise awareness among the population. In the context of a highly religious country with an oral tradition, one should note the importance

of traditional communicators and religious leaders. In that regard, the Ambassador praised the role of the High Islamic Council of Mali in countering violent extremism. The Ambassador stressed that the majority of religious leaders in Mali preach a tolerant Islam. To strengthen this tendency the Malian government welcomed the training of 500 imams in Morocco, known for its similar, tolerant practice of Islam.

One issue raised by most of the presenters was the tension between short-term, often times military solutions and long-term processes that address root causes of violent extremism. Imam Diallo and Oulie Keita (West-African Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP) both emphasized that root causes of conflicts and extremist ideologies cannot be addressed with military methods alone. Instead, Keita stressed the need for a human security approach to address the multidimensional crisis that exploded in 2012. She stressed that people living in Mali noted early warning signs in the years before the crisis. These signs included corruption, unemployment, a deteriorating educational system, food insecurity, conflicts between communities, a dysfunctional judicial system, tensions in the army and poor engagement with separatist groups in the North. She noted that despite military efforts, the Malian crisis had not been resolved; '*Terrorists can be chased out to go into hiding in the mountains of Kidal / Timbuctu (…), but the root causes of the problem are not addressed*'. She highlighted the insecurities Malians both in the South and North had experienced and the distrust this has caused among communities. Social services remain absent in several area's and there is a high need for reconciliation. Her approach would be one of human security: *"A human security approach empowers local actors to develop appropriate responses such as*

Oulie Keita: "Military intervention is indeed necessary sometimes but it has to be accompanied by political dialogue, intra and inter-communal dialogue and with the full implication of the population who may be the actors and the victims of the crisis as well as drivers for change."

early –warning mechanisms and social protection instruments. Human Security entails bottom-up processes that highlight individual's roles and responsibilities, improves local capacities, strengthens social networks and ensures coherence in the allocation of resources and policies."

Imam Diallo represented the organization he founded, 'Association pour la Paix et le Salut'. His organization is active in Islamic-Christian dialogue since 2008 and part of a bigger network of Muslim spiritual leaders (Sufis) promoting a peaceful Islam in Mali which is tolerant to diversity. Imam Diallo raised the problem of radicalization of Islam in Mali with well-funded Salafist leaders spreading their ideology through their multiple radio stations. Referring to the stronger security forces of Nigeria that haven't been able to overcome the violence of Boko Haram, he wondered: '*How can a poor country like Mali, without a strong army, combat terrorist groups?*'
For the Imam the major problem is not a struggle between arms but a struggle between ideologies. Therefore Imam Diallo called for support of initiatives of the Sufi movement that promotes an ideology of a peaceful and tolerant Islam. The Imam was concerned by the dominance of Salafist and Wahhabi Muslims in the high Islamic Council in Mali, who according to him do not represent the religious majority of the country. The ambassador however praised the role of the council and stressed that it is a legitimate and democratic state institution.

Finally, Michael Merker, representing the European External Action Service and active since 2008 in the development of programs in Mali, described how intergovernmental organizations can assist and advise national governments and offer a toolbox of many initiatives to address current threats of terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism. According to Merker, a functional government, which involves the rule of law and implementation of justice on all levels, is key to address and overcome violent extremism in the long run. Merker's main recommendation for future policy was to increase the links between policy fields within the UN and the EU and their interventions, interconnecting fields of development, security and education. Furthermore, Merker noted that the region including Libya, Nigeria and Morocco needs to be approached in an interconnected manner.

Panel 2: Intra and Interfaith dialogue to prevent and counter violent extremism

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy[3] calls for the promotion of "a culture of peace (…) religious tolerance and respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs or cultures by establishing and encouraging, as appropriate, education and public awareness programs involving all sectors of society" as a way to address the conditions-conducive to the spread of terrorism. The theme of the second panel, inter and intra faith dialogue fit well within this framework. The central question in this panel was; what are potentials and pitfalls of intra and inter faith dialogue to preventing and mitigating extreme violence and terrorism? This question was addressed by religious leaders and practitioners of inter and intra religious dialogue, who shared their experiences, good practices and challenges with inter faith dialogue in Kenya, Nigeria and Northern Ireland. The panel was organized by Human Security Collective and Hedayah.

Panelists

Mr. Abdi Billow, WAJIR Peace and Development Agency, Kenya

Father George Ehusani, Interfaith Activities and Partnership for Peace, Nigeria

Father Gary Donegan, Passionist Community in Holy Cross, Northern Ireland

Moderator: Mr. Ivo Veenkamp, Hedayah

The panel was opened by Father George, a priest from the Interfaith Activities and Partnership for Peace (IFAPP) in Nigeria. Father George set up the IFAPP with a Muslim colleague in the wake of the radicalization of Boko Haram and increasing incidents of suicide bombing by elements of this group. Father George explained that the terrorist attacks transformed the already existing suspicions between Muslims and Christians into mutual hatred. Therefore IFAPP took the initiative to bring important Muslim and Christian religious leaders together to work for greater mutual understanding and peace. One of their strategies is the use of mass media, among others they have set up a weekly TV show in which Muslim and Christian leaders engage in discussions. Father George explained that although extremists themselves are not the main target audience for this TV show, it is important to reach the majority of the population to overcome the narrative of the extremists and develop an understanding that there is no religious war between Christians and Muslims. This can prevent radicalization. A challenge he faces is to agree within each religious group, which is diverse in itself, on the participation in interfaith dialogue and what approach to take towards the other faith. One important lesson to be gleaned from Father George's experience is that engagement in intra-faith dialogue is a condition to organize interfaith dialogue.

As in Nigeria, religious leaders in Kenya also undertake collaborative action to counter violent extremism. Abdi Billow, representing his local organization Wajir Peace and Development Agency, described his experiences in Wajir, a historically marginalized place in North Eastern Kenya. The region has often been described as being a breeding ground for Al-Shabaab, partially due to poverty and unemployment. In 1998 religious leaders from different denominations of the Muslim and Christian faith started working together in public education in churches and mosques and on warning mechanisms against terrorist activities and recruitment in communities. Billow was positive on the development of this joint strategy of civil society and government in his community. However,

---

[3] UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, General Assembly Resolution 60/288, adopted on 20 September 2006, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/504/88/PDF/N0550488.pdf?OpenElement

he is also critical towards the government's strategy, which sometimes labeled individuals as extremists too quickly. Billow stressed that this approach provides the wrong message, only breeding radicalization instead of countering it by opening dialogue. Billow also noted an additional challenge to inter-faith dialogue in Kenya: that Muslim institutions in Kenya nowadays lack funding as important Muslim foundations have been banned from the country as they were labeled as (aiding) terrorists.

The third panelist, Father Gary, shared his experiences of countering violence and building peace as a Passionist priest in the Holy Cross parish of Belfast, Northern Ireland. In Belfast Father Gary found indifference and disenchantment among the people of his parish when he started working there in 2001. The community had lost a lot of people during the 40 year conflict. They felt the church was at best irrelevant, and at worst complicit of what happened, due to the perceived neglect to highlight the injustices that took place during the conflict. In this context of disenchantment and the rise of militant groups caused by frustration and powerlessness, Father Gary found himself organizing cross community services for Christmas, negotiating contentious parades and engaging with people from all sides of the conflict to build alliances and peace. He stressed the importance of finding relevance in the lives of people that feel powerless and tend to turn violent. As a religious leader in a community in which approximately 20% practices, he emphasized the need to spend his time out on the roads and experiencing the real situations instead of staying in the safe environment of one's institution.

As a whole, all of the panelists noted that in the context of violent extremism there is an urgency to build bridges between religious leaders, between communities, and between different stakeholders to work together. These stakeholders might have different beliefs and practices, and they might even experience tensions between and amongst them. Moreover, there are many challenges associated

with inter and intra faith dialogue in an effort to prevent violent extremism and build peaceful communities. For example, not all parties are interested in participating in open dialogue, and addressing the religious aspect of violent extremism requires a nuanced and sensitive approach. On the other hand, to promote and catalyze change in the community, governments, religious leaders and citizens can prevent violent extremism if they engage in collaborative efforts to do so. Insights of what works and what does not work is only possible when different stakeholders share experiences and engage in dialogue.

Panel 3: Reintegrating Violent Extremist Offenders: A Role for Governments and Communities

This panel, organized by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), focused on the process of reintegration of violent extremist offenders once they have been released from prison. Efforts to successfully reintegrate these individuals in society are important for assisting them in becoming peaceful, law-abiding citizens and preventing future extremist violence.

The panel was opened by Ambassador Karel van Oosterom, Dutch Permanent Representative to the UN. He stressed that within the Dutch approach to CVE, next to suppression, a large part of the government's attention focuses on understanding, identifying and preventing the process of radicalization. He emphasized the need to create an active, resilient society with good community-government relations.

The different panelists represented a multi-stakeholder approach to the reintegration process. They shared experiences in which the roles of a wide range of departments in government, prison staff, local authorities, civil society, communities, ex-offenders and victims themselves, were highlighted. Eelco Kessels, who has worked for several years on the development and implementation of training modules on reintegration for prison staff, emphasized the importance that different stakeholders, both on the recipient and on the providing side, are identified and sit around the table together to share experiences and develop appropriate and well-coordinated rehabilitation and reintegration programs. An important aspect of reintegration is to show that there are other ways than violence to be of significance in society.

Panelists

Mr. Max Boon, ICCT – The Hague / Alliance for a Peaceful Indonesia (AIDA)

Tim Andrews, US Department of State

Mr. Eelco Kessels, ICCT – The Hague

Mr. Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi, InReach Consult / South Asian Network on Conflict Research, Sri Lanka

Opening remarks: Amb. Karel van Oosterom, Dutch Permanent Representative to the UN

Moderator: Ms. Lia van Broekhoven, Human Security Collective

Tim Andrews, CVE advisor to the US State Department but speaking on a personal basis, focused on the support provided by the US government to overseas rehabilitation and reintegration programs and the role of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) Rome Memorandum in guiding their development. His experience showed that, as governments deepened their awareness of the GCTF Rome Principles, they often transformed their typically prison-centric approach into a broader inter-agency approach. They brought in ministries with responsibility for domains such as health, education, religious affairs and vocational training, as well as civil society counterparts. Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi, Director of InReach Consult and advisor to the South Asian Network on Conflict Research, shared his views on the experience of Sri Lanka with reintegration program for the former Tamil Tiger combatants, after they had been defeated in May 2009. The program paid significant attention to interpersonal relations, conflict resolution and peace, gender roles in society and the value of diversity. A central aim of the program was to overcome a separatist, exclusionist ideology and its futility in the context of South Asia. Citizenry of Sri Lanka, according to Hettiarachchi, comes with embracing the dignity of

difference. Another aspect of the reintegration program was to prepare communities and local authorities to accept returning beneficiaries without prejudice and social stigma. Such prejudice can prevent smooth reintegration and instead cause a backlash of hatred and violence. Hettiarachchi stressed the need for reintegration programs as a definitive means to much debated restorative justice. Restoring the beneficiaries with conditions of life that had been denied to them by terrorist outfit: employment, education, music, family life, freedom of thought, pleasure and love, to name a few. Such a program, explained Shanthikumar, can help these individuals to successfully reintegrate in society, embrace a regular way of life and prevent a return to violence.

Finally, ICCT Associate Fellow and founder of Alliance for a Peaceful Indonesia (AIDA), Max Boon, presented the work that he and his colleagues at AIDA have been doing over the past year, and will continue to do in the future. They empower, train and mobilize victims of terrorism to participate in outreach programs together with former

terrorists, to demonstrate the destructive impact of extremist violence to fellow Indonesians but also the powerful nature of forgiveness. A video on AIDA's work can be watched here. Max Boon is himself a victim of the 2009 bombing of the Jakarta Marriot Hotel and explained his thoughts about the young offender of the attack: *"(…) His aim was not to hurt me personally, but to conflict pain and fear among society. It is important that they, who make victims into abstracts, see the faces of the people whose life they destroyed."* Boon believes that victims can play an important role in CVE, when, instead of using their anger to speak out against violent extremism, they use positive dialogue and the ability to forgive while reaching out to at-risk groups such as youngsters and offenders, as well as the society at large. He recommended including forgiveness in all reintegration programs.

Panel 4: The role of young community leaders in fostering resilient communities

The final panel was organized by Human Security Collective, Hedayah, Cordaid and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders). It consisted of five young community leaders from Kenya, Palestine, Libya, Iraqi Kurdistan and Pakistan, sharing their views and experiences in initiatives that they are involved in to foster resilient communities. Some of them participate in the youth leadership programs of Human Security Collective and Cordaid while others are involved in the UNOY Peacebuilders' network.

While the international development community has long recognized the importance of youth as partners, problem-solvers and committed-leaders, in the world of peace and security, too often youth are narrowly approached as recipients of protection or potential problem makers / terrorists. This panel showed the capacities of young people to be of significance in their communities by engagement in a range of activities such as journalism, local peace building, human rights activism and peer to peer communication.

The panel was opened by Mr. Jehangir Khan, Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). Khan stressed the importance to involve youth in the policies addressing the various challenges of terrorism in different places in the world.

The first two panelists shared their experiences with countering violent extremism from a civil society and young leadership perspective in the high-risk areas of Kenya and Pakistan.

Panelists

Mr. Robert Ochola, From the Graves to the Ground, Kenya

Ms. Rewa Barghouty, Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy (PCPD), the State of Palestine

Mr. Marouane Bakit, Society Hope Makers for Human Rights, Libya

Mr. Krmanj Othman, part of Youth Advocacy Team of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, Iraqi Kurdistan

Ms. Gulalai Ismail, AWARE Girls, Pakistan

Discussant: Ms. Matilda Flemming, International Secretariat, United Network of Young Peacebuilders, The Hague

Opening remarks: Mr. Jehangir Khan, UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)

Moderator: Mr. Peter Knoope, ICCT- The Hague

Robert Ochola: "It is about time we talk with our young boys not to follow that path"

Robert Ochola, an engaged journalist from Nairobi, started off the panel by showing a short <u>video</u> on his work in journalism and peer to peer youth engagement. The video began with a clip of youngsters from Kenya that moved to Somalia to fight for Al-Shabaab. They sent messages back home for other

young boys to 'leave that infidel nonsense' and join their cause. The video also shows a scene in which a young suspected Al-Shabaab trained gangster calls Ochola for help in the middle of his radio show as the house he finds himself in is surrounded by the police. This illustrates how Ochola's work as a radio maker and young role model is close to youth and gangsters counseling. The video shows the importance of youth engagement in positive activities as sports and music but also the need for spaces for youth to openly interact in difficult discussions on violent extremism and gangs.

Gulalai Ismail: "Peace is not about men, peace is much more about young women"

Gulalai Ismail set up her young women led organization AWARE Girls in 2002, in which women are enabled to become leaders and drivers of change. The organization is active in a context of militancy and religious extremism, complicated by poor governance, poverty and low literacy. The young women of AWARE Girls engage in CVE programs in which young people are prevented to join militant groups, create open spaces for dialogue, revitalize indigenous culture destroyed by militants and promote non-violence and pluralism in the community. Ismail strongly believes such local peacebuilding is essential to achieve global peace, which cannot be 'imported'. While poverty and lower literacy make the problem of violent extremism more complex, they are not the root cause for extremism and terrorism, Ismail stressed. According to her '*that would blame poor people, while terrorism and extremism are about money, power and governance and should be seen from that lens'*.

The panelists from Palestine and Libya participate in the project implemented by Cordaid and Human Security Collective on Youth and Women leadership against violence.

Rewa Barghouty: "Youth can be innovative, responsible and has the ownership of their cause"

Rewa Barghouty from Palestine works in the West Bank with PCPD (Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy) on issues of true democracy and just peace and independence. The organization has a special focus on youth and women, developing young leader's capacities to participate in decision-making. She explained her own engagement: *"It is not just a job to me; it's my contribution in building my community (…) I feel privileged to get the chance to be part of making a positive change in my community."* In her opinion, it is a missed opportunity to perceive youth as victims and beneficiaries only, as '*youth can be innovative, responsible and has the ownership of their cause'*.

Marouane Bakit: "Youth should be acknowledged as valuable allies to tackle security issues"

Marouane Bakit set up the organization Society Hope Makers for Human Rights, based in Libya, a context where youth feels the sense of urgency as they are confronted with insecurities and human rights violations. Bakit explained that being trained in the youth and women leadership program provides young leaders methods to develop common ground among different stakeholders, improve leadership skills and engage with key (international) players on global security issues. He valued the interaction with international stakeholders and stressed the need for youth to be acknowledged as valuable allies for tackling security issues.

Krmanj Othman: "Without hope we cannot end violence"

Krmanj Othman from Iraqi Kurdistan, involved in the Young Advocacy Team (YAT) of UNOY Peacebuilders, explained his understanding of the concept of security today. In Kurdistan he has been involved in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees from Syria and Internally Displaced Persons from Iraq. He stressed that security issues are nowadays linked to all of us, noting the impact of the crisis in Syria on the region and even on the international level. Not only is security getting more globally interconnected, the concept of security itself has widened to include economic, social and cultural dimensions. Such dimensions are important for sustainable peace, he stressed. *"When discussing the role of youth in security, it is the process of developing human security that they want to be part of."* The connection between security and development relates to Othman's believe of the need for and strengthening of youth to build hope, as he explains that '*without hope we cannot end violence and start new life (…)'*. Youth involvement in peace processes and community security in all its dimensions can help make societies flexible to prevent instability and security threats. In order to realize hope amongst youth, it is important that they are being offered the space to participate in the dialogues and decision-making processes on peace and security issues. As in many societies participation of youth cannot be taken for granted, international mechanisms such as the Youth Advocacy Team help to create such spaces.

Matilda Flemming: "Young people are not the future, young people are important stakeholders today"

Matilda Flemming (UNOY Peacebuilders) wrapped up the session with some conclusions and 'bumper stickers'. She wanted to get rid of the cliché that "The youth is the future", as according to her; 'Youth is not the future; they are important stakeholders today'. She underlined the importance of governance for security, as mentioned by other panelists, but noted that part of good governance is having strong civil society including strong youth organizations. For advice on how to engage with youth on peace and security issues, she referred to the recently launched Guiding Principles on Young Peoples Participation in Peacebuilding.

Closing remarks

Engagement with civil society has increasingly been valued in UN policy dialogues on Counter-Terrorism. This increased value is reflected in the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy Review, adopted 13 June 2014, in which the General Assembly *'[e]ncourages civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to engage, as appropriate, in efforts to enhance the implementation of the Strategy, including through interaction with Member States and the United Nations system, and encourages Member States and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and its entities to enhance engagement with civil society in accordance with their mandates, as appropriate, and to support its role in the implementation of the Strategy'[4].*

This side event and the ones organized in 2010 and 2012 have played a part in realizing the continuous dialogue and engagement between civil society and policy makers in the field of counter-terrorism. Between the first side-event of 2010 and the last one in 2014, one can observe that engagement with civil society has increasingly been valued in UN policy dialogues on Counter-Terrorism. A more diverse range of CS, including those from high risk and conflict areas, was able to participate in the 2012 and 2014 side events. It has also been interesting to see that the audience increasingly included policymakers in the CT field, both of the UN and of member states.

The panels of the 2014 side-event contributed to a further closing of the gap between global policy making and governments, civil society, communities and citizens. They underscored the validation of the UNGCTS pillar 1. They encouraged civil servants, policy makers and donors to take stock of these practices, the context in which they can work, and possibilities for scaling up. Validation of the strategy through concrete initiatives and programs that are embedded in local reality is what is most required. The issues at hand are complex and cannot be resolved by one party only nor by either a bottom-up approach or a top-down approach. Collective approaches that leave space for complementary knowledge and insights gained through practical experience, and honor the dignity of people and communities are in the view of the organizers, the way forward. The role of intermediary organizations and persons that are trusted by different groups and can bridge the local context with national, regional and global policy-making is vital. Equally important is the creation of an enabling environment where actors are invited to speak on experiences that are effective, common mistakes made and lessons learnt. A learning and open attitude will, therefore contribute to an effective implementation of initiatives that prevent and mitigate violent extremism.

The organizers are aware of more angles and approaches in relation to the implementation of the UNGCTS and other narratives that may be shared by governments, civil society and citizens. We are cognizant of other valuable collaborative efforts that seek to interconnect different schools of thoughts and a growing body of practices, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and initiatives of UN bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP that cross over existing policy and operational boundaries with the aim to complement counter terrorism programming. By organizing the side event, we underline the importance of opportunities like the GCTS review to exchange practices, reflections and viewpoints related to a mix of approaches and presented by a diverse gamut of stakeholders that can contribute to a more secure and stable environment for societies and communities.

---

[4] UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy Review, General Assembly Resolution 68/276, adopted on 13 June 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/276

The question remains: what's next? Now civil society sits at the table with UN CT bodies, the major aim remains to make this dialogue and engagement between government and civil society a reality on national levels. This process has already been started, not only by the organizations involved in this side-event, but also by other civil society and policymakers on the ground. Challenges at the national level are different from the more abstract international level. Furthermore, with the recent developments in the Middle-East and Africa where several violent-extremist groups have become more powerful, many governments lean towards taking repressive measures. While such measures might be necessary at some stages and in some areas, it is crucial to remain vigilant for the politics of fear. Dialogue between a wide range of CS and policymakers in the counter-terrorism field is and remains important to ensure a critical reflection on counter terrorism measures to be taken, develop multi-stakeholder approaches that address root causes of violent extremism and ensure operational and political space for civil society.

Recommendations[5]

- Multi stakeholder engagement strategies that promote shared analysis and action with a variety of government departments and civil society organizations, can be an effective step forward to creating better policies and practice to countering violent extremism.

- Military strategies to counter violent extremism do not offer sustainable solutions. They have to be accompanied with political solutions that address root causes to violent extremism. Civil society is essential in analyzing and addressing these root causes to violent extremism.

- Religious leaders can play a critical role in countering violent extremism. Facilitating intra- and inter-religious dialogue to promote understanding and increase acceptance of the other is key to countering the narrative of hate.

- Good reintegration practices of violent extremist offenders should facilitate ex-combatants in their process of playing a positive role in society.

- Counter violent extremism policies should acknowledge and include the role of young change makers. These innovative, responsible citizens can play a crucial role in addressing violence in their respective communities and conditions conducive to violent extremism.

---

[5] These recommendations have been drawn from the different panels that took place during the side event of June 10 2014. For more advice on applying a human security approach in CVE, read the Human Security Guiding Practices for Countering Violent Extremism.