



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
15 February 2017

English only

---

## Human Rights Council

Thirty-fourth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Jssor Youth Organization, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2017]

---

\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.17-02358(E)



\* 1 7 0 2 3 5 8 \*

Please recycle



## **Youth and preventing extremism and protecting human rights**

*The only — strategy to isolate and defeat terrorism is by respecting human rights, fostering social justice, enhancing democracy and upholding the primacy of the rule of law. The late Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002).<sup>1</sup>*

Terrorism and violent extremism aims at the very destruction of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It attacks the values that lie at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments: is a denial of democracy and of human rights, which are at the very core of our existence as equal.

But what are the effective approaches that combine countering radicalization with human rights protection as mutually reinforcing goals? What roles can young people, often considered especially vulnerable to the threat? How can we make educational efforts work in the digital era?

In some countries counter-terrorism measures continue to violate human rights in taking extreme measures include: prolonged, incommunicado detention without judicial review; torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees; the transfer, return, extradition, and expulsion of persons at risk of being subjected to torture or ill treatment; and the adoption of security measures that curtail the right to freedom of association and movement and breach the principle of non-discrimination.

While the primarily discussions concerned with implementing international human rights standards within counter-terrorism policies and, as such, its focus is the relevant standards in international human rights law it is crucial to invest more in prevention measures targeting young people

Despite the numerous initiatives by the UN and state members to prevent or counter violent extremism there is no generally accepted definition of violent extremism, which remains an ‘elusive concept’, Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon, without clear definition. It is neither new nor exclusive to any region, nationality or system of belief<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, in recent years, terrorist groups have shaped our image of violent extremism and the debate on how to address the factors that violent extremism into terrorism; we need to recognize that the choice to support violent extremism is driven by many factors; a sense of disengagement and marginalization, despite the interconnected world we live in, leaves young people vulnerable to recruitment wherever they are. Some young people join violent extremist groups as a way to pursue exclusionary ideologies, to rectify real and/or perceived injustice, or to feel part of something larger than themselves. Some feel coerced to use violence because of manipulation or fear. The resulting violence has taken too many innocent lives, in response; governments have taken action to counter violent extremist movements, often through military force.

However, this approach only tackles the symptoms of the problem rather than addressing the factors driving participation in violent extremism. In many instances, security responses by governments further aggravate tensions and trigger more support for violent ideologies. This approach often adds to the feeling of exclusion and fails to engage youth as key allies in building resilience against violent extremism.

In its resolution 2178 (2014), the Security Council makes explicit the link between violent extremism and terrorism, underscores the importance of measures being in line with international norms and recognizes the need for prevention: “violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism”, requires collective efforts, “including preventing radicalization, recruitment and mobilization of individuals into terrorist groups and becoming foreign terrorist fighters”.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/rights/2002\\_10\\_21\\_hchr\\_statement.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/rights/2002_10_21_hchr_statement.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/SG-Plan-of-Action-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism-1.pdf>

In that resolution, the Council “calls upon Member States to enhance efforts to counter this kind of violent extremism”, recognizing that “international cooperation and any measures taken by Member States to prevent and combat terrorism must comply fully with the Charter of the United Nations”. Definitions of “terrorism” and “violent extremism” are the prerogative of Member States and must be consistent with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law.

The response to violent extremism needs meaningful youth participation at all levels. Our generation, like the generations before us, challenges the status quo and demands new ideas and systems. To effectively address the drivers of violent extremism and promote peace, youth must be engaged as partners in the design and implementation of relevant programs and policies. With commitments to learning, to partnership, to innovation, and to impact, we are ready to address violent extremism, a defining challenge for our generation.

We should work across communities and religious groups to foster trust, dialogue, and mutual understanding, building social cohesion and decreasing marginalization and injustice.

Work with other young people to speak up and address grievances constructively, without violence, by building skills in communication, advocacy, and collaborative problem solving.

Building the capacity of front-line actors, such as the police, teachers, social workers and young religious leaders as well as promoting training in schools can strengthen young people’s knowledge and skills to understand and reject violence and extremism narratives. Initiatives involving former violent extremists have shown great impact on youth as they can share their personal stories and challenge violent ideologies with more credibility.

Create partnerships with local and national governments, as well as international institutions, to design policies and strategies that prevent and counter violent extremism and work with other youth, civil society organizations, research institutions, religious leaders, and governments to identify and address drivers of conflicts and marginalization, furthermore recognize that policies and strategies focused on youth without youth input are rarely effective, and more contributions to these policies by youth members to ensure that they are appropriate, relevant, and impactful.

All actors must partner with young people more effectively to jointly address the challenges in create mechanisms for young people to participate in developing local, national, and international prevention strategies that include governmental and nongovernmental action, participation must include vulnerable youth, former violent extremists, and excombatants.

Also need to be addressed the official policies on countering violent extremism and terrorism to identify counterproductive policies and divisive language and clearly outline an inclusive process for revision. Governments should repeal or amend policies, which prevent young people’s full access to their fundamental rights and reduce the space for civil society and to foster dialogue between security services and young people to develop joint action plans to address grievances and injustices at the community level. These mechanisms must be designed to enable at risk youth to engage in positive and constructive ways with security forces, including police, military, and intelligence agencies.

---