



## **THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

---

**Youth, Peace and Security: The role of Youth in Mitigating and Countering Violent Extremism.**

### **BACKGROUND GUIDE**

SAIMUN 2019

LETTER FROM THE DAIS:

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Security Council Dais, I would like to welcome you to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Sub-Saharan Model United Nations, and to the Security Council! This year's Security Council staff is comprised of; Fred K. Muthusi (Chair) and Yahya Ibrahim (Committee Secretary). During the conference our agenda item shall be:

**Youth, Peace and Security: The role of Youth in Mitigating and Countering Violent Extremism.**

The United Nations Security Council is considerably the most powerful body in the United Nations. The council is charged with the mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Since 1990, the Council has dramatically increased its activity and it now meets in nearly continuous sessions. It dispatches military operations, imposes sanctions, mandates arms inspections, and deploys election monitors.

This background guide shall serve as a base of introduction to the agenda. In as much as this guide will provide you with relevant information, it is important to note that it should not replace individual research. I urge you to conduct an extensive research on your country's foreign policy. In addition to that, it is important that you familiarize yourself with the policies of other member states. This is especially if you wish to lobby during debate.

Honorable delegate, I encourage you to acquaint yourself with the Rules of Procedure and the SAIMUN code of conduct.

I wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at conference.

Best wishes,

Fred K. Muthusi

Chair

## THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL



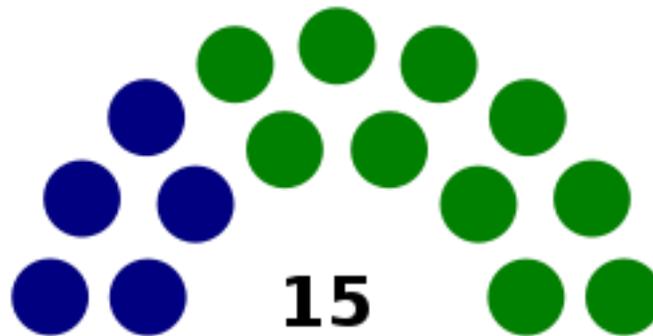
The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with the maintenance of international peace and security as well as accepting new members to the United Nations and approving any changes to its United Nations Charter. Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the imposition of international sanctions and the authorization of military action through Security Council Resolutions. The UNSC has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. As first recourse, it normally calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

## Membership of the Security Council



The Council is comprised of fifteen member states; five permanent members-*China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States*- and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. The current non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council are Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland and South Africa.



**AGENDA ITEM: YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY: THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN MITIGATING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM.**



**Violent extremism: What is it?**

Just as the term *terrorism* has not been universally defined, there has been no consensus in reaching an internationally accepted definition of the term *violent extremism*. The emergence and prevalent use of this term has coincided with the big global divide on the term *terrorism*. The term *violent extremism* was put forward as an alternative and less controversial term to refer to acts considered *terrorist* without being considered *politically incorrect*.

Extremism, though not universally understood thusly, refers to ideas that are systematically opposed to societal norms and acceptable ways of behavior. It has also been used to refer to the disregard for the human rights of the general populace by individuals or a group that seeks to determine or influence how life should be lived. This is usually in pursuit of an ideal or a perfect world in a certain respect. To be extreme, in this context therefore, means being over-zealous and having an intolerant view or an excessive belief in a cause that leads the beholder to seek to single-handedly change the world and achieve their transformation of this ‘imperfect’ world. With the addition of the word *violent* to the word *extremism*, the resultant statement (violent extremism) denotes an inclination by such people to use forceful methods to achieve their aims.

The process of change in an individual’s beliefs from being conventional to seeing the need for a drastic change in society is known as radicalization. Violent extremism is when a person (or group) who is radicalized decides that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and then acts accordingly. All forms of violent extremism seek change through fear and intimidation rather than through peaceful means. The justification of violence is

based on the belief of superiority, of “we” (good) and “them” (bad) and of the illegitimacy of the established *status quo* that has to be overthrown as soon as possible and by all means.

Violent extremist groups generally display the following characteristics;

- Anti-constitutional, anti-democratic, anti-pluralist, authoritarian;
- Fanatical, intolerant, non-compromising, single-minded thinkers;
- Rejecting the rule of law and adherence to an ends-justify-means philosophy;
- Aiming to realize their goals by any means necessary, including, when the opportunity offers itself, the use of massive political violence against opponents
- A propensity to;
  1. Use force/violence over persuasion;
  2. Promote uniformity over diversity;
  3. Establish collective goals over individual freedom;
  4. Give orders over dialogue.

### Drivers of Violent Extremism in the World

Table 1. Potential Risk Factors for Radicalization into Violent Extremism

Experiencing identity conflict
Feeling there is a lack of meaning in life
Wanting status
Wanting to belong
Desiring action or adventure
Having experienced trauma
Having mental health issues or being emotionally unstable/troubled
Being naïve or having little knowledge of religion and ideology
Having strong religious beliefs
Having grievances
Feeling under threat
Having an “us versus them” world view
Justifying violence or illegal activity as a solution to problems
Having engaged in previous criminal activity
Stressors (e.g., a family crisis, being fired from a job)
Societal discrimination or injustice
Exposure to violent extremist groups or individuals
Exposure to violent extremist belief systems or narratives
Family members or other in violent extremist network

## Extremism and Social Media



In online communities, made possible by social media platforms, information is able to be generated by users and shared to people it could never reach otherwise. This has enabled radical extremists to share their information and propaganda in bigger volumes and across greater geographical area-linking people at greater extents than would have been possible in any previous era. The internet has been used by extremist groups to:

- Create appealing, interactive user-friendly platforms to attract younger audiences
- Offer spaces where groups can maintain secret but highly democratic communication modes on the assumption that everyone can participate
- Disseminate extremist, violent and criminal content, which would not be well received otherwise;
- Identify potential participants and provide them with information about ‘the cause’ and the groups involved in defending it;
- Deliver massive publicity for acts of violence and enhancing a perception of strength;
- Spread propaganda, which is the main tool of recruitment;
- Provide several opportunities for participation in online and offline activities by sharing resources, trainings on “how to...” and potential targets.
- Produce false information using the fact that all types of information on the internet can be displayed on an equal footing. This can provide an illusion of credibility and legitimacy to extremist narratives. The public is now directly addressed by these propagandists and therefore allowing what was previously restricted, taboo now to be mainstream, able to be discussed by all, viewed by all and in the process win some converts.
- Facilitate the further process of radicalization post-recruitment, though tactical learning, exploiting confirmation biases (which confirm and amplify people’s previous opinions), gathering data and planning attacks.
- Establish a 24-hour intimate communication that aims at developing relations of complicity and friendship. This develops a sense of belonging and identity for the would-be terrorist.

- Foster one-on-one dialogue with young people, so as to isolate the young person at-risk and gradually induct him or her into a new “brotherhood” with violent extremist ideas creating strong interpersonal bonds.
- Influence the candidate to sever offline social ties and replace them with online or new offline ties from the extremist group to shape conceptions and inhibit disengagement.

### History/Past UN Actions



The United Nations Security Council has been at the forefront of adopting measures that seek to counter violent extremism. In 2014 the council passed resolution 2418 in which the Security Council makes an explicit link between violent extremism and terrorism. In addition to that 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”.

To prevent the subversion of the work of educational, cultural and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters, the council passed resolution 1624 in which the council seeks to take appropriate measures against all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or

belief, as exhibited in particular in the curricula of formal and non-formal educational institutions, and textbooks and teaching methods

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly by its resolution 60/288, addresses prevention and foresees balanced implementation across all four of its pillars: (a) tackling conditions conducive to terrorism; (b) preventing and combating terrorism; (c) building countries' capacity to combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard; and (d) ensuring respect for human rights for all and the rule of law while countering terrorism.

### **Questions a Resolution Must Answer:**



1. In order to be effective in countering violent extremism, the Council must take swift action to ensure that a dynamic approach is employed when it comes to violent extremism. Therefore, how can the council seek to ensure that any restrictions on freedom of expression are clearly and narrowly defined and meet the three-part test of legality, proportionality and necessity?
2. Violent extremists require the tacit support of a wider circle of sympathizers. If violent extremists can be deprived of this support, their capacity to cause harm and evade justice will be greatly reduced. How can the council promote in partnership with civil society and communities, a discourse that addresses the drivers of violent extremism, including ongoing human rights violations?
3. How can the council ensure accountability for gross violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including those amounting to crimes under international law, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity?

4. How can the UNSC ensure comprehensive participation of young men and women in activities that are aimed at countering violent extremism?
5. How can the UNSC mainstream gender perspectives to prevent violent extremism?
6. How can the UNSC ensure that there is no paradox of tolerance?

#### Citations:

1. Al Jazeera (2007), *Every Woman, Women of Hezbollah*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpz7eAe-glg> (part 1) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFCOFt24LLE> (part 2).
2. UN General Assembly- Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674)
3. Sageman, Marc, *Understanding Terror Networks*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
4. United Nations Resolution 1624- S/RES/1624 (2005).
5. The Charter of the United Nations.