



Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism

Concept note for a High-Level Event at the 14th Crime Congress in Kyoto

Tuesday 21 April 2020, 2:30-4:00PM

I. Context and Justification

Men and women are involved in the activities of terrorist groups such as ISIL/Daesh, Al-Shabaab or Boko Haram and in the commission of terrorism-related offences. However, in many cases, the circumstances of their association with these groups and the roles that they fulfil differ. Further, while women and men are among the victims of general acts of terrorism, women and girls are specifically targeted through acts of sexual and gender-based violence to achieve tactical and ideological aims. In some contexts, women disproportionately experience internal displacement due to terrorist threats, and may also face gender-specific difficulties accessing justice and seeking remedies as victims of terrorism.

Despite these different impacts and associations, traditional analysis has often placed women on the periphery of terrorism and counter-terrorism discourses, either viewing them solely as victims or as unwilling or incidental associates of the primary terrorist actors. Recently, there has been growing recognition at the international level that women are associated with and affected by terrorism in complex ways. This calls for gender perspectives to be considered through the spectrum of State responses to terrorism, ranging from measures to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism, and in criminal justice responses to terrorism.

UNODC's work in this regard is based on the understanding that criminal justice responses which do not differentiate between the impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism measures on women and men may in fact reflect largely male priorities, since men typically dominate decision-making at the household, community, and state levels.

The 2017 General Assembly resolution on *Technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to counter-terrorism* (A/RES/72/194) encourages UNODC "to assist Member States, upon request, in mainstreaming gender perspectives into criminal justice responses to terrorism, in full compliance with human rights law, in order to prevent the recruitment of women and girls as terrorists and promote the full protection of women and girls from any form of exploitation or violence perpetrated by terrorists".

This mandate was reconfirmed and expanded by the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in May 2019. The CCPCJ also welcomed the publication of the *UNODC Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*.¹

These requests to UNODC complement numerous other General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, Secretary-General reports, and other documents from the UN and others (e.g. GCTF), calling on Member States and UN entities to pay more attention to gender dimensions and women's rights in counter-terrorism and P/CVE, and to address sexual and gender-based violence used as a tactic of terrorism.²

¹ Available here: https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/17-08887_HB_Gender_Criminal_Justice_E_ebook.pdf

² GA resolution 68/178 (2014), 2018 Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review resolution, Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, Security Council resolutions 2242 (2015) and 2331 (2016).



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Since 2017, UNODC has included capacity building on gender dimensions into its technical assistance cooperation with countries in Africa³, the Middle East, Central, South and South-East Asia.

II. Purpose of the High-Level Event

The Side Event will serve to

- Discuss trends regarding women's participation in terrorist groups;
- Highlight the links and synergies between SDGs 5 and 16, the UN's Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and UNODC's technical assistance regarding gender dimensions of criminal justice responses to terrorism;
- Present examples of UNODC technical assistance and collaboration with Member States to strengthen the ability to take into account gender dimensions in criminal justice responses to terrorism;
- Disseminate the recently published UNODC *Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*.

³ See eg <https://www.unodc.org/nigeria/en/unodc-launches-nigeria-training-module-on-gender-dimensions-of-criminal-justice-responses-to-terrorism.html>