**STRIVE JUVENILE: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups**

**Launch in Nigeria - 15 APRIL 2021**

# Une image contenant texte  Description générée automatiquementBACKGROUND

In recent years, the international community has been increasingly confronted with the **association of children with terrorist and violent extremist groups**. Children who become associated with these groups can be subjected to serious and prolonged violence, which can result in devastating consequences. For girls in particular, the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence is a constant threat and reality. Above all, child recruitment and exploitation can result in early death. Even the children who survive such an ordeal must cope with terrible physical and emotional scars. Violence places at risk not only their health, but also their ability to learn and grow into adults who can create wholesome families and communities.

At the same time, due to their age and psychological malleability, children may become dangerous instruments in the hands of those exploiting/instrumentalizing them for the purpose of **committing criminal offences.** Indeed, children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups may be involved in the commission of serious offences, including acts of terrorism, war crimes or crimes against humanity.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Since 2015, in the framework of its Global Programme to End Violence against Children, UNODC has given priority to the issue of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups. Building on its dual mandate on counter-terrorism and violence against children, the Office has provided specialized technical assistance to over 35 countries in different regions of the world that are confronting this complex phenomenon. To do so, the Office has produced a **comprehensive training package**[[2]](#footnote-3), comprised of one Handbook and three specialized training Manuals and has developed the **‘UNODC Roadmap on the Treatment of Children Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups**’.[[3]](#footnote-4)

In recent years, Nigeria has been seriously impacted by the phenomenon of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups. Through its presence on the ground with its Country Office, UNODC has had the opportunity to assess national counterparts’ willingness to engage on this issue as a priority. In June 2019, UNODC held the first *National Consultative Workshop on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist Groups* in Abuja. As a follow-up to the event, on 26 August 2019, UNODC received a request for technical assistance from the Director of Public Prosecutions in the Federal Ministry of Justice of Nigeria to address the judicial challenges posed by children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups, and to suggest potential programming opportunities in this area.

In response to this request, UNODC organized a scoping mission to Nigeria in January 2020. A debriefing session, co-chaired by Rear Admiral Y.E.M. Musa, the ONSA Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, was held to conclude the scoping mission and present the preliminary findings and recommendations. UNODC and the Government of Nigeria now have an opportunity to build on these previous efforts and enhance their cooperation in this area through **STRIVE Juvenile**, a new STRIVE action supported by the European Union.

# Une image contenant texte  Description générée automatiquementLAUNCH OF STRIVE JUVENILE IN NIGERIA

STRIVE Juvenile aims to prevent and counter violent extremism affecting children, in full respect of human rights, gender equality and international law. To do so, the project pursues two **interconnected objectives**:

1. Strengthening government strategies, policies and mechanisms related to child association with terrorist groups;
2. Increasing the resilience of children and their environment against violent extremist and terrorist agendas.

STRIVE Juvenile will provide direct support to policy-makers, professionals, front-line officers and service providers who share responsibilities over protecting children from terrorism and violent extremism, and support children associated with terrorist and extremist groups, their families and communities as key beneficiaries. In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the project foresees the implementation of a number of **actions**, including:

* Research on the nature and extent of the phenomenon, good practices exchanges and awareness raising activities at national, regional and global levels;
* Provision of legal and policy advice on appropriate prevention and responses to the phenomenon of child association with these groups, with a view to promoting evidence-based and participative policy-making, based on gender-sensitive and child-sensitive approaches;
* Tailored capacity-building for professionals working in this area, adapted to their needs and roles;
* Interventions aimed at fostering participation of children and their environments in decision-making, including through their involvement in prevention and reintegration efforts.

Under STRIVE Juvenile, UNODC is partnering with three countries selected on the basis of their demonstrated political will to increase protection of children from terrorism, and their decisive role in setting the agenda on dealing with this phenomenon at both regional and global levels.

Throughout the planning and implementation of activities under the project in Nigeria, UNODC aims to prioritize **national ownership**, under the guidance of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), the lead coordination agency at the national level, and through the involvement and contribution of all national stakeholders who share responsibilities over the treatment of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups. To ensure that the proposed action is responsive to national and local contexts, STRIVE Juvenile foresees an **Inception Phase**, which will be dedicated to developing new and strengthening existing partnerships with all relevant counterparts and to assess the situation on the ground.

The **Launch of STRIVE Juvenile in Nigeria** will be an opportunity to introduce the project to key stakeholders and will commence the Inception Phase in the country.

# Une image contenant texte  Description générée automatiquementKEY OBJECTIVES OF THE LAUNCH

The **Launch of STRIVE Juvenile** will provide an opportunity for UNODC, ONSA and all relevant national counterparts to explore avenues for cooperation under the Project and to set the agenda for the Inception Phase.

Throughout its duration, and starting with the Launch, STRIVE Juvenile will continue to pursue a multi-stakeholder approach, involving a wide-range of professionals from the security sector, the justice system, the child rights community and civil society organizations.

The objectives of the meeting include:

1. Providing an **overview of the Project STRIVE Juvenile, its objectives, expected outcomes and outputs**, their alignment with the agenda and priorities of the Government of Nigeria, and their key contribution to the implementation of the Policy Framework and the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism;
2. Presenting the **relevance of national ownership throughout the implementation of STRIVE Juvenile**, and the mechanisms to ensure appropriate representation of the different stakeholders throughout the Project;
3. Setting the **key objectives of the Inception Phase**.

# Une image contenant texte  Description générée automatiquementAGENDA

**Thursday 15 April 2021**

**10h00 – 12h00 Abuja time / 11h00 – 13h00 Vienna time**

**10h00 – 10h30 Opening and Welcome**

* Rear Admiral Y.E.M Musa, Coordinator, Counter Terrorism Centre, ONSA
* Ms. Cécile Tassin-Pelzer, First Counsellor/Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Nigeria & ECOWAS
* Ms. Alexandra Martins, Head, Global Programme to End Violence Against Children, UNODC

**10h30 – 11h00 Introduction to STRIVE Juvenile & ONSA’s role**

* UNODC presentation of the STRIVE Juvenile project and its objectives in Nigeria
	+ Ms. Giulia Melotti, Knowledge Manager, Global Programme to End Violence against Children & STRIVE Juvenile, UNODC
	+ Ms. Bianca Kopp, Project Coordinator, STRIVE Juvenile, UNODC
* ONSA presentation of national priorities to protect children from terrorism and violent extremism & overall synergies and coordination with STRIVE Juvenile
	+ Ms. Iye Mangset, P/CVE Staff Officer, CTC-ONSA

**11h00 – 11h50 Interventions by national counterparts**

* Ms. Jummai Mohammed, Director, Child Development, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
* Ms. Chioma Onuegbu, Head of Complex Casework Group, DPP, Federal Ministry of Justice
* Ms. Hajia Zuwaira Gambo, Commissioner of Women Affairs and Social Development, Borno State
* Mr. Afraimu Jingi, Attorney- General, Ministry of Justice, Adamawa State

Plenary discussion with participants

**11h50 – 12h00 Closing**

*Moderator of the event: Lt. Cdr Abdulkareem Olajide, ONSA*

1. International Criminal Court, *Report on Preliminary Examination Activities* (2018), § 222, 225-6. See also: United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Compilation on Nigeria*, A/HRC/WG.6/31/NGA/2 (2018), § 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The comprehensive training package produced by UNODC includes the following publications: *Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System* (UNODC, Vienna, 2017); *Prevention of Child Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System: A Training Manual* (UNODC, Vienna, 2019); *Justice for Children in the Context of Counter-Terrorism: A Training Manual* (UNODC, Vienna, 2019); *Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims of Recruitment and Exploitation by terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: a Training Manual*, (UNODC, Vienna, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Accessible here: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/80b10d95-cbd1-4e20-9acb-148b2f7181d6> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)