



## PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN RECRUITED AND EXPLOITED BY TERRORIST AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS

*An initiative under the*  
**UNODC Global Programme on Violence against Children**

### CHALLENGE

Thousands of children (individuals under the age of 18) have been abducted, recruited, used, or otherwise associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups in recent years. These children have been subjected to violence at multiple levels, and, at the same time, have the potential to become particularly dangerous instruments in the hands of those exploiting them and/or instrumentalising them for committing criminal and terrorism-related offences. Countries are increasingly facing challenges in combining effective prevention and responses to violence perpetrated against children, while at the same time providing adequate accountability mechanisms to preserve public safety. The current wave of returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) also poses emerging threats and challenges for law enforcement and judicial authorities dealing with child returnees from conflict zones.

### UNODC RESPONSE & MANDATE

Given the mandates and expertise of UNODC in the areas of violence against children, justice for children and counter-terrorism, the Office is uniquely positioned to support Member States in their efforts to provide effective responses to the complex challenges raised by children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

At the global level, UNODC provides guidance to Member States on how children involved with terrorist and violent extremist groups should be treated by national authorities. UNODC guidance is contained in four technical assistance tools: [The UNODC Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: the Role of the Justice System](#), and the three UNODC Training Manuals: 'Prevention of Child Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups'; 'Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Victims of Recruitment and Exploitation by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups'; 'Justice for Children in the Context of Counter-terrorism'. UNODC also developed the [Roadmap on the Treatment of Children Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups](#), with a view to provide coherent and consistent guidance regarded three interconnected areas of work: prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration, and justice for children in the context of counter-terrorism.

At the national level, specialised assistance has been provided including: technical assistance needs assessment; legislative assistance and legal advisory services; collection and analysis of data; support to strategic planning to the public sector; institution and capacity building; information, advocacy and awareness raising. At the regional level, UNODC has conducted a number of regional capacity-building activities in West and Eastern Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Central, South and South-East Asia, benefitting more than 25 countries.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Preventing child recruitment and exploitation by terrorist and violent extremist groups.
2. Promoting effective rehabilitation and reintegration of children involved with terrorist and violent extremist groups.
3. Promoting justice for children in the context of counter-terrorism.



### SDGs

This project contributes to assisting countries in reaching the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably, Goals 5 and 16, aimed at achieving "gender equality" and "peace, justice, and strong institutions", respectively, and in particular target 16.2 on ending violence against children.



### DONORS

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