



OUTCOME REPORT

GLOBAL DIGITAL CONSULTATION

CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES ON
THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS
OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND
COUNTER-TERRORISM RESPONSES



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)



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**WOMEN, PEACE AND
SECURITY SECTION
UN WOMEN**

New York, January 2021



UNITED NATIONS
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FOREWORD

Women human rights activists and civil society organizations (CSOs) around the world are building peace in their communities, villages, towns and countries, and they continue to call for increased engagement and active roles in peace and security decision-making. The meaningful participation of women and CSOs is critical to the success of strategies aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). Their participation is also essential to ensure that these efforts are not used as a means to suppress women's activism, peacebuilding and rights advocacy, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report on Women, Peace and Security, published in September 2020.¹

Within the framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, UN Women and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) are, respectively, Chair and Vice-chair of the Compact Working Group on Adopting a Gender-sensitive Approach to Preventing and Countering Terrorism (Gender Working Group). In line with our respective mandates, we continue to work closely with all members of the Gender Working Group and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to assist Member States in promoting gender equality and integrating the women, peace and security agenda into their efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

During the global digital consultation organized by UN Women on behalf of the Gender Working Group, the civil society participants stated that current responses were ineffective because they focus entirely on militarized approaches. They also flagged that the terminology employed was often vague and

ambiguous, that it could be abused politically and that it generates biases against certain communities, including women.

We need to reinvest in the sustaining peace, sustainable development and human rights agendas, to effectively tackle terrorism and violent extremism. This can be successful only if efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism are both inclusive and participatory, with the meaningful participation of women, including young women, and marginalized groups.

The Global Coordination Compact has a crucial role to play in ensuring that future P/CVE policies are informed by the recommendations of the Public Statement drafted by the participants of the global digital consultation. UN Women and CTED will continue to advocate for the meaningful participation of women and civil society in P/CVE efforts and to support the implementation of these recommendations within our respective mandates.



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,
Under-Secretary-General;
Executive Director, UN-Women



Michèle Coninsx,
Assistant-Secretary-General;
Executive Director, CTED

¹ United Nations. 2002. Report of the Secretary-General: Women, Peace and Security. S/2020/946. Available [here](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is informed by contributions received from 80 civil society representatives from 33 countries, who shared their views, challenges and recommendations on the gendered dimensions of violent extremism and counter-terrorism for the [Global Digital Consultation “Voices and perspectives of civil society on the gendered dimensions of violent extremism and counterterrorism responses.”](#) The Global Digital Consultation was organized by UN Women on behalf of the Working Group on Adopting a Gender-Sensitive Approach to Preventing and Countering Terrorism (Gender Working Group) of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact between 25 May and 5 July 2020. It was funded by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

We would like to thank all those who participated in the consultation for their continuous engagement and insightful contributions. We would like also to thank the civil society moderators and reviewers whose professionalism and dedication ensured a successful consultation.

The report was informed through a collaborative process involving participants in the Global Digital Consultation, UN Women Regional and Country Office staff across the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western and Central Africa, as well as UN Women’s Women, Peace and Security section and the Communications

and Advocacy team at headquarters. It was reviewed by a committee of civil society representatives that participated to the Global Digital Consultation.

Particular thanks go out to Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, UN Women senior management, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, all the members of the Working Group on Adopting a Gender-Sensitive Approach to Preventing and Countering Terrorism, as well as the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for providing the necessary funding for the Global Digital Consultation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, in light of the upcoming biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS), the Gender Working Group of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact (UNGCTCC) held a global digital consultation with women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) and gender equality activists to hear their perspectives on the gendered dimensions of terrorism and counter-terrorism (CT), challenges and recommendations related to their effective engagement and participation in security-related processes, and the impact of counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism (PVE) measures on women's rights.

The Global Digital Consultation “Voices and perspectives of civil society on the gendered dimensions of violent extremism and counter-terrorism” took place from 25 May to 5 July 2020. It was organized by UN Women on behalf of the Gender Working Group and it was the first major consultation led by the UNGCTCC involving civil society. The consultation gathered 142 participants from 43 countries, who were representatives of women-led CSOs and gender equality activists.² A total of 80 participants from 33 countries posted 393 contributions in four Discussions Rooms that were moderated by civil society representatives. Participants shared their testimonies on how violent extremist organizations affect them and their communities and detailed their efforts to build peace in contexts affected by violent extremism. They summarized their findings and formulated recommendations in a powerful [Public Statement](#).

The most striking element in the findings and recommendations from participants is that they were so similar across countries and regions worldwide. Their main messages were that violent extremism and terrorism are fundamentally human rights, peace and human development issues. As such, they should be

and non-state actors. Women's involvement in violent extremism is also a phenomenon with multiple and complex forms. In most communities, women play different roles, have diverse identities and their experiences are non-linear – meaning they can be both victims and perpetrators. However, CT/PVE policies insufficiently address gender dynamics, the diversity of roles and the intersectionality of women's rights, failing notably to envisage their roles as perpetrators. For that reason, women are rarely included in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

Existing approaches, which are often militarized, are clearly not responding to the challenges on the ground. Participants went further to suggest that these approaches often lead to human rights violations, aggravating gender inequalities and making it even more challenging for women to have any agency or contribute to forging peace. Another major issue with existing responses is the lack of definitions and the misuse of concepts and terminology in relation to violent extremism and terrorism, as they can be abused politically and can generate biases against certain communities. Participants were particularly concerned with this issue, which was positioned as

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