



United Nations Security Council
Counter-Terrorism Committee
Executive Directorate (CTED)



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United Nations
Interregional Crime and Justice
Research Institute



Side-Event to the 68th Session of the Commission
on the Status of Women (CSW68)

THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE SAHEL AND MEANINGFUL CONSULTATIONS ON GENDER

Tuesday 19 March 2024, 3:00-4:15pm

New York | Conference Room D UNHQ

[Click here to register](#)





Agenda

3pm - 3:15pm

OPENING REMARKS

Master of Ceremonies: Mr. Odhran James McCarthy, Liaison Officer, UNICRI New York Office

- **H.E. Ambassador Sidi Mohamed Laghdaf**, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the UN
- **H.E. Ambassador Sangjin Kim**, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN
- **Ms. Natalia Gherman**, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED)
- **Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda**, Deputy Executive Director for Normative Support, UN System Coordination, and Programme Results of UN Women (TBC)
- **Mr. Christophe Monier**, Director of the Business Transformation and Accountability Division in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Secretary-General's Representative on the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

3:15pm - 3:25pm

VOICES OF RESILIENCE – KEY FINDINGS

Alice Roberti, Fellow, UNICRI

3:25pm - 3:55pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderated by: Mr. Odhran James McCarthy, Liaison Officer, UNICRI New York Office

- **Dr Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi**, Founding Director of the Women Advocates Research and Documentation Center (WARDC)
- **Ms. Helena Sterwe**, Team Leader of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding at UNDP
- **Ms. Lila Pieters**, the UN Resident Coordinator in Mauritania
- **Ms. Esther Omam**, Executive Director of Reach Out Cameroon

3:55pm - 4:10pm

Q&A

4:10pm - 4:15pm

CLOSING REMARKS





Background


The impact of conflict, violence and insecurity on women and girls has long been explored both within and outside the context of the United Nations system. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council officially addressed the interconnectedness of these topics when it adopted the landmark resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). This resolution is a crucial framework to address the unique ways women and girls are affected by conflict and promote their participation in maintaining peace and security, conflict prevention, and post-conflict efforts. Within this framework, the importance of gender mainstreaming, specifically in the context of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), has been widely acknowledged. Since 2015, several WPS resolutions have increasingly addressed the specific challenges women face in the context of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, calling for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all efforts to counter and prevent this phenomenon. These include Resolutions 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019). The Security Council has also requested the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue throughout its activities, including within country-specific assessments and reports, recommendations made to Member States, facilitating technical assistance to Member States, and briefings to the Council.


The importance of developing gender-responsive P/CVE initiatives has also been recognised within the UN Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, presented in 2016 by the Secretary-General. This plan establishes gender equality and women's empowerment as one of its seven priority areas. More specifically, the plan encourages investment in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women's roles in violent extremism, as well as the development of targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses that address women's specific needs, which is the focus of UNICRI's latest study. Gender has also been a recurring theme in the context of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS). Most recently, the General Assembly adopted a resolution in June 2023 as part of the Eighth Review of the UNGCTS, wherein it noted the vital contribution of women in the implementation of the Strategy and recalled the aforementioned Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. Furthermore, the Eighth Review also reaffirmed that the international community should seek to prevent and combat terrorism with a gender-responsive approach, noting how gender should be considered as a cross-cutting element of the Strategy.

Context of UNICRI's Research

Since 2015, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) has been active in the field of the prevention of violent extremism in the Sahel. Its approach has been grounded on the view that P/CVE strategies must rely on the assumption that the interactions between men, women and violent extremist groups are not uniform throughout the Sahel and that the experiences and everyday realities of local communities should inform their design. This view has prompted the UNICRI to analyse these elements further, with the aim of mainstreaming gender perspectives across P/CVE efforts in the region.

With the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), UNICRI initiated a data collection effort in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in early 2023 to define guiding principles for the design of future P/CVE interventions based on a sound analysis of gender roles and power





relations. The rationale behind this effort was to attempt to avoid standardized responses that often replicate the dominant urban perspective. Instead, it sought to identify ways to adapt gender and prevention initiatives to specific needs and demands of urban as well as rural and marginalised areas. By gathering the opinions of local communities on issues such as the availability of services, gender roles, violence, and P/CVE interventions, the study provides a unique opportunity to explore how these elements may be interlinked and how concerns over the lack of essential services and fundamental rights may act as drivers of violence. To this end, field visits involving surveys, key informant interviews and focus groups were conducted in Bamako and the Mopti and Ségou regions in Mali; Nouakchott and the Assaba and Hodh Ech Chargui regions in Mauritania; and Niamey and the Tillabéri region in Niger. The target countries were identified by UNICRI based on their exposure to insecurity linked to violent extremism, on the findings of previous studies and on the Institute's extensive experience in implementing P/CVE projects in these locations.

In late 2023, UNICRI released the publication of [Voices of Resilience: A Gender Needs Analysis on Preventing Violent Extremism in the Sahel](#), which provides a situation report on the perceptions and experiences of women and girls, men, and boys in target areas of Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, and sheds light on how best to design prevention of violent extremism initiatives based on solid gender analysis and tailored to local needs.

Objectives of the Side-Event

- The Side-Event will seek to share the findings of [Voices of Resilience](#) and the concerns raised by local communities and reflected therein in the framework of the Commission on the Status of Women and contextualise these findings in terms of related and complementary research and programmes on gender and P/CVE as they pertain to West Africa and the Sahel.
- Beyond this, the Side Event will serve as an occasion to foster an expert-led open discussion on how to develop violent extremism prevention initiatives designed to address context-specific resilience factors as well as the needs of women, girls, men and boys from local communities. In this regard, speakers will explore key guiding principles that should form the basis of future P/CVE interventions in the region while considering cross-cutting needs and priorities.

