



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

**Statement by Mr. Jehangir Khan  
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**International CVE Research Conference: Round Table Discussion on  
'The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on global terrorism and  
violent extremism', organised by Hedayah and the Euro-Arab  
Foundation, 22 April 2021**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Experts,  
Dear Colleagues,**

It is my great honour to join you today.

I am grateful to his Excellency and Executive Director of Hedayah, Ahmed Al-Qasimi, and co-organisers, the Euro-Arab Foundation, for the invitation to open the roundtable discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global terrorism and violent extremism.

I would also like to commend Hedayah and the Euro-Arab Foundation for organising this discussion. It is a timely initiative that demonstrates the continued commitment of Hedayah and the Euro-Arab foundation to reducing the threat of terrorism and violent extremism worldwide.

Today's roundtable discussion takes place at a critical time.

As the world confronts the COVID-19 crisis, terrorism continues to pose a grave threat to international peace and security; one that is evolving and diversifying, with the pandemic magnifying existing and emerging trends in counter-terrorism.

We therefore need a global picture of the potential and actual impact of the pandemic on global terrorism and violent extremism. We need more conversations like the one today that bring experts and practitioners together to better understand what our next steps should be, and what has changed since the onset of the pandemic.

We have seen, for example, terrorists use new social media, messaging, and gaming platforms to target vulnerable audiences and young people, who are spending significantly more time online due to the lockdown and stay at home orders.

Secondly, we know that the pandemic has impacted people psychologically, but we need to know more about how violent extremists are exploiting these vulnerabilities, as well as the psychological factors that support individual and community resilience in preventing and countering violent extremism.

The global pandemic has also exacerbated the transnational threat of resurgent Far Right Violent Extremism. We need better data and analysis on this form of terrorism, and work towards a common understanding, while strengthening existing cooperation mechanisms to achieve multilateral consensus in tackling this threat.

Fourth, ISIL and Al-Qaeda continue to pose a threat to international security, with regional affiliates gaining ground in some areas, but especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and more recently, in Mozambique. We need an updated understanding of how terrorists exploit weak governance, poverty, and conflict in the region, as well as working towards to a collective political response to terrorism in Africa.

**Dear colleagues,**

Even while the COVID-19 crisis is still ongoing, it is crucial to discuss the changing realities on the ground and evolving security landscape globally, and the impact this event will have on global terrorism and violent extremism.

My Office focuses on building global capacities to address these threats. The UN Counter-Terrorism Centre has a Global Programme to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism, helping governments, regional organisations, and civil society to build resilience and technical capacity to reduce the risk of terrorism and violent extremism.

Our PCVE team uses evidence-base knowledge to deliver PCVE programmes in strategic communications, policy assistance, peer-to-peer youth empowerment, mental health, as well as what we call ‘new frontier’ prevention, which explores the intersection of violent extremism with climate security and video games.

To do our work, our programme relies on cutting-edge research.

And this is why today's roundtable is so important to the PCVE community. It seeks to provide a platform for people of different backgrounds and expertise to discuss their observations and findings, fostering a learning culture that brings new ideas and research to the fore. We look forward also to participating and supporting Hedayah's International CVE Conference in October this year.

As a partner of Hedayah, my Office and I keenly anticipate the outcomes of your discussions today, and I wish you a fruitful exchange.

Thank you.