



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Engagement of Civil Society Organizations in the Management of Violent Extremist
Prisoners and Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons**

**Friday, 25 June 2021
12:30-2:00 pm**

Dear Colleagues,

As we have now reached the end of our discussions, let me make a few wrap-up remarks before giving the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Ladeb, Permanent Representative of Tunisia – one of the Member States participating in our project – who is the Chair of the Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee, for his own concluding remarks.

Let me first express on behalf of Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and all the co-organizers, our gratitude to all the panellists and our sincere appreciation to all of you for having participated in this event.

A special thanks also to my fellow moderator, Ms. Julie Coleman from ICCT, for her excellent job facilitating the first segment of the event.

Dear Colleagues,

Our discussions today clearly highlighted that CSOs' expertise and access to, and trust of, local communities can be instrumental in helping rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist prisoners.

Yet this potential remains underutilized.

It will be impossible to do justice in a short time to the richness of our discussions and the insights that were exchanged.

So let me just emphasize six key points from our own joint project with UNODC and CTED which were echoed today:

First, Member States should be encouraged to engage with civil society organizations as vital partners to prevent radicalization to violence in prisons, to help rehabilitation efforts within prisons, and after release to facilitate the reintegration of violent extremist offenders in the community.

Second, and to state the obvious, we cannot benefit from the crucial contributions from civil society partners if there is no enabling environment for them to operate.

In this regard, it is essential that states guarantee the freedoms of association and expression to civil society actors, and avoid instrumentalizing them. This would only undermine their credibility, which is often their key comparative advantage.

Third, Member States need to establish a regulatory and institutional framework for the management of prisons, including adequate oversight, which is conducive to transparency and accountability.

This includes arranging for civil society actors to engage directly with violent extremist prisoners, where appropriate, while addressing security needs.

Fourth, Member States should be encouraged to develop processes and mechanisms to consult civil society in the development of programmes for prison-based prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration, tailored to local needs, but also in monitoring and evaluating these efforts to feed back into policy, planning and implementation.

Fifth, civil society organizations, even if non-profit, need resources to do such work, especially where their involvement needs to be sustained over time as in the very individualized work needed for counselling, rather than be just one-off or *ad hoc* interventions,.

They must be able to access sufficient funding, either from governmental or international development funding.

Sixth, Member States should consider both which civil society actors can effectively support the reintegration of released offenders, and which other actors need to be engaged to alleviate concerns, risks of stigmatization and rejection.

With this, it is my pleasure to now hand over the floor to His Excellency, Ambassador Ladeb for his concluding remarks.

The floor is yours, Ambassador.

Thank you.