



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

**“Preventing the Spread of Violent Extremism in the Prison Context of Uganda”**

**10 September 2019, Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala, Uganda**

**Statement by Mr. Steven Siqueira, Chief of Pillar I and IV, UNOCT/UNCCT**

Madame Anna Merrifield, Charge d’Affaires, Delegation of the European Union

Mr. Mwange James, Deputy Commissioner-General of Prisons of Uganda,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Uganda for hosting today’s event marking the commencement of this important project to tackle the spread of violent extremism in prisons.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the European Union and the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for their critical funding support of this programme.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provided a generous grant to establish the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre and has also provided funding for the implementation of this project, so I would also like to convey my thanks to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their efforts in this important field.

Today, I am pleased to represent the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, to emphasize the priority UNOCT/UNCCT places on the development of global support for Member States on good practice in the management of violent extremist prisoners.

The ongoing management of violent extremist prisoners poses a significant challenge for Member States globally.

Not only does the effective management of violent extremist prisoners act as a protective measure for local community safety, but it has the potential to positively affect regional and global security and reduce the impact of terrorism and violent extremism.

The General Assembly's latest review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2016 expressed concern about the danger of recruitment and radicalization to terrorism in prisons (A/RES/70/291). Given the rising concern amongst many Member States about the spread of violent extremism in prisons, we expect continued interest in this important issue during the next review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy in June 2020.

The UN PVE Plan of Action (2016) (A/RES/70/291), highlights that the management of prisoners within a correctional system can run the risk of making some vulnerable to violent extremist ideology. The Plan of Action calls for safeguards to be put in place that prevent the spread of extremist ideologies, while upholding the protection afforded under international law to persons deprived of their liberty.

In 2017, when considering measures that should be taken by Member States to strengthen their response to the threat of returning FTFs in resolution 2396, the United Nations Security Council acknowledged the particular risk of prisons serving as "potential incubators" for radicalization and terrorist recruitment.

It is important to note that the Security Council also highlighted the critical role of prison authorities in the effective and sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration of former prisoners back into communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNOCT emphasizes that the challenges posed by violent extremist prisoners can only be effectively addressed by measures that adhere to fundamental human rights, in line with Pillar IV of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. We support the strong integration of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the "Nelson Mandela Rules") in this project, and my colleagues from UNODC and CTED will speak in greater detail on this important issue.

Many Member States face complex policy and operational challenges when managing violent extremist prisoners. This includes managing the return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters or Deportees.

I am pleased to see senior representatives from a range of authorities from the Government of Uganda here today, and I know we will welcome more colleagues to the workshop tomorrow. I would like to encourage this project, as it develops, to include not only inputs from across government, but also from civil society actors who have an important role to play in reintegration.

We sincerely hope that this project will support the Government of Uganda to develop practical, evidence-based policy and practice to help counter the threat posed by violent extremist prisoners. It will provide this detailed support, based on global good practice, across all stages of the prisoner management process; from intake, classification and importantly, rehabilitation and reintegration.

The work that Uganda and the United Nations will do together under this project will become an important global benchmark for the effective management of violent extremist prisoners. We look forward to working in partnership with Uganda to share the lessons learned and expertise developed during the course of this project at a regional and global level.

In July 2020, UNOCT will coordinate the second United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States. Again, given the significant Member State interest in this issue, we envisage strong global interest in the experiences of Uganda in adopting a system-wide approach to preventing the spread of violent extremism in prisons.

From the requests for assistance that we receive on a regular basis at the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre, it is clear that this work will become an important resource for other Member States grappling with the challenge of how to effectively manage violent extremist prisoners and keep their communities safe.

On behalf of USG Voronkov, I would like to reiterate the strong support of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism for this project and for the Government of Uganda on their work preventing the spread of violent extremism in prisons, and I look forward to continuing and enhancing our cooperation with all of you on this very important issue over the coming months and years.

Thank you very much.