



Statement by **Human Security Collective** at **United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Security challenges today are as much faced by the individuals and communities as by the state. And while governments continue to bear the primary responsibility for their nation's security, the threats from terrorism and violent extremism are more localized than ever and, in certain contexts, municipal authorities, local practitioners and community-based groups are better placed to address these threats.

A human security approach sees risk as human-centred and context-specific, and something which can be mitigated by a variety of institutions and actors. We at Human Security Collective, a nonprofit foundation based in the Netherlands and operating worldwide, believe that fostering human security, rooted in human rights, is and should be at the core of the prevention-of-violent-extremism agenda.

The recognition and inclusion of youth is a crucial part of our approach to building human security within communities. Our youth leadership programme helps build resilience to violent extremist messaging by addressing the underlying causes that lead to exclusion and a sense of alienation amongst youth.

Based on a recognition of their ideas, insights and initiatives, our work with youth always aims at enabling them across three levels:

1. Envisioning – building a vision of a safe and peaceful future,
2. Empowering – gaining leadership skills, and
3. Engagement – involving, among others, security actors in incorporating the youth leadership agenda.

Whether in Libya, Tunisia, Mali or the Netherlands, our approach is broad and systemic, with projects engaging community members such as parents, teachers and social workers, as well as various security stakeholders, a process which we help facilitate. It seeks to create a groundswell of support for youth-led, bottom-up, peer-to-peer initiatives, to build trust between young people and security institutions such as the police, for example, and to lead to the meaningful consultation and participation of youth in decision-making processes and bodies like this one.

You can listen to some of the concerns youth have as well as to their solutions at a side event, co-organized with UNESCO and UNOY, during the lunch break that follows, when youth from Jordan, Libya, Mali, Morocco, the Netherlands and Tunisia will discuss the 'Human Security and Youth Leadership Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism' in Conference Room 8.

And while we work on the ground, looking to understand the root causes of conflict and disenfranchisement, we also work on the enabling environment for civil society, advocating to mitigate the unintended consequences of the counter-terrorism and countering-the-financing-of-terrorism rules and regulations for nonprofits. Impact of this is felt in reduced financial access for and sometimes financial exclusion faced by nonprofits as well as in the shrinking of the operating environment for civil society more generally. This not only affects the humanitarian and development agendas, including the rollout of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also the preventing violent extremism agenda, given it is community-based organizations, the worst affected by these rules, who are at the forefront of building resilience against violent extremism.

In and through our projects, we recognize youth as a valuable ally for sustainable peace. It is imperative, therefore, to include them as stakeholders in the design, development and implementation of the prevention of violent extremism efforts, including national action plans, strategies and programmes so that they have a say in security policy. Youth have an unique and important outlook on the issues at stake in their communities, and thereby have the potential to be positive agents of change – this is something that we at Human Security Collective help harness and which is critical for policymakers to understand in order to build communities resilient to the threat of violent extremism.



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