
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The normative role of the United Nations has been a fundamental feature of its ability to act on behalf of all peoples, as derived from the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter. As it approaches its 75th anniversary, the organization faces growing challenges to its leadership in a changing world, one in which hard-won normative gains are confronted with the stark realities of skyrocketing socioeconomic inequality, a rising tide of nationalism, and the shrinking space for human rights and humanitarian action. The interconnectedness of global economies and the complex peace and security landscape require principled, coordinated international responses.

The United Nations' global reach and field presence has uniquely positioned it among the constellation of actors working to prevent violence, end conflict, and build lasting peace. As the nature of conflict is becoming increasingly decentralized, so too have the responses adapted to counter its threat. UN entities can serve as global monitors in assessing priorities, trends, and needs in the field, communicating insights derived from local contexts and realities to help anticipate crises and direct technical assistance efforts. The UN Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention widens the lens on peace and security issues and implicates a reorientation of counterterrorism-related efforts, centrally anchored in the Strategy.

To seize its comparative advantage in counterterrorism and PVE efforts, the United Nations needs the support of member states to invest in policy leadership and coordination that systemically account for human rights and civil society engagement to benefit human security.

This report makes the following recommendations to improve UN efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, building on the United Nations' comparative advantages as a norm-setter, convener, provider and facilitator of capacity development assistance, and global monitor assessing priorities, trends, and needs in the field.



UN Photo /Eskinder Debebe

Mona Juul, Norway's ambassador to the United Nations, casts a vote during UN Security Council elections on 17 June 2020 at UN headquarters in New York.

CALIBRATE THE UN COUNTERTERRORISM ARCHITECTURE

- 1. Prioritize UNOCT leadership and coordination functions across UN counterterrorism and PVE efforts.** Considered by many member states to be the *raison d'être* of the UNOCT and its Under-Secretary-General, strategic leadership and coordination are central to reducing redundancies, leveraging existing initiatives, and maximizing efficiencies within expansive UN counterterrorism and PVE efforts. Leadership and coordination should include capturing the full potential of the wide-reaching membership of the Global Compact, UN Resident Coordinators, and UN country teams to identify priorities and needs in the field and eliminating the need for liaison offices and conflicting reporting lines.
- 2. Leverage the UNOCT's comparative advantage in convening and coordinating Global Compact members and other stakeholders to lead on program delivery.** The UNOCT should improve the Global Compact's overall coordination and coherence in policy

development, program implementation, and resource mobilization. Many Global Compact member entities have extensive expertise and strong track records in delivering programs through field and project offices and in cooperation with local partners. The UNOCT, in particular the UNCCT and the Special Projects and Innovation Branch, should limit its active involvement in programming to larger, more complex programs that benefit from its unique ability to coordinate among multiple Global Compact members and respond to urgent priorities.

- 3. Develop a set of performance indicators and strategic priorities to direct the activities of Global Compact working groups and entities, and report on this biennially.** Guided by the Strategy and in consultation with other compact members, the working group chairs should develop clear policy and program priorities. All strategies and programs should include targets and indicators that focus on measuring impact, reductions in terrorism, and improvements in human security. These should be informed by UN country teams, CTED recommendations, and field-based research and input and need to be in close alignment with the Secretary-General's general reform efforts, call to action, and prevention focus. Chairs of other Global Compact working groups need to actively consult the chairs of the victims and human rights and the resource mobilization, monitoring, and evaluation working groups to ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights are properly mainstreamed, the assessment of this effort is standardized, and resource mobilization and allocation are realized.
- 4. Develop a comprehensive counterterrorism and PVE resource mobilization strategy and a more inclusive, multiyear appeal process.** Resource mobilization should be based on a consultative and collaborative process and organized around clear strategic priorities, including widening the donor base for UN counterterrorism and PVE efforts. The UNOCT and other Global Compact members should endeavor to attract a combination of mostly unearmarked contributions that can be invested in UNOCT leadership, Global

Compact coordination efforts, and a number of flagship technical assistance programs prioritized through the Strategy review, alongside a broad range of unearmarked and program-specific contributions for other Global Compact entities.

SITUATE UN COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS WITHIN THE PREVENTION AGENDA

- 5. Clarify how counterterrorism and PVE efforts can be best situated within broader UN peace and security efforts in the field, accounting for existing field staff representing Global Compact entities and the UN Resident Coordinators' broader conflict prevention and coordination roles.** The Secretary-General should direct greater integration of counterterrorism and PVE efforts within the UN peace and security and development agendas. UN Resident Coordinator capacities should be increased to include these efforts where and when appropriate as part of their broader engagement, avoiding the centering of counterterrorism as the single or principal focus and its potentially distorting effects. Particular care should be taken to leverage existing field staff from Global Compact entities and assess the interplay of human rights, development, and peace and security priorities.

ENGAGE AND SUPPORT CIVIL SOCIETY

- 6. Engage and support civil society proactively as part of UN counterterrorism and PVE efforts.** Acknowledging initial UNOCT efforts to develop a civil society engagement strategy, the UNOCT must transform the way it works with civil society organizations to be more consultative and reflective of their views and experiences. This should involve soliciting civil society input and participation in informing policy priorities and program design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Several Global Compact members already have mechanisms for engaging civil society, including UN Women and OHCHR, which can

serve as models for the UNOCT and other Global Compact members. UN leadership should advocate, internally and externally, for the integration of civil society actors in a positive manner and allocate adequate resources and technical capacities for their engagement and in support of their activities.

- 7. Protect civil society space actively by addressing the issue of shrinking civic space correlated to counterterrorism efforts and measures to counter the financing of terrorism.** The shrinking of civic space related to counterterrorism, CFT, and PVE measures requires express commitments to its promotion and protection. UN leadership and counterterrorism entities should publicly condemn the misapplication of counterterrorism measures and raise this issue in their dialogue with member states. They should also account for the effects on civil society engagement in their decision-making with regard to, for example, the framing of issues, selection of venues, collection and use of data, and review of national counterterrorism legislation. Measures that aim to eliminate barriers to engagement with civil society and to increase the diversity of perspectives should be promoted across all UN work.
- 8. Engage civil society in all stages of the Strategy review process, including through consultations that inform the Secretary-General's biennial report and by access to related briefings.** The Secretary-General should develop a robust consultative process for garnering civil society input for the development of his biennial report assessing the threat landscape and progress made in implementing the Strategy. In addition to receiving input from civil society directly, views gathered by UN Resident Coordinators from local civil society should be sought to ensure the broadest, most representative perspectives. Direct solicitations for civil society input should be widely communicated with ample notice and privacy protections, and access to relevant briefings should be provided to nongovernmental actors.

- 9. Monitor engagement with civil society by the UNOCT and Global Compact members.**

The UNOCT Civil Society Engagement Strategy should be consistent with and benchmarked against the UN system-wide strategy on civic space and guidance set out in the Secretary-General's call to action for human rights, which aims to promote and protect civic space, respond to undue restrictions on civic space, and protect the space for different stakeholders to express their views. In advancing the recently adopted UNOCT strategy, a civil society hub is likely best integrated within its Policy, Knowledge Management and Coordination Branch and should work closely with human rights, humanitarian, peace-building, and gender officers across Global Compact entities and should leverage existing civil society networks.

MAINSTREAM HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

- 10. Strengthen UNOCT leadership's commitment to the mainstreaming of human rights across UN counterterrorism and PVE efforts.**

Mainstreaming human rights issues must be a strategic priority of the UNOCT. A unit should be formed to oversee this priority across all UN counterterrorism and PVE efforts and to ensure that these efforts are undertaken in compliance with human rights standards, from their identification and development to their staffing, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation. Resources should be diverted to this unit following change management within the UNOCT, which prioritizes coordination and strategic leadership on human rights. The unit would set strategic goals with clear human rights benchmarks across all Global Compact entities, could be led by OHCHR or a team of independent experts, would liaise directly with the Global Compact secretariat, and would require adequate and sustained resourcing. The entity should be encouraged to leverage existing human rights mechanisms, the human rights treaty bodies, and the special procedures to support evidence-based

decision-making consistent with the Secretary-General's call to action on human rights.

- 11. Guide member states to implement the Strategy in a manner that complies with human rights obligations.** Global Compact entities, with the support of the Under-Secretary-General and entities that focus on human rights and humanitarian affairs, should consistently orient and guide member states' efforts to implement the Strategy in line with human rights considerations, including by developing practical guidance on human rights-compliant approaches concerning emergent and priority issues. Issue areas include the collection and use of surveillance information in terrorism investigations and the effects of CFT measures on principled humanitarian action.
- 12. Advance gender parity in staffing at the UNOCT and other Global Compact members and mainstream gender-sensitive, responsive counterterrorism and PVE approaches that support broader women, peace, and security objectives.** Global Compact entities should account for gender equity and representation among their own staff and beneficiaries and in project partners. They should develop projects that actively center and support women's and gender-nonbinary voices, account for the gender dimensions of political and social economy in assessments, and advocate for mainstreaming the issues of gender equity and empowerment.

ASSESS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- 13. Establish a mechanism to assess Strategy implementation.** Member states should endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation to develop a comprehensive, human rights-based results framework for assessing the implementation of the Strategy across all four pillars. This should include a more structured framework for UN entities and member states to report on their

Strategy implementation efforts. Consideration should also be given to a peer review mechanism for assessing Strategy implementation, such as those employed by FATF, the UN Human Rights Council, and UNODC.

- 14. Ensure civil society input in the Strategy review process.** The Secretary-General should solicit input from civil society on UN entity performance in counterterrorism and PVE efforts, including on their adverse impact. Similar actions to engage civil society need to be undertaken by the President of the General Assembly and the Strategy review co-facilitators to ensure that the review negotiations are enriched by the many perspectives and experiences of civil society actors closest to the issues on the ground.
- 15. Request that the Secretary-General produce an updated report on activities of the UN system in advance of the seventh review.** The report would update the Secretary-General's February 2020 report and provide member states with revised information pertaining to changes in the threat landscape, progress made in Strategy implementation, and developments in the UN system. The Secretary-General should facilitate a rigorous process for gathering key insights, including from civil society. The process for developing the report could include an independent assessment from eminent persons selected by the Secretary-General.
- 16. Continue to improve monitoring and evaluation approaches at the programmatic and institutional levels.** Monitoring and evaluation should be evidence based and track individual capacity development programs and their relation to and impact on overall Strategy implementation. A common monitoring and evaluation framework with integrated human rights metrics would allow for more consistent and comparable system-wide tracking. The resource mobilization, monitoring, and evaluation working group should ensure regular reporting and oversight to analyze and course-correct efforts, where appropriate, and work closely with the human rights unit.