

INDEPENDENT CIVIL SOCIETY–UN COUNTERTERRORISM ENGAGEMENT

LAUNCH OF THE SCOPING STUDY ON INDEPENDENT CIVIL SOCIETY – UN COUNTERTERRORISM ENGAGEMENT

Wednesday, 29 May 2024 | 10am-12pm ET
United Nations Headquarters, New York
Conference Room 2

Draft Launch Program

Overview

In support of wider civil society efforts to demand more meaningful influence on and engagement with UN counterterrorism efforts, this report presents the results of a year-long consultation process undertaken by the [Global Center on Cooperative Security](#) and [Rights & Security International](#) in collaboration with a committee of 15 civil society advisors. Based on the input of more than 170 civil society representatives from more than 50 countries around the world, this report explains the hesitation of many groups worldwide to engage with the United Nations on counterterrorism-related issues, the range of barriers they face, and their aspirations for the UN's role in promoting and protecting civil society and civic space.

The aim of the scoping study was to understand the need and potential avenues for, viability of, and interest in independent engagement by civil society with the UN counterterrorism architecture. During project consultations an overwhelming consensus emerged that the United Nations is failing to sufficiently engage with, promote, and protect civil society in the context of the world body's counterterrorism agenda and that there is common desire to see the United Nations correct this course. Achieving the necessary preconditions for greater civil society engagement requires concrete and sustained commitments by the UN and its member states. Ultimately, the global body must find safe, respectful, equality-promoting, and meaningful ways of hearing and responding to the experiences of communities and non-governmental groups in an era in which "counterterrorism" and "preventing and countering violent extremism" are often code words for repression.

Such challenges cannot be overcome by any UN entity overnight, and any progress demands substantial political support and investments by the UN and member states, and ultimately the buy-in and trust of civil society groups. Yet, steps



toward more meaningful independent civil society-UN engagement in the short term can foster incremental progress toward addressing these preconditions and increase engagement significantly over time. The [Scoping Report](#) offers a framework to strengthen the UN's engagement with civil society embodying specific attributes of meaningful engagement across a range of mutually reinforcing modalities of engagement. Several practical entry points are also offered, including specific recommendations to the UN and its member states.

Agenda

10:00 AM **Opening Remarks**

H.E. Mr Lars Tummers, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations

Eelco Kessels, Global Center on Cooperative Security

Sarah St. Vincent, Rights & Security International

10:15 AM **Keynote**

Mr Ben Saul, Special Rapporteur on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism

10:30 AM **Overview of the Scoping Report**

Franziska Praxl-Tabuchi, Global Center on Cooperative Security

Simón Hurtado Delgado, Rights & Security International

Matt Schwartz, Global Center on Cooperative Security

10:45 AM **Panel Discussion I: Barriers and risks for civil society engagement with the UN counterterrorism architecture**

Moderator: Jihane Ben Yahia, Global Center on Cooperative Security

Victoria Ohaeri, Spaces for Change

Tuan Nguyen-M, Initiatives for International Dialogue

Inès Osman, MENA Rights Group

Miguel de la Vega, UnidOSC



11 :15 AM

Panel Discussion II: Moving towards meaningful, independent civil society engagement with the UN Counterterrorism architecture

Moderator: Tufyal Choudhury, Rights & Security International

Ashleigh Subramanian-Montgomery, Charity & Security Network

Harouna Abdoulaye, COPAVE

Mahi Ramakrishnan, Beyond Borders Malaysia

11 :40 AM

Q&A session

Franziska Praxl-Tabuchi, Global Center on Cooperative Security

11 :55 AM

Closing Remarks

H.E. Mr Archie Young CMG, Ambassador to the General Assembly at the UK Mission to the United Nations

