Side Event

A Holistic and Gendered Approach to Return, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration from Violent Extremism

25 April 2019 from 14:00-16:00
"Théâtre Jeunes créateurs" (ground floor/Rez de chaussé)

This roundtable during the Tunis Forum on Gender Equality, 24-26 April 2019, will explore how to advance a holistic and gendered approach to understanding violent extremism and discussing return, rehabilitation and reintegration through policies and programming. Co-hosted by the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and SOS Terrorisme, this event will also focus on the potential for collaboration between international, national and civil society actors on gender- and human rights-sensitive disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration through the development and implementation of national PVE strategies and action plans.

As 2019 dawns, the specter of violent extremism remains at the forefront of the global peace and security discourse and practice. There are also new dimensions arising as states and communities struggle to address the complexity of return, rehabilitation, and reintegration of fighters and those associated with them—especially women, boys and girls. In this moment, addressing the complex challenge of women and girls associated with violent extremist movements returning to their communities and identifying practical ways forward for policymaking and programming in the area of rehabilitation and reintegration is critical.

Women and girls are associated with violent extremist groups in a variety of ways, including as recruiters, educators, campaigners, financiers, brides, logisticians, supporters, bystanders or a combination of these. In some cases, they are kidnapped or forced to join violent extremist groups; in other instances, they join voluntarily to feel empowered, to escape oppression or for reasons similar to those of their male peers. Many may be victims of trafficking and sexual slavery but have given birth and are caring for children of extremists. In this context, it is essential to understand who joins extremist movements and why they do so. International recruitment to Daesh highlighted that women can also participate in violent extremism, breaking a widely held assumption that terrorism is a man’s world. Understanding their situation, reaching them, and providing them with pathways back into communities that may fear or spurn them, is profoundly challenging. This is made worse by the paucity of protection against sexual violence when these women and girls face rescue, arrest or imprisonment.

The event follows the publication of the new report, Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration from Violent Extremism, jointly produced by ICAN and UNDP, which
draws on the expertise of members of the Women’s Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL). Reflecting the complex nature of the challenge, *Invisible Women* lays out a gendered analysis of disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration across the sectors that play an important role in responding to those who return.

**Objective**

This side event will foster awareness of gendered perspectives on the issues surrounding return, rehabilitation and reintegration and potential solutions pioneered by women peacebuilders from Lebanon and Indonesia, with application to the Tunisian context.

**Format**

The speakers will provide front-line perspectives on the issues, sharing their strategies, lessons learnt and recommendations for critical and practical steps that the UN and member states can take in the development of policy and programming to address this issue. The session will be structured as a facilitated dialogue between 4-5 speakers and a moderator, followed by audience questions and comments. The event will be conducted in Arabic, English and French.

**Opening Remarks**

- Randi Davis, Director, Gender Team, UNDP

**Moderator**

- Dr. Amel Grami, scholar of gender and terrorism, Tunisia

**Speakers**

- Melinda Holmes, Program Director for WASL, ICAN
- Hafida Benchehida, Independent Mediator and member of WASL, Algeria
- Ruby Kholifah, Country Representative, AMAN and member of WASL, Indonesia
- Nancy Yammout, Director of Rescue Me and member of WASL, Lebanon
- Farouk Mellouki, President of SOS Terrorisme, Tunisia
- Nizar Chouk, Magistrate, Tunisia

**Agenda**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Facilitated discussion among moderator and speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>Moderated discussion with audience</td>
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