

LAUNCH OF OHCHR TOOLKIT ON STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY AND POLICY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

A State's human rights obligations in countering terrorism require a State to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all individuals in its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, and ensure its counter-terrorism measures comply with its international human rights obligations. To effectively prevent terrorism, States need to address the circumstances in which it may flourish, including persistent failures to respect human rights. Counter-terrorism measures that do not uphold human rights can create fresh grievances, further nourish conditions conducive to terrorism, and create an environment susceptible to violence and insecurity. Protecting and promoting human rights, including advancing gender equality, should not be seen as operational or strategic impediments, but rather as prerequisites for successful counter-terrorism measures.

As counter-terrorism strategy or policy can have a determinant influence on subsequent measures taken in countering terrorism, the inclusion of human rights in counter-terrorism strategy and policy is critical to supporting counter-terrorism progress.

To this end, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) developed a global toolkit that aims to support the integration of human rights in Member States' counter-terrorism strategy and policy. The toolkit sets out key actions in three separate but interrelated areas:

- Tool 1: Integrating human rights into the content of a counter-terrorism strategy and policy.
- Tool 2: Building institutional human rights specialist capacity in counter-terrorism.
- Tool 3: Strengthening government engagement with civil society in counter-terrorism.

As part of the launch of the toolkit, OHCHR will be organizing a panel discussion on why human rights matter in counter-terrorism strategy and policy. Panellists will discuss the use of international human rights law framework to tackle the evolving terrorism threat, share positive examples of monitoring and independent oversight mechanisms of counter-terrorism policy or strategy, and the value and importance of meaningful civil society engagement in counter-terrorism responses.

The toolkit will be made available to participants at the launch.

Objectives

- Present and give visibility to the OHCHR global toolkit; and
- Discuss the importance of including human rights in counter-terrorism strategy and policy.

Target Audience

The launch event will be attended by representatives of Member States, United Nations entities, and civil society organizations.

Draft Programme

- **Opening remarks:** Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR.
- **Panel discussion.**
- **Questions and comments from participants.**
- **Closing remarks:** Permanent Representative/Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations in New York.

Format

The launch event will be in hybrid format that will provide for both in-person and virtual participation. The launch event will be live webcast on UN TV and will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation in all UN languages.

Contacts

- Seh Lih Long, OHCHR (longl@un.org).
- Lucas Sempadian, OHCHR (ghougas.sempadian@un.org).