

National Workshop on Effective Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014)

20-22 January 2015

Mombasa, Kenya

Opening Remarks, Dr. Bibi van Ginkel, Co-Chair, Research Fellow ICCT.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear participants,

Thank you to the Kenyan government for their welcoming words and opening statement, to Mr. Weixiong Chen for delivering the message on behalf of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Mon, and to Mrs. Marie-Threse Keating UNDP Country Director for their opening remarks.

My name is Bibi van Ginkel and I am a Research Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in the Hague, and let me say on behalf of ICCT and as co-organiser of this workshop, that we are very pleased to see so many of you again. But let me also tell you that we are just as happy to see some new faces. Because what we will be doing over the coming days builds on what we discussed in May last year, but also has the ambition to expand our working area and the participants who are part of this circle of like-minded people, who are committed to stop the increase of radicalisation towards violent extremism and even to decrease the problems that lay at its cause. That is our common goal, and it is good to realize that.

At ICCT we make it our business to study and research the problems we are dealing with, and base our assessments as well as the avenues for change on this research. But we are not only a think tank, but also a do tank, where we try to offer technical assistance, and facilitate dialogue and engage with the different stakeholders in the process. We connect the dots between rule of law issues and prevention against violent extremism, and meet in the middle where we advocate a human security approach to dealing with the issues, as we strongly believe that is the most effective way in the long run to deal with violent extremism. Where in many cases the root causes of radicalisation lie in some form of exclusion, we also believe the answers lie in inclusion.

The topics we will be discussing today and the days to come are related to the root causes of radicalisation, but –and that is the good news- also contain the key to avenues for change, to make sure that we tap into those resources that will function as vectors for peace and empowerment. Obviously, a comprehensive strategy should entail more issues than we can address in these coming days, but nevertheless, the issues at the table will offer ample opportunity for the different stakeholders to strategize together, exchange views, engage and build trust. And the best proof of a trustful relationship is shown when parties feel they can criticize each other, without jeopardizing this relationship which is dedicated to the building of a dialogue.

Many of you hold pieces of the keys towards solutions, but only when all efforts are aligned will we be able to make full use of these instruments.

We haven't come to tell you what problems you are facing. You are much better placed to make that assessment.

We haven't come to tell you what measures you should adopt and what programs you should run to face the problems in your society. You know, from your experience much better what works and what doesn't.

Then, why, you might ask, have we come? What we can offer you is the platform for exchange, the international frameworks that set the basic sketched lines for your context specific strategy. We can also offer you our knowledge about what good practices have worked in different contexts, so you might learn from that, and assess whether such solutions might work in your situation. Or we can help you find ways to take stricter security measures or strengthen powers of security organisation if the situation so requires within the framework of human rights, and with the right checks and balances in place, in order to remain legitimate in the approach, and henceforth effective. And finally, we – especially at ICCT- can offer the research behind some of the policies or potential solutions. As a think and do-tank we go beyond the obvious questions, but try to understand the process of radicalisation, and the potential effectiveness of policies and measures.

As Europe is at the moment also shaken up by the recent terror attacks, we once more realize how terrorists with their attacks try to break up societies. To spread fear, to try to bully us into self-censorship, and with their message of intolerance and against pluriformity. Their messaging is black and white. There are no nuances, or various colours of grey.

And so, that is what we need to defend and stand up against. If the message of terrorism is a message of despair and anger, of frustration and conviction, of loss of all perspective, the loss of belief in human values, of dehumanisation, and cynicism, then we will fight back with solidarity and resolve, and a strong believe in the rule of law, with respect for each other, and a society which allows different points of view, where criticism is allowed, and where there is hope and perspective, and a strong commitment to make sure that everyone has a chance to be included and to participate.

And what makes us more effective, and stronger than any terrorist can ever be, is the fact that this counter power not comes from one authority that dictates it all, but is supported by all actors in society. From central to local governments, from civil society to local communities. Each actor will contribute with its own voice, and will bring different perspectives to the table. These are all relevant. And when there is lack of agreement, there are ways and means to overcome that without the use of violence.

So our recipe is engagement and dialogue that may lead to understanding and less anger and frustration. To be able to do this, "space" is needed in which this can take place.

We offered that space before, and we will be doing that again. I have confidence that you will all use that space to be filled with dialogue and trust-building, and with concrete planning on several issues.

In a couple of days we want to walk away with concrete commitments to ensure future activities. These should and will be based on your activities, your priorities. With you as the prime actors, based on your ideas. I know you are all committed to that, so let's start working.

Asante sana.

Dr. Bibi van Ginkel