

Forum: 3rd Committee (Disarmament & International Security)

Issue: Countering radicalization and violent extremism among youth for the prevention of terrorism

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Introduction

Every day we are confronted with such problem as terrorism, which not only brings suffering to thousands of people all over the world, but also creates a threat to our future generation. Taking into account that young people are usually the majority among the population, we understand that they are a target group for recruitment into extremist organizations of different directions. A number of problems such as war, immigration crisis, the arbitrariness of the authorities, economic crisis or religious conflicts allow extremists to attract a large number of young people who can easily fall under the influence of propaganda. In conditions of instability, young people can't formulate an objective opinion about what is happening and therefore the position of radical extremist groups may become attractive due to their promises and ideas, especially for the uneducated or unemployed masses who are able to conduct active subversive activities and provoke the further destabilization of the situation. It is sad to recognize that juveniles are also involved in extremist activities in various Islamist or ultra-right organizations. Nowadays the problem of violent youth extremism is common practically everywhere in our world, especially in the Middle East and is now recognized as a serious, widespread social problem that affects not only different individual groups, but our society as a whole. Taking into account all mentioned aspects of the problem we must make efforts to prevent the radicalization of our young generation as it is a crucial step for countering terrorism - the today's task number one.

Definition of key terms

Extremism

Nowadays, the term is mostly used in a political or religious sense, for an ideology that is considered to be far outside the mainstream attitudes of society. Political agendas perceived as extremist often include those from the far-left politics or far-right politics, as well as radicalism, reactionism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism.

Salafi jihadism

Jihadist-Salafism is a transnational religious-political ideology based on a belief in "physical" jihadism and the Salafi movement of returning to what adherents believe to be true Sunni Islam.

Ultra-right politics

The term is commonly used to describe right-wing populist ideologies known for extreme nationalism and opposition to immigration, as well as Nazism, neo-Nazism, fascism, neo-fascism and other ideologies or organizations that feature extreme nationalist, chauvinist, xenophobic, racist, or reactionary views, which can lead to oppression and violence against groups of people based on their supposed inferiority, or their perceived threat to the nation, state, or ultraconservative traditional social institutions.

Background information

Throughout history, young people were constantly engaged in activities of radical movements and organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, the Nazi Party of Germany, IRA or leftist communist and anarchist movements. However, this phenomenon was not as remarkable as the phenomenon of terrorism in our days. Considering the modern problem of extremism, we can distinguish right-wing and left-wing radicalism and jihadism as the most common kinds of extremism. It is believed that the emergence of modern Islamic terrorism was caused by such factors as the struggle against colonial regimes, the Arab-Israeli wars, the opposition of the dominant religious population with a secular government, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and also contradictions between different movements in Islam. These factors have created the atmosphere of confrontation between the West and Islamic world, which, in its turn, formed the basis of radical ideas and has already led to terrorist activities in Western countries. Among the high-profile actions of jihadists it is necessary to mention the attack on World Trade Center on September 11, 2001; terrorist attacks in France in 2015-2016, terrorist acts against civilians in Turkey and the constant massacre of civilians in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It is hard to believe, but very often this activity is carried out by young people. Speaking about the growth of ultra-right-wing groups, which are based on young men, it should be said that the main factors of their growth are disagreement with the immigration policy in their countries, dislike of left-liberal reforms, which in their opinion undermine morality and contribute to the degradation of society. Among the ultra-right extremist groups the most popular are Blood and Honor, Combat 18, White Aryan Resistance, Ku Klux Klan and they usually organize pogroms against migrants or opposite activists, riots at football matches, and even terrorist attacks as it was in Norway in 2011 or in Lebanon in 1975. Considering left radical organizations, which are imbued with the ideas of struggle against "imperialism", "capitalism", we can say that they attract youngsters by different utopias like communism or anarchism. Among the left extremist groups the most popular are Red Army Fraction, Kurdish Labor Party, IRA, Red Brigades in Italy, Armies of National Liberation in Latin America and these organizations usually organize terrorist attacks, kill government officials and organize massacres.

Major countries and organizations involved

The problem of extremism among youth is truly international and affects most of the countries engaged in the fight against this negative phenomenon at the state level. Many countries like Russia, the USA, the UK, Turkey and some international organizations provide humanitarian aid to the population in combat zones and contribute to the maintenance of education there to protect youth from the influence of terrorist groups and organizations.

Relevant treaties and UN resolutions

The UN is making great efforts to fight with youth extremism. It is worth mentioning that in 2015 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which includes various measures to save young people from extremism. Also in 2006 member states of the UN adopted Global Counter-Terrorism strategy of the UN, which establishes measures to prevent the conditions contributing to the spread of terrorism and strengthening the capacity of states to combat extremism.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Previously many attempts were made to solve this problem. For many years, many states preferred exclusively violent policy in the fight against extremism, however as we have seen, one way of dealing with extremism by armed methods is not highly efficient and weekly contributes to prevent the growth of radicalization among the population. The governments also focus on elimination of the influence of extremists in the media by various restrictions. The listed methods still can be effective, but may require fundamental changes.

Possible solutions

Currently different experts and analysts offer a range of possible effective solutions in the fight against youth extremism. Taking into account the experience of the United Kingdom, it can be concluded that the involvement of youth in active social life, improving education, fostering the established values for personal and social development, increasing number of workplaces, attracting young people to volunteering and other measures help to prevent political marginalization that leads to extremism, and similar successful strategy has already been used in many countries.