DE-RADICALIZATION OR THE ROLL-BACK OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Proceedings of the UN Geneva Side Event
Held on 23 June 2016 and Lessons Learned

GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE
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CENTRE DE GENÈVE POUR LA PROMOTION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET LE DIALOGUE GLOBAL

The Geneva Centre for Human Rights
Advancement and Global Dialogue

DE-RADICALIZATION OR THE ROLL-BACK
OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2016, FROM 12h00 TO 14h00
PALAIS DES NATIONS, ROOM XXV

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INTRODUCTION

Violent and spectacular extremist violence has grown and is replacing other forms of classical attacks and aggression since the year 2000. It represents no less of a different threat to world peace and stability and to human wellbeing at large. However, the phenomenon of violent extremism is not only limited to people originating from a specific region. Violent extremism grows wherever it finds a fertile terrain nourishing it with the necessary elements of growth.

It so happens that countries of the Middle East were subjected since the beginning of the Millennium to invasion and excessive external military violence which, adding to civil strife it unleashed, led to the wanton deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocents resulting in deep social trauma. There could be no more fertile terrain for the development of violent extremism such as Daesh.

The social trauma of the excessive weight of reparations imposed on Germany after World War I also provided a fertile terrain for violent extremism which in this case took the form of Nazism.

The buckles of the Nazis' belts bore the inscription *"Gott mit Uns" ("God is with us")* as Daesh carries a black flag with *"Allah" ("God")* written on it.

In both cases, one finds the same attempt, shared with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a murderous terrorist group in Northern Uganda, to instrumentalise Christianity or Islam to serve their evil purposes.

In a persistent case of double standards, many Western media and officials have claimed that extremist violence practised by Daesh (who kills more Moslems than followers of any other faiths) are supposedly inspired by Islam, conflating terrorism and Islam. They would however dismiss in the same breath that the Nazis or the LRA were inspired by the Christian faith in any form whatsoever.

To conflate terrorism with one of the three Abrahamic Faiths and then curse the latter is like being in denial of the beauty of human creation simply because

the harmony of the body can be broken by carcinogenic agents which leads to metastasization. It's as if we cursed the body for cancer rather than the carcinogens.

The purpose of the Panel was just to join those who prefer to light the candle of understanding to provide the urgent remedies called for rather than to join the chorus of those who are content to curse the darkness maintained by prejudice or insufficient of awareness.

In an attempt to deepen the understanding of violent extremism, the Geneva Centre accordingly organized in cooperation with the Algerian Mission to the United Nations Office in Geneva and to Other Organizations in Switzerland, a panel discussion on this theme on 23 June 2016. The panel was held on the occasion of the holding of the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council, and was entitled: *"De-radicalisation or the Roll -Back of Violent Extremism"*. The panel was marked by the participation of a wide number of attendees from both the diplomatic and grassroots communities.

Among recent attempts aimed at tackling this issue, an international conference was held in Algiers on 22 and 23, July 2015. It was followed up by a global initiative on 7- 8 April 2016 in Geneva Switzerland. This was the United Nation's secretary general and the state of Switzerland jointly organized conference on preventing violent extremism in which emphasis was placed upon addressing the root-causes of this rampant phenomenon, as stated in the following statement that was made by **Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter** at the opening ceremony: *"We … need a clearer understanding of the phenomenon we are facing. It urges us to draw on factors that draw people, especially young people to violent extremism"*.

The Geneva Centre Panel Discussion was convened on 23 June 2016 in the wake of these important events. It was opened by **H.E. Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim**, *Chairman of the Geneva Centre's Board of Management*, followed by **H.E. Boudjemâa Delmi**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the United Nations Office in Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland*. The moderator of the panel was **H. E. Idriss Jazairy**, *Executive Director of the Geneva Centre*.

The panelists included: **Dr. Farhad Khosrokhavar**, S*ociologist and Research Director at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris*; **Dr. Hervé Gonsolin,** *Special Adviser on Peace and Security, Geneva;* **Dr. Raphael Liogier,** *Professor at the Institute d'Etudes Politique d'Aix –en –*

Provence, Professor at the College international de Philosophie, Paris, and **Mr. Reda Benkirane**, *Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies), Geneva*. Copies of the text of a statement by Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed, Anthropologist, and Research Associate at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur l'Ouest Saharien (CEROS), were circulated amongst the participants during the discussion.

A photo of the panelists during the meeting

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PANEL MEETING

The present report provides a summary record drawn up by the Geneva Centre on the discussions which took place during the panel meeting. It does not commit the authors of the remarks themselves whose statements, which were recorded, are reproduced in full in the annex to the report.

Of Radicals and Terrorists

H.E. Dr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim, *Chairman of the Geneva Centre's Board of Management* opened the panel with a statement in which he stressed the importance of this subject, which had led the United Nations Secretary General, and the state of Switzerland to hold the ministerial meeting of 7-8 April 2016 on preventing violent extremism. *"Radicalism is different from Radicalization"*, stressed H.E. Dr Al Qassim in this inaugural address. He elaborated on this key point by explaining that radical parties have existed in the West and elsewhere for a long time, and that they are characterized by the fact that they may, through political means, challenge orthodoxy even in the form of opposing a fossilized status-quo or authoritarian regimes. Such radicalism is to be distinguished from anarchist or terrorist groups that may or may not be deviant outcrops of such movements.

Radicalization, he added, was different. "It means that a source, possibly but not necessarily, a criminal one, is changing the values or mind-set of a subject, possibly a weak, angry or marginalised one, but not necessarily so". This may lead to quietist advocacies of a return to roots in one case or to violent extremism in another.

H.E. Dr. Al Qassim continued by explaining that violent extremism was on occasion espoused by frustrated or marginalised youth or even psychopaths who are led astray by globalized terrorists groups. These youths lacked religious or ideological persuasions, and were recruited for a variety of reasons that are still poorly understood. He underscored the fact that the full analysis of the situation, which represents a common challenge for both the North and the South, has yet to be revealed.

Warning against misguided approaches that over-simplify the analysis of extremist violence ascribing it to a particular region or religion, H.E. Dr. Al Qassim emphasized that further in-depth understanding is required to eradicate this global problem.

The Chairman of the Geneva Centre ended his speech by urging all countries, namely those suffering from home-grown violent extremism to take immediate

action. Action, he said, must be carried out at local and national levels, as well as at the global level in view of the global impact of social media. There was now, he concluded, a universal acceptance that prevention is key over the longer run and that in the short to immediate term, human rights compliant law enforcement is a central element in addressing violent extremism.

Terrorism and Violent Extremism and their Collateral Effects are Sparing no Country

In his opening remarks, H.E. Ambassador **Boudjemaa Delmi**, *Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the United Nations Office in Geneva*, emphasized that radicalization is a problem of major concern, not only for specific societies but for the entire international community. H.E. Ambassador Delmi made three observations related to this subject:

First, violent extremism contradicts the universal values of peace, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, thus it presents a threat to stability of our societies.

Second, there are numerous channels and methods through which violent extremism was expressed, such as the recourse to the use of conventional weapons as it is the case of Daesh in Syria, or even in the case of Japan with the use of sarin gas in the Tokyo Metro on March 20, 1995. Summary executions and hostage taking are also amongst other aggressive means resorted to.

Third, there is a need to deal with the criminal effects and potential threats of these global challenges; through collective and long-term action as an essential element of the agenda of the United Nations.

Speaking about Algeria's experience in countering violent extremism, H.E. Ambassador Boudjemaa Delmi recalled how Algeria suffered from the scourge of terrorism during the last decade of the 'nineties and how since then it had started implementing de-radicalization strategies to combat the impact of extremist's speech on the society in general, and on young people in particular. In this perspective, he mentioned seven axes on which the de-radicalization strategy in Algeria was based, which included political and institutional measures, security measures, social and economic measures, educational system reform, judiciary and penal system reforms, promotion and involvement in the religious

institutions, and creating a policy of national reconciliation.

H.E. Ambassador Boudjemaa Delmi concluded his speech by pointing out to an international conference that was held in Algeria in 22 July 2015 on "the fight against violent extremism and de-radicalization policies". The conference had resulted in the adoption of a set of operational conclusions consigned in a booklet that was officially handed over to the executive directorate for counter terrorism at the UN for circulation to member states, which is also available online at http://www.mae.gov.dz/page.aspx?page_id=44.

Understanding the Genesis of Violent Extremism is Not Tantamount to Excusing it

H.E. Mr. Idriss Jazairy, *Executive Director of the Geneva Centre*, and the moderator of this panel shed light on the consequences of violent extremism, the new forms of violence which tended to take precedence over classical conflict. Not falling on the battlefields, its victims were increasingly randomized. This violence was causing widespread indignation fuelling indiscriminate xenophobic responses and by undermining national unity, fed the recruitment propaganda of terrorist groups. He drew attention to the dangers of providing easy access to unregulated lethal weapons in some countries that led to further exacerbating the situation. The speaker dwelled on the role of the Internet in propagating hate speech that led to the polarization of societies. "This evolution meets the ultimate goals of terrorist violence", he said.

Mr. Idriss Jazairy affirmed that the current threat could not be durably overcome except through resorting to farther-reaching policies, while taking into account the socio-economic context of each country. He added that this meeting was intended to contribute to the maturing of such policies and strategies, and to rolling back the systematic interaction between violent extremism on one hand, and xenophobic populism on the other hand. H.E. Idriss Jazairy underlined dilemma in providing explanation to the emergence of violent extremism. In the search for effective solutions, he explained that understanding the genesis of violent extremism ties in with the process of de-radicalization or the likelihood of re-integration of averred terrorists into their societies. The speaker reiterated the Chairman's assertion that violent extremism or terrorism cannot and should

not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

Mr. Idriss Jazairy concluded by emphasizing the cross-border nature of the threat of violent extremism which requires national policies to merge into a concerted international strategy.

De-radicalization Measures Have to Conform to the Specificity of Each Country and Particular Circumstances

Effective implementation of de-radicalization measures constitutes a key element in countering violent extremism. Different factors need to be taken into account while constructing de-radicalization programmes. An off-the-peg approach proved to be ineffective with time. The argument of the presentation of **Dr. Farhad Khosrokhavar,** *Sociologist and Research Director at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, focused on this aspect. According to him, ensuring the effective process of implementation of the de-radicalization measures depend upon the three following determinants:

First, the peculiarity of each country. Each country has its own political and historical culture, and what measures of de-radicalization have been successful in some countries need not be so elsewhere. The peculiarity of the country and its situation has to be taken into consideration. For instance, the de-radicalization measures that had been implemented in Britain cannot be directly implemented in France and so on. Each country has specific political, religious and cultural features that characterize it and that makes it different from others.

Consequently, each country has to devise its own procedures of de-radicalization. Governments could seek inspiration from other countries' de-radicalization policies in such cases and learn from their experiences. However, they should not attempt to reproduce or replicate the same model. Second, the categories and different types of radicalized people also need to be considered. "There is no unified profile or single profile for terrorists", he asserted.

To provide evidence to his point, Dr. Khosrokhavar referred to some examples from the statistics about terrorist profiling. In Europe for instance, before 2013, few women participated in terror activities, and the number had risen now to more than 10 %. Of the 5,000 people who had gone to Syria, 500 to 550

amongst were women. Men and women cannot be categorized under the same profile. Hence, each requires a different approach.

Moreover, there are different types of radicalized actors, adolescent and post adolescent. The category of terrorists in this age bracket did not exist before in Europe. About 20 % of people who went to Syria were between 12 and 17 years old. The de-radicalization measures to be implemented in the case of juveniles cannot be the same as those implemented on adults. For adults the ideology counts, whereas for juveniles feelings and affections count more.

Another category of those who have been radicalized is the middle class category. Since 1990, few of the violent extremists belonged to middle class societies; the majority at that time came from poor social classes. However, almost half of those who were recruited to Syria since 2013 belonged to the middle classes. "Then comes the category of converts", he said. Prior to 2013, converts were a tiny minority of those engaged in fighting, but nowadays they have grown to between 8 to 25 or 30 % of the total. The proportion in Belgium seems to be low, whereas in France it is more than 20%. Converts have a kind of behaviours that is at variance with those who have roots in an Islamic background.

Dr. Farhad Khosrokhavar concluded that the aforementioned new categories need new types of de-radicalization procedures. "We cannot have a uniform type of model that could be applied to all of them. Appropriate means need to be developed to tackle this diversity", he reasserted.

According to his experience in conducting research in prisons, he found that people returning from the fighting battles were not homogeneous. Hence, the mind-set would be another typology that needs to be taken into account. There exist four types and sub-types of extremist mind sets:

First, the repentant who regretted being involved in radical extremist action and now disagreed with the tenets of violent extremism .The authorities' role in such a case is to try to strengthen their resolve not to get involved again in violent action.

Second, the ambivalents who went to Syria and Iraq and had gone through experiences of extreme violence. They come back in unstable conditions and if they are put in contact with extremists, they become prone to renew their involvement in violent action.

Third, the entrenched extremists who are convinced in an overwhelming manner that their views are right, possessing feelings of antagonism towards the West and all the governments in the Arab world. This is the most dangerous category,

according to Dr. Khosrokhavar. When mixing the entrenched extremists with the ambivalent ones, the entrenched ones will have the upper hand.

The last category is the traumatized extremists who could pose threat to others and perpetrate violent action due to their unstable psycho-pathological status.

Dr. Farhad Khosrokhavar summed up his presentation by saying that different types of procedures need to be developed in accordance with the different categories of the radicalized and their mind-sets.

Radical Behaviour Means Coming Back to the Foundations and Roots

From a sociological point of view, no matter how rational human beings think they are or try to be, they cannot provide a logical explanation for their behaviours. "Humans are always in the pursuit of giving a meaning to their life", said **Dr. Raphael Liogier**, *Professor at the Institute d'Etudes Politique d'Aix-en-Provence, and in Paris at Collège international de Philosophie.*

There are two categories of people who interpret religion: First, those who are against religion; the hard-core rationalists who put the blame on religion for everything and accuse religion for being instrumentalized by power and second, others who are involved in interfaith and religious dialogue.

He added that religion is neither peace nor war; it rather exists to give some transcendent meaning to our physical existence. We, humans, need to transcend our materiality. We cannot accept to be mere animals, this is also the reason why we set ourselves apart. We are mythological animals. The first myth we tell ourselves is the myth of our difference: difference from animals, difference from other humans, from everything else that is not "we". Human beings sometimes try to construct some radical kind of myth around themselves in a consistent manner. According to Dr. Raphael Liogier, this interpretation helps us understand the definition of racism. Racism appears when a number of individuals or groups want to set themselves apart, and they do that by creating a "superior condition". To justify such behaviour, they use several criteria such as the colour of their skin, the language they speak etc., only to prove that they are superior to others. In so doing, they become problematic for others, and this in turn leads to creating a strange relationship between those who have the

will to dominate and those that feel humiliated. Consequently, those who feel humiliated will try to react violently in order to save some remnant from their own myth of self-worth.

There is a difference between radical behaviours and violence. Salafism for instance , is considered to be a radical approach of Islam, and following "the salaf" that is, the way of life of the earlier followers of Islam, a yearning to go back to one's roots. Thus, there is nothing in Salafism per se that is violent any more than there is in the Amish. However the mix between this mode of life and of its external signs with the imperatives and practices of modern life in the West does not always lead to a blend. Rebel youths tend to want to differ from their environment in multiple ways. Sometimes they resort to the so-called "Gothic style" or sometimes they will resort to Hindu or Muslim garb just to look different. Some young women would be tempted to give up the 'niqab' or the 'hidjab' if this became an accepted and normal practice. But this must not be confused with extremist violence.

In order to be able to understand the phenomenon of extremist violence in Western societies, one needs to find clear answers to the following questions: How do we build identities; is there a real identity issue; are ideas constructed in different ways? What is the linkage between identities and globalization? What is the impact of the massive circulation of images worldwide?

Answering these questions, Dr. Raphael Liogier explained that the idea of building identities and globalization is something new and it is having a real impact on societies. Identity is no more about fitting into a static mould. Religion as contrasted to human legislation offer wide margins of interpretation and lend themselves to unscrupulous uses and instrumentalization. The black flag of Daesh today as the *"Gott mit Uns"* inscriptions on the belts of the Nazi uniforms offer this kind of narrative.

The difference between Al-Qaeda and Daesh was that Al- Qaeda used ideologies and theology as drawing factors, whereas Daesh relied on the globalization factor and used routinely "hero" myths to influence non-Arabic speakers. Dr.Raphael Liogier urged participants to read "Dar al Islam", a French language magazine where heroic images like superman and other desirable images for advanced industrialized societies are found.

He added that the idea of terror and violence had been justified by "Allahou Akbar". Clarifying that in Islamic orthodoxy, "Allahou Akbar" is a declaration of modesty, which means "God is greater than I am" subjecting individuals to God and affirming the modesty of their behaviour in the face of God. Invoking

God when committing a crime against humanity is repeating the Nazi *"Gott mit Uns"*. The relationship between God and his creatures exists in other beliefs and religions and have likewise been distorting. The idea that Allah'ou Akbar when shouted can summon the transition from a downtrodden human to a superhuman being has nothing to do with traditional islam but would be more reminiscent were it not invoked in such dastardly circumstances of the comic strip "Superman" who called out "Shazam" suddenly to turn from a bespectacled innocuous human to transition into the Superman myth. The image of superheroes and linking heroism with the myth itself in the images that are conveyed could be called "virtual futuristic fantasising" or hypermodernity, which is more than just modern. Wrapping up his presentation, he concluded that the gravity of future terrorist action could be foreseen. Backing his conclusion with evidence, he gave the example of the Daesh' foreseeable action as it was driven out by the Coalition forces from its territorial control of wide areas in the Middle East/North Africa. There would unfortunately be a flurry of attempts to make the Middle East conflict boomerang back to the countries of origin of the coalition. This is taking the form of ad hoc murders in Europe, committed by psychopaths and causing indignation and repulsion but that do not add up to a strategy of correlated suicide-bombers in the pursuit of proclaimed objectives.

There is no major underlying trend in terms of the number of violent crimes, but there is a new relationship with terror, which has weakened our societies. In Germany for instance, the German domestic security agency observed an increasing tendency towards turning to violence and brutality, and an increase of far-right attacks on refugee accommodation was recently noticed. In 2015, of the 38,981 politically motivated crimes which were recorded, 29,681 crimes were attributed to extremists. According to German authorities, right-wingers were held responsible for the great majority of the offences in 2015 compared to the year before. Thus, the question that arises is what should we avoid doing? Dr. Liogier answered the question that he posed by saying that one should not over react and one should not participate in the staging of the whole event, which is used by Daesh that wants to build this theatre of terror, create the impression, readily picked up by the media, that their action is truly "jihad" dictated by Islam and that a religious war is nigh between Islam and Christendom. By picking up their narrative, we give Daesh religious legitimacy and participate in the staging of their theatre creating conditions for a new form of religious war. There is need on the contrary to unpack and dissect this mortiferous admixture of ideology, crime and aggression on all sacred values shared by Abrahamic beliefs.

The response has to start with an adaptation of intelligence services from out-dated Cold War objectives to this evolving form of international criminality with other European intelligence services and also with their counterparts in the Islamic region.

Finally, Dr. Liogier said an effective approach to tackling violent extremism would be to get quietist Salafists involved. These people could speak on the ground and have empathy and understanding of myths. They could help to dispel them. He added that there is need in Europe for some kind of observatory for identities. Identities are no longer built on stable grounds. There is dislocation of identities as a result of deconstruction and then reconstruction. Thus we need not only security forces and political scientists but also sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and Islamologists to analyze the situation.

State Responsibility is Key to Countering Violent Extremism

Dr. Herve Gonsolin, *Special Adviser on Peace and Security* echoing what other panellists said that religion is neither the problem, nor the solution to the situation. Adopting religious beliefs is a spiritual personal choice, and nobody is qualified to express a value judgment on this. He added that the whole debate on the Muslim religion, the comparative advantages of Sufism rather than Salafism, Sunnism rather than Shiism, all comes down to the quarrels of dogma and have nothing to do with radicalization. This kind of debate tends to perpetuate the idea of manipulating religion for political purposes. Ever since they existed, religions have been great tools for the social mobilization equation but they have instrumentalised masses, and have been a pretext for all human ambitions even the worst of all.

Dr. Gonsolin mentioned that many people in communities across the five continents have been converted by force, exterminated or enslaved under the pretext that they did not have the right kind of religion. He underlined that debating the manipulation of religions could be an interesting idea, but then we have to broaden this idea to encompass the whole. The role of religion according to him is a very banal idea in the history of humankind.

Nonetheless, he asserted the need to understand why all those young people

mobilize spontaneously on all continents and become prepared to sacrifice their lives for a cause. In an explanation to this phenomenon Dr. Gonsolin said that anger unites young people who feel humiliated and excluded, young people who are often uprooted and who do not have a place or any future in their societies, which are closed, patriarchal or ultra-elitist. Those young people no longer believed in the fine words, thus they wanted to take control of all their destinies, and make history through bloodshed.

Furthermore, violent extremism is the degenerate child of an extreme popular revolt as it stems from the hatred of the young people for authority and those who support it. It reflects a deeper problem: the massive rejection of the social, economic and political order, which is synonymous with the previous failure of generations. The West is a target obviously, but is not the West reaping what it had sowed and is still sowing, he questioned: Military interventions everywhere, political interference in the affairs of other states, blind support for corrupt or oppressive regimes, and useless cooperation policies.

Nowadays, the so-called de-radicalization measures in many countries are causing blatant violations of basic human rights. People who are defined as terrorists are systematically being sentenced to death or executed on the spot by security forces. State efforts to combat radical movements, who are rapidly called sometimes "jihadist", facilitate the recruitment of extremist groups and help delegitimizing the state as a granter of common good equity and justice.

Dr. Gonsolin dwelled on the fact that this awareness came a little bit late for several peoples. What is still lacking in his opinion, is the recognition of certain responsibilities of some states or some components of these states which have encouraged or instrumentalized violent extremism sometimes unwittingly, but most often on purpose, as part of deliberate strategies of power struggle.

Criticizing the current de-radicalization mechanisms, Dr. Gonsolin said that there are 40 de-radicalization programmes throughout the world nowadays and they are all different. The most recent ones where launched in Somalia, Kenya and Pakistan, and the longstanding ones have been around since the early 2000s in Saudi Arabia and Singapore. However, there had been no serious independent evaluation conducted on these programmes. Some of the programmes are suspected of being disguised means of reorienting submission of extremists towards goals, which are more consistent with the interests of the established governments.

Joining the opinion of all the other panelists, Dr. Gonsolin clarified that the number of people signing up for joining violent extremist movements and their

level of radicalization could be reduced if the root causes of frustration, anger and hatred could be addressed, and other alternatives be put forward for those who have not yet been radicalized. In any event, power systems can only remain in place durably only when the blend is right between the commitment they call forth and the authority they exercise, particularly as far as young people are concerned.

Throughout his research work conducted with the Centre of the Humanitarian Dialogue on the perception of radicalization in eight sub-Saharan countries, he became convinced that any state which tries to ensure security needs to be a state of integrity.

Dr. Gonsolin ended his presentation by confirming the fact that if we truly want to get an answer to the problem of violent radicalization of tens of thousands of Muslims, governments in the Muslim world need to allow people to make their own choices. Governments need to ensure that the democratic process is not misappropriated, and to learn to accept the fact that such democratic processes might not necessarily bring conservative parties to power.

The Moderator's Comment

H.E. Idriss Jazairy followed Dr. Gonsolin's presentation by remarking that: "When one tries to clarify the genesis of the process leading to the birth of violent extremism", one needs to understand the root causes of the problem. Trying to understand it, does not mean that one agrees on it. Understanding a phenomenon is not linked with justification. To solve a problem we need to clearly understand it better".

The Concept of Jihad Must be De-criminalized

As a research associate, **Mr. Reda Benkirane**, *Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peace building (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies),* offered a detailed explanation on how stakeholders need to listen to the grassroots so that one becomes able to understand how people perceive and are coopted into violent groups.

Mr. Benkirane highlighted the fact that authorities are facing a global revolution, which itself is questioning the motives behind radicalisation. Great powers

have not been able to eradicate Al -Qaeda, thus one cannot ask other weaker countries to do so. Iraq paid a huge price when it was going through the process of de-radicalization. Field surveys showed that there is no single answer for this massive phenomenon. The speaker added that radicalism is not a negative thing and that the world needs radical political parties but not radicalized behaviours.
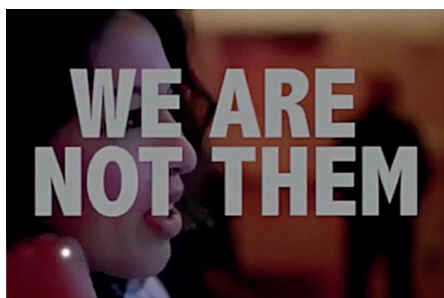
Islam is pictured as the new enemy of the Western world, with the advent of what is called "the market theology" where profits are maximized and socialized. "Jihadism", is the only violent theory available on the market. This general perception about Islam must be rectified and one must not condemn those who are committed to religious values. "If you have an enemy whom you want to fight, you must give him the benefit of the doubt as to his motivations", he exemplified, referring to self-styled "jihadists".

While working on the topic (Violent Extremism) in eight Sub- Saharan countries, Mr. Benkirane noticed that the democratic process, which people were seeking was reversed and deviated towards the direction of violent extremism. Terrorism for Mr. Benkirane is a very ambivalent terminology in historical and semantic terms. He supported his argument with evidences from history proving the deliberate conflation between terrorists on one hand and freedom fighters, as it is the case in Palestine and Algeria on the other hand.

"In conclusion, we should decriminalize the concept of Jihad, and we must not condemn the Jihadists because of Jihad", said Mr. Benkirane. People in the West do not know the proper meaning of Jihad, as we are in fact all Jihadists.

The Moderator's Comment.

The Moderator commented on Mr. Benkiran's presentation by saying that an important point was raised during the presentation that needs to be under scored. Youth must never be perceived as a source of the problem of radicalization. Youth carry the future of humanity with them, and we must realise that youth are not the problem but the solution to our problems. Thus, we have an obligation of transmitting what we have drawn from our own experiences to

all of the coming generations.

As for "jihadists", this was a Western media expression which did not exist in Arabic. "Jihad" did exist and Islam identifies two kinds of "jihad": the "jihad

of the soul" which is the "greater jihad" and has to do with fighting one's own temptation to commit sins" and the "lesser jihad" which is the universally recognized right to self-defence. Those that exercise this right to self-defence are called "moudjahidine" and not "jihadists". The murder of innocents cannot be interpreted by any stretch of imagination as "jihad" as it is specifically banned in the strongest terms by the Koran. It is understandable that deranged or other violent extremists claim legitimacy by invoking religious concepts in vain. Religions have always been the target of instrumentalization in the pursuit of inglorious terrestrial gains. By accrediting the legitimacy of such murders as compatible with "jihad", the Moderator emphasized, Western media and officials convey unwittingly a degree of respectability to this kind of political crime and an incentive for angry youths to join the fray.

Radicalization, Traditional Configuration and Social Change

Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed, *Anthropologist, and Research Associate at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur l'Ouest Saharien (CEROS)*, started her intervention by thanking the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue and the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Switzerland, for associating her with this relevant meeting, in this high quality panel. She stated that in Mauritania, as in many countries of the region, the trajectories of radicalization are multifaceted and can be driven by several inputs other than religion such as identity demands, or precede several claims that combine insecurity, the obstruction of future prospects, disorientation and neo-ideologies. Youths are increasingly exposed to extremism because of collision of social, political and economic changes due to chaotic regulation of residual social inequalities, based on the birth status.

Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed took the example of a brief testimony of a young man, aged 22, belonging to the social class of former slaves to show that since the late 70s, with the "neo-preaching" in cities and the opening of Islamic Institutes, access to education became easier. However, before that, it had been subject to social filtering:

"When my parents were slaves, at my age, they were not entitled to religious instruction, or only had a very limited, brief access to it, and even I, who am now independent, I had no such knowledge. I went towards the discourse that treated me as an equal, the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood, Likhwan, which preached knowledge for all, whereas in our badiyas (countryside) one

must be a descendent of a certain family in order to access this type of learning".

The above testimony showed that seeking self-realization (human identity) and social rehabilitation is a cause of deviation towards extremism rather than financial gain, moral support, or by Wahhabi temptation which will give life to the recipient. This religious revival will breathe new energy in the recipient and may incite him to put his life to use for precise and more temporal goals. She mentioned that young people are joining extremist non-violent organizations (Salafists, tablighistes, mujahideen el Ahrar ...), in order to return to the roots of religion, to change their view of a hostile World, and find solace when facing what they consider to be an illegitimate internal political structure.

Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed acknowledged that a social reform occurred in the 80s (Kadihine period) which represented a fusion between religion and practical life and resulted in evolution. It also helped to anesthesize this spontaneous ability of the traditional religious erudition.

She pointed to the fact that Islam determines the identity of Mauritanian of different communities. As an example, the Moorish adopt Islam in their daily lives and show importance to community service. In addition, the overinvestment in interpretation of the marabout Moorish scholars led to the hardening of the rule whenever this was in line with their interests or the interests of the social groups that they were part of. She added that the violent or "radicalized" drift of the religious phenomenon in this part of the world cannot be addressed if one does not have a clear understanding of the nature of the relation with the Letter and its spirit of Islam, but also with the producer of legal and spiritual norms, and the different usages that have shaped the ancient and recent history of this country.

Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed gave an example of how the "Re-Islamisations" decreased Sufi practices which were seen as moderate voices by engaging in violence which is not always bloody:

"... You talk to us about violence, says a lady in a rural community, but do you know that violence may take invisible forms, for example, do you know that we no longer sing in the evenings as we used to, the epic songs and the Médih (praises of the Prophet), because our young people, when they return from towns, forbid men and women from taking part in the same assemblies, and prohibit women from singing. Hence, a part of our memory was erased, because these songs were the means by which to maintain alive our historical heritage and the artistic knowledge inherited from our parents; nowadays, everything is gradually being forgotten, everything looks more and more alike

... we are suffering silently of this quiet violence."

She noted that radicalization is enhanced because of the insufficient and poorly-managed access of these young people to employment as well as to the Madrassas which do not produce potentially violent, religious, radical elements, but because their academic background is highly appreciated by extremist recruiters. She added that back-and-forths between a radical stance and a return to "normality" in the religious practice and in the relationships with the environment are permitted in Mauritania and that the factors that determine the duration and the effectiveness of these "de-radicalizations" are needs (financial or moral), or connections (with leaders of reputed structures, of influential foreign networks). She said that an extremist young man is not seen as posing any danger if he is a member of the family as he is seen as clean and honest. Moreover, the complexity of the misunderstanding between the Arab World and the West is blocking any progress towards finding a solution to provide a viable future for young Mauritanians.

She continued by saying that extremism is entering social, economic, and political structures, and that opportunities that States and International Donors are expected to offer to youngsters, who receive opportunities from radical organizations, are decreasing.

Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed concluded by asking the following question: Could it be that radicalization is nothing more than a case of the highest bidder?

A photo of the panelists during the meeting

Debate

We Need Impartially Built Counter Violent Extremism Policies that are Based on Evidence

H.E. Idriss Jazairy opened the debate for the participants after one hour and a half from the beginning of the discussion.

H.E. Ambassador Obaid Salem Saeed Nasser Al Zaabi, *Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations Geneva,* stressed that violent extremism is one of the most dangerous phenomena facing all countries in the world. What happened last week in Britain, he said, reminds us that violence is not only motivated by religion and what we are facing is an issue of multiple roots and causes that engulfs the world.

He pointed out that the UAE had adopted a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism and extremism in various sectors: - First, legislative - Second, religious - Third, cultural - Fourth, media and social work. He emphasized that the UAE was amongst the first countries that adopted legislations for combating violence and terrorism. The last legislative and legal measures promulgated by His Highness Sheikh Khalifah Ben Zayed Al Nhayan aimed at strengthening the fight against the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism.

The UAE government, in cooperation with the General Authority of Islamic Affairs Endowments, is engaged in instilling values of moderation, peaceful coexistence and tolerance within the community. It also contributed towards enhancing the culture of Islam and served as a shield in face of terrorism.

At the regional level, he continued, the UAE established the Abu Dhabi-based Muslim Council of Elders in 2014. The government also worked towards supporting moderate religious institutions in the Arab and Islamic world, especially at al-Azhar al-Sharif and sponsored the training programs of Afghan scholars in cooperation with the Zayed House of Islamic Culture Centre, in the pursuit of promoting peace through enhancing tolerance.

At the international level, the UAE established the Abu Dhabi based Hidaya Centre in 2011, which is the first-ever international centre dedicated to countering violent extremism. The Centre was created in response to the growing desire from the members of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the wider international community for the establishment of an independent multilateral centre devoted to countering violent extremism.

"In this context, it is crucial to realize that we need impartial policies that are based on evidence from the field", said Ambassador Al Zaabi. In parallel, the UAE had adopted a number of initiatives to harness social network to combating terrorism and extremism. Finally, the UAE was working towards the initiative of a Swap Centre, and partnership with the US in order to harness all means for correcting widespread misleading ideologies, and to provide wider space to moderate voices in line with the international effort to fight the Daesh terrorist group.

Ambassador Al Zaabi concluded by referring to the recent creation of the Ministry of Tolerance, with the vision of promoting the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the country , knowing that millions of people from close to 200 nationalities and cultures have been living in the UAE in harmony and amity.

A photo of the panelists during the meeting

Issues of Violent Extremism are Cross Cutting Issues

H.E. Ambassador Vaqif Sadiqov, *Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office in Geneva* said that extremist violence phenomenon was considered along many tracks by the Human Rights Council.

Commenting on what had been said by Dr. Khosrokhavar about the peculiarity of each country that needs to be taken into account when speaking about tackling extremism, the Ambassador added that governments need to take the specific characteristics, and the general guiding principles and values for each country into consideration when they develop methods to scale down terrorism and de-radicalize the violent groups of population.

"Of course, there are some common denominators and principle guidelines, but it is difficult to sow the same plant in different climates", he said.

He fully subscribed to what was said by Mr. Gonsolin in reference to the policies of states, political agendas, and political objectives that individual states are responsible for when issues of violent extremism are concerned .The permissiveness of the state and the permissiveness of the law enforcement in our societies, allowed extremism to grow. Enabling extremist ideas to propagate generates problems and this is not a trend specific to the Middle East or North Africa, but it is also common in the West.

H.E. Ambassador Vaqif Sadiqov underscored the responsibility of the State in letting radicalization grow. This fact is usually shied away from. Issues of political correctness need to be reviewed, and a great degree of responsibility lies on the media. He said that we need to focus on educating journalists in order to avoid further complications.

The Ambassador asked the following question; what should we do when it comes to state responsibility towards de-radicalization? He elaborated by saying that we know how to tackle issues related to extremist organizations, yet there is need for policy clarity when it comes to states and state institutions which sometimes assist in creating conducive conditions for radicalization to grow. How should one tackle that? He asked.

Mr. Gonsolin replied to the question by saying that this question is the key point to his presentation, reiterating what he said before that religion is neither the problem nor the solution. Problems and solutions lie in states responsibility. Not all people who are dying now are at war with other people; they are mostly at war with states.

He pointed to the attacks in Paris, which were perceived as attacks targeting

civilians, but in fact, those attacks were attacks perpetrated against the state of France, he explained. The state is part of the problem and the solution, and some states tried to instrumentalize violent extremism so that they could hang on to power.

Away from the formal diplomatic language, **a Representative from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sudan** to the UN office in Geneva spoke about a book called "What Went Wrong". This book which was demeaning for Arabs and Islam was written by Bernard Lewis to address the same problem that we are discussing today. Bernard Lewis implied that extremism is deeply rooted in the Islamic civilization. The representative regretted that there was a lack of other alternative narratives in academia to analyze and address the problem of radicalization more objectively.

The representative agreed with the central point that radicalization has nothing to do with religion, and that it is apt to spread quickly due to globalization. He also posed a question to the panellists, wondering if it is not the state rather than the religion that is causing the problem; what is then the role of the politicization of religion; what gives the youths the motives to sacrifice their lives. He then made a last point about the element of socio- cultural structure in the Muslim and Arab World where there is right now 30% unemployment among the youths with a population of youths, which is more than 60% of the total.

Mr. Benkirane replied to the question by confirming that people have the intention to say that religion is not the issue, but in reality, it is being used as a vehicle for terrorism. Islam as a religion, civilization and culture is being used as a vehicle, yet there are two present perceptions vis-a–vis this topic:

Firstly, researchers and the overwhelming majority of Muslims and those who have empathy for the Muslim World and who all say that this has nothing to do with religion. Secondly, there are those few extremists who claim that they are Muslims but advocate violent acts that contradict the Koran. Western propaganda can then pick and choose.

"Something is going wrong in the Muslim World", he said. We have to tackle that head on in terms of global dialogue; and we cannot simply send accusations back and forth.

An NGO activist representing the view of the Western Saharan community raised another question. She asked about whether occupation leads to radicalism, as it is the case in Western Sahara. "Twenty-five years of our life" she said "have been devoted to the search for a solution or a tentative solution prepared by the

Proceedings of the panel meeting

United Nations and nothing has been done, will that not give rise to radicalism?

In response to the question, H.E. Ambassador Boudjemaa Delmi said the following: "You have put forward the question referring to what has been said by academics, for example when they spoke about the typology to explain radicalization".

Indeed, radicalism is not always linked to religion; it could be the outcome of frustration as Professor Khosrokhavar explained.

Such outpouring of frustration and feeling of failure make people attempt to move towards violence.

The Idea of Moderation and Tolerance Should be Instilled in the Minds of All Generations.

H.E. Ambassador Saja Majali, Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations in Geneva stressed the need for investing in the prevention of violent extremism and for dealing with its consequences. She confirmed the need to clearly understand the phenomenon among youths who carry the future, referring to the Jordanian government, which had worked consistently on studying the push and pull factors of violent extremism.

The Ambassador highlighted one important driver that continues to generate violence today, which is the region's unresolved conflicts as well as foreign occupation. She said that the Palestinian Israeli conflict continues to fuel extremism and extremist thoughts, and the conflict in Syria is unfortunately feeding extremism.

Countering violent extremism requires a comprehensive approach as it was pointed out once in the Speech of King Abdullah II. His Majesty had said that this phenomenon requires a comprehensive religious, cultural, educational, and median security approach. Thus, we need to instil the ideas of moderation and tolerance that are the main principles of Islam in the minds of different generations. Raising awareness among our youths, and creating policies that focus on empowering youths who are thought to be a target for recruitment

by extremist groups. Similar initiatives were proven essential partners in countering violent extremism and promoting peace such as education in general and rehabilitation as highlighted in "The Amman Declaration".

She stressed the importance of reintegration strategies of former extremists, which are essential to our societies. Religious leaders play a central role in promoting the values of tolerance, coexistence and dialogue. Intercultural and religious dialogue is another priority for combating violent extremism. In Jordan, King Abdullah II had set out many initiatives including; the Amman Message, the Common World initiative and the General Assembly Resolution which declared the first week of February of each year an interface harmony week. For many years now, Jordan had been working to confront and weaken violent ideologies, violent extremist organizations and their thoughts such as that of Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Ambassador Saja Majali continued by pointing out the work that has been carried out by the Jordanian government to address radicalization and to improve Jordan's counter-radicalization work in schools and mosques. The Jordanian government announced in 2014 an inter-agency anti-extremist strategy, which had been revised to make it more grass-roots oriented. In 2014, a national plan was developed to confront and address the manifestation of extremism that have begun to sweep Jordan , targeting the youths mainly as a result of global, regional and local conditions, and to address extremism and intellectual fanaticism which requires comprehensive efforts.

The Ambassador concluded on the importance of stressing that violent extremism does not only spread across individual groups and communities, but it can also spread across borders. Hence , the drivers and root causes of extremism and terrorism if left unattended will lead to devastating consequences and this is why all responsible actors should do their best together in their individual capacities and in the ambit of the United Nations, of other International Organizations and of civil society, to understand and better address this phenomenon.

The Chairman replied to an NGO representative referring to the role of Salafism in the promotion of extremist violence. He said that the Gulf region started to work on this topic in 2010. How could one effectively promote human rights? Speaking about moderation and tolerance, he asserted that one really should continue to follow a rights-based approach and organize a series of training opportunities on the link between rights and obligations. He believed that this provides another option for trying to combat violent extremism irrespective of what its underlying sources are.

He then posed two specific questions about the topic. The first question was about the role that parliamentarians could play in better implementing strategies for countering violent extremism and terrorism. The second was about how one could convince those who have lost, say a mother or brother in the Iraq war, despite having some legitimate concerns, that reverting to violent extremism is not the solution.

Commenting on what have been said by some panellists, he agreed that someone mentioned that Salafism is radical but that does not mean it should be equated with the promotion of violent extremism. Accordingly, in answer to the question about whether Salafist radicalization creates a virtual terrain for the recruitment of individuals by criminal organizations and groups, he said this may or may not be the case, circumstances being different from one country to another and causes being multiple and intertwined.

Dr. Raphael Liogier commented on the question by explaining that today the situation is one where images circulate very rapidly and identities are no longer territory-based because of globalization. To give an example that confirms this phenomenon, supposing that there was an Israeli rocket that exploded in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, people from North African stock in some French inner cities will empathize with victims, simply because they see themselves as French Palestinians, and because they experienced the suffering via Facebook or through the social network.

As a result, if they are going to come across someone in the same building who is maybe Jewish, they are going to think that he is somehow a friend of Israel. The reverse is also true of Jewish groups in the inner cities that empathize with Israelis when a rocket is sent from across the border in Gaza. Therefore, this extensible identity-based logic, over and above local logics is a real danger factor, which is no longer linked to nations but is linked more to feelings of solidarity, the virtual solidarity which have real consequences on the way we construct our identities.

Concerning the question of Salafism, this is a complicated issue. Dr. Liogier explained that he was a bit simplistic when he mentioned Salafism as an example in his presentation, but this was deliberate. He added that Salafism is linked to religion. Religion is a narration, and it is the fact of telling a story that gives meaning to real life. This can be appropriated by the state, the state can merge this into national identity with the feeling of frustration. Be that as it may, the search for identity is part of the aspiration of all human beings to dignity and to group allegiance.

A photo of the representatives of different countries

There are narratives, which are neuro-positive, but sometimes they are completely built on frustration and on the use of quotes from the Bible and verses from the Quran. Consequently, the issue is not about whether we are talking about religious orthodoxy or whether this is real Islam or not. The question that arises is why we would build a narrative which is necessary for feeding our psychological and political needs. A "Jihadi", is this kind of new character. It is an individual who takes on a Jihadist identity on offer in the virtual market, justifying this by using the kind of narrative which enables him to act in a certain manner while inventing legitimacy to his behaviour. The same "Jihadi" could come across people from the Salafist movement, which make the situation much more complex. "Salafism is some kind of a Spring Board of Jihadism", said Dr. Liogier.

Salafism as any narrative, can be linked to violent extremism. At a certain point of the history of Islam, there were violent expressions that could be linked to the development of the political versions of Islam, in the 19th and the 20th centuries as a result of the humiliation caused by West. Yet, recently a new kind of Salafism was developing which is specific and has been seen as depoliticized and individualistic. This form could not be categorized as being violent even if it is radical. It is more about reverting to the roots.

H.E. Dr. Hanif Al Qassim reiterated that radicalization should not be linked to any religion, culture, or ethnic group. Radicalization could happen to groups other than Muslims, and it is not restricted to one religion. When reference is made to Islam there are many versions of it nowadays. In this case, one needs to identify which version does represent the real Islam, the religion that came to humanity with peace and harmony.

"Diversity is a good practice, a good representation of the real Islam", he added. However, there are extremist groups who attempt to high-jack Islam and claim to represent it. The antidote to their poisonous propaganda is to be found in the way we educate and raise our children at home and at school. All parents must educate their children to become more tolerant to other groups or individuals, from other backgrounds and origins. Dr. Al Qassim said while pointing to the

person who posed the question about Salafism, "I think you are referring to one specific group, yet the dilemma exists also in other groups who come from different countries, hence we cannot generalize", he said. He further explained that our efforts should be seriously orchestrated at the national and international level to provide the best remedy to this kind of malicious disease.

The Moderator closed the discussion by concluding that much more time and effort should be devoted to this extremely important topic. Referring to what H.E. Dr. Hanif Al Qassim said in his opening remarks about the need for holding another meeting on the subject before the end of the year, where there will be a possibility to draw some practical lessons from this harvest of ideas that have been expressed. Finally, he conveyed his gratitude to all the panel members for having enlightened this discussion with the non-politically correct language, and for all of those who participated in the debate.

DRAWING LESSONS FROM THE PANEL MEETING

By Idriss Jazairy

The panel was fortunate to benefit from the sponsorship of the Permanent Mission of Algeria, a country which has paid one of the highest tolls to terrorism in the world, back in the 'nineties of the last century. External observers were mostly unsympathetic at the time believing that such horrific violence was the result solely of a democratic deficit. They were thus reluctant to refer to the groups of individuals perpetrating their violent crimes as "terrorists", preferring to refer to them as "Islamic militants", in other words, as rebels with a rational cause.

September 11, 2001 put paid to such a truncated or biased vision of reality. Since then the successors of the suicide Tamil bombers in Sri Lanka, of the Lords 'Resistance Army of Uganda, of the Symbionese Liberation Army in the United States, of the "Bande à Baader" and the "Red Brigades" in Western Europe or of the neo-Nazis on its northern flank without going back to the OAS in France, have projected their dark shadow ever more broadly, wreaking havoc this time both in the Islamic and in the Western worlds. This refers of course to Al Qaeda and to some of its off-shoots despite their having cooperated with the West on the battlefield respectively at some stage in the past or even despite the fact that they do so currently in one case. It refers also more particularly to Daesh which is taking over the "terrorist franchise" on the world terror market. Extremist violence continues unabated in other regions. Thus extreme-rightist groups in Germany have carried out violent attacks against refugees. In the United Kingdom, a Member of the House of Commons who was planning to introduce a report on the anti-Muslim attacks to Parliament was brutally murdered in June 2016. As this enumeration shows extremist violence is a curse that has emerged in different contexts and is not an occurrence connected to a particular ethnic or religious category.

Extremist violence from the Middle East is no more referred to nowadays as coming from "Islamic militants" as was the preferred expression when media referred to the case of Algeria, from which the new forms of extremist violence do not really differ, but as "Islamic terrorists" or "jihadis". "Jihadis" in the new jargon are those that actually perpetrate wanton murders of innocent non-Muslims. "Islamists" are claimed to be those who tell them how to do so. These expressions ascribe guilt by default to Muslims in general, defame Islam and underline the chaotic and dogmatic nature of the process indicting the alleged anti-Enlightenment posture of the Islamic civilisation.

This misguided view overlooks the fact that, from 2015 until now, six times more Muslims on Muslim soil than people in the West have been killed by terrorist groups originating in the Middle East (1740 v.301). Even in the West, Muslims are also targeted. Thus in the recent terrorist attack in Nice on 14 July

2016, over one third of the victims were Muslims. It appears therefore that such terrorist groups are much more hostile to Muslims than to either Christians or Jews.

Contrary to prevailing biases, violent crime in Western Europe has not increased over the years as a result of Middle East-based terrorism; a panellist made that point. Only its nature has evolved with Middle East related terrorist crimes becoming more visible than other forms of attacks. Thus while the German security agency noted in 2015 an increasing tendency to resort to violence and brutality, it indicated that of the 38,981 politically motivated crimes recorded in 2015 and which rose by 20% over the previous year, 1,524 were related to the Middle East and other foreign sources, a decrease of 25% over the previous year.

Be that as it may, the transnational character of terrorist violent crime originating in the Middle East makes it necessary to search for solutions beyond the national or regional ambit.

Strategizing at the world level has become a must because of the global character of the threat. This led the UN Secretary General and the Government of Switzerland to convene a conference in Geneva on "Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward" on 8 April 2016 following up on a previous international conference organised by Algeria on 15 July 2015.

The Panel on De-radicalisation and the Roll-Back of Violent Extremism initiated by the Geneva Centre and held under the auspices of the Permanent Mission of Algeria was a follow-up to the Geneva Conference. It took place as a side-event of the session of the Human Rights Council. Its purpose was to investigate "The way forward" referred to in the title of the Geneva Conference. Moving forward meant getting the narrative right and then strategizing.

To get the narrative right is not an easy task for an issue which has become embroiled with legitimate security concerns, fear and fear-mongering which have been politicized by populist parties in the West and with phobic language that has been conducive to broad-based racism.

I. Getting the narrative right

Is Islam a religion that preaches violence?

To make this point critics quote from the Qur'an:

"Slay the Pagans wherever ye find them. And seize them, beleaguer them…" (Sura 9:5)

This statement was made by the Prophet (PBUH) about the tribe of Qoreich who had just violated a peace agreement two years after signing it with the Muslims.

Critics do not mention what follows in the Qur'an that "if they repent…Allah is oft-forgiving most merciful".

Compare this with psalm 137 of the Bible:

"O daughter of Babylon…blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!"

There are some 600 passages of such explicit violence in the Old Testament and far less in the Qur'an that sound particularly violent when quoted out of context. That is enough for any extremist from a Christian or from a Muslim background to claim the followers of the other religion are violent.

Yet compassion and forgiveness is everywhere to be seen in the Qur'an and also specially in the Gospel. How could terrorist killings in particular be reconciled with the Qur'an's assertion: "Whosoever kills a single soul wantonly is as if he had killed the whole of mankind…" (Sura5:32). Likewise the Holy Prophet has been reported in the Hadith quoted by Boukhari (the most authoritative source) as saying: "My compassion will always vanquish my anger".

This in no way denies that all religions have been invoked by zealots out of misguided behaviour, vindictiveness or to gain political advantage to justify extremist violence as shown by the Crusades where millions of people were killed, Religious Wars, the Saint Bartholemew's Day massacre, the incendiary preachings of the monk Savonarola who insisted that women should only go out entirely veiled and last but not least the likes of Sayed Qotb, Ben Laden and Abu Baker Al-Baghdadi.

II. Is radicalism or radicalization a threat for society?

There should be nothing wrong with "radicalism". It is the mind-set to return to the root of an issue to understand it better and draw the right inspiration from it. It chimes with the "Back to basics" policy slogan of the former British Prime Minister John Major. Radicalism can also call into question a fossilized system of government that needs to be done away with in different parts of the world. In fact the Enlightenment Movement of the 18th century was seen as radical in its days. Radical parties may take over the Government to introduce reforms. Sometimes the take-over is peaceful sometimes it is not. It tends to be the more violent the more the outgoing authorities or autocracies hang on to power. At times the violence gets out of hand and may or may not degenerate into terrorist

action. The question then arises as to who is to blame and the answer is "It depends". What is at issue here is not some violent streak inherent in radicalism but the extent to which democracy prevails in political change. Radical groups or communities are usually quietist. They are found in the West (e.g. the Amish in the US) and in the East (e.g. the Salafists in parts of the Muslim region). Their basic rights to the freedom of opinion should be upheld.

Radicalization is different from radicalism. Here individuals are singled out by ideologues or terrorist groups. They are incited to forsake their families and societies in the pursuit of an extraneous deceptive objective. When they enlist with these groups, they become gun fodder at the service of criminal interests. Thus at the end of the XXth century, the mind-set injected into vulnerable targets was based on a distorted and bigoted view of Islam which no legitimate Islamic authority in the world recognized. In the XXIst century terror groups in the Middle East increased their mastery of social media. By marketing images of hero figures picked up from Western fiction, the groups give people feeling like underdogs the sense that, from being powerless in their societies, they can become all-powerful in the model they are misled into opting for.

This broadens the appeal of the model to include a growing number of angry youths of European extraction, increasingly of middle class backgrounds and with a rising percentage of women in their midst.

III. What explains the difference between Middle East-based terror groups which have become a world challenge and other such groups originating in other parts of the world which remained, with a few notable exceptions, of local or regional concern only?

The following are relevant considerations to understand this situation:

• The fossilization of political autocracies and their inability to introduce reforms to meet the rising expectations of the youth who, despite being the majority, remain marginalised and in particular suffer from the highest rates of unemployment.

• The trauma inflicted upon the Middle East and North Africa by relentless foreign invasions which have been occurring since the beginning of the 2000s. These have caused over a million, mainly civilian deaths at the hands of regular armies in civil conflict. This tragedy only came to world notice when survivors tried fleeing westward to safety as refugees. No other region was subjected to such a high number of casualties. The war and ensuing occupation have destroyed the social fabric and in particular the traditional conflict resolution

mechanisms in the countries targeted. The wholesale dismissal of all the hierarchy in place under Saddam Hussein is a case in point.

This created enormous pent-up anger, sufferings and frustration and provoked a vacuum that was then readily filled by terror groups. Their attacks targeted primarily Muslim victims, 1740 having been killed since 2015 without getting much coverage in the world media. However as Daesh's territorial strongholds are on the verge of obliteration through air raids, it is gearing up its attacks in the Coalition countries to get maximum publicity and prepare its mutation to a "virtual khalifate" keeping a monopoly control over the terror franchise at the world level. It has thus perpetrated terror attacks which have killed over 300 people in the West since the beginning of 2015. By these actions Daesh grabbed the headlines with just a handful of deranged or manipulated criminals.

• The impact of globalisation and the development of social networks offer Daesh the possibility to access millions of households in the East and in the West. A few tens of people is all they need to convince and recruit to continue to perpetrate their attacks in the West at the current level of intensity.

World media have also contributed to the aggrandizement of Middle East-based terror groups by using phobic language the thrust of which is to conflate terrorism and Islam. This is contagious language which is even used now unwittingly by victims of Islamophobia.

Thus, the media and politicians refer to terror attacks as "jihad". Yet the "Greater jihad" in Islam is first and foremost self-exertion to overcome temptation to commit capital sins. Incitement to self-exertion for this purpose is as present in the Christian as in the Muslim faith. There is another dimension to "jihad" that is referred to in Islam as "Lesser jihad". It refers to the obligation to resort to self-defence only when attacked. This is a right and obligation consigned in the Charter of the United Nations. It precludes even the broader interpretations of self-defence that some world powers advocate (only for themselves) to include pre-emptive action in the concept of self-defence.

From the word "jihad", Western media have invented the neologism of "jihadist" which does not exist in Arabic. Those that practice "jihad" in the Koranic sense are called "moudjahidin". Not a single Arab or Islamic legitimate authority would refer to the members of Daesh as "moudjahidin". If "jihadi" is the Western deformation of "moudjahid" which it seems to be, then the media and officials that use it are giving these terror groups the aura of an alleged legitimacy by the standards of the second largest religion in the world. The same applies to the expressions of "Islamic or Islamist terrorism", "extremist

Islamic groups" etc…

Likewise some refer to "moderate" versus "extremist" Islam. Islam has been proclaimed as the continuation of the Abrahamic message of the Jews and of the Christians. It is the religion of the middle ground. His Holiness Pope Francis reaffirmed the same idea in August when he said that the "Qur'an is a book of peace and Islam is a peaceful religion''. People of course are fallible. They may be moderate or extreme in the practice of their faith but this does not indict the religion itself. In fact, Pope Francis mentioned that violence and fundamentalism can be attributed to Catholics in the same way as to Muslims.

By using this phobic language, one provides tremendous media scoop to Daesh and free publicity which increases its outreach and credibility thus enhancing its attractiveness for young *desperados*.

However, Islam is discredited by this phobic language as well as Muslims themselves who are caught at one and the same time by these violent extremist Middle East-based groups and by increasingly violent Islamophobic extremist populist groups in Europe. The situation is encapsulated in a dialogue on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice as reported by the French radio in the day following the terrorist attack of 14 July:

A lady of Maghrebi origin mourns the death of her mother by putting a bunch of flowers at the blood stained place of the pavement where her mother was killed by the mass-murderer of 14 July. A passer-by shouts at her: "Go back to your home country". She replies "But this is my home. I am mourning the death of my mother who was killed here on 14 July". "Good" replies the passer-by, "at least that's one less!".

IV.   Why we need a clearer understanding of factors that lead to radicalisation and extremist violence

A senior European politician said recently concerning home-grown terrorist attacks that he was fed up with those who seek continuously excuses or cultural or sociological explanations. He added that to explain is already to be somewhat inclined to forgive.

Without an understanding of the genesis of extremist violence the only response is one involving security forces to play the role of fire-fighters. This of course in the short term is indispensable and one should seek to improve coordination at the internal and at the international level in the field of intelligence. A special mention needs to be made of the potential for improvement in intelligence cooperation between the combat zones in the Middle East/North Africa region

and Western Europe. But this will only improve short term emergency responses.

Extremist violence is here to stay for some time. In order to roll it back, a long-term strategy is required that will have to go beyond security reinforcements. It will require political, cultural and sociological explanations.

At the level of national politics, extremist violence can erupt as a result of a denial of aspirations of the majority of the population and in particular of the youths. As mentioned by a panellist, a healthy balance needs to be kept between the commitment the State calls forth and the authority it exercises.

If the latter is overpowering, a triggerpoint may be reached where radicalism, which in normal circumstances is a welcome agent of change, degenerates into extremist violence which is hugely disruptive. Ultimately, it should be up to the people of each country, not to foreign military forces, to bring about democracy, each nation following an appropriate time path and approach. Outside assistance is often needed. But in order to avoid the creation of post-invasion vacuums which are inevitably filled by terrorist groups, the requisite international assistance is best provided through support of bilateral cooperation programmes or of regional as well as United Nations human rights machinery.

At the international level, globalisation has made it well-nigh impossible to insulate Europe in particular and the West in general, from the backlash of foreign military action in the Arab region. There can be no escaping the fact that such military violence will whip up terrorist violence locally and overseas and stimulate tidal waves of refugees whose numbers will be increased further by job-losses resulting from sanctions applied to their home country. Thus moving the western agenda in the Arab region from regime-change to stabilisation may help reduce the space for extremist violence. So will a resumption of the peace process to end Israeli occupation and enable the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination.

Cultural explanations would relate to the role of specific cultures in terms of some being more prone to violence than others. I have indicated in section I above that this argument, to the extent that it singles out the role of particular religions and specifically Islam, does not hold water. Culture has to do not only with faith but also with tradition. Patriarchy has been a broadly shared feature of many cultures in the East as well as in the West. In Switzerland, women were only allowed to vote in national elections in 1971, at a time when women had had voting rights for decades in all Islamic countries. Since then women's rights have made big strides in the West. Trust the youth to challenge the hold of patriarchy and to end violence against women. Again while violence

is unrelated to faith, one can admit that countries that have endured a violent colonial past may tend to be more violent than others.

Sociological explanations for extremist violence abound: the process of changing of the guards in the developing world may be violent as it was in France after the French Revolution. In these regions, the demographic pyramid has never had such a huge bulge around the "under thirties" who feel disempowered in a context of gerontocratic control of the levers of power. This situation cannot last but here those that refuse to relinquish power, at least as much as their (violent) challengers, may share the blame.

Sociological explanations also are relevant for understanding the efflorescence of home-grown extremist violence in the developed world where thousands of men and women join Middle Eastern terror groups. While at the end of the 'eighties and 'nineties of the last century, those attracted to violence were mainly incited by ideological motives having to do with a perverted interpretation of Islam, in recent decades the catch for recruits to violent action has been the illusory offer to change marginalised people from what they perceive as a state of powerlessness to a status of powerfulness. The model offered is the typical hero figure in Western fiction available on You Tube.

Here these people share a sense of somehow not being content with the identity traits provided by their citizenship and search for a complementary, or or in some cases substitutive, identity. It can be seen as a fashionable option as for the youths that don the "Gothic style", that resort to tatooing or the "burkini" in a quietist desire to distinguish oneself from others, or it can in some rare cases be a new life option seeking delusive self-assertion through extremist violence. A "secularist" State may want to select and attack both some quietist options that are associated with Islam to pander to prevailing Islamophobia and the violent option while the "secular" state will only attack the latter option.

So in the short-term, responses to extremist violence are urgent and intelligence cooperation is key. But such responses must fit in a global strategy to eradicate not only this violence but the conditions conducive to the emergence of such social cancer. This global strategy will necessitate moving beyond racist red herrings and simplistic knee-jerk reactions.

The purpose of the panel was to clarify the debate and to set people of good will from East and West, North and South to converge in the search for a common understanding as to how to roll back the systemic interaction between violent extremism on the one hand and xenophobic populism on the other.

The thrust of the meeting can be encapsulated in 6 action points:

1. Violent extremism to be seen as universal phenomenon:

The state has the monopoly of the use of force and should exercise it according to the rule of law. Violent extremism is a resort to the use of force outside the bounds of the state monopoly and of the rule of law. It is a universal threat because it aims to undermine universal values of peace, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation and because it thus undermines the stability and security of all states. It is not specific to any culture, religion or civilisation but tends to be the result of human rights violations including social exclusion, manipulation of social media, economic crisis and foreign invasion.

2. Understanding the genesis of violent extremism is not tantamount to excusing it:

Violent extremism nascent in the Middle East cannot be overcome by military or security services alone. Many misguided and short-sighted policies and permissive situations have led to an increase in radicalization. With the rapid development of social media, it has been difficult to reconcile the basic rights to freedom of opinion or expression with the imperative to prevent the proliferation of extremist violence. Such violence can only be overcome through eradicating its causes which have to do not only with security but with sovereignty, social justice, the role of minorities in society, the opportunities offered to the youths, the fulfilment of the aspiration of all to opportunities, recognition and self-worth. These political, economic, social and cultural conditions apply to all countries whether Islam is in position of minority or majority. That is why a proper understanding of how to cope with violent extremism requires the involvement not only of politicians but also of anthropologists, sociologists and economists, not to mention in an increasing number of cases, psychiatrists.

3. Radicals are not to be conflated with terrorists:

Radicalism is different from radicalization. They have been known in the West and elsewhere to oppose tyranny. Radicalization is the action of influencing weak or vulnerable persons to change his or her value system to become subservient to his or her handler. Fiction heroes of the Internet have replaced ideologies in this manipulative recruitment of adepts. The practice of one's religion should not become a cause of suspicion. Religions are prone to peace and not to violence and exist to give a transcendental meaning to the life of individuals. Quietist radicals should not be seen as adversaries and may be the most likely to deradicalize youths that have been involved in terrorist activities.

4. The responsibility of states in countering violent extremism:

There is no panacea for combating extremist violence. The historical and cultural particularities of each country need to be taken into account. In the case of Middle East-based violence, countries in this region and in North Africa should be left to choose their political and social systems to a greater extent. Foreign invasions in the region have systematically created a vacuum that has become an incubator for violent extremism. Of course, a reduction of the tension due to the interruption of the peace process over Palestine cannot be over-emphasized. Much has been said about shortfalls in the governance of developing countris as having led to social explosion and extremist violence. This well known fact is incontrovertible. More broadly, each country has to devise its own procedures of de-radicalization with an awareness of the different mind-sets of radicalized actors. Some may show sincere remorse and may help to de-radicalize others. Some others are completely indoctrinated and constitute a danger for society for instance. They need to be handled differently. An interesting practice has been introduced by the city of Aarhus to deal with Danish returnees from combat zones. According to this practice, "the city treats one time fighters not as criminals or potential terrorists but as wayward youths that deserve a second chance" according to the New York Time. This has helped youths reintegrate society on the basis of a model first applied to neo-Nazis.

5. The need to address phobic language:

Phobic language is used by heretic preachers from the Middle East to excommunicate Muslims and incite to violence against them as well as non-Muslims. This behaviour should be challenged by the official Islamic institutions in the states concerned. In vulnerable countries, special efforts should be made on improving the education system to promote the immunity of the youths against phobic language of this kind. Sometimes those that perpetrate crimes against their kith and kin and against other innocent civilians in independent countries whether their own or those of others have even been called "freedom fighters". That would be a sacrilegious statement soiling the memory of the heroes of liberation wars.

Phobic language should also be addressed in Western countries where Governments make precious little effort to educate, as they should, the public and the media. Thus not only the media but also mainstream politicians refer to terrorists as "Islamic militants" or "jihadists", to terrorist violence as "Islamist violence" to "moderate or extremist Islam", to fatwas as "licenses to kill" etc…, The impact if not the purpose of this language is just to conflate Islam

with terrorism. Yet greater jihad is the fight against one's own temptations while lesser jihad is the exercise of the right to self-defence. There is no third interpretation to cover wanton killer in the sense used in the West. Likewise Islam is by definition "the religion of the middle-ground", neither "extreme" nor "not-extreme". However people can interpret it literally (e.g. salafists) or in terms of ultimate objectives (soufis). Likewise a fetwa is an interpretation of an Islamic code to adapt it to an evolving reality. It is a sign of flexibility and modernity. It just happens that at one stage one imam cursed one author with a license to kill that was never implemented and this single case has obfuscated the positive impact of fatwas over 14 centuries!

Let us start by organizing exchanges between Christian and Muslim schools wherever possible in such a way that Christian teachers will occasionally lecture Muslim pupils on the Christian faith and likewise Muslim teachers will lecture Christian pupils about the Islamic faith.

6. Promoting the values of tolerance:

Tolerance is a value inherent in Islam as it is in other Abrahamic religions of which it is but an extension. At times political opposition obscures this fact. Yet 13 years after France completed the invasion of Algeria, the defeated leader of that country, exiled in Damascus, the Emir Abd El-Kader el Jazairy saved the Christian community from sure death at the hands of a fanaticised (we would now say "radicalized") populace. When asked why he saved those 12,000 Christians despite the fact that other Christians had invaded and ransacked his country, the Emir replied: "I fought the French for 17 years not because they were Christians but because they invaded my country. As for saving the Christians here, I was just complying with the teachings of the Qur'an which say "Whosoever kills a single soul wantonly is as if he had killed the whole of mankind and whosoever saves a single soul is as if he had saved the whole of mankind".

ANNEX I
FULL STATEMENTS OF PANEL MEMBERS

Of Radicals and Terrorists
Statement of H.E. Dr. Hanif Al Qassim
Chairman of the Geneva Centre's Board of Management

Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives of Member States,

Honourable Members of Civil Society Organizations and of Academia,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Geneva Centre extends to all of you its deep appreciation for so graciously participating in this side-event which we are fortunate to be organizing in cooperation with the Algerian Permanent Mission to the UN Office and to Other International Organizations in Switzerland.

Indeed, I wish to salute in particular H.E.Ambassador Delmi of Algeria, who shares this podium with us.

We are gathered here today to discuss a matter of great urgency: the "De-radicalization or the Roll-Back of Violent Extremism". Earlier this year, the vital importance of this subject compelled the UN Secretary General and the State of Switzerland to hold a ministerial meeting on the 7th and 8th of April, 2016 on the subject.

In the opening speech of the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism on 8 April, the Swiss Federal Councillor H.E. Didier Burkhalter challenged the audience with the following: "We… need a clearer understanding of the phenomenon we are facing so that we can act on the factors that draw people – especially young people – to violent extremism".

This present debate is intended to respond to the Minister's challenge and to zero in on "the way forward" by deepening our understanding of this phenomenon and related considerations.

A question that dominates the discussion is worthy of consideration: Is radicalism the problem? Radical parties have existed in the West and elsewhere for decades, if not centuries.

There is an important distinction to be drawn between radicals and terrorists.

Radicals challenge orthodoxy with the notion of addressing what they believe to be a fossilized status quo or authoritarian regime and justify the consequences

of their motives accordingly. Actions may result in violence, and blame for harm is frequently well deserved. It is undeniable, however, that often when radicals succeed, they move from opposition to Government which places them as actors in the dynamic political process, as a factor in reshaping structures and agendas. Numerous examples come to mind.

Radicalism is to be distinguished from terrorist groups that may, or may not be deviant outcrops of such movements.

Words have power through their distinctive meanings and the complexity of contrast is worthy of consideration in this case.

Radicalism is different from Radicalization.

With Radicalization, a source, possibly but not necessarily, a criminal one, is aiming at changing the values or mind-set of a subject. Often that subject is weak, angry or marginalised. What is confusing however is that many such subjects either lack those characteristics or hide them so as to remain undetected. In its mildest form, radicalization may lead to quietist advocacies of a return to roots. As we've witnessed only too frequently, in its most extreme case, radicalization may lead to destructive violence.

Of great concern now is the violent extremism espoused by frustrated or marginalised youth who are enticed to criminal action by globalised terrorist groups. These youth lack religious or ideological passion and accept to be recruited for a variety of reasons that are still poorly understood. The offer of a purpose and escape from hopeless lives has been cited as an explanation. The full analysis has yet to be revealed. The challenge before us is to understand the impulses that lead to violent extremism and through that understanding to identify effective methods for prevention and de-radicalization.

This is a common challenge of North and South. If blame there must be for the present state of affairs, we should all raise our hands. But this debate is not a blame game. All of the countries we call home have to some degree, suffered from, and endured, violent extremism. Action, first and foremost is required. Action starts at the local and national levels and certainly, action is required at the global level.

There is now universal acceptance that prevention is key and that human rights compliant law enforcement, is a central element in addressing violent extremism, although it is not the only answer.

Further understanding is required certainly and we must avoid the temptation to oversimplify the analysis with gross measures of categorization.

Accordingly, one thing needs to be emphasized at this juncture. As stated in the joint Chairman's Conclusions of the Geneva Conference of 8 April 2016: "violent extremism or terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group". To deny this in fact would fuel the growth of our nemesis - violent extremism.

Two hours will not exhaust the discussion of the subject, even with the presence of such illustrious and knowledgeable Panel members. We intend this debate to be followed by a longer meeting on the same theme in the second half of the year.

I wish you all success in your deliberations and hope for an informative outcome.

De-radicalization: Sharing an Algerian experience

Statement of H. E. Mr Boudjemaa Delmi

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Algeria in Geneva

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When one comes to think about de-radicalization and what should be done to contain violent extremism, it is convenient to first start with few observations:

• **First observation:** Terrorism and violent extremism and their collateral effects spare no country;

Being contrary to universal values such as peace, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, these two phenomena are: internally, a threat to the stability of our societies and at the international level, challenges to peace and security;

• **Second observation:** Modes and channels of expression of these two phenomena are many;

- Undermining sacred values, blasphemous provocations, Islamophobia, Xenophobia;

- Recourse to conventional weapons and even to chemical weapons (Sarin gas…as was the case when used by Daesh in Syria, and years ago in the Metro of Tokyo);

- Hostage-taking and summary executions by terrorist groups;

- Recourse to new Information Technologies and Communications and their impact, in particular, on the youth and the most vulnerable layers in society.

• **Third observation:** To deal with the criminal effects and potential threats of these global challenges, an urgent, collective and long term action has emerged as an essential element of the agenda of the United Nations. This agenda enumerates actions of:

- Prevention and fight against the scourges of terrorism and violent extremism;

- Promotion of values of tolerance, dialogue and living together;

- Primacy of justice and the rule of law;

- Social and economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Based on these observations, Algeria, which suffered from the horrors of terrorism, has implemented a **Strategy of De-Radicalization** to fight the impact of extremist discourse on the society in general and the youth in particular.

This strategy is based on seven main axes:

• **A national reconciliation policy,** thanks to which thousands of repentant individuals have been reintegrated into society;

• **Political and institutional measures:** building a strong and just State based on the developing of democracy and the primacy of the rule of law, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, establishing institutions and norms in conformity with our international commitments;

• **Security measures** to preserve the constitutional order and guarantee the protection of property and persons;

• **Social and economic measures:** good governance, promotion of social justice, equal opportunities, fighting against social scourges, combatting unemployment, fulfilling the needs and expectations of the youth by a better integration in terms of personal development, education, professional training, and employment opportunities by facilitating access to credits and the creation of micro and small-sized businesses;

• **The reform of the education system** to preserve the foundations of citizen-based culture and reaffirm the validity of universal values;

• **The reform of the judiciary and penitentiary systems** by the abolition of courts of exception and replacing them by specialized entities, the establishment of a set of measures inside the prison environment aiming at eliminating extremist discourse and giving those who propagate it the opportunity for repentance and reintegration in society through the education and professional training of detainees;

• **The involvement of the national religious establishment** through the promotion:

I. of an authentic, humanistic and a tolerant practice of Islam, carrier of social solidarity;

II. a practice of Islam that would protect our society from the damaging effects of extremism by a better training of Imams and "Mourchidates" (female preachers);

III. a practice of Islam sustained by legislation aimed at fighting against violent extremism by rededicating the mosque to its genuine role;

• **The consolidation of our national religious institutions** by the reorganization of the Fatwa institution, the creation of the Islamic Fiqh Sciences Academy, the creation of the National Observatory on the fight against violent extremism and the creation of the Institution of the Mufti of the Republic.

Before concluding, I would like to point out that my country had organized, in July 2015, an international conference with the theme of: "The fight against violent extremism and de-radicalization policies". This conference has resulted in adopting a set of operational conclusions consigned in a booklet that was officially handed over to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate for circulation to member States.

Understanding the Genesis of Violent Extremism is Not Tantamount to Excusing it.

Statement of H.E. Mr. Idriss Jazairy, Moderator

Executive Director of the Geneva Centre

Mr. Chairman of the Board of the Geneva Centre,

Your Excellency Mr. Boudjemâa Delmi, Permanent Representative of Algeria,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The topic chosen for our meeting could not be more painfully topical. Violent extremism sprang up in what might be perceived here as remoter parts of the world during the last part of the XXth century. But it has now spread its dark shadow worldwide and is henceforth sparing no region. Wanton deaths and desolation come in its wake. Unregulated access to lethal weapons in some countries make matters worse. Violent extremism fuels indiscriminate xenophobic responses. These in turn feed the recruitment propaganda of terrorist groups using social media and competing for world attention.

It seems at first sight that conflict is intensifying in the world. In fact, what is happening is that it has changed its nature. It used to take the form of more or less predictable classical inter-State or civil conflict. It is now replaced by a generalization of unpredictable ad hoc resort to violence by terrorist groups randomizing victims and outbidding one another in criminal horror. Thus casualties are not more numerous than was the case in the past, with some important exceptions such as Algeria during the Dark Decade of the 'nineties'. Yet their impact is greater because attacks spread more fear among ordinary people and reporting on these crimes is echoed instantly across the world. The effect of polarization of societies is enhanced by hate speech over the Internet.

This evolution meets the ultimate goals of terrorist violence. Such violence has ceased to be simply a national or regional challenge. It has now become a worldwide "franchise". This calls for immediate security responses, with due respect for human rights of course. The current threat cannot, however, be durably overcome except through resorting to a farther reaching policy taking into account the socio-economic context of each country. In view of the cross-border nature of the threat, national policies have then to merge into a concerted international strategy. Sadly, the desirable coping strategy at the international

level remains in its infancy.

Our meeting is intended to contribute to the maturing of such a strategy and to rolling back the systemic interaction between violent extremism on the one hand and xenophobic populism on the other. The Panel is invited to show us the path that lies beyond the retreat into security-only responses in light of the genesis of violent extremism.

No, understanding the genesis of violent extremism is not tantamount to excusing it despite what some politicians claim. It is a precondition to providing a smart and durable policy response, rather than a dumb crowd-pleasing short-term knee-jerk reaction. True there is no single explanation to the emergence of violent extremism. Street crime and gangsterism in overpopulated cities may be its incubator. In the South, high rates of youth unemployment and shortfalls in the respect of basic freedoms together with inadequate governance may be relevant considerations. In the North, glass ceilings and marginalization of minority groups and the desire of youths, confused by Daesh propaganda, to develop an alternative identity and to become all-powerful, may also be at issue.

There are then opposing views as to whether another key factor, ideology, is at play on top of crime, anger and manipulative recruitment propaganda of terrorist groups over the Internet. Jules Roy and perhaps Professor Liogier, for instance, may consider that ideologies nowadays have precious little to do in Europe with the decisions to leave, of cohorts of recruits attracted by terrorist groups in the Middle East. Others like Gilles Kepel consider on the contrary that these people are still indoctrinated by extremist ideologies, as were their predecessors of the end of the last century. The latter opinion may lead to some hazardous conclusions as to whether radicalism in and of itself is, as it were, already pregnant of violence. If so, should holders of "radical" views, a term on which there is no agreed definition, be put under surveillance or only those having, say, an Islamic background? The question would then arise as to how this would square up with human rights and in particular with the freedom of opinion and expression and with non-discrimination.

Understanding the genesis of violent extremism is not a philosophical debate as it ties in with the issue of how to "de-radicalize" if this term is taken in its extreme form to mean the re-integration of averred terrorists into their society. In Belgium, it has been claimed that condemnations in absentia of home grown terrorists that have joined Daesh has pushed some of them to not return home with a group of others for fear of the penalty, thus radicalizing them further. In Denmark, despite some understandable reservations, the town of Aarhus,

following an experience gained in de-radicalizing neo-Nazis, treats "one-time fighters not as criminals or potential terrorists but as wayward youths who deserve a second chance" according to the New York Times. Other countries are experimenting with intermediate solutions. What is becoming clear is that jails are no more seen to be a panacea to de-radicalize.

The present meeting is also intended to promote greater awareness in crisis times ahead that "violent extremism or terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group" as our Chairman just recalled. May this enlightened statement made by the Co-Chairs of the April 2016 Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism- The Way Forward, echo in this hall and especially beyond it, in the media of the world. For the Zeitgeist of today is not the hackneyed mantra of the 'nineties concerning the "clash of civilisations" but its rejection in the spirit of tolerance. A spirit that refuses to essentialize individuals according to the sound of their names. A spirit that has lead Londoners to elect a practising Moslem as mayor and that has also led, with less fanfare, to the election of a Chinese Christian as the mayor of Jakarta, the capital of the largest Moslem nation in the world.

The Geneva Centre, in cooperation with the Algerian Permanent Mission are contributing to this process started at the Geneva Conference in April of this year. They have offered the Geneva diplomatic community as well as civil society organizations, the possibility to contribute to a follow-up debate. Some outstanding representatives of academia have kindly accepted to gratify us with their presence today and we thank them for their commitment to upholding human rights which is what this meeting is essentially about. And human rights will be best served if we devise ways to "invest in prevention of violent extremism" and not just in "mitigating its consequences" to use the apt expression of Swiss Federal Councillor H.E. Didier Burkhalter.

Procedures of De-Radicalization

Statement of Dr. Farhad Khosrokhavar

Sociologist and Research Director at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales

Thank you very much indeed. I am going to talk about procedures of de-radicalization, how it is concretely implemented and what are their differences. I will not have enough time to develop the idea about radicalization and de-radicalization and whether or not they can be conceptually founded or accepted or rejected, so I take them as a kind of fact. Nowadays, we have researched on these topics and I think putting them into question as such doesn't carry so much weight. Now, de-radicalization is a notion which is even more contested than radicalization, one can talk about counter-radicalization or other words, but this is a kind of notion which has been somehow widespread all around the world, so we accept it as such, it doesn't mean we are not critical towards it, but it means that we have to cope with it and, if necessary, give our definition of it but I'm not going to develop these ideas. What I am trying to do is to give you a kind of picture of the diversity of the procedures about de-radicalization and for that reason, I would like to introduce a few basic notions.

First of all, each country has its own political culture and history. What had been taken as measures of de-radicalization in one country cannot be implemented elsewhere. Peculiarity of the country and the situation have to be taken into consideration. (Example: the de-radicalization measures that have been implemented in Britain cannot be directly implemented in France etc.). Each country has specific political, religious and cultural features that have to be taken into account. What makes the procedures specific needs to be taken into account to ensure the effective process of implementation of the de-radicalization measures.

Each country has to devise its own procedures of de-radicalization. One can be inspired by the others in such cases and learn from the experience of the others, but one cannot reproduce (replicate) exactly what they are doing. Also, sometimes some experiences do not appeal to other cultures (they vary from North to South) yet they should not be ignored.

In the same fashion, Norway long ago had an experience with the de-radicalization of neo-Nazis.

Second, there are categories and different types of radicalized people. There

is no unified profile (single profile) for terrorists. In Europe before 2013, few women participated in terror activities. The number had risen now to more than 10 %. About 5,000 people went to Syria, 500 to 550 amongst them were women. We cannot categorize men and women under the same profile (take into account the specificity of women with respect to men). Referring to my book that I wrote in French and translated to English, it is entitled: "Radicalization".

There are also different types of social radicalised actors (adolescence and post adolescence). This first category (age for terrorists) did not exist before in Europe. About 20 % of people who went to Syria belong to this category (aged 12-17). The measures implemented on juveniles cannot be implemented on adults.

For the adults, the second category, it's the ideology that count whereas for the juveniles it is the emotional side (affection) that counts more. Family crises, "buddies", problem, friends, competition.

The third category is the middle classes category: since 1990s "jihadism" included only a few middle-class people, but the majority came from poor social classes. Half of those who went to Syria belong to the middle class since 2013.

The fourth category is converts. Before 2013, converts were a tiny minority to go for fighting, but now they have grown to between 8 to 25 or 30 %. The proportion in Belgium seems to be low, whereas in France it is more than 20 %. Converts have a different kind of behaviour from those who have roots in the Islamic culture, past or civilization.

New categories need new types of de-radicalization procedures. We cannot have a unique model, which could be applied to all of them. The result would be catastrophic. Appropriate means need to be developed to tackle this problem.

According to experience in conducting research in prisons, people returning from the fighting of battles are not homogenous.

Another fifth category is a determination of violent extremists according to mind-sets. The mind-set is another typology that needs to be taken into account. There exist four types and sub types of mind sets:

1. The repentant: Who rejects the radical extremist tenets of "Jihadism" (the notion of Jihad in itself is controversial). We should resort to them to dissuade others from getting involved in violent action.

2. The ambivalent: Who went to Syria and Iraq and went through experiences

of extreme violence. They come back unstable and once they are put in contact with extremists, they could consider their involvement in new violent action.

3. The entrenched "Jihadi". Cement like, convinced in an overwhelming manner that their views are right. Antagonism towards the West and all the Governments in the Arab world and all the others not sharing their views. This is the most dangerous category. When mixing the entrenched "Jihadis" with the ambivalent ones, the entrenched ones will have the upper hand.

4. The traumatised ones: They could be dangerous to others and perpetrate violent action due to their unstable psycho–pathological status.

3 different types of procedures need to be developed in accordance with:

- The different natures.

- The different categories of people (middle class, poorer classes, women, men and converts).

- The returning "Jihadis".

Conclusion: Taking all these factors into consideration, one should conclude that de-radicalization procedures need to be tailor-made in order to become more effective.

Radical behaviour means coming back to the foundations and the roots

Statement of Dr. Raphael Liogier

Professor at the Institute d'Etudes Politique d'Aix-en-Provence, Professor at College International de Philosophie

Radical behaviour means coming back to the foundations and the roots. No matter how rational we think, we are or try to be, we do not really know what is going on. During our lifetime, we try to give some kind of meaning to all of this.

You have two categories of people who interpret religion:

1. Those who are against religion, who are hard-core rationalists who put the blame on religion for everything ("Jihad" violence in the Muslim world and inquisition in the Christian world). They say that religion is always instrumentalized by power.

2. A category of behaviour of different faiths that you always see when there is an interfaith dialogue.

Religion is neither peace nor war, it is rather to give some transcendental meaning to your physical existence. We all try to do that and it is called the Humanist approach. We set ourselves apart from animals by this, and what human beings try to do is to set themselves apart as a group. That is why they designate others as animals.

Humans sometimes try to construct some radical kind of myth around themselves, constantly, but the problem is that sometimes it does not work; it is fine if it works! Sometimes the multiple myths might blow up. It is fine if it works. Some societies do not do as well as others in this regard.

How can you define racism? It is when you have a number of individuals and people who want to set themselves apart and they set themselves apart by creating a "superior state", They use several criterias to justify this, such as the colour of their skin, their size or features and they use this as a justification to prove that they are superior to others. By doing so they create a problem for others. This leads to the creation of a strange relationship between those who will be dominant and the humiliated.

Those who feel humiliated will try to react violently in order to save some remnant

from their own myth. Otherwise they will be completely "Dispossessed".

When we say Radical and Radicalisation (distinction is required), we haven't said violence yet. It could be a deeply pacifist radical behaviour, and the only way to answer and respond to radicalism is to come up with counter non-violent methods conforming to what they aspire to.

There is a difference between radical behaviours and violence. Salafism is considered to be a radical approach, when you follow the Salaf you seek to go back to the roots. Those people are profoundly non-violent and they practice their faith in a non-violent way. This poses many problems for us in modern societies such as the problem of visibility or certain type of values that might defend strict gender equality. Neo- Salafism in addition, appeared in the 1990s-beginning of 2000. We in the religious observatory noticed, and through meeting veiled women and Buddhists for a research between 2007-2008, that they were behaving in this traditional manner not to influence each other, but more likely to set themselves apart. It is actually all about this and nothing more. The idea is not everyone doing it; the idea is that I am doing it because I count.

Humans try to set themselves apart from other humans.

To really understand this phenomenon in our societies, we have to understand two different tendencies:

1. How do you build identities; are there real identity issues, are ideas constructed in different ways?

2. What is globalization? What is the impact of this massive circulation of images worldwide on different types of fantasy? We have not solved yet the problem of parity.

Again, human beings set themselves apart so that they could build their own myths.

The idea of building identities and globalisation is something new and it is having a real impact

Developing one's identity does not mean resembling somebody else, this is why religion offers this kind of identity narrative.

We name our kids to give those identities, Identities related to Prophet Mohammad or Saint Peter.

Theology is Dogma. What is interesting is the neo-Jihadism we are seeing. The difference between Al-Qaeda and Daesh: Al-Qaeda used the ideologies and theology as drawing factors, whereas al Daesh relied on the globalization factor and used myths to influence non-Arabic speakers.

I urge you to read "Dar al Islam", a French language magazine where you find a mixture of notions taken from Islam paradise and so on. Deconstruction of the utopia of a perfect society. It is ok.

In addition, heroic images like superman inspire neo-fighters, Superheros (desirable images coming from industrialised societies).

"Allahou Akbar" in Islamic orthodoxy, is a kind of declaration of modesty, God is greater than I am so I can subject myself to God and His greatness by having a modest behaviour in the face of God. You can find this in a lot of other beliefs and religions (the relationship between God and His creatures). Proclaiming "Allahou Akbar" before committing a terrorist crime is an oxymoron in Islam. The idea of uttering a magic word in a transition to becoming a superman is more like Western fiction.

Following this fantasy one ends up behaving as though one can do everything; by becoming super hero and a warrior. The image of superhero and the links superhero and heroism with the myth itself in the images that are conveyed we could call this hypermodernity (more than just modern).

To wrap up: What is there that could be foreseen? As foreseen Daesh could not win in a territorial conflict, even if there were coalitions behind it, because it does not have a firepower behind it to hold on to territory.

But as it releases territory, it engages in a process which is much more dangerous. This is becoming a kind of franchise in the global terror market; a virtual Khalifate, which is even more adaptable, because its members can claim they are victims demonized by the West.

What can one do to deradicalize?

What should one not do?

Justifying terrorism by "Allahou Akbar", is a way of accessing to the repossession of power.

There are no major underlying trends for terror, but proclaiming crime is currently taking new forms.

Had violent crimes been of the kind usually practiced across Europe on a regular

basis, there might not have been a major outcry.

While there is no major underlying trend in terms of the number of violent crimes, but there is a new relationship with terror, which has weakened our societies. Thus, the question is what should one avoid doing? One should not over react or participate in staging the whole event which is used by Daesh to build this theatre of terror. By equating Islam and terrorism, one will be playing Daesh's game and will be doing its marketing free of charge.

This does not mean that we should not counteract in secret with other European intelligence services. On the contrary, we should have an alternative approach for Daesh, one could involve the Salafis themselves. One would be looking for people who could speak on the ground and have empathy and understanding of those people's myths. This approach can be positive. In Europe, we need a kind of an observatory for identity. Identities are no longer built on stable ground, nor in schools nor during the military service. Thus, we need sociologists, anthropologists, Islamologists. Not only this, a clearer idea of the situation is required. The impact of phobic language used by media and social media misrepresents reality. They in fact turn it upside down by making Daesh become a global franchise allegedly backed by the legitimacy of the World's second most important religion. So unless and until we can gradually correct phobic language in the West, we will continue to contribute to the aggrandizement of terrorist groups.

State Responsibility is Key to Countering Violent Extremism
Statement of Dr. Herve Gonsolin
Special Adviser on Peace and Security

Before delivering my speech, I would like to dispel one issue from the debate: religion in itself is neither the problem nor the solution to radicalization. Adopting a religious belief is a spiritual and personal act, it belongs to one's intimacy on which no one has the right to intrude.

The debate around the Islamic religion and on a so called good or bad Islam, on advantages of Sufism compared to Salafism, on Sunnism in comparison to Shiism and so on, belongs rather to the dogmatic quarrel and is not to be considered in the fight against violent radicalization. Taking the debate onto this ground tends to perpetuate the manipulation of religion for political purposes. Religions have always been and still are wonderful tools of social cohesion and mobilization but they are also tools of exploitation of the masses and a smoke screen to all human ambitions, especially obscure ones. So many peoples and communities, on the five continents, have been converted by force, exterminated or taken into slavery on the pretext that they followed the wrong religious practice but mostly, and for less admissible aims, to take over their properties, territories and workforces. Religions are too often a tool in the hands of conquerors and rebels to beat the peoples into submission or to push them to the ultimate sacrifice. A debate about the manipulation of religions could be interesting, but it would then be appropriate to extend it to include not one but religions as a whole from time immemorial.

When tens of thousands of young women and of young men from all backgrounds and from all walks of life, most of the time educated, graduated, psychologically fit, and who have only one thing in common, which is their belonging to the Muslim civilization; when all these young people spontaneously and voluntarily rally on all continents and are ready to sacrifice their lives for a cause, it is appropriate to try to listen to them or otherwise understand them. And if we were to listen, what would we hear? Probably huge anger. A quiet and growing anger that unites youth that feels humiliated and excluded; youth that is sometimes uprooted, finds no place in closed, static, patriarchal and elitist societies. Youth that no longer believes in fine words and good intentions, that wants to take control of its own destiny, even if that means overturning the table and burning down the house. These young people aspire to make history

whatever the cost. They are shaping it with their blood and at the cost of others' lives. Jihadism or violent radicalism is the degenerate child of a radical and never-say-die popular uprising and reflects all the anger and hatred of the youth against the established powers, and against those who support them. It is the consequence of the massive rejection of the political, economic, social, and even international order, and all these are perceived by a part of the Muslim youth as synonyms of the failure of the previous generations. The West is obviously also a target. Isn't the West reaping the whirlwind of the wind that it had sown and is still sowing? Willy-nilly military interventions, political interference, blind support to corrupt or oppressive regimes, useless and even harmful or partisan cooperation policies. When taken separately, the Western actions might have a sense, if carried out within the logical approach of "wanting to benefit others", but ultimately they, give to the youth of several countries only a feeling of humiliation, interference and support to conservatism. The attacks perpetrated in Europe are but collateral damage of events that are taking place outside Europe but in which the West is heavily involved.

Radicalized individuals will certainly go towards the fulfillment of their objective. We certainly must protect ourselves against them but not at any cost. In Africa, in the Middle East, and in Asia, violent and sometimes spectacular actions of radical movements who claim to be acting on behalf of Islam are growing, to the extent that they have even become a threat to the survival of certain States. The responses given by most of the fragile and less democratic States are systematically based on two approaches: the massive redeployment of security and military means and the reinforcement of the judicial arsenal aiming at controlling society. The immediate consequence of these measures is, on the one hand, a resurgence of violence against the civilian populations in conflict zones and, on the other hand, the significant decline of both public freedoms and the respect of human rights. In the name of preventing terrorism, journalists disappear, militants of associations and ordinary citizens are subject to different kinds of harassment and repression.

In March 2015, right here, and alongside with the 28th session of The United Nations Human Rights Council, a congress was held on this topic with the theme *"The contour of antiterrorist laws in Africa: Weakening of civil society, deterioration of Human Rights, arrest of opponents"*. In many countries, individuals who are labeled as "terrorists" are systematically sentenced to death during show trials. They are often even directly executed by security forces. Labeling a movement which disputes the established order or a member of the opposition as "terrorist" or "jihadist" means increasingly a permission to

kill. The consequence of these practices carried out by States is that the latter consider, out of opportunism, clumsiness, or blindly, large proportions of the population as suspects and enemies and treats them as such. The population targeted has no other option but to consider the State to be a threat and deal with it as such. Their opportunities of actions are reduced accordingly: go into hiding, flee or rebel. The radicalization of States in their fight against protest movements, which are sometimes rapidly and opportunely labeled as "Jihadists", feed the recruitment of extremist groups and finishes the job of delegitimization of the State as the guardian of common heritage, equity and justice. This mechanism of dual radicalization, which has also an impact in the West, is devastating.

Looking at the so-called war against terrorism, the UN in 2015 finally decided, that there is no gain in saying that this is casual action when human rights are flouted, aspirations are trampled underfoot and this whole feeling of injustice is spreading and people are saying that there is going to be a radical change. Such a change can be seen as very attractive. This awareness comes a little bit late for several people, but what is still lacking is the recognition of responsibilities of some States or some components of these States that have encouraged or instrumentalized violent extremism sometimes unwittingly, but most often on purpose as part of deliberate strategies of power struggle. In this context, you have the whole idea of De-Radicalization, but what De-Radicalization are we talking about?

There are US Government's reports saying that near 30 percent of detainees transferred from Guantanamo were suspected to have re-enlisted in the first years following their release.

There are some 40 De-Radicalization programs throughout the world and they are all different. The most recent ones were launched in Somalia, Kenya and Pakistan, and the long-standing ones have been around since the early 2000s in Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

There has been no serious independent evaluation conducted of these programs, but some of them are suspected of being a disguised means of reorienting submission of Jihadists towards goals which are more consistent with the interests of the established governments, collecting information or identifying the hard core elements and eliminating them.

The idea to join up with an armed group is an evolving process, it is based on the feeling of injustice, the ultimate means of combating evil, but also to achieve personal goals. To hinder radical movements, you have to make the effort to try

to understand the reasons leading such people to sign up. Now, expecting those who wish to die for a cause to return back is probably unrealistic.

On the other hand, the number of people signing up for joining these movements and their level of radicalization could be reduced if we try to address the root causes of their hatred. One can also propose other alternatives earlier on for those who have not yet been radicalized.

The uprisings in the 1960s and later years marked by terrorism were circumscribed as profound social change occured.

There are new uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, but if they don't lead to a real change, they will increase the pressure and if nothing changes they will degenerate.

A power system can only remain in power if it rests on a mixture between the commitments it creates and the authority it exercises, particularly as far as young people are concerned.

The more the power system emphasizes authority, the greater the cost of remaining in power, the more it isolates itself and the more polarized society becomes.

Dialogue is indispensible, and changes are unavoidable. States who do not understand that, hold on for a while but they will gradually decay and eventually collapse.

Conclusion: People often do not see Radicalization as a problem. They do not want to become Islamic zealots: They just want a different kind of State. A State that will ensure security, a State of integrity, close to them, like them, where they really can find themselves.

Let people make their own choices, let's make sure the democratic process is not misappropriated, and finally let's accept the fact that such democratic processes might not necessarily bring the conservative parties to power.

Then we can have a real answer to the problem of violent radicalization of tens of thousands of Muslims.

The Concept of Jihad must be De-criminalized

Statement of Mr. Reda Benkirane

Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peace building (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies)

Thank you very much. I thank the Geneva Centre and the Algerian Mission for having invited me. As a researcher, I will say a few words about what has been said here. We have heard our panelists with various approaches. We have the kind of immunity, it is not diplomatic immunity, but we try to understand. We are a kind of doctor, you must not be attacked by diseases, we are a kind of physicians, we are moved and sensitized by violence. We listen to populations who suffered during war and conflicts. We have listened to the grass roots, you know we are experts indeed but we also listen to grass roots. We want to know how people perceive, how they cope with this violence. There are terms which create problems. May I suggest a definition of radicalization: In order to use various dictionaries, the French Grand Robert says that radicalism is the intellectual aptitude to start at the beginning of problems, to study the various roots of problems, radicalization is linked to roots''. "Radical'' is Latin origin, so we have a problem, we have the roots of the problem, but there historical, sociological and cultural life. You have the roots which will become a tree. We have the tree yes, the roots are deep underground.

Radicalization is a different type of model, it is the horizontal root, a rhizome. It is also linked to globalization, it is not so much vertical approach but horizontal approach. We are facing a global revolution. Radicalization is indeed linked to violence, but how does it develop? We have the networking approach with non-linear mechanisms. In order to understand radicalization, you have to understand that some approaches will not work. If you think that in the grass model, the weed model, or the tree is the panacea, you will not be able to de-radicalize. You must have a case by case approach. It is not industrialized marketing. In the Suburbs, in the village, you are approached by a friend who will get a link with you. Some field research has been carried out on de-radicalization, and we have to forget about the police work, the army work, we have to forget about the security aspect, we know that some approaches have not worked. Since 2011, we know that various approaches have failed. If the great powers have not been able to eradicate the Al Qaeda basics, you cannot ask African nations to eradicate the problem. Some countries have disappeared, Iraq paid a huge price, some countries have disappeared when they tried to de-

radicalize. Field surveys show that there is no single answer to this phenomena. Resilience demands that we take different actions. The Ambassador mentioned the measures taken in Algeria, he talked about the security aspect, he also mentioned the sociological approach and the religious solution. The bad news is that radicalization is a global phenomenon. It is a sustainable movement, which is here to stay. Radicalization is not really negative, we need radicals, we need radical political parties but there is no more radical behaviour. Islam, being the new enemy of the West and the World, we have the market theology, maximizing the profit and socializing losses. We have no alternative ideologies, that is why somebody said "jihadism" is the only theory available on the market, you must not condemn all those who are pro-religious. If you have an enemy whom you want to fight, you must not say that they are not good; they have an ideal, some of them are scholars, so we must not have a counter discourse approach. Globalisation leads to radicalization but will also lead to some consensus. In 2011, we had the youth in the Arab World who tried to defend justice, dignity, and liberty and that Arab Spring spread and we saw that in various World capitals. In the Arab World, you want to get away with dictatorship and corruption, you want to get away from the market tyranny of the crisis, and we have to take stock. De-radicalization of violence failed. I worked on theological revolutions on Islam in order to do my part of the job linked to the enlightment of the Arab World in non-violence. I finished my work and then I asked to make a survey in eight Sahelian countries to work on violent extremism. So I have noticed during this five year period that we went from an open democratic situation to one of violent extremism. This being said, there are other semantic phenomena, today we are working on a very sensitive aspect, we talked about "jihad" and here I try to tell what we did in that aspect; we asked some people what do they feel about "jihadism". It is very dangerous to use the same term, a terrorist is a very ambivalent term, loaded term, historically, semantically. My uncle was an Algerian activist tortured by the French army because he was "Front de Liberation Nationale" "terrorist", Palestinians were considered as "terrorists" because of PLO, African National Congress members were considered "terrorists". If you want to kill your dog, you say that it has rabies. But the research worker has another approach: terrorism is the word which is not used in humanitarian action. Some terrorists are linked to executions, we are now in the Human Rights field, we have to be logical, you have to respect your enemy. When are we "jihadist"? I am again talking on semantics here, we should decriminalize the concept of "jihad". I think I will stop because time is short, thank you very much.

Radicalization, Traditional Configuration and Social Change

Statement of Ms. Mariem Baba Ahmed

Anthropologist, and Research Associate at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur l'Ouest Saharien (CEROS)

Chers mesdames et messieurs,

Je voudrais d'abord remercier le Centre de Genève pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme et le Dialogue Global, ainsi que la Mission permanente de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies et des autres organisations internationales en Suisse, de m'avoir associée à cette pertinente rencontre, au sein de ce panel de haute qualité.

En Mauritanie, comme dans plusieurs pays de la région, les trajectoires de radicalisation sont multiples et peuvent être mues par plusieurs entrées autres que la religion telles que les demandes d'identité, ou précèdent plusieurs revendications qui combinent l'insécurité, l'obstruction des perspectives d'avenir, la désorientation et les néo-idéologies. Les jeunes sont de plus en plus exposés à l'extrémisme à cause de la collision des changements sociaux, politiques et économiques grâce à la réglementation chaotique des inégalités sociales résiduelles, fondées sur le statut de naissance.

Depuis la fin des années 70, avec la «néo-prédication» dans les villes et l'ouverture des instituts islamiques, l'accès à l'éducation est devenu plus facile. Cependant, avant cela, il avait été soumis à un filtrage social. Je vous livre ici, ce témoignage de quelques lignes d'un jeune affranchi de 22 ans, de la catégorie sociale des anciens esclaves:

"Quand mes parents étaient esclaves, à mon âge, ils n'avaient pas droit à l'instruction religieuse, ou alors sommairement, et même moi qui suis autonome à présent, je n'avais pas des connaissances, je suis allé vers la parole qui voyait en moi un égal, c'est celle des frères musulmans, Likhwan, qui prêchait un savoir pour tous, alors que dans nos badiyas (campagnes) il faut être de telle souche pour avoir accès à cet apprentissage".

Dans le témoignage, la recherche de la réalisation de soi (identité humaine) ainsi que la recherche de la réinsertion sociale causent la déviation vers l'extrémisme plutôt que le gain financier, le soutien moral, ou la tentation wahhabite qui conduira à ce qui est perçu comme une renaissance religieuse. Celle-ci va insuffler une nouvelle énergie dans le destinataire et peut l'inciter à mettre sa

vie au service d'une cause radicale mais pas nécessaire violante. Une réforme sociale a eu lieu dans les années 80 (période des Kadihine ou Prolétaires) sous un aspect fusionnel entre la religion et la vie pratique et abouti à l'évolutivité. Elle a également contribué à anesthésier cette faculté spontanée de l'évolutivité religieuse traditionnelle.

L'Islam détermine l'identité de la Mauritanie et de ses différentes communautés. Par exemple, les Maures adoptent l'Islam dans leur vie quotidienne et ont mis la Lettre au service communautaire. En outre, le surinvestissement dans l'interprétation des érudits marabouts maures a laissé la porte ouverte au durcissement de la règle quand cela allait dans le sens de leurs intérêts ou ceux de leurs groupes sociaux. La dérive violente ou «radicalisante» du phénomène religieux dans cette région du monde ne peut pas être abordée si l'on n'a pas une compréhension claire de la nature de la relation avec la lettre et l'esprit de l'Islam, mais également avec la fabrique de normes juridico-spirituelles, et les différents usages qui ont façonné l'histoire ancienne et récente de ce pays. Les "Réislamisations" ont diminué les pratiques soufies, qui ont été considérées comme des voix modérées, en se livrant à la violence qui n'est pas toujours sanguine:

"...vous nous parlez de violence, raconte une dame dans une commune rurale, mais vous savez il y'a des violences qui ne sont pas visibles, par exemple, savez-vous que nous ne chantons plus les soirs, les chants épiques et les Médih (louanges du Prophète) comme avant, car nos jeunes quand ils reviennent des villes, nous interdisent la mixité hommes/femmes dans les assemblées et interdisent aux femmes de chanter. Ainsi une partie de notre mémoire s'est effacée, car ces chants étaient les moyens de faire vivre un patrimoine historique, des savoirs artistiques hérités de nos parents, à présent tout s'oublie peu à peu, tout se ressemble de plus en plus... nous souffrons sans l'exprimer de cette calme violence".

La radicalisation a augmenté à cause de l'accès insuffisant et mal géré de ces jeunes à l'emploi, non que les Madrassas produisent les éléments radicaux, religieux potentiellement violents, mais parce que les connaissances des jeunes sortants de ces parcours sont très appréciées par les recruteurs extrémistes. Les allers-retours entre une position radicale et un retour à une «normalité» de la pratique religieuse et des rapports avec l'environnement sont autorisés en Mauritanie. Les facteurs qui déterminent la durée et l'effectivité de ces "déradicalizations" sont les besoins (financiers, moraux), ou des connexions avec des chefs de structures adulés, ou avec des réseaux étrangers influents. Un jeune homme extrémiste, n'est pas considéré comme posant un danger. S'il est

un membre de la famille, il est souvent vu comme propre et intègre. De plus, la complexité de l'incompréhension entre le monde arabe et l'Occident bloque tout progrès destiné à trouver une solution pour assurer un avenir viable pour les jeunes Mauritaniens.

L'extrémisme est entré dans les structures sociales, économiques et politiques, et les possibilités que les États et les donateurs internationaux sont censés offrir aux jeunes, qui reçoivent des opportunités d'organisations radicales, sont en baisse.

La radicalisation, c'est peut-être ni plus ni moins qu'une histoire de plus offrant...?

ANNEX II

CLOSING STATEMENT OF GENEVA
CONFERENCE ON PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM
GENEVA, 7 AND 8 APRIL 2016

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

United Nations

Geneva Conference on
Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward

*Organized by the United Nations
in partnership with the Government of Switzerland*

Joint Co-Chairs Conclusions

7 and 8 April 2016
United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, co-chaired the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward (the Conference). A large number of Member States, including at the Ministerial level, as well as heads of international and regional organizations, United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes and civil society organizations participated in the Conference.

The Co-Chairs thank all participants for their active participation and contributions during the two days of discussion. The discussions during the Conference will remain a valuable resource of Member State, international and regional organizations and civil society perspectives, including for sharing of experience and best practices on key issues related to the prevention of violent extremism.

The Conference programme was divided in two days. The first day of the Conference was held at senior expert level and focused on the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in the context of the larger United Nations prevention agenda; the importance to address the drivers of violent extremism; priorities for national plans of action to prevent violent extremism; and resource mobilization.

During the second day, which was the high-level segment of the Conference, the Co-Chairs, the United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, Ministers, heads of Member State delegations, heads of international and regional organizations and heads of United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes shared their perspectives on action to prevent violent extremism at the national, regional and global level as well as on the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

The following are the non-binding conclusions of the Co-Chairs on the main points of discussion, which are meant to be indicative and not exhaustive. Regional groups and

individual Member States have also circulated their statements expressing their respective positions.

1.   Strong condemnation was expressed about the recent attacks of terrorist and violent extremists killing hundreds of people in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Lebanon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Belgium, Turkey, Pakistan and many other parts of the world. It was reaffirmed that violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Violent extremism was recognized as a universal phenomenon that poses a direct assault on the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was also strongly condemned how violent extremism undermines collective efforts to maintain peace and security, foster sustainable development, promote the respect for human rights and deliver much needed humanitarian aid around the world. The United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism's call for concerted international action on an urgent basis to prevent violent extremism was welcomed.

2.   The initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General was welcomed as a significant contribution to focusing the attention of the international community on the growing threat posed by violent extremism. The convening of the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism by the United Nations and the Government of Switzerland was welcomed as a valuable forum to give further consideration to the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism within the context of the United Nations General Assembly's consideration of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June 2016 as called for by General Assembly resolution 70/254.

3.   It was recognized that there is a need to take a more comprehensive and balanced approach to address violent extremism, which is recommended in the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. It was also recognized that terrorism cannot be tackled by security or military measures alone. The need for a comprehensive and proactive approach was noted, which should also encompass systematic preventive measures that directly address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism as recognized in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the short, medium and long-term.

4.   It was also noted that it is essential to address the threat posed by violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism. Definitional aspects of violent extremism were also discussed. It was further noted that the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action takes a practical approach to the prevention of violent extremism in the context of Pillars I and IV of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

5.   Recurring local and external factors were noted, which appear in a wide variety of countries and regions and which lead, sometimes in isolation and sometimes in combination with other factors, to radicalization and violent extremism – many of which are laid down in the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. It was also noted that important drivers include the lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance, violations of human rights and the rule of law, prolonged and unresolved conflicts as well as individual motivations and processes, collective grievances and victimization stemming from oppression, subjugation or foreign intervention; distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and leadership and social networks – all of

which can play a role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action. Concern was expressed about intolerance, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

6.   Experiences in developing national and regional plans to prevent violent extremism were shared and the emphasis placed on the principle of national ownership by the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was welcomed. It was noted that every Member State is best placed to address the national and local drivers of violent extremism, in full compliance with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. It was also noted that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is an important building block for preventing violent extremism.

7.   The more than 70 recommendations put forward by the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism for the consideration by Member States were also noted. In this regard, the importance of the seven priority areas identified in the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was also noted as well as the role of the United Nations system in supporting Member States to prevent violent extremism. The comprehensive approach taken by the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in advocating for an "all-of-government", "all-of-society" and "all-of-UN" approach was further noted.

8.   The importance of dialogue and conflict prevention to prevent violent extremism was noted. It was also noted that there is a need to foster inclusive political solutions where communities feel politically, socially or ethnically marginalized. The need for more national and regional early warning mechanisms to identify vulnerabilities and devise timely responses was further noted.

9.   It was noted that upholding human rights and the rule of law and promoting good governance creates an environment that will reduce the appeal of violent extremism. All strategies and policies should be firmly grounded in and comply with international human rights law. The significance of engaging civil society and communities in preventing violent extremism was also noted. It was suggested to support confidence-building measures at the community level to reduce tensions and to increase inter and intra-community dialogue.

10.   The need to positively engage young people was recognized as well as the need to engage them as partners to make a constructive contribution to the political and economic development of their societies and nations. In this regard, the contribution of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) was recognized, which among others notes the important role youth plays as role models in preventing and countering violent extremism.

11.   The importance of gender equality was also noted and the need to ensure the participation of women in building resilience and preventing violent extremism. The need to ensure that the protection and empowerment of women is a part of strategies devised to prevent violent extremism was further noted.

12.   It was noted that better education, skills development and employment facilitation to counter poverty and social marginalization was needed. It was also noted that teaching respect for human rights and diversity, fostering critical thinking, promoting media and digital literacy is important in addressing violent extremism as well as the development of behavioural and socioemotional skills, which can contribute to peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

13.   The importance of addressing online radicalization was further noted. It was noted that strategic communications should be enhanced, including through the Internet and social media as well as the tailoring of national communications strategies to local contexts. It was also noted that these strategies should be developed in close cooperation with social media companies and the private sector and put forward that positive messages could challenge the destructive narratives of violent extremists.

14.   The importance of mobilizing the necessary resources was noted, which was essential for the success of preventing violent extremism at the national, regional and global levels. This should include the better use of existing and new resources and the promotion of public-private partnerships.

15.   Support was expressed for a role of the United Nations in supporting Member States to prevent violent extremism, especially with regard to the provision of technical assistance to affected States. It was noted that the United Nations has a wealth of experience and expertise in the areas of maintaining peace and security, fostering sustainable development, promoting and protecting human rights and humanitarian action.

16.   It was noted that no country or region alone will be able to address the threat of violent extremism. The call by the United Nations Secretary-General for stepped-up international cooperation and the need for a dynamic, coherent and multi-dimensional response from the entire international community was welcomed. His pledge to leverage the universal membership and the convening power of the United Nations to further strengthen international cooperation at the national, regional and global levels was also noted.

17.   The prospect was noted to further consideration of the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism would take place in the context of the United Nations General Assembly review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary and the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on the review of Strategy in June 2016. Sincere appreciation was expressed to H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, for convening the Geneva International Conference which has made a significant contribution to strengthening international co-operation in the face of the growing threat posed by violent extremism around the world.

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