**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism**

**JOINT UNITED NATIONS – HUNGARY REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR CENTRAL EUROPE ONPREVENTION OF RADICALIZATION TO TERRORISM:
REGIONAL POLICY RESPONSES AND RISK MITIGATION**

**Session 1: Addressing terrorist narratives through preventive strategies**

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*Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This is the statement of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the discussion on ways to devise preventive approaches, among others through stemming incitement to terrorism and advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, including the exploration of ways in which these phenomena manifest in the online space.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur takes this opportunity to emphasize the importance of evidence-based regulation and policy-making and, in this context, the vitality of developing a nuanced and in-depth understanding of drivers of radicalization to violence, including in the online sphere, as a prerequisite for preventive measures that address these challenges in an efficient manner, by way of building and sustaining resilience, the rule of law and the dignity of each person, without distinction.

The important task of preventing terrorist use of the Internet and Information Communication Technologies, including through combating terrorist content online is an increasingly crucial component of counter-terrorism efforts and comes with its own set of particular challenges. Relevant online spaces, such as social media and other platforms, are privately owned and operated and subject to uneven levels of state regulation. Ensuring their effective operation, that is also in compliance with international law standards, requires meaningful cooperation between governments and the private sector.

The Special Rapporteur stresses the need for business enterprises to conduct their operations in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a set of global guidelines endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Council, and develop policies and practices regulating access to and use of their services with utmost consideration to internationally recognized human rights standards, as well as the principles of transparency and public accountability. She emphasizes that the unprecedented influence Internet platforms and social media companies exercise over a broad range of human rights, such as freedom of opinion and expression, right to access to information, freedom of assembly as well as interlinked public interest and democratic processes, must be matched by corresponding levels of corporate responsibility and accountability.

The mandate further highlights that terrorist content must be addressed by way of policies and practices that have due process standards adequately incorporated and respect the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality. She warns that practices resulting in the outsourcing of public interest tasks to business enterprises, especially when done without establishing adequate safeguards and oversight systems, may undermine the protection of rights and freedoms of members of the general public, and put in jeopardy the integrity of democratic processes. The Special Rapporteur encourages Member States to use targeted smart regulation in this respect, that includes bringing relevant definitions, including those of terrorist content and incitement to terrorism, in line with international and human rights law.

Finally, the Special Rapporteur wishes to reiterate that her Mandate is pleased to assist relevant stakeholders in their efforts aimed at taking forward a fully human rights compliant approach in this regulatory context and looks forward to continued dialogue on these important issues.

I thank you for your attention.