

Check Against Delivery

Remarks

Professor Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism – Arria Formula Meeting on “Enhancing the capacities of Member States to ensure a gender-responsive approach to counter-terrorism”

UN Headquarters, 26 June 2023

Excellencies, Distinguished Briefers,

I welcome the leadership of the Permanent Mission of Malta and the co-sponsors for holding this meeting on the importance of gender in efforts to counter-terrorism.

As many are aware, my mandate launched a Global Study on the impact of counter-terrorism on civil society and civic space last week during High-Level Week. In doing so, I have documented the historical targeting of women, LGBT and gender diverse persons under the guise of conformity with UN counter-terrorism. One of the things that Study does is evidences the scale and the scope of harms to women and girls assisted and enabled counter-terrorism and security discourses. What do we know from that? We know that women and LGBT and gender diverse persons are directly harmed every day as they work in their communities, their organizations, and their families as they fight for the most essential of rights. None of this under the guise of counter-terrorism makes women, girls, men, or boys safer or more secure.

Therefore, I urge Member States and Council Members when considering the obligations to mainstream gender and women’s rights in all peace and security efforts to do so rooted in the prevention agenda and the decades of work that the Women, Peace and Security in the Council has undertaken, which is complex, intersectional analysis of layered gender inequality. That must be mainstreamed here. As many have stated before me, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, is not about making war or armed conflict safer for women –

that's not its purpose – but it's about preventing such conflict altogether and dealing with root causes. This should be the same principle through which the United Nations Security Council and Member States address gender mainstreaming and women's rights in efforts to prevent and counter-terrorism.

I close by identifying a singular case where the dynamics of binaries and rights marginalization on the basis of gender persists. Namely, the continued the continued large scale arbitrary detention of over 60,000 women and children in Al-Hol and Al-Roj Camps in Northeast Syria and, in parallel, the de facto categorization of men and boys as high risks, simply because of their gender. I call on the Council and broader UN Member States to ensure that gender mainstreaming and women's rights are simply not co-opted to enforce decades of misuse of counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism measures. What we have to do is to ensure that this binary narrative no longer continues to fuel what is a limited threat analysis and response to the problem we have at hand.

Thank you.