

## Brief report session youth and radicalisation ICCT & Asser

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The session on 'Youth and Radicalisation' was co-organised by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT) and the T.M.C. Asser Instituut.

The session was moderated by Dr. Christophe Paulussen, senior researcher at the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and research fellow at ICCT, and was kicked off with a presentation by Simone Smit, Director of the Counter-Terrorism Department at the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV). Ms. Smit explained the Dutch approach with regard to tackling radicalisation amongst Dutch youth. After that, Fulco van Deventer from Human Security Collective and an Associate Fellow at ICCT introduced the project 'Building Youth Resilience in Tunisia and The Netherlands', which aims to engage youth from Delft, the Netherlands, and from six places in Tunisia (Tunis, Ben Arous, Kef, Siliana, Kasserine and Medenine) in enhancing resilience, social cohesion and security in their communities. Following this introduction of the project, Malek Kochlef, from the National Counter-Terrorism Commission Tunisia, reflected on the project as well and commented on youth and radicalisation in Tunisia more generally. Subsequently, Eva Entenmann, ICCT Programme Manager, presented on juvenile foreign fighters and shared some lessons learned from around the world. After the presentations, there was a lively Q&A session.

The main observations of this session were:

- Although ISIS has been defeated territorially, the ideology continues to exist. As such, we are entering a new stage where the focus lies on the challenge of rehabilitating and reintegrating returnees (including minors) as well as on the tackling of root causes of radicalisation amongst youngsters in order to prevent violent extremism in the future.
- The topic of youth and radicalisation is relatively new and highly complex and dynamic in nature. This means you constantly need to assess whether your approach and measures are still in tune with reality. As such, there is no 'one size fits all' solution: approaches have to be tailor-made and need to be in line with the reality and context on the ground, which varies from country to country.

A couple of lessons learned is that one needs:

- a research/evidence-based approach;
- a long-term approach;
- to create local ownership and secure enough funding, so that projects become sustainable and not mere pilot projects;
- to avoid reinventing the wheel. Lessons learned from adjacent fields could be used in this context as well. An example that was mentioned was the use of studies on how to deal with children from mafia families;
- to focus on prevention by addressing root causes and by targeting vulnerable youth.

Although there is not *one* approach to this complex problem, when speaking about 'the' Dutch approach the following elements were mentioned:

- The Dutch are good at bringing various stakeholders together. This comprehensive approach could also work in other countries. One needs to involve CSOs, which are often seen as credible messengers that can build trust within a community.
- What might also be *an* element of the Dutch 'way of doing' is the horizontal approach; hence, not 'taking over', but facilitating an exchange of views, which can act as a mirror or an eye-opener that can lead to a change of perception.
- Finally: the Dutch are good at innovation. They have an open mind when being confronted with complex challenges.