

Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian, Director and Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General,
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Strong Cities-United Nations roundtable: "Unlocking the Potential of Cities to Address
Hate Speech"

20 September 2023

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank Mr. Rosand and Ms. Nderitu for inviting UNOCT to partner in the organization of this roundtable.

The Secretary-General's first-ever report on terrorist attacks based on xenophobia, racism, and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, outlined Member States' recognition of the role hateful content and narratives on racial supremacy play as motivations behind terrorist attacks carried out in line with these narratives.

Indeed, incitement to hatred, as well as structural discrimination, whether on racial, religious, or other prohibited grounds, are often the basis of these terrorist attacks.

While unjustifiable, hateful narratives do not appear out of nowhere. They frequently serve as precursors of violence by undermining democratic values, social stability, and cohesion, as well as by stigmatizing and dehumanizing those who are already marginalized or discriminated against.

For this reason, countering these narratives requires comprehensive and narratives on rac. nBT (1)

Counter-terrorism should never be used as a pretext to persecute minorities, silence dissent, stifle criticism or block challenging debate.

Indeed, the application of counter-terrorism measures that violate human rights and limit civic space often aggravate, rather than address, the very grievances exploited in violent extremist and terrorist narratives.

UNOCT continues to work with Member States to develop strategies and plans of action to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism. While we primarily engage with stakeholders at the national level, we recognize that solutions to counter this complex challenge require buy-in from sub-national actors, including civil society and the private sector.

One example of our engagement with such actors is the work of our Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the Philippines. In efforts to support the Bangsamoro peace process, UNOCT has supported the inclusion of ~~for~~ each