



Round Table Discussion:  
Global Impact of COVID-19 on Violent Extremism  
22 April 2021

**BACKGROUND**

COVID-19 pandemic has largely affected people globally to various extents, disrupting the everyday life of individuals, with a large number of countries imposing different regulations, such as strict lockdowns, to curb the health crisis. While it is difficult to provide accurate data on the impact the pandemic had on people's lives around the world, it is clear that the effects are visible, leaving some people without an income, loved ones, and simply in a time of uncertainty.

COVID-19 also has had an impact on violent extremist (VE) groups and the way different actors work to counter them. While it can be argued that there was also a strain on VE groups' capabilities to mobilize and carry out attacks, it has been long argued that groups as such are quick to adapt to "new realities" of the world and leverage the situation for their own benefit. The uncertainty created by the pandemic, leaving the number of people either jobless or working from home with limited movement outside, could have easily led to ensuing grievances. Consequently, the current global situation also called for CVE practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to adapt their work, taking into close consideration the new range of factors caused by the pandemic.

While it may be difficult to derive conclusions during an ongoing crisis, it is highly crucial to discuss the changing realities in VE and CVE as we continue to witness the ongoing pandemic and the consequences it has around the world. The given event seeks to provide a platform for people of different background and expertise in the subject to discuss their observations and findings, helping to discuss what we already know and identify remaining gaps.

**ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION**

As the premier think-and-do tank dedicated to using its expertise and experiences to countering violent extremism (CVE), Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, in collaboration with the Euro-Arab Foundation (FUNDEA), and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) plan to hold a round table discussion on April 22, 2021. This session will serve as a precursor to the seventh **International CVE Research Conference 2021** scheduled to be held in University of Granada, Granada, Spain, in October 2021.<sup>1</sup> Adapting to the current global situation, the conference organizers are keen to ignite an online conversation surrounding the recent CVE trends and events, while simultaneously expanding its wide network of international CVE actors.

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<sup>1</sup> Pending on travel and general restrictions due to the COVID-19



By hosting an online round-table discussion, the co-hosts aim to provide a platform highlighting the latest cutting-edge research and engage the participants in a fruitful discussion on the recent developments in VE and CVE.

The two-hour online discussion will host four speakers, who will be given 5-10 minutes to briefly introduce their current research related to the topic. This Round Table Discussion will provide the opportunity for the participants to actively engage in the conversation by asking questions or suggesting solutions to identified problems. A moderator will steer the conversation and focus the discussion

#### **AGENDA**

### **Round Table Discussion Global Impact of COVID-19 on Violent Extremism**

22 April 2021  
07:00 New York | 13:00 Madrid | 15:30 Abu Dhabi

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| <b>15:30-15:45</b> | <b>Opening Remarks</b><br>Raffi Gregorian, <i>UNOCT</i><br>Inmaculada Marrero Rocha, <i>Euro Arab Foundation</i><br>Ahmed AlQasimi, <i>Hedayah</i>   |
| <b>15:45-16:30</b> | <b>Countering Violent Extremism during COVID-19:</b><br>Arie Kruglanski, <i>University of Maryland</i><br>Chelsea Daymon, <i>American University School of Public Affairs</i><br>Daniela PISOIU, <i>Austrian Institute for International Affairs</i> |
| <b>16:30-17:15</b> | <b>Discussion</b>  |
| <b>17:15-17:30</b> | <b>Closing Remarks</b><br>Ivo Veenkamp, <i>Hedayah</i>   |