



CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRIORITY DIRECTIONS OF COUNTERING RADICALISM WITHIN THE UN GLOBAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY

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Abstract

This article analyzes the conceptual foundations and priority directions of countering radicalism within the framework of the United Nations (UN) Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in 2006. The results of the study, conducted on the basis of a comparative-analytical method, demonstrate that eliminating the root causes of radicalism, cutting off financial sources, raising public awareness, and strengthening international cooperation are key factors in ensuring global security. In addition, based on international initiatives implemented in recent years and statistical data, the effectiveness of the Strategy is assessed and recommendations for its further improvement are proposed.

Keywords: United Nations, global strategy, radicalism, extremism, international security, youth, educational activities, financial control.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, radicalism and extremism occupy a special place among the most pressing threats to the development of humanity. In the context of globalization and the rapid development of digital technologies, radical ideas are being disseminated to a wide audience quickly and effectively. Studies show that as of 2024, more than 20,000 people worldwide have lost their lives as a result of terrorist acts caused by radicalism and extremism [2]. Young people, in particular, are increasingly being targeted as the primary audience of radical propaganda. Therefore, the international community continues to seek effective methods to counter radicalism.

In this process, the United Nations, as one of the leading international organizations, developed and adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006. This document defines the conceptual foundations of the fight against radicalism and extremism and serves as an important platform for international cooperation[3].

Literature Review and Methodology

The scientific literature offers various approaches to countering radicalism and extremism. The UNDP report *Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development* highlights economic inequality and social injustice as key root causes of radicalism [4]. According to World Bank data (2023), unemployment and poverty are recognized as major factors contributing to the spread of radical ideas [5].

UNESCO's 2022 study emphasizes the crucial role of education in countering radicalism. According to the organization, instilling religious tolerance and tolerance among young people is one of the most effective ways to reduce radicalism [6].

In addition, the FATF (2023) report *Combating Terrorism Financing* identifies the detection and blocking of financial sources of terrorist groups as a priority issue for international security [7]. The UN's 2024 report addresses the effectiveness of international cooperation in countering radicalism and existing challenges [8].

The experience of the Central Asian region also deserves special attention. According to the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (2023), Uzbekistan has achieved positive results in countering radicalism by strengthening spiritual and educational work with youth.[12]

Furthermore, based on the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 1, 2021, the National Strategy of Uzbekistan for Countering Extremism and Terrorism for 2021–2026 was adopted. The adoption of this National Strategy can be interpreted as a historic event, as it defined specific directions for combating destructive phenomena in the context of the New Uzbekistan.[13]

This literature review demonstrates that countering radicalism is a multidimensional process encompassing education, economic stability, information policy, and international cooperation. The article employs comparative-analytical and statistical analysis methods. The main sources include official UN reports from 2006 to 2024, materials published by UNDP, UNESCO, and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, as well as contemporary scholarly articles and expert analyses. The results of practical projects implemented in various regions were also comparatively analyzed.

Discussion and Results

Effective countering of radical ideas should not rely solely on punitive measures, but must be carried out in combination with preventive, educational, and enlightenment-oriented approaches. Today, many countries apply comprehensive strategies to address the main factors that give rise to radicalism, such as social injustice, unemployment, lack of information, and religious illiteracy.

In this regard, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated:

“It is necessary to correctly explain to young people the harmful essence of religious extremist movements and to form ideological immunity in their consciousness.”[1]

International organizations also emphasize the importance of religious freedom and human rights in the fight against radicalism.

On September 8, 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy through Resolution A/RES/60/288, which serves as a universal legal platform for combating radicalism and terrorism.[4]

The UN Strategy is based on four pillars in countering radical ideas:

1. Eliminating the Root Causes of Radicalism

According to the UN Strategy, the main roots of radicalism are linked to social inequality, disparities in education, political injustice, and economic hardship.[4] UNDP data indicate that 35 percent of the world's unemployed population consists of young people, many of whom are more susceptible to radical group propaganda.[6] Therefore, the UN recommends that states expand programs providing quality education, vocational training, and social support for youth. For example, in 2023, more than 120,000 young people were enrolled in vocational training courses through the “Youth Empowerment Program” implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa [6].

2. Cutting Off Financial Sources

The primary strength of radical groups lies in their financial resources. According to the UN's 2023 report, terrorist organizations mainly rely on illegal trade, drug trafficking, and illicit

financial transactions [7]. In 2023 alone, more than USD 2 billion in illegal funds were blocked through UN financial monitoring mechanisms. In cooperation with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), joint programs are being implemented to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism within the global financial system.

3. Raising Public Awareness and Strengthening Educational Activities

The most effective arena for radical propaganda today is the internet and social media. According to UNESCO's 2022 study, more than 70 percent of radical groups' propaganda materials are disseminated through online platforms [9]. Therefore, through the UN's "Education Above All" initiative, programs aimed at educating young people in the spirit of religious tolerance, tolerance, and interethnic harmony are being implemented in more than 50 countries. For instance, in Indonesia, over 80,000 students participated in counter-radicalism training in 2022 through the "Digital Peace Clubs" project [10].

4. Strengthening International Cooperation

Since radicalism and terrorism transcend national borders, global cooperation is of decisive importance in countering these threats. According to UN data for 2024, more than 90 countries are participating in programs to counter radicalism [11]. In particular, a "Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy" is being implemented in Central Asia. In 2023, Uzbekistan presented its national experience in countering radicalism at a meeting of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, demonstrating its active participation in international cooperation [11].

Analyses show that the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy serves as an important conceptual framework for countering radicalism. However, certain challenges persist in practice. First, it remains difficult to fully control radical propaganda disseminated via the internet. Second, in some countries, political interests and regional conflicts hinder full international cooperation. Third, high levels of youth unemployment create favorable conditions for radical groups.

Therefore, to further strengthen the UN Strategy, the following measures are proposed:

- strengthening global digital security and introducing artificial intelligence-based systems for detecting radical content;
- expanding international grant and scholarship programs for youth;
- promoting religious tolerance and tolerance more widely at the international level;
- enhancing regional cooperation mechanisms.

Conclusion:

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy has defined priority directions in the fight against radicalism and has produced numerous positive results at the global level. The four main pillars of the Strategy—eliminating the root causes of radicalism, cutting off financial sources, raising public awareness, and strengthening international cooperation—are among the key factors in ensuring global security. The Strategy's main achievement lies in providing a systematic approach to addressing the roots of radicalism. In the future, integrating this Strategy with modern technologies, youth policy, and cultural and educational initiatives is expected to further enhance the effectiveness of efforts to counter radicalism.

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