



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Justice

# The 2021 OSCE Counter-Terrorism Conference

Published 21 April 2021

Speech by H.E. Mikael Damberg, Minister for Home Affairs, Sweden, in the Closing Session of the 2021 OSCE Counter-Terrorism Conference. The conference was held virtually, 21 April 2021.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am particularly pleased to address you here today. I have devoted a lot of my time to strengthen Swedish policies and laws as well as introduced new practices to prevent and strengthen our society's resistance against violent extremism and terrorism. International cooperation with partners is strong and needs to be developed continuously to ensure that our societies can protect our populations from terrorist attacks.

During the past two days, you as participants have discussed preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism in a changing global security landscape. The devastating proliferation of Covid-19 has contributed to increased polarization. New technologies are used not only to facilitate our daily lives, but also misused by terrorists. To meet the new landscape, we have to adjust and develop our tools to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.

To do exactly that, I, together with my colleagues in the EU, adopted a joint statement last November on how to take the EU's counter terrorism agenda forward. Yesterday the EU counter terrorism coordinator gave an in-depth overview of the EU approach.

The respect for international law, including human rights and fundamental freedoms, is the basis on which all our work is built. We have heard

numerous examples on why the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is critical, also when countering the misuse of the internet for terrorist purposes. Corruption, the lack of respect for rule of law, violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms increase the risk of grievances, which might lead to radicalization and violent extremism. States have the primary responsibility to combat terrorism, but we do also have an obligation to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and the rule of law. This perfectly illustrates what is meant by the OSCE's concept of comprehensive security.

We must continue to pay attention to root causes of violent extremism. Terrorist groups across the ideological spectrum try to exploit grievances and vulnerabilities to polarize, divide and erode trust in democratic institutions. Existing socio-economic and political challenges, real or perceived feelings of victimization, are used to recruit followers and expand the support base of terrorist groups. The pandemic has worsened the situation, which has been highlighted by several speakers. Promoting tolerance and inclusive societies is pivotal to tackling root causes.

In the online world, we as participating States need to find ways to address harmful and illegal content online while protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Examples of how to go about this have been discussed. We have heard about the challenges for small and medium-sized tech companies to remove content online, but also positive stories on media literacy and how smaller companies work with bigger ones. I believe a multi-stakeholder approach with the involvement of civil society and the private sector is a way forward.

Regarding rehabilitation and reintegration. Developing and maintaining safe and orderly prisons, avoiding overcrowding and understaffing, establishing links between prison and probation, and developing rehabilitation and reintegration programs are essential. There is a need to support not only the individual, but also the community as a whole. A community that lacks housing, infrastructure, schools and employment opportunities will most probably face more challenges when reintegrating returning individuals. And we need individualized age- and gender- responsive approaches to create sustainable solutions. As has been highlighted during the conference, there is a huge demand to be met.

On the important issue of gender; the conference has emphasized that women can have a variety of roles in terrorist organizations. We need to take this into account when developing policies for preventing violent extremism

as well as for countering terrorism. If we fail to recognize this, women's radicalization might go undetected and women's access to rehabilitation and reintegration programs will be insufficient. That being said, women are often victims of terrorism and their roles can differ over time. Gender responsive analysis is a necessity in preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism and should be mainstreamed throughout.

As we are soon coming to the end to this conference, I would like to thank the close to 600 participants for making it a success. We would not have had such a rich discussion without the diversity of participants representing governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and international and regional organizations.

Thanks.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Justice

# Speech by Mikael Damberg at UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Published 08 March 2021

Digital conference in Kyoto, Japan, 7 March 2021.  
Check against delivery.

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me express my warmest gratitude to the Government of Japan for your hospitality and dedication in hosting this congress, despite the challenges of a global pandemic.

I also would like to thank the UNODC Secretariat and the Executive Director for all their efforts in organizing the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Sweden supports the statement made on behalf of the European Union by Commissioner Ylva Johansson. I would now like to elaborate on one of the important topics she addressed.

Men's violence against women must end. Worldwide, we are currently facing a grim pandemic that has exposed inequalities and increased the gap between women and men. Violence against women and girls has increased, which is one of the ultimate expressions of inequality.

We welcome that the Kyotodeclaration contains a paragraph on domestic violence, marking our common determination to prevent and counter violence against women.

Our goal as a feminist government is equal power for women and men to shape society and their own lives, and to end violence against women. In line

with this, Sweden is currently implementing a ten-year National Strategy for preventing and combating Men's Violence against Women. The strategy raises the importance of preventive measures and men's participation and responsibility in the work against violence. I can give you a few examples:

The Government has tasked the Swedish Police Authority to integrate gender aspects in all its work. This has resulted in more resources and investigators to fight domestic violence and crimes against women.

Prosecutors with special skills and experiences are put in the lead.

Sweden's sexual offences legislation criminalises all sexual acts which are not based on consent. The purchase of sexual services is also criminalised, which has proven to be a valuable tool in the prevention of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Compliance with international obligations is crucial and the Istanbul Convention offers an important device for follow-up. Sweden works for enhanced prevention, including treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence.

However, the problems go further. Crimes of violence against women is an international problem. It is used as a weapon in war and terrorism, and as a tool in organised crime through trafficking of human beings.

We need to make full use of the international tools and channels of cooperation to deal with these urgent issues and to reinforce accountability.

I invite you all to work with us.

When we invest in gender equal conditions, we strengthen our democracies and promote peace and social cohesion in society.

I would like to conclude by thanking you all for your attention. We highly appreciate the possibility to participate in the discussions this week.