



OFFICIAL REMARKS

WORKNEH GEBEYEHU (PhD), IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE:
Integrating Gender Perspectives in Investigation, Prosecution and
Adjudication of Terrorism and Violent Extremism Cases**

Thursday, 25 May, 2023 | Shashamane, Ethiopia



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

Good morning, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

1. It gives me great delight to welcome all of you to Shashamane, **the place I call home!** To those of you that may not know, **I was born and raised in this great town.** As I stand here, **my mind is full of beautiful memories and experiences that gave me a firm foundation and ultimately shaped me into the man I am today.**
2. It is in this town that **I learnt the values of family and true meaning of genuine friendship, values of humanity, values that I uphold and cherish- values of kindness, of respect, of integrity, of gratitude, of courage!** As such, **my heart is firmly rooted in Shashamane, indeed home is where the heart is!**
3. Let me tell you something interesting about Shashamane (share a personal experience...)



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

4. As you must have seen on your way from Awassa, **Shashamane is a beautiful place with impressive selection of attractions, it is also a safe and secure town not mentioning that the people of Shashamane are warm and hospitable.** I encourage you to **take some time to enjoy the sceneries and experience the warmth and generosity of the people of Shashamane.**

5. When I took office in 2019, I made a clarion call to all, to **take IGAD to the people. The people on the ground need to identify and relate with IGAD as it belongs to them.** I commend the IGAD Centre of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) for living up to this call while implementing their activities and more so for **being the first institution in IGAD to hold a meeting in Shashamane.** I am pleased to note that **this is also the first time that an international organisation is holding a meeting in this great town!**



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

6. The subject of criminal justice is one that **I have a keen interest in, both at a professional and scholarly level**, I am therefore very honored to be in your midst today to officially mark the start of this very critical training which brings together judges, prosecutors, law enforcement and correction officers from the IGAD region plus Rwanda and Tanzania with an objective of **enhancing criminal justice system in P/CVE by integrating gender perspectives in investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism and violent extremism cases.**

7. In my professional career, **I have extensively dealt with the challenges of peace and security and I can state authoritatively that the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in East and Horn of Africa continues to grow exponentially.**



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

8. The Centre's databank records **over 29,000 fatalities and over 30,000 injuries in the last decade occasioned by terrorist acts which translates to an average of at least 6,000 fatalities and injuries experienced annually.** Additionally, the Centre's analysis of the terrorism and violent extremism threat indicates that in the last decade, **the East and Horn of Africa has experienced the highest number of attacks** compared to other regions in Africa.

9. I am pleased to note that since its inception in 2016, the Centre has been on the front to enhance the soft power capabilities of the state and non-state actors by advocating for non-coercive actions and programmes which address the underlying causes of terrorism and violent extremism.



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

10. The Centre has in its programmes endeared to ensure that regional actors are integrating human rights based approaches, gender and conflict sensitive methodologies in their work to prevent violent extremism; **this particular training is a testament of the same.**
11. One key pillar espoused in the IGAD Regional Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism is **'Strengthening Rule of Law and Criminal Justice Systems'** with the measures and specific activities under this pillar being to engage state criminal justice actors including those in judiciary, prosecution, prisons and police departments.
12. With violent extremists continuing to adeptly exploit claims of human rights violations experienced at various contact points of the criminal justice system to aid their efforts to radicalization and recruitment, there is critical need to hold joint trainings such as this



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

one, which brings together judges, investigators, prosecutors, law enforcement and correction officers, **to explore the best practices to adopt so as to improve treatment of suspects of terrorism and violent extremism who come in contact with the criminal justice system**-during investigation, prosecution and adjudication-in accordance with human rights.

- 13.** Let me remind all of us that **ensuring fundamental rights are upheld in preventing and countering violent extremism efforts also calls for ensuring that both men and women needs are catered for in all levels of criminal justice.** This has not been the case as most criminal justice systems have not adequately factored in gender perspectives which has resulted in unwarranted discrimination of women in various contact points with the system both as victims or as perpetrators.



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

14. Additionally, with human rights abuses being reported as a key catalyst to join violent extremist groups, we need to see how **as criminal justice officers we can ensure that we disrupt terrorist activities in consistency with applicable international laws, regional and national instruments.**

15. It is my hope that the conversations that will be stirred up in this training will provide **concrete recommendations that will inform how best to step up efforts towards mainstreaming gender perspectives** into criminal justice system responses to violent extremism and terrorism incidences in the East and Horn of Africa.

16. Let us remember that **'to whom much is given, much is expected'** we must feel obligated to have in place inclusive criminal justice systems and to push for the same in our respective capacities.



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

17. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government of Sweden for its generous support to advance the peace and security agenda in the IGAD region and beyond, and for particularly supporting the Centre in efforts towards ***'Enhancing Gender Sensitive Approaches among State and Non-State Actors to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism (P/CVE) and Terrorism in East and Horn of Africa'***.
18. Additionally, I thank the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development for the **technical support they have accorded the Centre** on gender mainstreaming and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda to ensure successful implementation of this project.
19. I sincerely thank the Government and the people of Ethiopia for the hospitality.



ES Statement | Enhancing Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice System in P/CVE

20. I also thank the Centre for organizing this very critical gathering and for the commitment to push for adoption of preventive measures by the state and non-state actors to counter violent extremism in East and Horn of Africa.

I wish you very successful deliberations! Thank you for listening.