



in cooperation with



Centro de Investigaciones de Relaciones Internacionales y Desarrollo

# **The Role of Civil Society in Preventing Terrorism**

**Informal Working Level Meeting**

**14-16 March 2007  
Barcelona, Spain**

**-- Report --**

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## **Background**

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in cooperation with the Fundació CIDOB (Centro de Investigaciones de Relaciones Internacionales y Desarrollo), organised an informal working-level meeting on the role of civil society in preventing terrorism. The meeting was hosted by the Fundació CIDOB and held in Barcelona, Spain, on 14-16 March 2007. The Director-General of the Directorate for Terrorism, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Angel Lossada, opened the meeting. The Director of the ODIHR, Ambassador Christian Strohal, also made welcoming remarks.

Some thirty participants from civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as from the ODIHR, the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Secretariat's Action Against Terrorism Unit and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the meeting. Discussions took place under Chatham House rules and provided an opportunity to engage in an open and constructive dialogue.

The meeting was organised by the ODIHR with a view to strengthening the partnership and cooperation with civil society and NGOs on issues relating to the protection and promotion of human rights in counter-terrorism. As such, the meeting built on the outcomes of the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human Rights in the Fight against Terrorism held in Vienna on 14-15 July 2005. At this SHDM one of the three substantive sessions had focussed specifically on the role of civil society in the fight against terrorism.

The meeting in Barcelona had two main objectives. First, to identify how civil society, including the human rights community, can work practically in the prevention of terrorism. Second, to identify challenges to the participation of civil society in this work including the implications of governmental counter-terrorism law and policy. The meeting included four substantive sessions. The two substantive sessions on the first day addressed mainly the question of whether and to what extent there is a role for civil society in the prevention of terrorism. The two substantive sessions on day two focussed on challenges faced by civil society and NGOs in working on issues related to terrorism both at an international and national level. The final session was dedicated to conclusions and formulation of recommendations aimed at OSCE participating States, the OSCE, the OSCE-ODIHR, and civil society itself.

The main points of discussion from the substantive sessions are set out below.

### **I. The role of civil society in preventing terrorism**

1. The importance of involving civil society in a comprehensive and multi-dimensional response to the threat of terrorism has been stressed by various international documents. At the international level, the United Nations (UN)

General Assembly, for instance, in its resolution adopting the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on 8 September 2006, affirmed the determination of Member States to “further encourage non-governmental organizations and civil society to engage, as appropriate, on how to enhance efforts to implement the Strategy.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the framework of the OSCE, the 2002 Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, for instance, recognised that it was vital to engage civil society in finding common political settlement for conflicts and to promote human rights and tolerance as an essential element in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>2</sup>

2. The approach taken in the Barcelona meeting was to enquire, as a first step, whether NGO representatives themselves envisaged a role for civil society in the prevention of terrorism. As a second step, it was then explored *how* and *to what extent* civil society and NGOs might practically work in the prevention of terrorism.
3. Participants agreed that civil society and NGOs had an important and meaningful role to play in the prevention of terrorism. They have valuable expertise and experience in addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Specific reference was made to civil society institutions and NGOs working on strengthening respect for human rights and the rule of law and on promoting democratic accountability. Participants also referred to civil society and NGO activities aimed at fostering social inclusion as well as efforts in addressing socio-economic factors.
4. Notwithstanding that day one of the meeting largely focussed on the role that civil society can play in preventing terrorism with day two mainly examining obstacles that civil society and NGOs faced while working on issues related to terrorism, participants stressed that the two issues were closely interrelated. The discussions made clear that the question of civil society and NGO involvement was primarily a question of genuine partnership between civil society and government. It was stressed that it was vital to avoid instrumentalising civil society for political or intelligence gathering purposes.
5. Participants pointed out that the possibilities for genuine partnerships between civil society and government were dependent on the different circumstances and political realities in the respective OSCE participating States. The role of civil society in preventing terrorism and the possibilities for partnering with government in this regard were very limited in countries

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<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly, *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, Doc. A/RES/60/288, 8 September 2006, operative paragraph 3 (d).

<sup>2</sup> OSCE Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, MC(10).JOUR/2, 7 December 2002, Annex 1, Para. 20, [http://www1.osce.org/documents/odihr/2002/12/1488\\_en.pdf](http://www1.osce.org/documents/odihr/2002/12/1488_en.pdf) The 2001 Bishkek Programme of Action on Strengthening Comprehensive Efforts to Counter Terrorism also stressed the importance of promoting active civil society engagement in the fight against terrorism. In addition, the 2001 OSCE Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism directly mandated the ODIHR to continue developing projects to solidify democratic institutions, civil society and good governance.

where civil society structures were weak or non-existent. Reference was also made to legislation in some OSCE participating States that places limits on civil society and NGOs activity in the form of laws and practices that restrict registration and operation of NGOs. It was stressed that such legislation and practices were counter-productive because they prevented civil society and NGO's from contributing to prevention efforts.

6. Participants suggested more generally that a lack of political pluralism, a lack of channels to convey messages and a lack of independent media were among factors that needed to be taken into account when discussing and exploring the role of civil society and NGOs in preventing terrorism in the OSCE region. In this context, participants also pointed to the difficulties for civil society and NGOs to play a positive and meaningful role in preventing terrorism when circumstances require them to put major resources into defending and protecting their own rights and existence, including at times their own physical integrity.
7. The discussions proceeded to addressing the question of *how* civil society and NGOs might work practically in the prevention of terrorism. Participants were encouraged to share good practices and to explore human rights-based approaches to preventing terrorism. Participants were also asked to present and discuss grass-roots and other national initiatives, projects and experiences. The discussions identified several possible roles for civil society and NGOs in the prevention of terrorism.

***a. Advisory, educative and community roles***

8. Participants discussed the possibilities for civil society and NGOs to provide policy advice and expertise on aspects of preventing terrorism which, in many cases, is not available within government. It was stressed that in order for civil society and NGOs to play a meaningful advisory and partnership role in the prevention of terrorism they needed to be given a sense of ownership of the problems and processes. In many cases, however, partnership with government was unbalanced and one-sided as civil society organisations were not regarded and treated as equal partners competent of addressing security issues of common concern. It was argued further that political pressure by governments to provide "quick fix" solutions to security threats and issues contributed to the difficulties faced by civil society and NGOs in providing valuable advice and assistance.
9. Participants argued that it was vital for civil society and NGOs to explain human rights as a useful framework for developing effective counter-terrorism strategies rather than as an impediment. Specific activities identified in this regard included providing information to students as well as to youth workers and police and law enforcement. With regard to the latter, it was pointed out that civil society and NGOs may partner with law enforcement to develop targeted programmes of cooperation focusing, for instance, on increasing

awareness and understanding of the diversity of communities. Reference was made to a project where civil society and government linked up to develop a training DVD to enhance the understanding of different cultures and communities among law enforcement officers, outlining aspects of the culture, religious customs and traditions of certain communities, in addition to their historical and geographical origins.

10. Participants further mentioned the importance of providing alternative appropriate language and terminology to public officials in addressing issues related to terrorism and security. In order to strengthen cooperation with government, it was suggested that civil society and NGOs may also find it appropriate to acknowledge positive steps or measures taken by law enforcement officials and government where they occur. In addition, it was pointed out that civil society and NGOs may have a positive advisory role in providing concrete alternatives to counter-terrorism policies and measures considered to be ill-conceived. It was nevertheless imperative that civil society and NGOs were given relevant information in order to understand the reality of threats and provide adequate suggestions for response.
11. Participants agreed that civil society institutions and NGOs are catalysts for opinions and ideas which was vital for building strong and vibrant communities. By creating safe spaces for dissent and by providing a forum where experiences can be shared on a personal level, civil society institutions and NGOs may contribute to healing community rifts and tensions. It was also suggested that civil society and NGOs may engage in outreach activities and take proactive steps to address root-causes of terrorism. Participants advocated activities that strengthened human rights and the rule of law in particular. It was argued that the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law contributed to building strong democratic societies in which citizens were free to participate in the political process and exercise their rights. Reference was made to the essential need to provide practical and effective support to human rights defenders.
12. The discussions touched further on the question of whether civil society and NGOs should attempt to engage in dialogue with individuals and groups involved in and perpetrating acts of violence and “terrorism”. An argument was made that for various reasons it was easier for civil society and NGOs to engage in such dialogue than for governments. Stressing that dialogue did not imply affording any form of legitimacy to the perpetrators of violence and affirming that a human rights-based approach was essential, participants made reference to positive experiences of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

### ***b. Advocacy and research roles***

13. It was emphasised that civil society and NGOs should condemn *all* acts of violence against civilians regardless of the motivation for those acts. Positive measures identified in the discussions in the area of advocacy also included

writing open letters and statements to armed groups condemning terrorist tactics and maintaining a principled approach to the applicability of human rights standards, i.e. that these standards apply to both perpetrators and victims of violence. Participants further pointed out that there may be a role for civil society and NGOs in reducing the emotional and psychological impact of terrorism. In particular, it was stressed that civil society and NGOs may engage in activities amplifying the voices of the victims of terrorism as well as of persons affected by unlawful counter-terrorism operations.

14. Other aspects of an effective advocacy role discussed by participants included the issue of engaging with the media to shape the public discourse around “terrorism”. It was argued that it was essential to establish a constructive relationship with the media in order to provide reliable information, challenge negative or unbalanced portrayals of parts of the community and initiate public debate on issues of public security and human rights. Participants also pointed out that it was important to encourage debate within the media profession on the image that is conveyed of minority groups in connection with the fight against terrorism and the responsibility to avoid perpetuating prejudices, stereotypes or inaccurate and/or incomplete information.
15. Participants pointed out that high quality research in the area of terrorism, political violence and the respective root-causes was vital for effective and credible advocacy as well as for prevention efforts. It was suggested that civil society and NGOs conduct research in a variety of areas. This included conducting studies and surveys on the impact of counter-terrorism measures and legislation, on conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and in other areas where little or no research was available to date. Stressing the importance of a practical and not only theoretical approach, special emphasis was placed on the value of statistical and empirical research. Participants reported on experiences in documenting terrorism incidents as well as on fact finding missions and field work. Participants also recalled the dangers associated with engaging in such activity, especially threats and dangers to physical integrity.
16. Participants further suggested that an increase in statistical and monitoring work would also enable civil society to engage with government in an open and facts-based dialogue about the effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures. This included a frank and open debate on funds spent on counter-terrorism measures. It was pointed out further that in order for civil society and NGOs to play a meaningful role in preventing terrorism it was imperative to de-mystify public security issues. In particular, it was essential to recognise that public security issues were of concern to a variety of actors and should not be left to be discussed and addressed by security experts alone. In this context participants recalled the importance of governments accepting and treating civil society representatives and NGOs as partners rather than as suspects or obstacles in the fight against terrorism.

### ***c. Legal roles***

17. The work of civil society and NGOs on legal issues related to terrorism and counter-terrorism contributes to the strengthening of international and national legal frameworks in counter-terrorism, especially as they relate to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. Particular reference was made during the discussions to the need for expanding the work of civil society institutions and NGOs on technical questions of:
- definition of terrorism in, and scope of application of, domestic laws, international treaties and other instruments dealing with terrorism;
  - accountability of perpetrators and redress for victims of terrorist acts and of unlawful counter-terrorism practices, in both the domestic and international law dimensions;
  - educating decision-makers about the nature and extent of complementarity among different legal frameworks, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and domestic criminal and civil law; and
  - translating complicated legal arguments for wider public mobilization.

Participants pointed out that the lack of an agreed definition of “terrorism” or of “terrorist acts” was itself one of the key challenges for civil society and NGOs working on those issues.

18. As concerns the call for effective prosecutions of perpetrators of acts of terrorism and violence, it was expressed that trials be conducted in accordance with fair trial and due process standards. Participants stressed that it was vital for proceedings in criminal matters related to terrorism to fully adhere to international human rights and rule of law standards. It was suggested that human rights compliant prosecutions also contributed to preventing radicalisation and terrorism. Participants further agreed that regular criminal justice systems made ample provision for addressing the criminal responsibility of terrorists and that it was counter-productive to create parallel systems dealing specifically with terrorism and “terrorism-related” matters. Refraining from awarding terrorist acts special status as and categorising such acts as simply a crime de-legitimised the very use of that tactic.
19. As concerns individuals deprived of their liberty in connection with suspected terrorism-related activity but not criminally charged, it was expressed that protections against arbitrary detention, including the right to challenge the legality of detention in an independent court, be respected.

## **II. Challenges for civil society and NGOs**

20. The second day of the meeting allowed for identifying challenges for civil society and NGOs working on issues related to terrorism and counter-

terrorism, both at a national and international level. In addition, participants discussed some implications of governmental counter-terrorism law and policy on freedom of expression, association, assembly and on civil society in general. This included issues related to the vulnerability of human rights defenders. Participants re-emphasised that the obstacles and challenges civil society and NGOs face in working on issues related to terrorism had direct implications on the role they could play in the area of prevention.

21. It was stressed that it was very difficult for civil society and NGOs to play any meaningful role in those countries where there was little political pluralism and where civil society structures were weak. A lack of political pluralism in itself contributed to creating conditions conducive to terrorist recruitment. In this context, participants also noted with concern that in some OSCE participating States fundamental changes to the political system were made under the pretext of security and counter-terrorism.
22. Participants further expressed concern that the discourse on terrorism had called into question principles and standards that were previously thought inviolable. Particular reference was made to the absolute prohibition on torture. This presented enormous challenges for the NGO community in that the value and relevance of previous advocacy and research was effectively questioned. It was also pointed out that counter-terrorism policies affected democratic means of dissent – in particular as they impacted on NGOs and the mass media – and that this made it very difficult for civil society institutions and NGOs to engage meaningfully with both government and the community.
23. Another closely related major challenge identified by the discussions was the problem that civil society institutions and NGOs were seen as obstacles to governments in the fight against terrorism. Participants were concerned that efforts to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law as key elements of an effective strategy to prevent terrorism were in fact being portrayed as “pro-terrorist”. Participants also reported on accusations against NGOs in some OSCE participating States that they represented “foreign interests” rather than local communities. Participants further reported on civil society organisations being targeted by governments with their funding cut for perceived connection to “terrorists”.
24. Participants expressed concern that in a number of OSCE participating States human rights defenders were harassed or persecuted in the name of counter-terrorism. In some cases this harassment included threats to their physical integrity. Preoccupied with physical danger, human rights defenders had difficulties to devote efforts to articulating ways in which the international community could offer assistance and support. Another major challenge was finding ways and means to build support for human rights defenders in volatile regions.
25. The discussions also touched on the problem that attempts by civil society organisations to investigate and discuss the causes of terrorism were mistaken



for justification of terrorism. It was agreed that this undermined the possibility for serious debate on prevention and root causes. In many cases it was difficult to engage in research due to criminalisation of contact with “terrorist groups”; research into root causes was restricted as NGOs were expected to address acts of terrorism only. Participants also noted that the secrecy around security issues made it very difficult to engage effectively and practically in the debate.

26. Participants pointed out that newly enacted legislation in a number of OSCE participating States adopted very broad definitions of “terrorism” and “extremism” which was held to have a chilling effect on civil society and NGO activity, in particular in relation to activities aimed at the prevention of terrorism. The inclusion of overly broad definitions in anti-terrorism legislation made it very difficult for civil society and NGO actors to engage in legitimate activity. It was reported that so-called ‘terrorism-related’ offences targeted freedom of expression as well as freedom of association and put civil society organisations and NGOs in danger of persecution.
27. In addition, participants were concerned that a number of OSCE participating States had adopted restrictive NGO legislation. Such legislation, it was argued, was not only unhelpful as it limited the role of civil society and NGO in the prevention of terrorism, but was also a potential catalyst of conflict, including terrorism, by potentially outlawing legitimate forms of political expression and association.
28. Participants discussed challenges in relation to engaging and mobilising public opinion. These included a massive information gap in the area of terrorism and counter-terrorism: large parts of the community lacked an understanding of, and access to, relevant information. Civil society organisations needed to underline the quality of their information as well as improve ways and means of disseminating it. It was essential to build broad common political fronts and to strengthen coalitions in support of democratic values and human rights. This was particularly vital in order to address disillusionment of youth.

### **III. Synthesis of proceedings and discussion of recommendations**

29. The third day of the meeting was dedicated to synthesise the proceedings and discuss the conclusions. Participants formulated concrete recommendations addressed at the OSCE participating States, the OSCE, the OSCE-ODIHR and civil society itself. The set of recommendations is attached to this report as an annex. In addition, participants filled out evaluation forms to provide feedback on the meeting. The overall quality of the meeting was rated very highly with participants commenting favourably on the quality of discussions, format and length of the meeting as well as on its logistics. Participants also expressed interest in similar working-level meetings in the field of human rights and terrorism/counter-terrorism in order to increase international solidarity of civil society and to strengthen partnership and co-operation with the OSCE and the OSCE-ODIHR.

## ANNEX: 'BARCELONA RECOMMENDATIONS'

N.B.: the recommendations discussed in the course of the meeting are not meant to be exhaustive.

### **I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES**

1. Avoid instrumentalising civil society for political or intelligence-gathering purposes;
2. Engage in a genuine partnership with civil society and draw on expertise available within civil society and the community;
3. Create official means and channels of communication with civil society on national and local levels; explore where civil society can cooperate and where there are areas of mutual benefit;
4. Organise systematic trainings on diversity and human rights for law enforcement personnel, internally and with civil society;
5. Foster a “safe environment” for open discussion and dissent regarding root causes of terrorism, counter-terrorism policies and other issues related to terrorism and its prevention;
6. Refrain from attacking civil society and from directly or indirectly portraying NGOs as allies of “terrorists”, especially those who question the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies or monitor the negative implications of those policies;
7. Refrain from criminalising, legally restricting and harassing NGOs and media organisations that work on addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism;
8. Ensure that human rights defenders can operate freely without threat, intimidation or interference and reaffirm the responsibilities contained in the *UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*;
9. Recognise that the protection and promotion of human rights form a core part of effective counter-terrorism policy and public security rather than an afterthought or obstacle;
10. Give priority to combating terrorism through the criminal justice system and refrain from creating parallel legal regimes for addressing terrorism;
11. Use criminal prosecutions to bring perpetrators to justice while ensuring fair trial standards and respect for prohibitions of arbitrary detention;
12. Initiate programmes and allocate funds that enable civil society and NGOs to challenge anti-terrorism laws and practices in the courts in order to strengthen democratic accountability;

13. Abolish the vague and legally uncertain notion of “extremism” in legislation;
14. Within anti-terrorism legislation, refrain from legally categorising expression or charitable giving that is not directly related to terrorism as “terrorism related”;
15. Refrain from criminalising legitimate, non-violent dissent under the pretext of fighting “terrorism” and/or “extremism”;
16. Ensure that national lists of “terrorist organisations” and individuals have adequate periodic review and due process safeguards for challenging inclusion;
17. Take advantage of ODIHR technical assistance and draw on the expertise of independent NGOs in drafting and revising legislation and developing counter-terrorism strategies and legislation;
18. Address hate crime, discrimination, racism, restriction on religious freedoms and political, social and economic exclusion which may be amongst the root causes of terrorism including through introducing anti-discrimination legislation and effective institutional arrangements;
19. Take measures to promote equal rights and opportunities in society including proactive steps to prevent the stigmatisation of certain parts of the community;
20. Refrain from using racial, religious and national/ethnic origin profiling in counter-terrorism activities;
21. Allow and support research into root-causes of terrorism and refrain from limiting the role of research institutions active in this field;
22. Refrain from using absolutist language and polarising the debate around terrorism and abstain from using inflammatory language equating migrants or refugees with “terrorists”;
23. Evaluate existing legislation and policies adopted in the fight against terrorism to ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly against persons on grounds of race, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin, and where relevant, to revoke any such existing legislation;
24. Ensure adequate measures to protect certain groups of persons, who have become particularly vulnerable to racism and or/racial discrimination in public life including in education, employment, housing, access to public places, freedom of movement; and to racist expression and racially-motivated crime;
25. Regularly evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies and practices, both internally and through consultation with civil society and independent experts;
26. Support victims of terrorism and people affected by counter-terrorism operations by ensuring that they have access to justice and receive adequate compensation and reparations.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OSCE/OSCE-ODIHR:

### OSCE:

1. Engage more closely and regularly with civil society on issues related to terrorism, counter-terrorism, violent extremism and prevention;
2. Facilitate and support civil society/NGO participation in OSCE political meetings and other platforms to address participating States;
3. Provide a forum for civil society to raise issues with participating States and create a safe space for open discussion on issues relating to human rights and terrorism/counter-terrorism;
4. Make better use of Human Dimension mechanisms to address non-implementation of OSCE commitments.

### OSCE-ODIHR:

5. Regularly organise follow-up working-level meetings that bring together civil society representatives from across the OSCE region to discuss specific issues related to terrorism, counter-terrorism and prevention (on a bi-/annual basis);
6. Organise a meeting for civil society to discuss the human rights issues around definition of “terrorism” and “extremism” on a national and international level and formulate recommendations;
7. Facilitate and support civil society/NGO participation in OSCE political meetings and other platforms to address participating States;
8. In this regard, create a “safe space” for open discussion on issues relating to human rights and terrorism/counter-terrorism;
9. Involve civil society experts to inform technical assistance to participating States including legislative reviews;
10. Further develop guidelines on specific human rights issues related to the implementation of counter-terrorism strategies and measures;
11. Develop flexible assistance programmes for transitional democracies addressing concerns of local NGOs and building on local research;
12. Assist civil society and NGOs in coordinating efforts and coalition-building in the area of human rights and counter-terrorism;
13. Promote good practices on community-level initiatives by publishing a report/booklet involving civil society;
14. Create a reaction mechanism within the ODIHR to respond to urgent threats to organisations and human rights defenders;
15. Consider monitoring trials of persons accused of having committed “terrorism” or “extremism” offences;
16. Monitor threats to Human Rights Defenders and provide practical support;
17. Strengthen the capacities of National Human Rights Institutions.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY:

1. Consistently denounce any form of violence directly or indiscriminately targeting civilians, regardless of whether it is committed by State or non-State actors;
2. Proactively identify areas where civil society can cooperate with government and explore areas of mutual benefit;
3. Offer substantive training and follow-up to law enforcement agencies of participating States where appropriate;
4. Provide alternative appropriate language to public officials and the media in addressing issues of terrorism and security;
5. Reframe the discourse on “security” from counter-terrorism to human security;
6. Acknowledge positive steps or measures taken by law enforcement officials and government where they occur;
7. Work to ensure strong ties and trust with the communities on whose behalf you speak to enhance credibility;
8. Be sensitive in approaching communities affected by terrorism or counter-terrorism policies;
9. Engage in outreach and take proactive steps to address root-causes of terrorism;
10. Increase statistical and monitoring work and engage with government in an open and facts-based dialogue about the effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures; interrogate spending figures;
11. Establish a constructive relationship with the media and the entertainment industry in order to provide reliable information, challenge negative or unbalanced portrayals of parts of the community and initiate public debate on issues of public security and human rights;
12. Encourage debate within the media profession on the image that they convey of minority groups in connection with the fight against terrorism and the responsibility to avoid perpetuating prejudices, stereotypes or inaccurate/incomplete information;
13. Strengthen international solidarity and coordination and engage in work on coalition building; international and national NGOs should engage in a frank exchange of experience; international NGOs should take a more cooperative approach to national NGOs and provide support to them as well as to and human rights defenders suffering persecution in their countries;
14. Improve minority representation in national and international NGOs;
15. Amplify the voices of victims of terrorism and persons affected by unlawful counter-terrorism operations;

16. Assess the implications of national and international definitions of terrorism and build cross-sectoral coalitions to influence the debate accordingly;
17. Educate relevant target audiences, including States, on
  - the merits of various proposed definitions of terrorism and terrorism related-offences, especially as concerns potential conflict with rights of association and expression;
  - the proper scope of application of various legal frameworks, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and domestic law,
  - the importance of adhering to international legal standards for fair trials and protection against arbitrary detention.
18. Hold participating States publicly to account in relation to the implementation of OSCE commitments and international legal obligations, including on the international level where appropriate.