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June 28, 2019

Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental

freedoms while countering terrorism

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner

**Response to the Letter from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human**

**rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism**

Dear Ms. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin,

I have the honor to address you the response of the government of Finland to your request to share concise comments or material focusing on entities and initiatives involved in the development of soft law instruments and standards.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are addressed comprehensively in the Finnish counter-terrorism “soft law” instruments and in the related standard-setting initiatives and processes. The inclusivity and transparency of national counter-terrorism processes is ensured, for example, by consulting relevant stakeholders.

Finland's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy was updated in 2018 through a broad-based cooperation between public authorities. The updated strategy contains a number of policy definitions and strategic actions. The guiding principle in this strategy, as in the previous ones, is that any measures taken to counter terrorism are in compliance with human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

The National Police Board has continued the implementation of strategic actions defined in the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2018-2021 giving due regard for the compliance with basic and human rights, rule of law and international law.

The first National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism was published in 2012. The aim of the publication is to help the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate the prevention of radicalisation at national level. The Ministry of the Interior has appointed a national cooperation group, which has representatives from various authorities and organisations.

In Finland, the police, teachers, social workers, healthcare professionals, youth workers, NGOs and religious and other communities carry out anti-radicalisation work at grassroots level. Local cooperation networks are currently operating in Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Oulu.

The programme targets groups and individuals who are in danger of being radicalised. The objective is to ensure that the government’s capacity and permanent structures for preventing violent radicalisation and extremism are in place everywhere in Finland. Expertise and best practices need to be readily available. In particular, the aim is to strengthen the ability of children and adolescents to identify, and guard against, violence-inducing messages and propaganda.

The action plan was updated in 2016 to take into account the changes in the operating environment. The new Action Plan was drawn up as a result of cooperation between the authorities, NGOs and communities, and was approved by the ministerial working group on internal security in April 2016.

In spring 2019, an independent assessment of the effectiveness of actions in the Action Plan was carried out. The assessment is publically available on the Ministry of the Interior’s website[[1]](#footnote-1). Currently a third Action Plan is being drafted. It will take into account changes in the operating environment as well as the recommendations of the evaluation. The aim is to adopt the third Action Plan by the end of summer 2019.

Proposal for Arranging Cross-sectoral Cooperation on Managing Returnees from Conflict Zones was adopted in April 2017.[[2]](#footnote-2) The objective is to reduce the possible risk of violence and radicalisation posed by the returnees by, among other things, promoting their integration into Finnish society. The model is based on the cooperation between authorities. Nongovernmental organizations are also involved in measures to integrate returnees.

The new Anchor Manual on Multi-Professional Anchor Work was published in March 2019.[[3]](#footnote-3) Anchor work refers to multi-professional cooperation targeted at children and adolescents to promote their wellbeing and prevent crime. The related activities are based on the professional skills of the police, social workers, psychiatric nurses and youth workers and on the cooperation between these actors. Rapid intervention and opportunities to discuss issues with someone decrease the risk of violence and recidivism.

The Anchor Manual on Multi-Professional Anchor Work aims to support the implementation, development and assessment of Anchor work in Finland. The manual is forward-looking and describes the Anchor model, which is based on research knowledge and good practices. The aim is to steer, support, and standardise Anchor work, so that young people have as equal as possible access to services nationwide.

International law is the guiding principle of the counter-terrorism measures in Finland. Thus, all the above-mentioned “soft law” instruments are in full compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Yours sincerely,

Terhi Hakala

Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations Offices and Other International Organisations in Geneva

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[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. Kinnunen, Samuli & Partanen, Elli (KPMG Oy Ab), Assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism by the Ministry of the Interior, 26 April 2019, http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161565 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Proposal for Arranging Cross-sectoral Cooperation on Managing Returnees from Conflict Zones including a proposal for combining NGOs’ services with the action of the authorities, 7 April 2017,

   http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/79612 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Anchor Manual on Multi-Professional Anchor Work, 27 March 2019, https://intermin.fi/en/article/-/asset\_publisher/ankkuritoiminnan-tavoitteena-on-auttaa-nuoria-koko-suomessa-yhden-luukun-periaatteella [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Lomakepohja: Kirje (vieraat kielet) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)