

Social & Cultural Committee, PRAMUN 2026 Synopsis

Topic 1: Combating online radicalisation

I. Background Information

With the introduction of the digital age in the past few decades, radicalisation has become an especially prominent issue around the world. Extremist ideologies from radical groups or terrorist organisations have profited greatly from the uncontrollable spread of propaganda in the media and internet.

Radicalisation, as used in this context, is the spread and adoption of extremist ideologies regarding the political, social, or cultural world. Often these ideas are in support of terrorist organisations, or follow extreme left or right-wing political movements, spreading neoconservative agendas that do not benefit society.

However, online radicalisation, or the spread of these ideas through the internet and digital media, has become increasingly prominent with extremist groups, creating more hurdles to overcome when it comes to preventing radical propaganda. The online variety of radicalisation began in the 1980s, when right-wing extremists began to spread misinformation and radical ideas online instead of on print media. Before the rise of the internet, personal computers could be used to share online bulletin boards where documents and extremist information could be passed around to anyone with access.

With the rise of the internet, however, online radicalisation became even more prevalent. Terrorist organisations like Al Qaeda quickly turned to utilising the internet to spread their extremist ideas. By 2006, the group was reported to have over fifty websites promoting their ideologies; early websites were society's first sources of worldwide information, and oftentimes people fell victim to extremist propaganda without considering it to be misinformation. The internet and early digital technologies played a massive role in the coordination of the September 11 attacks, setting the stage for more advanced online radicalisation and attacks in the future.

A "second generation" of online extremism began with the introduction of social media. The online bulletin boards, which were more esoteric and specific, became obsolete as platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube rose in popularity. While revolutionary in the connection of people worldwide, social media platforms like these became notorious for allowing extremists to spread their ideas even easier than before. Radical information could be accessed through the unregulated search engines and blogs as the internet grew and expanded. Entire populations could be fed extreme propaganda without any interference from national and international security.

The current generation of radicalisation online can still be attributed to social media, but the way in which we communicate with others goes beyond traditional social media, and how extreme ideas and agendas are pushed onto the population has shifted drastically. There is a larger emphasis on anonymity, allowing people to spread and share information and “facts” without any verification or credentials. The general population is not well-informed on how easy it is to fall deep into misinformation and extremist ideas presented as something innocent and factual.

According to Actions Counter Terrorism (<https://actearly.uk/>), an organisation to prevent extremism, “Extremists know how to capitalise on feelings of insecurity and convince the person they can help by providing a solution. They don’t have the person’s best interests at heart and will twist the narrative to suit their end goal of radicalisation.” Because of this, a wide variety of people can fall victim to radicals and their ideologies while searching for a sense of belonging or purpose.

Between gaming platforms and private social media groups, xenophobic, racist, and extremist content is continuously discovered and spread across the internet, reaching youths and adults alike. Radicalisation is an ever-prevalent issue today, reaching across communities all over the world.

II. United Nations Involvement

The United Nations increasingly recognizes the importance of addressing the dangers that online radicalisation poses to humanity in an ever more digital world. As such, in 2016 the Secretary General presented a Plan of Action of Prevent Violent Extremism ([PVE](#)), which calls for assuming systematic preventative steps to address the issue. It is backed by the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy ([A/RES/60/288 General Assembly](#)), adopted in 2006, which focuses on additional measures to allow individual nations to combat radicalisation within their borders, as well as the consideration of human rights and equality while fighting terrorism.

The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is reviewed every two years by the General Assembly, and new resolutions are adopted to improve the strategy. The eighth review, with resolution [A/RES/77/298](#) adopted in 2023, seeks to strengthen the main strategy with more emphasis on increasingly relevant issues. Various preambulatory clauses of this resolution focus on preventing extremism against women and girls, and shifts like these in resolutions can be observed after each two-year period. The UN has continued to work and keep a live solution to global terrorists and radicals.

In 2026, the 20th anniversary of this plan, the UN will undergo the ninth review of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and reflect on the impact it has had in the past decades. The Secretary-General will also be responsible for a report on the implementation of the plan and its effectiveness, as well as suggestions moving forward. The United Nations as a whole has been

working hard to keep up with radicalisation worldwide; however, the same amount of effort has not yet been put in place in regards to extremists spreading propaganda through digital media.

III. Bloc Positions

The bloc of more developed nations with high internet penetration and more diverse populations, such as the United States, Canada, the UK, and other wealthy European states like France, tend to suffer more from online radicalisation due to social media. When youths in these nations feel marginalized or isolated, which is increasingly an issue when online engagement supplements community interactions, they are at higher risk of being drawn to more extremist ideologies that grant them a community and purpose. For example, France saw 18 minors prosecuted for terrorism cases in 2024 alone (ec.europa.eu).

This issue is particularly intensified by the prevalence of algorithmic personalization; if an individual displays interest in more conspiracies or extremist sources, they will be fed more of that by their algorithm. Thus, this bloc of states typically assumes the stance of combatting online radicalisation by working with social media forums to address the systemic issues in online spaces, especially by implementing stricter regulations.

This issue is tenfold worse in the bloc of nations composed of states in conflict zones, with weak governance and socio-economic instability. Countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, and even areas of the Philippines and Indonesia have struggled with radicalisation. Perhaps the most infamous examples of online radicalisation flourishing in these environments is the perpetual existence of ISIS and Al-Qaeda, who have long profited from the absence of safety nets and strong institutions in Iraq and Syria.

Social media in these nations has allowed terrorist groups to both spot potential recruits, and propagate false promises and extremist views via social media campaigns, articles, or recently even AI. These nations usually lack the resources and capabilities to address these issues alone, and as a result, may require greater assistance; these states tend to prioritize first addressing the societal issues resulting in online radicalisation.

IV. Things To Consider

- Methods of radicalisation have changed over the past few years. It is important to know how AI and similar technologies have an impact on the spread of extremist propaganda.
- What is your nation's prior/current experience with radicalisation?
- Has your nation taken any previous action toward online extremists? (Keep in mind the "generational" changes of radicalisation in the digital age.)

- Be aware of what the UN has done to combat this issue in years past. What has worked in the past? What worsened the situation?
- Ironically, while doing research on misinformation and radicalisation, we also have to be wary of any misinformation we might come across. Be sure to check **all** sources and dates before proceeding, and beware of sketchy websites and threads.
- Finally, bear in mind that radicalisation occurs for a reason. Some people who are swept into extremist activities have their own reasons for getting involved that go beyond the desire to discriminate, hurt, or kill populations. It is crucial for the UN to consider all perspectives of an issue before deciding any resolution.

V. Useful Sources

Online youth radicalization - Wikipedia*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onlineyouthradicalization#cite_note-1

*Remember that Wikipedia isn't a credible source on its own; use the articles to find sources for further research.

Adolescent Radicalisation: It's Not Just on Netflix

<https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/home/items/880571/en>

The Third Generation of Online Radicalization | Program on Extremism

<https://extremism.gwu.edu/third-generation-online-radicalization>

Homegrown terrorism and transformative learning: an interdisciplinary approach to understanding radicalization

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14781150903487956>

Radicalisation on the internet | ACT Early

<https://actearly.uk/radicalisation/online-safety/>

United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

ONLINE RADICALISATION

https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/RAN-online-radicalisation_en.pdf

Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism | Office of Counter-Terrorism

<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/en/plan-of-action-to-prevent-violent-extremism>

UN SG's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism - Secretary-General's Report

<https://www.undp.org/policy-centre/governance/publications/un-sgs-plan-action-prevent-violent-extremism-secretary-generals-report>

Europol and partner countries combat online radicalisation on gaming platforms

<https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/europol-and-partner-countries-combat-online-radicalisation-gaming-platforms>

The Digital Battlefield: How Terrorists Use the Internet and Online Networks for Recruitment and Radicalization

<https://www.congress.gov/119/meeting/house/117902/witnesses/HHRG-119-HM05-Wstate-Zelin-A-20250304.pdf>

Youth and violent extremism on social media: mapping the research

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260382>

From clicks to chaos: How social media algorithms amplify extremism

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/from-clicks-to-chaos-how-social-media-algorithms-amplify-extremism>

Youth Radicalisation: A New Frontier in Terrorism and Security

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/youth-radicalisation-a-new-frontier-in-terrorism-and-security/>

ISIL Online: Countering Terrorist Radicalization and Recruitment on the Internet and Social Media — FBI

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches-and-testimony/isil-online-countering-terrorist-radicalization-and-recruitment-on-the-internet-and-social-media->

Far-right extremists have been organizing online since before the internet – and AI is their next frontier

<https://theconversation.com/far-right-extremists-have-been-organizing-online-since-before-the-internet-and-ai-is-their-next-frontier-269271>

Thinking in Alternatives: Exploring New Approaches to Counter Terrorist Use of the Internet | UNICRI

<https://unicri.org/index.php/News-New-Approaches-to-Counter-Terrorist-Use-of-the-Internet>

Statements | Office of Counter-Terrorism

<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/en/statements>

Less relevant articles to explore (be wary of bias!)

DW | How Extremist Groups like Islamic State are using AI

<https://www.dw.com/en/how-extremist-groups-like-islamic-state-are-using-ai/a-69609398>

The Electronic Bulletin Board: A Computer-Driven Mass Medium - Sheizaf Rafaeli, 1984*

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/089443938600200302>

*Contains information/sources on early radicalisation before the internet!

Swallowing and spitting out the red pill: young men, vulnerability, and radicalization pathways in the manosphere

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09589236.2023.2260318>

Mechanisms of online radicalisation: how the internet affects the radicalisation of extreme-right lone actor terrorists

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19434472.2021.1993302#abstract>