



IDEA Secretary General Yves Leterme Talking Points
European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) High-Level Seminar
Brussels, 8-9 October 2015

Topic of high-level seminar: “Peace, Security and Sustainable Development: The Role of African and European Parliaments in Tackling the Root Causes and Consequences of Violent Extremism and Terrorism”

IDEA Secretary General talking points on the theme of “The consequences of Violent Extremism and Terrorism for Democracy”

- Thank you for inviting me today to discuss the - very important topic of the impact of violent extremism and terrorism.
- I will focus the *first part* of my comments on the *consequences of violent extremism and terrorism for democracy*.
- The *second part* of my comments will describe what the inter-governmental organization that I am leading – International IDEA - *is doing to support democratic processes around the world*, and reduce opportunities for the emergence of conflict and violence.
- Violent extremism and terrorism, conflict and instability constitutes a *serious threat to democratic governance and stability and contributes to undermine the fundamental norms, values, principles, human rights and freedoms* that underpin democratic societies.
- Violent extremism and terrorism also *weakens social cohesion*, dividing societies, creating fear and undermining interpersonal and group trust and weakening the social fabric of democratic societies.
- Further, conflict can destroy infrastructure, services, assets, and livelihoods, and displace populations, with reduced opportunities for people to live dignified lives.
- Violent extremism and terrorism also *impacts the accountability relationship between the government and citizens/voters*, as voters will hold politicians accountable for failing to provide security and adequately respond to terrorist threats or attacks.
- Violent extremism and terrorism can also contribute to *damage and undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions*, especially if the measures enacted to prevent them are deemed inadequate or insufficient and citizens lose confidence in the state to address terrorist threats.



- It is also important to note that *responses to combat and prevent terrorism* may also undermine or compromise fundamental democratic principles of *both mature democracies* well as *emergent and fragile democracies*.
- International IDEA is the *sole inter-governmental organization with the mandate to support democracy around the world*.
- Let me give you a few examples of programs that IDEA implements to strengthen democratic processes and reduce opportunities for violent conflict and terrorism.
- To empower democratic actors in organizing credible and peaceful elections, International IDEA has for example developed an *Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERMTTool)*. In the past several years, the ERMTTool has demonstrated its utility in building the capacity of electoral management bodies to organize elections in very difficult environments where conflict has been either latent or open, such as Kenya, Nepal, Bosnia, Myanmar, Nigeria and so on.
- The 2015 Nigerian and the 2013 Kenyan elections provide numerous examples of how the *ERMTTool empowered electoral officials* to gain *better situational awareness of threats posed by violent extremists and terrorists*, such as Boko Haram and al-Shabaab.
- International IDEA also provides support to *multi-party dialogue* in order to strengthen political cooperation as a cornerstone for effective and sustainable multiparty democracy; conflict prevention and peace-building, and an inclusive process for economic development and democratization reforms.
- I now pass the word to the next panelist to continue discussing the consequences of violent extremism and terrorism.

