



The 186th International Senior Seminar

“Criminal Justice Issues Regarding Youth Involved in Terrorism”

1. Duration and Participants

- From 17 January to 13 February 2025
- 14 overseas participants from 12 countries
- 4 participants from Japan

2. Overview of the seminar

This seminar addressed the critical issues of youth-involved terrorism with a particular focus on seeking ways to obtain credible evidence from youths in terrorism cases and ensuring effective and rehabilitative treatment of those youths to prevent them from reoffending. The seminar fulfilled its purpose by highlighting unique challenges in interviewing youths and providing practical interviewing skills to overcome these challenges. The seminar was also successful in sharing good practices of rehabilitating and reintegrating youth involved in terrorism including disengagement of these youths from violent extremism and terrorist organizations. Through participants’ presentations, expert lectures and group discussions, the seminar fostered mutual trust and understanding as a foundation for a global network of criminal justice practitioners committed to combating terrorism involving youths.

3. Contents of the Seminar

(1) Lectures

● Overseas Experts

A) “Prevention of Violent Extremism & Terrorism: Children and Youth”

Masood Karimipour

Regional Representative, UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific

B) “Securing the future: addressing foreign terrorist fighters in custodial settings”

“Prevention measures of violent extremism in prison (and probation)”

Torben Adams

Head of Division, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Bremen, Germany

C) “Judicial Proceedings Involving Children Suspected of Terrorism”

Cheibou SAMNA SOUMANA

Resident Fellow, Academic Unit, IIJ

● Lectures by Japanese Experts

A) “Efforts to Support Withdrawal from Organized Crime Groups”

YAGI Gakuyo

Director of the Second Prison Service Division, Tokyo Regional Correction Headquarters, MOJ

B) “Treatment of Young Inmates and Evaluation of Programme Effectiveness”
OTOMO Marie
Research Officer, Centre for Evidence-Based Research, Correctional Training
Institute

C) “Forensic interviews – The NICHD Protocol-”
UEMIYA Ai
Associate Professor, Institute of Human and Social Sciences, Faculty of
Humanities, Kanazawa University

(2) Individual Presentations

Each participant made an “Individual Presentation” describing the current situation and challenges in the participant’s country. Participants asked many questions to the presenters and an active discussion was held.

(3) Study Visits

The participants visited the following facilities to learn about effective and rehabilitative treatment of youths involved in terrorism.

- Kawagoe Juvenile Prison
- Ichihara Youth Correction Center
- With Hiroshima (Halfway House)
- Hiroshima Juvenile Training School
- Kifunebara Juvenile Training School for Girls
- Hiroshima Prison

(4) Group Discussion

The participants were divided into three groups and discussed assigned topics (below) based on the knowledge gained through the individual presentations, lectures by experts and study visits. The results of the discussions were summarized as concrete action plans for possible future measures, and presented to all participants and staff of UNAFEI, followed by a question-and-answer session.

- Groups A and B: “Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Youth Involvement in Terrorism”
- Group C: “Effective and Rehabilitative Treatment of Youths Involved in International Terrorism

4. Feedback from the Participants

Overall, most participants found the seminar meaningful, noting that they were able to obtain a comprehensive understanding of good practices in tackling youth-involved terrorism. Many participants were particularly impressed with the practical method and the protocol of interviewing youth. Moreover, many participants expressed their satisfaction in learning good practices of the Japanese correctional system in treating young inmates. They also reported that the programme was effective in establishing a network among their fellow criminal justice practitioners.

There was some constructive feedback to make future seminars more meaningful, such as to include police facilities, a prosecutors' office and the court as part of the study visit. UNAFEI would like to express its sincere appreciation for all comments and suggestions received, and will endeavour to reflect this feedback in future courses and seminars.

5. Comments from the Programming Officers

Youth-involved terrorism is an imminent issue that must be tackled now. Throughout the Seminar, the participants had an ample opportunity to fully discuss and gain useful information and knowledge to tackle this huge challenge, with the valuable contribution from the visiting experts and through the peer learning experience. We expect that the knowledge gained will be applied to strengthening and enhancing the criminal justice responses within each participant's jurisdiction. In particular, we hope participants understood the unique nature of youth, i.e. suggestibility, and the importance of open-ended questioning approaches in interviewing youth victims, witnesses and suspects to obtain credible statements. We would also like to emphasize the importance of disengagement of youths involved in terrorism. Successful disengagement is critical in the rehabilitation and reintegration of these youths. If we fail to do so, they will simply revert to the terrorist groups. In this sense, we hope participants have learned the good practices from the treatment of youth offenders in the Japanese correctional and probation systems (including the efforts by the correctional service to disengage inmates from organized crime groups and the support activities by *hogoshi*, the voluntary probation officers), as well as from the lectures by the visiting experts. We have also learned from the various activities by the UN in these areas. We highly recommend the participants to continue to enhance their knowledge by researching these critical activities. Furthermore, given the transnational nature of this issue, international cooperation is the key to resolving the problem. In this sense, the seminar was also meaningful in that it brought together senior criminal justice practitioners from different regions. The participants developed a global network which will function as a practical and useful channel for future cooperation and collaboration in combating terrorism.

UNAFEI sincerely hopes that we all will jointly strengthen momentum across the world toward building resilient societies to foster rehabilitation and reintegration of youth involved in terrorism.