

Ten years ago CdM hosted a global summit to discuss the scourge of terrorism and the ways of countering what was understood as a major threat to international peace and security.

Today's challenges are still more profound. Violent extremism is killing the innocent and destroying the hopes of men and women across many countries. And although 82 percent of acts of violent extremism take place in just five countries – as we were reminded by our President, Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Peter Neuman in a recent article published in El Pais – the effects are felt the world over. In our globalized world and in our time of instant communication the effects of the crimes of terrorism and violent extremism in general are our common, global concern.

We have gathered in Madrid to analyze this concern and to define the most necessary responses. While there is no universal formula, it is increasingly clear which are the main drivers and underlying conditions - conducive to the rise of the violent extremism of our era.

We have expressed our thoughts and made our recommendations in a concise document aiming at a global consensus to stop violence and to stop it now. We understand that governments, civil society, thought leaders and, indeed, all the concerned citizens of the world need to redouble their efforts for an effective action against violent extremism. A new framework for this broad partnership is needed and the major contours of that framework are offered in the appeal to the world emerging from the Club de Madrid's Global Policy Dialogue.

Some of the basic building blocs of our appeal to the world are not new. In fact, there is no better protection against chaos and human tragedies than the maintenance of territorial integrity and political independence of sovereign states.

However, in our era protection of these basic conditions of statehood has to be earned. It has to be earned by good governance, by responsible exercise of state sovereignty, by accountability of the government to the people, in other words, by constant efforts of the state to uphold its legitimacy. Preventing and countering violent extremism requires a genuine commitment to practicing the values of accountable and open

government, and respect for the rights of minorities and other democratic values.

It is understood that there exist different and sometimes competing sources of state legitimacy. In many countries elections based on the principle of one person one vote do not guarantee legitimate government. Respect for the rights of minorities and effective and transparent functioning of the government - as well as fairness to all citizens and their inclusion in policy making are the necessary ingredients of the legitimacy of the state. And only when all ingredients of legitimacy are taken together one can expect an effective protection against violent extremism.

There are many aspects of policy making, ranging from security to development of the educational system where the legitimacy of state power represents the most important guarantee of its effectiveness. Importantly, the effectiveness in protection against violent extremism is best achieved in a preventive mode. Prevention and non-coercive means of tackling violent extremism have to be given priority by governments. The main emphasis has to be placed on the contribution of citizenry, men and women alike. Contributions of educators, thought leaders, religious leaders, community groups and the business community have to be mobilized in an effort to develop appropriate long term prevention strategies.

An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure: this time-tested wisdom applies to the countering of violent extremism as much as it applies to other social ills and pathologies.

Understandably, the emphasis on prevention does not diminish the importance of repressive measures – the police, intelligence services and – sometimes – the military. However, when used, these measures must be proportionate to the actual threat and carried out in conformity with domestic and international law.

The majority of acts of violent extremism have their roots in entrenched armed conflicts that have been characterizing much of the time since the adoption of Madrid Agenda a decade ago. In several parts of the world

and in particular in the Middle East fighting has turned into a way of life. The flows of refugees have created populations that can become a fertile ground for further violent extremism.

The entrenched armed conflicts must be stopped. An intensified international effort is needed to break the current political and institutional deadlocks that prevent the resolution of these armed conflicts. Understandably, each armed conflict has its own dynamic, its own protagonists and its own modalities of ending. However, peace is indivisible and the international community must be able to pull its strengths together. The eyes of the world are turned to the United Nations and in particular the UN Security Council, a world body with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN member states have endowed the Security Council with formidable legal powers and an unparalleled international legitimacy. However, these assets imply an unparalleled level of responsibility.

It is high time to reestablish the necessary level of agreement within the UN Security Council. In fact, the deteriorating global security calls for a serious effort to build a global security compact involving all the permanent members of the Security Council. Such a compact would not have to be legally binding. But it will have to include an understanding on the ways to resolve the most acute armed conflicts of our era, in particular those in the Middle East, the global security fault line.

Paradoxically, it is not impossible to define the key components of such an approach. The expectations that a vigorous effort for peace will take place undoubtedly exist. Much good diplomatic work has already been done. Now is the time for political leaders to demonstrate their ability to take decisive steps for the restoration of peace.

Countering violent extremism requires action both at the national and at the international level. Individual efforts will not suffice. Collective efforts are clearly necessary. This is the time for determined multilateral action. And the current global policy dialogue held in Madrid represents a significant contribution in that regard.