

RELEASE IN PART B7(E),B7(F)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**2015-2016 Bureau of Counterterrorism “Partnership Concept”: North Africa****Summary:**

Terrorist organizations affiliated with al-Qa’ida and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are active in North Africa.¹ Continued political instability and violence in Libya have created space for terrorist groups to operate, most notably al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIL’s Libya branch, and limited counterterrorism options. Egypt’s Nile Valley continues to face significant threats from terrorist groups, including from ISIL-Sinai Province, formerly known as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. The region has also given rise to large numbers of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) who have traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight alongside ISIL and the Nusrah Front. Additionally, Libya continues to be a draw for Tunisian fighters. Returning FTFs and locally radicalized individuals pose a significant threat.

Governments in North Africa are committed to addressing terrorism and have significant security sector capabilities, although gaps remain in securing borders, conducting terrorism-related investigations and prosecutions, and addressing drivers of extremism. There are also significant challenges as a result of the continuing insecurity in Libya. In conjunction with the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and working closely with other U.S. government partners, the Bureau of Counterterrorism (CT) will pursue diplomacy, capacity-building programs, and activities to advance the following strategic goals (in no particular order):

1. Deter FTF transit in North Africa, including to and from Libya, by increasing regional information-sharing, watch-listing, and airport security capabilities.
2. Strengthen investigations and evidence-based prosecutions of terrorist operatives, facilitators and networks, including FTFs, in North Africa in a rule of law framework and with respect for human rights.
3. Mitigate future terrorist incidents and hostage-takings in North Africa by building the relevant capacity and cooperation of law enforcement units and first responders, particularly in Egypt and Tunisia.
4. *[Conditional on an improved political and security situation]* Reduce operating space for terrorist networks in Libya over time by establishing core civilian counterterrorism capabilities and partnerships in Libya.
5. Counter violent extremist radicalization and promote rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists through increased partnerships, community outreach, counter-messaging, and online engagement by law enforcement and civil society, particularly in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.
6. Enhance the capacity of Algeria and Morocco to promote civilian counterterrorism capacity in third countries across the Maghreb-Sahel to address evolving terrorist threats.

¹ For the purposes of this paper, “North Africa” encompasses Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

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7. Build the legal and enforcement capacity of law enforcement and financial regulatory institutions in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia to counter terrorist financing, particularly, bulk cash smuggling and money laundering.

Strategic Context and Gaps:

Terrorists affiliated with al-Qa'ida and ISIL, including FTFs and other radicalized individuals, continue to pose a threat to U.S. interests and regional stability across North Africa. Terrorist groups have exploited the instability and violence in Libya to establish safe havens, expand their operations, and to launch attacks against neighboring countries, such as Tunisia. The border between Libya and Tunisia remains porous, enabling the undetected movement of fighters and weapons. In 2015 to date, Tunisia has suffered two high-profile attacks, on the Bardo Museum in Tunis and on a beachside tourist resort in Sousse.

To Libya's east, Egypt also remains vulnerable to terrorism, including threats emanating from Libya and North Sinai. Over the past year, Egypt has witnessed increased attacks in its volatile Sinai region, including activity by ISIL-Sinai Province (IS-Sinai). IS-Sinai, formerly known as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, pledged allegiance to ISIL in November 2014. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] While some of these individuals will die on the battlefield, some have also returned home and more are likely to follow over the coming years.

The United States supports regional and international efforts to restore democratic governance in Libya, and discourages external interference that undermines these goals. The United States is committed to countering terrorist groups in Libya to the extent possible; however, we realize that counterterrorism efforts will continue to have limited effectiveness in the absence of broader stability and political reconciliation. As such, the United States seeks to support UN-led efforts to promote a national unity government that can address Libya's deep security challenges. When political and security conditions allow, significant support will be needed to build core civilian counterterrorism capabilities in Libya, including airport security, protection of critical infrastructure, transparent and credible legal frameworks and institutions, and law enforcement capabilities. At the same time, it remains critical to build the capacity of Libyan municipal councils and community leaders who can help counter the influence of terrorist groups, especially in border regions being transited by FTFs.

The United States is supporting Libya's neighbors to contain and degrade terrorist networks in the region. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Through TSCTP, the United States supports a range of ongoing programs to build the counterterrorism capacity and cooperation of military, law enforcement, and civilian actors across Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia to strengthen border security, deter terrorist transit, and encourage bilateral and regional cooperation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The United States conducts bilateral

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strategic dialogues with Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia to discuss areas for cooperation, including countering evolving terrorist threats.

The radicalization of individuals and flow of FTFs to and from Iraq, Syria, and Libya pose significant, increasing challenges for governments in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt. These countries have taken steps in line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 to address this problem, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Furthermore, criminal justice sector tools alone are insufficient to fully address this problem given its scale and scope. UNSCR 2178 highlights that countries should put in place more effective programs to counter violent extremist radicalization and to rehabilitate and reintegrate returning FTFs and other violent extremists. The White House Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit process has further identified tools for countries in the regions to address the full life cycle of radicalization. The Governments of Algeria and Morocco have considerable experience in this area and ongoing counter-radicalization programming. [REDACTED]

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B7(F)**CT Strategic Goals:**

In accordance with the TSCTP strategic priorities approved by the DAS Sahel-Maghreb Oversight Committee, CT will develop and pursue diplomatic engagements, capacity-building programs, and other activities that advance the following strategic goals.

1. **Deter FTF transit in North Africa, including to and from Libya, by increasing regional information-sharing, watch-listing, and airport security capabilities.** UNSCR 2178 and the GCTF good practices outline a series of actions that governments should take in terms of information-sharing, traveler screening, watch-listing, and security to prevent the flow of FTFs through airports and other major ports of entry. [REDACTED] Through training courses, exercises, regional workshops, and advisory support, CT will seek to build the capacity of [REDACTED] customs and immigration officials to implement traveler screening and aviation security procedures. CT will also seek to promote the installation and use of Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation Systems (PISCES) at airports and other major ports of entry in [REDACTED] to help track, identify, and interdict terrorist travel. CT will also seek to promote the increased exchange of terrorism screening information [REDACTED], and to increase multilateral designations of FTFs from the North Africa region.
2. **Strengthen investigations and evidence-based prosecutions of terrorist operatives, facilitators, and networks, including FTFs, in North Africa in a rule of law framework and with respect for human rights.** UNSCR 2178 and the GCTF good practices outline a series of laws, policies, and practices that governments should adopt to strengthen their counterterrorism legal frameworks, investigations, and capabilities to conduct evidence-based prosecutions. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] In partnership with the Department of Justice, CT will seek to expand training and advisory support to build the capacity of investigators, prosecutors, and judges in the region, especially to handle of FTF-related cases. CT will also seek to enhance the capacity of specialized law enforcement agencies in the region to utilize forensics techniques, analysis, and investigations.
3. **Mitigate future terrorist incidents and hostage-takings in North Africa by building the relevant capacity and cooperation of law enforcement units and first responders,** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Through the Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA)

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program and related efforts, CT will continue to build the institutional and tactical capacity of Tunisian specialized law enforcement counterterrorism units and first responders to conduct critical incident response and management. Additional training for [] crime scene investigators will remain a priority. CT will also continue to pursue efforts to build the capacity of [] law enforcement units on interdicting and countering improvised explosive devices (C-IEDs), including through joint training with Algerian instructors. Working with INL, CT also plans to expand engagement with Egyptian law enforcement agencies on C-IED and broader critical incident response. We are also exploring avenues for increased border security cooperation in Egypt.

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4. ***[Conditional on an improved political and security situation] Reduce operating space for terrorist networks in Libya over time by establishing core civilian counterterrorism capabilities and partnerships in Libya.*** If a political agreement is reached and government of national accord established, the government will need significant assistance to establish security and mitigate exigent terrorist threats. In the event of such a scenario, CT will seek pursue targeted opportunities to fill gaps in securing critical infrastructure, airports, and other ports of entry. Working closely with NEA and USAID, CT will also pursue opportunities to partner with municipal and local actors to counter violent extremist influence and recruitment – with a focus on border communities affected by FTF flows.
5. **Counter violent extremist radicalization and promote rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists through increased partnerships, community outreach, counter-messaging, and online engagement by law enforcement and civil society, particularly in Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.** Partnerships between government, law enforcement, and civil society leaders are critical to address the full spectrum of radicalization. Consistent with the White House CVE Summit action agenda, CT will seek to pursue projects that help law enforcement agencies to partner with community leaders and grassroots organizations to detect and address drivers of radicalization. This includes training law enforcement on CVE techniques, community-oriented policing, and counter-messaging. In conjunction with Hedayah and IIJ, CT will continue to promote efforts by governments and civil society actors to establish rehabilitation and reintegration programs for returning FTFs and former violent extremists.
6. **Enhance the capacity of Algeria and Morocco to promote civilian counterterrorism capacity in third countries across the Maghreb-Sahel to address evolving terrorist threats.** CT will continue to expand dialogue and partnerships with Algeria and Morocco to promote those countries' respective efforts to promote counterterrorism and CVE cooperation across the broader Maghreb and Sahel regions. Utilizing the Trilateral ATA Agreement, CT will enable Moroccan trainers to conduct trainings with Sahelian countries on investigations, critical incident response, and border security. CT will also pursue a similar trilateral arrangement with Algeria to utilize its expertise in key areas, such as forensics and C-IED.

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7. **Build the legal and enforcement capacity of law enforcement and financial regulatory institutions in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia to counter terrorist financing, particularly bulk cash smuggling and money laundering.** Through the work of the Department of Justice Resident Legal Advisors in Algeria and Morocco, CT will continue to work to strengthen legal frameworks to counter terrorist financing and money laundering. CT will continue to develop the capacity of financial intelligence units and other financial regulatory institutions in the region to conduct investigations and collaborate with law enforcement agencies. CT will also continue efforts to promote regional cooperation and capacity to detect and deter bulk cash smuggling, including activities related to kidnappings for ransom (KFRs). Algeria continues to be a critical ally and regional leader in seeking to address the KFR problem.

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Annex: Recent and Ongoing CT and Related State/USAID Programs**Current CT Programs:**

(SBU) Over recent years, CT has funded major programs in the following areas:

- Critical Incident Response and Counterterrorism Investigations:** Through the Antiterrorism Assistance program and Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, CT has supported law enforcement training across the region to build critical incident response and investigations capabilities. [redacted] B7(E)
[redacted] B7(F)
- Border Security (Land, Maritime, and Airport):** Through ATA, CT has funded bilateral land, maritime, and airport border security courses across the region. CT is also currently funding [redacted] to identify border security problems and develop regional solutions in [redacted] and a full-time advisor with ICITAP in [redacted]. We are in discussions with the [redacted] on an information sharing agreement, and hope to engage the [redacted] in the near future. B7(F)
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- Preventing and Responding to KFRs:** Under the auspices of the GCTF, CT has funded regional conferences and workshops on countering hostage-taking and kidnapping by terrorists. CT is providing funding to [redacted] B7(F)
[redacted] to facilitate a series of training workshops for Sahel and Maghreb countries on implementing the GCTF *Algiers Memorandum on Good Practices for Preventing and Denying the Benefits of Kidnapping for Ransom by Terrorist (Algiers Memorandum.)*
- CVE Training for Civil Society:** CT is funding a project that will engage [redacted] civil society and government officials in the effort to counter FTF recruitment. CT has also funded an ongoing CVE project focused on religious leader engagement in [redacted] B7(E)
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- Strengthening CT Legal Frameworks/Countering Terrorist Financing:** CT funds RLAs in [redacted]
[redacted] In previous fiscal years, CT has also supported ad-hoc trainings on interdicting cash couriers and seizing terrorist financing assets implemented by DHS and FBI in [redacted] CT is supporting training and consultations to strengthen [redacted] Financial Intelligence Unit.
- Strengthening Regional Capacity Building Leadership and Partnerships:** Through the ATA program, CT is training [redacted] law enforcement to build capacity in neighboring Maghreb and Sahel countries related to critical incident management, border security, and counterterrorism investigations. CT is hoping for a similar arrangement with [redacted] C-IED and forensic capacity.

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- CT Fusion Center: CT funds have enabled the [] government to establish an interagency counterterrorism fusion center to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents while also breaking down stove-piping between [] government agencies.

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Related Department of State and USAID Programs:

- DOD: DOD plans to provide significant assistance to enhance border security and surveillance []
[]
- INL: INL works in []
[]
- ISN: [] the EXBS program trains border guards in tactics and techniques for patrolling the border, manning border security checkpoints, conducting small unit tactics, examining and interviewing travelers. EXBS is also active in [] EXBS occasionally provides border surveillance equipment.
- USAID: USAID engages in macroeconomic growth in [] has a broad youth development program associated with the [] and has a large program in [] focused on at-risk youth. USAID/OTI also has an active program supporting community resilience []

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