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## Key Issue Definition of Countering Violent Extremism[1]

Countering violent extremism (CVE) refers to actions intended to reduce the ability of violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to change the conditions that are conducive to the spread of violent extremist recruitment and radicalization of individuals or communities. CVE is a critical component of a comprehensive and sustainable counterterrorism strategy.

CVE programming attempts to break the life cycle of recruitment and radicalization to violence and to build community resilience against the broader spread of violent extremism, including in areas where violent extremists are actively seeking to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize individuals to violence.

To advance the goals outlined in the Department and USAID's CVE Strategy, CVE Programming focuses on four areas: Research, Prevention, Intervention, and Rehabilitation & Reintegration.

1. **Research**: Understanding the drivers of violent extremism at the global, regional, and local levels, and determining the most effective interventions to address those drivers including how to measure and explain programmatic effectiveness;
2. **Prevention**: Mitigating identified drivers of violent extremism, including expanding government, civil society, and community capacity to utilize tools that reduce vulnerability to violent extremist radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization;
3. **Intervention**: Countering violent extremist messaging and recruitment tactics as well as providing positive alternatives, narratives, and/or "off-ramps" for individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence; and
4. **Rehabilitation/Reintegration**: Establishing policies and programs to promote the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists, including those in prisons.

CVE programming, or broader programs with CVE components, must be intentionally focused on violent extremism – and should focus particularly on preventing and/or intervening in radicalization and recruitment to violence. Such programs should meet the following criteria:

1. Be focused on a particular geographic region and/or population segment identified as susceptible to violent extremism, and
2. Have an explicit objective addressing one or more drivers of violent extremism. This explicit objective should be expressed through a program or a specific component of a larger program designed based on an assessment or analysis of the drivers of violent extremism that impact the particular geographic region or population segment.

As highlighted by the White House CVE Summit process in 2015, preventing the growth and spread of violent extremism requires a comprehensive approach that involves national and local governments, international organizations, civil society, religious leaders, the private sector and

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[1] The Director of Foreign Assistance (F) will use this "independent key issue" definition to track State and USAID's CVE assistance.

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affected communities. The White House CVE Summit Action Agenda, described in Appendix 2, provides further details on specific work-streams to advance CVE goals.

Illustrative examples of CVE programming include:

- Programs to build the capacity of civil society and community leaders, especially youth, women, and religious leaders, to counter violent extremist radicalization and recruitment in their communities;
- Programs to promote conflict mitigation and promote dialogue among communities susceptible to violent extremist radicalization and recruitment;
- Programs to provide targeted groups of youth with vocational and civic opportunities that reduce the attraction of violent extremism;
- Programs to provide educational and social service providers in key countries with tools to address drivers of violent extremist ideology;
- Programs to amplify the voices of victims and survivors of terrorism, as well as former violent extremists, and bolster community and media platforms to counter violent extremist messaging and to promote positive alternative narratives;
- Programs to help civilian law enforcement officials to develop positive relationships, trust, improved performance and access to justice, and effective communications with the communities most susceptible to violent extremism; and
- Programs to help corrections officials recognize and counter recruitment of other prisoners by violent extremists in their facilities, to implement evidence-based prison management practices that mitigate the risk posed by imprisoned violent extremists, and to expand efforts to promote rehabilitation and reintegration.