



RELEASE IN FULL

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Clarke  
Ellis, Senior Reviewer

## The White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism Follow-on Action Agenda

September 15, 2015

This non-binding Action Agenda was developed during and refined in the months following the White House Summit. It reflects the inputs from many of those government and non-government stakeholders who participated in the Summit or relevant follow-on activities, but does not necessarily reflect the views of all such stakeholders. This document includes a non-exhaustive list of voluntary steps stakeholders may wish to take to address the challenge of violent extremism at the local, national, regional, or international level as part of a wider effort to implement the comprehensive framework that the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy offers for addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The Action Agenda recognizes the central role of the UN in efforts to address violent extremism and that all such efforts should comply with international law in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law, as well as with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. The document will be presented by the co-chairs of the Rome Senior Officials' Check-In Meeting to the UN CTITF as a co-chairs' contribution to the development of the UN's plan of action on preventing violent extremism, which is expected to be presented to the General Assembly in November.

## **Action Agenda Item 1: Promoting Local Research and Information-Sharing on the Drivers of Violent Extremism**

Over the past decade, much of the research on terrorist radicalization and recruitment has focused on individuals or societies, leaving gaps in our ability to fully understand what drives violent extremism in specific, localized contexts. There is growing recognition that the factors contributing to particular communities' vulnerability or resilience to violent extremism are contextual, and that efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism will be more effective if tailored to those specific factors. Deeper research is therefore needed to understand the factors that enable or prevent the spread of violent extremism at the community level. Greater insight into these drivers will allow us to design more effective interventions.

Governments and the broader international community can a) do more to encourage and carry out research that will help us understand what makes communities vulnerable to violent extremism; b) support national and sub-national authorities to identify neighborhoods or communities at the sub-national level and within cities that are at risk of radicalization to violence; c) study the factors that drive violent extremism within these specific communities, along with the potential impact of possible responses; d) develop networks to ensure that first-hand practical experiences with local radicalization are broadly shared with local research organizations, municipalities, other first-line practitioners and (national) policymakers; and e) develop better international, regional, national and local tools with which to monitor and evaluate the results and impact of progress aimed at addressing violent extremism.

This is not simply a matter of creating research capacity from scratch, but about better utilizing, supporting, and connecting the existing knowledge base, particularly among (local) experts; expanding the pool of local CVE practitioners and researchers; encouraging inter-disciplinary approaches involving teams of economists, political scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, communications and marketing experts as well as others that are involved; and ensuring that both academic findings and practical experience are widely shared within the local, national and international field.

*Hedayah*, based in Abu Dhabi, UAE, is taking the first step towards this goal through its research unit, which can serve as a resource hub for practitioners and experts. It held a major CVE research conference, and it plans to build in-house capacity to conduct research to complement governmental and academic efforts.

Through its non-resident fellowship program, *Hedayah* is also starting to develop a small field-based network of local researchers.

To enhance these research efforts, which will also facilitate more effective and targeted interventions against violent extremism, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Encouraging relevant academic and research institutions to focus more attention on studying the drivers of violent extremism and facilitating the wide sharing of this research.
- Investing in network(s) to enhance the availability of practical knowledge of and experience with local extremism from first-line practitioners (teachers, doctors, community leaders, municipal officers) for (local) researchers and policy makers.
- Mentoring local researchers and providing financial and/or in-kind support for their efforts.
- Supporting small, multi-disciplinary networks of in-country researchers – from local universities, civil society organizations, survey firms, and government agencies – to identify and address gaps in understanding of the drivers of violent extremism within communities at risk.
- Complementing *Hedayah*'s nascent research network to identify and address research gaps; catalyze local efforts to identify critical CVE needs; and mobilize the necessary expertise and resources to address such needs.
- Supporting the creation of an online platform for researchers working on drivers of radicalization, which could be used to compile a set of best practices on this extremely localized research, and compile appropriate data-sets on those who have been radicalized to violence, with a central library or website to make these resources available to communities, front-line practitioners, governments, think tanks, and academic institutions.
- Sponsoring multi-disciplinary research on community-level support of, or resilience to, violent extremism, to enhance our understanding of why some communities resort to violence when faced with pressures to do so; how and why some communities choose to reject violent extremism; what types of targeted interventions could boost such resiliencies; and where opportunities exist to prevent radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.
- Organizing an international research conference on the margins of the leaders' summit against violent extremism in New York in September 2015 to a) highlight innovative research on the drivers of violent extremism and field-tested efforts to prevent and counter it; and b) identify existing

effective community-level approaches to resist and address drivers of violent extremism and how these can be further strengthened through outside support and c) share good practices that are collected in the past months on how the link between the local, national and international level can be further strengthened. The conference also would provide an opportunity to build cross- and/or regional networks of civil society leaders and organizations who are working in their own country and community to prevent and counter violent extremism; to facilitate the sharing of relevant experiences and best practices; and to support efforts to minimize violent extremism.

- Participating in Hedayah's annual CVE Research Conference in December 2015 to a) build on the network facilitated by the research conference on the margins of the leaders' summit in New York in September, b) strengthen existing research partnerships and create synergies between researchers, practitioners and policymakers and c) showcase the latest cutting-edge research in CVE (including preliminary results from ongoing projects). This annual Hedayah CVE Research Conference will be the first major milestone after the leaders' summit in the research Agenda Item, and keep the momentum of the leaders' summit moving forward by facilitating a regular, yearly research event.

## **Action Agenda Item 2: Civil Society, including the Role of Women and Youth in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism**

Women's role in preventing and countering violent extremism is understudied, though a vital element to understand in order to effectively address violent extremism. We know—and must recognize—that women are partners in prevention and response, as well as agents of change. They play a role in detecting early signs of radicalization and in staving it off. They can help delegitimize narratives.

Unemployed, marginalized, and sometimes impoverished young women and men are more vulnerable to being recruited into violent extremism. However, we have also seen radicalization of young individuals that are seemingly well-integrated, coming from comfortable backgrounds, and succeeding in education and other programs. Youth radicalization and recruitment is often based on social bonding, success or failure in schools - rather than ideology. Youth without the opportunity to discuss or constructively act on their needs for identity or a sense of alienation within their families, several friendships, homes, communities or countries may turn to violent extremist groups to find recognition, fellowship, and identity. Youth may join these violent extremist groups because they offer economic incentives, the sense of belonging, as well as empowerment a sense of adventure and a sense of helping others. Providing youth with opportunities to build positive identities through community engagement, civic participation and livelihoods can provide alternatives to violent extremism.

GCERF, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, is a public-private partnership that will support local, community-level initiatives in an effort to build resilience to violent extremist agendas. GCERF is the first global fund operating at the nexus of security and development. It is anticipated that GCERF funds will support grass-roots, civil society-focused initiatives to empower women and youth and provide them with positive alternatives and opportunities.

Independent civil society organizations, including human rights monitoring and promotion organizations, have an essential role to play in preventing and countering violent extremism. For example, they offer venues for non-violent exchanges and other discussion on social, religious, economic, and political issues; provide platforms where peaceful narratives to violent extremism can develop and take root; report impartially on the crimes and violations perpetrated by violent extremists, thereby helping to diminish their popular appeal; and bring a degree of accountability to the actions of law enforcement and other security forces, thereby

helping to prevent human rights violations that can be a driver of violent extremism.

The Sahel and the Horn of Africa Working Groups of the GCTF have taken initiatives to convene local civil society organizations and governments to develop a series of concrete ideas for action to enhance community resilience and counter violent extremism in their own sub-regions. Both of the following documents provide concrete ideas for states, nongovernment organizations and other partners to undertake on their own and together to address the challenge of violent extremism in ways that are appropriate to the local contexts of each region. ([www.globalcenter.org/publications/countering-violent-extremism-and-promoting-community-engagement-in-west-africa-and-the-sahel-an-action-agenda](http://www.globalcenter.org/publications/countering-violent-extremism-and-promoting-community-engagement-in-west-africa-and-the-sahel-an-action-agenda); [www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/HoA\\_Action\\_Agenda\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/HoA_Action_Agenda_Low_Res.pdf))

Building off of complementary initiatives, such as the UN's current leadership in bridging the preventing and countering violent extremism and the Women, Peace, and Security agendas, and multilateral mechanisms designed to promote and protect the role of independent civil society, including human rights defenders, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Supporting further analytic research and domestic programming on women's roles in preventing and countering violent extremism, including through partnerships between and among government, local or regional civil society and educational institutions, and the private sector.
- Working with stakeholders, including through the UN, EU, Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, *Hedayah*, GCERF, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), to continue to develop good practices on integrating women and gender into responses to violent extremism and to develop good practices on the role of youth in addressing violent extremism.
- Designing and implementing programs to engage youth in civic education, community service and local peace building initiatives to help lessen susceptibility to recruitment and radicalization to violence.
- Developing practical tools for youth to enhance their capacity to participate in open and constructive debate on civic concerns to provide an alternative for violent extremism as a vehicle for change.
- Designing and implementing programs to engage independent civil society organizations, including human rights organizations, in addressing violent extremism.

- Developing independent associations of victims of terrorism and violent extremism that represent, support, and empower victims and survivors.
- Strengthening independent civil society, including by ensuring that independent civil society organizations enjoy the basic freedoms of expression, assembly, and association that they need to maximize their contribution to efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism.
- Building the capacity of independent human rights defenders to hold security forces accountable and to report impartially on the crimes and violations committed by violent extremists.
- Developing or expanding economic empowerment and livelihood initiatives for youth susceptible to radicalization to violence; such efforts could include mentoring, access to capital, enhancing access to education, employment search support, and job-matching, thus offering alternative perspectives for youth susceptible to radicalization.
- Convening government officials with women and youth leaders in policy dialogues to develop and execute inclusive strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism among susceptible populations. For example, this could involve the creation of local security and peace committees that include civil society organizations, women's groups, youth groups, market associations, and other relevant community representatives in order to enhance engagement between local communities and governments.
- Identifying and sharing successful models of inclusive strategies against violent extremism.
- Amplifying efforts of the many creative young people who are pushing back against extremist ideologies that are taking hold in their communities.
- Building cross- and/or sub-regional networks of youth leaders who are working in their own community to prevent and counter violent extremism; the network would facilitate the sharing of relevant experiences and best practices among young people, and support efforts to expand their impact in the CVE space.
- Building and strengthening cross- and/or sub-regional networks of civil society organizations, including those promoting the protection of human rights, to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices to expand contributions to preventing and countering violent extremism by advancing human rights.

### **Action Agenda Item 3: Strengthening Community-Police and Community-Security Force Relations as Ingredients for Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism**

Security forces—including police and militaries—have the responsibility to provide security and protect the human rights of civilians. When security forces either fail to provide adequate services and protection, or actively violate these rights, they may create or fuel existing grievances, which could be exploited by violent extremists—whether through recruitment and radicalization or through creating the need for civilians to seek protection, justice, and dignity elsewhere. Grievances arising from perceived violations of human rights by security forces may be a driver of radicalization and recruitment. In fact, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (<http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml>) includes the lack of rule of law and violations of human rights as two of the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. A lack of accountability for such abuses, a lack of access to justice for victims, a lack of due process for the accused, and corruption within the security sector also fuel community grievances that may become a factor pushing individuals towards violent extremism.

Thus, ensuring that security forces respect human rights, build strong relations with the communities they protect, and when needed, reorient their organizations to support community-oriented policing, may contribute to prevent the spread of violent extremism, thereby reducing the terrorist threat.

Building on relevant existing efforts, including those of the UN, Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and relevant regional organizations, the international community should, *inter alia*, consider:

- Providing technical assistance to governments to improve institutional safeguards for prevention, independent oversight, and accountability for abuses by police and other security forces, including those engaged in counterterrorism activities.
- Ensuring that relevant capacity building efforts balance enhanced prosecutorial and investigative capacity with improvements in access to justice and respect for the rights of the accused.
- Ensuring that communities have a secure, trusted, accessible, and responsive mechanism for reporting on the conduct and misconduct of security forces.



- Facilitating open, regular and inclusive dialogue between at-risk communities and security forces, including, where appropriate, through a mediating role from civil society organizations to constructively address grievances and build trust. Platforms for dialogue might include regular community meetings, dialogue with key agents of change in communities, etc., and should include all sectors of society, women and youth.
- Developing national and regional border policies and practices that incorporate and engage with local border communities to maintain security, while emphasizing inclusion and empowerment of such communities.
- Convening a multinational, multi-stakeholder, technical working group comprised of independent experts to systematically explore the relationship between security force-community relations and the prevalence of violent extremism. Through an examination of common practice, empirical research, case study, and through dialogue, the technical group would provide a set of principles and recommendations for practitioners, public officials, civil society, and the development community. This working group would meet independently within the next three months and, resources permitting, on the margins of selected follow-on regional CVE summits and other relevant events.
- Expanding efforts to educate government officials and security sector practitioners regarding the negative impact of human rights violations on efforts to address violent extremism and national security more broadly and that enhanced respect for human rights will strengthen rather than weaken national security.
- Tailoring police and security force trainings to emphasize and streamline respect for human rights and positive community engagement as part of a standard of professionalization, and undertaking monitoring and evaluation of these trainings to evaluate effectiveness; building on existing community policing training courses for CVE, including those developed by Hedayah and the US Institute of Peace, as well as the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other relevant multilateral bodies or platforms.
- Developing internal investigation units that review the security sector's enforcement activities and ensure they are in line with established law and procedures, including on the proper use of force.
- Holding accountable security force officials that are found to be responsible for human rights abuses.

- Building law enforcement skills to engage, build relationships, and work with communities at risk of radicalization.
- Supporting law enforcement collaboration with religious, social service, education and youth ministries on CVE pilot initiatives and programming.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Promoting the Counter-narrative and Weakening the Legitimacy of Violent Extremist Messaging**

The international community has recognized that violent extremist recruiters are combining new information technologies and platforms with traditional outreach to connect across borders enabling them to reach younger, more susceptible segments of society. Identifying and scaling up effective strategies and techniques to offer an inclusive narrative to counter violent extremist messaging is therefore an essential element of a comprehensive strategy for addressing the violent extremist challenge. In order to support messaging that is effective and credible, the international community should also promote the media freedom and critical thinking skills upon which that credibility depends.

Current narrative messaging approaches and activities should be expanded and improved upon to ensure they are effective in dealing with the evolving violent extremism in areas of conflict and within susceptible populations. Greater emphasis should be put on community-level interventions that are responsive to the needs of specific vulnerable populations and the identification of new, credible and authentic partners in governments, the private sector, and civil society. Lessons learned should be shared so that scarce resources are effectively prioritized and results are measured. To further advance and sharpen our response to this critical challenge, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Supporting credible voices, diverse local allies and potential partners to develop and disseminate their own messages and inclusive narratives, and/or to amplify existing ones; reflecting in narrative strategies the reality that the messages of radical groups are effective because they articulate a compelling cause or problem (e.g. humanitarian suffering in Syria, regime injustices, alienation from society). Alternative narratives must therefore recognize and validate these concerns in the process of laying out constructive, non-violent options for engagement and activism around these same issues.
- Institutionalizing and scaling up Internet and web-based engagement efforts to help peaceful religious, community, youth, and women leaders to undermine the brand of violent extremist organizations that communicate and network in online spaces; these efforts could be linked with traditional media CVE efforts to create cross-platform campaigns.
- Expanding digital media strategies to more quickly and better share inclusive narratives through SMS, social media or text-messaging to interactively engage with vulnerable youth who communicate through

mobile networks, mobile apps, and social media communication tools, as well as popular local technologies.

- Engaging proactively with educational institutions that offer at risk-youth opportunities and provide critical-thinking skills and trainings as alternatives to violent extremist and radicalism.
- Encouraging local and regional media, civil society, and private sector partners to engage women and youth in devising effective inclusive narrative campaigns, including through social media, radio and billboards.
- Engaging the entertainment industry to discuss how to support community efforts to discuss the narratives of violent extremist groups, to undermine these narratives and develop and distribute their own, positive narratives and encourage them to develop appropriate narratives in mainstream entertainment, including dramas, reality shows, comedies, and public events.
- Engaging philanthropic foundations to identify how they could fund community-led initiatives that build resilience, provide opportunities, and counter terrorist narratives.
- Bringing together technology companies and related industry groups to address their role in addressing terrorists' use of television, radio, digital media and social networking platforms.
- Providing platforms to facilitate innovative working relationships and interactions between relevant stakeholders, including CVE policymakers, practitioners and academics—but also communications experts, technology companies/experts, and media specialists—to develop and fine-tune better counter and alternative narratives. For example, this might include modeling programs after the “HedayahHack” at the GCTF/Hedayah Global CVE Exposition in December 2014, the “Hackabout on the margins of the Sydney Regional CVE Summit, and the “CVE Lab” on the margins of the Nairobi Regional CVE Summit.
- Supporting credible efforts to develop and disseminate to communities at risk of being susceptible to propaganda and violent extremist messaging information explaining the mainstream, non-violent interpretation of religious texts that are frequently misquoted by violent extremist groups.
- Spreading the message in communities susceptible to violent extremist messaging that supporting violent extremism, including by joining terrorist groups abroad, is a criminal acts, not an act of heroism or religious piety.
- Working through the Global Counterterrorism Forum's CVE Working Group and other relevant multilateral platforms to develop and disseminate CVE communications good practices.
- Expanding multilateral efforts to counter violent extremist messaging through better coordination among governments, civil society leaders, and

private sector partners to promote joint messaging projects and programming.

- Supporting programs that produce and disseminate the history of peace and tolerance among faiths and cultures.
- Developing and expanding on Hedayah's collection of open-source counter-narratives to include more nuanced, locally-focused narratives from all regions of the world.

### **Action Agenda Item 5: Promoting Educational Approaches to Build Resilience to Violent Extremism**

Educators exert considerable influence by shaping the views and skills of the next generation, as well as helping to set society's broader norms. UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (September 2014), urges governments to adopt comprehensive approaches to countering violent extremism – including “empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders” and highlighting “the role education can play in offering inclusive narratives.” Education and youth-based approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism draw on established areas of education – such as civic education, critical thinking and life skills – and adapt these practices for these objectives. Inclusive education contributes to the prevention of alienation and as such strengthens social bonding.

In recent years, a number of countries have implemented education-based reforms to improve overall pedagogy and learning, as well as the specific goal of building children and youth’s resilience to violent-extremist ideas and ideology.

Multilaterally, we also have made some progress. The GCTF’s Ankara Memorandum, for example, underscores the importance of developing a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the violent extremist challenge. It emphasizes the need to work across sectors and highlights the important role of education in this effort. The GCTF’s Abu Dhabi Memorandum captures specific good practices on the role of education in CVE and the follow-on Action Plan on Education and CVE provides examples of existing programming integrating some of these good practices.. Attention could be given to undertaking a stocktaking of implementation of the good practices in these framework documents. At the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly, the OIC-sponsored resolution on combating intolerance, also known as Resolution 16/18, calls for, among other things, the creation of collaborative networks for constructive action on education and conflict prevention. It calls specifically for a “global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs.”

In addition to the Istanbul Process series of meetings that focuses on highlighting best practices for implementing Resolution 16/18, the conclusions and recommendations of the Rabat Plan of Action, launched by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in February 2013, can also serve as a complementary guide for efforts to tackle the most serious forms of intolerance and hatred. At the same time, it is worth recalling that the UN Human Rights

Council and General Assembly adopted parallel resolutions on “freedom of religion or belief” by consensus.

At regional level, the Council of Europe, for example, recently called for the development and utilization of tools for education for democratic citizenship, intercultural education and history teaching, in order to increase the capacity of societies to reject all forms of extremism. In addition, the European Union’s Radicalisation Awareness Network’s (RAN) PREVENT Working Group has developed a Manifesto titled “Empowering Educators and Schools” aimed at outlining principles for ministries of education investing in CVE efforts within the European context which was endorsed in March 2015 by the Ministers of Education in the EU.

Building on these and other efforts, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Ensuring inclusive education for all children and young people which combats racism and discrimination on any ground promotes citizenship and teaches understanding and acceptance of differences of opinion, conviction, belief, and lifestyle, while respecting the rule of law, diversity, and gender equality.
- Strengthening the key contribution which education makes to personal development, social inclusion and participation, by imparting the fundamental values and principles which constitute the foundation of societies.
- Providing technical assistance to governments interested in developing education and youth-based strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism.
- Strengthening government and civil society cognizance of the deleterious effects of intolerance and the benefits of inter-communal collaboration and mutual support on countering violent extremism and conflict prevention.
- Expanding existing CVE-related capacity-building programs for educators in order to encourage buy-in from the education sector, raise awareness and develop knowledge of CVE among educators, and build programmatic capacity of educational organizations in CVE.
- Designing and implementing pilot programs and extracurricular activities drawing on civic education, critical thinking, social and cultural diversity, diversity or interreligious training, life skills and other education approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism.

- Training youth to serve as positive mentors to their peer school groups in geographic areas of radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism.
- Training teachers and other professionals to recognize signals of worrisome behavior, amongst which signals of radicalization and how to effectively deal with them.
- Providing opportunities for professional dialogue amongst teachers: for example creation of a toolbox and courses on how to broach difficult topics, keep lines of dialogue open, foster productive classroom debate, counter false narratives online in particular on social media and encourage critical thinking and media literacy.
- Fostering an inclusive environment while exposing students to credible voices and suggesting alternative ways to support civilians in conflict areas.
- Supporting teachers, victims/survivors of terrorism and former violent extremists to collaborate on radicalization awareness and prevention efforts in schools, youth groups and similar settings and provide through inclusive education opportunities in life to all.
- Working with universities to develop curricula and implement training programs for teachers, religious leaders and youth leaders in approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism; universities can serve as institutions where such efforts can be sustained over time.
- Supporting efforts to highlight scholarship, education, and career opportunities as clear alternatives to violent extremist ideas and narratives.
- Working with families and social networks to promote respect for the larger community as an enabler of societal harmony and stability. Involving parents of at-risk youth in school programs, and involving educators with families and communities to reinforce programming at schools.
- Coordinating and developing high quality educational materials promoting pluralism, citizenship, and societal competencies that advance international standards on human rights.
- Supporting efforts to establish and expand an evidence-base for educational programs in the CVE space through research investigating the role of formal and informal education in preventing radicalization and recruitment.
- Gathering information on the different ongoing and planned programs and initiatives aimed at empowering and amplifying nonviolent religious voices and making this information more widely accessible.
- Socializing relevant good practices, such as the GCTF's Ankara Memorandum and Abu Dhabi Memorandum, amongst policymakers and practitioners across multiple sectors including the education, development and security sectors



## **Action Agenda Item 6: Enhancing Access to Mainstream Religious Knowledge**

Terrorist organizations and movements frequently take advantage of the fact that those they target for recruitment and indoctrination often have little to no grounding in mainstream religious knowledge. They are therefore able to convince impressionable young people of their highly unconventional interpretations of religious teachings. There is therefore a need to increase access to contemporary forms of pluralistic ideology that counteracts the distortions, decontextualized sound-bites, and violent extremist interpretations circulating at the hands of radical groups.

This work-stream will focus particular attention on the role of civil society organizations, academic institutions, foundations, and other non-governmental groups to significantly raise the profile and presence of voices that represent mainstream religious knowledge.

There are a number of concrete steps that the international community and governments should consider, inter alia:

- Providing media training to mainstream religious scholars and associated educational/outreach institutions, including social media and other online platforms. The goal here is to help purveyors of non-violence and tolerance to compete more effectively in the crowded online marketplace of ideas.
- Building the capacity in institutions of religious higher education that will promote non-violence in the exchange of ideas and education: through exchange programs, distance learning initiatives and other forms of international partnership, provide the technical assistance and resources that institutions of religious learning promoting non-violence require to compete effectively and attract students.
- Encourage states to provide security for proponents of peace and tolerance. This should be matched with justice and accountability for those who seek to silence constructive voices through intimidation and violence.
- Preserving the heritage of cultural and religious diversity. In settings such as Afghanistan, Mali, Yemen, Syria and Iraq, terrorist groups have sought to destroy manuscripts and religious sites that embody legacies of pluralism and tolerance. By actively working to preserve this heritage, we preserve the cultural infrastructure of diversity and tolerance. This line of effort will bring together philanthropic organizations, archaeologists, and historians to establish mechanisms for responding to acts of destruction against cultural

sites committed by extremist groups.

## **Action Agenda Item 7: Preventing Radicalization in Prisons and Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Violent Extremists**

UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (September 2014), urges governments to adopt comprehensive approaches to countering violent extremism – encouraging them to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF), where possible and appropriate. With many of the thousands of FTFs participating and potentially returning home in the years ahead, this charge to broaden our collective efforts beyond military, law enforcement, and intelligence approaches is timely and essential, as many returning FTFs will not be able to be prosecuted. Of note are also fighters who are disengaging from conflicts in East and West Africa and the Sahel or who disengaged from conflicts in Colombia and Northern Ireland; their successful reintegration into their communities is vital to enhancing peace and security in the relevant region. There is also growing recognition of the need for rehabilitation and reintegration programs for incarcerated violent extremists, many of whom will be released in the next several years. It is also well understood that prisons can serve as hotbeds of radicalization – and that steps need to be taken to address this phenomenon.

The international community has made some progress on these issues in recent years. Multilateral bodies, in particular the UN Inter-Regional Crime Research Institute (UNICRI), the GCTF and, increasingly, governments and civil society are engaged. Communities and governments are testing innovative approaches, including “diversion” programming that intervenes with at-risk individuals before they commit potentially criminal acts. Recognizing that it will not be feasible to prosecute every returning FTF, governments are also developing capabilities to reintegrate FTF into broader society, drawing in part from good practices articulated in GCTF’s Rome Memorandum and its The Hague-Marrakesh Memorandum. In mid-2014, Australia and Indonesia launched the GCTF Detention and Reintegration Working Group and in the fall of 2014 Morocco and The Netherlands launched the GCTF’s FTF Working Group, while the UN and GCTF jointly launched a reintegration/FTF work-stream at Rome in late 2014 to explore, develop and test new approaches to reintegration of those who are never incarcerated, as well as, in many instances, their family members. Lessons may potentially also be drawn from experiences with post-conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs.

There are a number of concrete other steps that the international community and governments should consider, *inter alia*:

- Developing domestic programs designed to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders, in which specific attention is dedicated to reintegration of former suspects of extremist behavior and recognizing that it is not one-size-fits-all.
- Developing domestic programs designed to facilitate the reintegration of returning FTFs and their families – in accordance with UNSCR 2178 – and sharing data and lessons learned.
- Developing risk assessment tools for prison staff, accompanied by a support system to minimize the risk of causing cultural misunderstandings or human rights violations and assist in recognizing differences between cultural/religious and violent extremist behavior.
- Designing different regimes for different detainees that allow for individually tailored programs, based on risk assessment, mental health, psychological disorders, and the indictment and/or court ruling.
- Sponsoring regional workshops to explore reintegration good practices, drawing on the resources of the full range of governments, as well as civil society, and mapping a way forward.
- Drawing upon successful approaches to raising awareness of the need to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders in order to sensitize stakeholders to their potentially key roles in reintegrating FTFs.
- Supporting the expansion of the platform, hosted by AVE, that would connect disillusioned FTFs willingness to share their stories with communities vulnerable to violent extremist messages.
- Gaining a better understanding of why formers disengage, which is a key element of building more effective exit and other reintegration programs.
- Providing technical assistance to governments expressing a desire to develop safe, secure, humane, and transparent detention and prison operations and effective rehabilitation and reintegration programming.
- Sponsoring, whether domestically or as part of capacity-building assistance to another government, programs designed to help FTFs exit terrorist groups. This could include expanding on the pilot training program under development by the International Institute of Justice and Rule of Law (IIJ) and Hedayah to facilitate national strategies, programs and projects for reintegration of FTFs for national and sub-national government officials. The Hedayah-IIJ training curricula will focus on the nexus between criminal justice responses and CVE responses for returning FTFs.
- Contributing good practices and lessons learned developed at the national level, as well as relevant research, to regional and global workshops.

### **Agenda Item 8: Identifying Political and Economic Opportunities for Communities Vulnerable to Radicalization and Recruitment to Violent Extremism**

Political and economic factors can leave certain communities or individuals susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by violent extremists, who in turn often leverage these factors in their efforts. When such groups are economically or socially marginalized, suffer from poor or abusive governance, or are denied basic services, the resulting grievances may leave them susceptible to radicalizing and recruiting narratives.

Terrorist organizations can move in to fill the void—providing services, governance, and, importantly, a sense of belonging, dignity, and identity. Terrorist organizations use economic incentives to help recruit unemployed or underemployed individuals from poor and marginalized areas. In addition, these organizations often offer the promise of a political voice to those individuals who feel excluded from formal political processes or face structural discrimination. Yet, poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, and discrimination alone do not necessarily lead to recruitment and radicalization. Other push and pull factors often accompany political and economic drivers to make communities more vulnerable to radical narratives.

Economic and political drivers are context-specific, and vary within and among communities, countries and regions. These drivers can include: limited employment opportunities, lack of access to educational systems, or lack of representation in government. Political and economic drivers may be issues amenable to local solutions, such as increasing input into local decision-making, or expanding the job market, or they may require a more systemic solution, like responding to rampant corruption, ineffective market regulation, lack of government capacity, or a lack of social protection and insufficient educational standards.

To provide appropriate political and economic opportunities that can prevent or counter violent extremism in vulnerable communities, a focused approach must be used. This requires leveraging available research, current best practices, and on-the-ground knowledge to feed into the design of appropriate programming. In addition, pilot interventions can be used to test assumptions and learn lessons on effective opportunities to stem recruitment and radicalization.

With the above in mind, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Providing financial or in-kind contributions to mechanisms like GCERF that support indigenous civil society organizations implementing locally-relevant political and economic activities designed to address the drivers of radicalization and recruitment.
- Supporting partners working with at-risk communities to develop approaches to mitigate political and economic drivers tailored to their communities.
- Encouraging partners to consider implications of political and economic policies on the violent extremist phenomena and explore ways to mitigate their negative implications in ways that address these drivers. This might include revising discriminatory laws, policies and practices in order to increase political, economic, and social inclusion of marginalized groups at risk of radicalization and recruitment
- Encouraging partners to focus on equitable service provision.
- Conducting and sharing evaluations of political and economic interventions to refine approaches to ensure these drivers are being addressed.
- Piloting technical and vocational education and training, job matching, and other jobs programming and initiatives that specifically target populations at risk of radicalization and recruitment, including strategies for engaging local business communities, for example in easing school-to-work transitions.
- Encouraging governments to offer skills training and job opportunities to disengaged or disengaging fighters and former violent extremists released from prisons who are a vulnerable population.
- Developing public messaging that accounts for popular political, economic, and social grievances and is solution oriented.
- Supporting local entrepreneurship initiatives that could focus on providing training in basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, including in business administration and management, which could improve the livelihoods of communities while strengthening their sense of empowerment and management.
- Addressing prolonged, unresolved conflicts.

### **Action Agenda Item 9: Development Assistance and Stabilization Efforts to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism**

International development donors provide considerable assistance to countries suffering from or witnessing the emergence of violent extremism. This assistance is often in sectors broadly relevant to preventing or countering violent extremism, but is not typically directed to mitigating the specific drivers of or focusing on specific populations or communities susceptible to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

At the same time, development's role in supporting international peace and security is widely recognized. The World Bank's World Development Report 2011 emphasized the critical importance of development – supporting access to justice, economic opportunity, service delivery and domestic revenue generation – in consolidating peace and enabling recovery. Fragile, poorly governed, and conflict-affected environments generate conditions favorable to radicalization to violence. There is a growing overlap between conflict- and violent extremism-affected countries. Importantly, many development-based tools are relevant to analyzing and addressing multiple drivers of violent extremism. Yet, while development agencies support conflict prevention and mitigation, peacebuilding, and resilience that ameliorate these broad conditions, their efforts have been insufficient in addressing specific drivers of violent extremism, particularly in demographic and geographic areas affected by violent extremism. Engaging development agencies, better understanding their roles in CVE, and working with them in focused ways is critical to effectively addressing the phenomenon. This is evidenced in the complementarities between international development principles and approaches and international CVE good practices, including those developed by the GCTF.

Thus, the international community should consider *inter alia*:

- Adapting counterterrorism and broader national security strategies to incorporate development-based, prevention-oriented approaches strategically focused on addressing the drivers of violent extremism.
- Encouraging international development entities within donor governments to contribute to or otherwise support GCERF, *Hedayah* and other multilateral efforts focused on preventing and countering violent extremism.
- Including explicit language in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda acknowledging the linkage between tackling the local drivers of violence and preventing and countering violent extremism.

- Organizing technical exchanges among the international development entities of donor governments, as well as multilateral development organizations, interested in tailoring specific development assistance initiatives and programs to address the drivers of violent extremism.
- Raising ‘CVE-sensitivity’ within the donor community: encouraging donors and development organizations to address explicitly how their programming prevents (unintended) interferences with processes of radicalization or how their results could contribute to prevent radicalization.
- Promoting a development assistance community of practice to facilitate information-sharing among members of the development community that are committed to addressing the political, economic, and/or social marginalization and exclusion that may lead to violent extremism and promoting rights-based approaches to mitigate and manage its effects.
- Organizing international development and CVE workshops within an existing multilateral forum, such as the GCTF's CVE Working Group or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee, to elaborate an action plan under which interested international development entities could tailor existing - and design new development assistance initiatives and programs aimed at addressing violent extremism.
- Creating a longer-term international development work-stream within the GCTF's CVE Working Group which would include donor governments and recipients of international development assistance. It would also include relevant development-based NGOs in its activities.





United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

RELEASE IN PART B7(F),B6

UNCLASSIFIED

**ACTION MEMO FOR CT COORDINATOR TINA KAIDANOW**

FROM: CT/SPP

B6  
B7(F)

SUBJECT: Approved Proposals for CT Funding

**Recommendation**

(U) That you approve the processing of grants for the two projects outlined herein, which were approved by you for funding on May 28, 2015.

Approve 

Dis REVIEW AUTHORITY: Clarke Ellis, Senior Reviewer

**Background**

(U) As part of AQM requirements, CT has prepared this memo for your review and signature. By signing this memo, you approve CT to move the two projects outlined below for immediate processing in the Department of State grants system. You approved both projects for funding in the CT proposal review meeting on May 28, 2015.

**1) Building a Civil Society Rehabilitation and Reintegration Network**

Locations: Global

Budget: \$1,000,000

Estimated Time Frame: October 2015 – December 2016

Activity Description: This project will support a non-governmental organization (NGO) to serve as the lead and convener in a project that would build the capacity of civil society actors to engage with law enforcement and other governmental entities for the purpose of reintegrating violent extremist offenders and returning foreign terrorist fighters into communities; facilitate relationships of trust among civil society actors and governmental security sector authorities as concerns reintegration and the creation of supportive interpersonal networks; formulate and validate good practices in this thematic area. This lead NGO, which will be selected through an open competition, will operate concurrent sub-regional lines of activity in at least three of the

UNCLASSIFIED

- 2 -

following sub-regions: The Sahel (Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon), the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria), the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Tanzania, Uganda), Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines), and the Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia).

**2) TSCTP Border Communities Engagement Project**

Locations: Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger

Budget: \$2,011,327

Estimated Time Frame: September 2015 – September 2016

Activity Description: A community-based border security approach facilitates local engagement and can deter border community members from cross-border crime and violent extremism. Project design will begin with a baseline needs assessment to examine the working conditions of border authorities at control points and along the border, the availability of technical and physical means to conduct border security operations, the engagement of border communities in border security activities and their level of interaction with border security authorities, and the engagement of regional and national authorities in border security and management. Once complete, the results of the assessment will drive the programming of activities such as monthly dialogues between border security units and border communities, the establishment of anonymous reporting systems to combat crime and violent extremism, joint cross-border trainings for local border authorities on community liaison officer skills and community engagement, and small-scale security sector infrastructure and equipment upgrades to improve border control and cross-border communications. This project will complement an ongoing multilateral security and development effort with France, the United Kingdom Conflict Stability and Security Fund, and the Danish International Development Agency Sahel Initiative and will facilitate replication throughout the region.

Approved: CT – Tina Kaidanow

Drafted: CT  6/17/2015, ext.

B6  
B7(F)

Cleared: CT/SPI:   
CT/SPP: