



## U.S. State Department and USAID Supported Initiatives to Counter Violent Extremism

Fact Sheet

**Office of the Spokesperson**

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Countering the violent extremism that is driving today's terrorist threats and stemming its spread is a generational challenge. Lasting victories over terrorism and the violent extremist ideologies that underpin it are not found on the battlefield, but rather in mindsets, and within communities, schools, and families. The U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are committed to countering today's threats, and building capacity and resilience to prevent tomorrow's challenges. Together with international partners, including governments, the United Nations, regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector, the United States is helping prevent the spread of violent extremist ideologies and networks worldwide.

The U.S. Department of State and USAID are supporting a wide range of programs and other initiatives to advance the themes of the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), with particular attention to topics discussed during the February 19 ministerial meeting at the Department of State. The United States will continue to advance ongoing and planned CVE efforts through robust programming and coordinated implementation described herein totaling approximately \$188 million.

### **1) Improving and Sharing Analysis of Violent Extremism**

- In Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, ongoing programs focus on strengthening understanding of the local drivers of violent extremism. This includes research and trend analysis that focuses on gender and governance through "Regional Violent Risk Assessments" in Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, and Uganda. The United States is also supporting civil society practitioners and partner governments to share the latest research on CVE through workshops, online trainings, and in practice.

## **2) Developing Skills, Expertise, and Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism**

- Efforts in West Africa, working with the Economic Community of West Africa and in the Horn of Africa, working with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, focus on developing national, multi-stakeholder strategies to address violent extremism. This includes providing and supporting trainings and exchanges of best practices among government practitioners and civil society leaders.
- New initiatives in North Africa and the Sahel will build capacity among community and government leaders to counter violent extremism locally with a variety of tools, including counter-messaging strategies. These efforts will help partners amplify and build networks of credible, independent, non-violent voices to build resistance to violent extremists' efforts, challenge the appeal of violent extremist narratives, and to promote tolerance in local communities around the world.

## **3) Promoting the Role of Civil Society Leaders, Especially Youth and Women, in Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism**

- Assistance for projects that build the resilience of youth susceptible to recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism provide youth a sense of belonging. This includes projects that focus on building technical skills and providing vocational training, as well as offering opportunities for civic engagement and leadership training.
- Support for activities that build networks of youth, women, civil society, and private sector leaders who can provide counter-narratives and counter-messaging through community-based efforts, the arts and media, sports, and culture.
- Support for CVE projects for women, including helping women assess signs of recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism in their families and communities, and extending support to women's organizations that develop prevention strategies and promising CVE activities. Programs seek to create safe spaces for dialogue between women community leaders and law enforcement, promoting community cohesion and community-based solutions to security concerns.
- In partnership with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue's Women and Extremism Initiative, convene CVE experts for a high-level "Women and Extremism" event in Washington, D.C., with a follow-on exchange program to build a network of researchers and practitioners that focuses on the role of women in CVE.
- Organizing a series of educational and cultural exchange projects and alumni projects on CVE-related themes, including interfaith dialogue, tolerance and diversity, minority integration, community service, outreach to at-risk youth, encouraging responsible citizenship and democratic participation, private and charitable sector engagements, and promoting peace and security. These efforts will build a global network of youth who are working in their own community to counter violent extremism to share experiences, good practices, and support each other to expand collective impact against violent extremism.

- Supporting economic opportunity for women and youth through innovation and entrepreneurship training and mentorship, such as the Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) program. GIST uses startup boot camps, interactive webinars, global competitions, and an online network to deliver programming that includes training, mentorship, peer-to-peer support, and access to financing. In November 2014, GIST launched [www.GISTnetwork.org](http://www.GISTnetwork.org) which is an online marketplace that allows technology entrepreneurs from across the globe to find mentors, share information, and solicit investments. GIST Net is a public-private partnership developed by the State Department and actively seeks the participation of women and encourages participants to share knowledge and pay forward success. For example, in Jordan, over half the 30 startup boot camp participants – and the winners – were women innovators.

- Investments in science, technology, education, and math (STEM) education, through the NeXXt Scholars Program, which provides young women from 47 Muslim-majority countries, alongside their American counterparts, with professional development, leadership and intercultural communication training, and mentoring, while studying STEM at 38 U.S. women’s colleges. Support for STEM education to young women in volatile regions can advance women’s empowerment and boost a country’s enhanced economic development and growth. To date, this initiative has involved 73 NeXXt Scholars from countries including Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

#### **4) Strengthening Community-Police and Community-Security Force Relations as Ingredients for Countering and Preventing the Spread of Violent Extremism**

- Support for community-oriented policing and community engagement projects to counter and prevent recruitment and radicalization in the Balkans, South Asia, the Horn of Africa, and the Sahel offer professional and cultural competency training to local law enforcement, and encourage engagement with vulnerable communities, emphasizing relationship and trust-building activities as well as communal problem solving. These projects support the implementation of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum’s (GCTF) Good Practices on Community Engagement and Community-Oriented Policing as Tools to Counter Violent Extremism.

- The creation of an expert-led technical working group to study the relationship between security force-community relations and the prevalence of violent extremism will engage civil society, government, and multilateral partners. The group will develop a set of principles and recommendations for practitioners, public officials, and civil society, by examining common practice, empirical research, and case studies.

#### **5) Building Community Resilience to Recruitment and Radicalization to Violent Extremism**

- Ongoing efforts to build community resilience to recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism include projects to promote inclusive peace and reconciliation and encourage tolerance and respect of religious minorities. Continuing activities include dialogue across religious, sectarian, and ethnic lines, conflict resolution training, and working with community leaders and members to peacefully resolve problems together.

- Projects to build resilience among youth susceptible to recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism include encouraging youth to be catalysts for inter- and intra-faith cooperation in their communities, and enabling youth to become active advocates by providing technical skills and training, as well as offering opportunities for civic education, community service, and empowerment.
- Provision of support services to low-risk offenders, coupled with the strengthening of public and youth-serving organizations that offer positive alternatives to violence. Services include life skills training, internships, employment placements, and entrepreneurship training to help prevent youth delinquency and reduce recidivism.

#### **6) Promoting Counter-Narratives, including through Strategic Communications**

- Expansion of innovative public diplomacy efforts to support counter-narratives and counter-messaging to mitigate recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism in key countries through social media and other information technologies and platforms.
- Support for alternative narratives and counter-messaging efforts that include: 1) amplifying the voices of victims/survivors of terrorism and former violent extremists and training them on ways to broadcast their message; 2) emphasizing the negative impact of violent extremism on families and communities; and 3) utilizing widely accessible technologies such as the internet, smartphones, radio, television, and SMS for maximum message dissemination to vulnerable communities.
- Support for a series of online media training programs and “tech camps.” The U.S., in partnership with governments and private sector organizations, will help mobilize people to actively and vigorously contest ISIL’s online activities. The media/tech camps will provide training and knit together influential community and religious leaders to enhance their use of technology to more effectively counter ISIL’s narrative and propaganda.

#### **7) Elevating the Role of Religious Voices and Promoting Educational Initiatives to Build Resilience against Extremist Recruitment**

- Support to amplify non-violent religious voices will: 1) mobilize religious leaders from conflict areas and encourage them to lead projects emphasizing peace, tolerance and coexistence at the community level; and 2) train religious leaders on conflict resolution and implementation of peace-building initiatives.
- Coordination of a meeting of religious leaders to positively engage young people and identify ways to empower youth with greater technical skills and training, as well as civic education and community service, and encourage them to become advocates for religious tolerance. Additional projects will support evidence-based critical thinking and values-oriented education interventions among at-risk student populations, including projects designed to support the implementation of the GCTF’s Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and Countering Violent Extremism.

## **8) Preventing Radicalization of Violence in Prisons and Rehabilitation/Reintegration of Violent Extremists**

- Support to the UN Inter-Regional Crime Research Institute (UNICRI) and the GCTF to lead ongoing efforts to build international capacity to address prison deficiencies, the risk of recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism in prison settings, and the danger of recidivism upon release. These projects aim to provide training to detention officials on recognizing and mitigating the signs of radicalization, working with known incarcerated terrorists on disengagement, and implementing prison management practices to separate known terrorists from prison populations.
- Work with governments to help shape corrections sectors so that a safe, secure, and humane prison system will make inmates more resilient to radicalization to violence.
- The U.S. is seeking to provide funding for a series of country-specific workshops focusing on rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters hosted by the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law.
- Utilize the International Corrections and Prison Association Annual Conference in October 2015 in Australia, the largest international corrections event of the year with more than 70 countries represented, to organize a workshop on classifying violent extremists, conducting intelligence operations on violent extremist threat groups, and counter-messaging and rehabilitation programs.
- Organize a regional conference on managing violent extremists, focusing on Central America in Summer 2015 in El Salvador and convene senior-level corrections personnel and experts from Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and Latin America to address trends among violent extremist prison populations and current effective methods for managing extremists in prison.

## **9) Engaging the Private and Charitable Sectors to Support Community-Led Solutions Globally to Create Opportunity and Address Violent Extremism**

- Support efforts to promote transparency and fight corruption through the Global Enterprise Registration (GER) platform that seeks to stem corruption by making business registration more transparent. This platform is free and publically available, allowing an entrepreneur to access general information worldwide, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to register a business in the 26 countries who have fully registered. Knowledge of processes and requirements can lessen the likelihood of bribery by allowing governments to see global standards for online business registration, and facilitates the adoption of best practices. And in doing so, GER enables a country to simplify its registration process, thereby encouraging more businesses to enter the formal economy and driving economic growth.
- Support to women to engage in the formal economy in order to create jobs and economic opportunity. The Women's Entrepreneurial Centers of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) project establishes physical entrepreneurial community centers tailored to a country's specific economic concerns and built in a safe and centralized location.

WECREATE Centers will provide women access to a wide variety of resources, from mentorship and networking opportunities, to sector-specific programming and access to childcare. Importantly, WECREATE will engage men and boys in the process, providing specific education and resources on understanding the value of supporting women and girls and how entrepreneurship can create opportunity for their families and communities. WECREATE opened its first Center in Pakistan in February. Additional efforts in Zambia, Kenya, Cambodia, and Vietnam are currently underway.

- The Resilient, Entrepreneurial, And Dynamic Youth (READY) Initiative teaches at-risk youth between the ages of 18 to 30 how to code, places them in a pre-arranged online internship with a technology company, and prepares them for online employment upon completion of the program. This low-cost pathway to virtual employment offers vulnerable youth a positive alternative and enables them to become productive members of society. The first six-month pilot program will be funded by the Department of State's Special Representative for Muslim Communities and reach 25 individuals in Egypt.
- Following the CVE Summit, the U.S. will continue the dialogue on fostering economic opportunities for vulnerable communities through a series of roundtables working with key partners, including:
  - Entertainment Roundtable: In partnership with the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands and University of Southern California's Annenberg School, CVE experts, leaders in the global entertainment and media industry, and content creators and technology experts will meet to explore ways to counter violent ideologies and promote positive narratives.
  - Philanthropic Roundtable: Leading foundations will come together to identify ways to fund community-led initiatives that build resilience, provide opportunities, and counter terrorist narratives.
  - Technology Roundtable: Technology companies and related industry groups will discuss their role in addressing terrorists' use of digital media and social networking platforms to recruit and radicalize. Leaders will discuss how to (1) help communities better understand and leverage key communication platforms; (2) assist community efforts to develop and distribute counter-narrative content, including short form videos; and (3) strengthen the "terms of use" and treat violent extremist content with the same zero tolerance approach as bullying.
  - Economic Drivers Roundtable: Leading economists, political scientists, think tank experts, and policy analysts will convene to further delineate the economic drivers of extremism, such as lack of access to opportunity, unemployment, income, limited access to finance for entrepreneurs, and skills training. Experts will brainstorm policy tools to address these drivers. Following an initial roundtable, a second roundtable including government officials, donors, industry, chambers of commerce, and leading international and local private sector companies from the Middle East and Africa could determine best practices for addressing job scarcity, financial inclusion, underemployment, and skills training in these regions toward shaping concrete programs.

## **10) Strengthening Multilateral Initiatives to Counter Violent Extremism**

- In partnership with the UN and by supporting the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate projects on CVE, support for counter-

radicalization technical assistance efforts focused on identifying particular causes and dynamics of radicalization, as well as specific high risk locations within countries and cities.

- Support for the GCTF's CVE Working Group and the Forum's broader CVE priorities through providing political and financial support to advance the implementation of the relevant GCTF good practices, including those related to addressing violent extremism. Together with relevant GCTF partners, the U.S. will support new CVE Working Group efforts aimed at advancing the issues raised during the CVE Summit. The U.S. will host a GCTF event on February 23-24 on community engagement in the context of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. This practitioner-level workshop will allow for in-depth discussions on a key Summit theme and include officials and experts from the GCTF members as well as select non-members.
- Support to the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre, which provides assistance for capacity-building efforts with member states and strengthens the UN's counterterrorism expertise.
- The U.S. plans to support the secondment of two FBI subject matter experts to INTERPOL headquarters in Lyon, France. The secondees will support the development of INTERPOL's Foreign Terrorist Fighter Fusion Center in order to address the growing threat posed by individuals traveling to conflict zones to support or directly engage in terrorist activity.
- Support for the Geneva-based Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, a public-private fund to support local, community-level initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience in communities at risk of radicalization and recruitment to violence (e.g., women's engagement and empowerment, youth outreach, media, education programs, and vocational training).
- Support for Hedayah, the international center of excellence on countering violent extremism in Abu Dhabi, to make training more accessible and enhance collaboration among governmental and civil society leaders on countering violent extremism.
- Support for the International Institute of Justice and the Rule of Law in Malta, which offers rule of law-based training to lawmakers, police, prosecutors, judges, corrections officials, and other justice sector stakeholders on how to address terrorism and violent extremism within a rule of law framework.
- Support to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for tailored CVE programs, training seminars, and regional initiatives in conjunction with other multilateral fora, including the GCTF.

