

FACT SHEET

The Development Response to Violent Extremism

When people – especially young people – feel entirely trapped in impoverished communities, where there is no order and no path for advancement, where there are no educational opportunities, where there are no ways to support families, and no escape from injustice and the humiliations of corruption – that feeds instability and disorder, and makes those communities ripe for extremist recruitment. President Obama, September 2015 Summit on Countering Violent Extremism

Violent extremism undermines peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and the rule of law. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has long recognized the critical role that development assistance can play in preventing and countering violent extremism (CVE), tackling fragility and encouraging community resilience.

In May 2016, our commitment was formalized in the first-ever U.S. Department of State-USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism. Working in partnership with government and civil society counterparts around the globe, the United States will mobilize a suite of diplomatic and development tools to prevent and address violent extremism.

The strategy builds, in part, on USAID’s analytical and field-based experience identifying and addressing the root causes of extremism. USAID’s 2011 policy, *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*, provides guidelines on using development programming to address the underlying issues that foment extremist violence and fragility. The policy categorized drivers of violent extremism generally as “push” factors – environmental conditions that create opportunities for extremists to gain traction – and “pull” factors that help explain how adherents to violent extremism are able to attract recruits.

USAID currently manages programs that specifically address drivers of violent extremism in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and increasingly Europe and Eurasia. The Agency also works alongside the U.S. Departments of State and Defense in regional programs through initiatives such as the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership Fund (TSCTP).

Defining and Understanding CVE

- CVE refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence.
- CVE efforts must be guided by ongoing research and analysis of the context, drivers, and most effective interventions against violent extremism. The nature and range of possible drivers of violent extremism can vary significantly from individual psychological factors to community and sectarian divisions and conflicts.

Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism

Based on rigorous, locally-informed assessments and analysis, USAID's approach concentrates on youth empowerment, social and economic inclusion, media and messaging, improved local governance, reconciliation, and conflict mitigation. Activities are calibrated to specific threat levels, political environments, and the material needs of each community. Our CVE efforts also target distinct populations, including those most at-risk of recruitment. USAID constantly gathers both quantitative and qualitative data to design, monitor, evaluate and refine this programming.

ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAMMING

Africa

- Regional Peace for Development II (PDEV II): Working in 101 municipalities across Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, the Peace through Development II (PDEVII) project applies a holistic, community-led approach to address socioeconomic, political and cultural drivers of violent extremism to achieve the following objectives:
 - Empower youth;
 - Amplify moderate voices and attitudes;
 - Strengthen civil society; and
 - Improve local governance and citizen participation.

Across the three countries, USAID trained over 2,200 community and religious leaders on conflict mitigation and resolution skills and over 800 government and community leaders on administrative and fiscal management skills. During 2014, USAID generated 614 hours of original radio content aimed at countering extremist narratives that was broadcast and rebroadcast almost 3,700 hours across 58 partner stations reaching more than 2.5 million at-risk people.

- The Niger Education and Community Strengthening Project works in 150 schools across 22 municipalities to improve educational opportunities available to children in at-risk areas, while strengthening school linkages with community and state structures. School attendance rates increased from 62 percent to 93 percent in project areas. USAID/OTI also works in Niger to empower local leaders to address the threat of violent extremism in vulnerable communities,
- Somalia (2016 – Present): Limited government responsiveness and an overall lack of government engagement and interaction with local communities drives extremism in Somalia. USAID/OTI supports initiatives in the Jubaland and Southwest States of Somalia that connect communities with local governing authorities and increase trust and confidence in local government. USAID/OTI also supports local government administrations and other civil leadership structures, and increased dialogue between communities and government.
- Nigeria Regional Transition Initiative (2014 – Present): USAID/OTI works to help diminish the conditions that allow Boko Haram to exist and flourish. The program addresses identified drivers of extremism by reducing perceptions of marginalization and challenging extremist narratives. The program primarily works in Northeast Nigeria in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe.

Middle East and North Africa

- **Maghreb-Sahel Capacity Building for Countering Violent Extremism:** This program will support communities and civil society organizations to develop and implement strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism. It also is designed to help reduce the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.
- **Middle East and North Africa:** USAID is undertaking a range of research to better understand and design programs to support communities and governments address the dynamics in the region related to violent extremism. **Libya (2015 - Present):** The post-revolution proliferation of arms, militias and volatility is exacerbated by the lack of a stable and unified governing body. OTI/Libya's CVE component complements the program's broader goal to support responsive and capable governance. USAID/OTI has researched socio-political drivers of VE in Libya's western coastal corridor bordering Tunisia and, as a result, OTI is piloting activities at the family and neighborhood level in one community to reinforce family-based approaches to CVE and to eliminate the structural opportunities in local conflicts that VE groups have exploited in the past.

Asia

- **Pakistan Transition Initiative (2007 – Present):** USAID/OTI programs in Karachi and Southern Punjab seek to counter violent extremism in order to build a foundation for political and social development in conflict-prone communities in Pakistan. Working with concerned ministries, local governments, community groups, and the private sector, USAID provides positive opportunities for residents to develop skills, reinforce tolerance and mutual respect, and develop counter-narratives. Separately, in Pakistan's FATA/KP region, USAID supports the Pakistani government's efforts to make communities resilient to extremists by strengthening community-government ties through locally-driven projects.
- **Central Asia (2015 – Present):** Drawing upon on research pointing to labor migrants as the main group vulnerable to radicalization, USAID is piloting activities that address labor trafficking and the reintegration of labor migrants returning from work abroad as well as exploring livelihoods support for returning labor migrants.

Europe and Eurasia

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015 – Present):** USAID is piloting new approaches to engaging youth in community initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina to mitigate external pressures that lead to violent extremism. The project supplements security and law-enforcement agency activities through psychosocial support and flexible small grants. Other donors, including Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom, have agreed to co-fund this activity.
- **Kosovo:** This year, USAID began two new activities to build networks of support and economic opportunities for youth in Kosovo. The activity supports civil society organizations to improve integration of marginalized youth and includes community- and family-level messaging on countering radicalization. This activity will also support civil society monitoring of the Government of Kosovo's new CVE Strategy and Action Plan implementation. A second, economic development activity will create entrepreneurship and microenterprise opportunities for unemployed youth.

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