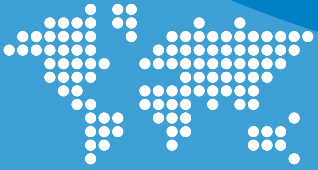


GUIDANCE NOTE

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRINCIPLES, DIMENSIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR PVE



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GUIDANCE NOTE

**GENDER MAINSTREAMING**  
**PRINCIPLES, DIMENSIONS**  
**AND PRIORITIES FOR PVE**



**UN WOMEN**

KATHERINE BROWN

New York, September 2019



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# FOREWORD



Terrorists and violent extremists are increasingly targeting women and women's rights as an explicit tactic. In my visits to affected areas, I have seen first-hand how sophisticated these groups are in exploiting existing gender inequalities and ideas

around traditional or 'ideal' roles for women and men in their recruitment materials and propaganda. Our response as the United Nations to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) must correspond to that sophistication, tactically integrating gender and women's rights in P/CVE design, implementation and evaluation.

This means ensuring that our programming and support appropriately reflect the different needs of women, men, girls and boys. It means addressing the systemic vulnerabilities that women face. At the same time it is vital to recognize how the intersection of multiple facets of women's identities – including their age, ethnicity, education level, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability – can increase vulnerability for some, but also provide women with valuable insights into preventing violent extremism in their communities. It also means working to eliminate harmful masculinities and promote positive behaviours, and removing the barriers to women's participation and leadership in prevention and reintegration work.

This Guidance Note aims to ensure that gender equality goals and principles are both respected and implemented when delivering UN actions to prevent violent extremism. It is the result of

extensive in-country consultations with policy-makers and practitioners and provides practical recommendations, based on lessons learnt, that align with the women, peace and security agenda. It aims to support efforts such as ensuring programmatic engagement in-country to reach their objectives while maintaining the principles of do-no-harm and conflict sensitivity. It guides P/CVE programming to complement the broader mission of attaining gender equality and women's empowerment.

This approach is in line with UN Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) that urges Member States and the UN system to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and the violent extremism that can be conducive to terrorism. This has resulted in UN entities becoming more involved in directly supporting stakeholders, such as women-led civil society organizations, alongside government institutions.

This guidance note highlights emerging good practices and transferrable principles and approaches. It is my hope that these ensure that gender mainstreaming efforts to prevent violent extremism are localized, context-specific and grounded in human rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
*United Nations Under-Secretary-General and  
Executive Director of UN Women*

# INTRODUCTION

Given the global reach, scale and scope of terrorism, and UN Member States' international legal obligations to uphold and protect the security and human rights of all, it has become increasingly necessary for Member States to engage in efforts to prevent and/or counter violent extremism (VE). Measures to do so directly address the drivers of VE as laid out in the UN Plan of Action.<sup>1</sup> The UN is committed to supporting member states in their efforts to apply human rights, including a gender perspective, in the design, implementation and evaluation of preventing and/or countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

**The significance of a gender-mainstreamed approach to P/CVE stems from recognition of the gendered drivers and impacts of VE, and UN Member States' obligations to protect and seek women's equality and security.** As UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka stated in 2018: "Terrorists and violent extremists have increasingly targeted women and women's rights as a tactic of terrorism."<sup>2</sup>

Terrorist and violent extremist groups also mobilize particular violent masculinities often in response to real, or perceived, violations of women's rights and women's security by state actors. Additionally, there is "deep concern that acts of sexual and gender-based violence are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups and are used as an instrument to increase their power through supporting financing and recruitment and through the destruction of communities."<sup>3</sup> This further justifies the need for full consideration of gender and women's rights in P/CVE design, implementation and evaluation.

Gender mainstreaming in PVE is grounded in international human rights obligations, and takes place within the context of a set of legal and policy commitments of States both individually, and through UN architecture and activities on countering terrorism and PVE. Gender mainstreaming incorporates women and girls and men and boys equally in gender-planning initiatives, modifies existing programmes to eliminate harmful masculinities and promote positive ones, and supports alliances between men and women in promoting and achieving gender equality.

**Gender mainstreaming in PVE, within the context of human rights and other commitments that bind PVE, is needed in order to:**

- accurately identify root causes, potential recruits, targets, and victims of violent extremism;
- leverage diverse actors as part of a comprehensive and holistic approach to PVE;
- prevent adverse gendered impacts, and to counter those effects that do occur.

Gender mainstreaming requires three main practical commitments:

- *Integration* of gender equality in interventions in general.
- *Targeting* specific groups or issues through special interventions.
- *Dialogue* with partners on gender-sensitive issues and aspects.

Previous research highlights<sup>4</sup> that efforts to include a gender perspective in PVE—including by engaging women and women's organizations—have thus far been *ad hoc* and silo-ed; they are often seen as 'women-centered', one-off, discrete activities and commitments that are secondary to, and separate from, mainstream PVE efforts. The bulk of PVE efforts are often gender blind, meaning there is little

consideration of the role of gendered norms and impacts in PVE for either women or men, and rendering such efforts unreflectively focused on men’s security needs and priorities. Furthermore, because many PVE initiatives are insufficiently grounded in a gender and human rights-based framework, they can exacerbate adverse gendered dynamics, including gendered inequalities and forms of discrimination. This leads to contradictory policies, securitizes gender equality, and instrumentalizes women’s human rights, which in turn means that local grassroots PVE work is put at greater risk and potentially undermined.<sup>5</sup>

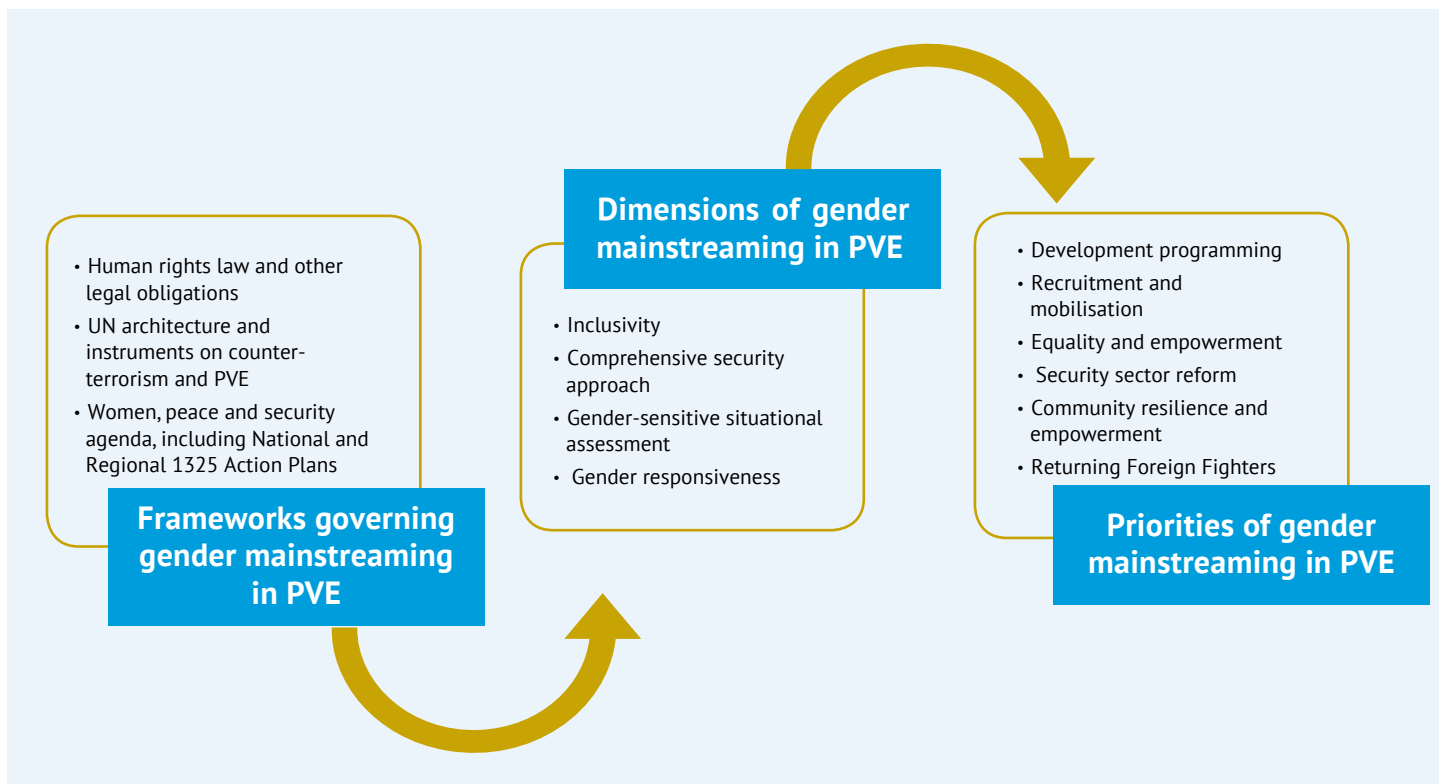
## Purpose of this Report and Target Audience

This report offers guidelines and guidance for the UN in supporting Member States in their P/CVE efforts – with a primary focus on PVE. A model is proposed for gender mainstreaming across PVE efforts that is human rights-compliant. The objective of this document is not to provide a single template or one-size-fits-all approach for PVE – in part because a wide range of activities potentially falls under PVE – but more significantly because, to be successful, each context requires a human rights-compliant, gender-responsive, bespoke, and locally-derived set of practices and policies.

*Gender mainstreaming is outlined in more detail in Appendix C.*

## Gender Mainstreaming Model: Frameworks, Dimensions and Priorities

**FIGURE 1:**  
Three Components of Gender Mainstreaming in PVE: Frameworks, Dimensions and Priorities





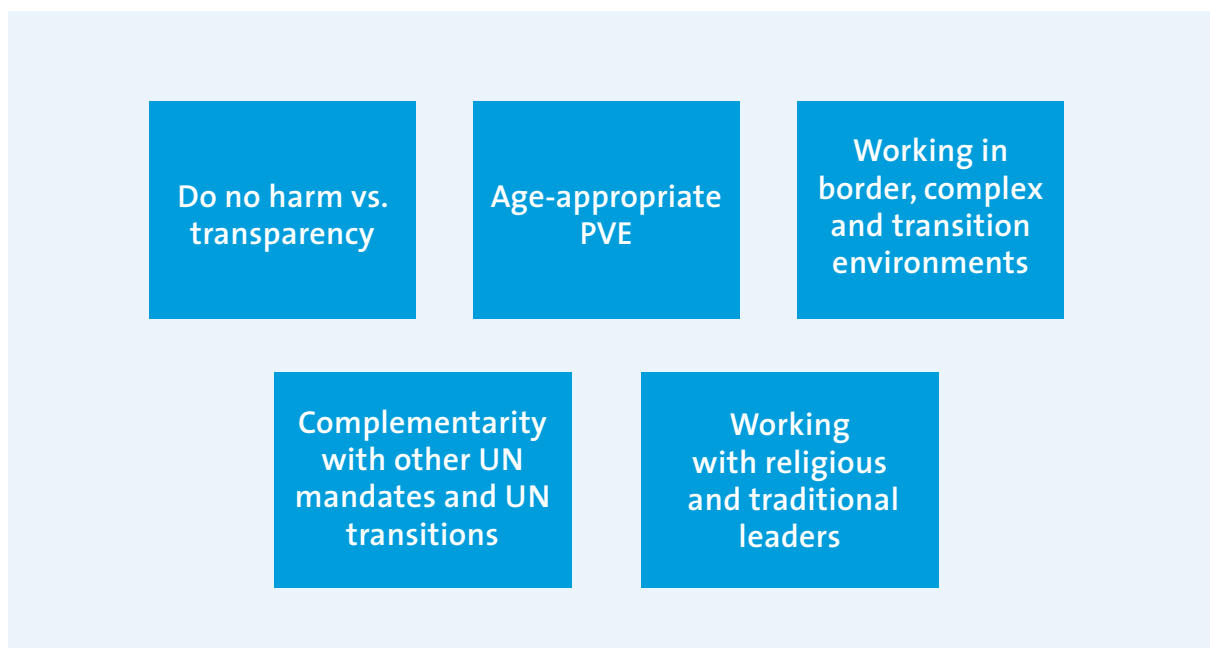
The first part of the report discusses the three components that constitute gender mainstreaming in PVE (see Figure 1). The **frameworks** derive from international human rights law and legal obligations that govern all security-related activities of UN Member States. The four **dimensions** derive from, and comply with, these frameworks. Within each dimension we offer reasons for adoption, as well as note the risks of not following them—not only to ensure respect and protection of human rights by state actors, but also to encourage the overall success of PVE. We also highlight the dimension at each stage of the policy-cycle order of vision, implementation, and evaluation in order to offer pathways and milestones for consideration, which reflect the necessary commitment to gender mainstreaming as a process rather than a single event. The **priorities** primarily reflect the ‘conditions conducive to violent extremism’ as laid out in

the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.<sup>6</sup> Each priority area includes **case studies** to show some of the responses available to policy makers and programmers.

## Lessons Identified

The second part of the report draws together the dimensions and priority areas to reflect on the practical aspects of gender mainstreaming PVE, and the issues that might arise in ensuring human rights-compliant and effective approaches. The lessons identified draw on interviews with practitioners and policy-makers in the field of PVE from around the globe. They primarily address five areas (see Figure 2), highlighting suggestions that can help identify the right balance for both context and situation.

**FIGURE 2:**  
**Lessons Identified**



# HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS ON GENDER AND PVE

## UN architecture and instruments on countering terrorism and PVE, including on gender mainstreaming

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy characterizes terrorism as “one of the most serious threats to international peace and security”.<sup>7</sup> The strategy, which provides the core strategic framework and policy guidance to the UN system on countering terrorism, is supported by a number of counter-terrorism-related Security Council resolutions which create obligations on Member States, and affirm that all measures must be compliant with international law, especially human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. These resolutions are outlined in detail in Appendix B1.

---

**The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy contains four pillars: (I) tackling the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; (II) preventing and combating terrorism; (III) building States’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, and to strengthen the role of the UN system in that respect; and (IV) ensuring respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.**<sup>8</sup>

---

Activities under pillar II have often been prioritized to the detriment of the other pillars.<sup>9</sup> However, the efficacy of these security-based measures have been called into question.<sup>10</sup> As laid out in the United Nations

Secretary-General’s *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (Plan of Action)*, there is now a recognized “**need to take a more comprehensive approach which encompasses not only ongoing, essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism.**”<sup>11</sup> This more preventive approach includes “reinvigorating those measures covered under” pillars I (conditions conducive) and IV (ensuring human rights) of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.<sup>12</sup> Importantly, because of the considerable latitude afforded to States in defining “violent extremism” (VE), PVE measures have taken on a number of forms that differ in the extent to which they seek to address the overall climate in which VE flourishes, or to undertake more direct interventions.

With regard to the need to develop strategies for addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, the UN Security Council called upon Member States in its resolution 2178 (2014) to cooperate and consistently support each other’s efforts to counter VE. It emphasized in this regard the importance of developing non-violent alternative avenues for conflict prevention and resolution by affected individuals and local communities to decrease the risk of radicalization to terrorism, as well as efforts to promote peaceful alternatives to violent narratives espoused by foreign terrorist fighters. The Council encouraged States to take steps to empower youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society. CVE initiatives may include the establishment of interreligious and intercultural dialogue mechanisms, educational and religious initiatives, community-engagement programmes, or development of national CVE strategies.

### UN Secretary-General's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* includes recommendations to:

- “[m]ainstream gender perspectives across efforts to prevent violent extremism;”
- “invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women’s roles in violent extremism ... and on the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives;”
- include women in security institutions, “including as part of counter-terrorism prevention and response frameworks;”
- enhance the “capacity of women and their civil society groups to engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism;”
- ensure “that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to projects that address women’s specific needs or empower women...”
- include “gender inequality” under the condition conducive of “marginalization and discrimination” and addressing the role of “[g]ender equality and empowering women;”
- recognize the gendered impacts of violent extremism;
- ensure that “more attention needs to be paid to devising efficient gender- and human rights-compliant reintegration strategies and programs for those who have been convicted of terrorism-related offences as well as returning foreign terrorist fighters.”

There is thus considerable overlap between CVE and PVE programs, as proposed by UN bodies.

Within the UN counter-terrorism and C/PVE frameworks there has been increasing attention to the role of gender mainstreaming and inclusion of a gender perspective.

UN commitments to C/PVE and to gender mainstreaming and women’s rights are extensively detailed in [Appendix B1 and B2](#), and are reiterated in the *Plan of Action*.

## Women, peace, and security agenda and C/PVE

The Women, Peace and Security agenda is comprised of nine UN Security Council resolutions adopted under the title of ‘Women and Peace and Security’ (WPS) (See [Appendix B3](#)). The first WPS resolution – UNSCR 1325 – was adopted in October 2000, representing the culmination of concerted feminist civil society activism around women’s human rights and needs in

conflict and conflict-affected settings. The provisions and principles of the WPS agenda are usually grouped into four ‘pillars’:

- 1) the **participation** of women in peace and security governance, which covers many dimensions of women’s involvement in conflict and post-conflict settings;
- 2) the **protection** of women’s human rights in conflict and post-conflict settings;
- 3) the **prevention** of violence, including both the prevention of violent conflict, and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV); and
- 4) **relief and recovery**, which demands gender-sensitive humanitarian programming in the wake of disasters and complex emergencies, as well as the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction and peace building-related activities.

The WPS agenda builds on existing international agreements and declarations regarding gender equality and the status of women, including the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA, A/52/231)*, and the *Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693)*. Details regarding UN obligations for WPS as they relate to PVE are set out in [Appendix B3](#).

The most recent WPS resolution, UNSCR 2467 (2019), reaffirms the linkages between WPS, countering terrorism and VE. It requests the Secretary-General and relevant UN entities to strengthen the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangement on conflict-related sexual violence, including with information related to sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism. It affirmed that sexual violence is used as a tactic of war and as a tactic of terrorism.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, the Council asks the UN Counter-terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) to work with various UN entities and Member States to ensure inclusion of “information regarding Member States efforts to address the issue of trafficking in

persons and its link with sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations committed by terrorist groups”<sup>14</sup> in its country assessments.

Additionally, the WPS agenda is firmly grounded in States’ obligations under international law, including human rights law. As noted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: “all the areas of concern addressed in [women, peace, and security] resolutions find expression in the substantive provisions of the Convention [on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women].”<sup>15</sup> Indeed, as stated in the *2015 Global Study on the Implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325*: “Resolution 1325 is a human rights mandate. It must not be forgotten that resolution 1325 was conceived of and lobbied for as a human rights resolution that would promote the rights of women in conflict situations. Any policy or programme on women, peace and security must be conducted with this in mind.”<sup>16</sup>

## STATE’S HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS IN PVE

- Key terminology and definitions are applied consistently with international human rights law. (A/HRC/33/29)
- All PVE measures—whether gender-specific or gender-neutral—comply with their international law obligations. (A/HRC/31/65)
- Circumstances in which VE may flourish are addressed – including linkages to a lack of respect for human rights and other injustices. (A/70/674)
- All PVE measures uphold human rights guarantees related to gender equality and non-discrimination. (A/64/211; A/HRC/30/L.25/Rev.1)
- All PVE measures are proportionate to the threat, and restrictions to the right to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief need to strictly comply with international law. (A/HRC/RES/30/15)
- Meaningful and independent oversight, and continual monitoring of the human rights impact of PVE measures occurs. (A/HRC/31/65; A/HRC/33/29)
- Due diligence is exercised to prevent, investigate, and punish actions by non-State actors that circumscribe women’s human rights organizing, women’s rights organizations, and gender equality. (A/HRC/33/29)

## International legal framework related to gender mainstreaming and PVE, particularly human rights

Human rights obligations apply at all stages of the design, implementation, and evaluation of PVE, and some examples of how these obligations apply are set out below.

Compliance with human rights, including women's human rights obligations, at the design stage of policy and programme design, requires orientating PVE objectives to the security of all persons, and requires PVE mechanisms to align with human rights obligations. Therefore, States must **ensure that definitions of “terrorism,” “violent extremism,” and “preventing violent extremism” are applied consistently with international human rights law.**<sup>17</sup> There is no standard agreed definition of “terrorism,” “violent extremism,” or “preventing violent extremism,” in either the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its review resolutions or the UN Secretary-General's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*. The *Plan of Action* states that: “Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon, without clear definition,”<sup>18</sup> and leaves questions of how to define “terrorism” and “violent extremism” to Member States while encouraging a “practical approach.”<sup>19</sup> In practice: “Conceptually, it has been challenging to differentiate between violent extremism and terrorism, with the two terms often used interchangeably and without a clear delineation of the boundaries between them.”<sup>20</sup> These difficulties of differentiating the two are amplified by the fact that the conditions conducive to violent extremism and those conducive to terrorism are “almost identical.”<sup>21</sup> Without clear definition and delineation, the potential for equating the two—and attendant human rights violations—is high. In this regard, the *Plan of Action* also notes “a risk that a conflation of the two terms may lead to the justification of an overly broad application of counter-terrorism measures, including against forms of conduct that should not qualify as terrorist acts.”<sup>22</sup> From a gender perspective, these concerns have been borne out through “use of vague and broad definitions of ‘terrorism’ to punish those who do not conform to traditional gender roles,

and to suppress social movements that seek gender equality in the protection of human rights”<sup>23</sup> or the “criminalization . . . of peaceful activities, such as . . . non-discrimination and equality or promotion of gender equality.”<sup>24</sup>

States' obligations under human rights law, including the non-discrimination principle, requires that they **consider the intended and unintended gendered impacts of PVE programming**—that is, to consider whether their activities promote or undermine gender equality in their design. This is an anticipatory assessment of “potential impact on women, children, ethnic and religious communities or any other specific group.”<sup>25</sup> The guidelines in this report specifically draw attention to the ways in which PVE programming may reinforce power imbalances in society and gender stereotypes that limit women's equality and human rights.

Following on from this, States must **combat discrimination and “ensure equality, both formal (de jure) and substantive (de facto) between men and women in the enjoyment of all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.”**<sup>26</sup> The obligation to ensure equality also includes a requirement to recognize “that traditional stereotypes and attitudes (e.g., cultural attitudes) undermine the enjoyment of rights of women and ensure that such stereotypes are not used to justify violations of equality.”<sup>27</sup> Attention to assumptions about women's roles, rights and responsibilities in society need to be considered in a sensitive manner, for example by not assuming that women's role as mothers determines their contribution to PVE, and by considering utilizing fathers more. Indeed, it is key that States “ensure participation of women and women's rights organizations in all areas of decision-making . . . and that the rationale for inclusion is on the basis of non-discrimination and equality and is rights-protective.”<sup>28</sup> This means, for example, ensuring that women and women's organizations are consulted in a meaningful manner on potential programmes<sup>29</sup> and that their participation is voluntary.

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**In the design, implementation and evaluation of PVE programs and policies it is important not to conflate women with ‘women and children’.**

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To do so infantilizes women in PVE thinking, assumes women’s experiences of, and vulnerabilities to VE are only determined by their relationship to children, and does not allow for understanding the different gender-based experiences of boys and girls. In addition, there are specific legal and practical considerations to take into account in addressing the potential vulnerabilities that arise in the intersection of age and gender in the experience of girls, as well as boys.

Additionally, States are required to “[p]rohibit discrimination (both direct and indirect) on proscribed grounds, including of sex and gender.”<sup>30</sup> This means that **PVE measures should not disproportionately impact particular racial, ethnic or religious groups**, including the young and elderly of those groups. Any programmes and measures must neither discriminate nor stigmatize particular groups or communities but rather support and further their resilience to VE (see [Priority 5: Community Resilience](#)). This includes addressing intersectional discrimination which is particularly important in the PVE context. For example, even though it is often stated that “violent extremism, in all its forms and manifestations, cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,”<sup>31</sup> in practice, PVE can “tend to target specific groups,”<sup>32</sup> in particular Muslim communities. Such approaches are counter to human rights standards, and undermine preventive efforts (see [Lessons Identified 4: Complementarity with UN Mandates](#)).<sup>33</sup> This is of particular note for gender mainstreaming because it is often women that suffer additional harms generated from such stereotyping and stigmatization. For example, women are disproportionately targeted in hate crimes as they are perceived as ‘easy targets’. This can lead to women’s mobility and freedoms being reduced because communities fear such crimes and increased police surveillance.<sup>34</sup>

In formulating and implementing PVE measures, States must ensure **there is no violation of human rights guarantees** e.g., arbitrary or unlawful interference with the right to privacy;<sup>35</sup> freedom of association, assembly, expression; and freedom of religion or belief including and on the basis of non-discrimination.<sup>36</sup> “Restrictions to the right to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief need to strictly comply with international law. The complex issue of drawing the demarcation line between freedom of expression and incitement to violence, hatred and discrimination needs to be taken into account, in particular in legal frameworks and criminal justice.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, PVE programmes and activities cannot be used for additional security objectives, such as covert surveillance or data collection. This matters for gender mainstreaming in PVE because suspicions of women operating as spies hampers their access to other state services and provisions (including education, welfare, justice and health care).<sup>38</sup>

An approach rooted in human rights<sup>39</sup>, based on strengthening the rule of law, with **appropriate checks and balances, is essential for the legality and legitimacy of any measures and programmes to prevent VE**. External and independent oversight mechanisms provide checks and balances that prevent human rights violations and abuses, hold perpetrators accountable, make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence, and ensure that institutions operate effectively while maintaining respect for and adherence to the rule of law. Crucially, this external oversight must be gender-responsive, locally-owned, and attend to whole-of-security approaches to ensure that the needs and rights of all individuals in different communities arising from PVE are addressed.

**Mindful of the wider context in which PVE programmes and policies are designed, States have additional legal international human rights obligations that must be met.** First, they must “address the circumstances in which violent extremism may flourish.(...) Poverty and a lack of economic opportunity fuel violent extremism, therefore efforts are needed to combat social exclusion and marginalization while enhancing respect for economic, social and cultural rights.”<sup>40</sup> Second, they must “[e]xercise due diligence

to prevent, investigate, and punish actions by non-State actors that circumscribe women's human rights organizing, women's rights organizations, and gender equality."<sup>41</sup> Third, they must "[g]uarantee human rights in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict contexts."<sup>42</sup> As activities under the rubric of PVE may take place in conflict or post-conflict settings, it is important for States to recall that in situations of armed conflict, international human rights law and international humanitarian law "apply concurrently and their different protections are complementary, not mutually exclusive."<sup>43</sup> (See also [Lessons Identified 4: Complementarity with UN Mandates and UN transitions](#))

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**Critically in developing, implementing, and evaluating all PVE measures, States must ensure that "human rights of women and girls are ends in themselves," meaning that States must "[p]rotect women's and girls' rights at all times" and "not just as a means for P/CVE."<sup>44</sup>**

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## Programmatic steps to address gender and human rights dimensions of PVE

UN actors and institutions should seek to promote and/or support:

- PVE objectives that seek to achieve gender equality and challenge gender inequalities to reduce girls' vulnerability to VE and to uphold international human rights obligations (detailed in later sections);
- Member States in avoiding the use of sweeping definitions and terminology in PVE to reduce discrimination and disproportionate impacts on particular segments of the population;
- Establishing an independent human rights body, or the involvement of national and judiciary bodies where appropriate, with oversight across all elements of PVE, including as they intersect with counter-terrorism and countering violent

extremism (CVE) (see further: dimensions related to accountability and monitoring);

- Inclusion of respect for human rights, including women's human rights, in Terms of Reference for PVE programmes and institutions;
- Adoption of gender mainstreaming guidelines for all actors involved in PVE design, implementation, and assessment;
- Application of gender and human rights audits to determine what additional resources and tools an agency may need to integrate gender into its counter-terrorism and PVE work;
- Development of actionable responses to human rights groups' concerns with existing PVE activities and programmes; and
- Preservation and protection of civil society to offer meaningful critique and diverse perspectives on PVE.

These steps to support member states in establishing and maintaining the legal and human rights framework needed for legitimate and successful C/PVE are in addition to the pragmatic steps outlined in the rest of this document, which include requiring sex-disaggregated data, supporting civil society, developing gender-sensitive indicators, and utilizing human rights and gender experts to help design tools specifically for PVE appropriate for the locality.

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING DIMENSIONS FOR PVE

## Introduction

*The Plan of Action*, like the *Reference Guide to National Action Plans*, has strong connections to the Women Peace and Security agenda expressed in UNSCR 1325. *The Plan of Action* draws on the UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council (2015), which noted that a commitment to women's peace and security, "is not just a principled endeavor; there is an underlying uncompromising rationale in pursuing **gender mainstreaming** across our prevention work, and it is quite simply that this leads to **stronger analysis** of the root causes of conflict in societies, and thus to **better informed and better designed prevention and mediation efforts**".<sup>45</sup>

Gender mainstreaming is:<sup>46</sup>

- A strategic approach to achieve gender equality.
- Integrating men and women's concerns and experiences in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.
- Context-specific.
- Cross cutting – across all political, economic and social spheres.<sup>47</sup>
- Recognizing and responding to how gender informs the security and insecurity of men *qua* men, as well as of women *qua* women.
- Action to self-improvement among women and/or men.
- Action to transform unequal gender relations through contributing to changes in social norms, cultural values, power structures and the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination.
- Essential in securing the commitment, funding, skills and programmes to realize gender equality.

*Foundational gender mainstreaming principles and details are outlined in Appendix C.*

**The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. It is not just a 'women's issue', because gender equality benefits men and**

**boys as well as women and girls.** In the context of armed conflict, for example, one aspect of gender mainstreaming is that "before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively."<sup>48</sup> Strict gender norms affect not only women and girls but also men and boys, constraining their life choices and impacting their security.

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**Gender mainstreaming therefore incorporates women and girls and men and boys equally in gender-planning initiatives, modifies existing programmes to eliminate harmful and promote positive masculinities, and supports alliances between men and women in promoting and achieving gender equality.**

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This also includes analysis and funding initiatives that are relevant to men, such as acknowledging and responding to how society's conception of masculinity affects men's experience with violent extremism (VE) as well as its response.<sup>49</sup>

Full implementation thus requires the amelioration of gendered inequalities and forms of gendered discrimination, and the realization of women's human rights and gender equality.

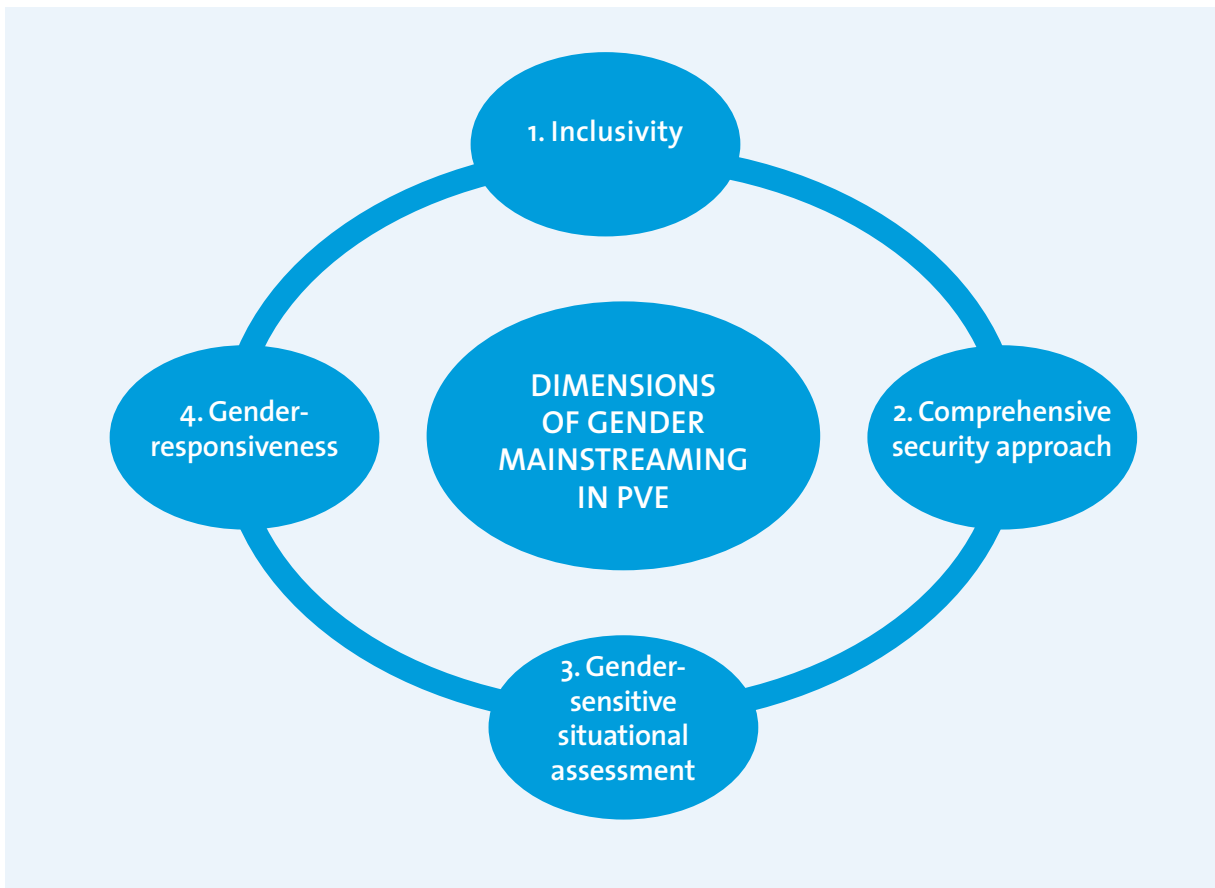


## GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND HUMAN RIGHTS AS MUTUALLY REINFORCING IN PVE

- Promoting the participation of women and girls.
- Addressing gender inequalities (including as they intersect with other factors such as class, race, age, marital status, sexuality, health).
- Ensuring policies in PVE do not undermine gender equality or women's rights (including through explicit gender-security trade offs).
- Integrating gender equality through specific and targeted measures.
- Dialogue with stakeholders and partners on gender-sensitive issues.
- Ensuring policies in PVE address the specific harms to women attributed to VE and terrorism.

Figure 3 below illustrates the four core dimensions that can be unpacked further to put gender mainstreaming into practice for PVE.

**FIGURE 3:**  
**Dimensions of Gender Mainstreaming in PVE**



# 1. Inclusivity

Inclusivity has two key components in a PVE context. The first centers on local ownership, the second specifically on women's participation and representation. The two are interconnected because without local inclusion, including of women, women's representation and participation is limited to those who can access state institutions at the national, regional, and inter-governmental level. Additionally, without women's inclusion, local ownership is partial and limited to existing stakeholders, including gatekeeper civil society organizations. There is some overlap here with Dimension 4 - Gender Responsiveness; however, the focus on inclusion is about 'women' while Dimension 4 focuses on gender more broadly.

Local engagement is critical, but participation should also go beyond the informal, community or local level, to ensure that women's participation is facilitated at national, regional and international levels, and in international organizations.<sup>50</sup> There can be local challenges to including women, due to social norms, unequal access to resources and information, and differing security needs and priorities between men and women. Therefore, it is important to support efforts to eliminate any barriers to women's participation before PVE work can commence. Where women's participation—including as part of civil society—is not facilitated in the regional and international development of instruments on counter-terrorism and PVE, this will also compromise the scope and nature of women's engagement at the local level.

## 1.1 LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND INCLUSION

All PVE programmes should be locally owned and connected to States' commitments to peace, security and human rights, including obligations concerning women's human rights. Consultation with stakeholders is therefore vital in all phases, but in particular, in the planning and design phase of programmes and projects. PVE programmes must be guided by a context-specific, locally-grounded theory of change, where programme objectives clearly connect with the needs, perceptions and priorities of local communities. Without a clear sense of how objectives are

rooted in local ownership, there is a risk that the programme could continue indefinitely, risking ongoing securitization and militarization of the society and its institutions, with adverse gendered effects.<sup>51</sup>

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***For women, local ownership in PVE matters because it helps ensure their human rights are realized, and their interests and needs included in PVE initiatives. Local ownership is also an important medium for women to be included in PVE, as they are often leaders in civil society, informal leaders in their communities, have knowledge of threats and risks, and are already acting on the 'frontlines' of PVE through their own efforts.***

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Historically, as research and practice within the women, peace, and security agenda reveals, States have ignored or misinterpreted gender, particularly in security matters and specifically in PVE, with women consequently often acutely suffering the effects of VE. Whether through lack of expertise or ability (which might be solved by capacity building, training, and inclusion of gender experts), or through lack of political will, this has led to a mistrust of the state as operator, particularly as regards programmes aimed at and designed to benefit women and girls. Mistrust creates resistance, and resistance fuels subversion, such as women being targeted if they do choose to attend such programmes.

Local ownership, when combined with a commitment to gender-inclusive representation and a commitment to human rights compliance, may help overcome these historical perceptions and build trust, primarily because it is an affirmative, demonstrative and accountable recognition and valuing of women's leadership, knowledge, perspectives and needs in security- and terrorism-related matters. As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) notes, "women are frequently victims of both terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism measures, and as such they can point out when preventive practices are counterproductive and cause backlash in their communities. This type of information can be decisive

to avoid creating or sustaining conditions conducive to terrorism.”<sup>52</sup> (See further 1.2 below.)

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**Additionally, inclusive practices are particularly important in preventing and countering VE because extremist ideologies often rely on exclusivist and divisive rhetoric such as sectarianism or racism. Inclusive practices enhance resilience and indirectly counter VE within and across communities by developing shared understanding, building trust, and establishing routine modes of communication.**

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Failure to properly develop strong and inclusive ‘peace and security partnerships’ jeopardizes the long-term success of PVE programmes, as they become identified with government security agendas, or are viewed by communities as agendas being imposed upon them. For example, mega development projects implemented as part of a larger project to prevent extremism in an area, can generate opposition if there is limited participation by local communities, who may have the perception that most of the jobs created will benefit outsiders.<sup>53</sup> In another example, government officials and partners who do not treat youth as equal partners in PVE programs, using a ‘top-down’ approach to deliver centrally-determined messages against VE in schools or youth venues,<sup>54</sup> can face resistance at every level, as youth feel ‘targeted’, ‘spied upon’, and patronized rather than ‘supported’. This is problematic as these are sometimes the very reasons young people join extremist groups.<sup>55</sup> Failure to properly develop strong and inclusive ‘peace and security partnerships’ can also create a backlash against those in the community—including women and girls—associated with the programme and the wider agenda, as programming can then be perceived to undermine local patriarchal norms.<sup>56</sup> The risk of backlash and stigmatizing is significant given the broad definitions of ‘violent extremism’ adopted by the UN and found in the domestic legislation of a number of States.

## 1.2 WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

“Women’s groups are trapped between terrorism and countering terrorism ... working in very dangerous context[s] where terrorists [exist] and on the other hand their chances to deliver their voice ... [are] shrinking in the name of countering terrorism.”<sup>57</sup>

Women’s representation and participation in PVE is an obvious and visible component to gender mainstreaming. Women’s participation enables women to make informed choices about their lives on the basis of non-discrimination and equality. However, too often, ‘being inclusive’ and ‘gender mainstreaming’ are translated in practice as, ‘inviting a few select women to the final stages of the process.’<sup>58</sup> However this approach is not a meaningful opportunity to contribute or to change the PVE programme(s). By this point in the process, assumptions are built into the programmes, key outcomes are determined and priorities are set, often with little room for negotiation.

The second difficulty with such ‘tokenism’ is that it is based on static categories of ‘men’ and ‘women’. There is a presumption that women’s experiences are homogenous, yet women from different classes, socioeconomic status, regions, communities, and of different ages, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion and marital status, will have different perspectives on VE and PVE. The intersectional nature of these factors in the experience of women is important to informing and building inclusive PVE programmes, as VE manifests and is experienced differently across these social markers.

**Women and girls as a diverse group should be well represented in community consultations and activities** consistent with the rights of non-discrimination and equality. It is recognized that building capacity for the meaningful inclusion of women and girls, and consultation with women and girls in the design of PVE programmes, may take time.<sup>59</sup> Further, the conditions under which this takes place will vary from context to context, reflecting *inter alia* differences in local security institutions and their relationship with civil

society, as well as the status of women stakeholders in those country contexts. To be effective, programming must be long-term and highly contextualized. It is particularly important for donors supporting PVE initiatives to manage expectations around what can be achieved within short timeframes or with interventions that aren't designed to fit the local context, which includes allocating sufficient time for trust and relationship-building prior to deployment of programmatic activities.

## DESIGN

Rather than repackaging and reformulating existing policies or uncritically legitimizing a state-driven security-focused PVE agenda, **PVE programmes should be subservient to and led by the community's priorities and objectives**, which includes the perspectives of women and girls. Pursuing inclusive and representational dialogue throughout all phases of PVE programmes—particularly in the design stage—will ensure contextually relevant and realistic targets are set, in line with the peace and security priorities and visions of the community.

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**The question of who to engage and with whom to partner is never politically neutral and becomes part of the context in which VE exists.**

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However, a broad and inclusive approach will reduce the risk of intensifying underlying grievances related to exclusion, marginalization and discrimination. This can mean working with groups that are dismissed by the mainstream, such as local LGBTI groups, HIV and AIDS campaigners, and/ or religious minority community advocates. It also requires seeing human rights defenders and civil society as potential friends, not foes to PVE.<sup>60</sup> Credibility of local partners becomes a more important consideration in the implementation phases of PVE, but it is not the *dominant* consideration in setting objectives. **Therefore, it is important for those designing and planning PVE to be proactive and act as brokers between groups, to ensure**

**marginalized and less-heard groups have the opportunity to influence the objectives of PVE.**

An inclusive design process offers a number of advantages to the design of PVE programmes:

- Facilitates credible programmes because communities become stakeholders.
- Ensures contextually-relevant and realistic targets are set.
- Avoids 'groupthink' and actively counters exclusivist ideologies of violent extremist groups.
- Ensures that the needs and interests of different sectors of the community drive the planning and design of PVE programmes.

## IMPLEMENTATION

PVE programmes can help to re-shape existing gender dynamics and power relations in the interest of gender equality, including as part of States' efforts to uphold international commitments to gender equality. PVE programmes can be a vehicle for confronting gender stereotypes because the assumptions that are often made about victims and perpetrators of extremist violence can be challenged effectively through careful, community-led, context-specific programme design and delivery that involves women, girls, boys, and men.

Culture and tradition are not static; politics and economies change to respond to new conditions. Similarly, **VE groups manipulate the uncertainty and insecurity citizens feel about the future and their anxiety about possible changes.** VE groups are often challengers to traditional customs, to the rule of law, or proponents of economic and political change – that they find sympathy and followers suggests at least some willingness for transformation. For women who live under strict gender oppression, joining a VE group can be seen as a way to gain more freedom. For men who cannot meet traditional expectations of masculinity, violent extremist groups can offer a compelling substitute for regular masculinity authentication. VE groups can also alter the political and economic landscape, leading to different norms and behaviors – for example, women might leave the family home to join and support groups, or

young people might follow different religious leaders to those followed by their parents and grandparents. Old forms of authority are questioned, and new forms emerge across different contexts.

PVE programmes can help shape the new social norms that take hold. For example, in Morocco and Saudi Arabia, training women in religious arguments and giving them religious authority in order to combat particular and general threats of VE is a break from tradition but represents one route for women's engagement and inclusion in culturally-relevant ways, and potentially creating opportunities in other areas of life. Having women participating in these activities as representatives of PVE endeavours normalizes their roles in public, and normalizes the idea that VE is something that affects women, and that women participate in.

A human rights-based approach to PVE also calls for the participation of marginalized, disempowered, and discriminated groups of women and men in decisions that affect their security and overall resilience.<sup>61</sup> It must, therefore, occur in a manner consistent with human rights obligations and other safeguards including voluntariness, safety, and age-appropriateness, and it must not be based on gender stereotypes.

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**Failure to consider safeguards and human rights obligations places men and women who deliver PVE at particular additional risk as they challenge social norms and the power of extremist groups. Finding local advocates and allies will be essential in developing these opportunities for women and girls in ways that avoid replicating existing gendered hierarchies (e.g. by avoiding gatekeeper organizations).**

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Placing women in situations where the community is simply responding to the expectations of external actors and there is no real, genuine support for their participation should be avoided.

Most PVE programming is gender-blind. This is not the same as gender-neutral; rather, it centers men's needs and presumes their participation and experience defines what is 'normal'. This can lead to barriers (intended and unintended) to women's participation and inclusion in PVE. **Pre-conditions for successful PVE programmes should thus include removing a range of institutional, normative and physical barriers to women's and girls' participation.** Importantly, what barriers exist should not be assumed; instead in each location, they must be identified through consultation with women themselves and a variety of organizations. While not all barriers can be overcome, efforts should nonetheless be made to try to do so, and failure to eliminate barriers should not be used as a reason not to engage in PVE. One example of a barrier is the exclusion of young women. They are often denied leadership opportunities in the formal public sphere, and civic initiatives that contribute to peace and security frequently overlook their needs and contributions, and yet they are often active (more than other age groups) in civil society.

While direct evidence about barriers in PVE is still limited, we can draw parallels from other areas of peace and security. For example, studies show that factors of exclusion include, "domestic and care burdens, discriminatory social norms regarding women and girls, and negative views about the appropriateness of their involvement in political issues or legal frameworks."<sup>62</sup> Moreover, as women of all ages become civically and socially engaged, they are at greater risk of violence. As International Alert observes, "politically active women are far more likely than men, even in peaceful societies, to be subjected to violent and sexualized intimidation, ranging from verbal or physical abuse to gender-based violence, abduction or death,"<sup>63</sup> **A gender-sensitive situational assessment can help identify the current situation and the potential risks for women.**

## EXAMPLES OF BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' INCLUSION IN PVE

### Physical Barriers

- Limited mobility
- Less access to finances
- Additional caregiving responsibilities
- Lower rates of literacy
- Reduced access to other state-provided/operated services (such as healthcare or welfare provision)
- Violent extremism increases insecurity and limits women's mobility further
- Women's groups are often direct targets of violent extremism, especially where those organizations have been supportive of PVE.

### Institutional Barriers

- Gatekeeper resistance to women's inclusion
- Lack of women as practitioners and service providers
- Lack of culturally-appropriate spaces for women's activities, where PVE providers are typically security institutions or in locations dominated by men

### Normative Barriers (stigmatization and suspicion)

- Harmful stereotypes about women's participation in PVE
- Gender norms about women's appropriate role in the public sphere
- Gender norms about women's presumed non-violence and presumed moderate natures.

### Examples of Practical Responses

- Choose local venues that women and girls frequent
- Consider gender-segregated and age-segregated sessions for consultation and implementation
- Operate at different times of day
- Offer childcare (and if not, consider if alternative childcare is available at that time)
- Offer other services to be provided at the same time
- Participation or non-participation must be voluntary (and not prohibit access to other services)
- Support efforts to improve women's literacy and mobility
- Promote women's skills, leadership and training
- Deliver programme components via radio and/or social media messaging platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram, etc)
- Work with community leaders to challenge harmful stereotypes
- Build awareness about women's participation in violent extremism and PVE
- Work with civil society to enhance women's leadership
- Work with men and boys to promote gender equality and create allies

## EVALUATION

Local ownership and women's inclusion in evaluation continues the processes in the design and implementation stages of PVE. When local and women's voices are heard within evaluation and monitoring processes, they have opportunities to influence and feedback into the PVE policy cycle. More detail is discussed in [Dimension 3: Gender-sensitive Evidence Base](#).

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**It is important to determine who decides when PVE policies can be considered successful, and to ensure that gender equality and guarantee of human rights are not only central criteria but tracked for progress.**

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Those who have participated in establishing criteria for success can be involved in monitoring, but a wider range of actors can also participate. For instance, representatives of target groups should be included in the development and implementation of M&E processes. This links to the priority of building gender capacity and commitment to gender equality in PVE. Importantly, both men and women, and gender experts, must be included in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams. Similarly, men and women in leadership positions should be involved in any gender-specific M&E to help ensure gender considerations are adequately addressed.

## PRAGMATIC STEPS

UN entities can support and encourage Member States to:

- Establish local PVE forums across different regions, with regional and collaborative meetings to build knowledge towards a national understanding; diverse local civil society networks and NGOs should participate in these, including women and women's groups.
- Collect data from women's groups and women from across localities about what would encourage or dissuade them from participating in PVE activities, through e.g. workshops, surveys or key stakeholder interviews.
- Publish reports from various local stakeholder engagement activities.

- Encourage local groups as partners to publish their commitments to PVE and to women's inclusion and gender equality.
- Include local groups as signatories to core vision or mission statements on PVE, and key objectives of national and local PVE plans and initiatives.
- Publish objectives and outcomes, and indicators, with gender-sensitive data.
- Fund women's groups to deliver and provide PVE to mixed and male-only audiences as well as female-only audiences.
- Use women-friendly venues, activities, and times to facilitate women's participation, including childcare provision.
- Assure that women at heightened risk have a mechanism to raise their concerns and participate in decision-making, while guaranteeing confidentiality regarding their personal situation, and without exposing them to further harm or trauma.
- Identify, and make dedicated efforts to remove physical and normative barriers to women's participation.
- Engage with minorities, youth and other marginalized voices as PVE legislation or new policies are being considered and developed.

## 2. Comprehensive Security Approach

PVE policies, programmes and activities do not operate in a vacuum. They are part of a range of state, civil society, regional and UN efforts to address violence and the conditions conducive to VE and terrorism. A Comprehensive Security Approach links human security and 'whole-of-governance' approaches to policy-making in this field.

### 2.1 HUMAN SECURITY APPROACHES

Human rights and state security are complementary – complying with human rights obligations has multiple advantages for PVE, and non-compliance significant negative consequences. Human security approaches move us beyond militarized and limited understandings of national security.<sup>64</sup> This is

important because VE is a threat to states' legitimacy, to international community values, and standards of living – i.e. to human rights. Security is linked to rule of law, and the ability of citizens to freely exercise their rights. Active promotion of human rights, including the rights of women, is therefore essential to countering and preventing all forms of VE.

### SECURITY VS. HUMAN RIGHTS IN PVE: A FALSE DICHOTOMY

#### Human Rights Increases Security:

- Counters violent extremist groups' exclusionary ideologies
- Increases trust and cooperation for/on PVE measures
- Promotes everyone's security, not only those of the elite

#### Non-Compliance Reduces Security:

- Feeds VE propaganda
- Exacerbates underlying socio-economic and political grievances
- Reduces civilian trust in PVE measures
- Diverts resources from PVE

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**Because violence and insecurity are inter-connected, addressing VE requires also addressing other forms of violence – including those that are state-led or state-sanctioned.**

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It is a fact that state repression, including when it takes place through counter-terrorism activities, increases VE.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, state-sanctioned or state-led human rights violations (or perceptions thereof) are often part of violent extremist groups' ideology and rhetoric. Ensuring counter-terrorism (including PVE) initiatives and providers comply with human rights standards reduces the scope for such allegations.<sup>66</sup> Complying with human rights may also increase trust in the state and in PVE activities, leading to greater compliance and participation in PVE and

other counter-terrorism efforts. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy reflects this understanding of human rights and counter-terrorism, including PVE, as complementary and mutually-reinforcing.

**Human security requires us to consider women's security. Indeed, it should be obvious that security achieved at the expense of the safety of half the population is not security.** Greater gender equality is "correlated to less violent, more stable societies, yet (male) political leaders and policy-makers often respond to the threats of violence from other men by disempowering women and undermining their status, rather than the opposite."<sup>67</sup> Stepping away from existing commitments to women's human rights in efforts to secure compliance with some communities frequently leads to sacrificing the well-being, security, and development of women. Although such sacrifices offer 'quick' prospects for a *negative* peace (commitment to government agendas, or cessation of armed conflict), they are unsustainable, have significant long-term economic, political and social costs for men and women, and invariably deny women equal rights and opportunities.

## 2.2. WHOLE-OF-GOVERNANCE APPROACHES

Whole-of-government, whole-of-UN, joined-up or integrated approaches to policy-making are terms used to describe unified, comprehensive and coordinated multidimensional and system-wide effects in national, multinational and interagency policy-making contexts. The whole-of-governance approach has come about because of growing insecurity, fragility and prolonged humanitarian emergencies worldwide (including through VE) that have led to **cross-cutting, complex challenges that call for collaborative, coordinated, and comprehensive responses across government sectors.**

Whole-of-governance approaches focus on enhancing effectiveness and coherence of policies through increased cooperation between different administrative units. This requires shared understanding of the challenges, actions, resources, and evaluation of policies and programmes addressing a problem, such as VE.



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**By bringing together experts from different corners of society and government, greater understanding of a problem can be achieved, sustainability and credibility of programmes and activities increased, and capacity maximized through the pooling of resources and expertise.**

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There are particular challenges with implementing whole-of-governance approaches in fragile and developing contexts – as well as difficulties emerging in developed and highly bureaucratized countries. Nevertheless, where donors, external agencies, and regional institutions support states in their comprehensive peace, security and equality efforts, progress can and has been achieved. Given the breadth of PVE (as evidenced by the range of PVE priorities) a comprehensive, whole-of-governance security approach is vital to ensure that gender mainstreaming is facilitated across the board.

## DESIGN

PVE approaches that do not take into account other elements of security in their design, risk only focusing on forms of violence against women perpetrated by VE or terrorist groups, at the expense of considering violence perpetrated by state forces, as well as the relationship between state and non-state violence. These other forms of violence not only violate women's rights but can further the motives and rationales for supporting VE by incentivizing distrust of, and resistance to, government. A limited approach also creates a hierarchy of violence, whereby states deem 'extremist violence' more important than other forms, including intimate partner violence or child and forced marriage. This ignores the fundamental principles of gender mainstreaming (see [Appendix C](#)). **PVE programmes thus need to be mindful of, and account for, threats to women's security and their right to live free of violence, beyond VE.** They also need to mitigate and minimize any negative harms in other areas of security that their policies might generate, and remain focused on the overall objectives as shaped by local voices (including women). (See further: [Dimension 4: Gender-responsiveness](#)).

For example, a comprehensive security approach may include designing programming to change men's traditional gender roles, to facilitate inclusion in PVE for women, and to directly address the emasculation, shame, humiliation, and related concerns for male youth that are exploited by violent extremist recruiters. **Moreover, an inclusive and people-centered understanding of violence may serve as an 'early warning' of increasing VE within a region.**<sup>68</sup>

Synchronicity is required to **integrate and coordinate programmes and policies such that women's needs and capacities are consistently supported** through PVE programmes. Across the security sector, it is important that PVE experts inform 'hard' security design processes in order to offset the potential militarization of counter-terrorism, and to counter the prioritization of short-term security goals, both of which undermine the long-term peace building and human rights-based approaches prioritized by PVE. There are, no doubt, challenges with this inclusion as military and 'hard' counter-terrorism operations tend to eschew civilian oversight, and different institutional cultures can make communication challenging. Nevertheless, as cooperation and coordination become routine and institutionalized, such challenges will diminish.

**Theories of change (ToCs) that take into account gender considerations can help generate the insights and linkages necessary for a comprehensive security approach.** ToCs define long-term goals and then map backwards to identify necessary preconditions. They "serve simply to articulate the intended pathways from inputs/activities to the desired programme impact, and to identify the key assumptions associated with these pathways."<sup>69</sup> Some valuable lessons on this topic can be taken from closely-related fields, including in peacebuilding programme design:

"Too often we are driven in our program choices by our favorite methods– training, dialogue, trauma healing, political negotiation, grassroots mobilization – without considering which of these has the greatest likelihood of leveraging the desired change in the conflict. Program effectiveness is tied to a clear understanding of the ways that change happens in the particular context."<sup>70</sup>

## IMPLEMENTATION

Given the complexity of factors that might lead to VE, it is important to acknowledge that a **wide range of early recovery, peacebuilding and development interventions can directly or indirectly contribute to addressing the threat**. For instance, promoting interventions such as income-generating activities or providing basic services, may reduce the opportunities for extremist groups to recruit or build local support. In other words, the contribution towards PVE should not be limited to projects designed and implemented for this very particular purpose. A whole-of-governance approach to implementation requires coordination, working with complexity and understanding the interconnectivity of various interventions – including those not considered PVE. This is only possible with a [Gender-Sensitive Evidence Base](#), and with shared inclusive processes of design and resourcing. Indeed, everything can be considered in the context of PVE. This also emerges in the lessons learned discussions on: [Complementarity with UN Mandates and UN Transitions](#).

There are two main risks regarding implementation – one where programmes mask their connections to PVE, and the other where PVE is appropriated.

The first risk is that PVE programmes are ‘rebranded’, using familiar development or empowerment labels such as ‘livelihood creation’, ‘leadership skills’, or ‘inter-faith dialogue’ in order to mask the connections with C/PVE and counter-terrorism. Stigma associated with PVE programmes has sometimes encouraged practitioners and governments to avoid labeling activities as PVE, and to further avoid openly acknowledging PVE objectives for programmes. For example, women’s centers may offer cooking classes, but then will also teach about women’s rights or discuss fears about VE in their area. We have seen this especially with programmes connected to women’s empowerment or those that are women-centered, because of long-running feminist resistance to co-option into state militarist agendas, as well as safety concerns about the risks of being identified with PVE activities.

While not labeling or openly acknowledging activities as PVE can offer a way to manage the risks around

perceptions of a programme and stigmatization of those engaging in the programme, it can also present ethical dilemmas, including around the core principle of inclusivity and accountability (as discussed in more detail below). In the long run, subterfuge and covert PVE approaches undermine the overall objectives, and human rights compliance, and may prevent local ownership of PVE. When programmes are reported on as PVE but presented to beneficiaries and participants as something different, this implicitly labels those engaging in the programme (or those from a specific area) as vulnerable to VE, or core to building resilience to VE.

The second risk with whole-of-governance approaches is that there can be securitization and instrumentalization of peacebuilding, humanitarian, human rights and other development programmes. In other words other projects become dominated and appropriated by PVE. This may result because of funding and resources being reduced in some areas but increasing in the area of C/PVE. The outcome is that projects are diverted from their original objectives towards security and state agendas. Without a gender mainstreamed and human rights centric approach this extension of PVE also tends to result in the prioritization of security actors in the design and delivery of P/CVE. Mitigating this risk is addressed more in the section addressing [Security Sector Reform](#).

**Labeling and linking a project or programme to PVE can cause other problems too.** It can also create security threats against implementing partners and UN entities, thus impeding any efforts in the field. The labeling of activities under PVE and also go against core principles of certain entities, even though they have engaged and contributed for decades in PVE. For example, although many UN agencies support the release, rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with violent extremist groups, it goes against some of their core principles to consider this as PVE.

Importantly, there are ways in which projects and programmes can be acknowledged as PVE and minimize these risks: by working with local partners (upholding the principle of Inclusion) and by giving the PVE objectives a lower profile (but not obscured). Here,

donors and funders play an essential role in mitigating these challenges as they often frame and shape particular activities. This topic is addressed further in the Lessons Identified discussion: [do no harm](#).

## EVALUATION

Accountability contributes to the legitimacy and credibility of PVE. It helps to promote, advocate, and facilitate equal representation of women and men within PVE such that PVE practitioners and organizations reflect wider society. It helps reaffirm that force should only be used when necessary, and in a manner proportionate to the circumstances. Accountability, when framed according to human rights standards, transcends questions of performance and effectiveness – and although the latter are important, they do not substitute for accountability.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to robust reporting, resourcing, and M&E frameworks of their various initiatives and activities, **PVE programmes must have a whole-of-programme oversight to ensure accountability and transparency.** Principles of good governance are central to UN objectives; PVE interventions and programmes should be no different. The temptation to place counter-terrorism and security-oriented initiatives outside of civilian oversight must be resisted in order to maintain legitimacy and overall long-term effectiveness. Civilian primacy in PVE efforts must be maintained, and while policing or military agencies may contribute, their efforts must be subject to the same level of scrutiny and serve the objectives as laid out in the [inclusivity section](#). Gender-responsiveness in accountability frameworks and institutional mechanisms helps build non-discriminatory, human rights- promoting and responsive security institutions. Civilian bodies tasked with overseeing PVE should be drawn from a variety of sectors and agencies and have a broad range of interests represented, including from women’s groups, minority groups, and from different regions.

## PRAGMATIC STEPS

UN entities should support:

- The establishment of a national civilian body with oversight over all counter-terrorism components, including PVE.

- The development of multi-sectorial/multi-agency gender-responsive standard operating procedures on PVE.
- Equal participation of women security sector PVE approaches – with reference to the [Priority Area of Security Sector Reform](#)
- Consideration of differing women, girls, men, and boys’ security needs and intersecting threats in PVE design.
- The establishment of interagency coordination and communication mechanisms concerning national security policies and practices, including PVE.
- Publication of the “Theory of Change” framework that informs PVE policy and interventions – with reference to the [Gender-sensitive Evidence Base](#)
- Inclusive dialogues on PVE – including how to, and whether to, identify a programme with PVE – with reference to the [Lessons Identified Discussion on Do No Harm](#)
- Good governance and management practices for institutions, sectors and organizations involved in PVE through offering or designing and facilitating training.
- Public participation as policy and legislative measures in PVE are being developed.

## 3. Gender-sensitive Evidence Base

Gender analysis is required at all stages of PVE policy and programming in order to highlight gender differences and inequalities as they cut across other social markers – such as age, class, and ethnicity – and as they are shaped by the specifics of local contexts.

Good PVE policy, programmes and activities must **rely on sound empirical evidence, which is appropriately gender-sensitive and gender-disaggregated.** For example, the UN has recognized the importance of having a secure grounding for PVE efforts, and in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015):

*“Urges Member States and requests relevant United Nations entities... to conduct and gather*

gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses, and to ensure United Nations monitoring and assessment mechanisms and processes mandated to prevent and respond to violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, have the necessary gender expertise to fulfill their mandates."<sup>72</sup>

Please refer further to [Appendix B2: Key UN statements on mainstreaming gender and promoting the participation of women in counter-terrorism and PVE](#).

Despite such recommendations, an experts' workshop hosted at the London School of Economics determined that, "[t]here is a dearth of knowledge on the relationship between gender, agency and P/CVE which may explain the absence of an analytical gender perspective and reliance on gender stereotypes in P/CVE programs. Existing evidence-based research predominantly focuses on the policy level or on country-specific examples, resulting in gender-blind reports."<sup>73</sup> Further, the Institute for Security Studies in their report analyzing gendered approaches to CVE and PVE in Africa found that, "[c]ontext and local dynamics are key to building effective PVE programming and, as practitioners note, further research is needed to better understand the relationship between structural gender inequalities and violent extremism in different contexts, as well as the influence of gender norms and rigidities."<sup>74</sup> The consequence of this oversight in data gathering and research is that it has become too easy to dismiss gender-specific or gender-mainstreamed PVE efforts.<sup>75</sup>

## DESIGN

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**"You cannot fight what you don't understand"<sup>76</sup>**

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Gender-sensitive situational assessment is essential for guaranteeing that the dignity and security needs of all citizens are equally met by PVE. This is set out in the Ankara Memorandum, where the first section is

dedicated to, "identifying the problem."<sup>77</sup> Assessment teams provide the data necessary for PVE programs to be envisioned, designed and planned. Gender-sensitive situational assessment promotes and helps embed human rights, inclusion, participation, and comprehensive approaches to PVE from the outset.<sup>78</sup>

Without accurate, nuanced, and inclusive situational assessments of violent extremism (VE) in-country, and PVE capacities to date, all other monitoring and evaluation, and PVE practices, are rendered suspect and vulnerable to being misdirected at best, and facilitating the narratives of violent extremist groups at worst. Objective and evidence-based situational assessments are also necessary to assuage local and international concerns that governments and other bodies manipulate fear and threats of VE to further their own agendas (at the expense of opposition groups, human rights organizations and minorities).

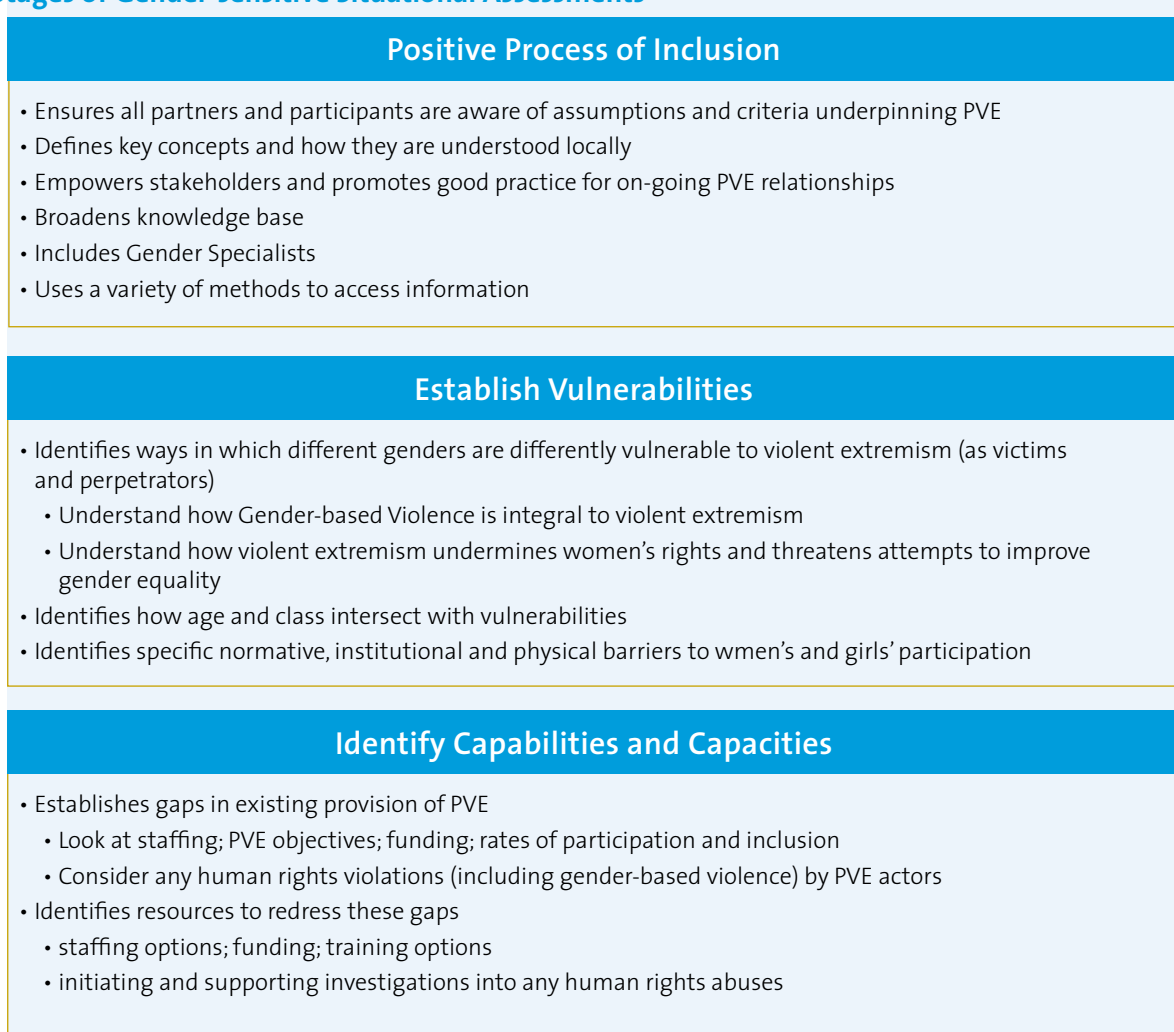
It is important to note that violent extremist groups are not static; they alter tactics and narratives. This means it can be difficult to determine whether change is happening because of PVE activities or for other reasons. There are also difficulties in establishing baselines because of the dynamic, uncertain and challenging environments in which PVE operates, which can mean that assessments are often partial and limited in nature.<sup>79</sup>

A current example of VE situational assessment design, such as the **UNDP toolkit**<sup>80</sup>, considers the 'violent extremism challenge' to **focus on resilience and vulnerability** factors. As a first step, an assessment should include how different genders connect to vulnerability and resilience factors differently (see further Dimensions: [Comprehensive Security](#) and [Gender-responsiveness](#)) and this is acknowledged and drawn out in the UNDP toolkit. However, resilience and vulnerability are complex phenomena and concepts. It is important to establish what these concepts mean in a locally-relevant manner, because, for example, 'resilience' as a concept addresses the absorptive, anticipatory and adaptive capacities of communities, but when paired with 'vulnerability' in VE analysis, it tends to focus on static ideas of capacity and resources, thereby portraying vulnerability as

an inherent negative and resilience as a positive. As young people are often the target of VE organizations and groups, it is especially important to look at what it means to female or male youth in areas where violent extremists are active.<sup>81</sup> A gender-responsive approach to resilience reveals a need for more relational, and therefore local, understanding.<sup>82</sup> This would lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the VE challenge, and how they threaten relationships within and

between communities, as well as with other actors. Gender-sensitive situational assessment has three core stages (outlined below). These situational assessments are more than ‘adding and stirring’ but include a nuanced gender analysis of the local context (situation). Gender analysis<sup>83</sup> refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.<sup>84</sup>

**FIGURE 4:**  
**Stages of Gender-sensitive Situational Assessments**



Assessments can potentially be desk-based reviews of existing data. However, such data are often insufficiently disaggregated according to gender, age, status or ethnicity. It is therefore important that such reviews are followed by semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and surveys. **By including a diverse range of sources, a whole-of-society assessment of PVE can be carried out.** It is also important that the assessment is accessible, and that results are shared. Assessment teams should be mixed-gender in composition, and from a variety of backgrounds, and socio-economic and ethno-religious groups. Similarly, assessment teams should have had gender briefings and training, including on specific methodologies for gathering data in gender-sensitive ways. This helps ensure that the results can be appropriately adapted, interpreted and contextualized, for the development of PVE.

**When assessments are lacking in gender-sensitivity, it is not possible to establish whether PVE efforts are successful, nor whether success is variable across different sectors of society, because the appropriate benchmarks required to identify the anticipated changes or the impact of the PVE programme are not available.** In addition, failure to carry out gender-sensitive situational assessments has a knock-on impact on the ability of the programme to adhere to the principles of inclusivity, responsiveness, capacity building, or local ownership. Failure to incorporate gender analysis and concepts at this early stage of PVE thinking can also undermine the trust in and legitimacy of any claims to gender mainstreaming or commitments to women's security, thereby reducing participation and effectiveness.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Evidence-based policy formation is a cornerstone of good governance and effective programming and strategy. When combined with 'theories of change' in a particular field, it produces better outcomes. However, PVE programmes, in part because of urgent need, complex operating environments (often in conflict or post-conflict zones), and *ad hoc* nature of initiatives, have not always been grounded in empirical and objective analysis.<sup>85</sup> While there is a strong community of practice in the fields of CVE and PVE, and the evolution of the programmes and policies over the past decade shows that there is a professional commitment to

being responsive and taking a positive approach to learning and adaptation,<sup>86</sup> this learning has still not been systematically captured. For example, some research shows that past evaluations of, and the findings and conclusions drawn from, past programmes were, "suggestive rather than strictly evidence-based."<sup>87</sup>

**Moreover, where learning and evaluations have occurred, they have not always reflected on how gender insights and gender equality have influenced decision-making and ideas of success.** This is evident in the evaluations of USAID operations in Kenya. The evaluations and associated research publications of these operations are rare because they reflect honestly on where and why successes have been limited.<sup>88</sup> Learning from failure, and gathering evidence of failure, is as important as identifying best practices but rarely occurs in the field of PVE. Additionally where evaluations are made public in PVE, gender is largely absent as a consideration. The Royal United Services Institute's (RUSI) evaluation of their Strive Horn of Africa PVE operations (in collaboration with the European Union) provides another example. This was unusual in that it also reflected on limitations, in particular it included an admission that they had failed in their objective of supporting recruitment and retention of women in a local police force, suggesting it was too difficult to overcome local resistance.<sup>89</sup> They concluded that attempting to include gender equality objectives undermined the efficacy of the CVE efforts. This is problematic: First, it ignores the security needs of women in the area, even whilst accepting that women report and engage better with local police forces when the police officer is female. Second, it ignores how security sector reform (SSR) (Priority Area 5), including working towards integration of women and their perspectives in the security services, is an important aspect of local ownership, and furthering human rights compliance. Third, it reflects more a failure in design, planning and implementation assumptions, than accurate reflections of local culture or needs, but shifts responsibility and blame for these failures onto the community. This outcome could also be the result of time constraints that negatively impact on the design stage of PVE interventions, such that not enough time is allocated to the foundational work that would have enabled gender-responsiveness and gender equality considerations.

It is also important that **the methods for data collection are gender-sensitive** – that is, we must think about how women can contribute to the process without placing them at risk. This might mean asking healthcare providers to partner with the initiative, for example, so women can speak confidentially at clinics without risk of being overheard. However, it is imperative that access to clinics and the services they provide is not limited by participation in PVE, or that healthcare providers are put at risk by participating. This is a lesson learnt from the use of the polio vaccine drive in Pakistan to determine the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden, and the subsequent erosion of trust in healthcare providers, increased risk of violence to foreign aid workers and medical workers, and the follow-on rise in polio incidence because of a reduced uptake of vaccinations.<sup>90</sup>

## EVALUATION

It is important to additionally monitor and evaluate any specific gender mainstreaming initiatives within PVE. Proper monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives enables documentation of good and bad practices, and helps determine their effectiveness. Monitoring assesses progress, improves decision-making, and allows for adjustments for greater impact and effectiveness. It also provides demonstrable evidence for Member States and UN institutions of their commitment to gender mainstreaming and gender equality in PVE.

**Gender audits are a useful tool to assess what gender initiatives have already been implemented, what the effects have been, and what gaps exist in PVE.** Such audits, when regularly carried out, can help establish whether gender mainstreaming initiatives have had an impact, and to what extent. Additional monitoring and evaluation of individual initiatives can establish effective and efficient practices, as well as identify any transferable lessons

## PRAGMATIC STEPS

UN entities can support Member States with the:

- Publication and distribution of evidence from a diverse range of sources and partners (noting that distribution should occur through a variety of media – e.g. radio, public hearings, in written form in local languages) to show how the VE situational assessment was derived.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO MEASURE ADHERENCE TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE PVE SECTOR

### • Gender infrastructure to:

- Examine gender policies
- Number and utility of Gender Units
- Percentage of women staff and managers (and if increasing)
- Increase in resources for women-centred initiatives within PVE (in terms of services and organizations)
- Frequency and relevance of gender-awareness training

### • Organizational changes:

- Work-life balance
- Tracking power relations between and among men and women
- Awareness of gender considerations in work goals and plans

### • External changes needed to transform service delivery and organizational culture:

- Societal attitudes towards women's employment
- Societal attitudes towards women's participation in politics and civil society
- Societal attitudes towards women's participation in VE
- Societal attitudes towards gender-based violence

- Publication and distribution of the methodology, as well as the findings of VE situational assessments and of gender audit reports.
- Utilization of mixed methods for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, and assessment of these methods' ability to access and adequately capture the experiences and realities of marginalized groups, including women and girls.
- Highlighting and distribution of gender-specific VE situational assessment findings.
- Publication of funded research into gender and VE/PVE by local researchers, including from a human rights perspective.

- Training of researchers and gender advisors in research methodology and research ethics.
- Inclusion of a variety of stakeholders in developing gender-sensitive evidence through facilitating dialogue, workshops and training sessions at local, national and regional levels.
- Training for conducting and carrying out gender sensitive situational assessments and gender audits.

## 4. Gender-responsiveness

**Gender-responsiveness is necessary because violent extremism (VE), as with all violent conflict, has distinct and disproportionate gender and human rights consequences.**<sup>91</sup> There is a difference in how the effects of VE are experienced among and between the genders because of the relational positions and contexts in which it occurs. A gender-responsive policy and programme responds to these differentiated impacts.

### To be gender-responsive is to be transformative.

Rather than just identifying gender issues (gender-sensitive), or applying the ‘do no harm’ principle (gender-neutral), being gender-responsive entails substantially working to overcome gender biases and inequalities. It means recognizing that all men and women have different and differentiated roles as

victims, perpetrators, enablers and as change agents. (See also the discussion in [Lessons Identified 1: “Do No Harm”](#).) Gender-responsive PVE programmes include an understanding of how ideas about femininity and masculinity can inform VE and people’s reactions to it, as well as integrate measures aimed at promoting non-violent, positive masculinities and dismantling negative masculinities.

### To be gender-responsive means knowing the local context.

Being gender-responsive requires an understanding of the specific gender dynamics and socio-cultural reference points that prescribe the roles of men and women in any given society (necessitating the principle of gathering and using [Gender-sensitive Evidence](#)). This includes examining how gender inequalities are compounded for certain groups of women and girls (because of their age, ethnicity, national origin, religion, belonging to a certain community, occupation or other characteristics), using this to identify the barriers these groups face in accessing services, and developing strategies to overcome such barriers. This allows PVE programmes and policies to respect and understand cultural norms (alongside [Dimension 1: Inclusivity](#)), while not deepening or perpetuating gender inequalities, and while aiming towards gender equality.

## GENDERED NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON WOMEN

- Women are subject to sexual and gender-based violence, and are targets of VE because of gender norms.
- Women face reduced opportunities in public, economic and social spheres.
- Women have extra caring and financial obligations placed upon them when they become heads of households (when men leave to join violent extremist groups).
- Women face additional harms caused by forced disappearance and prolonged detention of male family members in the context of CVE and CT.
- Returning women fighters face social stigma (not faced by returning men) as they may have broken social and cultural norms regarding women’s non-violence and participation in politics and activities outside the home and family.
- Women and girls are subject to social stigma if they have been raped, forcibly married or become victims of other crimes by violent extremist groups.
- Women might run the risk of being charged for alleged terrorist activity by male family members.



## DESIGN

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**PVE is a complex area, and gender differences in radicalization processes mean that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is unlikely to be effective in either preventing or countering radicalization as a dimension of VE.**

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**In the design stage of a policy or programme it is important to uphold inclusion to ensure that PVE is locally-owned, but also addresses the diversity of underlying drivers and conditions conducive to VE.**<sup>92</sup> For example, in addition to extremist recruitment materials and propaganda that directly target women and girls, and men and boys, through appealing to various local gendered stereotypes and commonly held beliefs, gendered assumptions are reproduced in the processes of radicalization that attract both women and men. Many radical groups’ ideologies rely on chivalric narratives, where men are obliged to defend and protect ‘their’ women from harm. These narratives identify harm or human rights violations as gendered; for example, presenting torture as violating masculinity, or the banning or criminalizing of traditional or cultural practices (especially those focused on women) as challenging local patriarchy/patriarchal power. These lead, in turn, to harmful hyper-masculine responses which include further attempts to control women in an effort to ‘protect’ them, increasing violations of women’s human rights, and violent retaliations against presumed perpetrators.

**In this context, gender-responsive perspectives can help to address masculinities.** In relation to setting PVE objectives, it enables men’s vulnerabilities to come to the fore, such as in refugee camps or in relation to emerging harmful masculine ideologies<sup>93</sup>, and it also allows for examination of the varied and inter-connected harms of VE, and what different understandings of VE and security mean to different men and women. This can help build alliances across civil society. Such alliances, and an awareness of mutual security needs of different elements of society, can foster resilience against the ideologies and practices of violent extremist groups.

Deriving from peacebuilding initiatives, PVE initiatives can focus on promoting positive masculinities, shifting the narrative of men as perpetrators of violence, to an understanding that masculinities are socially constructed, and can be shaped around peace, peaceful conflict resolution and challenge gender norms by promoting the importance of engaged fatherhood. The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) shows examples from the Balkans and Tunisia where programmes question men’s acceptance of violence as part of their masculinity and start to disassociate violence from manhood. This approach, USIP urges, is not to shame men and boys but to illuminate alternatives.<sup>94</sup>

It is also important to **assess how interventions might interact with and influence the attitudes and behaviors of the target group and surrounding community**, to ensure that negative gender stereotypes and discrimination against women and girls are not reinforced by the programme.

“[P]romoting gender equality ... is part of a larger conversation on women, peace and security that **can help CVE policymakers and practitioners avoid the pitfalls of stereotyping or securitizing women’s roles** ... and offers a framework of different strategies for practical application in analyzing, designing and assessing CVE efforts.”<sup>95</sup>

Placing gender analysis and gender equality at the forefront of PVE, offers a framework for better understanding and preventing VE. This becomes important when **considering the emphasis on women as mothers** in current PVE efforts. While motherhood is a significant identity for many women, and has been a powerful peace discourse, a focus on motherhood can reinforce traditional gender roles and prevent seeing women’s contributions in other ways. It also ignores the role of men as fathers in PVE.

Furthermore, **women’s support for VE should not be overlooked** in PVE. It is important to recognize that **some women may find violent extremism a source of empowerment**. Whether as participants or as a result of the changes to the social fabric, VE empowers some

women to actively challenge gender roles that may have hindered their participation in political, economic and social realms. For women that join VE groups, there may be some attraction in some groups' advocacy of gender equality for soldiering and participation, while for others a sense of empowerment may be found in groups advocating gender-segregation and defined gender roles. Others may also find security in the strict punishments for rape and tight controls of permissible sexual relations within groups, and still others may find opportunities to learn new skills that might otherwise have been barred to them, such as leadership, logistics, and computing.<sup>96</sup> With the right support, these women and girls can make use of the skills they acquired to become agents of change for gender equality. For those who do not join VE groups, the upheaval caused by these groups' recruitment patterns and violent activities often requires and forces changes upon a society and households, such as an increase in women's participation in local community affairs and rise in the number of female-headed-households because men have left to join VE groups or militia opposing them.

**Ultimately, PVE as a response to VE needs to acknowledge these gendered aspects of women's experience and knowledge of VE, and also to recognize that, given these impacts, PVE shapes future social, economic and political outcomes.** For example, lessons can be learnt from gender-inclusive and -responsive initiatives in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes.

## IMPLEMENTATION

**Unless delivery of PVE programming is gender-responsive and human rights-compliant, the protection of women from VE cannot be certain.** This stems from recognition that, on average, women represent between 15-30 per cent of the membership base of violent extremist groups and may also be supporters of extremism and extremist ideas.<sup>97</sup> In order for PVE to protect women, it is important to identify how men and women support violent extremist groups differently, and the role that gender plays. While remaining mindful of the specifics of each experience of VE, some general comments can be made with reference to gender. First, while some women are coerced and

influenced by friends and family members, they may also be motivated by political, social, ideological and economic motives. Second, the combination of personal and political is common to men and women.<sup>98</sup> This means that PVE programmes need to consider both of these components. However, to ensure that this does not lead to overly intrusive state behaviors or excessive 'securitization' of citizen's lives, these must be grounded in compliance with human rights obligations.

**For implementation to be gender-responsive, it must attend to the gendered differential needs of men and women. Specific PVE activities therefore may be less effective when addressing women's radicalization versus men's radicalization.** For example, PVE programmes that use group sporting activities are less effective when addressing women's pathways to violent extremism. Reasons for this include that VE groups use similar activities as a basis for recruitment among bored and underemployed young men, and that women tend to be more vulnerable to online VE or recruitment through religious study circles that offer childcare. Additionally, women's insecurity fostered by VE derives from different vulnerabilities and is experienced differently than it is for men. For example, in a number of cases VE has an underlying ideology that does not respect women's human rights, as well as threatens women's autonomy and increases their risk of gender-based violence – this presents different challenges for reintegration. PVE activities must target these specific vulnerabilities as well as those vulnerabilities that men face regarding VE.

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**It is not sufficient that women and girls are involved in the design and delivery of PVE. Instead, they must be supported to understand their rights and be empowered to exercise them before VE even appears.**

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For this to occur, physical, institutional and normative barriers must be reduced (see Barriers to Implementation). An important step is creating awareness in communities and among individuals about women's human rights, and about the importance and availability of PVE as a first step towards increasing

women's access and participation. As women tend to have lower levels of literacy than men, this limits the effectiveness of print and written communications directed at them, so alternatives need to be used. Messaging needs to acknowledge and value the contribution of women and girls in PVE, in order to reduce the stigma of women accessing these services, while also showing positive outcomes for women and girls who have participated. In many communities, women need permission from family or partners to travel or to participate in 'public' activities. It is therefore useful to work with community leaders and heads-of-household to ensure whole-of-society support for women's inclusion. In the longer term, it is essential to work with communities to eliminate practices that violate women's human rights and are consequently harmful to women's autonomy, status and mobility.

Given the complexities of VE therefore, gender-responsive service delivery is more than building skills or training women to become whistle-blowers, or otherwise influence family members away from extremism. Instead, it must include and be coordinated with other actions towards reducing women's inequality more broadly in societies, in order to work against gender inequality as a driver of VE. Equally important to recognize, is that while gender equality in itself is not sufficient to end extremism, it should nevertheless be promoted in its own right.<sup>99</sup>

## EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical for building a strong, global evidence base around VE and for assessing the diverse range of interventions being implemented to address it. There is strong evidence showing the negative effects of VE on women and girls and other marginalized groups, but evidence on effective strategies to prevent VE remain weak. This is especially relevant in resource-poor areas, where difficult funding decisions need to be made. At a programmatic level, it helps identify when programmes are on track and operating effectively, with a measurable impact on expected outcomes. Evaluations help institutions and countries learn from existing programmes and build a knowledge base on PVE effectiveness for the future.

**Gender-responsive M&E does more than include gender-sensitive data or enquiry, but holds PVE to account for all the elements of gender mainstreaming and for operating within and in support of the human rights legal frameworks set out earlier in this document.** Gender-responsive evaluation can promote social change by using the knowledge produced from evaluations to inform development programming

**The UN Women Evaluation Policy and the UN Women Evaluation Strategic Plan 2014-2017 guide the discussion and details set out in relation to PVE.** These set forth the principles and organizational framework for evaluation planning, conduct and follow-up in UN Women. These principles are aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, Standards for Evaluation in the UN System and Ethical Guidelines (2008).

that promotes gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights in a sustainable manner.

Gender-responsive M&E has two key components: first, gender equality in the design and participation of the M&E process; and second, ensuring the M&E process accounts for gender differences in terms of criteria for success – in other words, what is monitored and evaluated, and how it is undertaken. An important first task is determining an agreed-upon sets of targets, the attainment of which can be easily identified and verified. These should be based on the activities carried out, and on the desired consequences of those activities in relation to the established end state. This must be related to a theory of change. A second key task is establishing short-, medium- and long-term interim objectives that can help build momentum towards the end state. This connects the M&E process to the theory of change that shapes PVE.

Continuous and transparent M&E is vital as PVE is neither cheap nor quick.<sup>100</sup> Continuous, locally-owned, and transparent M&E processes are therefore essential to ensure that PVE programmes are flexible, meet

the needs of all, and contribute to gender-responsive organizational cultures. M&E should establish as a base line whether PVE activities and institutions are delivering on their objectives. Further, gender-responsive M&E should specifically determine whether such activities and institutions are:

- addressing the differing security needs deriving from the challenges of VE impacting people depending on gender and age;
- responding to and preventing human rights violations that emerge as a direct outcome of violent extremism or as a result of PVE efforts;
- using a participatory and inclusive process of delivering PVE; and
- fulfilling specific gender-related objectives.

Gender dimensions can be integrated into existing results-based management (RBM) strategies, and specific gender indicators can be developed for monitoring and evaluation of PVE. RBM ties into ‘theories of change’ as it seeks to identify the activity, its outputs and outcomes, and compare these to intended impacts. However, it is important to note that results-based management is not a substitute for accountability.

Good performance indicators that are gender-sensitive inform decision-making, measure progress and achievements, clarify consistency between activities, build legitimacy and accountability, and assess project and staff performances<sup>101</sup> Good indicators are linked to the vision of the future (end state/objectives) of PVE – that is, they are linked to the theory of change built into the PVE programme. Different types of indicators can be used, such as measures that focus on inputs, range of performances/processes, and outcomes of PVE.

Similarly, indicators can be *qualitative* (approval ratings for PVE; trust measures of PVE practitioners and institutions; perceptions of security), as well as *quantitative* (awareness and participation in PVE initiatives; reduction in VE incidents reported). It is tempting to see compliance with this principle as simply having separate indicators or additional indicators for ‘women’ (e.g. number of women recipients or deliverers). However, this is insufficient and must carry out a full gender analysis.

## Gender Responsive Budgeting

PVE policy initiatives are not cost-neutral. They require investment if they are to achieve their goals. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) facilitates that. Looking at the budget for PVE through a gender lens shows clearly where values and priorities lie, allowing for critique, reform, and support for initiatives. GRB budgeting is not about creating a separate budget for women, or solely increasing funding for gender-specific activities within PVE. **Rather, it is about ensuring that the allocation of resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing the needs of women in relation to PVE, while at the same time promoting gender equality.** It is a step towards accountability to women’s human rights, gender equality, and to meeting the needs of all members of society in PVE, demonstrating compliance with national and international gender-related commitments and action plans (e.g. those relating to CEDAW).

A gender-responsive budget is one that works for everyone, and is essential both for gender justice and for fiscal accountability. GRB is typically associated with national-level budgeting – PVE should be included in any national gender-responsive budgeting considerations – and here the term is also adapted to policy- and programme-level for the same ends. GRB allows for (re)prioritizing expenditure in a gender-equitable way by taking into account the different needs and priorities of women, men, girls and boys. GRB challenges gender-blind budgeting approaches: differences in the vulnerabilities and experiences of women and men to VE, mean that PVE policies which appear gender-neutral on the surface may have unintended consequences, including perpetuating gender inequality.

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**GRB means not only examining how resources are spent in relation to meeting the needs of men and women, but also how budgeting decisions affect gender equality. It does not necessarily mean an equal expenditure on men and women in PVE.**

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Indeed, although fewer women may be directly involved in violent extremist groups, women and girls’

insecurities in relation to VE and broader structural disadvantages, may require greater expenditure on initiatives that are women-centered. GRB should take into account other categories of inequality such as age, religious or ethnic affiliation, or the place of residence (urban/rural, different provinces), which can then be incorporated into gender-sensitive analysis.

### GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETS

- Reflect the values of a programme (and country) – who it esteems and who it rewards
- Identify resources and funds to respond to the different needs of men and women.
- Allocate and track sufficient funds for gender mainstreaming tasks.
- Evaluate the use of resources based on progress towards gender equality and in relation to other axes of disadvantage (e.g. race, age, ethnicity, rural/urban).
- Include the participation of women in budgeting decisions.
- Include de-centralized budgets to facilitate local ownership and responsiveness to local needs.

### PRAGMATIC STEPS

UN entities can support Member States to:

- Provide training in gender analysis of plans and budgets for staff who are developing and implementing PVE programmes.
- Publish gender-budget analysis in accessible formats, including in the M&E interim and final reports.
- Dedicate funding and staffing to respond to and address gender issues and gender mainstreaming in PVE institutions (such as gender training, initiatives to increase recruitment of women to PVE organizations, efforts to empower reporting of GBV or women's rights violations).
- Design and implement PVE campaigns delivered to address gendered needs of men and women as victims of VE.
- Design and Implement PVE campaigns delivered to address gendered needs of men and women as participants of VE.
- Design and Implement PVE campaigns to address the underlying gender inequalities that support VE.
- Set gender performance targets built into job descriptions, terms of reference and staff personal development plans, including at senior management level.
- Address the impact extremist ideology has on women and how gender should be included in combating such ideologies.
- Carry out research on gendered impacts of VE, on men and women's participation and recruitment, and on pathways to exit VE.

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRIORITIES FOR PVE

## Conditions Conducive to Violent Extremism

It is essential to understand that the processes and conditions conducive to violent extremism (VE) do not operate in isolation to each other, and that is not possible to reduce analysis to just one over another. Additionally, there are challenges with ‘levels of analysis’ – some conditions and drivers operate at the level of the individual (prisons; social networks) while others operate at the aggregate level (economic and political inequality; lack of good governance). For example, while economic disadvantage may not explain

why an individual turns to VE (i.e. it is not always the poorest of society that become involved), societies with higher levels of economic inequality tend to suffer higher rates of VE and VE incidents.<sup>102</sup> It is thus important to consider all levels of analysis, and resist being overly deterministic.

**A gender analysis asks two sets of questions about the conditions conducive to violent extremism. The first addresses ‘gender behaviors’** – it examines how men and women behave in relation to these conditions. **The second addresses ‘gender norms’** – the social pressures to behave in a particular manner, or what types of masculinity and femininity are rewarded or punished.

**FIGURE 5:**  
**UN Plan of Action: Conditions Conducive to Violent Extremism**



### Lack of socioeconomic opportunities

Statistical data suggests the existence of a strong correlation between violence and income inequality.<sup>103</sup>

- VE organizations are seen as attractive sources of income for some men – VE ideologies often blame women for ‘taking away men’s jobs’, strengthen ideals of male control over women in ‘their’ house

holds, and enable state agencies to be blamed for women's vulnerability and insecurity in the public sphere, especially when women have to travel long distances for water, food or to access services.<sup>104</sup> For example, in Syria expectations placed on men to be the male breadwinner increased the appeal of VE groups, as alternative providers of employment.<sup>105</sup> When male youth can no longer cope with their inability to fulfill this breadwinner role, they display a higher tendency to react by engaging in violent extremist behavior.<sup>106</sup>

- For some women the living conditions in VE groups can be better than in their home contexts. Many women who joined Boko Haram voluntarily, report they did so because they felt it would empower them economically, because their bride price was paid directly to the women rather than their family, and because standards of living were higher within the group.<sup>107</sup> ISIS also promoted this agenda for women, advocating a so-called 'five-star *jihadi* lifestyle', having 'house slaves' to do the chores.<sup>108</sup> Other women reported direct payment being offered to families and to individual women for carrying out suicide attacks.<sup>109</sup>

Data correlating lack of socioeconomic opportunities to vulnerability to recruitment to VE groups is a key reason for the Priority area of development orientated PVE programming.

### Marginalization and discrimination

The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action highlights that no country is homogeneous, and that diversity *per se* does not lead to or increase vulnerability to VE. However, it goes on to note that **when a country experiences insecurities and when one group (regardless of its demographic weight) monopolizes political and economic sectors at the expense of other groups**, subsequent harms occur which may incite those who feel disenfranchised to embrace VE as a vehicle for advancing their goals.<sup>110</sup>

**Another important factor is identification with the group that is marginalized or discriminated against** – even if the individual does not directly experience it or directly belong to that group. **Perception of**

**marginalization and discrimination matters more than statistical data.** This was highlighted in research carried out in Mindanao (Philippines) where the most significant driving factor of participation in VE was a group's strong connections to a community and an awareness of a community's marginalization, rather than economic poverty or direct experience of discrimination or personal isolation.<sup>111</sup>

**Participation in VE can be a draw for women who are often marginalized and discriminated against because they are female.** In rural Colombia, research by Mercy Corps showed how young women, "chafe under the daily humiliations of entrenched misogyny."<sup>112</sup> "I wanted to be a machinista," said Isabel, a former child soldier. "I hate chauvinism. Many women think this way."<sup>113</sup> In Nepal, adolescent girls joined the Maoist Army to escape and protest against gender discrimination and child marriage.<sup>114</sup> Similar motivations have also been reported in Sri Lanka in connection to girls and young women's involvement with the Tamil Tigers.<sup>115</sup>

Discrimination is frequently directed at those who are perceived as 'soft targets' – often women and minorities. Because discrimination and marginalization operate in an intersectional manner, women in marginal groups suffer at least a double burden. This is evidenced for example, in the ways in which sexual violence and gender-based violence are practiced in prolonged and unresolved conflicts. Where states fail (or are seen to fail) to respond to attacks against women, or are perpetrators of that violence, it can lead to the false belief that VE groups will protect women from state or others' violence.

In the PVE context, marginalization and discrimination also make it harder for women's civil society organizations, women's community based organizations (WBOs), women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders to advance women's human rights and equality because they may be re-cast as traitors by the state as these groups can often depend on foreign funding). They may also risk their ability to work within their own communities, because in a contradictory way they may be seen as supporting a state agenda against the minority community.

## Poor governance, violations of human rights and the rule of law

Although violent extremism is a global challenge and concern, and more than forty countries have experienced at least one terrorist attack, **VE thrives particularly where state authority is weak.**<sup>116</sup> Paragraphs 27-29 of the UN Secretary-General's *Plan of Action* outline how poor governance, and violations of human rights and the rule of law, enable VE to thrive. Efforts to counter terrorism and improve security that also curtail rights might provide short-term relief from VE actions, but often further underlying grievances and inequalities, thus exacerbating the challenges.

Such themes were evident in a UNDP Report, which revealed high levels of disaffection and mistrust of the government by those subsequently recruited to extremist groups. Key indicators included:

“[B]elief that government only looks after the interests of a few; low level of trust in government authorities; and experience, or willingness to report experience, of bribe-paying. Grievances against security actors, as well as politicians, are particularly marked, with an average of 78 percent rating low levels of trust in the police, politicians and military. Those most susceptible to recruitment express a significantly lower degree of confidence in the potential for democratic institutions to deliver progress or meaningful change.”<sup>117</sup>

Poor governance, such as corruption, and failures to uphold the rule of law, also has gendered effects that influence VE. For example, corruption can reinforce masculine ideas of patronage, with negative effects on those cast outside their ‘protection network’.<sup>118</sup> **Human rights violations by state agencies are often used strategically and deliberately to emasculate and feminize perceived ‘threats’** through sexualized violence or, for men, taking away opportunities to perform as ‘a man’.<sup>119</sup>

In addition, efforts to counter terrorism may have negative effects for marginalized groups, including women. For example, the new financing laws for CT exacerbate the challenges faced by women’s rights organizations<sup>120</sup> Women are detained by states so that men in their

families surrender, in a clear example of the violation of their rights and a failing of the rule of law.

## Prolonged and unresolved conflicts

Paragraph 30 of the *Plan of Action* highlights the connections between prolonged and unresolved conflicts and VE. **Out of twenty-three countries in conflict, seventeen are also experiencing violent extremism; and 88 per cent of all terrorist attacks have occurred in countries involved in violent conflict.** This suggests a strong link between conflict and fragility and the growth of VE.<sup>121</sup>

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**The suffering and lack of governance resulting from conflict, as well as underlying deep-rooted grievances, enable VE groups to control populations and resources, as well as alter the framing of the conflict and therefore the conditions for peace.**

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The relationship to militarization and prolonged conflicts is a key underlying factor in the [comprehensive security dimension of gender mainstreaming](#). Here, gender insights from other conflict scenarios can be used to assist those designing, promoting and implementing PVE programmes within these regions.<sup>122</sup>

## Radicalization in prisons

Research shows that harsh treatment in detention facilities can play a powerful role in recruitment to VE groups and terrorist organizations. Harsh treatment, whether at the hands of security officers and staff or other inmates, spurs prisoners to seek security and safety in VE groups. Safeguards need to be put in place to prevent the spread of VE ideologies and power while upholding international human rights for all detained persons.

Prisons are intrinsically hierarchical organizations that rely on clear demarcations of power – through violence, wealth and access to privileges. **They, therefore, tap into particular gender norms regarding male control and privilege, which are similar masculinities of violence that VE groups also rely on to recruit and retain.** The normalization of violence within prisons,



and the valorization of violence as a method of control and governance, further reinforces the legitimacy of VE groups for those who have experienced incarceration.

Prison radicalization is less of a direct factor for women because fewer women have been detained (and their sentences are shorter) for terrorism-related offences than men. This gives few opportunities for intervention and rehabilitation within prisons, but also fewer

opportunities for radicalization to occur there. This is likely to change, however, with the current prosecutions of foreign women in Iraq and Syria. It is therefore urgent that forward planning and programming is considered for women detained there, and should they return to their home countries.

As with men, women detained for other offenses must have their rights and opportunities for rehabilitation

## MILITARIZATION, VE AND PVE

### Militarization:

“... happens at multiple levels. At the individualized level, when mothers are persuaded the best way to get their sons off the couch is to send them to the military and sports fans are excited to see a military jet fly over their event. At the national level, when the best solution to problems is seen as collective violence and when the use of violence becomes ordinary, daily culture...”<sup>i</sup>

“...is the extension of war-related, war-preparatory, and war-based meanings and activities outside of ‘war proper’ and into social and political life more generally.”<sup>ii</sup>

- **Creates PVE challenges by directing resources and solutions away from civil society and broader human security provisions.**

- Analysis by SIPRI concludes that with around 10 per cent reallocation of military spending to the achievement of the SDGs, major progress could be achieved, provided that the reallocated funds are effectively channeled to implement Sustainable Development Goals with a comprehensive rights-based approach.<sup>iii</sup>

- **Impacts on how men understand their relationships and behaviors – valorizes military masculinities.**

- In al-Shabab controlled areas some young men feared being victimized for not joining the group, they worried about being seen as weak by family and society-at-large, and therefore had to ‘man up’ and join. If an able-bodied youth did not join, they could be suspected of supporting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Since some of them would move between *al-Shabab*- and TFG-controlled areas regularly, they had to pick a side.<sup>iv</sup>

- **Impacts on women’s behaviors and motivates them to join VE.**

- During the Chechen wars, Russian soldiers searching for rebel fighters would reportedly drag women from their homes, beat them, molest them, rape and sometimes murder them. Following this, we saw the emergence of suicide bombing in Chechnya, and Chechen women have been involved in 81 per cent of all suicide attacks attributed to Chechen rebels.<sup>v</sup>

i) Schouten, P. & Dunham, H. “Theory Talk #48: Cynthia Enloe on Militarization, Feminism, and the International Politics of Banana Boats”, *Theory Talks*, May 2012 <http://www.theorytalks.org/2012/05/theory-talk-48.html> ;

ii) Sjoberg, L. and Via, S. *Gender, war, and militarism: feminist perspectives*. ABC-CLIO, 2010 p. 7

iii) Perlo-Freeman, Sam *The opportunity cost of world military spending* (Stockholm: SIPRI 2016) [www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2016/opportunity-cost-world-military-spending](http://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2016/opportunity-cost-world-military-spending)

iv) Hassan, Muhsin “Understanding Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Case of al-Shabab and Somali Youth”. *CTC Sentinel* 5 (8) 2012, <https://ctc.usma.edu/understanding-drivers-of-violent-extremism-the-case-of-al-shabab-and-somali-youth/>

v) Maura Reynolds, “Abuse Seen in ‘Sweeps’ of Chechens”, *LA Times*, Jul. 2, 2001, Los Angeles, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jul/07/news/mn-19542>

and reintegration upheld in order to prevent their experiences in prison from radicalizing them. If we examine support (or lack thereof) for the families of prisoners convicted of terrorism, then prisons become factors in women's radicalization. Where the legal system detains men (sometimes indefinitely) for terrorism-related offenses, and often at some distance from the family home, women become dependent upon external support for maintaining the home and for visiting their family members. This is an opportunity exploited by VE organizations to further recruit within the family, and as broader propaganda about their ability to support their members.

### Processes of Radicalization

The conditions conducive to VE affect entire populations but only a small percentage of individuals are motivated and radicalized to carry out acts of violence. A complex combination of motivations and human agency play key roles in exploiting these conditions and transforming ideas and grievances into violent action. The *Plan of Action* identifies four broad areas: personal experiences that confirm VE ideologies; collective grievances and victimization; cynical distortion of beliefs and ethnic-cultural differences; and, influence of charismatic leaders and social networks. In short, **radicalization affects one's beliefs, behaviors and belonging.**

**As with the deeper exploration of the conditions conducive to violent extremism, gender analysis focuses on two elements: first, whether there are similarities or differences in the ways men and women radicalize, and second, how ideas about manhood and womanhood influence radicalization.** It is noted that there is no 'profile' of a 'terrorist' or 'violent extremist'. Both men and women radicalize for personal and political reasons – that is, a combination of rational and emotional factors. However, these factors are 'gendered' – that is they are experienced differently by men and women because of gender norms. For example, homo-sociability (the 'band of brothers' effect) is found in both men and women – for groups linked to radical violent Islamist ideologies men talk about the *Umma*, while women, the 'sisterhood'. In both cases, social networks play a facilitating role in radicalizing.

However, for women (especially those in the West), the process is often experienced online, rather than in public spaces such as bookshops or coffee houses, because of their desire to uphold *pardah* or because caring obligations keep them in the house for longer periods of time.

### Family relations play a major role in radicalization – especially among youth.

For example, one report found that the level of childhood happiness was a robust and significant predictor of likelihood of joining an extremist organization, in particular, a perceived level of parental involvement, versus high experiences of physical and emotional punishment as a child.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, in some cases it has been found that an absent parent, especially a father, may contribute to later radicalization. Extremists can fill the void of absent fathers.<sup>124</sup> Mothers are also facilitators in radicalization processes of youth. For example, in Jordan a mother who had lost two of her three sons fighting for Daesh, reported: "I am happy they went... Jihad was their duty as Muslim men, to protect their sisters." And where did they learn about jihad? "From me, of course," she said. "They learned it here, in the home".<sup>125</sup> The susceptibility for recruitment of adolescents is also linked to their development and their psychological need for group belonging. As adolescents separate from their intra-familial group in search of a broader, independent identity, it makes them receptive to role models, cues and patterns around them.

### Gender norms influence how particular grievances or ideologies are manipulated to recruit to VE.

For example, Reverend Iain Paisley of the Protestant DUP [Democratic Unionist Party] utilized a rhetoric that is, "highly attuned to the masculinity of defense."<sup>126</sup> Interviews with paramilitary women of the Irish Republican Army reveal how women's "defense of the hearth" was central to uprising against the British.<sup>127</sup> Al-Shabab too evoke male 'honour' ideologies to recruit men where women's rights are seen as violated or women's security not assured by the security sector.<sup>128</sup> In Jordan, among those supporting conflict in Syria, gender is often militarized by both sexes; the main reason cited for joining the conflict being to defend Syrian women against the *Shi'ia*-labeled Assad government.

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**Gender norms can encourage men to go, to prove their masculinity, and to shame those who stay behind.**

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Mercy Corps’ research in Jordan evidences this, showing how communities consistently talked about fighters as ‘real men’. Among other examples, they quote a woman from Salt in the Jordanian valley: “They [young men] hear about the rape of women in

Syria and they have to go,” By comparison, she continued, “The men in Amman only care about their hair.” For this woman, it’s worth noting that all three of her sons have gone to fight for Daesh.<sup>129</sup>

**PVE PRIORITY AREAS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

The PVE priority areas for gender mainstreaming are derived from research on existing PVE programmes, from research on the causes of violent extremism, and from consultation with practitioners from around the globe.

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**FIGURE 6:**  
**Priorities for gender mainstreaming in PVE**



**1. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING**

The *Plan of Action* identifies the conditions conducive to violent extremism. While PVE programmes and policies are generally focused on all these issues, interventions are usually focused on one or two. While poor economic conditions alone do not cause people to join VE groups, improving women’s economic well-being is seen as a route to mitigating the conditions conducive to VE, while being consistent with human rights obligations. This priority area not only addresses women-centered PVE economic programmes but also promotes gender-responsiveness in PVE development-related programming and contributes

to the broader realization of women’s social and economic human rights.

**The economic and social impact of violent extremism is long-lasting.** The presence and operations of VE groups negatively affect livelihood possibilities and food security. As a result of the violence and upheaval they engender, many of those who are economically active leave the area and rarely return, or no longer contribute to the formal economy because they become members of VE groups. Especially in the most marginalized areas, porous borders and the absence of central government facilitate the establishment, movement and cross-fertilization of VE groups, which

alongside the organized trade in weapons, drugs and other goods that are prerequisites for their existence, local energy and economies are diverted away from activities that produce stable, sustainable and peaceful livelihoods. Additionally, government failure to provide basic services (health, education, welfare) allows VE groups to meet these needs and further build support as a result. Although this is a form of racketeering, in the absence of peace and security, populations are often ready to accept any entity that appears to, and may actually, offer stability. As mentioned above (see 'lack of socio-economic opportunities') there are gendered differential developmental effects of VE, and of PVE and CT responses.

**While the development sector has been cautious, particularly raising concerns about the linkage of development cooperation to terrorism, there is recognition of the role development can play in PVE.**

The 2016 revision of the OECD's ODA guidelines now allows its Member States to report funding for PVE activities as part of their annual development targets and the implications for PVE efforts.<sup>130</sup> Within the development sector more broadly, there is acceptance of the need for gender empowerment as part of their remit.<sup>131</sup> For example, the most recent UNDP toolkit on PVE dedicates a section to gender analysis. Further, the UNDP regional and multi-country project document on PVE in Africa for 2016-2019 includes as one of nine outputs, gender-specific activities.<sup>132</sup>

Generally, **development-oriented PVE focuses on economic regeneration of at-risk areas**, including upgrading infrastructure, removing obstacles to entrepreneurship and prioritizing job creation. These often include long-term livelihood programmes and entrepreneurship training, which integrate life skills, citizenship values and social cohesion curricula. Particularly in contexts characterized by limited institutional presence, community-based projects, labeled as Community Violence Reduction (CVR), have been implemented by peace operations in "hot spot" areas to prevent the recruitment of youth at-risk. These initiatives, drawn from development tools, are implemented with demobilized combatants and community members to dis-incentivize at-risk groups regarding the economic opportunities of recruitment.

**Here, lessons learnt from DDR programmes are particularly valuable, to avoid being seen to reward recruitment.**

**PVE development-oriented programmes need to consider how women can access the opportunities from economic regeneration.** From a PVE perspective this is important because it further contributes to community resilience ([Priority Area: Community Resilience](#)). For example, assessing labor markets from a gender perspective can help to identify entry points for the economic engagement of women that promotes their talents. Investing in women's economic activity pays high dividends: for every \$1US a woman earns she re-invests 90% back into her family and/or community; men reinvest only 40%.<sup>133</sup> Training programmes on entrepreneurial skills or new livelihood skills can be made accessible to women as well as to men, and need to adapt to women with caring responsibilities.

#### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DDR CASES**

(See also: [Former combatants, returnees and Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their Family Members](#))

In Nigeria, the state underestimated the suspicion and hostility from communities when women sought to return from Boko Haram, and the level of freedom and empowerment some women in Boko Haram felt they experienced. While providing training and start-up money for small businesses were initially useful for women's reintegration, such initiatives did not provide meaning or belonging for the women.<sup>134</sup> In Nepal, women's experiences in war zones were discounted in DDR programmes, and they were offered only menial or gender-stereotyped training for employment (sewing or 'beauty'-related services). These initiatives were also often offered without enough attention to the sustainability of the market for those particular goods/services.<sup>135</sup>

**Case Studies:** Please refer to [Appendix E: Economic Empowerment in Bangladesh and Pakistan](#).

Training should also challenge gender stereotypes – for example, the UNESCO programme promoting women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Development programmes are working closely with humanitarian operations, bridging the short-term humanitarian response with the required intervention to improve national capacities to respond to emergencies and crises. **The work on the humanitarian-development nexus, with a strong focus on displaced populations and IDPs offers an important angle to consider with a PVE lens.** When humanitarian and protection needs are not addressed for displaced, vulnerable communities, this creates a space for VE recruitment and cross-border activities. Although protection mandated-agencies, like UNHCR, have strict policies on maintaining the civilian character of refugee camps for example, there is room to partner and strengthen development programming to mitigate possible light weapon smuggling, (ex) combatant movements and victims of crisis who ended up in refugee camps, including conflict-related sexual violence victims.

## 2. RECRUITMENT AND MOBILIZATION

The *Plan of Action* focuses on four processes of radicalization that lead to recruitment and mobilization of men and women for violent extremist groups. These are:

- individual backgrounds and motivations;
- collective grievances and victimization;
- distortion of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and
- leadership and social networks.

**Radicalization ideologies and mobilization processes are gendered, relying on particular constructions of femininity and masculinity to support VE.** Understanding mobilization requires acknowledging women's broad roles within VE networks, including combat, logistical and intelligence roles, providing general labour, and carrying out domestic, caring and sexual roles. Membership within a group does not always connect to a strong belief in the group's ideologies.

**There are three broad recruitment patterns: “the net”; “the funnel” and “infection”.<sup>136</sup> A fourth pattern is “coercive”, which cannot therefore be said to be ‘recruitment’.**

### THE NET: UTOPIAN THINKING

This is a dissemination of propaganda. VE groups' propaganda tends to provide three types of narratives: first, they offer answers to (individual/global) challenges; second, they offer an awe-inspiring solution, and finally, they provide a method for achieving it.<sup>137</sup> VE groups utilize social media and the internet to disseminate these components; to build allegiances; and to influence communities to co-create new narratives.<sup>138</sup>

#### Reactive PVE Strategies:

Seek to inhibit terrorist movements online; these primarily involve ‘take-downs’, filtering, and implementing restrictions. This has resulted in unlikely alliances between security services and hacker communities.

#### Proactive PVE Strategies:

Offer counter or alternative narratives and rely on the assumption that they are ‘noise’ which disrupts the VE message. Another positive approach is jamming and interfering with VE messages, often through humor.

#### Design and Implementation Challenges:

Not having sufficient relevance to the breadth of audiences; diversifying the range of alternative and counter narrative messengers, mode of deliveries, and messages, while remaining authentic and credible to a wide audience, especially given the digital divide that crosses class, geographical and gender lines; technological barriers hamper active local participation. **Therefore, it is vital that young women are skilled-up to engage online, and design counter-narratives which consider women's and girls' different recruitment patterns.**

### THE FUNNEL

This is a more incremental approach, which targets specific individuals already deemed ready for recruitment. This is sometimes associated with how

domestic abuse occurs (hence connections to domestic violence and VE).<sup>139</sup> Similarities are also noted with how ‘new religious movements’ or ‘cults’ operate. The process involves:

1. Identification and isolation of a target, including fostering distrust in others, such as authorities, parents, teachers, friends;
2. Devaluation (including humiliation and building fear);
3. Dependency-creation through building relationships based on love, ethnic or religious identity (including emotional strategies such as ‘love bombing’, affirmation of hero/savior narratives, constant gifts, and providing ‘special’ information).

#### **Reactive PVE Strategies:**

Detaining those vulnerable to radicalization; monitoring increases or changes in domestic abuse prevalence as an ‘early warning’ indicator.

#### **Proactive PVE Strategies:**

Awareness-raising of the ‘funnel’ process; highlighting links to domestic abuse; promoting emotional resilience and well-being among girls and boys.

#### **Design and Implementation Challenges:**

Over-focus on psychological components can de-emphasize the political and socio-cultural aspects of VE; create false links to mental health and psychological conditions; increase the risk of violations of personal liberties – especially relating to health care;<sup>140</sup> reinforce a ‘*jihadi* bride’-style narrative (assuming women join VE groups for ‘love’) thus oversimplifying the dependency component; can overlook women as recruiters who build on existing networks of trust.<sup>141</sup>

**Therefore, it is vital not to decouple psycho-social from the politico-economic in PVE design, and to ensure that women’s diverse experiences and motivations are addressed in PVE implementation.**

## **INFECTION**

The third recruitment pattern relies on an agent ‘inserted’ to pursue recruitment from within, employing direct and personal appeals. The social bonds between the recruiter and target may be strengthened by

appealing to the conditions conducive to VE, as well as pre-existing social and familial networks. VE groups use positive role models and infiltrate social networks to facilitate group radicalization.

For example, an *al-Shabab* recruiter would approach young men and offer to make them an *amir* of his own ‘men’ if he could get three or more of his friends to also join. This connects to masculinity, and the power young men often feel they lack compared to older men. In the words of one respondent, “[w]alking the city with a gun as a member of *al-Shabab* ensured everybody feared and respected you. Girls also liked you.”

Consultations held by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with criminal justice actors and civil society on gender mainstreaming in PVE efforts in South and South-East Asia has revealed that this phenomenon does not only affect men. Some VE groups capitalize on grievances over a lack of social recognition or opportunity, by highlighting the potentially significant role that women could play in the terrorist group.

#### **Reactive PVE Strategies:**

Highlighting the self-interest (often financial) of recruiters; distraction activities; arrest and detention of suspected recruiters; highlighting VE false promises; disrupting men’s social spaces.

#### **Proactive PVE Strategies:**

Developing alternative positive masculinities (e.g. peaceful heroes); building inter-generational support networks; recruiting male allies to champion gender equality.

#### **Implementation Challenges – Youth Engagement:**

Not including youth and youth empowerment when targeting recruiters; reinforcing patronage networks; displacement activities lacking meaning or not resonating with intended targets; exclusion of young women (focus on young men as ‘youth’); over-focus on male public spaces that reaffirm VE narratives; long-term and slow to generate programming that doesn’t adapt to rapidly changing youth dynamics and contexts. **Therefore, it is vital to help ‘inoculate’ local communities by working directly with them,**

**including young women and young men, in the design and implementation of PVE interventions that challenge existing narratives and gender roles that put individuals at risk of VE ‘infection’. Local leaders and young people should also get gender equality training.**

## COERCION

The fourth pattern is coercion, such as kidnapping, blackmail and other methods, that are deployed against men and women. Women are particularly vulnerable to forced prostitution and sexual slavery.

### **Reactive PVE Strategies:**

Rescuing women and girls (e.g. Chibok Girls); provision of ‘safe houses’ for women returnees (see [Priority Area: Former Combatants and Returnees](#)); disrupting VE group activities; prosecuting kidnappers and those who work with them.

### **Proactive PVE Strategies:**

Security sector training in prevention of trafficking; working with communities (particularly traditional and religious leaders) to combat harmful stereotypes about rape victims; working with women and girls to identify strategies to halt trafficking

### **Implementation Challenges:**

Missing women not reported; stigmatization; lack of police or military skills, interest or resources to investigate effectively; complex trauma needs; reinforcing stereotypes that women are only victims of VE. **Therefore, it is vital to engage in security sector reform so women’s experiences and needs are considered (especially in militarized zones), and to consult with local groups with experience working with trafficked persons and rape victims.**

### **Gender Mainstreaming Challenge: Women Can Also be Radical**

There is a significant lack of programmes and policies targeting women as ‘potentially radical’. Too often, as highlighted above, women are perceived only as agents who can prevent the radicalization of men. There is little consideration of how women themselves are targeted as potential recruits, including

how the messaging of VE groups is altered to do so, how their recruitment networks differ, and how their direct appeals feed on particular gender behaviors and norms.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTION: TARGET THE FAMILY UNIT

Because of their wide range of experiences of VE, women can play an important role in all three modes of recruitment. As evidenced by Mercy Corp’s PVE work in Jordan for example, when a Jordanian man leaves home to defend Syrian women and children, Jordanian mothers and wives are often left destitute. Children cannot afford to go to school.<sup>142</sup> Women’s voices in “[de-mystifying] the life of a terrorist by speaking about the hardships involved such as those of separation, insecurity, loss of income and anxiety about a covert life,” is important<sup>143</sup>, but this role of de-mystification is extended to the entire family.<sup>144</sup> Families and support networks are both powerful enablers of VE, and barriers to recruitment. In research in Kosovo for example, families reported moving cities to try to deter sons from radicalizing further, while in other cases families’ distrust of younger members who began to follow more radical approaches to Islam (regardless of connections to violence) facilitated the radicalization of those youngsters as they became increasingly disconnected from the family unit creating openings for recruiters.<sup>145</sup> Research elsewhere shows the importance of family in many cases, but also how those who are radicalized often hide their intentions from those closest to them.<sup>146</sup> Therefore, PVE programmes that address families, such as training mothers and fathers, need to consider how trust in families can be strengthened and fostered as much as training adults to ‘spot the signs’ in young people.<sup>147</sup>

**Case Studies:** Please see [Appendix E](#): On-line campaigns; Burka Avenger; Comedy as PVE

## 4. WOMEN’S EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

As noted earlier, violent extremism (VE) has a disproportionately negative effect on women’s human rights and security – we see an increase in child marriages, domestic violence, sexual violence, including sexual slavery, and poverty, and a decline in women’s

access to education, employment, and health services, and political engagement. Nearly every indicator of human development and women's empowerment suffers. It is therefore apparent that women have a vested interest in preventing VE (even as some women actively participate in it).

Attacks on women's freedoms, security, and lives are deliberate in VE movements. Upholding them is therefore a core component of challenging the objectives and strategies of VE movements. The targeting of, and impact on, women by violent extremists are not accidental or collateral damage, but deliberate. In non-western settings, conservative and extremist movements typically link women's human rights to notions of 'western' immorality as an extension of colonialist politics. The more extreme movements create boundaries between women and men, manifested through legal and physical means, including the regression of women away from the public space and life.<sup>148</sup> Yet, despite the clear linkage, the security sector tends to ignore attacks against women, as the violence has not been considered a threat to national or international security. This is why Security Sector Reform is important for gender mainstreaming in order to affirm a [comprehensive security](#) approach.

#### **Challenge:**

Linking women's empowerment to PVE is difficult given the limited impact, unclear causality or correlation between PVE and women's empowerment.

#### **Possible Solution: Be SMART**

Develop clear SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) objectives for specific women's empowerment objectives and link these to PVE. For example, an uneducated woman who labors daily with no vision or hope for the future of her children sees only what is apparent, not what can be imagined. If only VE narratives are presented, this is challenging to stability and peace. While engaging meaningfully and appropriately on an intellectual and emotional level with women in at-risk communities will be more protracted, enhanced perception and alternative possibilities have the potential to be more enduring. Therefore, focused, strategic programmes on education and critical thinking (in combination with programmes to increase

gender equality in other areas), so women can identify the flaws in VE narratives and imagine alternative futures, can be successful. It is also worth noting how feminist and women's rights organisations (WROs) are necessarily antithetical to VE narratives and objectives, rooted as they are in inclusive, sustainable, equitable and pluralistic peace agendas. This is reflected explicitly in the *Plan of Action*, which emphasizes this point: "women's empowerment is a critical force for sustainable peace..."

#### **Partnership Challenges:**

Exclusion of women's groups and women's rights organizations from PVE; lack of resources and funding structures; mutual suspicion; partnering with non-violent extremist groups; and programmes and policies that are antithetical to women's groups and women's rights organizations.

This is particularly noted by the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, Karima Bennouna, in remarks about her findings in 2017 from 54 countries:

"The political practice of partnering with non-violent extremist groups is also marked as a cause of concern... governments that cite cultural practices while objecting to women's rights defenders are 'aiding and abetting extremism'."

She further noted that,

"[g]overnments must not make the mistake of thinking they can use so-called 'non-violent extremism' ... The highest price for such blunders is paid by women ... [O]ften these so-called non-violent extremists espouse a discourse of discrimination against women that ... ends up producing a great deal of violence against women."<sup>149</sup>

#### **Possible Solutions: Do No Harm and Seek Male Allies**

PVE priorities for women's empowerment and equality need to be built on dialoguing with women and other partners at all levels, and ensuring that women's human rights and the 'do no harm' principle is upheld. Gender mainstreaming in this priority area also requires supporting male allies and engaging



men in gender empowerment and women's equality initiatives. The Fostering Peaceful Communities in Morocco Project found that participants were often advocates of gender issues (and not necessarily just women), especially where activities that intended to target women included men as well.<sup>150</sup>

**Case Studies:** Please See [Appendix E: Women's Leadership in Nigeria](#); and WISE

## 5. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

“The old and ever current debate between liberty and security is relevant, precisely because in some countries, the VE agenda has been abused to suppress political opposition or ideological dissent. The Special Representative on Terrorism has alerted us not to lose “the valuable rights and freedoms of our citizens in the rush to find new measures to protect them.”

– Magdy Martínez-Solimán, *UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Program Support*

The security sector includes a broad range of actors, including the police, militaries, border guards, associated ministries, and private security companies, among others. **The security sector<sup>151</sup> takes a lead role in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.** However when the security sector is not representative, responsive or accountable to local communities, this creates grievances, and where they are not inclusive to women and minorities, there are additional challenges for the provision of security. In other words, security sector activities inadvertently become part of the driver and conditions conducive to VE. **Security sector reform therefore is critical for successful PVE.**

It is a well-known tactic of VE groups to generate a spiral of state repression, leaving populations squeezed between them and hostile, intolerant governments. In some countries, the fight against VE has often been used explicitly to justify state suppression of civil society organizations, through detentions, assassinations, revoking licenses, etc., and VE groups are quick to exploit the vacuum that results. For example, although

extensive road blocks, road closures and check points reduce the mobility of terrorist organizations, they also hamper women's mobility to get their produce to markets, places them in vulnerable positions when searched by male security personnel, and makes them vulnerable to robbery and banditry in the surrounding area.

It is widely acknowledged that the meaningful and inclusive participation of both men and women in security sector reform enhances public trust and confidence in state institutions. **Security sector reform must stem from the perspective of a comprehensive security approach** – that is a sector responsive to the needs, perceptions and visions of men, women, boys and girls for their security; representative of different sectors of society; with inclusive decision-making processes; which is held accountable; and which coordinates with other areas of policy. Without this approach the security sector will be hampered in its ability to understand and respond to the impacts and consequences of VE – especially as they relate to women and girls.

### **Gender Mainstreaming Challenges: “Gender-Lite” Approaches<sup>152</sup>**

PVE security actors lack training and capacity, structural power, and influence, to affect the wider gender relations in which PVE takes place; Gender experts lack expertise in PVE; gender considerations are reduced to ‘women *qua* mothers’ or ‘women *qua* victims’; approaches only ‘add women into programmes’ rather than look at how gender operates as a factor in VE, or how wider societal gender relations influence PVE activities.

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**Without contextualizing PVE in wider society, efforts to ‘introduce women’ will be limited, token and piecemeal.**

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Moreover, it has meant that ‘doing gender’ in PVE has led to human rights violations, reinforcement of gender stereotypes, and allegations that it hampers wider security objectives of PVE.<sup>153</sup> In this section, while we focus on security sector reforms, the issues cut across all aspects of PVE. These are reflected on and expanded further in the legal framework discussion.

### **Possible Solution: Secondment of Gender Experts to PVE Units**

To facilitate and mainstream gender analysis into PVE, UN missions can contribute to increasing capacity and awareness of how gender works in PVE by drawing on the expertise of gender officers, women protection officers and gender units to deliver appropriate and context-specific training, and to be seconded to PVE units. Women, and civil society actors working with women, can help to build the capacity of the security sector as well, through training, research and expert advice on gender issues. Such a participatory and accountable PVE framework also helps to ensure that PVE efforts do not unduly undermine the human rights of women and girls. This can be a mutually-rewarding learning experience, empowering both security and gender experts to develop knowledge and insights into their different areas of operation.

### **Possible Solution: Gender Equality Sessions in all PVE training**

Core PVE training for practitioners include integrated specific gender equality sessions. Complementary processes include mentoring, online networking and self-assessments as well as forming internal teams of gender and non-gender staff, and encouraging dialogue between them and external gender experts.<sup>154</sup> This must also occur alongside training on issues at the intersection of gender/PVE for both male and female personnel.

### **Possible solution: Training of Trainers (ToT) Approaches**

ToT approaches might be considered useful instruments as they multiply the spreading of knowledge while creating local ownership at the same time. In the context at hand, a gender-focused ToT would aim to provide selected PVE practitioners with the skills and knowledge needed to implement adult training programs on gender-related topics. This approach combines main ideas of adult education with an interactive and learner-centered approach and melds it with the thematic and technical knowledge to be learned so that those undertaking the programme develop their personal training techniques and capacity to train their peers and colleagues on this topic. By building upon the experience, expertise and contextual knowledge available among participants,

ToT allows for a multiplier or cascade effect within relevant institutions. In addition, to the extent that this approach involves the gradual devolution of the responsibility for gender training to local practitioners, it builds upon and fosters the principles of local ownership and long-term sustainability.

Beyond such embedded possibilities, short and one-off training might be considered to strengthen understanding of gender within PVE and the context in which PVE programmes operate. **Gender training to enhance the expertise of staff and partners must be based on a robust needs assessment.** However, based on our understanding of the drivers of VE and the UN principles of gender equality, main topics of training to be considered are: UN approaches to gender mainstreaming and human rights; sexual and gender-based violence; gender roles and relations (before, during and after violent extremism); gender identities and intersectionality; and, access to justice. **Such training could include and be delivered by local women's groups and civil society actors to promote PVE practitioners' insight into their expertise, knowledge and perspectives.**

**Case Studies:** Please refer to [Appendix E: STRIVE, Horn of Africa; Police Women in Pakistan, Addressing Domestic Violence in Tajikistan.](#)

## **6. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND GOVERNANCE**

In the list of conditions conducive to VE, there is a focus on inequalities and marginalization that are then used to foster polarization exploited by VE ideologies. Therefore, while national governments and regional institutions focus on ameliorating the material conditions leading to discrimination, and work towards the reduction in hate-speech across society, it is understood that **it is at the community level where polarization, marginalization and discrimination are most acutely experienced.** Moreover, it has been noted that not all places (just as not all people) become embroiled in VE, even when in a conflict zone or in areas where VE is present nearby or where structural inequalities, marginalization and discrimination occurs. This has led to PVE initiatives focused on replicating the behaviors and norms found in those communities

where VE and polarization is absent. These communities are characterized as ‘resilient’.

Resilience is used to mean both resistance and adaptation to threats or shocks.<sup>155</sup> It is a process of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances. At the community level, the ‘absence’ or ‘prevention’ of threats to that community, and the minimization or mitigation of negative effects of those challenges defines success. **Community resilience is therefore understood as, “a process linking a set of networked adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation.”**<sup>156</sup>

There is little research on resilience to VE *per se*, however some lessons can also be learnt from research in peacebuilding<sup>157</sup>, on fragile states analysis<sup>158</sup>, on community resilience to communal and sectarian violence, and from comparative analysis of non-war communities.<sup>159</sup> Research on Balkans communities’ resilience and PVE, points to factors that *show* resilience. For example, research on Albania identified three sets of adaptive capacities – ideological (civic

values; religious education), socio-economic (connections/cohesion, equal opportunities), and structural (institutional cooperation, community engagement and efficacy).<sup>160</sup> Community engagement is varied and some types are found to be more effective than others in generating resilience to violence. **Existing local networks of civic engagement** (organized networks bound together by working trust and mutual shared interests across groups, such as business associations, trade and labor unions, and organized clubs) are often more effective than ‘everyday’ interactions and associations – such as soccer games or festivals. Finally, on the question of values, research supports the overall vision of the UN *Plan for Preventing Violent Extremism*, with Holmer concluding her research with: **“[a] community that promotes tolerance and inclusivity, and reflects norms of gender equality, is stronger and less vulnerable to violent extremism.”**<sup>161</sup>

These various relationships that form community resilience have been generalized as: Bridging, Bonding, and Linking ties.<sup>162</sup> These are summarized in the table below:

**FIGURE 7:**  
**Types of Social Connections (Reproduced from Ellis and Abdil 2017, p.290)**

Social Connections that contribute to Community Resilience	Risk Factors For VE addressed by Social Bonds	Examples of how communities can promote resilience
Bonds: Sense of belonging and connection with others	Weak social identity; searching for belonging and meaningful identify	Support for ethnic-based community organizations promoting self-help
Bridging: sense of belonging and connection with people who are dissimilar in important ways	Social marginalization; lack of identification with or attachment to nation	Community-wide, school-based anti-bullying youth mentoring programming
Linking: connections and equal partnership across vertical power differentials – e.g. government and communities	Lack of trust, lack of collaboration and equal access to recourses, systems that lack the knowledge to engage/serve communities	Establishing advisory boards or multidisciplinary teams with community membership

Two additional factors impact on community resilience: Efficacy and Legitimate Leadership.

### EFFICACY

Research on Kenya reveals the importance of both bridging relationships among diverse community

groups in preventing or mitigating violence and *collective efficacy*, or a community’s belief that it has the power to achieve shared goals. Research on Kosovo showed that part of this efficacy is an awareness of, and a willingness to act collectively against a problem.<sup>163</sup>

### **Solution: Improve efficacy of existing networks**

The work on networks seeks to **extend the utility of existing community associations and groups to PVE**, or to **up-skill them to enhance their efficacy**, so that they are better able to resolve community tensions to prevent polarization. These approaches also build **local ownership**, as self-governing communities are found to be more resilient. **Women, Peace and Security focal points** can be created to help develop and foster women's rights organizations and government representatives working together on PVE. This is important for Women's Representation, as part of Inclusivity, and connects with the **Priority Area: women's empowerment**. Community engagement in PVE requires the participation of women to be successful (see **Dimension: 1.2 Women's Representation and Participation**).

### **Legitimate Leadership**

A key factor in a community's capacity to opt out of war is legitimate leadership. Legitimate leaders are ones who have established extensive networks in the community, regularly engage with residents, and value brainstorming and problem-solving with community members who are critical to resisting war.

### **Solution: Supporting Women**

Given the centrality of leadership as a force multiplier for resilience, it is important to ensure women leaders are supported; women's networks and organizations are incorporated into local civic engagement and PVE partnerships; and, the goals of local networks and PVE committees are gender-responsive. **To achieve this may require careful dialogue with local partners, and fostering dialogue on sensitive gender topics.** The implementation of innovative approaches in conflict-affected areas, such as Community Violence Reduction (CVR), could serve as a reference towards promoting community resilience and gender mainstreaming as it relates to PVE. These are designed based on a consultative process with community members and local authorities in order to identify interventions with the highest social, economic and security impact while promoting community dialogue. Through this process, community-based initiatives are developed with the aim of preventing recruitment by armed groups, and to mitigate the negative harms of violence. Moreover, initiatives serve to mobilize and empower

women, and create the basis for the implementation of follow-on development projects.

### **Challenges**

Funding and expectation mismatch; lack of capacity and under-preparedness of civil society organizations (especially in monitoring and evaluation); low levels of trust between the state and civil society actors; poor governance and institutional weaknesses; fear of co-option and securitization; establishing an evidence base about measures that are effective at prevention (i.e. how to prove a counter-factual, i.e. the absence of violent extremism).<sup>164</sup>

### **Solutions**

The methods to enhance resilience are also the methods to utilize here to resolve these issues – local dialogue, participation, oversight, engagement, and training.

**Case Studies:** Please refer to **Appendix E: Community Justice in Northern Ireland; Lifting Weights and Spirits in Jordan.**

## **7. FORMER COMBATANTS, RETURNEES AND FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS**

The prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration, and processes of risk management of returning combatants, VE group members, foreign terrorist fighters and their family members are important parts of preventing spreading VE and recidivism. At least 40,000 individuals have travelled from more than 100 countries to join the conflict in Iraq and Syria.<sup>165</sup> Of these, as many as 30 per cent of any nationality were women and children.<sup>166</sup> There is no neat profile for the women who travelled to the conflict zones of Iraq and Syria or to other conflicts and VE groups. There is a gap in official data, only a small percentage of women have returned 'home', and there is little knowledge about the women who have remained in conflict zones.<sup>167</sup> This lack of information and of nuanced analysis poses challenges for PVE.

Foreign fighters represent a small percentage of those associated with a VE, combatant or terrorist group. In

certain contexts such as Somalia and Afghanistan, VE members are inherently endogenous, and combatants have strong family ties in the territories controlled by the group.<sup>168</sup> In other cases, individuals come from neighboring countries, or may be individuals who were prevented from leaving for a foreign conflict zone, or those who are ‘exiting’ programmes as part of de-radicalization initiatives. Therefore, most of the programmes addressing former combatants and returnees are not those designed for ‘foreign’ returning fighters. Rather they focus on those disengaging/defecting from the group in-country.

Former combatants, returnees, returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families have the potential to be significant spoilers or supporters for future peace and stability, and can have significant impacts on VE cohesion, acceptability, and on community resilience (priority area 6), which means that this also needs to be an important priority area.

#### **Cross-cutting Solutions: Human Rights Compliant, Gender-responsive and Child-centered**

Human rights compliance must be at the forefront of any policy and programming that focuses on rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as prosecution when appropriate<sup>169</sup>; work with member states in applying the UNSCR 2467 (2019) on meeting the needs, security and justice of victims of VE; initiate women-centric programmes as well as make existing programmes gender-responsive;<sup>170</sup> all children should be primarily considered as victims – their best interests must be the guiding principle, and rehabilitation and reintegration the primary goal for any intervention.

#### **Prosecution Challenges**

Pressures to seek revenge, deliver speedy punishment<sup>171</sup>; ‘home countries’ refusal to repatriate, and denied citizenship and threatened extra-judicial killings;<sup>172</sup>securing convictions because of evidential weaknesses and jurisdictional ambiguity;<sup>173</sup> applying differing evidentiary threshold for men and women.<sup>174</sup>

#### **Possible Solutions: Technical and Legal Frameworks and International Cooperation**

Support Member States to uphold UNSCR 2396 (2017) which calls upon Member States to employ

evidence-based risk assessments to assess and investigate family members for any potential involvement in criminal and terrorist activities.

#### **Prison Challenges (see also the discussion on radicalization in prisons)**

Women VE offenders are less likely to get rehabilitation and reintegration support than men in prison or outside it;<sup>175</sup> risks of radicalizing other prisoners; vulnerability to violence perpetrated by other inmates and guards; address the needs of children and other family members of VE offenders.

#### **Possible Solutions: Training**

Train prison staff and set up appropriate rehabilitation programs for women VE offenders; encourage participation of personnel with gender expertise in the design of interventions for women offenders; apply the relevant and appropriate provisions of the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules); ensure vocational training opportunities take into account the diverse range of interests and skills of women VE offenders, and not only those tailored to the majority male population of such prisoners;<sup>176</sup> give attention to gender dimensions concerning male VE offenders – for example through programmes addressing elements of masculinity implicated in radicalization. (Please also consider recommendations under [Security Sector Reform](#))

#### **Rehabilitation Challenges**

There is no simple binary between victim and perpetrator<sup>177</sup>; gender-biases in risk assessments – especially by law enforcement and the security sector – which presume women’s non-participation in combat<sup>178</sup>; lack of resources; non-consideration of women’s particular needs regarding health and social care; vulnerabilities to VE.

#### **Possible Solutions: Gender-sensitive Risk Assessments and Analysis**

Having gender-sensitive risk assessments are particularly important for addressing immediate responses to returnees (for example as they seek support from consulates and embassies, arrive at borders, or are deported from conflict zones); utilize women mentors

and women's NGOs as they are better able to recognize and create 'cognitive openings' and are better equipped to build relationships.<sup>179</sup>

### **Reintegration Challenges**

The VE or terrorist group member has left families 'at home' who are subsequently discriminated against and stigmatized within their communities or by state authorities;<sup>180</sup> lifetime stigmatization and marginalization of children born of sexual violence committed by VE groups; stigmatization and marginalization of all those returning or associated with VE.

### **Possible Solutions: Transitional Justice Framework**

Apply a clear transitional justice framework; facilitate dialogue with communities pre-return; consider phased returns; work to overcome societal stigma; work with traditional and religious leaders to remove stigma (see [Lessons Identified: working with Religious leaders](#));<sup>181</sup> uphold the right of mothers to confer their nationality upon their children so as to avoid statelessness of children born in VE conflict and through sexual violence committed by VE groups.<sup>182</sup>

### **Justice for Victims of VE Challenges**

Amnesty granted to those affiliated with or members of VE groups can complicate managing the needs, justice and security of victims of VE; women victims of VE face additional gender challenges in reporting and challenging perpetrators – this is heightened when the violence perpetrated against them includes rape, sexual assault, forced marriage and forced pregnancy; failure to consider the voices of all victims may result in cumulative or reciprocal radicalization and the emergence of counter-movements.<sup>183</sup>

### **Possible Solutions**

Provide opportunities for victims to address their concerns, to report their experiences, and to have their security needs met, in a safe, inclusive and non-stigmatizing manner. Additional training for law enforcement and the judiciary, new institutional structures, and new resources for trauma counseling may be required in order to facilitate these measures. This may also require incorporation into a broader transitional justice framework where non-judicial measures are put in place during a conflict phase.

**Case Study:** Please refer to [Appendix E: The Yellow Ribbon Initiative](#)

# LESSONS IDENTIFIED

This section of the report draws on the experiences of practitioners, programmers, and policy-makers in their efforts to implement gender-mainstreamed PVE interventions. This is based on semi-structured interviews with 20 individuals working in this area, as well as observations and interactions in professional conferences, workshops and events worldwide. The aim of the interviews was to identify key challenges and lessons in the implementation of PVE – especially as they relate to gender-mainstreaming concerns. Interviews lasted from forty minutes to two hours, covering a range of topics to allow the views and priorities of the interviewees to shape the agenda. The interviews are treated as non-attributable, and therefore information that relates to specific programmes or countries has been hidden to ensure that those speaking could do so freely. The conferences, workshops and professional events were hosted by other organizations, with agendas and activities reflecting a variety of interests in PVE. These are drawn on to supplement the interviews as secondary sources.

## 1. Do No Harm vs. Transparency and Accountability

The perceived tension between transparency of PVE and women’s human rights agendas with a principle of “do no harm” was one of the main areas of concern that emerged. **Practitioners felt that the label “PVE” for activities targeting “at risk” or “vulnerable” communities or individuals drew undesirable attention and increased security risks to both the practitioners and their clients.** This negative attention was both from state security forces and from violent extremist groups. The former saw the communities as “suspect”, that is of being hidden extremists at worst or extremist sympathizers and colluders at best, while the latter saw them as enemies and informants that needed to be stopped. The feeling among practitioners and programme designers was that **adding the requirement for gender-sensitive interventions or for promoting women’s empowerment as part of PVE added to these risks.** In addition, it was recognized that women’s community-based organizations (WBOs) and women’s non-governmental organizations were additionally vulnerable to such negative

targeting. Many in positions of power already see WBOs as destabilizing forces because they seek gender and social transformation. Additionally, WBOs and women’s rights organizations are often mistakenly perceived as “foreign” or “external” to the societies in which they are operating (aka pawns of imperialists). VE groups see them as deliberately threatening their societal and gender goals. This means violent extremist groups may frequently target WBOs early in a campaign, regardless of WBO participation in PVE, and seek to undermine human rights, including women’s human rights, in their propaganda and activities.

Paradoxically, interviewees also recognized that **non-disclosure of PVE agendas to those delivering and running activities (such as community-based organizations) also placed them at risk** – because they couldn’t prepare or plan for any potential backlash – and undermined trust and confidence in relations with governments and international organizations. In other words, it actively worked against the first dimension ([Local Ownership and Inclusion](#)) of these guidelines. Additionally, they were aware how **women’s human rights and security are often placed as secondary in PVE and security communities**, and that these concerns often result in sidelining women’s needs and concerns for PVE. This concern is also addressed

below in Lessons Identified [4. Complementarity with UN mandates and UN Transitions](#) and [5. working with religious and traditional leaders](#).

Despite their concerns, CSOs are willing to engage and work in the PVE area. Citing an incomplete dataset, in 2016 Eric Rosand pointed to over 850 CSOs internationally implementing around 1,000 PVE and PVE-relevant projects, including early-stage prevention, intervention, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning foreign fighters and terrorist defectors.<sup>184</sup>

Yet, it must also be noted that in the years preceding the *Plan of Action*, more than 63 countries passed laws “shrinking civil society space and increasing the criminalization of and discrimination against NGOs worldwide”.<sup>185</sup> An Institute for Security Studies (ISS) report on PVE in West Africa for example, found that security concerns of NGOs and civil society actors, hostility and opposition to their activities, and lack of support from government or local communities were significant challenges.<sup>186</sup> A related challenge is that prioritizing PVE work in international agendas, along with donor concerns, has forced WBOs and youth organizations to narrow their activities to the detriment of other long-term transformative activities.<sup>187</sup> Every participant and interviewee noted the challenges of short-term funding cycles, and the lack of funding for organizations’ administrative and core functions and infrastructures to ensure their sustainability and longer-term programming.

## KEY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

- **Embed PVE within a wider framework of support** and change for communities and organizations, but not place it ‘front and center’. Programmers and donors were clear, however, that doing so did not mean obscuring or misleading PVE providers, and that robust and frank conversations would be needed in order to ensure PVE is not ‘lost’.
- **Look for ‘entry points’** emerging in other programmes and activities. In other words, prioritize work which additionally supports PVE and builds

trust such that PVE can be addressed either as a secondary concern within those interventions or as a follow-on set of activities. Being aware of the long- and short-term milestones and goals of PVE plans and programmes can help determine the sequencing of activities and interventions. Being clear of the theory of change guiding PVE within each context is therefore vital for the correct identification, labeling and framing of programmes and activities.

**Identify knock-on, and often unintended, impacts** of interventions before engaging in any PVE work. For this to be effective it is important to recognize that these effects will be different for men and women in any locality, and to be mindful of the different security and human rights needs for men and women (See [Dimension 4: Gender-responsiveness](#)). This allows those in the field to mitigate or plan for any additional risks. A proper gender-sensitive situational assessment should be carried out at the beginning of any planning cycle that takes into account relevant international human rights obligations. (See [Dimension 3: Gender-sensitive Evidence Base](#)).

- **Carry out detailed risk assessments and ensure safeguarding mechanisms** are in place for staff and clients. In crisis situations it is important for donors and facilitating institutions of PVE to be actively supportive of smaller organizations and individuals – such support can help build the resilience of individuals, organizations and communities.

## 2. Gendered Age-Appropriate Programming

A number of challenges emerged when addressing the needs of ‘youth’. The first is that **there is a tendency to either discuss ‘youth’ as a gender-neutral category which results in the prioritization of male needs, or to discuss ‘women and children’ as a single category which results in the infantilization of women**. The second challenge emerges because **youth (particularly young men) are pathologized and seen as a risk and a threat by security services**. This is because of the ways in which radicalization theories,



understanding of extremism and terrorism have been absorbed into mainstream thinking. A third challenge is the **'rotation' of a select core of young people into and out of international conferences** and workshops that represent a particular elite or class of young people, but are disconnected from the lived realities of their peers. Of note however, is that this is a criticism similarly leveled at women's organizations and gender advocates to discredit them, and therefore other practitioners and policy makers were skeptical of the significance of this feature of youth organizations and young people in PVE.

These challenges and lessons identified are also reflected in studies and research. The West Africa Report by ISS, noted that a significant percentage of PVE work in the region was targeting 'youth'.<sup>188</sup> The key aims identified in that report were either vocational training or educating youth for coexistence, patriotism, accountability, obedience to the rule of law, and good governance. A respondent from Nigeria cited in the report described this objective as "to deepen the understanding of communities on the nexus between peace building and human rights through constructive engagement".<sup>189</sup> In Europe a similar model emerges, where studies show that PVE providers think young people should be educated "on citizenship, political, religious and ethnic tolerance, non-prejudiced thinking, extremism, democratic values, cultural diversity, and the historical consequences of ethnically and politically motivated violence".<sup>190</sup> The TerRa project in Europe also includes specific guidelines oriented to preventing radicalization among youth and they provide toolkits for people working with youth from diverse domains, including teachers and youth workers, religious leaders, prison and police officers.<sup>191</sup> Puigvert advocates "dialogic engagement" for youth engagement in PVE, and stresses the following elements to make them successful and ethical practices: providing guidance to being safe in the exploration of extremist messages and violent radicalization; the rejection of violence; that dialogue is egalitarian; and that relationships in these spaces for dialogue are built on trust so that adolescents and young adults feel confident to raise their doubts.<sup>192</sup> As with much research in this field, Puigvert and the team evaluating these

programmes does so with no reference to gender, and no consideration of the different modes and levels of engagement between girls and boys.

## KEY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

- Work with partner organizations that specialize in providing for young men and women, such as UNICEF, iDove, or Clowns without Borders. This helps generate 'child-centered' and 'youth-sensitive' PVE programmes. This approach also helps support inclusive programming, in keeping with international human rights obligations.

Work with organizations and partners that specialize in working with and for youth, so that they integrate gender-sensitive programming. For example PVE programming for [returning foreign fighters and returnees](#) will need to address how young men's experiences may be one of disempowerment within VE groups, while young women's may be that of empowerment. It is also important to address the different needs of young men and women who live in contexts where VE groups operate – young women may become primary care-providers or heads of households as brothers join VE groups, creating additional burdens and further disrupting their education; they may also be less heard in PVE planning and design stages because they lack power in the home and community generally.

Work towards promoting peaceful youth masculinities (often in cooperation with [Lessons Identified 5: religious and traditional leaders](#)) and addressing their socio-economic disempowerment ([Dimension 2: Comprehensive Security Approach](#)). This requires providing opportunities for young men and women to engage in social activities and find alternatives to violent extremist groups for their sense of belonging and purpose.

- Shift from vulnerabilities and deficit-modeling for programmes and interventions, towards capability and needs-based framing. This creates a positive "can do" response in youth, project workers and

programmers. Additionally, this reframing supports involving youth not in a merely informative way, but in a decisive way, making them protagonists of the process through inter-subjective dialogue.<sup>193</sup>

- Work with families and seek to empower young women and address youth masculinity as part of their relations with others. Depending on the varying social and other contexts, women were not always powerful within families, and that the family should not be idealized. Women can exploit their social networks and gender-specific activities to mitigate the danger posed by male extremist youths.<sup>194</sup>

### 3. Working in Border, Complex and Transition Contexts

Borderlands, conflict-affected and transitional contexts were identified as having **extra challenges for PVE providers and programmers because of their fluctuating, unstable and uncertain governance and security situations**.<sup>195</sup> Many living and working in these environments struggle to receive support from communities, families or state agencies; lack formal documentation and identification to access formal support; and live with uncertainty about how their histories and experiences will be addressed in their home communities (either as victims or perpetrators of VE). For PVE providers working in these contexts, inter-governmental coordination and cooperation (or lack thereof) is a defining feature of their day-to-day operations, and the hyper-militarized security framing in these locations heavily influences the range of activities and groups they interact with. From a gender perspective, it is notable that women's security needs in borderlands, transitional contexts (such as IDP camps or refugee camps, resettlement camps), and complex environments are particularly shaped by threats of sexual violence and domestic violence; poor sanitary and health provision; lack of privacy; lack of housing and educational provision, combined with limited opportunities for justice or support. Interviewees reported how women travelling without husbands also face hostility from host

communities who see them as threats to the 'normal order' and stability.

These challenges and lessons identified are also reflected in studies and research on PVE in complex environments and drew on research by the NGO SaferWorld. They concluded that in such scenarios there was a tendency to oversimplify conflicts; an imposition of external security agendas on local realities; acquiescence to government agendas despite their roles in fueling conflict, thereby undermining transformative change; ignorance of change and reform processes; co-optation of civil society into top-down agendas driven by elites; failure to challenge crackdowns on dissent; and an over-focus on ideology and counter-messaging over addressing underlying structural drivers or grievances.<sup>196</sup>

#### KEY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

- More research is needed on challenges and lessons emerging from complex, transitional and border contexts, as this was among the least known areas.
- One suggestion for practitioners working in these environments is to link different types of violence to PVE such that PVE activities and agendas can be developed within existing programmes in these environments. This is because PVE is new to these locations, and therefore should seek to avoid duplication but also to build on expertise and utilize existing resources effectively.
- Identify key partners and individuals who are able to work across borders and ensure they receive appropriate gender-sensitivity training so that they can work as allies and interlocutors of gender-responsive PVE. These individuals and partners are unlikely to be those PVE providers already used to working with, but may be entrepreneurs, health care providers, and security providers. A related suggestion is to view transient contexts and borderlands as sites of innovation and adaptability rather than as sites of ungovernability and insecurity. The change in lens can help move interaction with security personnel and local actors away from intelligence-gathering and threat detection.

- Focus on supporting families and strengthening family and community relationships ‘back home’ to support transient populations. This is because individuals in these situations lack networks to assist them within complex and border zones.
- Work towards transitional justice, and work with victims of VE in these contexts.

## 4. Complementarity with UN Mandates and UN Transitions

PVE is a ‘meeting point within the UN’. As CTED noted: “It created a situation where we have to speak to one another, to recognize that a broader approach is needed, and that it [counterterrorism] isn’t just about what the Security Council can do.”<sup>197</sup>

However, practitioners have also noted that there are **different agendas among various state, regional, and UN agencies, which can cause friction, but also generate overlap, redundancy, and group-think in the field**. Friction can occur because of different understandings of success, security and effectiveness (see also [Dimension 2: Comprehensive Security Approach](#)). Overlap emerges because, despite ‘whole-of-UN’ intentions, organizations, donors, and States often operate in ‘silos’. Of particular concern was the tension between ‘hard’ counter-terrorism approaches and soft PVE approaches that are the focus of this set of guidelines. This is because the influential US counter-terrorism doctrine focuses on the F3EAD process (find, fix, finish, exploit, analyze, and disseminate) which is intended to identify, target, and kill or capture so-called high-value targets<sup>198</sup> and therefore can undermine non-security longer term efforts, prioritize elimination of immediate risks to the detriment of juridical processes, and lead to fear of coercion in voluntary PVE.

In addition, **concerns were raised by practitioners about instrumentalizing development work for security purposes because they feared de-legitimizing those efforts and compromising the neutrality of aid**.<sup>199</sup> There was also recognition among interviewees and in other fora that PVE could be politicized and often times is

closely identified with Western agendas. Furthermore, in interviews concerns were raised that PVE interventions tend to be disproportionately focused on Muslim communities, which may jeopardize UN conflict sensitivity and do-no harm principles. In an attempt to offset this concern, Member States are encouraged to design their National Plans of Action for PVE in line with their own priorities. This, however, has added to doctrinal and definitional confusion that has made liaising across programmes and regions additionally complicated.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, national PVE plans should be based on the UN *Plan of Action* priorities, including gender mainstreaming and supporting human rights.

These challenges and lessons identified are also reflected in studies and research. **This body of work is often more concerned about the risks in this area than the voices of practitioners and programmers**. For example, one study noted how “the PVE agenda was easily mistaken for, or deliberately perverted as, another coercive instrument in the state’s toolbox, camouflaged by a gentler vocabulary and, for that reason, perhaps all the more sinister.”<sup>201</sup> Evidence from Uganda raises questions about whether the regime there, for example, can bridge a credibility gap that would enable it to implement a meaningful PVE programme.<sup>202</sup> A challenge raised by academics and researchers is whether or not states can resist abusing the term ‘violent extremist’ given their poor track record to do so with the label ‘terrorist’ to undermine legitimate protest and dissent.<sup>203</sup> Beyond state challenges, the UN also faces challenges in this regard.

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**“The United Nations is not value neutral, it operates on the invitation of states, it defends the conventions of states, and it is therefore seen as—and indeed, is attacked for—serving a very particular agenda.”** –Naureen Chowdhury Fink, in *Ucko*, September 2016

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Therefore, certain countries actively resist or work against either a civil-society or human-rights (including women’s human rights) framing of security and PVE. Moreover, academic research and policy evaluations question whether the relationship between VE and conflicts is correctly formulated in PVE. As

International Crisis Group put it: “Preventing crises will do more to contain violent extremists than countering violent extremism will do to prevent crises.” However, while UN Peacekeepers should not be involved in counter-terrorism, for this would undermine UN neutrality, they should be engaged with early prevention and early peacebuilding agendas to remove the root causes of radicalization.<sup>204</sup>

## KEY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

- Train local researchers and build capacity of local women’s groups and human rights organizations. Facilitate local knowledge generation, knowledge-sharing and transmission but pragmatically also increase the possibility of governments permitting research on “sensitive topics”.
- Clearly focus on the theory of change in planning such that the impacts and activities are aligned to PVE. To facilitate inter-stakeholder cooperation, hold regular joint planning and design meetings; run joint conferences and workshops; coordinate and sequence activities between organizations; share information across sectors; and consider the co-creation of projects and interventions to meet a variety of mandates. Practitioners recognize this is an ideal state of affairs, but felt that personal connections, frequent communication, and openness on their part would increase the possibility of this occurring.
- Identify how VE operates in complex ways, but often feeds on a variety of insecurities. Therefore, encourage how interventions, programmes and activities elsewhere can be PVE-relevant, PVE-targeted or PVE-sensitive, and have implications for PVE provision.

## 5. Working with Religious and Traditional Leaders

The interviewees felt there was a presumption that religious and traditional leaders are resistant to women’s organizations or are supportive of some VE agendas. Practitioners saw this as stereotyping

this group of potentially powerful actors in PVE, and minimizing the important activities and roles of many faith-based leaders and organizations already addressing PVE directly and indirectly. Interviewees felt that religious leaders’ are essential gatekeepers and able to identify those most vulnerable within their communities. At the same time, they also acknowledged that despite being a ‘stereotype’, some had definitely experienced sexist and PVE-limiting attitudes from religious and traditional elite. This led to a desire not to engage with them to avoid giving them extra power and legitimacy, and because, for some interviewees, non-violent extremism demonstrated by some religious elites is a precursor to violence, including violence against women.

These challenges and lessons identified are also reflected in studies and research. The first argument by researchers is that religion and religious or faith-based organizations (FBOs) should not be ignored in PVE.<sup>205</sup> Second, researchers argue that religious leaders cannot be held responsible for solving the problem of VE because there are multiple drivers of VE; nevertheless, they are vital participants in building shared citizenship.<sup>206</sup>

*“The challenges that interreligious peace-building practitioners face when attempting to address the gender issue within a CVE/PVE program are related to the inherent structure and nature of hierarchical and patriarchal religious leadership systems. It should also be noted that in most of these formal religious institutions, women are part of the implementation system: in many cases, they do a lot of the groundwork for the religious leaders. Nevertheless, in terms of their public representation they lag behind the formal male leadership.” - Abu Nimer<sup>207</sup>*

Researchers also express a concern with the **proliferation of unregulated religious schools that are perceived to be in opposition to agendas of peaceful coexistence and are seen to reinforce gender stereotypes**. In UNODC’s consultations with criminal justice actors and civil society on gender mainstreaming in PVE efforts in South and South-East Asia, participants identified that it was often difficult for women to

obtain guidance on the interpretation of religious texts from a woman as most of the senior scholars are men. Thus, when a woman is approached by a violent extremist purporting to be an authority on religious matters, it can be more difficult for that woman to access alternative views from religious scholars in the community. Concerns about religious education also emerge in PVE policies and discussions in Europe and the global North, for example in Spain, legal and constitutional considerations show how a core objective of religious education should be preventing the influence on young people of extremist messages, yet there is a fear that young Muslims in Spain are not receiving this message in public schools (despite it being established as a recommendation in 2004 by the Spanish Parliament).<sup>208</sup>

Another issue emerging in the research reflecting the fears of practitioners is a **stereotypical fear that the involvement of women in security issues or religious ones are offensive to men and tradition**.<sup>209</sup> Challenging these external fears of racism and western intervention, are indigenous and locally-developed PVE activities by women-led organizations, such as in Nigeria – for example, The Women Without Walls Initiative, the Women’s Interfaith Council, the Complete Care and Aid Foundation, the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations in Nigeria, the Muslim Sisters Association and Bring Back Our Girls.<sup>210</sup>

## KEY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

- Seek alternative local leaders and authority figures who may be less resistant to change who can act as allies, promoters and go-betweens for PVE activities – these might include cultural or sporting stars/figures; local business leaders and managers; and local health providers. However, interviewees also stated that it is important to support these individuals and be aware of any potential risks to them and their livelihoods (see [Lesson Identified 1: Do no Harm vs. Transparency and Accountability](#)).
- Work with religious and traditional leaders on other areas of shared interest to build trust and develop modes of mutual cooperation, before addressing more complex issues of PVE. This could

include supporting the rebuilding of local places of worship or congregation, in a way that can include and facilitate women’s participation within these spaces. These shared interests can be used as the basis for further gender-sensitivity and human rights training for these groups. Relatedly, this tactic helps minimize traditional and religious leaders’ fears that women’s organizations and PVE are promoting immorality. In these situations, PVE providers are asked to consider seating arrangements, and giving women a voice to participate through writing ideas on cards rather than open conversation if in mixed-sex spaces.

- Train PVE providers in local matters of tradition and religion so they are familiar with the debates, concerns and terminology of religious and traditional leaders. This might also include facilitating inter-faith dialogue on PVE in order to develop cross-competencies. However, interviewees also said that it is important to avoid engaging directly in matters of theology or belief, as external commentary was usually unwelcome and antagonizing. Instead, they suggest to include, whenever possible, a variety of religious and traditional leaders and communities – so not only the most powerful or secure or conservative (read authentic) of this group, but a diversity of voices from within the same faith as well as from others.
- Train religious leaders on terrorism and VE in order to build their resilience. This includes identifying where local drivers and risks of extremism exist, and raising awareness of how this might differ for men and women.
- Actively empower, support and build capacity of women traditional and religious leaders. A respondent in Nigeria for the ISS report said that their projects target women who are traditional and religious leaders, and they have trained 500 female religious leaders to detect behavior patterns in children that could be early warning signs of violent extremism.<sup>211</sup> Another example is the Mosintuwu Women School<sup>212</sup> in Indonesia, where over the course of a year, women from different villages are introduced to a range of religious ideas and beliefs, and core concepts of tolerance, peace, diversity, gender and public service.

# CONCLUSION

It has been widely recognized that PVE needs reform in order to meet the needs of all citizens. Increasing awareness of the role of women in violent extremism (VE), and of their frontline roles in preventing and countering VE, as well as of the adverse human rights impacts of some PVE interventions, has put PVE under the spotlight. We know that violent extremism is gendered in its motivations, actions and ambitions. We know that this demands gender-responsive and human rights-compliant PVE and that the UN has increasingly drawn attention to the intersections of PVE and gender. The UN Secretary-General identified gender mainstreaming as a significant issue, and the Security Council, “recognizes with concern that without a significant implementation shift, women and women’s perspectives will continue to be underrepresented in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding for the foreseeable future”.<sup>213</sup> This phrasing asserts that the representation of women in conflict prevention is essential, constructing women as important political actors with responsibilities in all spheres of peace and security governance – including the prevention of violence. (See also [Appendix B2](#)).

Yet, despite the hard work and best efforts of many civil society organizations and Member States, current PVE programmes remain mostly unresponsive to gender issues, and only minimally committed to Member States’ obligations to upholding human rights and women’s equality. Women-centric PVE programmes are few in number, limited in scope and ambition, lacking funding, and ghettoized. Other PVE programming that does address gender issues tends to rely on gendered stereotypes, and lack a robust grounding in human rights frameworks. Furthermore, there are unrealistic expectations placed upon gender-responsive or women-centric PVE programmes by international and national stakeholders, as their assumptions about PVE are often disconnected from locally-derived situational assessments, from theories of change in relation to VE, and from women’s and other marginalized groups’ security needs. Weak institutionalization of gender mainstreaming has also limited the transformative potential of gender-responsive PVE strategies.<sup>214</sup>

The UN, through the WPS agenda and human rights instruments, has articulated a range of commitments that demand such limitations are overcome. These are grounded in extensive and longstanding

UN instruments affirming commitments to women’s equality and gender mainstreaming. Recognizing women as security actors and as human rights actors is a first step that has been promoted by the WPS pillars. These Guidelines for gender mainstreaming in PVE continue these efforts.

PVE is wide-ranging in its scale, scope and reach, and therefore has the potential to support and demonstrate commitment to human rights, including women’s human rights, across Member States. While women’s human rights and gender equality are not a ‘silver bullet’ for VE, and they should not be instrumentalized, synergies between PVE and women’s human rights must not be ignored. These guidelines represent an opportunity to design, implement, and evaluate PVE, in ways that can build security for all.

## Current and Future Recommendations

The goals of normalizing gender mainstreaming and embedding human rights into PVE are ambitious and challenging. It is vital that all practitioners and

governments are supported in their commitment to these goals. By working within the legal human rights frameworks, including the four dimensions and focusing on the six priority areas, PVE as a whole will be improved, as will women's and girls' rights and security.

These guidelines are rooted in a commitment to locally-embedded understandings of security needs and risks, and local ownership is paramount. Nevertheless, without anchoring PVE in internationally recognized standards and norms for governance and human rights, PVE has the potential to undermine the security of Member States and their citizens. PVE is a burgeoning field of operations that impacts on all areas of life – ensuring human rights, including women's human rights, as an ethical framework for practice can only enhance peace and security.

These principles and priorities are actionable today. UN Women and the OHCHR are ready to support Member States and other UN institutions as they work to enact them. Many of these are already familiar to UN missions in other fields. The deliverables include: gender-responsive budgeting; gender training for participants and practitioners; and inclusion of gender advisors and staff. This, in turn, leads to gender-responsive service delivery, to removal of barriers to participation, and to inclusive engagement in design, delivery and governance. Further, learning from other areas of UN activity develops an ethos of coherence in strategy and delivery across the UN towards identified global goals.

Women-specific recommendations emerge from these dimensions and priorities, such as targeting specific factors involved in women's recruitment to VE groups (e.g. women's particular online vulnerabilities) or including women's NGOs in discussions on PVE goals. Indeed, engaging with civil society as a whole is vital for ensuring the comprehensive inclusion of women in PVE. These recommendations can be actioned immediately, given the right commitment and resourcing.

Importantly however, these Guidelines transcend women-specific needs, and instead, encourage a gender-responsive approach to PVE that also examines negative gender roles and how some gender norms may undermine resilience to VE. This makes the Guidelines transformative of PVE as a whole. They require that PVE examines how gender influences and is influenced by VE.

Regardless of economic, political or religious status, VE is one of the greatest challenges facing states. It undermines the legitimacy, efficacy, and capacities of states across the globe, and presents a real threat to the international system rooted in principles of equality, justice and equity. We urge national governments and UN agencies to affirm their commitment to these dimensions and priorities, offering leadership to the field of PVE, and hope to the millions of men and women affected by VE today.

# APPENDIX A:

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# KEY CONCEPTS

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## COUNTER-TERRORISM

Counter-terrorism consists of actions or strategies aimed at preventing terrorism from escalating, seeking to eradicate terrorism in a given context, and limiting the negative effect of any attack (sometimes referred to as resilience). Counter-terrorism can be classified according to four theoretical models: Defensive, Reconciliatory, Criminal Justice, and War.<sup>215</sup> The UN counter-terrorism policy has four pillars: addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; preventing and combating terrorism; building States' capacity and the role of the UN; and ensuring human rights and the rule of law.<sup>216</sup> Countering Violent Extremism falls under the remit of Counter-Terrorism operations.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation is the, “systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or programme.”<sup>217</sup> Evaluation reports focus on effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and the impacts of PVE. Evaluations come at the end of a programme and often rely on the data and insights provided by monitoring processes. At the moment, evaluation reports on PVE projects are similarly limited to, “Did we do what we said we would do?” and are not connected to theories of change or desired impact.

## GENDER

The Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of women in 2001 states that gender refers “to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age”.<sup>218</sup> The UNDP further notes that in utilizing a gender approach the focus is not on individual women and men but on the system that determines gender roles/responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and decision-making potential. As an identity category, gender should not be seen in simple binary terms (where gender identification is a choice between two options: ‘man’ and ‘woman’) but should be acknowledged as a complex and multidimensional spectrum. To see gender as a power relation, we recognize that assumptions about the appropriate behaviors of bodies inform many – if not all – social and political processes, from resource allocation to regulation of education, sexual activity, and participation in formal and informal institutions. Efforts to ‘mainstream’ gender (see below) must take into consideration both the ways in which gender functions as an identity category (i.e. represents an essential part of lived experience for many individuals), and as a power relation (i.e. prescribing and proscribing certain possibilities for certain people, depending on the gender identity ascribed to them).



## GENDER EQUALITY

The Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women in 2001 clarified that equality between women and men (gender equality) refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality does not mean ‘the same as’ – promotion of gender equality does not mean that women and men will become the same – but that rights, roles and responsibilities of men and women will not depend on whether one is born male or female. Equality involves insuring that the perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of men and women (which can diverge because of differing roles and responsibilities) will be given equal weight in planning and decision-making. Equal representation helps to make equality more likely, but equality also requires equal influence on establishing the security priorities and outcomes for men and women. This is a matter of human rights and social justice, and a necessary condition for people-centered and local ownership in security policies – including PVE.

Gender Mainstreaming: is detailed in [Appendix C: Gender Mainstreaming Principles](#).

## GENDER NORMS

Gender norms are not just about the attitudes and beliefs held by individuals, but are produced and perpetuated by political, economic, cultural and social structures, including education systems, the media, religious institutions, welfare systems, and security and justice systems. It is important to distinguish between norms and people’s actual behaviors: whereas norms describe social pressures to behave in a certain way, people’s behaviors (how they act or conduct themselves) do not always conform to those norms. The costs of not conforming to gender norms vary, but can be high, including shaming and social exclusion, violence and even death.<sup>219</sup>

## GENDER-SENSITIVE, GENDER-RESPONSIVE AND GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES

Gender-sensitive programming refers to programmes where gender norms, roles and inequalities have been considered, and awareness of these issues has been raised, although appropriate actions may not

necessarily have been taken. Gender-responsive programming refers to programmes where gender norms, roles and inequalities have been considered, and measures have been taken to actively address them. Such programmes go beyond raising sensitivity and awareness, and aim to do something definitive and practical about reducing gender inequalities. Gender-transformative approaches include ways to transform harmful gender roles, norms and relations, and strategies to foster progressive changes in power relations between men and women.<sup>220</sup>

## INTERSECTIONAL (ANALYSIS)

While all women are subject to gendered discrimination in one way or another, it is not just gender but also race, socioeconomic class and other factors that shape experiences of discrimination, marginalization and oppression. The experience of intersecting discriminations is unique, not simply the sum of different discriminations. Intersectional analysis shows us how gender inequality and patriarchy intersect with other systems of oppression and how these intersections then contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege.<sup>221</sup>

## MONITORING

Monitoring is a “continuing function that aims primarily to provide managers and main stakeholders with regular feedback and early indications of progress or lack thereof in the achievement of intended results. Monitoring tracks the actual performance or situation against what was planned or expected according to predetermined standards. Monitoring generally involves collecting and analyzing data on implementation processes, strategies and results, and recommending corrective measures”.<sup>222</sup> While monitoring implementation is important, it is only of value when considered alongside achieving goals or outcomes as set in accordance with the dimensions set out – particularly [3. Gender-sensitive Evidence Base](#). Currently, most monitoring and evaluation of PVE is a limited form of analysis – “Are we taking the actions we proposed?” – without considering whether those actions help achieve the identified goals of PVE – in other words, they are not driven by results or impact.

## PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The United Nations Secretary-General's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* (Plan of Action) describes PVE as systematic preventive measures which directly address the *drivers* of violent extremism. It may be seen as part of the efforts to implement the first pillar of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly (resolution 60/288).

## PVE-SPECIFIC, PVE-RELEVANT, PVE-CONDUCTIVE INTERVENTIONS

PVE-specific interventions are often short term and highly targeted to disrupt radicalization and recruitment processes, and to reintegrate those that have already joined (pull factors). PVE-relevant policies and programmes tend to address the structural factors that drive violent extremism as they affect a particular vulnerable group or area (push factors). PVE-conductive interventions have positive effects on the underlying conditions conducive to violent extremism.<sup>223</sup>

## SECURITY SECTOR

“Security sector is a broad term often used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel responsible for the management, provision and oversight of security in a country. It is generally accepted that the security sector includes defense, law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services, and institutions responsible for border management, customs and civil emergencies. Elements of the judicial sector responsible for the adjudication of cases of alleged criminal conduct and misuse of force are, in many instances, also included. Furthermore, the security sector includes actors that play a role in managing and overseeing the design and implementation of security, such as ministries, legislative bodies and civil society groups. Other non-State actors that could be considered part of the sector include customary or informal authorities and private security services.”<sup>224</sup>

## SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

“Security sector reform describes a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples

without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.”<sup>225</sup>

## TERRORISM

Definitions of terrorism are the prerogative of Member States, but must be consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, SCR 1566 and its description, and the 19 international conventions (where States are parties to those). A consensus on a definition of terrorism has not been reached, with disagreements over who is a terrorist, what actions are terrorist, and which motives are terrorist.<sup>226</sup> Users of these guidelines must therefore work within the framework of any legal definitions and frameworks operating within their locality.

## RESILIENCE

Resilience does not refer to the restoration of the status quo, or ‘bouncing back’ to some pre-crisis state, but rather to learning and adaptation. Resilience is the ability of a community, people, state, or region to adopt new processes, norms, and strategies for conducting their lives and new societal relationships in response to a violent shock or uptick in aggression and brutality in order to prevent, mitigate, or recover from violence.<sup>227</sup>

## VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* underlines that violent extremism (VE) encompasses a wider category of manifestations than terrorism. However VE can be conducive to terrorism. If the two terms are conflated it could result in the overly broad application of counter-terrorism measures. VE is neither new nor exclusive to any region, nationality or system of belief. A violent extremist actor has ideological opposition, and uses violence to advance and express this ideological opposition to the values and structures of international society.<sup>228</sup> These include, but are not limited to, far-right and neo-Nazi violent extremism in Europe and North America, the Lord's Resistance Army in Africa, and the so-called Islamic State group. As with terrorism, definitions of VE are the prerogative of Member States, and the UN does not attempt to address questions of definition.<sup>229</sup> Therefore users of this guide must operate within the legal frameworks of Member States.

## **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

“The empowerment of women concerns the ability of women to control their own destiny. It has five components: self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.”<sup>230</sup> It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. The process of empowerment is as important as the goal. Empowerment comes from within; women empower themselves. Inputs to promote the empowerment of women should facilitate women’s articulation of their needs and priorities and a more active role in promoting these interests and needs. Empowerment of women cannot be achieved in a vacuum; men must be brought

along in the process of change. Empowerment should not be seen as a zero-sum game where gains for women automatically imply losses for men. Increasing women’s power in empowerment strategies does not refer to power over, or controlling forms of power, but rather to alternative forms of power: power to; power with and power from within which focus on utilizing individual and collective strengths to work towards common goals without coercion or domination.

## **WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

These are laid out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). And can be summarized as: “The human rights of women and of the girl- child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.”<sup>231</sup>

# APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGIES AND COMMITMENTS

## Appendix B1: Significant PVE UN Commitments

Resolution/Document (Year)	Key Issues and Core Provisions
<b>UNSCR 1624 (2005)</b>	Stresses that member states, “must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, and should adopt such measures in accordance with international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law, and humanitarian law;” <sup>232</sup>
<b>A/60/825 (2006)</b>	The report <i>Uniting against Terrorism: Recommendations for Global Counterterrorism Strategy</i> emphasized operational elements of dissuasion, denial, deterrence, development of State capacity and defense of human rights. Common to all of these elements is the indispensability of the rule of law, nationally and internationally, in countering the threat of terrorism.
<b>A/RES/60/288 (2006)</b>	Four pillars of activity agreed upon by the UN General Assembly as the constitutive parts of a unified counter-terrorism strategy;
<b>A/64/211 (2009)</b>	UN Special Rapporteur of Human Rights on gender and countering terrorism, which adopted a social rather than biological definition of gender. The report included particular reference to the ways in which violent extremism and terrorism violated the rights of LGBTQ individuals. <sup>233</sup>
<b>UNSCR 2129 (2013)</b>	Security Council reaffirmed the Council’s intention to increase its attention to women, peace and security issues in all relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda, including in threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.
<b>UNGAR 68/127 (2014)</b>	Emphasizes the influence of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and repeatedly calls for the protection of human rights in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism.
<b>UNSCR 2178 (2014)</b>	Encouraged Member States to engage relevant local communities in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, and women.
<b>S/PRST/2014/21 (2014)</b>	Council noted that violent extremism is frequently targeting women and girls, which can lead to serious human rights violations and abuses against them, and encouraged Member States to engage with women and women’s organizations in developing CVE strategies.
<b>S/2015/730 (2015)</b>	Makes specific mention of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and which connect prevention to the protection of human rights more broadly.
<b>UNSCR 2242 (2015)</b>	Connects the WPS agenda with CT/CVE efforts in three specific operative paragraphs (see below).

<p><b>UN Secretary-General’s Remarks at General Assembly Presentation of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) [As Delivered]<sup>234</sup> (2015)</b></p>	<p>Identifies Violent Extremism as a grave threat to international peace and security; specifically mentioned denial of women’s rights, kidnapping of women as components of VE. Prevention identified as priority; human rights as crucial; and ‘all out approach’.</p>
<p><b>A/HRC/34/61 (2017)</b></p>	<p>Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism</p>
<p><b>UNSCR 2395 and UNSCR 2396 (2017)</b></p>	<p>Resolution 2396 (2017), which is a Chapter VII article, the Madrid Principles and the 2018 Addendum. The Addendum articulates in Guiding Principle 12 that PRR strategies should be <b>age and gender appropriate</b>, and place the, “best interests of the child [as] a primary consideration.”</p> <p>Resolution 2396 calls upon Member States to employ evidence based risk assessments to assess and investigate family members for any potential involvement in criminal and terrorist activities</p>
<p><b>A/RES/72/284 (2018)</b> <b>A/RES/72/180 (2018)</b> <b>A/RES/73/174 (2019)</b></p>	<p>72/284 is the UN’s <i>Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review</i>. It renews the UN’s commitment to the previously adopted counter-terrorism strategy and its provisions and institutions.</p> <p>72/180 is the UN’s resolution on the <i>Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism</i>. It reaffirms the UN’s original purpose of defending human rights around the world and renews the pledge that States should not violate human rights while implementing counter-terrorism measures.</p> <p>73/174 is the UN’s resolution on <i>Terrorism and human rights</i>. It is emphasizing that all human rights are universal and is condemning all acts of terrorism and violent extremism that are violations of human rights.</p>
<p><b>A/HRC/40/28 (2019)</b></p>	<p>Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human rights on the <i>Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism</i>. This report is focused specifically on protections of the rights of women and children.</p>

## Appendix B2: Key U.N. statements on mainstreaming gender and promoting the participation of women in counter-terrorism and PVE

<p><b>Measuring impacts of counter-terrorism and PVE on women's rights and organizations</b></p>	<p><i>Urges</i> Member States and requests relevant United Nations entities, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, within its existing mandate, and in collaboration with UN-Women, to conduct and gather gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses... S/RES/2242 ¶ 12 (2015)</p> <p>Women's empowerment is a critical force for sustainable <i>peace</i>...There is also a need to ensure that efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism do not impact adversely on women's rights. I therefore recommend that Member States:</p> <p>(b) Invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women's roles in violent extremism, including on identifying the drivers that lead women to join violent extremist groups, and on the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses; UN Secretary-General, <i>Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism</i>, A/70/674 ¶ 53 (2015)</p> <p><i>Calls upon</i> all Member States, ... to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism; A/RES/70/291 ¶ 12 (2016)</p> <p><i>Calls upon</i> all Member States ... to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism; A/RES/72/284 ¶ 25 (2018)</p>
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**Address Women and Girls as Victims of Terrorism and Violent Extremism**

The Security Council expresses with deep concern that violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, often results in increased displacement, and is frequently targeted at women and girls, leading to serious human rights violations and abuses committed against them including murder, abduction, hostage taking, kidnapping, enslavement, their sale and forced marriage, human trafficking, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence. The Council urges all Member States to protect their population in particular women and girls, affected by violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, whilst respecting all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law . . .

S/PRST/2014/21 ¶ 11 (2014)

*Urges* Member States and requests relevant United Nations entities, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, within its existing mandate, and in collaboration with UN-Women, to . . . ensure United Nations monitoring and assessment mechanisms and processes mandated to prevent and respond to violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, have the necessary gender expertise to fulfill their mandates, including relevant sanctions experts groups and bodies established to conduct fact finding and criminal investigations;

S/RES/2242 ¶ 12 (2015)

There is credible information indicating that terrorists and violent extremist groups like ISIL and its affiliates may have committed serious violations of international law, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. These groups also violate the rights of women and girls, including through sexual enslavement, forced marriages and encroachment on their rights to education and participation in public life. In areas where ISIL and other terrorist and violent extremist groups currently operate, it appears that religious communities, and women, children, political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community are being systematically targeted, abducted, displaced and murdered. Torture, and sexual and gender-based violence, are also reportedly widespread.

UN Secretary-General, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*,  
A/70/674 ¶ 19 (2015)

Expressing deep concern that acts of sexual and gender-based violence are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups and are used as an instrument to increase their power through supporting financing and recruitment and through the destruction of communities.

A/RES/70/291 preamble (2016)

**Efforts to  
integrate WPS  
and Counter-  
Terrorism and  
PVE agendas**

Expresses its intention to increase its attention to women, peace and security issues in all relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda, including in particular Protection of civilians in armed conflict, Post-conflict peacebuilding, The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security, Peace and Security in Africa, Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, and Maintenance of international peace and security  
S/RES/2122 ¶ 3 (2013)

*Reaffirming* the need to increase attention to women, peace and security issues in all relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda, including in threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, and noting the importance of incorporating the participation of women and youth in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism  
S/RES/2195 preamble (2014)

*Calls for* the greater integration by Member States and the United Nations of their agendas on women, peace and security, counter-terrorism and countering-violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, *requests* the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue throughout the activities within their respective mandates, including within country-specific assessments and reports, recommendations made to Member States, facilitating technical assistance to Member States and briefings to the Council, *encourages* the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to hold further consultations with women and women's organizations to help inform their work, and *further encourages* the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to take the same approach in activities within its mandate  
S/RES/2242 ¶ 14 (2015)



**Encouraging women's participation in counter-terrorism and PVE**

Encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion  
S/RES/2178 ¶ 16 (2014)

The Security Council expresses with deep concern that violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, often results in increased displacement, and is frequently targeted at women and girls, leading to serious human rights violations and abuses committed against them including murder, abduction, hostage taking, kidnapping, enslavement, their sale and forced marriage, human trafficking, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence. The Council urges all Member States to protect their population in particular women and girls, affected by violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, whilst respecting all their obligations under international law, in particular, international human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. The Council encourages Member States to engage the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations, including refugee and internally displaced women, in developing strategies to counter violent extremism, and further to address, including by the empowerment of women, the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism

SC Pres. Statement 2014/21, UN Doc. S/PRST/2014/21 ¶ 11 (2014)

*Noting* the important contribution of women to the implementation of the Strategy, and encouraging Member States, United Nations entities and international, regional and sub-regional organizations to consider the participation of women in efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.

A/RES/68/276 preamble (2014)

Encourages States to engage with local communities and non-governmental actors through a whole-of-society approach in developing strategies that respect human rights and fundamental freedoms to counter narratives that incite acts of violent extremism and terrorism and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, including by empowering women, religious, cultural, education and local leaders, engaging members of all concerned groups in civil society and from the private sector, adopting tailored approaches that incorporate human rights and fundamental freedoms to prevent and counter recruitment to this kind of violent extremism, and promoting social inclusion and cohesion

UN Doc. A/HRC/30/L.25/Rev.1 ¶4 (2015)

*Urges* Member States and the United Nations system to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, including through countering incitement to commit terrorist acts, creating counter narratives and other appropriate interventions, and building their capacity to do so effectively, and further to address, including by the empowerment of women, youth, religious and cultural leaders, the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, consistent with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288), *welcomes* the increasing focus on inclusive upstream prevention efforts and *encourages* the forthcoming Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to integrate women's participation, leadership and empowerment as core to the United Nation's strategy and responses, *calls* for adequate financing in this regard and for an increased amount, within the funding of the UN for counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, to be committed to projects which address gender dimensions including women's empowerment  
S/RES/2242 ¶ 13 (2015)

*continued*  
**Encouraging  
women's  
participation in  
counter-terror-  
ism and PVE**

*Encourages* Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion  
S/RES/2250 ¶16 (2015)

Member States, United Nations entities and international, regional and sub-regional organizations to ensure the participation and leadership of women in efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.  
A/RES/70/291 preamble (2016)

*Calls upon* all Member States, given the complex global security context today, to highlight the important role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and urges Member States and United Nations entities to integrate a gender analysis on the drivers of radicalization of women to terrorism into their relevant programs, to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;  
A/RES/70/291 preamble ¶ 12 (2016)

*Noting* the important contribution of women to the implementation of the Strategy, and encourage[ed] Member States, United Nations entities and international, regional and subregional organizations to ensure the participation and leadership of women in efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism,  
A/RES/72/284 preamble (2018)

*Calls upon* all Member States, given the complex global security context today, to highlight the important role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and urges Member States and United Nations entities to integrate a gender analysis on the drivers of radicalization of women to terrorism into their relevant programs, to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;  
A/RES/72/284 ¶ 25 (2018)

"women's equal and effective participation and full involvement in the security sector reform process, given their vital role in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace-building".  
S/RES/2151 (2014)

**Linking gender inequality to terrorism and violent extremism**

Encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion  
S/RES/2178 ¶ 16 (2014)

The Security Council expresses with deep concern that violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, often results in increased displacement, and is frequently targeted at women and girls, leading to serious human rights violations and abuses committed against them including murder, abduction, hostage taking, kidnapping, enslavement, their sale and forced marriage, human trafficking, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence. The Council urges all Member States to protect their population in particular women and girls, affected by violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, whilst respecting all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. The Council encourages Member States to engage the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations, including refugee and internally displaced women, in developing strategies to counter violent extremism, and further to address, including by the empowerment of women, the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism.

UNSCR Pres. Statement 2014/21, S/PRST/2014/21 ¶ 11 (2014)

*Encourages* Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion  
S/RES/2178 ¶ 16 (2014)

Encourages States to engage with local communities and non-governmental actors through a whole-of-society approach in developing strategies that respect human rights and fundamental freedoms to counter narratives that incite acts of violent extremism and terrorism and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, including by empowering women, religious, cultural, education and local leaders, engaging members of all concerned groups in civil society and from the private sector, adopting tailored approaches that incorporate human rights and fundamental freedoms to prevent and counter recruitment to this kind of violent extremism, and promoting social inclusion and cohesion

UN Doc. A/HRC/30/L.25/Rev.1, ¶ 4 (2015)

*Urges* Member States and the United Nations system to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, including through countering incitement to commit terrorist acts, creating counter narratives and other appropriate interventions, and building their capacity to do so effectively, and further to address, including by the empowerment of women, youth, religious and cultural leaders, the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, consistent with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288), *welcomes* the increasing focus on inclusive upstream prevention efforts and *encourages* the forthcoming Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to integrate women's participation, leadership and empowerment as core to the United Nation's strategy and responses, *calls* for adequate financing in this regard and for an increased amount, within the funding of the UN for counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism, to be committed to projects which address gender dimensions including women's empowerment  
S/RES/2242 ¶ 13 (2015)

*continued*

**Linking gender inequality to terrorism and violent extremism**

Women's empowerment is a critical force for sustainable peace. While women do sometimes play an active role in violent extremist organizations, it is also no coincidence that societies for which gender equality indicators are higher are less vulnerable to violent extremism. We must therefore ask ourselves how we can better promote women's participation, leadership and empowerment across society, including in governmental, security sector and civil society institutions. In line with Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), we must ensure that the protection and empowerment of women is a central consideration of strategies devised to counter terrorism and violent extremism. There is also a need to ensure that efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism do not impact adversely on women's rights. I therefore recommend that Member States:

- (a) Mainstream gender perspectives across efforts to prevent violent extremism;
- (b) Invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women's roles in violent extremism, including on identifying the drivers that lead women to join violent extremist groups, and on the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses;
- (c) Include women and other underrepresented groups in national law enforcement and security agencies, including as part of counter-terrorism prevention and response frameworks;
- (d) Build the capacity of women and their civil society groups to engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism;
- (e) Ensure that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to projects that address women's specific needs or empower women, as recommended in my recent report to the Security Council on women and peace and security (S/2015/716).

UN Secretary General, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, A/70/674 ¶ 53 (2015)

**Gender Analysis  
of Drivers of  
Radicalization  
of Women**

*Urges* Member States and requests relevant United Nations entities, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, within its existing mandate, and in collaboration with UN-Women, to conduct and gather gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses, and to ensure United Nations monitoring and assessment mechanisms and processes mandated to prevent and respond to violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, have the necessary gender expertise to fulfill their mandates, including relevant sanctions experts groups and bodies established to conduct fact finding and criminal investigations;  
S/RES/2242 ¶ 12 (2015)

Women's empowerment is a critical force for sustainable peace. While women do sometimes play an active role in violent extremist organizations, it is also no coincidence that societies for which gender equality indicators are higher are less vulnerable to violent extremism ... It therefore recommend that Member States:

- Invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women's roles in violent extremism, including on identifying the drivers that lead women to join violent extremist groups, and on the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses;
- Include women and other underrepresented groups in national law enforcement and security agencies, including as part of counter-terrorism prevention and response frameworks;

UN Secretary-General, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*  
A/70/674 ¶ 53 (2015)

*Calls upon* all Member States, given the complex global security context today, to highlight the important role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and urges Member States and United Nations entities to integrate a gender analysis on the drivers of radicalization of women to terrorism into their relevant programs, to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;  
A/RES/70/291 ¶ 12 (2016)

*Calls upon* all Member States, given the complex global security context today, to highlight the important role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and urges Member States and United Nations entities to integrate a gender analysis on the drivers of radicalization of women to terrorism into their relevant programs, to consider, when appropriate, the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations and to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;  
A/RES/72/284 ¶ 25 (2018)

## Appendix B3: WPS UN Commitments

Resolution/ Document (year)	Key issues and core provisions
<b>S/RES/1325 (2000)</b>	Representation & participation of women in peace and security governance; protection of women's rights and bodies in conflict & post-conflict situations.
<b>S/RES/1820 (2008)</b>	Protection of women from sexual violence in conflict; zero tolerance of sexual abuse and exploitation perpetrated by UN DPKO personnel.
<b>S/RES/1888 (2009)</b>	Creation of office of SRSG-SVC; creation of UN Action; identification of 'team of experts'; appointment of Women's Protection Advisors to field missions.
<b>S/RES/1889 (2009)</b>	Need to increase participation of women in peace and security governance at all levels; creation of global indicators to map implementation of UNSCR 1325.
<b>S/RES/1960 (2010)</b>	Development of CSRV monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements; integration of WPAs to field missions alongside Gender Advisors.
<b>S/RES/2106 (2013)</b>	Challenging impunity and lack of accountability for CRSV.
<b>S/RES/2122 (2013)</b>	Identifies UN Women as key UN entity providing information and advice on participation of women in peace and security governance; whole-of-UN accountability; civil society inclusion; 2015 High-level Review of implementation of UNSCR 1325.
<b>S/RES/2242 (2015)</b>	Integrates Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) in all UNSC country situations; establishes Informal Experts Group on WPS; adds WPS considerations to sanctions committee deliberations; links WPS to countering terrorism and extremism
<b>S/RES/2467 (2019)</b>	<p>Meeting the needs of victims of violent extremism – In particular noting:</p> <p>15. <i>Urges</i> Member States to strengthen access to justice for victims of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, including women and girls, who are particularly targeted, including through the prompt investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as reparations for victims as appropriate;</p> <p>28. <i>Stresses</i> that acts of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict can be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of, and used as a tactic by certain parties to armed conflict, including non-state armed groups, designated as terrorist groups and therefore <i>affirms</i> that victims of sexual violence, committed by certain parties to armed conflict, including non-state armed groups designated as terrorist groups, should have access to national relief and reparations programs, as well as health care, psychosocial care, safe shelter, livelihood support and legal aid and that services should include provisions for women with children born as a result of sexual violence in conflict, as well as men and boys who may have been victims of sexual violence in conflict including in detention settings; contribute to lifting the sociocultural stigma attached to this category of crime and facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.</p>

## Appendix C: Gender Mainstreaming Principles

### EQUAL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

Women's and girls' participation in peace agreements and in security apparatus has steadily increased since 2000. The mere presence of women, however, is no guarantee that an integrated gender perspective is adopted or that gender equality has been achieved. Equal participation and inclusion must therefore engage women meaningfully in order to understand and incorporate their diverse perspectives. This includes practical steps such as long-term women's capacity building, skills training, and generating political will. It also requires promoting and supporting women's participation at all levels of decision making and engaging with women via non-traditional and informal mechanisms. This demands more than *pro-forma* descriptive representation; rather gender-mainstreaming requires engaged consultations with all, especially women.

### ATTENDING TO GENDER DIFFERENCE AND INEQUALITIES

Bringing women into unjust and unequal processes and institutions does not in itself produce gender equality. Bringing 'women in' to current institutions and processes also requires addressing unequal situations and contexts preceding their engagement. Gender analysis is required at all stages of policy and programming in order to highlight gender differences and inequalities as they cut across other social markers – such as age, class, and ethnicity – as shaped by the specifics of local contexts. Gender analysis shows where gender norms, roles and relations require different approaches to policy and practice for men and women. Taking explicit account of how men and women contribute to, participate in, and perpetuate unequal gender relations is recommended, and these differences must be attended to in design, implementation and evaluation. This includes allocating appropriate funds for women-specific policies and programs, as well as allocating appropriate resources to ensure that the different needs and approaches for women are accommodated within all policies and programs. This also includes analysis and funding initiatives that are relevant to men's issues, such as

acknowledging and responding to how masculinity affects domestic violence against men, parenting, demobilization of male soldiers, substance abuse, etc.

### NON-EXCLUSIVITY

Recognizing that gender inequality between men and women is relational leads to the understanding that gender mainstreaming is not a 'women's issue'. Gender mainstreaming does signal the replacement of women-centered approaches within mandates, although there has been a move away from 'women' as a target group. This is because gender often concerns the relationships between men and women, and consequently women's well being and security cannot improve without including men. Failing to understand the social structures that govern the way men and women interact can undermine actions directed at women or render them ineffective. Like women, men are also affected by strict gender norms and with a long-term perspective not only women and girls but also men and boys benefit from gender equality. Gender mainstreaming therefore incorporates men and boys in gender-planning initiatives, modifies existing programs to reduce negative and amplify positive effects for men (without undermining the overall goal), and supports alliances between men and women.

### COHERENCE (INFERRED)

While gender equality is an important goal in itself – an issue of human rights and justice - measures to support gender equality can contribute to other goals. Policies and programs across the UN system must support gender equality and should work cooperatively and coherently to that aim alongside specific policy objectives. Success in one policy area is not countenanced if it harms the objective of gender equality. Therefore, gender equality should not be sacrificed for other goals; policy makers and practitioners should avoid securitizing and instrumentalizing gender equality. Moreover, coherence across mandates to secure gender equality is required as policies and programs in one mandate or policy area can undermine efforts in another. This is sometimes referred to as a 'whole of UN' or 'whole of government' approach.

## Appendix D: Pragmatic Steps and Activities:

<p><b>Cross Cutting Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize Gender Experts, Gender focal points and gender advisors in the design, implementation and evaluation of PVE.</li> <li>• Ensure UN and PVE Management structures include and support gender mainstreaming activities and priorities.</li> <li>• Identification of invitation to a diverse range of partners and participants, including a gender balance, in all areas of PVE.</li> <li>• Articulation of local understandings of what gender equality means (e.g. linking gender with other forms of differentiation, such as age, class and ethnicity) and encouragement for internally developed strategies for achieving gender equality.</li> <li>• Audit existing gender training – offer training where gaps are identified.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Compliance with Human Rights, including Women's Rights</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PVE objectives that seek to achieve gender equality and gender inequalities to reduce girls' vulnerability to violent extremism and to uphold international human rights obligations (detailed in later sections).</li> <li>• The avoidance of the use of sweeping definitions and terminology in PVE to reduce discrimination and disproportionate impacts on particular segments of the population.</li> <li>• Establishing an independent human rights body, or the involvement of national and judiciary bodies where appropriate, with oversight across all elements of PVE, including as they intersect with counter-terrorism and CVE (see also later dimensions on accountability and monitoring).</li> <li>• Including the respect for human rights, including women's human rights, in Terms of Reference for PVE programs and institutions.</li> <li>• Adopting <i>gender mainstreaming guidelines</i> for all actors involved in PVE design, implementation, and assessment.</li> <li>• Applying <i>gender and human rights audits</i> to determine what additional resources and tools an agency may need to integrate gender into its counter-terrorism and PVE work.</li> <li>• Development of actionable responses to human rights groups' concerns with existing PVE activities and programs.</li> <li>• Preservation and protection of civil society to offer meaningful critique and diverse perspectives on PVE.</li> <li>• Reorientation of PVE objectives and outcomes towards human rights and security.</li> <li>• Establishment of an independent human rights body with oversight (see also later principles on accountability and monitoring).</li> <li>• Human rights SWAT analysis/review of each PVE activity.</li> <li>• Invitation for human rights groups to audit and evaluate PVE.</li> <li>• Development of actionable responses to human rights groups' concerns with existing PVE activities.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Dimension 1</b> <b>Inclusivity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of women-centered and women-specific initiatives as well as incorporation women’s needs in all PVE activities.</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement activities to elicit local consensus on desired outcomes of PVE and how they relate to broader security outcomes – these should include partners from across a variety of groups and be gender inclusive.</li> <li>• Development of networks and allies who can build ‘peace and security partnerships’ across sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Including feedback and reporting mechanisms from these partnerships in program activities and planning.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Empowerment of local stakeholders to identify what changes are expected and in what time frame, and for them to identify how they anticipate such changes occurring. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where there is a gap between local expectation and delivery – communicate and discuss why and where this is.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mapping of differences in anticipated changes and related activities separately for how they relate to men and women.</li> <li>• Identification of relevant national commitments to political and civil rights adherence and attainment of local compliance within policies.</li> <li>• PVE agendas, activities, and narratives need to be translated into the local languages, as they need to be more culturally and locally driven.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dimension 2</b> <b>Comprehensive Security Approach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop training manuals for different sectors so they can engage with the programs.</li> <li>• Develop matrices that connect different areas of human security to PVE (for example consider how incoming generating activities need to be meaningful and gainful for participants in order to drive change).</li> <li>• Lobby and work to overcome structural factors that inhibit PVE goals.</li> <li>• Establishment of a national civilian body with oversight over all counter-terrorism components, including PVE.</li> <li>• Development of multi-sectoral / multi-agency gender responsive standard operating procedures on PVE.</li> <li>• Equal participation of women security sector PVE approaches – with reference to the <a href="#">Priority Area of Security Sector Reform</a>.</li> <li>• Consideration of differing women, girls, men, and boy’s security needs and intersecting threats in PVE design.</li> <li>• Establishment of interagency coordination and communication mechanisms concerning national security policies and practices, including PVE.</li> <li>• Publication of the “Theory of Change” framework that informs PVE policy and interventions – with reference to <a href="#">Gender Sensitive Evidence Base</a>.</li> <li>• Inclusive dialogues on PVE – including how to, and whether to, identify a program with PVE – with reference to the <a href="#">Lessons Identified Discussion on Do No Harm</a>.</li> <li>• Good Governance and management practices for institutions, sectors and organizations involved in PVE through offering or designing and facilitating training.</li> <li>• Encourage public participation as policy and legislative measures in PVE are being developed.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Dimension 3 Gender Responsiveness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage donors to fund women’s organizations in a timely and safe manner.</li> <li>• Respond to women’s concerns, needs and agendas in a timely and respectful manner to ensure fair and appropriate participation for all.</li> <li>• Identify how local norms for masculinity and femininity relate to VE narratives – in opposition or confirming.</li> <li>• Include mechanisms for women to report and comment in a safe manner upon the successes and limitations of the PVE activities and organizations.</li> <li>• Include gender mainstreaming and gender awareness training in a locally appropriate manner for all partners.</li> <li>• Provide training in gender analysis of plans and budgets for staff developing and implementing PVE programs.</li> <li>• Publish in accessible formats of gender-budget analysis; of the M&amp;E interim and final reports.</li> <li>• Dedicate funding and staffing to respond to and address gender issues and gender mainstreaming in PVE institutions (such as gender training, initiatives to increase recruitment of women to PVE organizations, efforts to empower reporting of GBV or women’s rights violations).</li> <li>• Design and Implement PVE campaigns delivered to address gendered needs of men and women as victims of VE.</li> <li>• Design and Implement PVE campaigns to address the underlying gender inequalities that support VE.</li> <li>• Set Gender performance targets built into job descriptions, terms of reference and staff personal development plans, including at senior management level.</li> <li>• Address the impact the extremist ideology has on women and how gender should be included in combatting such ideologies.</li> <li>• Carry out research on gender impacts of VE, on men and women’s participation and recruitment, and on pathways to exit VE.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dimension 4 Gender Sensitive Evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition and establishment of clear terms of reference for the assessment team that includes gender expertise.</li> <li>• Collect data from women’s groups and women from across the locality about what would encourage or dissuade them from participating in PVE activities, through e.g. workshops, surveys or key stakeholder interviews.</li> <li>• Collation of gender-sensitive and disaggregated data on human rights violations, including women’s human rights, and gender-based violence (regardless of the perpetrators).</li> <li>• Collation of gender-sensitive and disaggregated demographic information on violent extremism (settings, membership, objectives); identification of the gender ideologies, gender identities and gender roles in violent extremist groups.</li> <li>• Utilization of mixed methods for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, and assessment of these methods’ ability to access and maximize the experiences and realities of marginalized groups, including women and girls.</li> <li>• Publication and distribution of evidence from a diverse range of sources and partners (noting that distribution should occur through a variety of media – radio, public hearings, and written form in local languages) to show how the VE situational assessment was derived</li> <li>• Publication and distribution of the methodology, as well as the findings of VE situational assessments and of gender audit reports.</li> <li>• Further highlighting and distribution of gender-specific VE situational assessment findings</li> <li>• Publication of funded research into gender and VE/PVE by local researchers, including from a human rights perspective.</li> <li>• Training of researchers and gender advisors in research methodology and research ethics</li> <li>• Inclusion of a variety of stakeholders in developing gender sensitive evidence through facilitating dialogue, workshops and training sessions at local, national and regional level.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Priority 1</b>  <b>Development and Programming</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme level objectives and outcomes should be ‘SMART’ (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-specific).</li> <li>• Work closely with other UN agencies to minimize overlap and avoid friction with other mandates.</li> <li>• Identify the theory of change to show how activities impact upon and generate PVE (see lesson identified <a href="#">Complementarity with UN mandates and UN Transitions</a>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 2</b>  <b>Recruitment and Radicalization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research to determine the gendered processes of radicalization in the local context.</li> <li>• Research and work with gender advisors to identify the needs of women as victims and participants in VE.</li> <li>• Analysis of gender norms, including glorification of violence, sexual violence and masculinity norms, and consider how to address them.</li> <li>• Focusing on counter-narratives in a gender sensitive manner is important but only if coinciding with gender sensitive initiatives to address other drivers of VE.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 3</b>  <b>Equality and Empowerment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of a rights-based approach to participation so the cultural practices related to gender roles do not limit participation.</li> <li>• Development of women’s capacity and skills so that they are encouraged and confident in participating in public life and PVE.</li> <li>• Participatory analysis, with women and girls, of their capacities and skills, and identification of any gaps where additional support is required.</li> <li>• Emphasis of positive norms and values that are part of masculine identities in the institutions and communities concerned.</li> <li>• Engagement in and promotion of capacity-building activities pre-PVE programs for women’s organizations and groups based on the analysis.</li> <li>• Support for women’s human rights defenders and improvement of women’s groups security from violent extremist groups.</li> <li>• Engagement with men and boys to reflect on and promote women’s participation in P/CVE.</li> <li>• Fund women’s groups to deliver and provide PVE to mixed and male-only audiences as well as female-only audiences.</li> <li>• Partnerships and co-operative efforts with other organizations and institutions to reduce long term socio-cultural barriers to women’s participation in PVE, such as: work with educators to promote women’s literacy; work with law enforcement and judiciary to increase women’s participation in law, justice and security institutions; work with community leaders to develop spaces and opportunities for diversifying and strengthening women’s local authority, autonomy and influence.</li> <li>• Agreement and enablement in the community and with partners on targeted actions that may be necessary to enhance women’s meaningful participation.</li> <li>• Use women-friendly venues, activities, and times to facilitate women’s participation, including childcare provision.</li> <li>• Assure that women at heightened risk have a mechanism to raise their concerns and participate in decisions, while guaranteeing confidentiality regarding their personal situation and without exposing them to further harm or trauma.</li> <li>• Identify, and make dedicated efforts to remove, physical and normative barriers to women’s participation.</li> <li>• Recognition and removal of gender, age and racial stereotypes that minimize women’s abilities and then limit their activities in PVE.</li> <li>• Sensitization of community gatekeepers and security counter-parts to the importance of women’s participation in PVE, through awareness campaigns.</li> <li>• Identification of and partnerships with credible women to speak to other women <i>in their terms</i> to encourage participation, rather than overreliance on the most educated women in an area.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Priority 4</b>  <b>Security Sector Reform</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support national security sector institutions to address different VE threats faced by women, girls, men and boys, through facilitating the participation of women and girls in security sector decision-making, assessment, planning, implementation and oversight.</li> <li>• Facilitate the exchange of lessons and experiences among the security sectors of Member States in gender-responsive security services in partnership with sub-regional and regional organizations, academia and women’s local organizations.</li> <li>• Strengthen political advocacy towards the promotion of gender equality in the security sectors at national levels by encouraging senior leaders to increase women’s representation in the security institutions; and establishing accountability mechanisms to address gender-based discrimination by and within the security sector.</li> <li>• Enhance accountability and compliance to WPS agenda by supporting national authorities to develop analysis, collect data and track progress on women’s participation in national security sector reform processes, including on the impacts of the security responses to VE in women’s life.</li> <li>• Development and publication of gender-responsive local strategies on community policing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 5</b>  <b>Community Resilience and Empowerment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of local PVE forums across different regions, with regional and collaborative meetings to build knowledge towards a national understanding.</li> <li>• Publish reports from various local stakeholder engagement activities.</li> <li>• Locally developed gender awareness training for local PVE programs, with women in leadership positions and adoption of strategies of inclusion at the local level.</li> <li>• Encourage local groups as partners to publish their commitments to PVE and to women’s inclusion and equality.</li> <li>• Publish objectives and outcomes, and indicators, with gender-sensitive data.</li> <li>• Include local groups as signatories to Vision or Mission PVE Statements and Objectives of National and Local PVE plans and initiatives.</li> <li>• Attendance of Local NGOs and civil society networks and interest groups across diverse sectors at local PVE forums.</li> <li>• Provision of feedback to local forums.</li> <li>• Engage with minorities, youth and other marginalized voices as PVE legislation or new policies are being considered and developed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority 6</b>  <b>Returning Foreign Fighters and their families</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of clear guidance on the disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration of former female combatants.</li> <li>• Establish the different needs for men and women foreign fighters and returnees – including medical, social and political.</li> <li>• Do not assume to ‘know’ their experiences with extremist groups based on their gender; rather work on a case-by-case basis to establish the best rehabilitation approach.</li> <li>• Work with communities to prepare them for the return of former fighters and members of extremist groups.</li> <li>• Work with traditional and religious leaders to minimize stigma, especially for those returning with children.</li> <li>• Consider how to engage returnees in meaningful and purposeful activities.</li> <li>• Address the concerns of victims in a gender-sensitive and appropriate way. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women may not feel comfortable reporting sexual abuse by terrorist organizations so additional reporting mechanisms will need to be considered.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Facilitate community and security sector trust building activities and conversations.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX E: Case Studies for PVE Priority Areas

### Methodology for Case Study Selection

The case studies used in these guidelines represent a broad range of activities and programmes that indicate gender mainstreaming in PVE for each of the priority areas. The case studies can be adapted to suit local contexts. Their selection for inclusion in these guidelines followed a four-stage process. First, desk-based research by the authors identifying publicly known gender-relevant PVE activities worldwide. Second, the authors interviewed a global selection of PVE practitioners to ascertain their activities and priorities. Third, the authors established a ‘best fit’ with the priority areas and the gender mainstreaming dimensions to the case studies, and fourth, they further refined the selection to show the diversity of approaches and various scales of activities.

There were some challenges identifying case studies:

- a number of PVE activities are not identified as such making it hard to evaluate them in terms of their attention to the priority areas;
- there are few gender-sensitive PVE activities worldwide, and even fewer that focus on addressing masculinity in violent extremism;
- details about activities (even those identified as PVE) and who participated in them have to be kept minimal because of the threats of violence against workers;
- there is a bias in PVE programming towards addressing violent extremism that utilizes jihadist rhetoric – this reflects the overall orientalist bias in global counter-terrorism, and countering violent extremism. It does not mean that there is not a need for PVE programming to address other modes for extremism – there is – but that thus far there are not many which do this AND address gender components.

### List of Case Studies

- Economic Empowerment in Bangladesh and Indonesia
- Economic Empowerment in Pakistan - PAIMAN
- Challenging Misinformation Online - The Sakinah Campaign in Saudi Arabia
- Burka Avenger: Comics and Comedy to Change Cultural Norms in Pakistan
- Anti-extremism Comedy (in Indonesia, the Philippines and Bangladesh)
- Women’s Leadership in Nigeria
- Women’s Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality in the USA and Worldwide
- STRIVE in the Horn of Africa
- Police Women in Pakistan
- Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violent Extremism in Tajikistan
- Community Justice in Northern Ireland
- Lifting Weights and Spirits – Mercy Corps, Jordan
- The Yellow Ribbon Initiative – Neem Foundation, Nigeria

### Economic Empowerment in Bangladesh and Indonesia<sup>235</sup>

In Bangladesh and Indonesia, economic empowerment programmes are seen as an entry point for PVE engagement and bring women together to build networks, confidence, self-efficacy, and skills to take part in family decision-making and to resolve community problems. A key finding from the economic empowerment programmes were that they reduced tensions within families and communities.<sup>236</sup>

### Economic Empowerment in Pakistan - PAIMAN

One of the primary objectives of PAIMAN is to create economic opportunities for women as a way of diverting activity away from employment

that creates or sustains the conditions for extremist violence. As the organization explains:

Combating extremism through socio-economic empowerment of women is one of PAIMAN's flagship programs in which women are given livelihood skills along with life skills and skills of community level peacebuilding to become not only the earning members of their families but also to play a significant role in social cohesion and building peace within their household and community. PAIMAN has also established institutes for skill building and livelihood (income generation) opportunities for marginalized communities, especially women, by the name of JAWANDOON at Charsadda and Swat. Women are being trained in home bakery, stitching, embroidery, gift box making, kitchen garden, poultry, carpentry etc. Through this initiative, PAIMAN has provided support to more than 1,400 IDPs [internally displaced persons].<sup>237</sup>

The co-founder of PAIMAN, Mossarat Qadeem, has overseen other activities in this domain that have had a positive effect on the livelihoods of women who previously were involved in activities that supported acts of extremist violence. Mossarat and a group of women associated with PAIMAN were introduced to a network of women who were paid by the piece to sew jackets into which explosives could be inserted. Mossarat recalls: "We had a discussion, I asked her how much she is being paid for this one jacket? She said 100 rupees (less than one dollar) so if she stitches 5 per week, she gets around 5 dollars, sometimes she would get a little more, and she said that that is enough for her to buy groceries or clothes. So I said, well you are only earning 1500 rupees per month, let's start working on your stitching skills and use it in a positive way. You can still earn money, but you won't live with the regret of using your skill to kill people. You can instead use it to help and support other women by stitching their dresses and you will earn even more money."

In this case, the PAIMAN women managed to persuade thirteen of the network's thirty women to take up the alternative employment offered to them and

give up sewing the deadly jackets. Creating economic alternatives for women, respecting their need to earn a living and maintain standing in their communities, and engaging the women themselves who were formerly involved in making extremist violence possible has resulted in the transformation of families and communities. Mossarat explains that, "[v]iolent extremism has become a way of thinking, a normal way of life. Creating awareness, sensitizing these communities, engaging these women so that they themselves spread the message and take ownership is essential for preventing violent extremism. It is these women with knowledge and skill that can influence the thinking of their family and community".<sup>238</sup>

See more at: <http://www.icanpeacework.org/2018/01/25/mossarat-qadeem-tolana-mothers-cutting-off-extremists-resources-one-thread-time/>

### **Challenging Misinformation Online – the Sakinah Campaign in Saudi Arabia**

The Sakinah Campaign is an independent non-governmental organization, supported by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs and other agencies, which engages in online dialogue as a way of combating internet radicalization. Staffed by a combination of volunteer and paid workers, the campaign has two parts: one half of the campaign's efforts are directed at collecting online recruitment materials in order to better understand how extremists and ideologues are using this kind of collateral to radicalize and mobilize recruits; the other half involves interacting with people who are online looking for information and religious instruction. According to one study: "the Sakinah workers who dialogue online are *ulama* and other religious scholars proficient with modern computer technology, all with highly developed understandings of extremist ideologies, including the religious interpretations used to justify violence and terrorism."<sup>239</sup>

Recognizing that there are gender norms that govern interaction and communication between men and women, even in a virtual environment, the Sakinah Campaign operates a separate women's section comprised of ten volunteer workers. The operatives

engage in both public and one-to-one dialogue: “After engaging with them on an open platform, the Sakinah operative suggests a private platform and directs the conversation towards moderate teachings of Islam, at the same time pointing out inconsistencies in the rhetoric of extremists.”<sup>240</sup>

As Dr Christopher Boucek comments: “The importance of the Internet will only increase in the future, and programs such as the Sakinah Campaign are similarly bound to multiply. Any strategy to combat the spread of extremism must also offer viable options for the religiously observant. Engaging with that segment of the population and offering alternatives to violent extremism is a critical necessity in the war of ideas. Encouraging local partners to take up this approach is vital, and the Saudi experience will be useful for others to study as they consider strategies to curb Internet radicalization.”<sup>241</sup>

### **Burka Avenger: Comics and Comedy to Change Cultural Norms in Pakistan**

*Burka Avenger*, created by Aaron Haroon, is Pakistan’s first-ever animated superhero TV series. The show chronicles the adventures of Jiya, “an inspirational school teacher whose alter ego is the superhero Burka Avenger, who fights for Justice, Peace, and Education for all.”<sup>242</sup> Haroon has stated in an interview that he was inspired to create the character after reading about girls being denied education by extremists in Pakistan and elsewhere.

“The whole concept [of *Burka Avenger*] came about because I was reading about girls’ schools being shut down and bombed by extremists, and women and girls are threatened with violence. That’s why the super heroine was created,” says Haroon.<sup>243</sup>

*Burka Avenger* works against radicalization and mobilization into extremism by depicting positive messages of justice and peace, changing the conversations that young children are having with their parents and potentially helping to prevent extremism from a very early stage. The lead representative from UN Women Asia-Pacific explains: “We often look to law enforcement to prevent extremism, but it starts

very early from a child’s age, through TV and entertainment . . . A girl and superhero using pens and books as weapons can make us start having a conversation, at home or in schools.”<sup>244</sup> According to UN Women, the show has significantly boosted support for girls’ education, women’s empowerment, and tolerance in Afghanistan, and has recently been launched in Indonesia.<sup>245</sup>

### **Anti-extremism Comedy (in Indonesia, the Philippines and Bangladesh)**

Sakdiyah Ma’ruf uses her routine to challenge extremism and religious intolerance. As a devout Muslim woman she uses humor to highlight issues of her faith, politics, extremism, and gender issues. Her routine emphasizes the need for religious freedom and tolerance. In her latest collaboration with the Moral Courage Project (found on the Moral Courage Channel),<sup>246</sup> she worked with fellow Indonesian comedienne in an independently-organized show called PerempuanBerHAK (Women’s Rights). She is careful in how she presents her material, and tries to avoid confrontation. Her aim is to encourage those with extremist views to reflect on their behaviors and views, not just a general audience.<sup>247</sup>

Mythos Labs made two videos — one in South Asia and one in Southeast Asia — with two totally different approaches. The first video, “Brainwash,” was filmed in India as a satirical beauty product commercial that parodies the overall messaging of patriarchal society, not just violent extremism. Meanwhile, the second video “HI-SIS,” filmed in Indonesia, takes the form of slapstick, ensemble comedy that pokes fun at extremist recruiting practices. The videos received millions of views on YouTube, but more importantly, 91 per cent of viewers completed watching them — an impressively rare occurrence for any kind of online video. Not only that, but 88 per cent of the comments were positive. In addition, they ran a “My Power” Social Media and Counter-narrative Training which taught 150 first-time social media users across Asia how to write, film, edit and upload counter-narrative videos centered around the theme of “my power” (“amar shokti” in Bangla, “lakasko” in Filipino and “kemampuanku” in Bahasa). Videos showed female protagonists using

their inner strength to overcome major problems. By helping young women internalize the fact that they are already strong, powerful individuals, this campaign made them less vulnerable to extremists' empty promises of empowerment.<sup>248</sup>

### **Women's Leadership in Nigeria**

Efforts by *Jama'atul ahl al-sunnah li da'awati wal jihad* – commonly known as Boko Haram – to recruit people, forcibly or willingly, to join the militia have had a significant effect on the community of Kwar Maila in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in north-east Nigeria. This has, in turn, had consequences for community relations. Even after relative peace has been established in the area, the community is rife with suspicion and divisions remain. Dr. Mohammed Hassan, the Executive Director of Herwa Community Development Initiatives, explains that, “[m]any people stigmatize the residents because so many insurgents originated from the area. In fact, the women and their children from this community are summarily rejected, despite the fact that many of them have lost their husbands, fathers and children as a result of the insurgency.”<sup>249</sup>

International Alert, an international NGO that works on peace building, conflict resolution, and reconciliation, has identified the lack of community cohesion as a risk factor for future violence and instability. The organization has launched a programme in Kwar Maila to support women's leadership and political participation in an effort to promote peace and the protection of human rights. According to the organization, “[t]he high levels of recruitment of boys by Boko Haram has made neighboring communities and security forces suspicious of those in Kwar Maila – especially mothers – and left residents feeling isolated, reluctant to use social services and negatively affected economically. It is important to address this stigma and help support the community in countering further extremism.”<sup>250</sup>

The programme works in tandem with other International Alert initiatives in northeast Nigeria, including sensitization workshops for women and girls who have survived sexual violence by Boko Haram,

and family workshops run by International Alert programme facilitators with survivors who spent periods of time held captive by Boko Haram. The foundational logic of these programme interventions is to rebuild specific relationships and community trust on the understanding that cohesion inhibits conflict.

The organization has provided a series of profiles of programme participants, including Fussam, a woman leader responsible for the well-being of women and girls and their reintegration into the Kwar Maila community. Fussam also educates women and girls on sexual gender-based violence and how to find a voice in the community. She urges women to understand their value as human beings and why they do not deserve to be treated otherwise. She holds dialogue and sensitization workshops for women's and girls' education and awareness on the importance of moving forward from sexual violence and being able to find peace. She says: “I have become a role model to these women and girls and I'm glad I was able to learn from the organization to make such an impact. This camp is very peaceful now and survivors have been able to move on with their lives.”<sup>251</sup>

### **Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality in the USA and Worldwide**

WISE is a global programme, social network and grassroots social justice movement led by Muslim women, which aims to empower Muslim women to fully participate in their communities and nations, and to amplify their collective voices. The programme builds on the strengths, talents, expertise and experiences of its members to foster collaboration, and support the diverse work of Muslim women leaders worldwide. WISE has a clear theory of change, based on collaboration, interpretation/education, action, and communication to promote resilient communities.

According to WISE, while they focus on addressing key issues for Muslim communities, the PVE space is predominantly interested in improving existing responses in the USA – current public and political discourse surrounding VE is having negative effects on Muslim communities by falsely conflating Islam, Muslims and terrorism. The organization has produced



a substantial 72 person-authored report entitled WiseUP, a congressional briefing report, a YouTube video, and initiated a series of ‘town hall dialogues’ on VE. While their findings are not in themselves gendered, the initiative’s information-gathering events and reports were led by and included Muslim women from a variety of backgrounds from across the USA.

In addition, WISE is developing a community guide for use by Muslim communities to inform and support community leaders in their efforts to challenge ISIL narratives, drawing primarily on religious scriptures and scholarship. This approach reveals how women can be included as empowered religious and spiritual leaders as well as civic leaders in PVE.

Read More at: [www.wisemuslimwomen.org/](http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/) See also: [www.wiseupreport.org](http://www.wiseupreport.org)

### **STRIVE in the Horn of Africa**

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) carried out a range of PVE initiatives in the Horn of Africa, including those working on security sector engagement on PVE and improving civil society and security sector relationships.

Two stakeholder coordination meetings were arranged to help women engage community elders, religious leaders and government actors and to secure female participation in local CVE initiatives. With the help of STRIVE Horn of Africa (HoA), 11 women’s peace committees were established in the Togdheer, Saahil and Sool regions to raise awareness of violent extremism. They also sought to improve the circulation of information between law enforcement and community actors. Through a set of capacity-building workshops, women were instructed in methods on how to effectively present themselves when interacting with local authorities. RUSI staff also provided guidance and technical support to the women’s peace committees as they convened meetings with their respective communities to mobilize local ‘buy-in’ across both urban and rural contexts. Finally, STRIVE HoA trained policewomen, and members of women’s police forums, in how they could actively participate in CVE programs, identify security issues in their local

precincts and design targeted solutions. As women are more likely to report to women police officers, this was important to improve trust but also to create a more coherent reporting mechanism for those who might be vulnerable to radicalization.

RUSI reported an increase in women’s employment in police forces, albeit mostly at entry level and administrative jobs, therefore they concluded that to be entirely successful there needed to be more work with law enforcement, and with society more broadly to achieve greater parity. Indeed, in their final report they questioned whether backlash against an emphasized gender empowerment component in PVE undermined the overall effectiveness in PVE. A question for programmers and policy designers is how to ensure that issues of gender empowerment and equality are raised in dialogue with local communities.

Read more: <http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Strive-Lessons-Learned-Report-Final-Version.pdf> and also Julian Brett and Andre Kahlmeyer, “STRIVE (Horn of Africa)”, Evaluation Report, 23 January 2017, <http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/170124-STRIVE-evaluation-Report-Final.pdf>.

### **Police Women in Pakistan**

A previous Inclusive Security and PAIMAN partnership in Pakistan resulted in the formation of Amn-o-Nisa, a diverse coalition of women leaders from all areas of civil society who mobilized against increased intolerance and violent extremism (VE) in Pakistan through advocacy, public outreach, and community engagement. They identified that the lack of women in the Pakistani police forces was a major gap in the country’s efforts to combat terrorism and VE.

Women police officers and gender-sensitive community policing approaches are an important component to preventing security sector-related push factors towards VE. Inclusive Security reasoning for this is seven-fold:

- women are less likely to use excessive force;
- they can more efficiently de-escalate potentially violent confrontations;

- they can reach marginalized populations in a way male counterparts may not;
- they can help reduce corruption;
- survivors of rape and abuse are more likely to report incidents to women police officers;
- in some contexts, only women responders are permitted to care for women victims of terrorist attacks; and
- they can help strengthen community and police relationships.<sup>252</sup>

Pakistan's police forces have been characterized by some as "historically under-resourced and plagued by corruption, heavy handedness, and civilian mistrust. Negative experiences with criminal justice sectors corrode public trust in rule of law institutions, hindering their effectiveness and generating grievances".<sup>253</sup> These conditions are conducive to VE and bolster terrorist recruitment.<sup>254</sup> Inclusive Security argue that Pakistan's police need to build trust, be more responsive to local needs, and reduce corruption and abuses. Women police officers are critical to enhancing the operational effectiveness of police forces and strengthening trust between police and civilians.

However, women's participation in Pakistani Police forces has been low (1 in 100) and women are severely underrepresented at higher levels of authority and decision making, with 98 per cent of women serving only in the lower cadres. An additional challenge is that police forces across Pakistan are underfunded and under-resourced, especially at the community level. The introduction of Women Police Stations, while they had a laudable aim of increasing the reporting of crimes by women, has created a two-tier system. There is a nationwide quota and policy to increase women's recruitment and retention in the 'mainstream' police, but results have been uneven.

The project goals were limited and were focused on increasing women's representation in PVE/CVE-related security policies and processes, especially in law enforcement. Inclusive Security aimed to create a vanguard of women, through working with a core group of women from parliament, police and civil society to increase their capacity to access and include

their voices in policymaking related to security issues. This meant increasing participants' advocacy skills, increasing mutual trust and understanding, providing technical assistance to participants to carry out research and hold meetings, and connecting participants to policymakers and officials.

Read more at: <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Pakistan-CVE.pdf>

### **Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violent Extremism in Tajikistan**

Javononi Peshsaf (Tajikistan) is an NGO that aims to enhance the role of women and youth for peace and security, prevention of domestic violence and violent extremism, in partnership with the police. The organization conducted research in 12 villages in Penjikent to find out why youth are joining violent extremist groups. This was followed up with a project to implement training and awareness-raising on preventing violent extremism and domestic violence within Penjikent. Activities for this included a training course on "police and community cooperation on prevention of domestic violence" in Panjakent, with assistance and cooperation of the US Embassy in Tajikistan. It included a partnership between the NGO, researchers and government, so that trainers in the workshop included the senior advisor of the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Head of the legal department of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The event was attended by representatives of various government structures, law enforcement agencies, and community committees of mahallas, religious leaders, volunteers and employees of the NGO. Participants of the event and representatives of law enforcement agencies, religious leaders and the local community discussed collaboration, and how to make joint efforts to solve problems on prevention of domestic violence, and attraction of young people to various extremist groups.

### **Community Justice in Northern Ireland**

The violence in Northern Ireland spanned a thirty-year period, officially brought to an end by the signing of the Good Friday (or Belfast) Agreement in 1998. Legacies of the sectarian conflict continue to affect societies across the territory even today, however,

as communities that endured significant loss and disruption during the so-called ‘Troubles’ struggle to reconcile and rebuild both relationships and institutions that will sustain a lasting peace.

Various peace initiatives have been implemented in Northern Ireland, including education and housing reforms to reduce the strict segregation of Catholics and Protestants, and the creation of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to replace the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Embedding an ethos of community policing in the newly-formed PSNI enabled greater accountability of police action and provided a framework through which to deliver other peace and reconciliation programs. As one report notes: “[d]eveloping relations between the police and particularly historically estranged communities has been difficult and challenging for all of the actors involved, and the effort is still evolving. Such relations are, however, at the very core of the ongoing CVE efforts to thwart those who promote violent opposition to the status quo.”<sup>255</sup>

In Northern Ireland, as in other contexts, PVE initiatives overlap and are interwoven with community-based violence prevention programs designed to divert young people, in particular, from crime and acts of violence. This includes the Community Restorative Justice programmes. The key learning from the success of these programmes is that the problems faced by the community are mostly relational in nature, which means that an understanding of gender relations is required to inform resolution and restore justice.

The kinds of issues dealt with by the variety of Community Restorative Justice programmes active across Northern Ireland include disorderly conduct, vandalism, and dissident, largely male, violence. This last issue, in particular, is a focus for the programmes, and entails a sympathetic perspective on the shifting expectations associated with contemporary masculinity. Allied initiatives, such as *Coiste na n-Iarchimí* (Safe Spaces for Critical Dialogue), which use, “the comradely bonds among veterans,”<sup>256</sup> (White and McEvoy 2012, 50) as a means to consolidate and amplify messages of positive peace, also recognize that peace work involves creating opportunities for

different forms of identity expression and leadership. Societal transformation requires more than, “jobs for the boys,” as one informant described it<sup>257</sup>, but rather needs a gender-sensitive, relational approach to transitioning out of violence and into lasting peace.

Read more at: White, Stephen, and McEvoy, Kieran *Countering Violent Extremism: Community Engagement Projects in Europe* (2012). Qatar International Academy for Security Studies [www.qiass.org](http://www.qiass.org)

### **Lifting Weights and Spirits – Jordan<sup>258</sup>**

Mercy Corps in Jordan supported the Jordanian town of Kharja to build a women’s only gym. Kharja is close to the Syrian border and has a significant number of refugees living there. Like many towns hosting a sudden influx in refugees, tensions and clashes occurred as communities tried to accommodate and learn to live with each other. Such tensions are conducive to VE. Mercy Corp established conflict resolution programmes with community members and refugees, in towns like Kharja, where they teach mediation and negotiation skills, and end with the completion of a community project. In this case a woman’s gym.

The women’s gym was decided upon through community consultation (what Mercy Corp describes as ‘local conflict resolution groups’) with men and women (and although a men’s gym was discussed, a women’s gym was considered more useful). The women’s gym was seen as an opportunity to empower women through exercise. The conflict resolution group felt that women’s leadership required women having their own time together, space to exercise, and develop their skills together. The gym also serves as a meeting space for other activities and gym members also organize excursions together.

It is worth noting that other NGOs are also focusing on women’s fitness and self-defense in Jordan – SheFighters, and Zumba by International Alert. The difference with Mercy Corps was that this gym was decided upon through local conflict resolution networks, so not only does it empower women, but it also strengthens the networks and builds community resilience to conflict and VE.

Read more at: <https://www.mercycorps.org.uk/articles/jordan-syria/lifting-weights-and-spirits-how-womens-gym-forged-friendship>

### **The Yellow Ribbon Initiative – Neem Foundation, Nigeria**

Neem Foundation is currently implementing a “Rehabilitation and Reintegration” Programme, the Yellow Ribbon Initiative, in the North- East of Nigeria. Although the comparatively high numbers of women in Boko Haram, suggests a strong need in Nigeria for gender-based prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR), there is as yet no system in place for addressing post-detention scenarios. The project has a comprehensive approach to rehabilitation and reintegration that covers psychological care, religious engagement, creative engagement, peace through sports, as well as reintegration activities such as economic empowerment, reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The Neem Foundation is developing the capacity of men and women within beneficiary communities to act as lay counselors, and

mentoring them through technical supervision to enhance the emotional and social well-being of children, and promote their rehabilitation in a way that is culturally and contextually appropriate. Activities would include trauma counseling, psychological assessment as well as psychosocial support for children with higher resilience. They are additionally working with faith-based leaders to help them provide basic counseling and to work towards changing the mind-sets of communities, victims and perpetrators of violence. The aim is to create positive coping mechanisms, enhance well-being and psychological resilience. They tailored their approaches to meet the needs of survivors of gender-based violence, and to work with returnees in an age- and gender-appropriate manner to process their experiences, and to learn how to forgive themselves so that they can best relate and reintegrate with community members.

Read more: <https://www.neemfoundation.org.ng/what-we-do> and [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/ICAN\\_UNDP\\_Invisible\\_Women\\_Report.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/ICAN_UNDP_Invisible_Women_Report.pdf)

## Appendix F: Useful Resources

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**UN WOMEN SUPPORTS UN MEMBER STATES AS THEY SET GLOBAL STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY, AND WORKS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO DESIGN LAWS, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT THE STANDARDS ARE EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED AND TRULY BENEFIT WOMEN AND GIRLS WORLDWIDE.**

It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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