

# Cooperating With Civil Society to Rehabilitate and Reintegrate Violent Extremist Prisoners

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UN Security Council Resolution 2396 recognizes the contributions of civil society to the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters and their families, encouraging member states to engage civil society when developing their rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.<sup>1</sup> This policy brief explores how government and civil society can advance their cooperation in the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals convicted and imprisoned for violent extremism or terrorism-related offenses.<sup>2</sup> It presents the current state of cooperation between government and civil society in the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners, then outlines the potential objectives of further cooperation in the rehabilitation and reintegration process.<sup>3</sup> For each objective, the brief explores the opportunities and challenges of cooperation for both governments and civil society.

## COOPERATION ON REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

Similar to other areas of counterterrorism practice, cooperation between government and civil society is recognized as a significant element of rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Most attention has focused on advancing cooperation outside of prisons and within communities to reintegrate those associated with and impacted by violent extremism. For example, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders* proposes that governments should work “in close partnerships with civil society organizations and communities, to enable the treatment to continue after the inmate has left the prison setting.”<sup>4</sup> This focus has recently drawn much attention due to the gradual

1 UN Security Council, S/RES/2396, 21 December 2017, para 32.

2 Cooperation may apply to other categories, including individuals in pretrial detention or prisoners suspected of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism in prisons.

3 Rehabilitation is the process of assisting individuals to change and reduce problematic behaviors associated with illegal activity, in this context, violent extremism. Sharon Casey et al., *Foundations of Offender Rehabilitation* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 34. Reintegration is the process by which violent extremist prisoners move from incarceration to community living. UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons,” *Criminal Justice Handbook Series*, October 2016, p. 142, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf) (hereinafter UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners).

4 GCTF, *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders*, 2012, p. 12, <https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/Rome%20Memorandum%20-%20ENG.pdf?ver=2016-03-29-134610-213>.

return of suspected foreign fighters and their families, some of whom receive short prison sentences or community-based sentences. In these community-based programs, governmental cooperation with civil society becomes a logical requirement.<sup>5</sup>

Cooperation between government and civil society in the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals convicted and imprisoned for violent extremism and terrorism-related offenses is more difficult to advance. The difficulties of cooperating in prisons are partly justified by the security, political, and reputational sensitivities involved in managing this category of prisoner. Due to the high-profile nature of violent extremist offenses and the potential impacts of violent extremism on the safety of the public, these prisoners are often considered high risk.<sup>6</sup> They will be more deeply stigmatized within and outside of prisons and under tighter supervision and will experience additional security restrictions and control measures that create barriers to the involvement of civil society in their rehabilitation and reintegration process. The global pandemic has highlighted these restrictions because these prisoners are rarely considered for early or temporary release, while external visitations are limited to reduce the spread of infectious disease inside prisons, further limiting possibilities for civil society cooperation.<sup>7</sup>

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Advancing cooperation between government and civil society in the rehabilitation and reintegration

of violent extremist prisoners is not easy. Even when cooperation is identified as desirable, objectives for such cooperation and the opportunities and challenges these present must be clearly identified and understood by government and civil society partners. Both need to appreciate how different types of cooperation can potentially serve their goals, needs, and interests. They also must understand the possible barriers to cooperation and the potential negative outcomes of cooperation for both parties or either one and for violent extremist prisoners.

The definitions of “government” and “civil society” and the dividing lines between these stakeholders are often fluid across countries. In this brief, government refers to multiagency partners at national, regional, and local levels contractually affiliated with and employed by the state and typically involved as coordinators of the rehabilitation and reintegration process.<sup>8</sup> This includes prisons, probationary services, police, and other partner agencies, such as those providing social services. Civil society is used to describe the range of nongovernmental and voluntary organizations that have a presence in public life at local, national, and international levels.<sup>9</sup> This includes independent community groups, research institutes, charitable foundations, and faith-based associations. For example, civil society refers to independent organizations that have an interest in prisons, are concerned with the well-being of prisoners, campaign for wider criminal justice reform, or provide community-based services, resources, and support.

Cooperation between government and civil society has long been recognized as important to prevent and

5 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), “Non-custodial Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism: A Guidebook for Policymakers and Practitioners in South-eastern Europe,” January 2020, pp. 69–71, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/7/444838.pdf>.

6 UNODC, “Handbook on the Management of High-Risk Prisoners,” *Criminal Justice Handbook Series*, March 2016, pp. 44–45, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/HB\\_on\\_High\\_Risk\\_Prisoners\\_Ebook\\_appr.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/HB_on_High_Risk_Prisoners_Ebook_appr.pdf).

7 UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Terrorism, Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism,” June 2020, p. 4, <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CTED-Paper%E2%80%9393-The-impact-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic-on-counter-terrorism-and-countering-violent-extremism.pdf>.

8 Merel Molenkamp and Lieke Wouterse, “Triple P: Coordination and Collaboration Between Police, Prison and Probation Services in Dealing With Violent Extremist and Terrorist Offenders,” Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), n.d., [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ex-post\\_paper\\_joint\\_event\\_pol\\_pp\\_ptimising\\_triple\\_p\\_20-21\\_09\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ex-post_paper_joint_event_pol_pp_ptimising_triple_p_20-21_09_2018_en.pdf).

9 World Bank, “Civil Society” n.d., <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society/overview> (accessed 11 July 2020).

reduce crime generally.<sup>10</sup> Cooperation can increase resourcefulness, flexibility, and innovation in the criminal justice sector; increase the availability and quality of frontline services; and facilitate transparency and accountability of governmental institutions.<sup>11</sup> The rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners, perhaps more so than other categories of prisoners, can benefit from greater cooperation between government and civil society. For example, these prisoners might perceive government, its institutions, and representatives as illegitimate or “the enemy.”<sup>12</sup> Cooperation with civil society groups that are perceived as independent from these institutions can create new opportunities that could better support rehabilitation and reintegration processes. Cooperation can help identify and promote new perspectives that will challenge governmental assumptions and approaches in order to improve rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes. Civil society may contribute new expertise, skills, and resources that could help plug gaps in official approaches that would otherwise go unaddressed inside prisons or outside in communities.

Cooperation can result in negative consequences for government, civil society, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. It could generate new forms of conflict between practitioners, create or sustain inequalities in the treatment of prisoners, and develop new reliance on alternative or informal resources that impact the effectiveness and sustainability of rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Moreover, the responsibility, transparency, and accountability for the provision of these public services might be obscured

and left undermined.<sup>13</sup> Civil society may not be willing to advance its cooperation due to resourcing constraints, community stigmatization of prisoners, the security risks associated with supporting prisoners, or the negative reputational repercussions of assisting governmental rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Government may fear that civil society risks undermining policies and practices to manage violent extremist prisoners. Challenges can be particularly consequential for the rehabilitation and reintegration of these prisoners. For example, unique security, political, and reputational risks are associated with the mismanagement of these prisoners, with more serious implications for national and international security.<sup>14</sup>

## COOPERATION OBJECTIVES

Ten objectives of cooperation between government and civil society are summarized in this brief. For each objective, the corresponding opportunities and challenges of cooperation are described. Cooperation will take many different forms depending on the context, needs, and requirements of individual countries. Certain objectives may not be relevant, necessary, or sufficient to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration. For example, certain objectives might already be addressed through existing cooperation between government agencies alone. In others countries, greater cooperation could be required where there are resource gaps, a common problem faced by many criminal justice systems that tend to be underfunded and understaffed. Yet, some countries may lack a vibrant civil society sector with which to cooperate.

10 Shane Bryans, Clive Martin, and Roma Walker, eds., *Prisons and the Voluntary Sector: A Bridge Into the Community* (Winchester, UK: Waterside Press, 2002); Phillipa Tomczak, “Introduction: The Criminal Justice Voluntary Sector: In Comparative Perspective,” *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* 58, no. 3 (September 2019): 271–275. See David Faulkner and Ros Burnett, *Where Next for Criminal Justice?* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2012), p. 69.

11 See Faulkner and Burnett, *Where Next for Criminal Justice?* p. 82; Shane Bryans, Clive Martin, and Roma Walker, “The Road Ahead: Issues and Strategies for Future Joint Working,” in *Prisons and the Voluntary Sector: A Bridge Into the Community*, ed. Shane Bryans, Clive Martin, and Roma Walker (Winchester, UK: Waterside Press, 2002), pp. 163–166.

12 See Michelle Butler, “Using Specialised Prison Units to Manage Violent Extremists: Lessons From Northern Ireland,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32, no. 3 (2017): 539–557; Greg Hannah, Lindsay Clutterbuck, and Jennifer Rubin, “Radicalization or Rehabilitation: Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners,” RAND Corp., 2008, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical\\_reports/2008/RAND\\_TR571.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2008/RAND_TR571.pdf); Farhad Khosrokhavar, “Radicalization in Prison: The French Case,” *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 14, no. 2 (2013): 284–306.

13 See Faulkner and Burnett, *Where Next for Criminal Justice?* p. 83; Bryans, Martin, and Walker, “Road Ahead,” pp. 166–169; Alice Mills, Rosie Meek, and Dina Gojkovic, “Exploring the Relationship Between the Voluntary Sector and the State in Criminal Justice,” *Voluntary Sector Review* 2, no. 2 (2011): 193–211.

14 See Rajan Basra and Peter R. Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism: Extremist Offender Management in 10 European Countries,” International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2020, pp. 15–23, <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ICSR-Report-Prisons-and-Terrorism-Extremist-Offender-Management-in-10-European-Countries.pdf>.

OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTION
1 Informing Prison Policies	Inform prison policies to ensure they align with international standards and correspond to domestic realities.
2 Monitoring Prison Conditions	Improve the monitoring of prison conditions to ensure appropriate treatment of violent extremist prisoners.
3 Mobilizing Community Support	Strengthen public and political support for rehabilitation and reintegration processes for violent extremist prisoners.
4 Recruiting and Training Prison Staff	Facilitate the recruitment and training of diverse and skilled prison staff to manage violent extremist prisoners.
5 Informing Assessment Processes	Support the development of more valid and reliable assessment processes to assess risks and needs of violent extremist prisoners.
6 Implementing Custodial Interventions	Implement custodial interventions to support the rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners during their incarceration.
7 Implementing Community Interventions	Implement community interventions that support the rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners during their incarceration.
8 Facilitating Community Reintegration	Facilitate the transition and reintegration of former violent extremist prisoners into communities.
9 Supervising Community Reintegration	Monitor and supervise former violent extremist prisoners during the reintegration process.
10 Reducing Community Stigmatization	Reduce stigmatization experienced by former violent extremist prisoners during the reintegration process.

## OBJECTIVE 1: INFORMING PRISON POLICIES

*Cooperate to inform prison policies, ensuring they align with international standards and correspond to domestic realities.*

Governments are often faced with determining the extent to which violent extremist prisoners should be treated or managed the same as other prisoners. Specific policy challenges and considerations include their housing locations within prisons,<sup>15</sup> their separation from or dispersal throughout the wider prisoner population,<sup>16</sup> the specific policies required to address their unique risk and needs, and the alignment of new or existing policies to manage them in line with standard minimum rules on the treatment of prisoners.<sup>17</sup> Governments also need to consider additional policies targeting the specific needs of special categories of violent extremist prisoners, including female and juvenile prisoners.<sup>18</sup> Governments should be concerned about the impact that new policies might have on diverting limited resources toward or away from other prisoners<sup>19</sup> and the unintended consequences that tailored rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for violent extremist prisoners will have on provoking and exacerbating conflict inside and outside prisons. Governments should also ensure that they can effectively implement and sustain any new policies and practices over time.

### COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation can provide new or alternative perspectives about how policies considered by government are

legal, relevant, and proportionate in the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners. Civil society can provide external expertise that governments will not otherwise possess, which could inform how these prisoners are treated. Sourcing civil society expertise will be important to the domestic consideration of the increasingly broad range of international guidance,<sup>20</sup> ensuring that policies developed in some countries are not counterproductive when adopted in others. Rehabilitation and reintegration strategies also require the support of civil society and the communities they represent, as the necessary services cannot typically be provided through official resources alone. Cooperation will enable governmental stakeholders to determine the contribution of civil society to the rehabilitation and reintegration process and the resources required to facilitate its active participation. Cooperation can also ensure that the scope of civil society involvement matches its available expertise and that governmental decisions are fully informed by civil society experience. Civil society might be more willing and able to support governmental policies if they are consulted in their development and involved in their implementation. Advancing cooperation in this area can help facilitate cooperation in other areas covered in this brief, including mobilizing community support for rehabilitation and reintegration processes (objective 3).

### COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Cooperation in this area will often be limited by resistance from different governmental and civil society stakeholders who could perceive partnership working on policy as threatening. Governments might be

15 Council of Europe, “Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism,” PC-CP (2016) 2 rev 4, 1 December 2016, pp. 32–33 (hereinafter Council of Europe handbook).

16 RAN, “Dealing With Radicalisation in a Prison and Probation Context,” n.d., pp. 6–7, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-news/docs/ran\\_p\\_and\\_p\\_practitioners\\_working\\_paper\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-news/docs/ran_p_and_p_practitioners_working_paper_en.pdf).

17 International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IJ), “Prison Management Recommendations to Counter and Address Prison Radicalization,” n.d., p. 2, <https://theij.org/wp-content/uploads/Prison-Recommendations-FINAL-1.pdf>.

18 Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Melinda Holmes, “Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation and Reintegration From Violent Extremism,” International Civil Society Action Network and UN Development Programme, 2019, <https://icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ICAN-UNDP-Rehabilitation-Reintegration-Invisible-Women-Report-2019.pdf>; Global Center on Cooperative Security and International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague (ICCT), “Correcting the Course: Advancing Juvenile Justice Principles for Children Convicted of Violent Extremism Offenses,” September 2017, [https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Correcting-the-Course\\_Global-Center\\_ICCT.pdf](https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Correcting-the-Course_Global-Center_ICCT.pdf).

19 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), “Radicalization in Detention - The ICRC’s Perspective,” 10 June 2016, p. 3, [https://www.icrc.org/en/download/file/27662/radicalization\\_in\\_detention\\_-\\_the\\_icrcs\\_perspective.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/en/download/file/27662/radicalization_in_detention_-_the_icrcs_perspective.pdf).

20 See UNODC, “Compendium of United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,” November 2006, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Compendium\\_UN\\_Standards\\_and\\_Norms\\_CP\\_and\\_CJ\\_English.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Compendium_UN_Standards_and_Norms_CP_and_CJ_English.pdf).

concerned that external civil society input into their policies could be exploited to compromise the security of prisons and wider national security. Civil society may not be familiar with the operating constraints that often inform governmental policies to manage violent extremist prisoners, for example, specific security procedures that have a legal basis and can be proportionately applied. Civil society will be hesitant to inform policies that might be illegitimate and discriminatory or perceived as such. Civil society cooperation could become instrumentalized by its governmental partners, such as to legitimize human rights violations. Advancing cooperation in this can also serve to delegate accountability for the implementation of the rehabilitation and reintegration process from government to civil society. Cooperation requires assurances that civil society involvement in the policy development process inspires, informs, and complements governmental approaches, rather than delegating responsibility for its success to civil society. Government must avoid replacing basic public services with cheaper civil society alternatives<sup>21</sup> and remain accountable for this process.

## OBJECTIVE 2: MONITORING PRISON CONDITIONS

### *Cooperate to improve the monitoring of prison conditions to ensure appropriate treatment of violent extremist prisoners.*

Governments are faced with implementing proportionate prison policies that balance the needs for security and rehabilitation. A general principle suggests all

prisoners should be subjected to the least restrictive measures necessary for the protection of the public, prison staff, and prisoners.<sup>22</sup> Due to the real or perceived higher security risks posed by violent extremist prisoners compared with other categories of prisoners, there is a higher likelihood of this required balance being undermined, where “security first” is mistaken for “security only.”<sup>23</sup> Although torture and cruel and unusual punishment are strictly prohibited under international law, concerns are repeatedly expressed over different forms of ill-treatment experienced by violent extremist prisoners as part of their specific incarceration regime or as disciplinary sanctions.<sup>24</sup> Not only can these restrictions violate fundamental human rights, but systematic abuse and real or perceived unjust treatment in prisons can contribute to radicalization to violent extremism.<sup>25</sup> It is vital that government monitors policies targeting violent extremist prisoners to ensure they are legal, necessary, and proportionate and that government develops mechanisms to address violations.<sup>26</sup>

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Concerns over the treatment of prisoners are often amplified by the absence of cooperation between government and civil society in prisons. Prisoners are less likely to be subjected to human rights abuses and ongoing abuses are less likely to be concealed if civil society is regularly visiting prisons and interacting with prisoners and staff.<sup>27</sup> Monitoring by civil society can create transparency that results in new protections for governmental action if, for example, violent extremist prisoners allege mistreatment by authorities

21 Bryans, Martin, and Walker, “Road Ahead,” p. 167.

22 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 18.

23 Peter R. Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries,” International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010, p. 22, <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/ICSR-Report-Prisons-and-Terrorism-Radicalisation-and-De-radicalisation-in-15-Countries.pdf>.

24 ICRC, “Radicalization in Detention,” p. 3.

25 Ryan J. Williams, “Approaches to Violent Extremist Offenders and Countering Radicalisation in Prisons and Probation,” *RAN Working Paper*, 2016, p. 8, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_approaches\\_to\\_violent\\_extremist\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_approaches_to_violent_extremist_en.pdf).

26 See Penal Reform International and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), “Balancing Security and Dignity in Prisons: A Framework for Preventive Monitoring,” 2015, p. 6, [https://www.apr.ch/sites/default/files/publications/thematic-paper-4\\_balancing-security-and-dignity-in-prisons-en.pdf](https://www.apr.ch/sites/default/files/publications/thematic-paper-4_balancing-security-and-dignity-in-prisons-en.pdf).

27 Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), “Community Participation in Prisons: A Civil Society Perspective,” 2008, p. 11, [http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/prisons/community\\_participation\\_in\\_prisons.pdf](http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/prisons/community_participation_in_prisons.pdf).

as part of a deliberate strategy to disrupt normal prison operations.<sup>28</sup> Cooperation in this area can lend greater credibility to establishing which allegations of abuse are unfounded.<sup>29</sup> Cooperation can facilitate the communication of prisoner concerns to officials, allowing prisoners space to express concerns, without prison staff being present, and allowing governments to change policies in response to recommendations made by civil society groups based on the accounts of prisoners themselves. Responding to the findings of civil society monitoring can contribute to improving security and order and increase the perceived legitimacy of officials among prisoners.<sup>30</sup> Advancing cooperation in this area can also support other forms of cooperation, including informing new policies targeting violent extremist prisoners (objective 1).

### COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Civil society will be reluctant to become involved in monitoring if it believes that its observations and recommendations will remain tokenistic and not inform revisions to policies. Not only can such monitoring waste precious civil society resources, inaction may be disempowering and reduce prisoner confidence in civil society monitors. Governments will be concerned that civil society could misuse its monitoring role or inadvertently destabilize official approaches in prisons. Civil society monitoring might impact prison security by creating new sources of vulnerability that could harm staff and prisoners. Cooperation requires agreement over the terms of monitoring processes, such as determining how monitoring visits are facilitated.<sup>31</sup> Governments will see civil society monitoring as a reputational risk, fearing idealistic conclusions that overlook resource constraints, operational realities, and the

unique political pressures associated with managing violent extremist prisoners. Cooperation may require new mechanisms that formalize how monitoring results are reviewed, considered, and addressed by government officials. This monitoring is not a guarantee that abuse and malpractice will be uncovered, as civil society itself may become normalized to these over time.<sup>32</sup> Checks and balances should be considered to ensure civil society monitoring remains independent and objective. Cooperation must supplement rather than replace formal monitoring conducted by governmental or international agencies.<sup>33</sup>

### OBJECTIVE 3: MOBILIZING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

*Cooperate to strengthen public and political support for the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners.*

Challenges persist in making prisons more transparent, providing a basis for public accountability in the state's treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. The need for transparency is especially important for violent extremist prisoners, as perceptions and attitudes within communities often have a stigmatizing influence on how they are managed in prisons. Various factors generate higher levels of community interest in this group. These include biased or politicized public discourse surrounding violent extremism, sensationalistic media coverage of violent extremist offenses, and the real or perceived threat they pose to public safety and national security.<sup>34</sup> Some in the community will perceive official responses as being too sympathetic,

28 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 22.

29 International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS), King's College London, "Guidance Note 11: External Inspection Monitoring and Redressing Grievances," 2004, p. 2, [https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn11\\_6.pdf](https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn11_6.pdf).

30 Penal Reform International and APT, "Balancing Security and Dignity in Prisons," p. 5.

31 See APT, "Monitoring Places of Detention: A Practical Guide," April 2004, <https://www.apr.ch/sites/default/files/publications/monitoring-guide-en.pdf>.

32 Bryans, Martin, and Walker, "Road Ahead," p. 168.

33 See APT and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Monitoring Places of Detention: A Practical Guide for NGOs," December 2002, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/3/29845.pdf>.

34 Global Center and ICCT, "Correcting the Course," p. 2.

naive, or not sufficiently punitive.<sup>35</sup> Others will critique responses for being disproportionately punitive, prejudicial, and political.<sup>36</sup> Measures in prisons can have important repercussions outside prisons, including driving support for violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies, which may in turn negatively impact on prison life.<sup>37</sup> Government is often constrained by this polarized community debate, which impacts operational policies in prisons that are widely scrutinized, influencing why, when, and how decisions are made about the management of violent extremist prisoners.<sup>38</sup>

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation between government and civil society can be a powerful mechanism to facilitate responsible community dialogue around the management, rehabilitation, and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners. Cooperation might help communicate the benefits of rehabilitation policies. This includes reframing negative perceptions of intervention activities that are often perceived as rewards for crime, rather than effective means to prevent future victims and protect communities.<sup>39</sup> Civil society can help campaign to keep prisons and reintegration programs on the public agenda to generate greater interest and investment,<sup>40</sup> even when the discourse surrounding violent extremist prisoners becomes politically unfavorable, such as after a terrorist attack. Civil society can help reduce the impact of external events inside prisons by serving as a liaison between the institution and the community. Civil society can support government officials to better understand the wider positive and negative impacts of prison policies on surrounding communities and assist in proactively responding to media interest, particularly

during times of crises. Cooperation can increase governmental capacity to regularly engage the media. In so doing, civil society may help communicate the necessity, legality, and proportionality of security, control, and other measures deployed to manage, rehabilitate, and reintegrate violent extremist prisoners.

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Civil society will not be willing to cooperate in this area if it disagrees with governmental approaches or has not seen meaningful results from previous engagement or if collaboration is likely to have a negative impact on its reputation within communities. Civil society might become concerned about promoting success stories of rehabilitation and reintegration policies if its contribution to these approaches or its opportunities to observe the impacts of these approaches on prisoners has been limited. Government should help civil society to develop a more informed and objective understanding of official approaches and their effects on violent extremist prisoners, the benefits of which might be more effectively conveyed to communities. Government will fear criticism from communities, but it is unlikely that community support can be mobilized in favor of rehabilitation and reintegration if civil society is not encouraged to share its findings independently, including voicing concerns about the management of violent extremist prisoners without fear of governmental reprisals. At the same time, certain stakeholders may be concerned that civil society support for rehabilitation and reintegration programs will distort public perceptions that correctional services are not providing effective security and punishment as a form of deterrence. Government in particular may

35 Till Baaken, Judy Korn, and Dennis Walkenhorst, "The Challenge of Resocialisation: Dealing With Radicalised Individuals During and After Imprisonment," RAN, n.d., p. 4, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_dealing\\_with\\_radicalised\\_individuals\\_06\\_112018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_dealing_with_radicalised_individuals_06_112018_en.pdf).

36 Neumann, "Prisons and Terrorism," p. 15.

37 Christopher Dean and Eelco Kessels, "Compendium of Good Practices in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders," Global Center, August 2018, p. 16, [https://www.veocompendium.org/\\_downloads/GC\\_2018\\_Oct\\_Compendium.pdf](https://www.veocompendium.org/_downloads/GC_2018_Oct_Compendium.pdf).

38 Council of Europe handbook, p. 40.

39 Christina Nemr et al., "It Takes a Village: An Action Agenda on the Role of Civil Society in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Those Associated With and Affected by Violent Extremism," Global Center and ICCT, August 2018, p. 3, [http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GC-It-Takes-a-Village\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GC-It-Takes-a-Village_WEB.pdf).

40 ICPS, "Guidance Note 12: Encouraging the Involvement of Civil Society," 2004, p. 4, [https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn12\\_5.pdf](https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn12_5.pdf).



want reassurance against this unbalanced perception, especially as civil society is likely to have more access, resources, and freedom to engage with the media.

## OBJECTIVE 4: RECRUITING AND TRAINING PRISON STAFF

### ***Cooperate to facilitate the recruitment and training of more diverse and skilled prison staff managing violent extremist prisoners.***

Governments are faced with recruiting and training prison staff to ensure the safety of prisoners and their colleagues while avoiding biases in attitudes and practices and ensuring human rights-compliant approaches. Prisoners deprived of their liberty are in a situation of power imbalance, and the potential for abuse is always present.<sup>41</sup> This is a specific concern in prisons with violent extremist prisoners. As state employees, prison staff may view these prisoners as enemies of the state. This perspective can increase the potential for biased, prejudicial, and abusive practices directed toward these prisoners, who rely on staff to fulfill such basic needs as food and protection.<sup>42</sup> Positions within facilities holding these prisoners are less appealing to existing staff, especially following violent extremist or terrorism-related incidents within prisons or the communities where staff live.<sup>43</sup> Existing staff can apply outdated or corrupt practices and hold institutional biases that undermine efforts to manage these prisoners.<sup>44</sup> The management of violent extremist prisoners can create unique stresses or pressures that increase vulnerability to conditioning, manipulation, and corruption among prison staff.<sup>45</sup>

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

When government seeks to recruit staff from within its service, civil society can advise on the competencies and qualities of staff assigned to work with violent extremist prisoners based on its specialist knowledge, experience, and expertise in communities. This includes supporting government to identify staff characteristics that support or undermine official efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate these prisoners. For example, staff qualities and competencies associated with effectively working with these prisoners include confidence, resilience, empathy, and positive role modeling.<sup>46</sup> There is a growing need for staff to mirror the diversity of the prisoners they manage.<sup>47</sup> Cooperation can help identify more diverse staff that reflect the linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious communities of these prisoners.<sup>48</sup> Civil society can help address the professional needs of staff assigned to manage these prisoners. Civil society may possess new forms of knowledge, skills, and resources to inform staff training.<sup>49</sup> This includes training on conditions conducive to violent extremism, community drivers of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism, and intercultural and multifaith awareness training to help staff distinguish violent extremism from diversity of opinion, belief, and tradition.<sup>50</sup> Government may find it financially efficient to subcontract services to civil society, and these services can be more effective when they are provided independently by external stakeholders. Exposing staff to civil society stakeholders can have other indirect benefits. For example, “[I]f you let prison staff work with creative and interesting projects, and creative

41 ICPS, “Guidance Note 11,” p. 2.

42 Amado Philip de Andrés, María Noel Rodríguez, and Guilherme Augusto Doin, “Civil Society and Prisons: The ‘Invisible Bars’ Challenge,” *UNODC Working Paper Series on Prison Reform*, no. 1, n.d., p. 3, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/ropan/Working\\_Papers/UNODC\\_ROPAN\\_Work\\_Paper\\_on\\_Prison\\_Reform.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/ropan/Working_Papers/UNODC_ROPAN_Work_Paper_on_Prison_Reform.pdf).

43 Williams, “Approaches to Violent Extremist Offenders and Countering Radicalisation in Prisons and Probation,” p. 14.

44 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 28.

45 Dean and Kessels, “Compendium of Good Practices in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders,” pp. 12–13.

46 Council of Europe handbook, para. 173.

47 Torben Adams, “Approaches to Countering Radicalisation and Dealing With Violent Extremist and Terrorist Offenders in Prisons and Probation,” RAN, 2019, p. 13, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_wrk\\_pp\\_pract\\_3rd-2018\\_20190606\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_wrk_pp_pract_3rd-2018_20190606_en.pdf).

48 IJ, “Prison Management Recommendations to Counter and Address Prison Radicalization,” p. 6.

49 Nemr et al., “It Takes a Village,” p. 29.

50 “Guidelines for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism,” 2 March 2016, p. 3, <https://rm.coe.int/16806f3d51>.

and interesting people, you see the benefits in greatly reduced sick rates.”<sup>51</sup>

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Cooperation in the recruitment and training of prison staff can often require additional organizational resources and mechanisms to incorporate new recommendations made by civil society. It may also require prison services to elaborate new vetting processes and selection procedures. If left unchecked, cooperation in this area can result in training incompatible with the professional realities and personal experiences of staff working with violent extremist prisoners. For example, staff will be skeptical of training from civil society stakeholders “who may be very knowledgeable about human rights but who have never had to spend ten hours in charge of a large group of volatile prisoners.”<sup>52</sup> Effective cooperation requires training developed through a collaborative process that ensures materials integrate core principles of human rights with the professional needs, realities, and constraints of staff working with these prisoners. Cooperation here will be supported by advancing cooperation in other areas, including facilitating the development and evaluation of training guidance through the monitoring of prison conditions (objective 2). The monitoring of prisons by civil society will enable it to observe the lived experiences of staff, enabling it to better understand the required qualities and competencies of individuals recruited to work in prisons housing violent extremist prisoners.

## OBJECTIVE 5: INFORMING ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

### *Cooperate to support the assessment of violent extremist prisoners to better understand their risks and needs.*

Periodic individual assessment of prisoner risks and needs is crucial to inform their management, rehabilitation, and reintegration.<sup>53</sup> Yet, assessments used on other categories of prisoners might not be appropriate for the assessment of violent extremist prisoners.<sup>54</sup> Governments are faced with deciding if they should adopt or adapt existing or develop new assessments protocols to identify the specific risks and needs of these prisoners.<sup>55</sup> Regardless of design or development, assessments must be informed by evidence and be culturally appropriate.<sup>56</sup> Assessment protocols also require qualified assessors to implement them as intended.<sup>57</sup> For example, assessors should be required to possess integrity and the necessary skills to minimize prejudice to avoid unreliable or inaccurate assessment results.<sup>58</sup> Assessments are critical in deciding what, when, how, and by whom interventions are implemented.<sup>59</sup> This includes determining the scope of cooperation between government and civil society to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners (objectives 6, 7, and 8).

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation between government and civil society can have important benefits in the design, development, and implementation of assessments for violent

51 Bryans, Martin, and Walker, “Road Ahead,” p. 164.

52 ICPS, “Guidance Note 8: Prison Staff and Their Training,” 2004, p. 5, [https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn8\\_6.pdf](https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn8_6.pdf).

53 UNODC, “Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders,” *Criminal Justice Handbook Series*, December 2012, p. 89, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/Introductory\\_Handbook\\_on\\_the\\_Prevention\\_of\\_Recidivism\\_and\\_the\\_Social\\_Reintegration\\_of\\_Offenders.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/Introductory_Handbook_on_the_Prevention_of_Recidivism_and_the_Social_Reintegration_of_Offenders.pdf) (hereinafter UNODC Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism).

54 Dean and Kessels, “Compendium of Good Practices in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders,” p. 17.

55 Ibid.

56 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 54.

57 Simon Cornwall and Merel Molenkamp, “Developing, Implementing and Using Risk Assessment for Violent Extremist and Terrorist Offenders,” RAN, n.d., p. 2, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_developing\\_implementing\\_using\\_risk\\_assessment\\_brussels\\_09-10\\_07\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_developing_implementing_using_risk_assessment_brussels_09-10_07_2018_en.pdf).

58 Adams, “Approaches to Countering Radicalisation and Dealing With Violent Extremist and Terrorist Offenders in Prisons and Probation,” p. 21.

59 Dean and Kessels, “Compendium of Good Practices in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders,” p. 31.

extremist prisoners. Civil society can support government to source and evaluate the suitability of existing international assessment protocols that could inform domestic approaches. Civil society possesses unique expertise on violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies that can inform adaptations to existing assessment protocols. Civil society can also help develop new assessment protocols through its scientific or technical skills that might be unavailable or limited within prisons, helping to ensure assessments are valid, reliable, and effective. For example, governments can cooperate with civil society, including universities and independent research institutes, to study violent extremist prisoners and to research the local drivers of support for and disengagement from violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies within communities. The results of civil society research could help determine what should be included or emphasized in the assessment of these prisoners. Cooperation could also enable the training of specialist prison staff responsible for assessments, ensuring they are qualified to implement protocols in line with standards of good practice (objective 4). Cooperation also results in increased independent oversight of assessment outcomes, ensuring that assessment results inform proportionate security restrictions and appropriate rehabilitative interventions.

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

The contribution of civil society to informing assessment will only be valuable if assessments are practical and useful for government, including being consistent with the strategic objectives, organizational norms, and operational standards of prisons. Cooperation in this area will require governmental expertise to navigate and integrate the input of civil society with operational realities. Where civil society is involved in research informing or evaluating assessment, challenges can also arise regarding if and how this research is published. For example, governments might be reluctant to publicize research results for security reasons while

civil society could have ethical and academic reasons to ensure such research is published. Research expectations might need to be agreed at the beginning of civil society involvement. Establishing legal mechanisms to protect the confidentiality and integrity of assessments can help mitigate these issues. From a civil society perspective, insufficient public transparency can create a barrier to cooperation. In addition, civil society may be reluctant to cooperate in this area as assessment can be controversial, raising sensitive ethical issues with which it is not prepared to be associated. Civil society might also avoid cooperation if it does not have confidence that it will have sufficient influence over assessment implementation or safeguards around how these will be used by government.

## OBJECTIVE 6: IMPLEMENTING CUSTODIAL INTERVENTIONS

*Cooperate to implement custodial interventions to support the rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners.*

Governments are faced with implementing interventions to rehabilitate violent extremist prisoners. International guidance suggests that interventions should be as diverse as the individual needs of the prisoners, and a wide range of general and specialized intervention activities are identified as relevant to the rehabilitation and reintegration process.<sup>60</sup> Interventions include education programs, psychological support, religious counseling, social work and mentorship, and skills or vocational training.<sup>61</sup> Governments also need to consider additional age- and gender-specific intervention activities.<sup>62</sup> To this end, a wide range of intervention providers are identified as possible contributors to the rehabilitation process, including psychologists, community leaders, social workers, religious scholars, victims of violent extremism, and individuals formerly associated with

60 Ibid., pp. 29–30.

61 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 77.

62 Global Center and ICCT, “Correcting the Course,” p. 26.

violent extremism.<sup>63</sup> The relationship between the provider and the prisoner is crucial in the extent to which the prisoner participates and progresses in interventions.<sup>64</sup> This observation is particularly important when considering implementing interventions with violent extremist prisoners, who may refuse to cooperate with providers perceived to represent government and its agencies.<sup>65</sup>

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation between government and civil society can help increase prisoner motivation for and progress in rehabilitative interventions.<sup>66</sup> Civil society may have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to deliver interventions that are otherwise unavailable within prison services. Government might find it more productive, efficient, and cost effective to have civil society provide specialized interventions rather than training prison staff to do so. Government may want to ensure that the limited resources available in prisons are used to maintain a safe prison environment, allocating its existing resources toward providing generalized activities available to all prisoners.<sup>67</sup> Cooperation between government and civil society can therefore provide new opportunities to respond to the more specialized needs of these prisoners that could otherwise go unaddressed. When perceived as external to the prison service, civil society might also be considered more trustworthy and less interested in extracting information from prisoners for intelligence purposes. Cooperation in this area will be particularly important

for these prisoners, whose day-to-day relationship with staff may typically be limited to surveillance, security, and control. Civil society can also be involved in the training of specialist staff responsible for implementing interventions (objective 4). Cooperation in this area will be strengthened through the monitoring of rehabilitation programs by civil society (objective 2), ensuring that staff responsible for implementing intervention activities are not also responsible for evaluating their impact or success.

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Government will be concerned that civil society will behave naively or inappropriately due to lack of experience working in prisons, becoming a soft target for manipulation, intimidation, and corruption. Civil society intervention providers must be appropriately vetted, trained, and supported to conduct their work safely.<sup>68</sup> Cooperation can lead to disagreements over the theory, methods, and intended outcomes of rehabilitation activities, including whether interventions should aim to change prisoner attitudes, behaviors, or both.<sup>69</sup> Cooperation might require new goals and agreed measures of intervention success.<sup>70</sup> Civil society may not feel qualified or comfortable providing interventions in prisons, preferring instead to provide support to the victims or families of prisoners in the community. Civil society might express concerns over its safety when working with violent extremist prisoners. Cooperation will require additional forms of supervision and support of civil society activities in

63 Council of Europe handbook, pp. 42–45.

64 Christopher Dean, “Addressing Violent Extremism in Prisons and Probation: Principles for Effective Programs and Interventions,” *Global Center Policy Brief*, September 2016, p. 10, [http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/16Sep\\_Dean\\_Address-Violent-Extremism-in-Prisons-and-Probation\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/16Sep_Dean_Address-Violent-Extremism-in-Prisons-and-Probation_FINAL.pdf).

65 Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism and ICCT, “Building on the GCTF’s Rome Memorandum: Additional Guidance on the Role of Psychologists/Psychology in Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs,” n.d., p. 7, <http://www.icct.nl/download/file/Hedayah-ICCT%20Psychology%20Good%20Practices.pdf>.

66 RAN, “Exit Programmes and Interventions in Prison and Probation,” n.d., p. 3, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ex\\_post\\_paper\\_ran\\_p\\_and\\_p\\_14-15\\_06\\_2016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ex_post_paper_ran_p_and_p_14-15_06_2016_en.pdf).

67 Council of Europe handbook, p. 19.

68 Adams, “Approaches to Countering Radicalisation and Dealing With Violent Extremist and Terrorist Offenders in Prisons and Probation,” p. 25.

69 Tinka Veldhuis, “Designing Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programmes for Violent Extremist Offenders: A Realist Approach,” *ICCT Research Paper*, March 2012, p. 8, <http://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ICCT-Veldhuis-Designing-Rehabilitation-Reintegration-Programmes-March-2012.pdf>.

70 ICCT, “Roundtable Expert Meeting and Conference on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders: Core Principles and Good Practice,” February 2012, pp. 4–6, <https://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Background-Paper-Rehab-Core-Principles-Good-Practices.pdf>.

prisons.<sup>71</sup> Yet, government should ensure that supervision does not undermine the integrity of civil society interventions in prisons<sup>72</sup> and should safeguard the independence of civil society intervention providers in the eyes of prisoners.<sup>73</sup> To mitigate against these and similar issues, cooperation will require new standard operating procedures and contractual agreements that specify under what conditions civil society might provide interventions in prisons; the formalities that will facilitate its access to prisons, including security arrangements; and the resources that will be made available to support these activities.

## OBJECTIVE 7: IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

### ***Cooperate to implement community interventions that support the rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners during their incarceration.***

Community events and engagement can have an important impact on the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. The political, social, and economic contexts in communities increase or decrease personal resistance to rehabilitation efforts in prisons.<sup>74</sup> Community networks of violent extremist prisoners, including families and friends, are identified as particularly important in influencing the rehabilitation process.<sup>75</sup> For example, these networks can discourage participation in or progress during interventions by reinforcing attitudes that justify support for violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.<sup>76</sup> Conversely, these networks can discourage continued engagement with violent extremism by strengthening or

establishing social bonds that advocate for participation or progress in interventions.<sup>77</sup> Communities may also create the conditions that facilitate successful reintegration, as prisoners with strong positive connections to their community are less likely to reoffend.<sup>78</sup> Yet, families and the prisoner's wider social network may have additional needs or concerns to be addressed before they become a willing and reliable ally in the rehabilitation process. Governments should work to increase exposure of violent extremist prisoners to community influences that support positive change, while reducing the impact of negative influences on their rehabilitation and reintegration process.

### **COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Cooperation can serve to increase understanding of community dynamics that impact violent extremist prisoners. Given their status as citizens and representatives of communities, civil society stakeholders often symbolize a “bridge” between prisons and the wider community that can facilitate constructive engagement between these prisoners and their social networks.<sup>79</sup> The incarceration of prisoners can result in the loss of family income, status, and access to services or resources that negatively impact their relationships. Cooperation in this area can enable more sustained support for families and friends of prisoners in communities, especially when formal governmental resources for such support are limited. Cooperation can allow for the provision of new forms of socioeconomic or psychological assistance to help families and friends of prisoners manage and address challenges created by incarceration. Cooperation can help provide

71 Council of Europe handbook, pp. 48–49.

72 Dean, “Addressing Violent Extremism in Prisons and Probation,” p. 3.

73 UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and Gobierno de España, “Building on the GCTF’s Rome Memorandum: Additional Guidance on the Role of Religious Scholars and other Ideological Experts in Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programmes,” n.d., p. 4, [http://www.unicri.it/topics/counter\\_terrorism/UNICRI\\_SPAIN\\_Religious\\_Scholars\\_in\\_Rehab.pdf](http://www.unicri.it/topics/counter_terrorism/UNICRI_SPAIN_Religious_Scholars_in_Rehab.pdf).

74 Council of Europe handbook, p. 40.

75 Global Solutions Exchange, “Improving PVE Practice: 10 Steps to Strengthening Rehabilitation and Reintegration Efforts for Terrorism Offenders, Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters, and Victims of Violent Extremism,” n.d., p. 2, <https://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GSX-Ten-Steps-to-Strengthening-Rehabilitation-and-Reintegration-2017.pdf>.

76 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 38.

77 Adams, “Approaches to Countering Radicalisation and Dealing With Violent Extremist and Terrorist Offenders in Prisons and Probation,” p. 24.

78 UNODC Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism, p. 87.

79 Sarah V. Marsden, *Reintegrating Extremists: Deradicalisation and Desistance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Council of Europe handbook, p. 42.

different forms of practical assistance to promote and enable communities to visit prisoners. This includes organizing or reducing the costs of travel to prisons and facilitating remote correspondence. Civil society can also act as an intermediary or mediator between prisoners and communities, including by participating in prison visitations. Cooperation is particularly important when prisoners are reluctant to receive family and friends or when family and friends are unable or unwilling to visit.

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Civil society might express concern about intervening in the community networks of violent extremist prisoners because such work can expose them to threats and harm. For example, civil society representatives might receive death threats for being involved in these types of activities from the social networks of these prisoners or communities that are opposed to the rehabilitation and reintegration process. Cooperation will require additional protections from government to guarantee civil society safety within communities. Cooperation will require additional resources to sustain civil society resilience to manipulation, corruption, or exploitation, which may occur in part because of community threats and intimidation, to ensure its efforts do not become counterproductive. Cooperation can be undermined by prisoners who could be opposed to civil society involvement in their community networks. They could fear that cooperation between government and civil society could increase stigmatization of their families and friends. Government can also adopt policies that have unintended negative impacts on the effectiveness of community interventions implemented by civil society. For example, these prisoners are often held in facilities far away from their homes or may be transferred to different facilities in response to security concerns.<sup>80</sup> These

policies can create physical and psychological barriers that undermine civil society support for nurturing relationships between prisoners and communities.

## OBJECTIVE 8: FACILITATING COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

### *Cooperate in facilitating the reintegration of former violent extremist prisoners into communities.*

Prisoners often experience damaging collateral effects of their incarceration. They might have lost their employment, relationships, and property.<sup>81</sup> These losses will be particularly damaging for former violent extremist prisoners, who as previously observed are often subjected to stricter policies that create additional barriers to their reintegration. These prisoners may not have participated in rehabilitative interventions in prisons due to a lack of programs, their unwillingness to participate, or the security restrictions involved. Although the success of reintegration is often determined by the experiences of former prisoners during their incarceration, transitioning from prisons to communities poses additional challenges that impact the risk of reoffending in communities.<sup>82</sup> For example, the absence of reintegration support can make former violent extremist prisoners vulnerable to reengagement with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies in their communities.<sup>83</sup> Governments are therefore faced with developing effective plans to facilitate the transition from prisons to communities to reduce the likelihood of reengagement and reoffending. Planning for reintegration should occur during incarceration of these prisoners as early as possible during their sentence<sup>84</sup> and, where possible, promote the active participation of families, friends, and wider community networks in the planning process.

80 ICRC, “Radicalization in Detention,” p. 3.

81 UNODC Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism, p. 31.

82 RAN, “Dealing With Radicalisation in a Prison and Probation Context,” p. 9.

83 Kate Barrelle, “Pro-integration: Disengagement From and Life After Extremism,” *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 7, no. 2 (2015): 129–142.

84 UNICRI and UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), “Additional Guidance on Aftercare and Reintegration Programmes for Violent Extremist Offenders,” n.d., p. 6, <https://toolkit.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/En/Additional-Guidance-on-Aftercare-and-Reintegration-Programmes-for-VEO.pdf>.

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

For reintegration efforts to be successful, communities must be a central stakeholder contributing throughout the process.<sup>85</sup> Reintegration outcomes are improved when governmental partners cooperate with civil society in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating reintegration policies, processes, and practices. Civil society has an important role to play in identifying opportunities for and challenges in securing community support for rehabilitation and reintegration. Government may not have the resources to provide continuous support during the transition period, and civil society often is better placed to provide such support between the prison and community environments.<sup>86</sup> Cooperation in this area can help ensure that positive experiences and progress made by violent extremist prisoners during their imprisonment can continue following their release. Cooperation will also ensure a better alignment of intervention activities in prisons (objective 6) with opportunities available in communities. Government might encourage periodic contact with civil society by referring former prisoners to civil society services or requiring them to cooperate with civil society as part of their release conditions and reintegration policies. The involvement of civil society may be particularly beneficial for violent extremist prisoners, whose incarceration may have been particularly harsh or violated their rights. These former prisoners might express distinct needs that require support during transition and after their release but be skeptical of having their needs met by government.

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

For cooperation to be effective, expectations of different partners need to be clearly understood. Given that reintegration typically involves a wide range of civil society stakeholders, cooperation requires clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of different partners involved.<sup>87</sup> Planning is required to ensure that civil society partners can reliably fulfill expectations

of their governmental partners, as civil society has its own resource needs and limitations. Cooperation in this area requires strong mechanisms of coordination. Otherwise, there may be greater opportunity for practices that are ineffective or counterproductive to reintegration goals. Effective coordination is vital to ensure the governmental and civil society activities are appropriate, consistent, and mutually reinforcing.<sup>88</sup> Civil society can be reluctant to be involved in community reintegration if it believes its involvement will be instrumentalized by government or if it will be made a scapegoat if reintegration is unsuccessful. Civil society will also avoid cooperating in this area if it believes that its support for and access to its services by violent extremist prisoners is disproportionate in comparison to those provided to other community members. Cooperation also requires information-sharing mechanisms that determine when and where former prisoners will be released. Should government rely on the services of civil society to support reintegration, government has to consider what role civil society will have in implementation of its reintegration activities during the incarceration of prisoners prior to their release (objectives 6 and 7).

## OBJECTIVE 9: SUPERVISING COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

***Cooperate to inform and monitor the conditional release of former violent extremist prisoners.***

A common element found in reintegration strategies are release, or license, conditions imposed on former violent extremist prisoners. Community supervision of these individuals can occur for security purposes and to better understand whether and how effectively former prisoners appear to be reintegrating. Such measures must be conducted in strict compliance with human rights, including the right to privacy. Release conditions can include a range of requirements and

85 Tomczak, "Introduction," pp. 271–275.

86 Nemr et al., "It Takes a Village," p. 3.

87 Council of Europe handbook, p. 37.

88 See UNICRI and UNCCCT, "Additional Guidance on Aftercare and Reintegration Programmes for Violent Extremist Offenders."

restrictions imposed on former prisoners to retain a level of control and supervision over the reintegration process, including if and when a former prisoner will be recalled to prison. Restrictions can include limitations on movement; communications with old associates or networks; places of residence; curfews; communication, such as the use of the internet; and foreign travel.<sup>89</sup> Release conditions for these former prisoners are often considered as more strict compared with other categories of prisoners,<sup>90</sup> and they may be under tighter supervision and more closely monitored by security and intelligence services upon release.<sup>91</sup> Although release conditions are often designed with security in mind, disproportionately strict release conditions can violate rights and create barriers in the reintegration process. Governments must identify the appropriate balance between supervision and support in facilitating the reintegration of these former prisoners.

### COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation in this area can help facilitate the supervision of former violent extremist prisoners during their reintegration process.<sup>92</sup> Cooperation might increase compliance with conditional release restrictions as civil society can interact with these former prisoners in ways that governmental agencies and their representatives cannot. At the same time, cooperation with civil society can serve as a check on official monitoring processes, ensuring that such mechanisms remain legal, proportionate, and effective. As a result of the increased contact with civil society stakeholders, cooperation might better enable observations of day-to-day behaviors that could help inform risk and needs assessments, which can be different than those identified during incarceration. Cooperation can lead to better understanding of whether certain sanctions imposed on former prisoners who breach their license conditions are necessary and proportionate. Cooperation can help assess the effectiveness of governmental

supervision processes on these former prisoners and to inform revisions to official policies should these be required. Civil society input in this area can also help government better determine the unintended impacts of supervision activities on communities, given the potentially disruptive effects of these processes on the families and social networks of former prisoners.

### COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Civil society may express reservations and ethical concerns about supporting governmental monitoring of former violent extremist prisoners within communities. If former prisoners or their social networks perceive monitoring to be the primary purpose of civil society involvement in the reintegration process, this will affect their cooperation with civil society stakeholders. Civil society groups will not want to support such supervision if this negatively impacts their reputation in communities. They may end their cooperation if their monitoring is misinterpreted, decontextualized, or misused by government. Civil society will be concerned that they will be held accountable for the monitoring process and scapegoated for failures in the community reintegration process. These concerns can be partly mitigated through clear memorandums of understanding, information-sharing protocols, shared agreement on roles and responsibilities, and explicit public communication about the parameters of cooperation between government and civil society. Where civil society makes no contribution to supervision, government will still need to ensure that its supervision of former prisoners does not undermine constructive services provided by civil society to facilitate their reintegration. Government will need to ensure that civil society actors involved in the reintegration process are not themselves negatively impacted by potential governmental monitoring and supervision of these former prisoners, including investigations by the security and intelligence agencies.

89 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, pp. 132–133.

90 Williams, “Approaches to Violent Extremist Offenders and Countering Radicalisation in Prisons and Probation,” p. 29.

91 Neumann, “Prisons and Terrorism,” p. 21.

92 UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners, p. 132.



## OBJECTIVE 10: REDUCING COMMUNITY STIGMATIZATION

### *Cooperate to identify and reduce stigmatization experienced by former violent extremist prisoners.*

Public opinion impacts how prisoners are managed and rehabilitated in prisons and the chances of their successful reintegration. Former prisoners experience considerable stigmas.<sup>93</sup> These stigmas can translate into negative community behaviors that might significantly curtail circumstances and opportunities that can facilitate their effective reintegration. For example, former prisoners can find it more difficult to find employment or access mental health services and social support.<sup>94</sup> Stigmatization can reinforce some factors that contribute to involvement in violent extremism, including alienation, exclusion, dehumanization, and us-versus-them thinking.<sup>95</sup> Enabling communities to accept such prisoners can be particularly challenging.<sup>96</sup> Violent extremist prisoners will often be subjected to higher levels of public interest in their crimes and to intense media scrutiny before and after their release from prisons. Not only will they be regarded as a potential threat to communities, they might be perceived as “selling out” by previous associates for participating in and benefiting from reintegration programs offered by state agencies.<sup>97</sup> It is vital to reduce the stigmatization of former prisoners and secure the necessary support and resources critical to their successful reintegration.

## COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation in this area can help identify the key reasons driving stigmatization of former violent extremist prisoners in specific communities. For example, one common driver is the real or perceived grievances of communities against those who have threatened them and toward reintegration programs that offer opportunities and resources to former prisoners that are not available to law-abiding citizens.<sup>98</sup> Civil society can assist government to better determine what level of support communities will find acceptable in the reintegration of these former prisoners. Cooperation can help to determine how more credibly to communicate the benefits of reintegration and the need for and impact of community support for these former prisoners.<sup>99</sup> Cooperation can help minimize the impact of negative community attitudes on these former prisoners and their social networks, including family and friends. For example, it might help provide new forms of practical assistance to support former prisoners, their families, and social networks manage and respond to press inquiries, while offering specialized psychological support to build their resilience to intense public or political exposure and media scrutiny.<sup>100</sup> Civil society can provide important social buffers through mentoring and other forms of peer support that can help reduce the negative impact of community rejection, alienation, or marginalization experienced during the reintegration process.

## COOPERATION CHALLENGES

Cooperation in reducing community stigmatization of former violent extremist prisoners can have negative

93 UNODC Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism, p. 5.

94 Dean and Kessels, “Compendium of Good Practices in the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders,” p. 50.

95 See Daan Weggemans, Edwin Bakker, and Peter Grol, “Who Are They and Why Do They Go? The Radicalization and Preparatory Processes of Dutch Jihadist Foreign Fighters,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 4 (August 2014): 100–110.

96 See Daniela Pisiu, “Radicalised and Terrorist Offenders Released From Prison: Community and Family Acceptance,” RAN, 1 August 2019, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ran\\_pp\\_yfc\\_community\\_family\\_acceptance\\_prague\\_20190606\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_pp_yfc_community_family_acceptance_prague_20190606_en.pdf).

97 Hedayah and ICCT, “Building on the GCTF’s Rome Memorandum,” p. 4.

98 Nemr et al., “It Takes a Village,” p. 18.

99 ICPS, “Guidance Note 15: Developing Alternative Sentences,” 2004, p. 6, [http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn15\\_5.pdf](http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/gn15_5.pdf).

100 Merel Molenkamp, “The Role of Family and Social Networks in the Rehabilitation of (Violent) Extremist and Terrorist Offenders,” RAN, n.d., p. 7, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran\\_pp\\_role\\_family\\_social\\_networks\\_rehabilitation\\_extremist\\_terrorist\\_offenders\\_06-07\\_03\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_role_family_social_networks_rehabilitation_extremist_terrorist_offenders_06-07_03_2018_en.pdf).

impacts on civil society operations. Publicly communicating the benefits of reintegration processes might affect the perceived independence and credibility of civil society stakeholders within communities. Campaigning for community acceptance of these former prisoners can lead to reputational damage. Although civil society might be willing to assist official approaches behind the scenes by providing services to these former prisoners, it will be reluctant to publicly communicate the benefits of its support if this generates unwelcome public exposure and criticism. Cooperation will require identifying and mitigating the various reputational concerns and needs of civil society in this regard. Government can be particularly sensitive to the need to uphold disapproval of such behavior in order to maintain the perceived and deterrent costs of involvement in violent extremism. Yet, stigmatization by definition prevents hope of progress and change from being offered.<sup>101</sup> Cooperation will require agreement over the outcomes of activities to reduce community stigmatization. This includes identifying a balance between maintaining social disapproval of criminal behavior while minimizing the practical impact of such disapproval on the reintegration process.

## CONCLUSION

A lack of cooperation between government and civil society in the management, rehabilitation, and reintegration of prisoners undermines the criminal justice process. As previously stated, a “criminal justice system that is committed to high standards of transparency, accountability, integrity and openness is usually much more open to various forms of community involvement. Repressive systems, on the contrary, are far more reluctant to carve out a suitable place for community participation or, for that matter, for any kind of meaningful civil society involvement.”<sup>102</sup> Indeed, restricting cooperation shields the criminal justice system from societal view, obscuring the actions of the state against individuals deprived

of their liberty. This is a particular concern for violent extremist prisoners who are often ideologically opposed to the state and government agencies responsible for administering the criminal justice process.

Ten objectives of cooperation between government and civil society were summarized in this brief. Cooperation can support the development and monitoring of prison policies, help to mobilize community support for the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners, and support the recruitment and training of new prison staff. Cooperation can also improve assessments to better understand and manage prisoner risks and needs and provide more effective and responsive interventions inside prisons and outside within communities. In addition, cooperation can help facilitate and supervise the community reintegration process and reduce community stigmatization experienced by former prisoners. Although cooperation between government and civil society will take many different forms depending on the context, needs, and resources of individual countries, the principle of cooperation should be considered universal in all rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

Cooperation between government and civil society can present various challenges. If implemented without care and consideration, cooperation can undermine rehabilitation and reintegration efforts from serving the goals and interests of government, civil society, and most importantly the citizens they serve. Yet, limiting cooperation between government and civil society is counterproductive in the fight against violent extremism. In fact, support for violent extremism tends to thrive when civil society has limited agency or space to function.<sup>103</sup> If governments want to rehabilitate and reintegrate prisoners into law-abiding community members, it is vital that these same communities from which prisoners originate or to which they will eventually return are involved.<sup>104</sup> Cooperation between government and civil society can help bridge the gap between criminal justice systems and communities to support rehabilitation and reintegration processes.

101 David Berreby, *Us and Them: The Science of Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

102 UNODC Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism, p. 82.

103 Nemr et al., “It Takes a Village,” p. 2.

104 CHRI, “Community Participation in Prisons,” p. 8.

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The Global Center works to achieve lasting security by advancing inclusive, human rights-based policies, partnerships, and practices to address the root causes of violent extremism. We focus on four mutually reinforcing objectives:

- Supporting communities in addressing the drivers of conflict and violent extremism.
- Advancing human rights and the rule of law to prevent and respond to violent extremism.
- Combating illicit finance that enables criminal and violent extremist organizations.
- Promoting multilateral cooperation and rights-based standards in counterterrorism.

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