



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



UNODC GUIDELINES FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN PVE NETWORK:

**Design and Management of Programmes
to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism**

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

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**This publication has been prepared for the Central Asian Network for
Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (www.capve.org)**



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Abbreviations

CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
FTF/FTFs	Foreign Terrorist Fighter(s)
ISIL (Da'esh)	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, rendered in different sources as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham), IS or Islamic State.
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism leading to terrorism
UN	United Nations

	Quotations
	Considerations, Ideas, and, Good Practice
	Information worthy of note
	Case Study/Scenario

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 UNODC Project Description

These guidelines have been produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (“UNODC”) to reflect on the learning and knowledge-sharing that occurred during the project “Supporting Central Asian States to Strengthen National and Regional Frameworks for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism,” implemented during the years 2017 and 2018, funded by the government of Japan. Under the project, UNODC provided capacity-building assistance to Central Asian states on the prevention and countering of violent extremism leading to terrorism (“P/CVE”). The project led to the establishment of the Regional Network on Preventing Violent Extremism (“PVE Network”).

The PVE Network is a regional coordination structure which seeks to: reduce the barriers to interagency interaction; contribute to the consolidation of the Central Asian expert community's efforts; strengthen the capacities of experts in this field; create a more inclusive approach to P/CVE; facilitate the coordination of P/CVE policies at the regional level; strengthen regional identity and integrity; and support future research in the field.

Under the project, UNODC developed and launched a PVE Network resource website, www.capve.org. The website functions as a repository and coordinating tool for the Central Asian states and their partners to share research, evidence, and data to assess and respond to drivers of radicalization. The website is periodically updated with relevant documents for preventing crimes associated with radicalization, incitement, and recruitment of individuals for terrorist purposes.

1.2 UNODC Project Context

Until recently, foreign terrorist fighters (“FTFs”) returning from the Syrian Arab Republic (hereinafter “Syria”) and Iraq represented a significant security issue facing the international community. Estimates of the total number of individuals who have travelled to the region to fight with ISIL (Da'esh) and other terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq vary between 27,000 and 40,000.

Whilst many who joined the conflict are thought to have been either killed or captured, those that managed to leave the region to return home or travel to countries other than their home country potentially pose a security threat. Predicting the scale of such a threat can be extremely challenging, as it is difficult to discern whether returnees intend to carry out further attacks in

their home states. However, as attacks during 2017 in Western Europe demonstrated, some returnees were well-trained and intent on committing terrorist acts outside conflict zones.¹ Furthermore, returnees may become involved in recruitment and radicalization of others, including in prison settings.²

As the flow of FTFs to Syria and Iraq has come to a halt, Member States have begun to turn their attention to the security threat posed by home grown terrorism inspired by ISIL (Da'esh) and other forms of violent extremism. Efforts to mitigate these potential threats fall within the scope of national counter-terrorism and P/CVE strategies.

1.3 Legal Foundations

The primary legal instruments applicable to terrorism in general and FTFs in particular are international treaties, United Nations Security Council resolutions ("UNSC resolutions"), and regional agreements. Complementing this international legislative framework, the United Nations has published two comprehensive policy statements: the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism ("Plan of Action").

However, within these legal sources, the task of defining "terrorism" and "violent extremism" is left to the Member States; the definitions and the policies based on those definitions must be consistent with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law.³

1 Research by Thomas Hegghammer indicated that around 10% of those individuals in foreign conflicts went on to carry out attacks on home soil. If today's numbers for Syria and Iraq follow that same pattern, (even allowing for those killed or captured) the overall threat has the potential to be incredibly significant.

Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad", *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Winter 2010/11). Available at http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1162/ISEC_a_00023.

Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting", *American Political Science Review* (February 2013).

Available at http://hegghammer.com/files/Hegghammer_-_Should_I_stay_or_should_I_go.pdf.

2 Europol, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report*, p. 27 (2018).

Available at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/terrorist-threat-in-eu-remains-high-despite-decline-of-in-iraq-and-syria>.

3 United Nations, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, A/70/674 (24 December 2015), para. 5.

Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

Relevant resolutions include UNSC resolution 2396 (2017), which calls on Member States to "develop and implement more effective means to counter the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes, including by developing counter-terrorist narratives and through innovative technological solutions, all while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in compliance with domestic and international law"; Preamble. Available at: [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2396\(2017\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2396(2017));

UNSC resolution 2178 (2014) calls on Member State to "ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law"; Preamble. Available at: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2178>;

UNSC resolution 1624 (2005) calls on Member States to "ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law". Preamble. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1624%20%282005%29;

UNSC resolution 2250 (2015) emphasises "the need for Member States to act cooperatively to prevent terrorists from exploiting technology, communications and resources to incite support for terrorist acts, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in compliance with other obligations under international law". Preamble. Available at: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250(2015));

The Plan of Action notes that violent extremism is “a diverse phenomenon, without clear definition” which “encompasses a wider category of manifestations” than acts which can be managed through security-based approaches.⁴ The Plan of Action notes that violent extremist ideologies usually promote messages of intolerance for differing religious, cultural, and social views, and that violent extremist groups employ tactics which challenge the values of peace, justice, and human dignity. In addition, violent extremism grows in environments characterized by poor governance and impunity.⁵

Various national jurisdictions and organizations have published resources defining violent extremism as support for violent action to achieve a goal that is ideological, religious, or political.⁶ This document will use the following working definition of violent extremism:



Working definition

Violent extremism is an ideology that accepts the use of violence for the pursuit of goals that are generally social, racial, religious, and/or political in nature.

Violent extremism thus specifically refers to behaviour and thinking which can lead to commission of acts of terrorism. Violent extremism is a separate but related phenomenon from terrorism, and it is important to distinguish the methods used to prevent violent extremism with the methods used to prevent the criminal acts which constitute terrorism. Otherwise, efforts to counter violent extremism will merely focus on preventing crimes while ignoring its causes. As will be discussed throughout these guidelines, preventing violent extremism should focus on working at all levels of society to identify, deter, and combat the conditions motivating individuals to use violence as a tool to achieve their goals.

4 United Nations, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, A/70/674, paras. 2, 4 (24 December 2015). Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

5 United Nations, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, A/70/674, paras. 2, 27 (24 December 2015). Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

6 A policy statement of The United Kingdom government defines extremism as “vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs”. See HM Government, Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales, para. 7 (2015). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf. See also Parliament of Australia, “Australian Government measures to counter violent extremism: a quick guide” (February 2015); Government Offices of Sweden, “Sweden Action Plan to Safeguard Democracy Against Violence Promoting Extremism”, Government Communication 2011/12:44, Point 3.2 (2011); USAID, “The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles Into Practice”, p. 2 (September 2011).

2. FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS AND ISIL (DA'ESH)

2.1 Global Situation

At its peak, some 10 million people were living in territory under ISIL (Da'esh) control in Syria and Iraq,⁷ and the flow of FTFs across the Turkish-Syrian border was as high as 2,000 per month.⁸ By 2015 approximately 40,000 individuals from over 120 countries had travelled to Iraq and Syria as fighters.⁹ An estimated 80 percent of those migrated to join ISIL (Da'esh) and lived in the territory under its control,¹⁰ creating a combined force with local Syrians and Iraqis assessed at around 100,000 fighters.¹¹



In 2017, INTERPOL had more than 46,000 names in its database of suspected foreign terrorist fighters, with information provided from 53 countries.¹²

As part of its overarching aim to build a “global caliphate”, ISIL (Da'esh) announced the establishment of a number of “provinces”, or administrative divisions, outside of Iraq and Syria. Controlled by affiliated groups, these provinces are located on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, in Algeria, Egypt-Sinai, Libya, Nigeria, the North Caucasus, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.¹³

By the beginning of 2019 ISIL (Da'esh) and other terrorist factions fighting in Syria had lost almost all their territories. However, they have retained capacities to carry out terror attacks both in Iraq and Syria. In spite of their military defeat, groups such as ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaeda, and their affiliates will continue to focus on carrying out international attacks.

For this purpose, ISIL (Da'esh) has purportedly reorganized into a network of sleeper cells supported by hidden personnel, funding streams, and weaponry. Thus, ISIL (Daesh) inspired and other similar ideology remains a global threat.¹⁴ Furthermore, despite major territorial

7 BBC News, “Islamic State and the crisis in Iraq and Syria in maps” (21 October 2017). Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

8 Brookings Institution Blog, “What's beyond the defeat of ISIS?” (27 September 2016). Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/09/27/whats-beyond-the-defeat-of-isis/>.

9 Paul Cruickshank, “A View from The CT Foxhole: Lisa Monaco, Former Assistant to President Barack Obama for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism”, CTC Sentinel West Point, Volume 10, Issue 9 (October 2017). Available at <https://ctc.usma.edu/posts/a-view-from-the-ct-foxhole-lisa-monaco-former-assistant-to-president-barack-obama-for-homeland-security-and-counterterrorism>.

See also “Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families”, Radicalisation Awareness Network (July 2017), stating that there are “42,000+ foreign terrorist fighters from 120+ countries”.

Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf.

10 Alex P. Schmid, “Foreign (Terrorist) Fighter Estimates: Conceptual and Data Issues”, ICCT Policy Brief (October 2015).

11 University of Texas War on the Rocks Blog, “How Many Fighters Does the Islamic State Really Have?” (9 February 2015). Available at <https://warontherocks.com/2015/02/how-many-fighters-does-the-islamic-state-really-have/>.

12 INTERPOL, Fact Sheet COM/FS/2018-08/GI-04 (2017). Available at https://www.interpol.int/content/download/788/6323/version/38/file/04_GI-04_2018-08_EN_LR.pdf.

13 The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, “Beyond Syria and Iraq - Examining Islamic State Provinces” (November 2016). Available at https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus149_Bauer.pdf.

14 Jamestown Foundation, “Islamic State's Continued Presence and Footprint in Syria” (3 December 2018). Available at <https://jamestown.org/program/islamic-states-continued-presence-and-footprint-in-syria/>.

losses, ISIL (Da'esh) has gained the allegiance of established and emerging terrorist groups in other countries and directs or inspires terrorist attacks around the globe. For example, the "Islamic State Khorasan"¹⁵ province seeks to expand the influence of ISIL (Da'esh) to South and Central Asia and has been responsible for nearly 100 attacks against civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as roughly 250 clashes with U.S., Afghan, and Pakistani security forces since January 2017.¹⁶

Broadly speaking, ISIL (Da'esh) attacks can be placed in three categories, described below.¹⁷

- First, there are attacks conducted by "core" FTF operatives, who are trained by ISIL (Da'esh), based in and primarily active in Syria and Iraq.¹⁸ Core operatives carried out the suicide bomb attack on Istanbul airport in June 2016,¹⁹ as well as attacks in France²⁰ and Belgium²¹ in 2015 and 2016.



Case Study – Turkey

On 28 June 2016, three men launched an attack on Atatürk International Airport in Istanbul. Armed with automatic weapons and explosive belts, two of the attackers opened fire in the international arrivals area, before detonating their explosive belts. The third attacker detonated his belt in the parking area. Including the three attackers, 48 people were killed, and more than 200 were injured.

Turkish authorities believe that the attackers, originally from Russia and Central Asia, had come to Turkey from Syria, and that they were acting on behalf of ISIL (Da'esh).²²

- Second, there are attacks where the person or group has not travelled to a conflict zone but makes contact online and is coached virtually by an ISIL (Da'esh) facilitator based in Syria or Iraq (often an FTF from the attacker's own country). As ISIL (Da'esh) has come under military pressure, it has repeatedly urged would-be FTFs to conduct attacks in their home countries or elsewhere, instead of attempting to travel to enter the territory

15 Khorasan historically encompasses parts of modern day Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

16 Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K)" (2018).

Available at <https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/terrorism-backgrounders/islamic-state-khorasan-k>.

17 These categories and attack statistics are based on a report published by the University of Maryland START Consortium. The most recent report of 2017 contains statistics for the year 2016 – the figures are provided to illustrate the scope of violence occurring in a single year, and the potential for violence to spread outside the main conflict zones.

18 University of Maryland Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, "Overview: Terrorism in 2016" (August 2017). Available at https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_GTD_OverviewTerrorism2016_August2017.pdf.

19 Hurriyet Daily News, "Death toll rises to 46 in 2016 Istanbul airport attack" (23 October 2017). Available at <http://www.hurriyetsdailynews.com/death-toll-rises-to-46-in-2016-istanbul-airport-attack-121308>;

CNN, "Istanbul airport attack: Planner, 2 bombers identified, report says" (2 July 2016).

Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/07/01/europe/turkey-istanbul-ataturk-airport-attack/index.html>;

The Soufan Center, "Beyond the Caliphate" (October 2017). Available at <http://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017.pdf>.

20 BBC, "Paris attacks: What happened on the night" (9 December 2015). Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34818994>.

21 BBC, "Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks" (9 April 2016).

Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35869985>.

22 The Wall Street Journal, "U.S. Suspects Chechen Was Behind Istanbul Airport Attack" (3 July 2016). Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-suspects-chechen-was-behind-istanbul-airport-attack-1467458810>

Al Jazeera, "ISIL 'key suspect' in Istanbul's Ataturk airport attack" (29 June 2016). Available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/turkey-istanbul-ataturk-airport-attack-160629010240861.html>

under ISIL (Da'esh) control. Using tools like encrypted messaging apps, these facilitators encourage and instruct the attackers. Some commentators have described these attacks as “remote-controlled attacks”.²³



Case Study – India

In 2015, Indian police broke up a cell allegedly planning attacks against markets, police stations, and religious places. The cell had managed to obtain several kilograms of explosives.

The members of the cell had been radicalized through online materials. The leader, Ibrahim Yazdani, received guidance from ISIL (Da'esh) for 17 months and plotted what would have been the group's first attack in India. ISIL (Da'esh) trained Yazdani to select members for the cell and organized delivery of weapons and chemicals used to make explosives.²⁴

- Finally, there are “lone wolf attacks”, where the attacker or group self-affiliates with ISIL (Da'esh) but does not have any direct or official link with the group.²⁵ Some commentators have described these attacks as “leaderless jihad.”²⁶



Case Study – USA

On 31 October 2017, a man drove a truck into a bike path in Manhattan, New York, killing 8 and injuring 11 others. The attacker, identified as Sayfullo Saipov, had left a hand-written note in the truck pledging allegiance to ISIL (Da'esh).

However, security officials did not find ties to ISIL (Da'esh) and instead consider him a “lone wolf” attacker. He had apparently followed instructions that ISIL (Da'esh) published in one of its magazines, which included the directive to leave a note in the truck.²⁷

2.2 Regional Situation

In addressing terrorism in Central Asia, the focus, until recently, has generally been on the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (“IMU”), its breakaway group, the Islamic Jihad Union, and the international Islamist movement Hizb-ut-Tahrir (“HT”). However, in line with global developments, attention has shifted to the regional influence of ISIL (Da'esh) and its ideologically-linked groups and individuals.

The specific goals of the IMU are reported to be overthrowing the Uzbek government,

23 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “Terror from afar: how ISIS inspires and directs attacks remotely” (24 March 2017). Available at <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/day6/episode-330-london-attacks-trump-and-russia-autism-on-sesame-street-kids-climate-change-lawsuit-and-more-1.4035186/terror-from-afar-how-isis-inspires-and-directs-attacks-remotely-1.4035188>.

24 Rukmini Callimachi, “Not 'Lone Wolves' After All: How ISIS Guides World's Terror Plots From Afar”, The New York Times (4 February 2017). Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/04/world/asia/isis-messaging-app-terror-plot.html>.

25 It is often difficult to correctly classify many attacks. Although contact with ISIL (Da'esh) is frequently suspected, tangible evidence may not be found.

26 Marc Sageman, “Leaderless Jihad - Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century” (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

See also Brookings Institution, “Frustrated foreign fighters” (13 July 2017). Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/07/13/frustrated-foreign-fighters/>

27 Reuters, “Commentary: NY truck attack part of Islamic State's 'leaderless jihad'” (1 November 2017). Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bazzi-afterislamicstate-commentary/commentary-ny-truck-attack-part-of-islamic-states-leaderless-jihad-idUSKBN1D162G>.

replacing it with an Islamic government ruled by Sharia law; establishing Islamic rule in the other Central Asian countries;²⁸ and fighting against those seen as enemies of Islam.²⁹ A period of in-fighting within IMU from 2014-2015 resulted in the brief emergence of a pro-ISIL (Da'esh) faction, whose members were killed at the hands of the Taliban. Since 2016, the IMU has denounced ISIL (Da'esh) and expressed loyalty to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This faction continues to operate within Taliban controlled regions of Afghanistan.³⁰ It is estimated that the IMU currently has 200-300 members. Several IMU members are also suspected of having travelled to Syria to fight with terrorist groups.³¹

The Islamic Jihad Union splintered from the IMU in the early 2000s and has claimed responsibility for attacks in Uzbekistan in 2004 against road checkpoints, the Uzbek Prosecutor General's office, and the United States and Israeli embassies in Tashkent.³² One of the most prominent incidents involving the group was the disrupted 2007 bomb plot in Sauerland, Germany.³³ Islamic Jihad Union members operate from Afghanistan and Pakistan and are scattered throughout Central Asia and Europe.³⁴

HT is an international Islamist movement seeking to unite Muslims under one Islamic caliphate; it ideologically rejects ISIL (Da'esh)'s so-called caliphate.³⁵ HT has been banned in all of Central Asia³⁶ and in many Muslim-majority countries outside the region³⁷ but operates relatively freely in some Western countries.³⁸ Estimates of HT membership in Central Asia range from a few thousand up to 100,000, with members including students, teachers, the unemployed, and

28 Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Congressional Research Service Report for Congress: Foreign Terrorist Organizations" p. 37 (2004). Available at <http://fas.org/irp/crs/RL32223.pdf>.

29 University of Maryland Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)" (last updated March 2015). Available at <http://www.start.umd.edu/baad/narratives/islamic-movement-uzbekistan-imu>.

30 Long War Journal, "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan faction emerges after group's collapse" (2016). Available at <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/06/islamic-movement-of-uzbekistan-faction-emerges-after-groups-collapse.php>.

31 United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan" (19 September 2018). Available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f424.html>.

32 United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2016: Foreign Terrorist Organizations" (July 2017). Available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf>.

33 The Guardian, "Islamist terrorists planned to blow up US air base in Germany" (2 March 2010). Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/04/islamic-jihad-union-bomb-plot>.

34 United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2016: Foreign Terrorist Organizations" (July 2017). Available at <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf>.

35 Counter Extremism Project, "Hizb ut-Tahrir". Available at <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/hizb-ut-tahrir>.

36 Kuwait News Agency, "Kazakhstan court bans extremist Hizb ut-Tahrir" (28 March 2005).

Available at <https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=1559412&language=en>.

Institute for War & Peace Reporting, "Hizb ut-Tahrir Emboldened in Kyrgyzstan" (20 March 2007).

Available at <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/hizb-ut-tahrir-emboldened-kyrgyzstan>.

RFE/RL, "Tajik Hizb Ut-Tahrir Leader Sentenced To 18 Years" (22 January 2011).

Available at https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan_hizuttahrir_members_sentenced/2284242.html.

RFE/RL, "Tajikistan Bans Another Islamic Organization" (3 May 2012).

Available at https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan_islamic_groups_banned/24568348.html.

Human Rights Watch, "Notes on Wahhabism, 'Wahhabis,' and Hizb ut-Tahrir" (March 2004).

Available at <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/uzbekistan0304/4.htm>.

37 Counter Extremism Project, "Hizb ut-Tahrir". Available at <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/hizb-ut-tahrir>.

38 World Almanac of Islamism, "Hizb ut-Tahrir" (updated 13 January 2017). Available at <http://almanac.afpc.org/hizb-ut-tahrir>.

factory workers.³⁹ HT claims to pursue its ends through political non-violent means, but commentators observe that its ideology of establishing worldwide rule necessitates eventual use of force.⁴⁰ Regardless of HT's actual stance on violence, the more immediate risk is that its members may "graduate" to more radical groups to violently implement principles learned within HT.⁴¹ The HT branch in Osh is thought to be in charge of the Central Asian region.⁴²

In common with FTFs from other world regions, it is probable that Central Asian operatives, trained in Syria, have already returned to their respective home states or shifted their focus to the Afghan battlefield. From there, they may pose significant threats to the Central Asian region and beyond. Analysts argue that Central Asian countries' reputations as exporters of radicalized extremists appears to be giving way to one marked by a growing threat of terrorism domestically.⁴³ Additionally, ISIL is seeking to expand its area of activity in Central Asia and has called for terrorist attacks targeting public gatherings.⁴⁴

39 Counter Extremism Project, "Hizb ut-Tahrir". Available at <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/hizb-ut-tahrir>

American Foreign Policy Council, "World Almanac of Islamism: Hizb ut-Tahrir", p. 6.

Available at http://almanac.afpc.org/sites/almanac.afpc.org/files/Hizb-ut%20Tahrir_0.pdf;

International Crisis Group, "Asia Report No. 58, Radical Islam in Central Asia - Responding to Hizb ut-Tahrir", p. 17 (30 June 2013) (arguing, at the time of publication, that 20,000 is the ceiling of HT members in Central Asia).

40 International Crisis Group, "Asia Report No. 58, Radical Islam in Central Asia - Responding to Hizb ut-Tahrir", pp. 7-8 (30 June 2013).

41 Zeyno Baran, "Hizb ut-Tahrir: Islam's Political Insurgency", pp. 52-53 (December 2004).

Available at http://www.bits.de/public/documents/US_Terrorist_Attacks/Hizbut-ahrirIslam'sPoliticalInsurgency.pdf.

42 Nodirbek Soliev, "Annual Threat Assessment Central and East Asia", Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (January/February 2015). Available at https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CTTA-Jan_Feb-2015.pdf.

43 Jamestown Foundation, "Terror Threat Turns Inward on Central Asia" (3 December 2018).

Available at <https://jamestown.org/program/terror-threat-turns-inward-on-central-asia/>.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of incidents and trends in Central Asia, or involving citizens of Central Asia:

Kazakhstan

- Currently, the most significant development in Central Asia on the threat posed by FTFs and their family members this year has been the efforts of Kazakhstan to repatriate its citizens. According to external sources, it is impossible to estimate the exact number of those who joined extremist groups as they usually travelled without documents and crossed up to four different internationally recognised borders before they reached areas controlled by Islamic extremists. However, over 200 citizens of Kazakhstan, among which 156 children, are said to having returned to Kazakhstan, after having travelled to Syria to join radical terrorist groups involved in the civil war. <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/kazakhstan-continues-operation-to-repatriate-citizens-from-conflict-zones/>.

- In 2018, 50 nationals of Central Asian countries were detained in Kazakhstan, 30 of whom were wanted for terrorism-related reasons. Twenty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities", para 59. Available at https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/N1846950_EN.pdf.

Kyrgyzstan

- According to the State National Security Committee (GKNB), a group of five men, some trained in Syria, were plotting attacks in Bishkek on the Kyrgyz Independence Day, August 31 (2017).

Available at http://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2017/09/12/feature-01.

- In 2017, there was a suicide bombing against the Chinese embassy in Bishkek. (United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Kyrgyz Republic" (19 September 2018). Available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f9913.html>).

Tajikistan

- In 2015, Tajik special forces leader Gulmurod Khalimov publicly defected to ISIL. Though he was killed in 2017, his position in ISIL leadership may have caused an increase in the number of Tajiks among foreign-born suicide bombers. (The Diplomat, "Is Tajikistan's Most Famous Militant Gulmurod Khalimov Dead?" (18 April 2017). Available from <https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/is-tajikistans-most-famous-militant-gulmurod-khalimov-dead/>; BBC News, "Tajikistan special forces chief Gulmurod Khalimov 'joins IS'" (28 May 2015). Available from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32917311>; The Times, "Isis 'minister of war' is killed by allied airstrike in Mosul" (25 April 2017). Available from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/TP/edition/news/isis-minister-of-war-is-killed-by-allied-airstrike-in-mosul-wwtdp388x?ni-statuscode=acsaz-307>).

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- In July 2018, a group of four tourists were killed, and three others injured. ISIL (Da'esh) published a statement on Twitter claiming responsibility for the attack shortly after. (Jamestown Foundation, "Terror Threat Turns Inward on Central Asia" (3 December 2018). Available at <https://jamestown.org/program/terror-threat-turns-inward-on-central-asia/>; BBC News, "Tajikistan attack: Four cyclists mown down are identified" (1 August 2018). Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45026752>.)
 - In 2018, at least 25 inmates and two security officers were killed after a riot broke out at a high-security prison in Khujand where prisoners convicted of religious extremism offences, including membership of ISIL (Da'esh), are generally held. Shortly after the incident, ISIL (Da'esh) claimed responsibility, saying that one of its fighters was responsible for the attack that sparked the riot. (Reuters, "At least 27 killed in Tajikistan prison riot: security sources", (8 November 2018). Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tajikistan-khujand/at-least-13-killed-in-tajik-prison-riot-sources-idUSKCN1ND0IX>; The Diplomat, "What Really Happened at Khujand Prison in Tajikistan?" (27 November 2018). Available at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/what-really-happened-at-khujand-prison-in-tajikistan/>.)
 - Analysts have also documented a trend of Tajik migrant workers in Russia becoming radicalised after experiencing limited opportunities at home and pressures in Russia including discrimination and social isolation. (FIDH, "From Tajikistan to Russia: Vulnerability and Abuse of Migrant Workers and Their Families" (October 2014). Available from <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/russie641uk2014hd.pdf>. The Diplomat, "Central Asia and Islamic State: The Russian Connection" (8 March 2017). Available from <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/central-asia-and-islamic-state-the-russian-connection/>.)

Turkmenistan

- According to several sources, one apparent main area of concern is the situation along the border between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. For example, in February 2014, Afghan Taliban militants killed three Turkmen border guards while crossing from Afghanistan's northwest Badghis province into Turkmenistan – the first attack on border guards since 2001. In May 2014, Taliban militants killed at least three more border guards during a cross-border attack from the Ghormach District in the northern Afghan province of Faryab. <https://www.rferl.org/a/qishloq-ovozi-turkmen-troops-killed-afghan-border/25400833.html>.
- In September 2014, another attack on the border occurred, but there were no casualties. Available at <https://news.am/rus/news/227781.html>.

Uzbekistan

- Though the groups IMU and IJU have historical connections to Uzbekistan, they currently are not based in the country and have not launched any significant attacks within the country since 2004. Rather, individual ISIL (Da'esh) sympathizers from Uzbekistan have committed high-profile attacks abroad. (Counter Extremism Project, "Uzbekistan". Available from <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/uzbekistan> (accessed 20 July 2018).)
- For example, an ethnic Uzbek was arrested in Sweden in April 2017 for running a truck into a crowd in Stockholm and killing four people. Another ethnic Uzbek is on trial for committing the above-mentioned Istanbul nightclub attack that killed 39 people and injured 65 others. Dozens of Uzbeks were arrested in Russia in various anti-terrorism investigations. (United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 – Uzbekistan" (19 September 2018). Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f734.html>.)

44 ISIL claimed responsibility for the killing of four foreign cyclists in Tajikistan (see above). In November 2018, "ISIL stated that one of its fighters was responsible for the attack that sparked a riot in a high-security prison in Khujand, Tajikistan. Foreign terrorist fighters who are nationals of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are attempting to use Kazakhstan as a transit route for moving in and out the region." Twenty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities", para 59. Available at https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/N1846950_EN.pdf.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF P/CVE PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES

The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism emphasizes the need for member states to "...develop joint and participatory strategies, including with civil society and local communities, to prevent the emergence of violent extremism". The Plan of Action makes numerous recommendations to Member States for preventing the spread of violent extremism,⁴⁵ beginning with the development of plans of action. These plans should reflect local and regional contextual factors and priorities, approached in a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral way.⁴⁶ This call to create partnerships with civil society in order to deliver a holistic and effective approach has been addressed in a number of other sources:

- UNSC resolution 1624 (2005) highlights "the importance of the role of the media, civil and religious society, the business community and educational institutions in fostering an environment which is not conducive to incitement of terrorism."⁴⁷ UNSC resolution 2129 (2013) promotes a comprehensive approach, calling for partnerships with "international, regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society, academia and other entities in conducting research and information-gathering, and identifying good practices."⁴⁸ UNSC resolution 2178 (2014) encourages member states to "engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies" to counter violent extremism; this is the first mention of P/CVE in a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.⁴⁹ UNSC resolution 2396 (2017) stresses the importance of assisting women or children associated with foreign terrorist fighters who might be victims of the experience of traveling to, and living in, a conflict zone. Alternatively, they may have abetted terrorist acts in a variety of roles. The complexity of this situation underscores the need for tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, especially with the assistance of specialized civil society organizations.
- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's 2015 Ministerial Declaration recognized that a multi-dimensional approach to counter-terrorism efforts is required, including the need to address the underlying causes such as the "various social, economic, political and other factors, which might engender conditions in which

45 United Nations, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, A/70/674, para. 51 (24 December 2015). Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

46 United Nations, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, A/70/674, paras. 43-44 (24 December 2015). Available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

47 United Nations Security Council resolution 1624, Preamble (2005).

48 United Nations Security Council resolution 2129, para. 19 (2013).

49 United Nations Security Council resolution 2178, para. 16 (2014). Chapter VII of the UN Charter governs UN action with respect to "threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression." A resolution adopted under Chapter VII typically sets out the measures that the Security Council deems appropriate to maintain or restore international peace and security. These resolutions are binding on all UN Member States.

terrorist organizations could engage in recruitment and win support." The Declaration recognized that the primary responsibility for efforts to counter both violent extremism and terrorism lies with States, while also highlighting the pressing requirement for all stakeholders to be fully involved, notably "youth, families, women, victims of terrorism, religious, cultural and educational leaders, civil society, as well as the media."⁵⁰

- The African Union Peace and Security Council acknowledged the pivotal role that women can play in combating violent extremism, recognizing that promotion of women's rights is a "success factor in preventing and combating the scourge of violent extremism."⁵¹ In its resolution, it stressed the need for "constructively engaging a broad range of actors...including leaders of various religious groups, community leaders, traditional leaders, educational institutions, civil society groups, the media and internet service providers, as well as the youth and women."⁵²

Therefore, it is crucial that Central Asian states work towards cooperation and collaboration with civil society organisations ("CSOs") and local communities within their own national P/CVE strategies.

The Plan of Action calls for comprehensive action to address the "drivers" of violent extremism, commonly grouped into two categories: "push" and "pull" factors.⁵³

- Push factors are societal conditions conducive to violent extremism. These include: lack of socio-economic opportunities; marginalization and discrimination; poor governance; violations of human rights and the rule of law; prolonged and unresolved conflicts; and certain prison environments.
- Pull factors are individual motivations and processes which play a key role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action. These include: individual backgrounds and motivations; collective grievances and victimization stemming from domination, oppression, subjugation, or foreign intervention; distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and personal social networks.

The complexity of these factors – and the need to address overlapping factors simultaneously – requires the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in any P/CVE strategy. The sections below contain good practices for developing P/CVE programming and describe how government

50 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism, Preamble (2015). Available at <https://www.osce.org/cio/208216?download=true>.

51 African Union Peace and Security Council, Press Statement of the 728th Meeting "The role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa" (31 October 2017). Available at <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc.728.womeninpreventingandcounteringviolentextremism.31.10.2017.pdf>.

52 African Union Peace and Security Council, Communique of the 749th Meeting at the Level of Heads of State and Government, para. 9 (27 January 2018). Available at <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc.summit.749.com.ahg.terrorism.27.01.2018.pdf>.

53 United Nations, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, A/70/674, para. 23 (24 December 2015).

actors can partner with civil society organizations and local communities to implement a P/CVE strategy.

3.1 Programme Examples

A variety of programmes can contribute to the goals of de-radicalization,⁵⁴ rehabilitation,⁵⁵ and reintegration⁵⁶ of those exposed to violent extremist ideology. These programs can be beneficial regardless of the person's actual level of engagement in terrorist offences or status as a defendant in a criminal prosecution. These options range from direct interventions designed to challenge specific behaviour and attitudes, to softer interventions aimed at building social capital and developing relationships. Such programmes include:

- **Psychological support / counselling**

These include professional psychological support and counselling services designed to manage traumas associated with exposure to violent extremist ideology or to address general mental health concerns that could raise susceptibility to radicalization.



Practical example

The Danish city of Aarhus has developed an "Exit" programme targeting political or religious extremists with potential to commit violent crimes and/or terrorism. The city's police and social services are collaborating to offer a range of support, including psychological counselling to both violent extremists and their families.⁵⁷

A family counselling centre in Norway offers support to families in crisis. Included in the Government's Action Plan against radicalization and violent extremism, the centre also cooperates with municipalities to detect individuals at risk of becoming radicalized and offers counselling and family therapy to the individuals and their close family members.⁵⁸

54 The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism defines de-radicalization as "programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of reintegrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence". CTITF, "First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes" para. 8 (2006).

Available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/44297>.

55 Rehabilitation is "a purposeful intervention and set of planned activities targeting individual victims, survivors or offenders with an aim to positively impact changes in attitudes, cognitive skills and behaviour, personality or mental health issues believed to be the cause of the individual's criminal behaviour, through social, educational and/or vocational skills acquisition with the intention to reduce the chance that the individual will experience recidivism". United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/SNCCT, "Violent Extremism in Sudan: An Evidence-Based Study" p. 22 (2017). Available at [http://www.sd.undp.org/content/dam/sudan/docs/Violent%20Extremism%20in%20Sudan%20-%20UNDP%20SNCCT%202017%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.sd.undp.org/content/dam/sudan/docs/Violent%20Extremism%20in%20Sudan%20-%20UNDP%20SNCCT%202017%20(1).pdf).

56 Reintegration "occurs at the end of incarceration, sometimes under formal supervision, sometimes without any assistance". Reintegration "also refers to a process through which violent extremist prisoners move from custody to living in the community".

UNODC, "Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons", p. 142 (2016). Available at https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf.

57 Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Foreign fighter returnees & the reintegration challenge", pp. 6-7 (November 2016). Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_foreign_fighter_returnees_reintegration_challenge_112016_en.pdf.

Preben Bertelsen, "Danish Preventive Measures and De-radicalization Strategies: The Aarhus Model", Panorama - Insights Into Asian and European Affairs (January 2015).

Available at http://psy.au.dk/fileadmin/Psykologi/Forskning/Preben_Bertelsen/Avisartikler_radikalisering/Panorama.pdf.

58 Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism - Family support" (2017). Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/family_support_en.pdf.

- **Housing support**

This category includes access to social housing, assistance in relocating, or help setting up on one's own.



Practical example

A young girl travelled to Syria as part of a larger family. Once there she reached out to friends saying she wanted to escape, but her older brother and cousin (whom she had married in Syria) were preventing her. When both the brother and husband were killed, she managed to use money to bribe herself across the border and, after a period of detention under the Turkish authorities, she was deported to her country of origin. Upon return, she did not wish to live in the same area as before, due to fear of reprisal from family and friends. Therefore, cooperation between housing services from differing local authorities allowed her to access social housing in another province.

- **Access to training / vocational courses to enhance job prospects**

This may include providing training courses or paying for vocational qualifications.



Practical example

A community organisation-run project gave youth from a disadvantaged area the opportunity to undertake a free 12-week course. The course fostered interaction between youth who, in normal circumstances, would not mix together. This interaction helped them develop skills such as communication and anger management. It also gave the youth training and qualifications in IT and cyber security, assisting them to better access the job market.

- **Theological support**

Religion-based extremism is often exacerbated through obtaining information on religious texts from a single source without access to suitable individuals in a position to challenge incorrect perceptions. People well-versed in a particular religion, and in particular those who resonate with the target audience, can spend time with individuals and provide information and guidance in theological matters.



Practical example

A young man was adopting interpretations of religious doctrine from preachers on the internet who were delivering messages similar to those used by violent extremist groups. Within the local area, there was no one who was able to capture the attention of this man or provide alternatives resonating as strongly as the messages on the internet. Finally, he came into regular contact with a highly-educated yet relatable religious scholar, who was able to re-purpose the quotes from the internet and provide effective counterarguments.

- **Mentoring**

Older peers can act as support for minors who may be on the path to radicalization. The elder can serve as a friend, give them someone to talk to, or act as an example to be emulated.



Practical example

A young man joined an extremist group as an 18-year-old. He proselytized on the streets, called for the removal of the democratic government. He and some close friends were later arrested and convicted of terrorism offences.

After serving his prison sentence, as one of a number of support measures, he had regular one-to-one meetings with another former extremist who had succeeded in turning his own life around. The similarity of their personal backgrounds showed the young man that there is a pathway away from violence.

- **Family support and access to family members if separated**

Families are instrumental in the process of reintegrating and helping individuals (especially returnees) once again feel a part of their society. This support could include parenting advice and guidance from social care professionals, familial access to imprisoned individuals, or support in reaching distant family members.



Practical example

A girl who became radicalized via online contact with an ISIL (Da'esh) recruiter was stopped at the Turkish border by the authorities and returned to her country of origin. One of her motivations for leaving home was to distance herself from certain abusive family members. She received assistance in finding accommodation elsewhere, with special arrangements enabling communication and in-person meetings with close family and friends; the arrangements were kept secret from the abusive family members.

It is important to recognize that there can be no “one-size-fits-all” approach to rehabilitation or support programmes. Each individual case must be assessed to determine:

- ◆ What level of threat do individual extremists pose? Considerations can include criminal histories; offences committed in the conflict zone; motivations for traveling abroad; reasons for return; nature and demeanour since entering the programme; psychological trauma; skills (such as prior military experience); and other case-specific facts, such as travelling with friends and family who are now deceased.
- ◆ What are their psychological needs? For example, returnees are likely to have suffered trauma that will have had some form of impact on their state of mind (PTSD) and individuals who feel disenfranchised can often withdraw from society.
- ◆ What is the status of their social networks? Who are their local contacts who can act as a support network?
- ◆ Were they formally employed?
- ◆ What is their level of education? (This is relevant to career prospects)
- ◆ What are their general health needs? Do they have drug and/or alcohol abuse issues?

3.2 In-Depth Programme Example: Development of Counter-Narratives

A crucial element of any P/CVE strategy is the development of alternatives to the narrative of violent extremist groups or organizations. Counter-narratives should work to dilute the appeal of terrorist groups. Counter-narratives can spread factual information about corruption within a terrorist group leadership, hypocrisy regarding non-Islamic behaviours, or miserable living conditions in terrorist-controlled territory. As further explained below, delivering these messages utilizing victims or former terrorists who recount their experiences in the first person can be extremely effective.

Current good practices in developing alternative narratives include:

- *Using, and showcasing, cooperation between government, private sector, civil society, and local communities.* Governments should interact with its population and welcome its participation in the design and implementation of social policies. The counter-narrative should be disseminated on a local level, through the use of networks of participating CSOs. This approach legitimizes the message; facilitates its spread throughout the population; demonstrates inclusive policymaking; supports the principles of freedom of expression and assembly; and creates a sense of belonging and loyalty within the community.



Practical example

One of the best examples of the various possibilities which these networks offer is the **Stop Violence Coalition**⁵⁹ in Bangladesh, which brings a number of CSOs throughout the country together, in order to work at the various stages of the P/CVE process or plan.

- *Strengthening the sense of national identity and of belonging to the community.* Counter-narratives can emphasize the importance of national or community identity, in contrast to religious identity, thereby increasing resilience against groups who misuse religion to promote violent extremism.
- *Youth as generators of counter-narratives.* Today's youth are not only the targets for a P/CVE plan; they should also be seen as generators of its content. National P/CVE strategies should implement frameworks allowing youth groups and CSOs to flourish. Youth messages possess credibility that governmental experts generally cannot leverage themselves if they are unaware of trends and topics that appeal to young people. One example of an initiative focused on empowering young people against radicalization is the competition known as **Peer to Peer: Facebook Global Digital Challenge**, which tasks students with the design of counter-radicalization programs.⁶⁰ To quote from the Peer to Peer website:



"This project consists of a Global university youth initiative and international competition that uses the power of student innovation to challenge prejudice, online hate and extremism. It develops campaigns and social media strategies against extremism that are credible, authentic and believable to their peers and resonate within their communities.

The teams will research their target market and create a strategy designed to best reach and influence their peers. Each team receives a \$2,000 (USD equivalency) operational budget plus \$400 in Facebook ad credits to design, pilot, implement and measure the success of a social or digital initiative, product or tool that:

- ◆ Motivates or empowers students to become involved in countering violent extremism.
- ◆ Catalyzes other students to create their own initiatives, products or tools to counter violent extremism.
- ◆ Builds a network or community of interest, focused on living shared values, that also counters violent extremism."

59 <https://www.peaceinsight.org/conflicts/bangladesh/peacebuilding-organisations/stop-violence-coalition/>

60 EdVenture Partners. Available at <https://edventurepartners.com/peer2peer/>.

Under this program, students at Dhaka University in Bangladesh established the “Think Twice, Act Wise” project. In 2016 it was awarded first prize in the competition. This project would be ideal to replicate in other institutions throughout the region as it promotes tolerance and empathy for different views and opinions in society. It also fights violent extremism through encouraging the development of critical thinking and extra-curricular interests amongst the youth of Bangladesh. Through the use of a purpose-built website together with social media, the project recorded over 10 million hits on Facebook alone over a two-month period.



Practical example

Law enforcement agencies in Kyrgyzstan initiate action groups and invite students to assist in identifying and reporting internet content promoting terrorism, extremism, or violence. Students are also engaged in awareness raising campaigns and dissemination of anti-extremist materials through online forums and social media.⁶¹

- The use of victims and former radicals. Victims and former radicals who have walked away from violence possess heightened credibility and can create more empathetic connections with audiences. Additionally, victims' experiences may show the dangers and real-life results of terrorism, helping people understand its harmful impact. With regard to former terrorists, their experiences may help to discredit terrorist messages, while at the same time adding credibility to counter-narratives (which would not necessarily be the case if the source of the message was governmental). There are a number of notable examples of former extremists whose messages appear to have made an impact within extremist circles.



Practical example

Sweden's “Exit” program supports young people to leave violent extremist movements. In addition to receiving support from social workers, the program hires former extremists as mentors. The mentors, having been in the same situation, appear as legitimate role models. Furthermore, they are more qualified than others to understand the struggles of youth and know what is needed to help them navigate their way out of extremist networks.⁶²

- *Enhancement of critical thinking.* Ultimately, the prevention of radicalization is a task of strengthening society against the impact of terrorist messaging. Initiatives enhancing critical thinking will increase the ability to think independently and identify the flaws in exploitative propaganda.
- *Gender considerations.* A P/CVE strategy should plan for and implement gender-based considerations in the development of counter-narratives. For example, narratives may need to counter messages which frame participation in a violent extremist group as an opportunity to fulfil traditional gender roles (such as taking on the role of a spouse or a

61 CA-Portal. Available at <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:25658>.

62 Fryshuset. Available at <https://fryshuset.se/in-english/>. Fryshuset is the youth centre where the Exit programme and other programmes originate;

See generally Radicalisation Awareness Network, “Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism - Exit strategies” (2017). Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/exit_strategies_en.pdf.

mother) or to achieve empowerment, responsibility, and autonomy (such as taking part in recruitment efforts or nursing). Counter-narratives to these recruitment messages may highlight the factual dangers of participation in the terrorist group or the falsehoods of the recruitment message itself. Bearing in mind that gender equality is a fundamental human rights concern, P/CVE policymakers should seek to promote gender equality both for its own sake and to reduce the attractive force of recruitment messages preying on gender-related grievances. To that end, CSO partnership is encouraged because local CSOs may already study and possess crucial data regarding gender inequality, particularly at local levels.

Finally, women are well positioned to create counter violent extremist narratives and draw family members away from violent extremist groups and ideology. There are a number of initiatives that reflect this, including:



Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) in Austria was established to provide a network for women working against violent extremism. It serves as a platform to create and deliver tools required to challenge extremist ideologies and to develop alternative strategies in addressing extremism. The network includes women with personal connections to violent extremism, either as former extremists themselves or as survivors of attacks.⁶³

Mothers for Life is a unique global network of mothers who have direct experience with family members attracted to an extremist ideology, most cases of which involve husbands, sons, and daughters leaving to join ISIL (Da'esh). The network aims to coordinate activities and provide guidance, and counsel. Mothers for Life also aims to create strong and convincing counter narratives in an effort to prevent individuals from becoming involved with extremist networks and activities.⁶⁴

Javononi Peshsaf is a CSO from Tajikistan whose aims include enhancing the role of women and youth for peace and security, prevention of domestic violence, and prevention of violent extremism, in partnership with the police. The organization conducted research in 20 villages in Penjikent to discover why youth are joining violent extremist groups.⁶⁵

Women Against Violent Extremism is an initiative by Mutakallim, a Kyrgyz NGO, which protects and advances the rights of Muslim women. Women are engaged in prevention work, especially by facilitating discussion and dialogue on violent extremism, and providing awareness on the dangers of violent extremist and terrorist groups.⁶⁶

The Committee on Women and Family Affairs in Tajikistan, which has 110 Information and Consultation Centres across the country, is a counterpart for some women seeking ways to address violent extremism in their families. This infrastructure has occasionally been used for awareness raising on violent extremism, and in Dushanbe some mothers have been trained on how to detect signs of growing extremism within their families. The Committee shot a PVE documentary, shown by local branches, in which mothers share their grief by talking about their children who left to join ISIL.⁶⁷

63 Women Without Borders. Available at <http://www.women-without-borders.org/save/>.

64 German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies: Mothers for Life. Available at <http://girds.org/mothersforlife>.

65 Javononi Peshsaf. Available at http://ef-ca.tj/javononi_peshsaf_eng.html.

66 UN Women. Women and violent extremism in Europe and Central Asia (June 2017). Available at [http://kg.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/kyrgyzstan/docs/General/UN%20PBF_UNW_ECA_KYRG%20chapter%20FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](http://kg.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/kyrgyzstan/docs/General/UN%20PBF_UNW_ECA_KYRG%20chapter%20FINAL%20(1).pdf).

67 UN Women. Women and violent extremism in Europe and Central Asia (June 2017). Available at http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2017/iii_unw_eca_tajikistan%20chapter_final-02%20final.pdf?la=en&vs=1241.

3.3 Organizational Considerations

- *Competent local delivery of the national strategy.* Ministries and departments across national governments should be involved in delivering the P/CVE strategy; states must effectively coordinate and deliver that strategy, first and foremost, at the local level. For example, in March 2010, the UK House of Commons “Communities and Local Governments Committee” published a report stressing that “communities must be at the centre of the response to violent extremism”. This conclusion is based on the view that local actors such as families, teachers, and youth workers are best positioned to understand local factors and to lead implementation of P/CVE programs. The report also notes, however, that a high level of training and experience may be needed to respond to complex situations. Local actors have a vital role in P/CVE, but must receive sufficient training to be effective and to act without undermining national policies.⁶⁸
- *Avoid contradictory efforts.* The governmental authorities must be mindful of the effects of implementing P/CVE initiatives alongside criminal justice-based initiatives, particularly when incompatible initiatives fall under common management. The UK “Communities and Local Governments Committee” report noted this problem by comparing two parallel initiatives – one for building community cohesion and one for crime prevention. While the former sought to minimize the Muslim community’s isolation within the general population, the latter had the effect of raising scrutiny on the Muslim population and its potential ties to violent extremist activity. These programs were found to be incompatible; the committee recommended different ministries to take charge of each program.⁶⁹
- *Perform a localized threat analysis.* Managing the risks associated with terrorist activity, especially relating to returning FTFs, requires developing a comprehensive understanding of the localized threat picture. Also, decisions on managing the conditions in which extremism can develop, need to be made at the local level, based upon local risk assessments. In doing this, not only can local areas be categorised to inform national priorities, but also the number of local returnees and the areas to which they are returning can be determined. This, in turn, informs analysis of travel patterns and allows effective resource allocation and multi-agency support. A clear local picture also ensures that returnees are not situated in close proximity to each other.



Try it for yourself

- ◆ If there are no localized threat analyses in place, consider creating one.
- ◆ If one exists, perhaps look at creating a threat analysis of a particular threat or problem (such as large numbers of fighters returning, or on activities of local recruiters).

68 House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, “Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009-10”, pp. 44-47. Available at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf>.

69 House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, “Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009-10”, pp. 67-68. Available at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/65.pdf>.

Techniques to consider:

- ◆ **5 W's and H** questions: (**Who, What, Why, Where, When** and **How**) for the threat and for mitigating responses
- ◆ Information sources on the threat
- ◆ Identify stakeholders
- ◆ Horizon Scanning techniques – imagine the effect on the following conditions:
 - Political; Economic; Social; Technological; Legal; Environmental

Examples of risk assessments and processes include the “Prevent risk assessment and action plan” for Norfolk (a UK county)⁷⁰ and the EU RAN “Violent Extremism Risk Assessment, version 2” (VERA-2R).⁷¹

- *Create or modify management posts.* Consideration should be given to either creating one or more official posts or to simply adjusting the responsibilities of a pre-existing role to coordinate the required response and ensure effective management and direction of a P/CVE strategy. For example, officials in an already-existing counter-terrorism office may be able to smoothly transition into a position dealing with P/CVE. On the other hand, staffing a P/CVE office with persons from the civil society sector allows those managers to leverage their already-existing networks for governmental P/CVE efforts. Consider also the following points:
 - ◆ Resources (Where will the budget for new personnel come from, and likewise, where will these new staff be based?)
 - ◆ Does the seniority or standing of the new position (for example, in grade of post) command respect and ensure cooperation?
 - ◆ Autonomy – it is good practice that the person(s) appointed are able to set strategies and hold their own budget (particularly true at localized level).
 - ◆ Regional cooperation - There may be elements of good practice already in place within the regional setting. Establishing regional cooperation mechanisms will assist in promoting those good practices.
- *Coordinate through working groups.* It is important to ensure that responsive feedback is gained from all stakeholders, from the grassroots level (such as community members) to the senior levels of government. With that in mind, many States have developed working or steering groups to ensure coordination and feedback from the various stakeholders, such as government representatives, international and regional organisations, law enforcement, community leaders, and other relevant professionals. Working groups can be organised in various ways:

70 Prevent risk assessment and action plan, “Norfolk Action Plan 2016-2019”. Available at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/community-safety-partnership/prevent-norfolk-action-plan.pdf>.

71 Pressman, Rinne, Duits, and Flockton, “Violent Extremism Risk Assessment, version 2-revised” (2016). Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/11702_en.

- ◆ Regional working groups (which can coordinate activities within a geographic region)
- ◆ Risk assessment working groups (for example, the UK Channel panel determines actions for “at risk” individuals)⁷²
- ◆ Ad-hoc or specific issue working groups (for example, a group can focus on the issue of returning families from Syria and Iraq)⁷³



Considerations on forming working groups

- Try to use pre-existing structures if possible (avoid creating new structures just for the sake of it).
- Consider the amount of time that those involved will need to dedicate to a working group – are those involved able to give up this time on a regular basis?
- Wherever possible, meet in person, but also have the ability to meet and coordinate by phone or computer if necessary.
- Have clearly defined roles and ensure that those assigned specific roles (such as Chair) are of significant enough standing to be respected and listened to.
- Try to avoid duplication (i.e. local working group, regional working group, police working group, and/or policy owner working group, all doing the same thing).
- Consider the size of the working group – this should be as small as possible, particularly if the group is tasked with discussing actual cases (i.e. how to manage the risk of a returning family to the local community). Ways to manage this can include having a smaller core group that attend every meeting, and then adding specific relevant experts (such as mental health workers, theological mentors) for individual cases. These experts discuss only the cases they deal with and then leave following this discussion, not attending the whole meeting.
- Ensure proper information security of all meetings and cases discussed, and have participants sign and adhere to confidentiality agreements.

3.4 Benefits of Civil Society Involvement

The existence of violent extremism and threats of future terrorist attacks in Central Asia, together with the fact that individuals returning from conflict zones in Syria and Iraq could seek to exploit the region as a refuge, underlines the need for Central Asian states to adopt holistic local, regional, and national strategies and policies to effectively address the issues surrounding those risks and threats.

Although until recently the priority of the states within the region has been to adopt a “hard response” using traditional criminal law approaches, the progress and trends in combating the radicalization and recruitment process, as well as the evolution in the extremist narrative regarding recruiting, demonstrates that alternative approaches involving communities and collaboration with society are, increasingly, a necessity.

The implementation of P/CVE strategies should be coordinated by an agency or department that has assumed leadership in the P/CVE domain. Implementation partners should include

⁷² Channel panels are part of the UK Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) and are a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>.

⁷³ For examples on ad-hoc working groups, see Radicalisation Awareness Network “Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families” (July 2017). Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf.

actors from CSOs, which can provide expertise and services ranging from health care to education to family assistance. Their involvement can prevent the radicalization or travel of would-be FTFs, as well as facilitate the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees and their families.

There are many crucial reasons for including CSOs in the P/CVE plan:

- *Credibility.* As discussed above, P/CVE messengers must be credible. Often, P/CVE programmes led by governmental agencies do not achieve the desired amount of credibility among the communities at whom they are directed – generally, target communities hold suspicion and even anger against the government. Therefore, it is necessary to rely on the collaboration of CSOs, which are less likely to be rejected or to have their motivations questioned.

Credibility is essential for CSOs implementing “mentorship” de-radicalization and disengagement programmes for FTFs and returnees, as open communication between mentor and mentee requires a high degree of trust. This trust will likely be easier to achieve when the mentor is not associated with government authorities.

By extension, the visible faces of these programmes should be individuals who generate confidence and empathy in the target audience. These individuals often require significant logistical support, assistance, and training to craft narratives (what to say) and access the target audience (how, when, and where to say it). Local civic organizations may provide this assistance more efficiently than regional or national government offices.

- *Access to CSO networks.* Collaboration with CSOs regarding P/CVE leads to the possibility of leveraging existing CSO networks, which will amplify the effectiveness and delivery of messages. Access to certain areas of the community may only be possible through cooperation with specific CSOs and their networks.
- *Greater access to marginalized groups.* Collaborating with CSOs in P/CVE planning facilitates access to a wide range of social groups and individuals who, beforehand, may have had difficulty in direct engagement with authorities without being rejected or ignored. CSOs thus facilitate access to larger audiences.
- *Knowledge of the vulnerable populations.* CSOs can articulate the needs of the local communities where they work. In terms of FTF and returnees’ families, local CSOs can obtain information about individual needs, where a governmental authority may otherwise be rejected.
- *Reputation management within the target community.* A P/CVE strategy should identify and anticipate possible threats to its own reputation within the target community. CSOs

are often better-placed within the community to identify and mitigate these threats. CSOs should perform this function during the pre-implementation stage, and likewise, measure their effectiveness in the monitoring and evaluation stage.

- *Legitimacy of P/CVE policies involving law enforcement.* CSO collaboration with law enforcement bodies focusing on counter-terrorism can build respect for lawful authority and increase the community's candour with law enforcement, enabling early detection of radicalization and more effective investigations. At the same time, specialized CSOs may work with law enforcement to motivate greater compliance with rule of law standards in investigations and prosecutions.

3.4.1 Methodology for CSO engagement in P/CVE strategies

In developing P/CVE plans where CSO engagement is desirable, planners can follow the flowchart below. This section will explain each step of the process in detail.

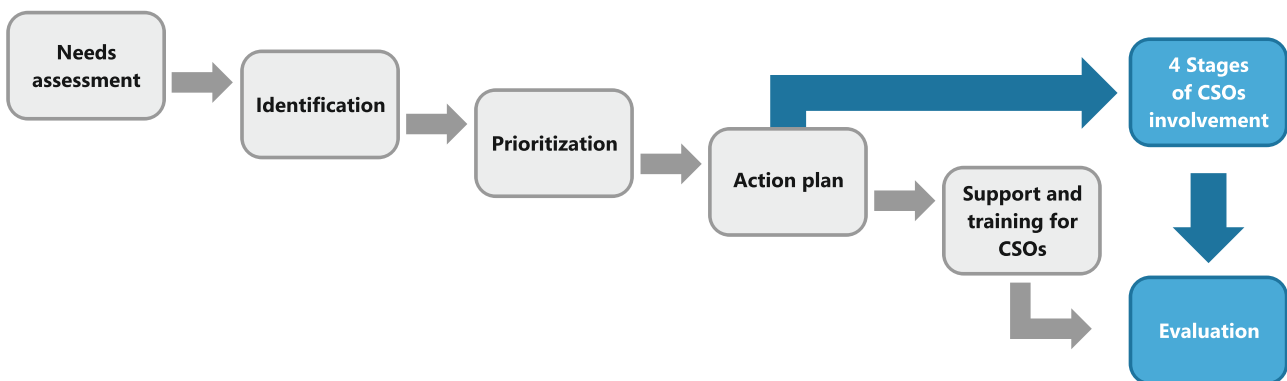


Figure 1: Flowchart of steps for engaging with CSOs

Needs assessment: Prior to designing a plan or activity, a needs assessment should be undertaken in order to identify areas that would benefit from the support of, or collaboration with, CSOs. A few simple questions can provide information on specific areas where such collaboration may be beneficial.

- Is there sufficient knowledge of the target audience?
- Is there credibility to effectively reach the target audience and to build a strong bond with that audience?
- Are the necessary legal and logistical structures in place to assist in P/CVE implementation?

Identification: In order to ensure the correct CSOs are identified for specific activities, it is desirable to have information on their structure, degree of expertise, and capabilities. The use

of a simple matrix can facilitate the work of the government agency that assumes leadership and coordination of the P/CVE plan, as it assists in identifying predefined criteria of the CSO in question.

Prioritization: Once the CSOs have been identified, the process of prioritization should be undertaken in order to ensure that each CSO implements the activities within their expertise, while adhering to the fundamental objectives in the P/CVE plan. For example, where activities are related to interventions within schools, CSOs from the local area that can build relationships with the target audience (e.g. school pupils) should be given priority. Additionally, previous experience would suggest that victims' associations, or associations of relatives of radicalized youth, working in coordination with governmental authorities and through their own networks, are often the most effective CSO collaborators for P/CVE activities.

Action plan: It is important to identify the model of action and collaboration that will be maintained with the different CSOs that are involved in the P/CVE plan – in particular, the stage of involvement of the CSOs. Four stages are described below.

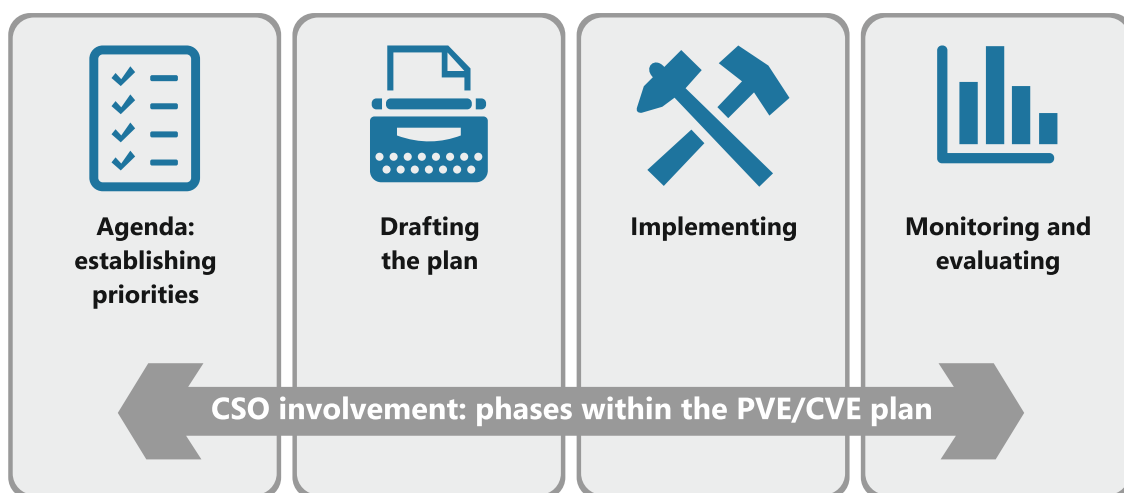


Figure 2: Four main stages of possible CSO involvement

- **Agenda: establishing priorities.** CSOs can be included during agenda planning to take advantage of their in-depth knowledge of the target audience (including trends and community needs). Likewise, their participation can generate credibility and build confidence within society at large, validating future activity in relation to P/CVE and counter-terrorism. CSO inclusion in planning should be formalized, thus giving the CSO standing as a partner of the government. This demonstration of official collaboration will help to strengthen the trust of the parties involved, fortifying the working relationship between these parties. The use of informal consultation conferences is also a consideration, as it gauges the atmosphere and approaches between the participating organizations and the general society.

- Drafting the plan. Once the priorities of the P/CVE plan are identified, drafting the national or regional P/CVE plan may require collaboration from CSOs, either from the beginning of the design process or to provide input once that has been completed. Academic centres that have experts in this field, along with CSOs with a profound knowledge of the target population, are partners for consideration for inclusion as collaborators.
- Implementing. CSOs can directly implement aspects of the P/CVE plan, or the government may finance existing CSO projects that are directly associated with the objectives and national strategy of the P/CVE plan.
- Monitoring and evaluating. The monitoring and evaluation of the results and effectiveness of a plan or activity can be enhanced by the collaboration of CSOs. CSOs may perform surveys and interviews of programme participants more effectively than deploying an evaluator from a central government office.

Support and training for CSOs: Collaboration and cooperation with CSOs may highlight areas for improvement. Addressing these issues will increase the effectiveness of the P/CVE plan. Training activities relating to the use of social networks and the creation of online campaigns or the simple constitution of forums in which CSOs collaboration regarding P/CVE are evident are effective in strengthening these organizations and will reinforce coordination and cooperation within them. Financing of projects is, undoubtedly, another aspect that will enhance these organizations and therefore positively contribute to the effective implementation of a national or regional plan. Training given to CSOs, focused on empowering them in their work as government partners in P/CVE, may focus on, among other things, developing knowledge in relation to the design, launch, management, and monitoring of programmes.

Evaluation of CSO: It is also necessary to implement evaluation of the relationship with CSOs. Periodic monitoring meetings between the staff of these CSOs and the governmental agencies to ensure that the adequate degree of communication between both is achieved, is essential. This will ensure that the expectations of both parties are met and will provide a platform through which engagement can be modified or adapted to current situations.

3.4.2 Community Engagement

Key elements to bear in mind when dealing with community engagement include:

- **Families**
Families are key to understanding the radicalization process of the individual and, in the same way, are critical to facilitate the disengagement process. Families are also in a position to inform engagement with, and the relocation of, returning fighters as they may have critical information on the needs and antecedents of those returnees. To

guarantee this active involvement, a mutual trustful and understanding relationship with the authorities must be built beforehand. Collaboration of local CSOs at this point is crucial to avoid creating the feeling of being under scrutiny and suspicion. Active engagement will help build the necessary resilience amongst families to avoid future potential radicalization of other siblings who could feel attracted by the phenomenon.

- **Police**

Local police officers have a special role in terms of community engagement, as they can not only recognise the first signal of radicalization, but also receive information from other local actors or even relatives themselves. In order to effectively carry out these functions, several practical steps should be considered:



- A “two-way” relationship between the families and the local police officer must be established. This should not only be based on receiving information but on providing advice and support during the de-radicalization and disengagement processes.
- It is essential to deliver specific programmes together with other local organisations to create networks of trust in order to gather the correct information about radicalized individuals and/or returnees, and to build the proper local network to support these affected families. Specific protocols to share this information should be recorded.
- Providing law enforcement staff with appropriate training in terms of community engagement, approaches, CSO management, and how to approach and deal with sensitive situations is essential.
- Establishing personal contact between CSO and the local police team is highly effective in building resilience and developing a solid relationship with affected families, without the fear that they (the families) are being screened or persecuted.
- It is crucial to introduce a prevention-focused policy involving law enforcement, especially within the local community police, allocating the necessary budget to these tasks. Encourage authorities to provide their staff with the specific capacity building input and promote community and local CSOs involvement.

4. CONCLUSION

These guidelines set out the menu of options available when creating P/CVE strategy. As the focus shifts to domestic threats, we must look at the causes behind violent extremism, as well as prevention. But there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach and programmes must be tailored considering overall goals, strengths, and situations. CSOs have a major role to play in P/CVE as well and should be leveraged along with other community partners. Many people, from former extremists, clergy, to the youth, have a role to play and can be included in successful P/CVE programmes. Success depends on being willing to adapt and change as quickly as the threat does.

Please visit our website, www.capve.org, for the latest news and information related to P/CVE in Central Asia.

