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BRIEF OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
P/CVE POLICY, PROGRAMMING AND
FUTURE RESEARCH

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BACKGROUND

The International CVE Research Conference 2017 was held in Antalya, Turkey from 30 October–1 November and hosted by Hedayah, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the Center for Middle Eastern and Strategic Studies (ORSAM). The Conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey.

The Conference could not have taken place without the support of its main partners: the Australian Government, European Union—Global STRIVE Programme, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), M&C Saatchi, Swansea University, and the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. Content partners included Adam Smith International, the Afghanistan Justice Organization, Aktis Strategy, the Asia Foundation, Creative Associates International, Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI), the Global Center on Cooperative Security, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism—the Hague (ICCT), Pakistan Peace Collective, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Wasafiri Consulting, and UN Women

The Conference aimed to provide a platform for the latest, cutting-edge P/CVE research, and to facilitate a discussion around P/CVE policy, programming and research. The Conference also sought to find opportunities for future action-oriented research, and to inform P/CVE practice based on context-specific analysis. The purpose of this brief is to provide an overview of the content of the Conference. More details about the presentations will be elaborated further in the annual edited volume from the Conference, projected to be finalized by Summer 2018. The following sections summarizes the new and innovative ideas, key takeaways and recommendations for P/CVE policy, programming and future research on each of the topics highlighted at the Conference

INTERNET AND MEDIA FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE COUNTER-MESSAGES TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The first session looked at the roles the internet and media play in radicalization and countering violent extremism. The panelists and audience defined several challenges to this topic, especially in the context of the "propaganda war" being fought by Daesh. One speaker recommended that messages should be simple, focused and disciplined, and that the counter-messaging frameworks should draw on resources from the private sector and marketing. A second speaker discussed the role of echo chambers online, and identified that there is not sufficient research about the role of echo chambers, despite being part of the popular media discourse around the process of online radicalization. A third speaker highlighted the reporting

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[1] This report is a collation of the presentations, discussions and debates that took place during the International CVE Research Conference 2017. The Conference organizers are grateful for the speakers, moderators, facilitators and note-takers that made this report possible.

styles around terrorism may be fueling the "us versus them" rhetoric that terrorists capitalize on to gain attention for their propaganda.

Research results and good practices from the communications field suggests that simple and straightforward messages are more effective. However, several participants noted that this is a challenge for P/CVE purposes. In this respect, positive values are difficult to explain succinctly, whereas negative values highlighted by terrorist groups are often easier to convey using short, simple messages.

There was also a discussion on framing CVE efforts in the private sector through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a crucial component of a successful business plan. Social media companies do not want to be perceived as providing a platform for violent extremism and terrorism to spread, and it is also in their best business interest to ensure counter-messages are prioritized.

The panel on Internet and Media resulted in the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Utilize all the available tools to counter the narratives of violent extremists. Violent extremists partly operate in illegal and underground spaces, and do not have all the tools that mainstream society has available.
- Encourage collaboration between governments and social media companies, as these programs seem to yield the best results in terms of countering the narratives of violent extremism.
- Ensure that there are diverse perspectives and voices in the media to reduce and undermine the "us vs. them" rhetoric.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Ensure messages and counter-messages are simple and direct. In order to do CVE communications successfully, developers should employ principles of simplicity, focus and discipline.
- Encourage positivity in the media & reporting with both content and the tone to reduce sensationalizing negative events that could encourage the messages that terrorists try to spread in their propaganda.
- Consider working with the traditional and social media on reporting techniques (both in terms of content and tone/style) to reduce sensationalizing negative events that feed into the messages and strategies of terrorist groups. This could be achieved through advancing media's capacity on crisis communications as well as convening the interaction between the police and the relevant ministries and the media.
- Find a balance between ethics and effective communications strategies. For example, the Redirect Method used by Google could present a problem of potential censorship of ideas if a variety of alternative options were not presented to the reader.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Investigate the effects of so-called "echo chambers" in the radicalization process.
- Research the concepts of critical thinking and media literacy, specifically on how these influence online and offline behavior in the context of P/CVE.

SPECIAL REPORT: PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA: THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN MINING SECTOR

This panel focused on a forthcoming research project exploring the role of the private sector in P/CVE. The panelists began by identifying relevant frameworks for P/CVE engagement with the private sector. Panelists set the context and the framework for why the Australian mining sector in Africa was chosen as a case study for this research, outlining the driving factors of radicalization in the four case study countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya and Mali. The speakers also noted the strong role the mining sector plays in each of those countries and the threat level (high, except Ghana) of terrorism in all of the countries. The panelists also noted both risks and opportunities for how the mining sector may potentially exacerbate or mitigate VE.

The Special Report panel resulted in the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Liaise with the private sector as a key actor in P/CVE in Africa, especially the mining sector, including early on in national strategy development and national action plans.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Identifying a framework by which the mining sector in Africa can begin to engage more comprehensively in P/CVE efforts, based on expanding what is already being done in scope and reach.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Look at the different African violent extremist organizations, and differentiate how they recruit and carry out attacks in their local communities. In particular, a comparison between religiously based VEOs and VEOs that are politically driven is needed. This could feed into more informed security and counter-terrorism trainings.
- Investigate the intersections between violent extremism and the mining community, specifically on where and how there is a direct impact of the mining sector on violent extremism.

THE RADICALIZATION OF FAR-RIGHT VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

Panelists during this section discussed the narratives and the radicalization of the far right in Europe and Australia. There was a comparison in the hate speech utilized by far right groups,

specifically by Britain First and Reclaim Australia. Both groups utilize rhetoric that is anti-Islam and discriminatory against non-white ethnicities, but often adopt mainstream political rhetoric to draw in a broader appeal. Britain First often engages more with political activities, whereas Reclaim Australia tends to support more rallies, which have a tendency to turn violent. In this regard, a keyword analysis of their social media resulted in the finding that Britain First often focuses on the legal status of Muslims whereas Reclaim Australia advocates for violence against Muslims. On this panel, there was also a broader discussion of the non-mainstream right (NMR) in Europe and the overlap that the discourse of the NMR often has with the mainstream political discussions. The point was made that while the NMR radicalization process is responsive to both national and local parameters, the discourse has now developed a more transnational dynamic.

The panel on the Radicalization of Far-Right Violent Extremists resulted in the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Recognize that the shift in mainstream attitudes, values and discourses around identity, nativism and immigration may be creating an environment that feeds the pre-violent space when it comes to the far right.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Design programs to address identity as a driver of cognitive and behavioral radicalization for the far-right and the conditions that make it possible for an individual to hold a complex and layered identity.
- Approach the non-mainstream Right (NMR) as a distinct phenomenon; most NMR activity is low level (of violence) that is difficult to engage, but cognitive radicalization is under-estimated because of its close proximity to mainstream thought.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Develop more research specifically on localized manifestations of the far-right in different countries.

GENDER, WOMEN AND P/CVE

The panel on gender, women and P/CVE generally highlighted the complexity of the role of women's participation in violent extremism and in P/CVE efforts. For example, in the Kenyan context, one piece of research revealed that full coercion and full agency are not only the reasons women in Kenya participate in violent extremism, nor are they mutually exclusive.

At the same time, the panel also highlighted some key differences between women participating in terrorism as different than men. For example, one study found that women traveling to Daesh usually travel with others and rarely travel alone. Men, on the other hand,

sometimes travel with others, but may equally also travel alone. There was also a discussion around gender differences in recruitment methods, and some participants pointed out that Daesh uses a gendered narrative to create a hyper masculine ideal, using examples of women supporting Daesh to shame men into fighting for them.

The panel also discussed the perceptions of gender in society with respect to violence, looking at Bangladesh as a case study. This research found that the public sentiment towards women and violence in Bangladesh is related to sexual violence rather than terrorism, but the public sentiment towards men and violence in Bangladesh is related to crime/gang violence and terrorism.

The panel on Gender, Women and P/CVE resulted in the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Reflect on the language used around "foreign terrorist fighters" from a gender perspective, as women are often not fighters.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Develop targeted programs towards women in Kenya for P/CVE that take into account gendered experiences such as domestic violence & sexual assault.
- Train security agencies to respond to the needs of women in Kenya.
- Leverage women's networks for purposes of prevention; networks and relationships are more significant for women for radicalization/de-radicalization when compared to men across several contexts (Kenya, UK, Middle East).

For P/CVE Research Community

- Further research the role of children in violent extremism and the effects of VE on their development.
- Identify specifically the areas and pathways where women are playing enabling roles to violent extremism.
- Ensure experts are engaging with the media, and using data to dismantle misconceptions about gender, women and violent extremism that are prevalent in the public discourse.

REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

This panel focused on different P/CVE elements related to rehabilitation and reintegration in the context of prisons and (returning) foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the role of civil society organizations (CSOs). The panel included presentations from a civil society organization providing psychosocial counseling in South East Asia, a rehabilitation center for defectors in East Africa, and the perspective of CSOs supporting rehabilitation and reintegration programs in South East Asia, West Africa, and East Africa, as well as from the perspective of organizations working with governments to develop their strategies and programs. The panel pointed out that

the target audiences of R&R programs are very diverse (e.g. children from conflict, women who have been raped, FTFs, abductees, and their families, communities), and that multi-disciplinary teams were needed to address all the components necessary for effective rehabilitation and reintegration (e.g. psychological, legal, financial, etc.). Moreover, the panel indicated that community sensitization is critical; all actors need to understand why the integration of the returnee is necessary for their security. The panel also pointed out that psychopathologies and mental illness should be treated differently than psychosocial care, but there is a lack of resources in terms of trained personnel in prisons and in communities. It was also noted that there was a risk of securitizing basic development programs with respect to R&R if not handled appropriately.

The panel on Reintegration and Rehabilitation resulted in the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Integrate principles of R&R programs into P/CVE strategies, including elements of community sensitization, which may include traditional/cultural reconciliation processes.
- When developing R&R strategies, enable sufficient legal space for CSO actors and organizations, as in many cases CSOs are the main delivery arm for R&R programs.
- Ensure efficient information-sharing between departments and from governments to CSOs; rehabilitation should not fall under one pillar of a national strategy.
- Devote more funding towards monitoring and evaluation of R&R programs.
- Amend the mandate of the RAN CoE to more flexibly cover R&R (long-term commitment, more funds and increase outreach research).

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Convene local, national and regional CSO networks for information sharing and support.
- Collect rigorous data as part of R&R programming to ensure the programming is evidence-based. Ensure this data is regularly used to inform the program at numerous stages, and that feedback is incorporated effectively.
- Increase scope of stakeholders for R&R programs to include a broader set of relevant actors, including government, the private sector, and civil society, as well as the families, victims, and communities of violent extremist offenders.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Develop good practice guides for R&R and facilitate greater access to those guides.
- Stimulate informal network exchanges of research on R&R (e.g. annual P/CVE research conference).
- Consider and investigate further the specific needs of returning children.

REGIONAL SESSIONS

The Conference featured seven regional sessions, some of which were held in parallel over the course of several days. These regional sessions were convened to support research conducted at a localized level, but also to identify broader trends in research related to P/CVE that could be applied at a regional level. The key learning points and recommendations from these regional sessions are described in more detail below.

South Asia

The panel on South Asia explored women and violent extremism in Bangladesh, as well as the role of families in P/CVE in Pakistan. The panel concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Recognize the difference between education through wrote learning and education to critically think about subjects and topics.
- Divert more attention towards the radicalization of women in South Asia, including those that conduct suicide attacks.
- Enhance the capacity of government to communicate the work they are doing on P/CVE.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Work with communities to provide knowledge and skills to tackle violent extremism within kin networks (families) and subsets of communities.
- Train teachers to recognize inherent biases that could reinforce messages of violent extremists, such as ethnic or cultural stereotypes.
- Train teachers to utilize pedagogical approaches that enhance critical thinking in students.
- Include women in the processes and programs to prevent violent extremism, especially young women.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Research the "red flags" that turn the enabling environment into more critical push factors to violent extremism in Bangladesh.
- Utilize "proxy indicators" to investigate violent extremism, since discussing or researching it directly is culturally taboo in many contexts in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

East and Horn of Africa

This panel explored the drivers of radicalization in Somalia; the influence of secondary education in Somalia; the spill-over of that conflict to Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan; and sources of resilience in developing community influencers in Kenya. The East and Horn of Africa panel concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Recognize the growing support for Daesh in Kenya, especially those joining through Sudan. Note a growing social media presence of Daesh, and their ability to recruit women from Kenya.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Involve families in identifying early warning signs of radicalization.
- Create programs of social support that help facilitate family members to encourage their relatives to return home.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Develop methodologies for research that overcome the "minority problem"—that radicalized individuals and those susceptible to radicalization are a small group.
- Ensure interview techniques overcome the "random noise" problem that may not inform P/CVE programs.
- Investigate the relationship between crime and extremism in different countries across East Africa.

Central Asia & the Caucuses

This panel discussed the drivers of radicalization and at-risk youth in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia as case studies. The panel also covered broader trends of violent extremism across Eurasia, and discussed women in P/CVE in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The panel on Central Asia & the Caucuses concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Develop policies towards migrant workers from Central Asia to reduce marginalization.
- Improve integration policies for ethnic and religious minorities across Central Asia & the Caucuses.
- Encourage regional cooperation on P/CVE issues, and share good practices amongst Eurasian countries.
- Promote cooperation between NGOs/IOs and governments to work with vulnerable groups.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Integrate religious organizations into P/CVE programming in Kyrgyzstan, as trust in these organizations amongst the community is high.
- Work with the government and youth groups to provide social spaces for youth in Georgia.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Look at the intersection between violent extremism, religious profiling and religious repression in the region.

- Investigate the role of religion in Central Asia, particularly on which ideologies are influential amongst youth groups.
- Research which types of counter-narratives are most effective in the region and why.

Middle East and North Africa

The panel on the Middle East and North Africa investigated P/CVE programs and P/CVE polices, with a special focus on Tunisia as a case study country. The panel on the Middle East and North Africa concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Launch an informal referral mechanism for suspected radicalized individuals.
- Ensure cooperation between police and the community through developing community policing programs.
- Develop strategies and policies that integrate community-level needs.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Provide opportunities for education, employment and entertainment for the communities in Tunisia.
- Involve families and their needs and requirements in P/CVE programming.
- Recognize that NGOs are sometimes perceived as suspicious by the community.
- Encourage local ownership of the solutions in their communities for the problems related to radicalization and recruitment.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Investigate perceptions of violent extremism in MENA, including the terminology associated with it.

West Africa and the Sahel

The panel on West Africa and the Sahel explored drivers of radicalization and P/CVE programs in the context of Nigeria, Mali and trends across broader West Africa. The panel on West Africa and the Sahel concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Integrating more development-led solutions across the West African context, as military solutions alone will not deliver effective results.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities for the development sector and the military sector when it comes to P/CVE (divide the work).
- Focus on violence prevention at the community level, rather than singling out the most "at risk" individuals.

- Support peace processes to be more inclusive, transparent and responsive to community needs.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Promote programs in Mali that undercut the perception that joining an armed group will increase chances of being accepted into the military in the future.
- Ensure counter-narrative campaigns are utilizing credible, local messengers to deliver the message.
- Identify and facilitate opportunities for youth to achieve social and economic status without engaging in armed groups.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Investigate the perceptions of governments and security institutions by the community with the intention to improve trust.
- Determine linkages between community media and the crisis in central and northern Mali.
- Research the role of women in supporting groups such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM).

South East Asia

The panel on South East Asia looked at counter-narrative campaigns in Indonesia and Australia, trends and classifications in violent extremism across South East Asian countries, and a case study of radicalization and resilience in Singapore. The panel on South East Asia concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Integrate policies and frameworks that adapt to the constantly-changing manifestations of violence in South East Asia.
- Ensure a robust understanding of the organization and logic of violent extremist groups as a whole, not only an understanding of its members and recruitment strategies.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Involve religious leaders and influencers into P/CVE programs as messengers.
- Manage the spread of generic narratives promoting tolerance and diversity—as they come across as contrived and over-used by the local communities.
- Recognize that in the context of South East Asia, political violence does achieve some of its aims, and adapt P/CVE programming accordingly.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Test the influence of counter-narrative campaigns in the region.

- Investigate how real-world events frame the way narratives on issues of racism and extremism are received by the community.

Western Balkans

The panel on the Western Balkans looked at P/CVE policies and research in Kosovo and Serbia as case studies. This session also discussed religious tolerance and violent extremism in Albania. The panel on the Western Balkans concluded with the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Recognize the diversity in ethnic and religious composition of the countries across the Western Balkans when developing policies and engagement options.
- Reassess efforts over the past 20 years to promote democratization and inclusive societies to determine what has and has not had an impact, and why, in order to tailor more effective P/CVE approaches.
- Build on locally-salient traditions to counter violent extremist narratives such as the tradition of religious tolerance in Albania or the strong role of families in Kosovo.
- Support the development of educational and curricular policies and practices that can ensure relevant educational outreach to all young citizens in each target country.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Promote intercultural and civic education as a way for youth to interact with the state governance system and influence decision-making, through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Involve religious leaders in promoting religious tolerance in Albania.
- Design development projects that empower women and address specific vulnerabilities to radicalization and recruitment in Kosovo.
- Include religious leaders in prison rehabilitation programs.
- Support the ability of individuals to hold complex and layered identities, through conducive norms and social structures.
- Provide psychological and psychosocial support as two distinct components of programs for returned foreign terrorist fighters and their families.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Further investigate the dynamics of recruitment networks in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia.
- Research the role of the community in reintegration programs for foreign terrorist fighters.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

On the last day of the Conference, participants convened in breakout sessions in order to discuss new and emerging topics in P/CVE. The breakout sessions explored 1) challenges to

researching violent extremism (and solutions), 2) challenges and solutions to monitoring, measurement and evaluation (MM&E) for P/CVE programs; and 3) tools and toolkits for monitoring, measurement and evaluation for P/CVE programs.

Some of the main challenges identified by the breakout sessions were:

- Difficulty in collecting data due to language barrier, security issues, reputation risks.
- Difficulty in identifying, approaching and convincing formerly or currently "radicalized" individuals to participate in research studies (also ethical concerns for researchers).
- When data is available on violent extremism, it is also not readily accessible to all stakeholders (e.g. intelligence community only).
- Access to private and conservative communities is difficult (e.g. women, children, religious groups).
- Challenge of attribution for MM&E—how to determine if results are due to the program/intervention itself, or an external factor.
- Challenge of measuring a negative or non-event (i.e. an individual not joining a terrorist group).
- Lack of patience from funders for robust MM&E for P/CVE programs.
- Difficulty in determining clear indicators for change when it comes to reducing violent extremism.
- Lack of available resources for MM&E, including knowledge.
- Lack of ethical guidelines for conducting P/CVE-related research, including interview techniques, note-taking, recording and storing data, interacting with radicalized individuals etc.

In terms of overall solutions, the breakout sessions resulted in the following recommendations:

For P/CVE Policymakers

- Establish ethical and legal frameworks for interviewing returning foreign terrorist fighters and prisoners that balance access to data with human rights and criminal justice requirements.
- Encourage the release of results for MM&E programs (as donors) to ensure good practice and lessons learned are shared across stakeholders.
- Ensure commissioned research results are shared in the communities where the research took place.
- Take more risks in terms of projects and program funding; be flexible in how funds are spent in order to be more adaptive to the local context.
- Ensure appropriate funds are diverted to tracking P/CVE results and impact.
- Accept that P/CVE programs may not always be successful, and encourage reporting on lessons learned and failures.

For P/CVE Practitioners and Programs

- Utilize social media tools as mechanisms for assessment of counter-narratives.
- Structure programs and management of programs across several stakeholders and partners to overcome resource problems related to MM&E.
- Encourage partnerships between research institutions and NGOs that have access to local communities; do not assume local NGOs have abilities to conduct research.
- Consult subject matter experts or conduct a peer review process on MM&E to enhance current efforts; encourage third-party evaluation where possible.
- Recognize the importance of informal mechanisms of research on P/CVE that provide local context and inform P/CVE programs through local knowledge.

For P/CVE Research Community

- Work with locally-based P/CVE researchers to conduct assessments on violent extremism.
- Train interpreters on terminology related to researching violent extremism and P/CVE.
- Model research methods for qualitative data from other disciplines.
- Ensure baselines are always established to enhance MM&E efforts.
- Encourage higher standards for research methodology on P/CVE programs.
- Utilize case studies as a research methodology for P/CVE.
- Establish a set of proxy indicators that can help determine impact of P/CVE programming when direct indicators cannot be captured.