



COMBATING TERRORISM WORKING GROUP

Foreign Terrorist Fighter Networks: Threats, Challenges, and Responses Tabletop Exercise, May 30-31, 2017, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

INTRODUCTION

As ISIS's footprint in Iraq and Syria contracts and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) are squeezed out of the *caliphate*, their prospective returning to their countries of origin poses significant risks. Over 30,000 FTFs from more than 100 nations are believed to have joined terrorist groups including ISIS, Al-Qaeda and associated organizations. Many have received combat training including the use of weapons and explosives, and continue to be completely indoctrinated in the extremist ideology. Although many FTFs have been killed, the significant threat posed by returning FTFs has already been established; Mehdi Nemouche, the attacker of a Jewish museum in Brussels in 2014 spent a year fighting for ISIS in Syria while Cherif and Said Kouachi, the instigators of the Charlie Hebdo attack, received weapons training in Yemen. Moreover, several assailants in the Paris 2015 attacks fought for ISIS in Syria. Virulent digital recruitment, fundraising, and mobilizing campaigns have created virtual cells linked via cyberspace, contributing to the violent attacks across Europe and North America. In light of these security challenges, more than sixty officials, practitioners, and researchers from twenty-seven countries gathered by invitation of the Partnership for Peace Consortium's (PfPC) Combating Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) at the George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany May 30-31, 2017. Entitled "Foreign Terrorist Fighter Networks: Threats, Challenges, and Responses," the event explored issues related to the complex and dynamic threat of dispersing terrorist networks.

Keynote speeches were given by Dr. Magnus Ranstorp, Research Director at the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS); Dr. Sajjan M. Gohel, International Security Director of the Asia-Pacific Foundation and PfPC-CTWG Senior Advisor; Dr. Peter Forster, Associate Dean, College of Information Sciences and Technology, Penn State University and PfPC-CTWG Co-Chair; LT COL Brian Steed, Assistant Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; Mr. Faran Tahir, a renowned Pakistani-American actor also active in countering violent extremism; Dr. Anne Speckhard, Director of the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism; Mr. Michael Scardaville, Principal Director for Information Sharing Policy at U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Imam Awes Mohamed Abdullah, Islamic religious leader based in London, Monsignor Lucio Sembrano of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and Mr. Holland Taylor, Co-Founder and Chairman of the LibForAll Foundation also took part in a panel discussion on interfaith dialogue and community-based resilience. The PfPC-CTWG utilized a whole-of-society approach in a tabletop exercise (TTX) to address the current security challenges and provide innovative solutions to tackle these. Efforts to link terrorism and crime-related databases, enhancing public-private cooperation with internet service providers, engaging psychologists, and liaising with local community leaders were discussed in detail. The outcomes included the elaboration of a comprehensive set of policy recommendations for senior leaders on current challenges and threats facing NATO Allies and Partners.

OVERVIEW

The CTWG has developed a series of tabletop exercises (TTXs) for use in defense curricula and security institutions featuring moderated scenario-based discussions and role-playing. This model employs a case study methodology to help participants devise effective strategies, formulate policy



recommendations, and develop programmatic responses for public and private sector leadership. The "Foreign Terrorist Fighter Networks: Threats, Challenges, and Responses" event incorporated a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing terrorism challenges. Participants included representatives from the diplomatic, policy, military, intelligence, civil society, academic, religious, youth, private sector, and law enforcement communities. The conference explored concepts related to broadened partnership efforts, positive narrative development, youth engagement, enhanced information-sharing (e.g., sharing identity information of FTFs and support network operators), and strengthened defense and border security. The event sought to compile and propose a comprehensive set of policy recommendations and contribute to the development of local, national, and international capacities.

Two moderated, role-play Task Forces examined a hypothetical scenario derived from actual cases. The scenario illuminated security-related challenges associated with the growing numbers of returning FTFs to Europe and North America so that actionable policy responses could be developed by senior decision-makers in the region to prevent, detect, intervene against, and mitigate potential threats while identifying areas for further collaboration. The aim of the TTX was to produce strategic communication and engagement methods, policy recommendations, and programmatic development areas. For a detailed list of the event's recommendations, please see Annex A.



Participants emphasized improving communication strategies and developing positive narratives by raising awareness of exit pathways, promoting societal resilience to attacks, developing modules for preventing and responding to radicalization and providing programs to teach schools and parents how to identify early signs of radicalization. Much emphasis was placed on community-level engagement and building community-based resilience programs to empower youth in

positive social networks. Another focus was on having vetted religious leaders play a prominent role in providing spiritual guidance and counsel through newer youth-oriented platforms.

To confront returning FTF threats and challenges twenty-five priority areas were identified:

- 1) Teach parents/guardians to recognize early signs of radicalization to violence;
- 2) Formulate a nationwide narrative of responsibility and loyalty towards the nation aimed at all members of society;
- 3) Develop a sophisticated online platform that enables credible religious leaders to provide religious guidance and counsel;
- 4) Raise public awareness of radicalization "exit pathways" and share success stories;
- 5) Establish clarity with regards to the rule of law;
- 6) Invest in community-policing models to build trusted relationships and engage youth;
- 7) Provide resources to ensure the integration of newly arrived migrants while ensuring the protection of minority rights;



- 8) Promote transparency and collaboration, where possible, between authorities, communities, and the media;
- 9) Train stakeholders to use the right terminology when describing the threat of violent extremism;
- 10) Identify the warning signs of terrorist activity and ensure there is a strong framework in place that can address this from a law enforcement perspective;
- 11) Deploy anti-gang taskforces to counter violent radicalization and recruitment;
- 12) Analyze the profiles and communication methods used by hackers and terrorist groups;
- 13) Develop Joint Operational or Fusion Centers to streamline and evaluate cases;
- 14) Establish a step-by-step framework for determining the minimum threshold for prosecution;
- 15) Equip front-line officials to implement smart border policies and coordinate with INTERPOL to prevent, detect/identify, or intervene against potential threats;
- 16) Enhance the sharing of information about known or suspected terrorists in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions;
- 17) Integrate/deploy facial recognition technology in critical infrastructures and vulnerable targets;
- 18) Provide multiple, non-threatening channels for reporting concerns and alerting authorities;
- 19) Coordinate with EGMONT and Financial Action Task Force to monitor and prevent terrorist financing;
- 20) Define a national radicalization redemption strategy;
- 21) Design a coordination platform for the prevention, intervention, and mitigation stages which includes civil society representatives;
- 22) Build community-based resilience programs to empower and engage youth in positive social networks and goal-oriented activities, such as sports and drama;
- 23) Provide programs in schools on preventing and identifying violent extremism;
- 24) Ensure the sustainability of working projects; and
- 25) Establish an effective incident response program.

PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

The conference opened with an introduction by CTWG Co-Chair Mr. Richard Prosen from the U.S. Department of State, who highlighted recent progress in countering the global FTF threat and the importance of keeping the United States and its global allies synchronized on international counterterrorism engagement efforts. With reference to the recent security priorities outlined by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Mr. Prosen highlighted three areas of focus to prevent the resurgence of ISIS, or like-minded groups like, as we make gains on the battlefield: 1) continue to persist with in-country counterterrorism and law enforcement operations, while keeping in mind our commitment to protect the civil rights and liberties of our citizens; 2) greater intelligence and information sharing within our own domestic agencies and among our nations, including at gatherings like these where we can share experiences and good practices; 3) break terrorists' ability to spread messages and recruit new followers, including countering terrorist recruitment, mobilization, and inspiration to violence. Mr. Prosen concluded by calling for enhanced whole-of-society approaches and cross-border cooperation and bilateral exchanges to overcome the challenges we collectively face.

A keynote presentation on the "Global Terrorism Landscape: The Challenge of European FTFs" was introduced by Dr. Magnus Ranstorp from the Centre for Asymmetric Threat Studies. Dr. Ranstorp shared perspectives from Europe and Sweden, and discussed how recent terrorist incidents in Stockholm highlight the importance of tackling terrorist financing, preventing reciprocal radicalization of the right, and creating societal resilience as an overarching prevention strategy. He also detailed key challenges in responding to the increased operational tempo of attempted attacks, including: 1) different operational levels and degrees of terrorist connectivity; 2) use of social media and encryption;



3) IS Propaganda and identity creation; 4) increasing polarization and the "grey masses"; 5) profiles of Foreign Fighter Returnees; 6) complimentary hard and soft measures; and 7) local prevention. Dr. Ranstorp recommended the creation of national, regional, and local FTF Returnee Coordinators to connect and drive unity of effort and top-down coordination.

Dr. Sajjan Gohel, the Asia Pacific Foundation and CTWG Senior Advisor, offered an assessment of blowback risks and current terrorist tactics as Da'esh's physical territory contracts and its "Virtual Caliphate" expands. He warned of more plots in the West and against Islamic targets during Ramadan, and more attacks on police and youth. He argued that an entirely "lone actor" is rare, and discussed the prevalence of virtual-physical terrorist networks employed by Da'esh's intelligence apparatus, the Emni, to recruit and direct plots. He also discussed the continuing shift toward Da'esh's "Just Terror" tactics, including the use of vehicles and knives, the pattern of complicated "zig-zag" or broken travel routes by terrorists to avoid detection, and the deliberate manipulation of asylum-seekers and recent migrants by Da'esh to stir social tensions. Dr. Gohel closed by calling for more vigilance and protection for police and military, and increased support for front-line policing.

Dr. Peter Forster, The Pennsylvania State University and CTWG Co-Chair, delivered a presentation on "Terrorism in Africa: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, New Threats and Challenges" and spoke of broadening the CTWG's geographic engagement and warning of the growing regional threat. He discussed the complexity of Africa's terrorism landscape, including conflict-driven migration, terrorism exacerbated humanitarian disasters, poor governance, and failing states. This environment provides an opportunity for FTFs moving from the crumbling caliphate into ungoverned territories across Libya, the Lake Chad region, and Northern Nigeria. He also discussed the challenges posed by group agility and coalescence around a self-sustaining jihadi ideology that does not require a physical space to spread its message, and the enigmatic, shifting tactics of groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab. To confront and degrade these threats, Dr. Forster recommended a comprehensive counterterrorism approach including military, law enforcement, counter-resources, building regional and state capacities, and alliances, as well as international assistance targeted to local contexts to identify lynchpin factors.

Lt. Col. Brian Steed, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, spoke about maneuvering in the narrative space, where the narrative is the sum total of how people interpret their environment. He advocated developing a cross-cultural competency in which Western actors attempt to understand the Middle Eastern perspective and apply solutions within the framework of their perspective, not a Western one. He argued the reason more emphasis is placed on countering online radicalization than radicalization in mosques is because it is a familiar space and Westerners don't know how to engage the latter space. Lt. Col. Steed explained that narratives are accepted or rejected based on whether they reinforce foundational narratives or challenge them, and the challenge is whether the extremist narrative from groups like Da'esh or the alternative narrative is more effective at resonating with that foundation. He concluded his presentation by noting that when you put your enemy in a box, you don't constrain your enemy, only yourself.

Mr. Faran Tahir, actor and CVE practitioner, spoke on the need to construct an alternative narrative to the prevailing image of extremist Muslims in the media. He explained how there needs to be a multipronged effort to countering violent extremism, where policing and military intervention are given equal importance to prevention measures. Mr. Tahir emphasized the importance of storytelling in influencing communities by forming their beliefs and values. He proposed empowering these



communities to create positive stories organically, like promoting the stories of local and global heroes that young adults can identify with. He contended that all battles are won and lost in the media, and the war of opinion must be addressed to avoid overreacting.

Dr. Anne Speckhard of the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE) detailed the work her organization is doing on counter-narrative content creation. ICSVE has filmed 62 interviews with Da'esh prisoners and defectors to create counter-narratives that resonate with youth at risk of radicalization to disrupt online and face-to-face recruitment. Dr. Speckhard asserted that the most effective counter-narratives appeal to emotions instead of attempting to only make cognitive arguments. She pointed out the four components usually necessary to create a terrorist: a group, its ideology, social support, and individual vulnerabilities and motivations that resonate with the first three. She also emphasized understanding the difference between the radicalization of those in conflict and non-conflict zones, with the former being driven by trauma and revenge and the latter largely motivated more by feelings of alienation, marginalization, discrimination, or seeking dignity, purpose, significance, relationships, or material benefits. She concluded that the benefits of creating videos of defectors versus using defectors to engage in developing counter-narratives are that defectors are often not healthy and can vacillate in their views, whereas video content can be tightly controlled, can be viewed in many places at once, and is less hindered by resource limitations.

Mr. Michael Scardaville, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, outlined the implementation of the agency's Secure Real-Time Platform, which created a biometric data-sharing system between the DHS and participating governments for border screening. He emphasized how every checkpoint on an FTF's journey is a controlled space, giving an opportunity to either divert their path or detain them. The goal is to improve intelligence-sharing between agencies to have near-instantaneous identification of high-risk travelers at the time of encounter. He identified the key to success of the platform is to determine the legal policy process for sharing data and information across the various domains. He concluded, citing recent UN Security Council Resolutions, that it is a responsibility of border and immigration agencies to prevent crime and terrorism and utilization of this platform is vital to that prevention.

The panel discussion on Interfaith Dialogue and Community-based Resilience began with Imam Awes Mohamed Abdullah, who works as an Imam in the UK prison system. He explained how there is a high demand for Imams in prisons as the number of incarcerated Muslims in the UK increases. He discussed how religious leaders in the prisons teach inmates to value social responsibility, individual liberty and mutual respect. Imam Abdullah also mentioned the importance of faith leaders working collaboratively together and being well-versed in all faiths. He professed that faith leaders need to be more involved at an earlier stage with youth at risk of radicalization. Imam Abdullah recommended that faith leaders be more active on social media and in other spaces that resonate with the youth. Monsignor Lucio Sembrano, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, spoke on the importance of educating youth properly on religion in order to combat Islamic radicalization. He explained that religious knowledge among jihadists is generally low and their reason for radicalization is rarely inspired directly from religious fundamentalism. Monsignor Sembrano expressed, while religion can be distorted to marginalize and promote violence, it can also be a resource for fostering civic engagement. He stated that more religious literacy is needed among policymakers, diplomatic and military personnel, to overcome mutual suspicions and better understand one another. He recommended interreligious dialogue be implemented as early as kindergarten to acquaint children with believers of all religions at an early age and let their parents grow in mutual esteem and friendship. Mr. Holland Taylor, Co-Founder and Chairman of the LibForAll Foundation, spoke on the Indonesian Sunni organization,



Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest independent Muslim organization in the world, which is trying to promote a pluralistic and humanitarian interpretation of Islam. He spoke on the importance of understanding the elements within Islam that can be weaponized by extremists, and re-contextualize them within the historical framework in which they emerged. He also warned that until Western governments hold states that promote radical interpretations of Islam responsible for their culpability in the spread of extremism, things would not change. Mr. Taylor pleaded that organizations and citizens promoting peaceful narratives must be fully supported.

Ms. Evanna Hu and Mr. Ben Dubow are the co-founders of Omelas, a data analytics company that leverages predictive analytics, online analytics, and machine learning, combined with qualitative analysis, to learn at the deepest level what drives people to extremism and what turns them away. They spoke on how there is an overemphasis on data collection within the CT community and insufficient focus on analysis. Their software system assesses the extent to which someone's online activity matches the activity of those who are associated with violent extremism. They also assess how extremist content is spread and the varying ways in which propaganda affects local communities. This is used to inform and develop technologies, strategies, and intervention/de-radicalization methodologies to counter violent extremism.

CONCLUSION AND WAY AHEAD

In sum, more than sixty participants from international governments, civil society, the private sector, and multilateral bodies successfully tested a synergistic, whole-of-society, multi-stakeholder TTX module to address and respond to FTF threats and challenges. The TTX developed robust analytical and practical insights into efforts that address the full spectrum of international security threats related to violent extremism and the increase in returning FTFs. The conference also disseminated good international practice in an effort to promote high-quality, professional education, training, exercise, and evaluation responses for NATO partner defense institutions and security studies institutes, conference participants, NATO, the OSCE, and other international entities. The TTX module is available for targeted implementation in interested countries and local communities, as part of a broader, international capacity-building effort to help address security challenges. The TTX concept will be integrated in the CTWG's Counterterrorism Reference Curriculum (CT RC). In January 2017, the CTWG convened a meeting of counterterrorism specialists in Brussels to identify key themes and topical areas (i.e., blocks) for the reference curriculum. The CTWG is pleased to lead this initiative in close cooperation with NATO. The CT RC will develop national capabilities and capacity to understand, recognize, and combat terrorism; increase international counterterrorism cooperation through common understanding of best practices, while provide flexibility for the delivery of training. It is both a comprehensive overview of terrorism and counterterrorism strategies and approaches and a modular approach to address specific training and education needs in partner countries. The goal is to have the CT RC completed within the next fiscal year (i.e., September 2018).

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ANNEX A: ACTION-ORIENTED RESPONSE RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic Communications

Teach parents/guardians to recognize the early signs of violent radicalization: Parents and guardians are best placed to identify changes in their child's character and detecting the early signs of extremist behavior. Parents should be aware of differences in their child's appearance, changes in friendship groups, and signs of sympathy or support for the ideology of extremist groups. Clear information should be provided to explain what steps they should take if concerned about a child.

Formulate a nationwide narrative of responsibility and loyalty towards the nation aimed at all members of society: Governments must project a message of unity and protection under the law for all citizens to ensure social cohesion. It is imperative that religious and national identity are seen as being complementary, not conflicting. Leaders within the religious community must also play a role in cultivating this. There should be an emphasis on the duties one has as a member of society.

Develop a sophisticated online platform that enables credible religious leaders to provide religious guidance and counsel: Governments must project a message of unity and belonging amongst all citizens to ensure social cohesion. It is imperative that religious and national identity are seen as being complementary, not conflicting. Leaders within the religious community must also play a role in cultivating this. There should be an emphasis on the duties one has as a member of society.

Develop a sophisticated online platform that enables vetted Imams to provide religious guidance and counsel: Da'esh's online presence has been critical to the spreading of its ideology. Countering this must then utilize some the same techniques. Moderate Imams must be able to directly address the extremist ideology themselves through the use of a sophisticated online platform. They need be able to provide guidance and engage those who are looking for solutions to their religious problems on a broader scale.

Raise public awareness of radicalization "exit pathways" and share success stories: Governments should communicate a way out for people on a path towards radicalization. Publicizing the possibility of redemption and social reintegration can build trust at the community level, making it more likely for friends and family to report concerns and provide viable alternatives to violence. Governments, media, and entertainment industries should share success stories of people who have successfully renounced violence and provide positive coverage of people coming forward with counter-narratives.

Policy Recommendations

Establish clarity with regards to the rule of law: It is important that people are aware of the legal repercussions of supporting terrorist activities. Governments, civil society organizations, and religious institutions should be absolutely clear that supporting, funding, or carrying out activities on behalf of a terrorist organization will result in prosecution. Individuals who are apprehensive about another person's potential extremist ideology should be reassured that early intervention is the best possible course of action for all those concerned.

Invest in community-policing models to build trusted relationships and engage youth: Community policing is an effective model for building relationships and establishing trust early on, so that people exposed to radicalization feel more comfortable reporting concerns and reaching out for help. By recruiting from the local community and ensuring each area has a recognizable and firmly established officer, community policing can facilitate horizontal dialogue and foster a duty to report.

Provide resources to ensure the integration of newly arrived migrants while ensuring the protection of minority rights: Governments should implement policies that enable newly arrived migrants to identify with their new nation. Citizenship lessons and language classes can go some way in helping achieve this. Safeguarding the rights of minorities and ensuring they are able to practice their religious faith in a new and welcoming environment should also be paramount.

Ensure there is transparency between the authorities and the media: The media can play a key role in the prevention and mitigation stages of terrorism. Governments have the opportunity here to provide the media access to key discussions regarding counterterrorism initiatives and program launches. Having the media on board with the government's plan of action can promote a united front, and ensure accuracy of information shared with the public. The media can also be used to promote societal resilience following an attack and prevent xenophobia. Reactions should be constructive and focus on sharing the lessons learned from such events and adhering to the facts. In addition, e-Learning modules could be endorsed by the media with the aim of teaching the public how to prevent and respond to radicalization.

Train stakeholders to use the right terminology: A clear consensus is needed with regard to the terminology surrounding terrorists. Muslims often feel a huge sense of disrespect when a terrorist is referred to as simply Muslim and their actions considered 'Islamic Terrorism.' Many argue that this reinforces the idea that Islam itself is to blame for acts of terror. Clearly differentiating between Muslims and terrorists should be encouraged, and the media, civil society organizations, and governments must all play a key role in this endeavor.

Identify the warning signs of terrorist activity and ensure there is a strong framework in place that can address this from a law enforcement perspective: Members of the public and law enforcement should be aware of known radical preachers and the availability of their extremist material online. Those in a position to identify online activity should be familiar with the names of these speakers and what they advocate for (e.g., Anwar Al-Awlaki, Amud Musa Jabril). The use of the dark web and hacking should warrant immediate grounds for further surveillance.

Deploy anti-gang taskforces to counter violent radicalization and recruitment: There is a crossover effect between criminal gangs and violent extremism, with gang membership providing a gateway to radicalization. To combat recruitment, anti-gang taskforces should be established at the local, regional, and national levels to counter gang culture, trace financial flows, and share information and best practice with counterterrorism officials.

Analyze the profiles and communication methods used by hackers and terrorist groups: To assess the relative threat posed by hackers and terrorist groups, social network analyses and keyword searches can be combined with other extremist indicators to produce a radicalization score. By analyzing social connections and tracing online activity, authorities could discern whether a group has an established trajectory of extremism. This would be particularly effective in the prevention stage.

Develop Joint Operational or Fusion Centers to streamline and evaluate cases: Insufficient information sharing hinders counterterrorism investigations and risks terrorists avoiding detection. To better evaluate and monitor cases, governments should establish information-sharing processes such as the sharing of identity (biometric and biographic) data with mechanisms for different agencies and players to exchange intelligence and piece information together. This initiative should start at the domestic level, and ideally expand to regional and international cooperation.

Establish a step-by-step framework for determining the minimum threshold for prosecution: To achieve the goal of public safety and security, governments should align on the minimum criteria or “tipping point” for identifying whether a case requires a social (e.g., de-radicalization programs) or criminal response (e.g., prosecution). To streamline this process, governments should establish a step-by-step framework with clearly defined assessment criteria. Law enforcement should only be triggered if a case crosses the established minimum threshold, to maintain trust between communities, local police, and federal authorities.

Equip front-line officers to implement smart border policies and coordinate with INTERPOL: Front-line immigration and customs officers need sufficient training and resources to accompany border checks with biometrics and to access to query national (whole-of-government) databases and INTERPOL databases, particularly the Stolen & Lost Travel Document Database and Watchmaker to monitor overseas weapon flows. Front-line officials should also be familiar with cultural nuances and languages to detect fraudulent cases and avoid mistaken identity.

Integrate/deploy facial recognition technology in critical infrastructure and vulnerable targets: Governments and communities should conduct risk assessments to identify their most vulnerable targets and enhance security and protection measures at these locations accordingly. Part of this effort should be to integrate facial recognition technological capabilities for critical national infrastructure, including transportation systems, political monuments, and sensitive sites.

Provide multiple, non-threatening channels for reporting concerns and alerting authorities: To streamline and filter intelligence information, governments should provide the public with multiple channels for raising concerns, ranging from anonymous helplines to physical reporting. Separate hotlines should be created for people to report concerns of radicalization versus alerting authorities of imminent attacks. There should also be clear delineation between intelligence gathering information, requiring protection of sources and methods, and law enforcement information that is permissible for prosecution in a court of law. These channels should operate according to transparent and protective procedures, so that people do not feel threatened when reporting their concerns.

Coordinate with EGMONT and Financial Action Taskforce to monitor financial flows: Terrorist organizations often rely on unregulated remittance networks, such as *hawalas*, to finance their operations. To combat illicit financing and money laundering, governments should coordinate oversight activities with groups such as EGMONT and the Financial Action Task Force. Ministries of Finance should also monitor online transactions to known extremist schools, and alert security services when they register a threat.

Define a national radicalization rehabilitation strategy: Radicalization does not have to be a one-way trip. Governments should provide rehabilitation opportunities for people who have not yet committed any crime to work their way back into society. For example, the American education system offers redemptive options for students who have failed or been expelled to participate in parallel education programs and get back on-track. Disproportionately punitive policies risk further pushing people toward violence, while limiting more socially sustainable and cost-effective alternatives to incarceration.

Programmatic Development Areas

Design a coordination platform for the prevention, intervention and mitigation stages which includes civil society representatives: There should be a clear framework in place for representatives at each of the prevention, intervention and mitigation phases. A coordinated platform would allow for a measureable structure to be put in place and enable civil society representatives to know when further action is required from law enforcement regarding individuals of concern.

Build community-based resilience programs to empower and engage youth in positive social networks and goal-oriented activities, such as sports and drama: The creation of a National Youth Engagement Platform could serve as a formal means of addressing issues effecting the youth today. This also ensures their voices are clearly heard speaking out against extremist narratives. In addition, providing a way for youths to channel their energy into activities such as sports and role play can offer a productive outlet for stress. Providing encouraging role models and mentors in this environment can help ensure those who may be vulnerable to the extremist path are set on a more positive trajectory.

Provide programs in schools on preventing and identifying violent extremism: Governments should design and oversee the delivery of training programs in schools on preventing and identifying violent extremism. These programs could be led by the national prevention coordinator, and be run similarly to existing public health programs addressing sensitive and controversial topics, such as eating disorders and sexual education. The goal would be to increase public awareness and understanding of the risks and available resources, while discouraging discrimination or naming and shaming.

Ensure the sustainability of working projects: Proven, successful projects within civil society should receive full support and proper resourcing to ensure full and sustainable implementation. Projects that empower women and teach mothers the tools and skills for prevention and intervention against radicalization to violence (such as the Sisters Against Violent Extremism – Mothers School model) should be thoroughly endorsed and supported internationally, nationally, and locally.

Establish an effective incident response program: Instituting an incident response program that can disseminate timely, accurate, and reliable information in near real-time following an attack is crucial. Mechanisms for social media to provide the public with the locations of safety points and structures to provide psychological support following an attack should also be discussed, designed, and established.