



2022 Global Annual Report on
**PREVENTION OF
VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE)**

United Nations Development Programme

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Annual Report on Prevention of Violent Extremism 2022

UNDP Crisis Bureau

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**Prevention of
Violent Extremism
(PVE)**

About UNDP's Preventing Violent Extremism work

The UNDP Crisis Bureau (CB) is responsible for UNDP's crisis-related work and drives UNDP's vision and priorities for peacebuilding and crisis prevention, response and recovery. The Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) team is placed within UNDP's Global Programme Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions (CPPRI) at the UNDP Crisis Bureau. UNDP designs and implements risk-informed, conflict sensitive and analysis-based development solutions for the prevention of violent extremism at the global, regional and country levels, to meet the priorities set out in the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and through participation in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. UNDP country and regional-level PVE programmes are supported by the Regional Bureaux and Hubs operating in Africa, Arab States, Asia Pacific and Europe and Central Asia. Our work covers the interconnected thematic workstreams of Prevention of Violent Extremism, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) and Addressing Hate Speech as they all relate to sustaining peace and security. This Annual Report presents UNDP's key achievements, lessons learned and way forward under the aforementioned portfolios.

For more information, we invite you to contact Ms. Nika Saeedi, PVE Team Leader, CPPRI/ Crisis Bureau, and UNDP's global focal point on MHPSS, Hate Speech and Religion at: nika.saeedi@undp.org.

Contents

About UNDP's Preventing Violent Extremism work	2
Acknowledgement	5
1. Executive Summary	6
2. Overview of Global Trends	8
3. Global Highlights	10
3.1 The Global Portfolio Approach	11
3.2 Overarching Technical Support and Advisory Role of the Global CPPRI/PVE team	13
4. Regional Highlights	15
4.1 Africa and Arab States	16
4.2 Asia and the Pacific	18
4.3 Europe and Central Asia	19
4.4 Latin America and the Caribbean	21
5. Thematic Highlights	22
5.1 Prevention of Violent Extremism	23
5.1.1 Whole-of-society community-level centred approach	23
5.1.2 PVE Action Plans and human rights-based interventions to address governance grievances	25
5.2 Religion and Faith-Based Organizations	28
5.3 Return and Reintegration	31
5.4 Hate Speech and Online Radicalization	35
5.5 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)	38

List of Acronyms

AI	Artificial intelligence
CPPRI	Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions
CSO	Civil society organization
CSSAVE	Child Safety and Security against Violent Extremism
DDR/RR	Disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement
FBO	Faith-based organization
FMVI	Mohammed VI Foundation
GBV	Gender-based violence
HDP	Humanitarian, Development and Peace
IASC	UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IATF-R	Inter-Agency Taskforce on Religion and Sustainable Development
IDP	Internally displaced person
ISIL	The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PaRD	International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development
PNPLEVT	Mali's National Policy for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism and Terrorism
PVE	Prevention of Violent Extremism
PCVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
RBA	UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa
RBAS	UNDP Regional Bureau for the Arab States
R&R	Return and reintegration
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STRIVE	Strengthening Resilience Against Violence Extremism in Asia
ToT	Training of trainers
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPFA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VEG	Violent Extremist Group
WG	Working Group
WPS	Women, peace and security

Acknowledgement

The 2022 Global Annual Report on the Prevention of Violent Extremism is periodically prepared by the Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions (CPPRI)/Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) Team at UNDP's Crisis Bureau. It is a compendium of key achievements, lessons learned and areas for future engagement at the global, regional and national level on PVE-relevant initiatives spearheaded and supported by the CPPRI/PVE team. Under the editorial direction of Nika Saeedi and guidance of Samuel Rizk, the development of the 2022 Global Annual Report on PVE was led by the CPPRI/PVE Team: Rita Angelini, Heesu Chung, Natalie Angkawijana, Joelle-Seme Park and Yann Cres. The Team is grateful to the UNDP Global Policy Network (GPN) of PVE practitioners, Regional Hubs and Country Offices for their valuable inputs to the report. The Team would also like to thank Justine Doody, the copy editor, and Jennifer Bergamini, the designer of this report.





Executive Summary

Against the backdrop of the world's compounding risks and uncertainties, [UNDP's 2022 Crisis Offer](#) presents a framework for breaking the cycle of fragility, helping countries to anticipate and prevent crises, as well as to respond and recover from them. Meanwhile, UNDP's 2022–2025 [Prevention Offer](#) calls for a strong development lens to be applied to stabilizing and safeguarding development gains, mitigating risk of relapse and recurrence and building institutional and community resilience to sustain peaceful development pathways. Radicalization and violent extremism are among the most pressing threats to peace and stability, with the potential to set development gains back by decades. Building on the successes of risk-informed development through preventing violent extremism (PVE), UNDP supports innovative programming that addresses the causes and drivers of conflict, specifically violent extremism, through multidimensional and development-based approaches.

Accordingly, UNDP PVE's programming includes, but is not limited to i) the prevention of violent extremism through a **'whole-of-society' approach**, including by supporting the development and implementation of **PVE National Action Plans (NAPs)** complemented by **human rights-based interventions to address governance grievances**. Taking this approach ensures that international organizations, governments, private entities and civil society, including youth-led movements, religious leaders, women of faith and other individuals, are all engaged to achieve inclusivity in the design, implementation, provision and receiving of programming. By adopting a consultative, multi-disciplinary and participatory approach, UNDP contributes to addressing the challenges of formal state structures that may perpetuate grievances, including those relating to real or perceived exclusion and marginalization. At the same time, UNDP assists countries to set national priorities for addressing local drivers of violent extremism in order to ensure adequate investment in necessary areas by national and local governments and other stakeholders.

UNDP has continued to invest in new capabilities to boost anticipation and prevention efforts through pioneering new frontiers for effective and evidence-based action through: ii) engaging **religious and faith-based organizations**; iii) supporting **return and reintegration (R&R)** of former terrorist fighters and/or their families, deemed to have been associated with violent extremist groups (VEGs); iv) addressing **hate speech and online radicalization** and; v) integrating **Mental Health and**

Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) in peacebuilding. In support of this, UNDP has applied innovative methods and tools, including behavioural insights in PVE as well as **online data and new technologies** such as artificial intelligence (AI). These efforts fall within the PVE policy and programming efforts to assist local, national, regional and global partners in 41 countries across five regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean) and beyond, as part of broader preventive responses across all development settings through inclusive programming that strengthens community resilience, empowers individuals and advances risk-informed, rights-based, gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive development.

Supported by evidence-driven data from flagship reports,¹ UNDP in 2022 continued to anchor on the 'growth edges' of PVE activities through community-based initiatives in local, national, regional and global partnerships in order to contribute to the implementation of the UNDP Signature Solution on Resilience. At the global level, UNDP Crisis Bureau's Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions (CPPRI) Global Programme worked to support the operationalization of the vision of the UN Sustaining Peace resolutions as well as Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". In their efforts towards this goal, UNDP CPPRI/PVE team achieved the following **results** in 2022: 1) Thought leadership was strengthened through research and policy development, as well as through facilitating access to and exchange of knowledge, tools and best practices through global advocacy; 2) Support was provided on technical, financial and quality assurance processes in the PVE portfolio in order to advance global, regional, national and local capacity for contextualized programming; and 3) Partnerships were strengthened on human-centred peacebuilding alternatives to securitized approaches to address violent extremism.

UNDP CPPRI/PVE team has **established and strengthened partnerships** across the UN system and with external partners. Within the framework of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, and under the chairmanship of the United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), UNDP co-chairs the PCVE Working Group together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2021–22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World* (New York, 2022); UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity* (New York, 2022).

(UNESCO) and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). UNDP is also a member of: 1) the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development, 2) Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers' Core and Advisory Group, 3) the Global Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes (Plan of Action), 4) the UN Working Group on the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, and 5) the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. Further, UNDP has facilitated cross-bureau collaborations between the Crisis Bureau and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support as part of joint efforts to develop knowledge products and provide policy guidance and support to Country Offices on areas including but not limited to addressing hate speech, information pollution and electoral violence as well as working with state actors such as the parliaments. UNDP's external partners include Member States (including through South–South Cooperation), private sector organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), foundations and academic institutions, including Beyond Conflict, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, Google, Hedayah, Koe Koe Tech, Nudge Lebanon, the Oxford Internet Institute, SecDev, TikTok and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

Based on the work achieved and the trends identified to date, as a **way forward**, UNDP CPPRI/PVE will continue to build on existing knowledge, best practices and lessons learned to i) Expand on research to better understand the trends and evolutions of VE groups and movements in order to obtain knowledge which can feed into policy and programmatic work to address the roots *causes of extremism*; ii) *Consolidate UNDP Country Offices'* experiences on the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals formerly associated with violent groups, ensuring a harmonized approach based on worldwide best practices; iii) Expand the integration of MHPSS in peacebuilding programmes throughout the work of UNDP, building the organization's expertise on MHPSS and improving its impact on the ground with mental health-informed activities; iv) Strengthen innovative approaches and develop best practices to address the spread of hate speech, information pollution and misogyny online as well as offline; v) Continue advocating for the use of a whole-of-society approach to address the root causes of violent extremism as an essential part of all PCVE strategies, while promoting the active involvement of women and girls, youth, faith-based actors and minorities.



Overview of Global Trends

Preventing violent conflicts, peacebuilding and sustaining peace are central to the work of the United Nations as derived from its Charter.² Approximately 2 billion people live in conflict-affected countries, and in 2022, 88 percent of terrorist attacks and 98 percent of deaths from terrorism occurred in countries with active conflicts.³

To mitigate this challenge at the global level, UNDP seeks to achieve transformative changes in protracted crises and fragile contexts through context-specific, systems-based development solutions that are ambitious, bespoke, principled and at scale.⁴



In 2022, UNDP's flagship Human Development Report 2021/22 and its Special Report on Human Security 2022⁵ outlined current urgent challenges to global human security and development. Meanwhile, UNDP's recent Preventing Violent Extremism Report Series contextualized data and trends on violent extremism in continental Africa. These studies, together with data from the latest editions of the Global Peace Index and Global Terrorism

Index, provide rich insights that underpin this chapter's list of existing and new factors that have exacerbated radicalization in the past year.

At the global level, UNDP has observed the following trends:

- **Terrorist attacks have become more deadly.** The lethality of attacks has risen by 26 percent in comparison with previous years.⁶ The 10 countries most impacted by terrorism in 2022 were also involved in an armed conflict.
- Dynamics of violent extremism are becoming more concentrated in **regions and countries suffering from political instability and conflict**, highlighting the ways in which human security threats interact with evolving conflict dynamics.⁷
- Layers of **multidimensional uncertainty** are accumulating, disrupting lives in unprecedented ways. As the Human Development Report 2021–22 highlights, increasing pressures on the environment, digitalization, economic insecurity, violence, discrimination and other uncertainties all interact with existing inequalities, compounding threats to human development and security.
- Similarly, **greater insecurity**⁸ is associated with political **polarization**⁹ and **extremism**. The Special Report on Human Security revealed worrisome levels of perceived insecurity even before the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: just before the pandemic's outbreak, more than six in seven people at the global level felt insecure.¹⁰
- Over the past decade, indicators related to the attitudes that create and sustain peaceful societies – in other words, **polarization** – across 163 countries have noticeably deteriorated.¹¹ Societies appear to have become less

² UN Secretary-General, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/668–S/2022/66)*.

³ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2023: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism* (Sydney, 2023). Available at <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GTI-2023-web-170423.pdf>.

⁴ UNDP, 'UNDP's Crisis Offer: A Framework for Development Solutions to Crisis and Fragility' (New York, 2022). Available at <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-09/UNDP%20Crisis%20Offer%202022.pdf>.

⁵ *The Human Development Report 2021–22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World* (New York, UNDP, 2022) argues that layers of uncertainty are stacking up and interacting to unsettle life in unprecedented ways, particularly in the last two years, during which crises like COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine hit back-to-back, aggravating the uncertainties caused by sweeping social and economic shifts, planetary changes and massive increases in polarization. Meanwhile, the Special Report on Human Security, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity* (New York, UNDP, 2022), calls for greater solidarity across borders to tackle the disconnect between development and perceived security.

⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2023*.

⁷ *Ibid.*; UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene*.

⁸ Dimensions of insecurity can be found in Table A1.2.1 in UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene*. The definition covers fear of conflict perceived socioeconomic insecurity, and perceived insecurity in the community.

⁹ Political polarization is a division of society into 'us versus them' camps, wherein group members hold negative views of and distrust other groups. When such camps align with mutually exclusive identities and interests, it undermines social cohesion and political stability. We speak of toxic polarization when levels of polarization are high and widely permeate and shape society.

¹⁰ UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene*.

¹¹ Deteriorations in attitudes are defined as "changes in social perceptions and patterns of interactions among individuals and groups that lead to more social disharmony, more violence or fear thereof, deeper political instability or more disruptive economic inefficiencies". UNDP, *Human Development Report 2021–22*.

harmonious and political affiliations appear to have become more factionalized and intolerant.¹² The 2021–22 Human Development Report noted that the intensification of political and social polarization across and within countries is positively correlated with the use of hate speech.

- Violent extremist actors use **misinformation and disinformation** to manipulate and exploit pre-existing social tensions and divisions, as well as the vulnerabilities created by COVID-19. This encourages **the spread of hate speech**, which is facilitated through both traditional and online media, including social media.¹³
- Women are continuously and often disproportionately affected by acts of violent extremism. **Gender inequality and misogyny** are central to the propagation of violent extremism. Violent extremist groups not only capitalize on unequal power dynamics between genders but also use women's yearning for empowerment to assist in recruitment.¹⁴ At the current rate of progress, it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality.¹⁵
- Regardless, **women's participation** is essential to peace and their role in PVE is multifaceted: while some perpetrate or engage in violent and terrorist acts, others play a critical role on the front lines of prevention.¹⁶

Geographically, a significant shift has taken place: a major trend in violent extremism is the concentration of terrorist incidents in Africa, which is emerging as a new global epicentre for violent extremism.

- While **deaths from terrorist activity** have fallen considerably worldwide in recent years, they surged in Africa by 8 percent in 2022.¹⁷
- [UNDP's Report Series on violent extremism](#), which focused on the drivers of recruitment into and out of violent extremism, cross-border trends and the modus operandi and evolution of violent extremist groups in Africa, showed that **violent extremist groups in the region successfully exploit social grievances** such as poverty, inequality, weak social

contracts and grievances with state institutions. Stand-alone security responses are not sustainable, and may have serious human rights implications and result in counter-productive outcomes.

- In 2022, the Sahel was the part of the region most impacted by terrorism, representing 43 percent of global terrorism deaths, and becoming home to the world's fastest growing and most deadly terrorist groups.¹⁸ Fatalities in the region in the last 15 years have grown by over 2,000 percent.¹⁹
- Violent extremism is also spreading elsewhere in Africa, for example, in Benin, Mozambique and Togo.²⁰ In 2022, the coastal countries Benin and Togo were among the 10 countries with the largest deteriorations in Global Terrorism Index score.²¹ While cross-regional trends are highly dynamic, recruitment and propaganda by VEGs²² in these areas appear to be feeding on the **instability created by climate change** in traditional economic activities such as agriculture, herding and fishing, as well as issues relating to resource management, pastoral and interethnic conflict and polarization, among others. Most recorded terrorist activity is observed along peripheral areas and borders where government control is weakest.²³
- Despite these significant shifts, analysis of trends in official development assistance (ODA) flows in the last decade suggest that **the international community is still responding in a reactive way**. Humanitarian assistance on the continent has been steadily increasing since 2011, but PVE prevention efforts (peacebuilding and security sector reform) remain the least funded, accounting for a striking 2 percent of ODA funding in Africa between 2011 and 2019.²⁴ This is despite well-established evidence that prevention work is more effective and less costly in the long run.²⁵
- At the same time, **international and local PVE efforts have progressed in complexity**, moving beyond traditional work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding to address new challenges and risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid global digitalization.

¹² UNDP, *Human Development Report 2021–22*.

¹³ Interestingly, a social media post that includes indignant disagreement obtains almost twice as many likes and more than twice the number of shares, according to data from UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene*. AI algorithms are, in fact, often used to generate economic value by exploiting human cognitive biases.

¹⁴ Mathias Bak, Kristoffer Nilas Tarp and Christina Schori Liang, 'Defining the Concept of "Violent Extremism"', Geneva Paper (Geneva, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2019).

¹⁵ UN Women and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2022' (New York, 2022).

¹⁶ UNDP, *Between perpetration and prevention of violent extremism: Accounting for gender* (Baghdad, 2022).

¹⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2023*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Countries in the Sahel region include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Michaël Matongbada, 'Stopping the spread of terror onto West Africa's coast', *ISS Today*, 30 October 2018; Sampson Kwarkye, 'West African coastal terror attacks: just the tip of the iceberg' *ISS Today*, 9 March 2022.

²¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2023*.

²² United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, *Perceptions of climate change and violent extremism. Listening to Local Communities in Chad* (Torino, 2022).

²³ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2023*.

²⁴ UNDP, *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement* (New York, 2023).

²⁵ See, for example, Institute for Economics & Peace, *Measuring Peacebuilding Cost-effectiveness* (Sydney, 2016); UNDP, *Measuring the Economic Impact of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism in Africa* (New York, 2020).



Global Highlights



3.1 The Global Portfolio Approach

Crises cannot be solved solely through emergency response: a prevention approach is necessary to prevent crises and mitigate their impact.²⁶ In recognition of this, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called for “adequate, predictable and sustainable” financing for peacebuilding.²⁷ To this end, UNDP welcomes General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/305 on Financing for Peacebuilding, which recognizes that “peacebuilding is an inherently political process aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, recurrence or continuation of conflict”, and should provide an important step towards the **increase of contributions to peacebuilding**.

UNDP’s Strategic Plan (2022–2025) highlights the need for innovation, prioritizing UNDP’s efforts to pioneer new frontiers for effective and evidence-based programming. UNDP builds

on the ‘growth edges’ of PVE practices advancing global priorities – on innovation, integration and people-centred action through community-based initiatives that generate measurable change in lives and institutions. In line with the Strategic Plan, UNDP provides policy and programming support to assist local, national, regional and global partners in **41 countries**²⁸ across **five regions** (Africa, Arab States, Asia Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean). Within this structure, UNDP ensures that key stakeholders, including governments, CSOs, youth, women, religious actors and the private sector, are engaged in the development of solutions to violent extremism, while also working directly with communities to build resilience. Through its PVE work, the CPPRI/PVE team contributes to the implementation of the **UNDP Signature Solution on Resilience: supporting countries and communities in building resilience to diverse shocks and crises, including conflict, climate change, disasters and epidemics**.



41 countries | 5 regions

²⁶ Adapted from UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner, ‘Reimagining Crisis Response: How to Save Lives and Livelihoods’, interview at USIP, 27 September 2022.

²⁷ UN Secretary-General, *Our Common Agenda* (United Nations publication, 2021).

²⁸ Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte D'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan.

In 2022,
UNDP
engaged in
PVE through
the following
portfolios:



PVE National Action Plans

(NAPs): In 2022, Thailand's NAP was finalized with coordination by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) and with the support of UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNOCT. To date, UNDP has supported the development of PVE NAPs in **24 countries**,²⁹ with 18 finalized or already under implementation.



Religion and Faith-Based

Organizations: UNDP collaborated with religious actors, women of faith and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to support their efforts in promoting tolerance in **22 countries and territories**.³⁰



Return and Reintegration:

UNDP supported the return and reintegration of individuals and families deemed to have been associated with violent extremist groups and listed terrorist organizations in **15 countries** (and two Regional Bureaux).³¹



Hate Speech and Online

Radicalization: UNDP addressed hate speech in **49 countries**³² and **territories** and information pollution in **36 countries and territories**.³³ This includes identification and analysis of as well as countering polarizing, violent, hateful, and/or false online narratives.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):

UNDP supported the structural integration of mental health and psychosocial support in peacebuilding through the development of global guidance, knowledge-sharing, technical assistance and the capacity-building of national actors in **21 countries**.³⁴

²⁹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan.

³⁰ Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uzbekistan. Kosovo is hereafter referred to in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

³¹ Two Regional Bureaux (Regional Bureau for Africa and Regional Bureau of Arab States), Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

³² Albania, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Georgia/South Caucasus, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Serbia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Saint Lucia, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

³³ Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Georgia/South Caucasus, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela.

³⁴ In 2022, 13 countries integrated MHPSS in their activities: the Gambia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Eight more have received funding and initiated their first initiatives on MHPSS in early 2023: Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, the Kingdom of Eswatini, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania and Yemen. Three countries are currently still exploring MHPSS programming and not yet implementing activities: Afghanistan, Indonesia and Montenegro.

3.2 Overarching Technical Support and Advisory Role of the Global CPPRI/PVE team

UNDP's Crisis Bureau, created as part of the Global Policy Network in 2018, is responsible for the organization's crisis-related policy and programme support. As part of the Crisis Bureau, UNDP's CPPRI team leads global advocacy, knowledge, policy and programming, and a partnerships agenda in support of stronger, more visible, concrete development pathways to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

In 2022, the UNDP CPPRI/PVE team worked towards ensuring a better understanding of issues related to PVE at the global level. UNDP also led the design, implementation and scale-up of initiatives to address the root causes and effects of violent extremism. The CPPRI/PVE team focused on **1) thought leadership and global advocacy; 2) technical, financial and quality assurance processes in the PVE portfolio; and 3) enhancing and supporting partnerships.**

1) Thought leadership was strengthened through research and policy development, as well as through facilitating access to and exchange of knowledge, tools and best practices through global advocacy:

- In 2022, the CPPRI/PVE team developed four knowledge products: the policy brief, '[From Pilots Toward Policies: Utilizing Online Data for Preventing Violent Extremism and Addressing Hate Speech](#)', along with its accompanying guidance note; the guidance note on '[Integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support into Peacebuilding](#)';³⁵ and the report, '[Enhancing Efforts to Prevent Violent Extremism by Leveraging Behavioural Insights](#)'. Each of these publications was downloaded over 100 times on average. Work was also carried out on the policy brief, '[Stepping Forward: Parliaments in the Fight Against Hate Speech](#)', and the study, '[Dynamics of Violent Extremism in Africa: Conflict Ecosystems, Political Ecology and the Spread of the Proto-State](#)', which focuses on the group dynamics of VEGs in Africa. Both were published in early 2023.
- The CPPRI/PVE team also explored the intersection between PVE and grievances related to governance, with a specific focus on the actions and/or inactions of the state in fostering radicalization. The CPPRI team is working on a guidance note aimed at identifying best practices for governance interventions for PVE and addressing operational and programmatic challenges.
- The CPPRI/PVE team developed a global database for all PVE projects and activities to better monitor and report on UNDP's global, regional and country level progress

in the seven priority areas of the PVE Action Plan. This was complemented by a project dashboard as well as an indices dashboard, which visualizes key national-level trends in violence and fragility across UNDP's PVE project countries.³⁶ The [project dashboard](#) has been made publicly available to enable practitioners to find relevant data and sharpen their analysis.

- The team further developed the [PVE Knowledge and Research Portal](#) launched in December 2021, enabling both UNDP staff and external users to access quality knowledge and tools on PVE. The repository currently contains 119 UNDP research products, published between 2015 and 2022.
- In October 2022, the CPPRI/PVE team launched a [website on Preventing Violent Extremism](#) to ensure wider promotion of best practices, resources and approaches on development-based solutions to violent extremism.

2) Support was provided on technical, financial and quality assurance processes in the PVE portfolio in order to increase global, regional, national and local capacity for contextualized programming:

- Since 2020, UNDP has implemented the Joint EU-UN [Strengthening Resilience Against Violent Extremism in Asia](#) (STRIVE Asia) regional programme, in partnership with UNOCT and UNODC, across five countries in Central Asia. The CPPRI/PVE team coordinates STRIVE's Output 3: *Strengthening local resilience of at-risk communities through the support of community-led initiatives in the PCVE area*. As part of STRIVE in 2022, UNDP partnered with the NGO [Beyond Conflict](#) to provide hands-on technical assistance to five Country Offices to integrate MHPSS into their PVE activities. The Country Offices in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are now better equipped to partner with local stakeholders and provide risk-informed counselling and mentoring support for trauma-informed care and destigmatization, as well as to understand the role of trauma recovery in the prevention of violent extremism.
- UNDP CPPRI/PVE partnered with the UNDP-United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) Joint Programme for Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention to provide seed funding to 11 Country Offices³⁷ and Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) to pilot catalytic initiatives integrating MHPSS in peacebuilding. The countries selected for funding will receive dedicated technical, coordination and knowledge-sharing support to ensure their activities are aligned with the 10 principles outlined in UNDP's guidance note on [Integrating MHPSS into Peacebuilding](#).

³⁵ To ensure that a widely participatory and inclusive process underpinned the drafting of the Guidance Note, an in-depth literature review was conducted that captures recent developments in this nascent field. More than 100 practitioners took part in regional consultations, during which they had the opportunity to share their needs and expectations of the forthcoming guidance note. The consultations allowed UNDP to become more aware of the relevant cultural, religious and traditional beliefs and structures that need to be harnessed to strengthen the integration of the fields. Information and data collected during the literature review, survey and regional consultations formed the basis of the guidance note and are captured in an extensive report.

³⁶ The global database and indices dashboard are available for internal use only.

³⁷ Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan and Yemen.

- In light of the impact of rapid technological change, the CPPRI/PVE team offered master classes to more than 50 PVE staff from five regions in order to build their capacities to facilitate impactful, participatory and safe online community engagement activities for PVE. Building on the knowledge, tools and best practices in these master classes, the team developed a [resource hub for Online Community Engagement Activities for PVE](#).

3) Partnerships were strengthened on human-centred peacebuilding alternatives to securitized approaches to address violent extremism:

- The CPPRI/PVE team represents UNDP in global fora and UN-wide working groups on issues related to PVE. Specifically, UNDP co-chairs the PCVE Working Group (PCVE WG) of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Compact.³⁸ As a co-chair, and throughout the four quarterly meetings held by the PCVE WG in 2022, UNDP facilitated coordination and knowledge-sharing between 45 UN and non-UN entities on PCVE. For example, on 10 February 2022 UNDP convened a special meeting on Violent Extremism in sub-Saharan Africa and presented the early findings of the study *Dynamics of Violent Extremism in Africa: Conflict Ecosystems, Political Ecology and the Spread of the Proto-State* to the PCVE WG. Representations from UNDP Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique and Somalia shared their experiences from the field and provided recommendations to the PCVE WG.
- The CPPRI/PVE team is also a member of the following UN Working Groups, in which the team shares its expertise and ensures that UNDP's development-based approach is prioritized and inter-agency collaboration is enhanced:
 - The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (IATF-R)
 - The Core and Advisory Group of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers
 - The Global Steering Committee for the implementation of the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes
 - The UN Working Group on the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech
 - The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.
- The CPPRI/PVE team has also facilitated cross-bureau collaborations between the Crisis Bureau and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support through joint efforts to develop knowledge products and provide policy guidance and support to Country Offices on areas including but not limited to combating hate speech, addressing information

pollution, preventing electoral violence and working with state actors such as parliaments.

- The CPPRI/PVE team established and continued to strengthen external partnerships with Member States (including through South–South Cooperation), private sector and civil society organizations, foundations and academic institutions. External partners worked with in 2022 include Beyond Conflict, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, Google, Hedayah, Koe Koe Tech, Nudge Lebanon, the Oxford Internet Institute, SecDev, TikTok and USIP.
- As part of an increased effort in advocacy and communications, the CPPRI/PVE team produced a story series³⁹ on MHPSS in peacebuilding programming that averaged 435 views per post. Other blogs and press releases produced were:
 - [Using online data to tackle violent extremism is a risk worth taking... if we're smart about it. Here's how](#) (blog post)
 - [What works and what doesn't: Behavioural change to prevent violent extremism](#) (blog post)
 - [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Still Overlooked in Peacebuilding, Says New UNDP Guidance](#) (press release).
- The CPPRI/PVE team organized a total of nine knowledge-sharing events, which involved more than 650 participants. In addition, the CPPRI/PVE team organized 11 high-level UN meetings on PVE that were attended by participants from UNDP senior management, with the aim of advocating for a PVE approach that is grounded in human rights and adequate development solutions.
- The CPPRI/PVE team facilitated knowledge exchange sessions between Country Offices that manage PVE programmes and form part of the Community of Practice on PVE. These knowledge exchanges helped Country Offices to learn from each other to improve the quality of their PVE programming and its impact on beneficiaries.
 - For example, the CPPRI/PVE team organized a knowledge-sharing session between UNDP Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Sudan and Trinidad and Tobago in September 2022. Participating Country Offices presented their initiatives on return and reintegration, stigmatization and policy work.
- The CPPRI/PVE team produced a monthly global newsletter that was disseminated internally, reaching approximately 250 staff members engaged in PVE programming. Every monthly issue highlighted key global, regional and country updates on activities, results and best practices. All issues of the monthly newsletter are available on UNDP's [SparkBlue dashboard on PVE](#).

³⁸ UNOCT is the Working Group's chair and UNDP, UNAOC and UNESCO are co-chairs.

³⁹ For more information about UNDP's story series on integrating MHPSS in peacebuilding, see chapter 5.5.



Regional Highlights

Regional dynamics play a key role in the spread of violent extremism. A major strength of many VEGs is their capacity to move across borders, building their strongholds in areas under weak state control. UNDP leads regional initiatives aimed at addressing the trans-boundary aspect of PVE, promoting better analysis, knowledge-sharing and coordination between national actors.

4.1 Africa and Arab States

Countries covered:



Countries part of the Regional PVE Project (2017–2022): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Knowledge production and sharing:

In 2022, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) and Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) finalized the second iteration of the Regional Project, Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach (hereafter, Regional PVE Project). With lessons learned from the first phase (2017–2022), the new project expanded its coverage to include the nexus between violent extremism in Africa and in the Mashriq, part of the Arab States region.

Through the Regional PVE Project co-implemented by the Regional Service Centre for Africa and the Regional Hub for

Arab States, UNDP RBA and RBAS in collaboration with the CPPRI/PVE team led innovative research and knowledge development on the drivers of violent extremism in Africa. In 2022, UNDP worked on the finalization of three complementary studies on violent extremism in Africa and the Arab States:

1. *Dynamics of Violent Extremism in Africa: Conflict Ecosystems, Political Ecology and the Spread of the Proto-State*, which focuses on the group dynamics of VEGs in Africa
2. *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement*, which focuses on individual pathways to recruitment and disengagement

⁴⁰ In 2022, UNDP conducted a scoping mission to Comoros to support the formulation of a programmatic offer on social cohesion with a PVE lens. The mission also provided recommendations on opportunities identified for youth, who constitute the largest demographic portion of Comoros and play a crucial role in the country's socio-economic development and in maintaining social cohesion and stability.

3. Perceptions, Vulnerabilities and Prevention: Violent Extremism Threat Assessment in Selected Regions of the Southern Libyan Borderlands and North-Western Nigeria, which focuses on cross-border trends and VEG recruitment.

- As part of the podcast series #ExploringExtremism, in collaboration with the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, RBA and RBAS launched a spin-off series on their findings related to emerging PVE issues in Africa and the Arab States. In 2022, two of the series' four episodes were released. The first episode, 'Not Child's Play: How Extremist Groups in Africa Recruit Children', released in July 2022, sheds light on perceptions around child recruitment and the experiences of former recruits. The second episode, 'Drugs, Violence and Extremism: The Unexplored Connection' aimed to investigate the emergence and evolution of drug use in VEGs, while also unpacking the gendered aspects of drug abuse within these groups. The full #ExploringExtremism podcast series is available at <https://pveportal.org/podcast/> or on Spotify.
- In November 2022, UNDP, together with Small Arms Survey, launched Perceptions, Vulnerabilities and Prevention: Violent Extremism Threat Assessment in Selected Regions of the Southern Libyan Borderlands and North-Western Nigeria, a report examining the strategies and methods of armed groups. It highlights the common trends related to violent extremism across the southern Libyan borderlands and provides an analysis of challenges in addressing them. The study also provides programmatic recommendations for strategic coordination, early action and responses to build community resilience in the border areas of Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan. The report benefited from country-level contributions from Libya (Prevention of Violent Extremism in Libya: Preliminary Assessment), produced in partnership with the Libya Counter-Terrorism Centre.
- Perceptions, Vulnerabilities and Prevention: Violent Extremism Threat Assessment in Selected Regions of the Southern Libyan Borderlands and North-Western Nigeria was presented during the ninth Geneva Peace Week (GPW22) in November 2022 as part of the conference's second thematic track, 'Moving beyond securitization: Risk management and new horizons for peacebuilding'. GPW22 offered space for technical conversation with over 50 participants while providing original, first-hand and distinctive insights gathered from over 6,500 households in five countries on barriers to peace and development.

Creation of spaces for stakeholder dialogue:

- In June 2022, UNDP Regional Hub for the Arab States convened a regional round table discussion in Amman for UNDP staff, Member State representatives and civil society actors. The dialogue explored lessons learned, challenges and emerging good practices in prevention of violent

extremism. The participants agreed on the need for a sub-regional study on VE vulnerability and resilience factors in the Mashriq and for further research into return and reintegration processes. Other issues highlighted were the need for consensus on terminology surrounding VE, as well as the importance of a whole-of-society approach.

- In October 2022, the Libya Country Office and the Libyan Counter-Terrorism Centre organized a conference on Emerging Trends of Violent Extremism and the Future of Prevention of Violent Extremism in Libya. The event gathered together PVE policymakers, practitioners and CSOs from Libya, the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region, and international levels. Over the course of the conference, the participants addressed VE risks and trends in Libya and shared lessons learned and emerging good practices.

Support to civil society actors:

- Under its Regional PVE Project, since 2018, UNDP has supported a continental Africa-wide CSO network, Peace by Africa, with the aim of promoting insider mediation, reintegration and reconciliation efforts at the community level in the Great Lakes and Lake Chad Basin regions. In May, six CSOs from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda received grants to provide support in specialized activities targeted at communities in the Great Lakes region. This initiative was part of the broader ongoing regional project in support of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which aims to strengthen regional mediators specialized in Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDR/RR), and to empower national and cross-border CSO engagement strategies.
- The Regional PVE Project also contributed to capacity-building among regional and sub-regional organizations through South-South collaboration and trust-building measures between securitized infrastructures and communities.
- UNDP Ghana, through its TRAC-2 resources, built capacity on early warning and collaboration with security actors to prevent violent extremism among women- and youth-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating along border regions and in major trade areas.

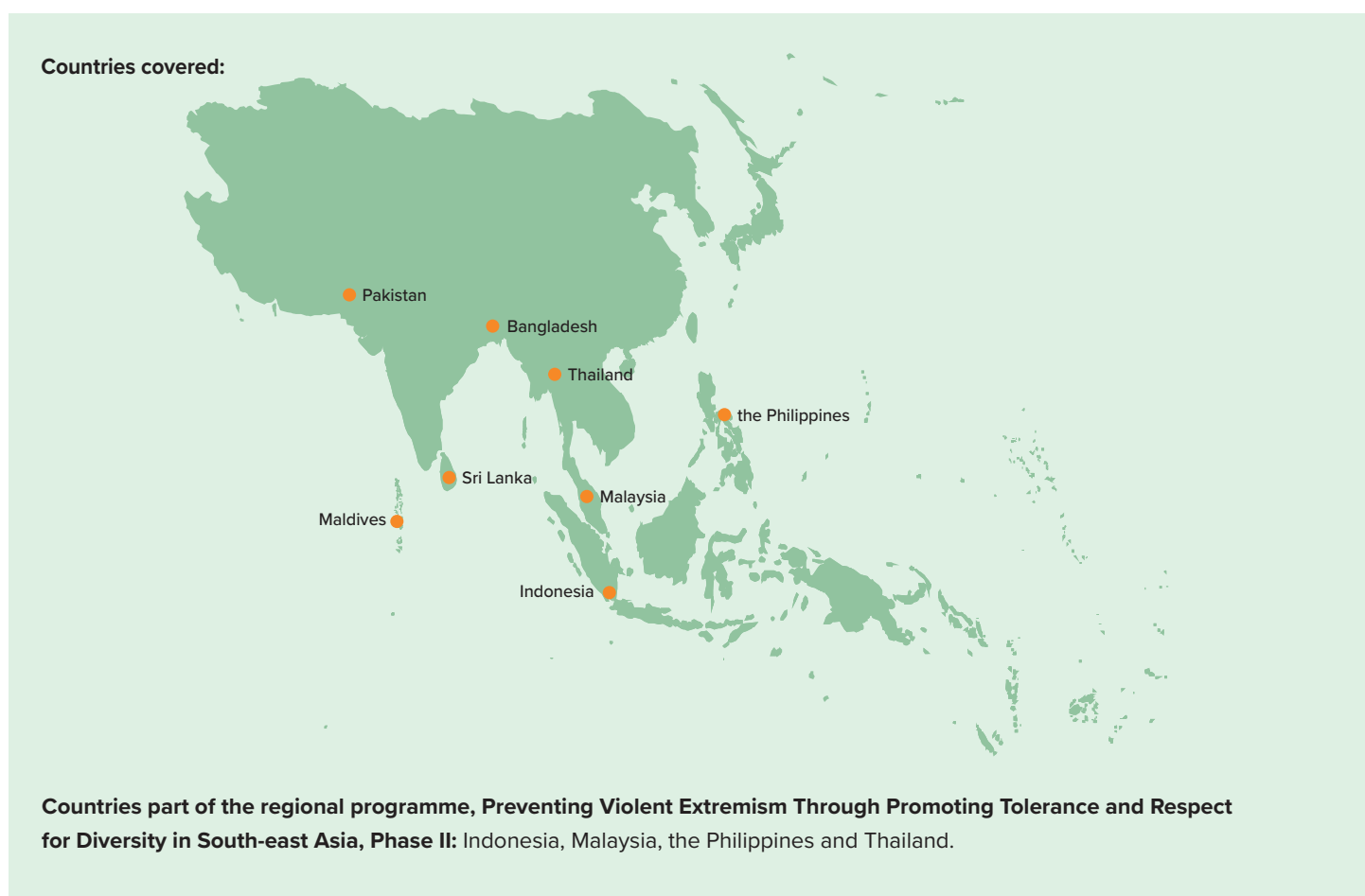
Scale-up of a cross-border, preventative PVE approach:

- Violent extremism is rising in the West African region, specifically in the Gulf of Guinea, fuelled by complex political transitions and persistent socio-economic vulnerabilities. This increased risk necessitates a collective preventative approach. Based on an initial request from the UNDP

Togo Country Office, preparation was begun for a broader sub-regional PVE intervention to deepen the collective preventative approach. This effort was able to build on the foundation provided by a multi-country PVE virtual workshop held in July 2021, which provided a platform for peer learning experience and best practice sharing among countries participating in the West Africa Regional Initiative in the PVE Regional Project. The Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire Country Offices were also invited, as part of the planning process for the Atlantic Corridor Sub-regional Project.

- Given the increasing risk that violent extremism will spill over from the Sahel to the Gulf of Guinea countries, to complement the Atlantic Corridor PVE Project Initiative, the UNDP Crisis Bureau provided seed funding of US\$200,000 to lay the groundwork for cooperation and immediately attend to the needs of the affected countries. As a result, the Country Offices of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo received financial and technical support in July 2022 to scale up targeted interventions in prevention, early warning and response, including through establishing a data management system on violent extremism and fragility.

4.2 Asia and the Pacific



Addressing online and offline hate speech, misinformation and disinformation:

- In the Asia Pacific region, under Phase II of the regional programme, Preventing Violent Extremism Through Promoting Tolerance and Respect for Diversity in South-east Asia (2020–2023), UNDP supported governments and other relevant stakeholders to address the root causes and drivers of extremism and violence, with a focus on preventing online

and offline hate speech and misinformation. UNDP Asia Pacific partnered with tech giants during the implementation of several iterations of its youth influencer programme, Creators for Change (2018 and 2020), United Creatives (2021) and Creators Forward (2022). UNDP engaged alumni from previous programmes and relied on the expertise of participating CSOs to ensure contextual relevance and programme sustainability.

⁴¹ Alternative narratives are defined by the EU as “positive, pluralist or progressive narratives that are based on intercultural principles and respect for human rights”. Council of Europe, ‘Migration and Integration: Which alternative narratives work and why’ (Strasbourg, 2021).

Promotion of alternative narratives⁴¹ for inclusion and diversity:

- Through a new season of the ExtremeLives series, the You, Me, We, Us initiative, Instagram Live Storytelling and the United Creatives programme, UNDP produced campaigns to engage communities on topics such as countering cyberbullying, celebrating cultural diversity and advocating for global empathy. The campaigns achieved 300,944 active engagements (total of likes, shares, reactions and comments) in the region. The intervention fostered productive relationships between creators across the region to build social cohesion and cultivate an environment of tolerance, diversity and creativity.
- UNDP Maldives conducted a film-based workshop for young aspiring film-makers, in which 20 participants (six women and 14 men) were trained by industry experts in the art of film-making. Sixteen participants completed the programme by creating and directing four short films focusing on social cohesion and building tolerance in communities. The four films focused on the sub-themes of gender equality, migrant workers, disenfranchised youth and persons with disabilities.

- UNDP Bangladesh organized its annual hackathon, Digital Khichuri Challenge, in five districts in Bangladesh. Ten winners from five local cohorts designed and implemented two-month-long social media campaigns and reached 2.1 million people with messages of cultural diversity, religious tolerance and awareness against hate speech and misinformation.

Evidence-based research:

- In 2022, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific commissioned a mapping of the digital ecosystem of violent extremism in South-east Asia. UNDP partnered with SecDev, a digital risk consultancy firm, to study issues affecting youth and marginalized populations, as well as emerging online narratives. Through the study, UNDP gained a better understanding of the perceptions, misconceptions and barriers related to addressing violent extremism in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. This allowed UNDP to set a direction for further evidence-based programming and to develop innovative approaches to address online hate speech.

4.3 Europe and Central Asia

Countries covered:



Countries part of the regional programme: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Strengthening a whole-of-society approach:

- As part of the STRIVE Asia programme (2020–2023), co-funded by the European Union with UNOCT and UNODC as implementing partners, UNDP is ensuring that key executive and legislative bodies, state security agencies and non-government actors are better prepared to contribute to PVE objectives in Central Asia, and that at-risk communities are more resilient to violent extremism. In 2022, UNDP supported

the establishment and functioning of 27 PVE Advisory Groups, in which members were helped to develop capacity to stand up for community interests, conduct dialogues and exchanges on issues related to violent extremism, and design development solutions. These solutions are to be implemented jointly by local governments, NGOs, private sector actors and local communities, including youth and women-led organizations.

- Other UNDP activities as part of the STRIVE Asia programme include: contributing to the implementation of strategies on PVE with a focus on community-based activities, capacity development of government actors and strategic communication; providing counselling and mentorship in response to signs of radicalization; building social, digital and soft skills among young people and increasing their employability; and providing grants to civil society actors to implement PVE activities.
- UNDP is also working to redress the lack of access to information on PVE and return and reintegration issues, especially as regards addressing gender stereotypes, increasing the engagement of civil society actors and religious leaders in PVE interventions, and increasing the attention given to PVE in education programmes.

Facilitation of return and reintegration:

- UNDP worked jointly with UNOCT, UNODC and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to support Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan under the project, EU-UN Support to States in Central Asia for their Citizens Returned from Conflict Zones, Primarily Syria and Iraq. This project provided human rights-based, age- and gender-sensitive technical assistance to support families and alleged former terrorist fighters from Syria and Iraq. UNDP implemented capacity-building initiatives and awareness raising trainings for front-liners, local authorities, civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders who work directly with returnees and receiving communities. At least 90 front-liners were equipped with tools and techniques needed to work with adult returnees and vulnerable communities. UNDP also trained more than 100 members of national and local institutions supporting the reintegration of adult returnees on how to engage returnees in local reintegration efforts, as well as in skills such as empathetic communication.

Addressing divisive narratives, online and offline hate speech, misinformation and disinformation:

- UNDP in Europe and Central Asia has been closely monitoring the impact of information pollution and has worked to promote information integrity. UNDP has

undertaken several initiatives to address divisive narrative and hate speech⁴²: it has organized workshops on mis/disinformation with youth of diverse ethnic backgrounds; it has established regional narrative monitoring and analysis datasets using social media listening and micro-narratives tools; and it is providing rapid analysis and trend monitoring on the impact of misinformation and disinformation. Through these initiatives, UNDP aims to counter information pollution, including divisive narratives and hate speech, and promote the development of positive, constructive narratives in the region, while also addressing violent extremism.

- During a Forum on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Europe and Central Asia, UNDP held three sessions⁴³ covering PVE-related topics, with representatives from all 19 UNDP Offices in the region agreeing on the growing need for innovative, inclusive and sustainable ways of tackling the challenge, both online and offline.
- Through the regional project Strengthening the role of youth in promoting increased mutual understanding, constructive narrative, respect for diversity and trust in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo, UNDP organized two workshops that supported 95 youth in Kosovo and North Macedonia to better understand misinformation and disinformation and equipped them with guidance on how to develop constructive narratives. This initiative has been followed by a new Peacebuilding Fund-enabled project in Moldova, aimed at addressing the impacts of divisive narratives, misinformation and hate speech related to the Transnistrian conflict.
- UNDP launched a new two-year regional PVE project in Central Asia⁴⁴ (2022–2024), funded by the Government of Japan, to improve national PVE capacities in the region. The first phase of the project (2018–2021) directly supported 11,143 young women and men from 36 communities in four Central Asian countries; the new phase of the project will draw on lessons learned and best practices from the earlier implementation and will operate in five Central Asian countries. Building on the Joint Plan of Action of the Central Asian countries, the project will strengthen regional PVE networks to enhance regional knowledge-sharing between governments, civil society and youth; develop local early warning systems; provide labour market skills to youth; and provide legal and policy advice to governments.

⁴² This work is taking place through the Istanbul Regional Hub and in collaboration with the Oslo Governance Centre and the PVE/CPRI team.

⁴³ The sessions were on: 1) Radicalization, extremism and ethno-nationalism; 2) MHPSS; and 3) Divisive narratives, mis/disinformation and hate speech. The Forum ran from 2–4 November 2022 and was hosted by UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub.

⁴⁴ See UNDP, 'Japan and UNDP embark on a new initiative to prevent violent extremism in Central Asia', 13 December 2022. Available at <https://www.undp.org/kazakhstan/news/japan-and-undp-embark-new-initiative-prevent-violent-extremism-central-asia>.

4.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

Countries covered:



There is currently no regional PVE programme in Latin America and the Caribbean.

⁴⁵ Through the PVE-YES (Youth Empowerment and Strengthening) project concluded in August 2022, UNDP supported the government to restructure its PVE agenda, focusing on working with youth in communities and in detention. The initiative aimed at addressing the factors that cause youth to align with gangs and extremist groups: disenfranchisement, poverty, unemployment, stigmatization, lack of education and skills, and mistrust of authority. As part of this work, UNDP opened a Learning Centre at the girls' wing of the Youth Transformation and Rehabilitation Centre, dedicated to girls' education. In collaboration with the UNDP Accelerator Lab team, the project also carried out a Peace Innovation Challenge engaging youth organizations, women's groups, NGOs, and FBOs and supported the five winning teams to implement their project ideas promoting peace.



Thematic Highlights





5.1 Prevention of Violent Extremism

Across 41 countries in five regions, UNDP is working to build the capacity of national actors – from government and civil society, as well as youth groups and the private sector – to prevent violent extremism. UNDP also works directly within communities to build resilience against crises and to counter violent extremist narratives.

Guided by the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, **UNDP is committed to advancing Pillar I of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy through an approach that is grounded in human rights and development solutions.**

This chapter showcases UNDP's main achievements in:

- Adopting a whole-of-society approach by working with women, youth, CSOs and the private sector to foster community-led solutions to radicalization and recruitment
- Supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of PVE National Action Plans (NAPs)
- Working with religious leaders and faith-based organizations to sustain peace and security.⁴⁶

5.1.1 Whole-of-society community-level centred approach

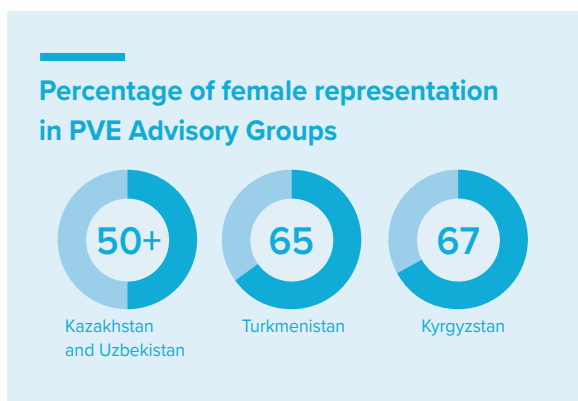
UNDP's whole-of-society approach to PVE is a critical component in ensuring that interventions are sustainable. For example, engaging with local CSOs is key to reaching target audiences at risk of radicalization in inaccessible areas with high level of insecurity. Similarly, UNDP has continued to prioritize support to women-led organizations to promote long-term transformation in the unequal gender norms that underpin the drivers of violent extremism and local grievance. Since vulnerable youth are at particular risk from violent extremism, UNDP has engaged youth with a nuanced understanding of the pathways to engagement in and disengagement from violent extremism.

In 2022, UNDP has:

- 1) Pursued contextualized and community-centred approaches to peace and security**, which included **empowering grassroots CSOs** through engaging them in the design, implementation and monitoring of PVE policies and interventions, enabling them to play a greater role in policymaking processes:

⁴⁶ UN Secretary-General, Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2022/740).

- Across five **Central Asian countries**, UNDP formed 27 PVE Advisory Groups to enable government, civil society and local actors to work together in identifying and addressing drivers of violent extremism at the local level. These Advisory Groups will allow key stakeholders to collaborate on promoting resilience to violent extremism through individual and collective actions. UNDP focused on ensuring women's participation.



- In **Kyrgyzstan**, under the EU-UN STRIVE Asia project, nine local PVE Action Plans were developed and 18 PVE-related activities from the approved action plans were implemented with Advisory Groups (in which 33 percent of members were women) and with 10 Local Self-Governments (LSGs), of which six were female. A gender-sensitive approach was achieved through engaging women and increasing the role of young girls in community activities.
- In **Uzbekistan**, UNDP supported the government in strengthening the role of women in the fight against violent extremism by sponsoring conferences and dialogues with communities and by carrying out training sessions on local support systems. UNDP also supported three projects implemented by local NGOs⁴⁷ that focused on leveraging social media, making MHPSS available for vulnerable groups and researching international best practices on de-radicalization with a view to adapting and replicating them in Uzbekistan.
- In **Kenya**, UNDP supported the National Counter Terrorism Centre to train 31 teachers to engage youth and promote responsible behaviours through education. Separately, 30 women representatives from state authorities on preventing violent extremism were trained to promote behaviour change in their families and communities. UNDP Kenya also supported a training of trainers (ToT) on Child Safety and Security against Violent Extremism (CSSAVE) for 33 members (14 female, 19 male) of the CSSAVE Guide

implementation committee and 80 members (34 female, 46 male) of the National Parents Association. The ToT supported participants to implement preventive actions and counter radicalization within families and education institutions.

- In **Malaysia**, UNDP conducted a needs assessment to determine the needs of local CSOs working on PVE. One key need was found to be monitoring and evaluation, so UNDP organized a workshop in May 2022 to help civil society actors to ensure more relevant, impactful and sustainable PVE interventions.

2) Fostered innovative solutions to addressing inter-connected **Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) challenges**, using behavioural insights to ensure evidence-based and innovative programming, while safeguarding inclusivity.

- The ExtremeLives Initiative is UNDP's flagship digital advocacy project in **South Asia** and **South-east Asia**. Season 4 of the video series, produced and released in 2021–2022, was designed using country-specific research and behavioural insights. This approach aimed to ensure that its content i) is targeted and disseminated to the intended audience of people vulnerable to violent extremist narratives; ii) achieves a measurable impact on the attitudes and behaviour of this at-risk audience; iii) is regularly fine-tuned based on data, to continually enhance its targeting and impact. The behavioural research enabled the development of a set of indicators that young people could use to self-report, covering both attitudes and likely actions around violence-related beliefs and behaviours, community connectedness and social capital concepts, as well as behavioural dimensions specific to young people. The indicators were used to form the basis of a survey instrument for impact assessment and a guide format to facilitate focus group discussions for qualitative research.

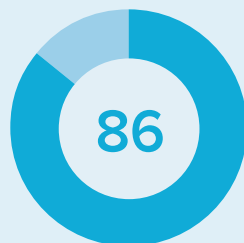
3) Cooperated with the private sector, including social media companies, data analytics organizations and public CSOs to provide technical expertise in PVE programmes and disseminate positive and alternative narratives.

- UNDP partnered with social media company TikTok for the Creators Forward programme to reach, empower and educate young people in **Malaysia, the Philippines** and **Thailand** on encouraging an online culture of respect, kindness, tolerance and equality. UNDP organized workshops along with TikTok, local CSOs and well-established creators from the region to train and mentor South-east Asian online youth influencers, with a collective following of over 25 million, to counter hate speech and harmful online content.

⁴⁷ In October 2022, UNDP announced the winners of the grant contest Financing Initiatives of Non-Governmental and Non-Commercial Organizations (NGOs) in the field of Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (C/PVE). See UNDP, 'Winners of the Grant Contest on countering and preventing violent extremism are announced', Press release, 28 October 2022. Available at <https://www.undp.org/uzbekistan/press-releases/winners-grant-contest-countering-and-preventing-violent-extremism-are-announced>.

5.1.2 PVE Action Plans and human rights-based interventions to address governance grievances

Globally, a majority (86 percent) of respondents to an internal UNDP survey said that UNDP programming contributed to mitigating governance grievances and the associated risk of radicalization, including through stabilization, good governance, rule of law and justice, youth empowerment, security sector reform and livelihood programmes.



These interventions are supported by evidence-based data, including the recently launched report, *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement*, which notes that 71 percent of voluntary recruits cited a specific government action as their 'tipping point' towards violence – showing that government action accompanied by human rights abuses continue to trigger, fuel and accelerate recruitment into violent extremism.

In 2022, UNDP has:

1) **Supported Member States in their efforts to address the drivers of violent extremism**, making progress in all seven action areas through investments in human-rights based development solutions. This includes the development of **National Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism (NAPs)**, which set country-level priorities for PVE. As of 2022, UNDP has supported the development of **NAPs in 24 countries**, with 18 finalized and/or ready for implementation.

- In **Central African Republic**, UNDP supported the government in updating the National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism for 2023–2025. UNDP also supported capacity-building on a pilot PVE alert system for 15 members of the Local Committee of Peace and Reconciliation in Bangui and nine members of the Inter-ministerial Committees of Prevention of Violent Extremism.

Ten⁴⁸ countries indicated supporting participatory and inclusive NAP development processes and 6⁴⁹ supported participatory and inclusive monitoring of NAPs,⁵⁰ allowing communities to hold institutions accountable.



- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNDP, OHCHR, UNODC, UNOCT and UN Special Rapporteurs provided advice on drafting the new Law on Countering Terrorism, which was adopted by the Kyrgyz Parliament on 4 July 2022 and on the Law on Countering Extremist Activity, which entered into force on 24 February 2023. Both laws were drafted in an inclusive way, through a series of national and sub-national round tables; the consultative processes engaged representatives of law enforcement agencies, CSOs, international NGOs, human rights defenders, the media and local authorities nationwide. Through its support to the law-making processes, UNDP helped fill some of the gaps seen in earlier versions of the laws issued in 2006; both laws are now consistent with Justice Sector Reform (2022) concepts of de-penalization, de-criminalization and humanization of trial proceedings.⁵¹
- In **Mali**, the 2022–2026 action plan of the National Policy for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism and Terrorism (PNPLEVT), developed with UNDP support, was formally adopted by the Government in October 2022. UNDP also supported the establishment of a PNPLEVT monitoring and coordination committee.
- In **Thailand**, with UNRCO coordination, UNDP, UNODC and UNOCT supported the development of the NAP, which was finalized in 2022. UNDP supported civil society participation, including that of women and youth networks, human rights defenders, media, academia and community-based organizations from each locality, in identifying key grievances and implementation partners for the action plan. As a result of CSO engagement, a mechanism for tripartite consultation for inclusive governance was established. The UNDP Thailand Country Office promoted the human security approach in Thailand to enhance whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches in the PVE NAP. The Thai Government has embraced the

⁴⁸ Benin, Indonesia, Maldives, Mali, the Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago and Uzbekistan.

⁴⁹ Benin, Indonesia, Mali, Somalia, Sudan and Uzbekistan.

⁵⁰ Significant efforts were made in these countries to enable the participation of diverse stakeholders, particularly by consistently engaging CSOs, women peacebuilders, youth networks, human rights defenders, media, academia, community-based actors representing those affected and concerned businesses.

⁵¹ The laws led to strategic changes in the roles and mandates of the State Committee for National Security, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor's General's Office as regards PCVE. The laws establish the necessary checks and balances among State institutions and define the roles of both law enforcement and non-law enforcement agencies in PCVE. Further, Governmental Coordination Platforms enable law enforcement and non-law enforcement to implement PCVE policies and action plans in a cohesive way, breaking down silos between stakeholders and reinforcing pre-emptive governance. The laws also better define the roles of CSOs and the media in PCVE.

concept and added the words “human security” to their national security plan. The concept opens up space for government agencies from various sectors to dialogue and work with CSOs, academic groups and representatives of target groups/communities.

- In **Tunisia**, UNDP supported the review of the National Counter Extremism and Terrorism Strategy by providing evidence-based research and knowledge advocating for a better balance between prevention and security responses to violent extremism, as well as by ensuring inclusive dialogue between civil society organizations and the government.

2) Collaborated with national and local government stakeholders and civil society actors to address governance grievances through human rights-based PVE programming, since government action, accompanied by human rights abuses, can trigger, fuel and accelerate recruitment by VE actors.

- In **Maldives**, UNDP developed a toolkit and guide on PVE targeted at various state actors engaged in preventing and countering violent extremism. A consultant developed training material and drafted policy papers on the state of violent extremism in Maldives, as well as policy options government can explore to streamline current approaches

CASE STUDY

A human rights-based approach to stabilization in Mozambique

For the past six years, the province of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique has been plunged into armed conflict, resulting in the displacement of nearly 1 million people and the destruction of countless towns and villages. UNDP Mozambique’s Stabilization Project intervenes in areas directly affected by violent extremism, complementing the operations of the state’s security forces. UNDP’s **human rights-based approach** is underpinned by evidence that securitized approaches to violent extremism alone are not sustainable over time, since marginalization and poverty are root causes of the breakdown of the social contract and engagement in violent extremist groups. In 2022, UNDP supported public servants, including from the security sector, to deploy and rehabilitate public services, restore access to justice and provide economic opportunities for displaced communities. To further **build trust between communities and the state** and to **break the cycle of recruitment into violent extremist groups**, UNDP Mozambique built the capacities of front-line police officers deployed in areas where armed groups are active on police ethics, human rights protection and the specific needs and rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNDP also strengthened **early warning and early action systems** by leading community dialogues at the neighbourhood level to connect individuals and families with the police, building a better understanding of security challenges in Cabo Delgado. To help meet the basic needs of the population, UNDP also improved livelihoods and employment by providing bicycles, cell phones and solar panels to recharge electronic devices in isolated areas.



and processes. About 18 people from various state institutions and civil society received training on PVE, and all found the content new and useful to their work.

- In **Pakistan**, UNDP worked with local communities and governance institutions to strengthen trust between the state and society and reduce violent extremism in conflict and post-conflict settings. In the province of Balochistan, UNDP created community-based groups linked with governmental service providers, promoting women's access to justice and protection services. UNDP also trained parliamentarians on topics related to PVE with full ownership by the National Counter Terrorism Authority.
- In **Somalia**, UNDP worked to improve the quality and inclusivity of local governance service delivery and to

address radicalization through developing policy, building capacity in systems and structures, and ensuring the inclusion of women, youth and marginalized communities. As a result, minority clans and disadvantaged community members benefit from a balanced resource allocation.

- In **Tanzania**, UNDP and the Global Peace Foundation established 30 Peace Clubs in 12 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and six community colleges to empower students to become actors in peacebuilding in their communities and families. In total, 1,557 youth (770 girls and 787 boys) were enrolled in Peace Clubs. In addition to the Peace Clubs, UNDP Tanzania conducted peacebuilding awareness workshops with 353 youth members (163 women and 190 men) from influential groups.⁵²

Lessons learned and insights to inform future engagement:

- **A lack of linkages between state and society can exacerbate perceived grievances related to marginalization.** Ensuring meaningful and inclusive political participation is a crucial step to alleviate grievances and build civic actors' trust in the state.
- **Civil society consultations are key to understanding underlying grievances.** Insights gained must be analysed, shared and communicated with government actors and included in PVE NAP development processes as well as actionable interventions. To achieve this, sustainable local consultations must be facilitated through empowering informal networks and groups, and systematic connections must be established between regional, national and local civil society networks to ensure community ownership of interventions.

⁵² A Practice Note is being developed, based on the above case studies, to identify, create and strengthen synergies between PVE and Governance programming. For more information, please visit 'Global Highlights', chapter 3 of this report.



5.2 Religion and Faith-Based Organizations

Religious leaders and faith-based organizations (FBOs) are highly valued and present in people's lives as sources of information, trust and influence over thought and action. Leveraging this strategic role, UNDP advocates for engaging faith-based actors as powerful allies in PVE efforts through its active involvement in relevant policy fora such as the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development. At country level, UNDP builds religious actors' capacity to tackle violent extremism and intolerance, including by: establishing community-level platforms to promote social cohesion, tolerance, dialogue, non-violence and non-violent communication; working with the educational sector and the media; and enhancing religious actors' role as insider mediators.

In 2022, UNDP has collaborated with religious actors, women of faith and FBOs to support their efforts in promoting tolerance in 22 countries. To do so, it has:

1) Engaged faith-based actors to promote tolerance and peace by facilitating peace dialogues, fora, and round tables among different religions, sects and ethnicities:

- In **Indonesia**, UNDP collaborated with more than 250 Islamic scholars to disseminate alternative and peaceful messages that counteract the appeal of violent extremism online and offline.
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNDP supported the drafting of a policy document on the National Concept of State Policy in the Religious Sphere⁵³ for 2021–2025, which was adopted through presidential decree, and of the draft Law on Freedom of Religion and Belief aimed at implementing the Concept (still under consideration). UNDP organized and facilitated official meetings and legislative discussions among stakeholders.

- In **Maldives**, UNDP supported HafthaaRes, a community engagement and organizing initiative conducted by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment in partnership with the National Counter Terrorism Centre and civil society organizations. UNDP supported three programmes in the initiative in 2022, targeting the atolls Haa Alifu/Haa Dhaalu, Meemu and Raa. Each event brought together policymakers and heads of state institutions with teachers and youth on target islands to discuss the threat of violent extremism, deliver preventive messaging to the community through religious sermons, and host a one-day festival for the community to help build an environment for community organizing.
- In **Morocco**, UNDP released a short [documentary](#) on promoting tolerance in the prison environment through the innovative peer educator approach.⁵⁴
- In **Sri Lanka**, UNDP supported the public movement MinorMatters in the development of a [Virtual Museum of Religious Freedom](#). The virtual museum acts as a virtual learning environment, encourages critical thinking about history and highlights the root causes of misunderstandings between communities. The museum is supplemented by a pioneering, stand-alone [e-learning platform](#) aimed at promoting literacy about freedom of religion through online courses.
- In **Sudan**, UNDP conducted religious sessions in Gezira and Khartoum and awareness sessions in five Sudanese sub-states to foster the use of religion as a tool for tolerance and acceptance. The sessions were attended by 1,204 community members.

⁵³ The Concept aims to strengthen the state's secular and legal foundations towards ensuring interreligious harmony, preserving the secular nature of the state and safeguarding the human rights to religion and religious beliefs.

⁵⁴ In peer education, community members are engaged to promote positive health behaviours among their peers.

- In **Uzbekistan**, UNDP carried out special trainings for community leaders in target regions on the threat of violent extremism under the guise of religion.

2) Engaged religious leaders to foster community acceptance for returnees and people perceived as associated with them, encouraging reintegration in receiving communities:

- In **Iraq**, UNDP engaged more than 650 religious leaders from different sects in platforms, creating a network of leaders grounded in tolerance, respect for other faiths and community understanding.
- In **Somalia**, 240 religious leaders were trained on Islamic principles of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. UNDP also worked with state-level religious affairs ministries to establish a countrywide network of like-minded religious leaders. The network aims to reduce the spread of violent extremist content and promote the tolerant message of Islam.
- In **Tanzania**, UNDP organized peacebuilding awareness workshops, held in partnership with the Global Peace

Foundation, which advocated for the involvement of religious leaders in promoting youth engagement in peace and security to build resilient communities. A total of 150 participants (68 women and 82 men) attended these workshops.

3) Highlighted the role of religion in peacebuilding in the following international platforms:

- The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development
- The International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development, PaRD, of which UNDP is a founding member (UNDP is also currently serving in the UN Advisory Group to PaRD)
- The Core and Advisory Group of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers
- The Global Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes.

CASE STUDY

Involving religious leaders in gender-sensitive PVE and social cohesion programming in Iraq

After decades of conflict and violent extremism, the social fabric of communities in Iraq urgently needs support. UNDP has developed an **integrated strategy on PVE and sustaining social cohesion** in Iraq, taking a multi-faceted, gender-sensitive approach, since most returnees perceived as having been affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are women and children. UNDP's approach includes continuous assistance to the National Committee on the Implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism, for example through building capacity among sub-committees of Iraqi governorates on implementing the strategy, as well as establishing interfaith religious leader networks across Iraqi governorates.



In 2022, UNDP Iraq and the National Committee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism held a high-level dialogue that included religious members from various faiths, with a view to **establishing a network of religious leaders** whose key focus would be to promote moderate religious discourse and increase awareness and support to community initiatives on PVE. UNDP also held a **series of five conferences targeting governorates liberated from ISIL**, where key religious sects, including Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, Christians, Sabean-Mandaeans, Kakais and Bahá'is, agreed to support community readiness for the reintegration of displaced families and to work together to prevent the spread of violent extremism.

Lessons learned and insights to inform future engagement:

- **People's differing understanding of religion is a catalyst for grievances related to identity.** According to the report *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement*, 52 percent of voluntary recruits in VEGs perceived religious diversity as “a good thing”, compared to 82 percent in the reference group. While many individuals indicate religion as a reason for joining VEGs, most of them also admit limited or no understanding of religious texts.⁵⁵
- **Further investment is needed in religious education and religious literacy, which constitute key protective factors against violent extremism. Inter-faith dialogue that celebrates diversity should be promoted.** Efforts to achieve these aims should include working with diverse faith-based actors to engage in dialogues for peacebuilding, promoting positive alternative narratives, and supporting religious teachings through methods that enable students to question and engage critically with religious texts and address misperceptions.

⁵⁵ UNDP, *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment* (New York, 2017).

5.3 Return and Reintegration

The territorial collapse of ISIL and ongoing crises in the Lake Chad Basin, Horn of Africa and Sahel regions have made screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals affiliated with violent groups an international priority.

The Al-Hol camp in north-east Syria, for example, hosts **55,000 individuals (about 27,000 of whom are children aged under 11)** including Iraqis, Syrians and third country nationals.⁵⁶



Recidivism and re-radicalization present real risks, so UNDP advocates for **local stakeholders**, such as law enforcement officers and front-line professionals, to be provided with capacity to offer rehabilitative programmes that ensure deradicalization, healing and attainment of social and livelihood skills so that returnees' eventual reintegration into society does not pose a security risk. Secondly, **returnees**, especially women and children, regardless of their real or perceived former association with VEGs, need to be able to obtain official identification, safe shelter and a dignified source of livelihood, and must be able to access public services as well as psychosocial support. Thirdly, **communities** must be prepared with the help of partnerships with influential community leaders and anti-stigmatization programmes.

In 2022, UNDP has supported stakeholders, returnees and communities in 15 countries. To do so, it has:

1) Empowered local civil society and stakeholders, including security sector actors, to provide contextualized reintegration support to improve inclusivity in return and reintegration programming:

- In **Kazakhstan**, UNDP trained 90 front-line service providers, including psychologists, social workers, district police officers and municipality officials to equip them with the tools and techniques to work with returnees. This has directly benefited 200 returnees. UNDP also worked with local NGOs, such as Chance, a part of the Pravo Public Foundation, which was supported to deliver social, medical and psychological rehabilitation services, as well as Akniet Public Foundation, which was supported to ensure the theological and psychological rehabilitation of returnees.
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNDP partnered with local NGOs, such as Pokolenie Insan, and with the national Probation Department to provide legal, psychological, social and medical services to 70 probation clients (48 male and 22 female) charged with VE-related criminal activities and domestic violence. Services were also provided to the probation clients' families.
- In **Morocco**, UNDP built the capacity of psychologists and social workers of the Mohammed VI Foundation (FMVI) to assist in the reintegration of ex-inmates convicted under the Anti-Terrorism Act, including returnees and their families. The UNDP training allowed 85 ex-inmates to receive improved psychosocial support. A subsequent ToT (mostly psychologists selected from the general training) allowed FMVI to take forward future trainings.

⁵⁶ Global Protection Cluster and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Syria Protection Sector Update: Al-Hol Camp, June 2022' (Geneva, 2022).

- In **the Philippines**, UNDP built capacity on early warning, prevention and effective response to radicalization risk among 50 participants working on issues related to return and reintegration, drawn from government, the security sector and civil society. UNDP also provided a platform to enable participants to collaborate effectively.

2) Developed evidence-based return and reintegration programming and policies to ensure human rights-based, age- and gender-sensitive approaches are applied:

- In **Iraq**, UNDP organized a two-day dialogue forum on reintegration, which brought together over 50 key government representatives, NGOs, partners and stakeholders from across the country to discuss strengthening the social fabric of Iraqi communities, with a focus on communities experience the return of families with perceived affiliations with ISIL. Additionally, the following knowledge products on return and reintegration were developed:
 - *Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration in Iraq (C2RI): Conflict Analysis 2022* analyses the socio-economic, development, political and security-related factors considered triggers of conflict within five target communities (Al Qa'im, Habbaniyahh, Muhalabiya, Ayyadiya, Yethrib and Tuz Khurmato) and presents key recommendations to foster stability
 - The study, *Affiliated with ISIS: Challenges for the Return and Reintegration of Women and Children*, highlights the very specific challenges and obstacles faced by women and children
 - The study, *Between perpetration and prevention of violent extremism: Accounting for Gender*, helps to support reintegration and PVE programming focusing on the perpetration and prevention of violent extremism by women
 - Finally, *Managing Exits from Conflict in Iraq: A Case Study of Basra and Tal Afar* developed by UNDP Iraq in partnership with the UN University, aims to improve the understanding of how and why individuals quit armed groups or situations and how they reintegrate into communities.
- In **Morocco**, UNDP supported the development of the national strategy to support the reintegration and rehabilitation of persons sentenced under laws relating to the fight against terrorism, including returnees from conflict zones and their families.
- In **Tajikistan**, UNDP developed a Toolkit for Return and Reintegration under the EU-UN STRIVE Asia project. UNDP ensured the inclusion of key groups and themes in return and reintegration programming, including the judiciary,

the media, community and religious leaders, theological institutions, education, MHPSS, sports and gender.

- In **Uzbekistan**, UNDP supported national partners in conducting needs assessment and evaluation surveys among adult returnees and staff members (community leaders, psychologists and nurses) engaged in reintegration of nationals repatriated from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria through the Mehr/Mercy special humanitarian operations in 2019–2021. A general assessment of the reintegration work accomplished so far was conducted and existing needs and challenges were identified, enabling the preparation of recommendations for national stakeholders.

3) Engaged on skills building, livelihood support and economic empowerment:

- In **Morocco**, UNDP organized courses to foster the economic empowerment of detainees, which were followed by a national competition to honour the best craftsman. UNDP also supported the development of a digital application to record information on new detainees in the centralized information system of the General Delegation for Prison Administration and Reintegration and ensured prison conditions were improved through the acquisition of hygiene equipment.
- In **Nigeria**, UNDP's reconciliation unit provided livelihood support to 600 women through alternate means of farming (micro-gardening). This enabled them to grow crops of economic value, which provided food supplies and generated income for their families.
- In **Pakistan**, UNDP provided livelihood skills trainings and MHPSS services for 100 men and 100 women (mostly returnees' family members) and ensured that returnees were linked with community elders and governmental service providers. Community-based activities addressed stigma towards returnees and prepared and sensitized host communities to create safe spaces for returnees.
- In **the Philippines**, UNDP collaborated with Gagandilan Mindanao Women Inc to help 40 widows of Abu Sayyaf⁵⁷ members reintegrate into their communities through values formation, conflict and safety mapping and peacebuilding. The training enabled the women to contribute to efforts to promote peace by encouraging active Abu Sayyaf members to return and informing them of the ongoing reintegration programmes.
- In **Sudan**, UNDP successfully reintegrated 10 individuals returning from conflict epicentres in Iraq, Libya and Syria. A further 1,695 people (of whom 771 were women) benefited from the provision of direct services such as vocational training (in areas including car mechanics,

⁵⁷ Abu Sayyaf is an Islamic separatist group operating in the Philippines regions of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

baking and mobile phone repair), agricultural activities, small enterprise and savings loans throughout the receiving communities and detention institutions of the targeted states.

4) Combated stigmatization of returnees:

- In **Iraq**, UNDP is supporting the reintegration of 9,000 perceived ISIL-affiliated families who were displaced within the country. The Country Office worked with local and national stakeholders to bring together hundreds of community and tribal leaders and local authorities in more than 30 trainings, workshops and conferences held with government officials, religious leaders, community leaders, local authorities and CSOs to promote social cohesion, reintegration and reconciliation. UNDP held dialogues with over 650 diverse religious leaders on mediation management and conflict transformation, promoting community readiness for the reintegration of displaced families and the promotion of PVE. In addition, over 90 government officials, local authorities and members of Local Peace Committees participated in trainings on reintegration concepts and practices.

- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNDP worked with the media in sensitization campaigns to address stigmatization. A guidance note⁵⁸ was published to encourage journalists to aim for unbiased reporting in covering the return of citizens from conflict zones. The guidance is regularly posted on the [Prevention Media analytical portal](#), as well as by other leading media organizations in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In total, 100 journalists from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were trained to put the guidance note into practice. The note's recommendations were integrated into the current [Code of Ethics for Journalists in Kyrgyzstan](#) to avoid stigmatization and to ensure sensitive media coverage of the repatriation of children. Under the EU-UN STRIVE Asia Project, media cards were prepared to advocate sensitive reporting on children's repatriation during the [AiKoi repatriation mission of children and women from Syria](#) and to ensure journalists adhered to the Code of Ethics. This limited the spread of hate speech, in particular when compared with the inflammatory rhetoric observed after the 2021 Meerim mission, which was not accompanied by a Code of Ethics or awareness programme for journalists.

CASE STUDY

Conflict-sensitive return and reintegration of individuals perceived as associated with Boko Haram in Nigeria: towards reconciliation and recovery

Due to ongoing conflict and protracted displacement, Nigeria is currently hosting more than **87,000 returnees**. In partnership with the Borno State Ministry of Transport, UNDP led initiatives on youth engagement and the provision of **sustainable livelihoods** for young people as part of their reintegration and transition back to civil life. For example, UNDP partnered with experts to train 500 youths to prepare them for deployment as road traffic marshals. Further, UNDP improved the quality of the **MHPSS** services provided to victims of Boko Haram dealing with PTSD, mental health issues, neurological conditions and substance abuse. Group sessions in the communities of reintegration also proved to be effective in fostering recovery among affected groups. Through participants' sharing of personal stories, these sessions encouraged a mentality of **peace and forgiveness within communities**. UNDP's **Peace through Sports Project** organized football games between teams drawn from host communities, former associates of VE groups and IDPs. The games promoted **social cohesion, solidarity and respect**.

UNDP Nigeria also enhanced **communities' preparedness** for reintegration and helped to **reduce rejection and stigmatization** of former associates of VE groups. UNDP engaged traditional and religious leaders, led sensitization campaigns and trained people in alternative dispute resolution and transitional justice to build the foundation for the reintegration of returnees. In 2022, UNDP's return and reintegration activities in Nigeria helped 3,447 returnees (including 1,450 women) to reintegrate into communities in Bama, Borno, Gwoza and Konduga States.



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⁵⁸ Prevention Media and UNDP, 'Recommendations for Reporting on Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children from Conflict Zones' (Bishkek, 2022).

- In **Pakistan**, UNDP worked with local community influencers (such as traditional and religious leaders and women and youth representatives), local NGOs and the media to address the stigmatization of returnees. UNDP adopted a comprehensive community-level approach, including sensitization sessions for government partners and civil society organizations. Additionally, UNDP worked on stabilizing the host communities of Afghan refugees following the influx of new Afghan migrants

after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021. UNDP built intra-communal harmony between host communities and migrants through the sensitization of local service providers and by creating links between new migrants and existing protection stakeholders. In the provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 200 migrants and host community members directly benefited from this initiative, as did the rest of their communities.

Lessons learned and insights to inform future engagement:

- **Long-term human rights-based and gender-sensitive strategies** are necessary to rehabilitate and reintegrate returnees and their families. Further investment must be made to meet the needs of women and returnees and reduce the risk of stigma and of re-radicalization. This includes capacity-building among law enforcement officials and prison wardens on the drivers of violent extremism and on gendered perspectives and needs.
- To prevent prisons from becoming incubators for radicalization and recruitment, **proper risk-informed screening and behavioural assessments**⁵⁹ at different stages of the reintegration process are needed. These measures are also needed to ensure returnees' well-being after their release. They can be carried out through professional psychological sessions that accompany the deradicalization process, including throughout returnees' and families' social integration into receiving communities.
- Given that **mental health challenges are a major obstacle to many returnees' ability to fully participate in reintegration programmes**, return and reintegration programmes must include psychosocial rehabilitation, vocational training, education and social reintegration initiatives that allow returnees to seek employment and socialize with members of their host community.

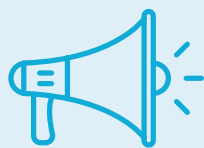
⁵⁹ In Sudan specifically, social monitoring is carried out by providing psychosocial support services through case management and referral to specialized services, and follow-up and evaluation sessions are required. Importantly, this highlights the need for experts to oversee the monitoring and assessment of returnees for risk-informed programming, to ensure that it does not become a medium for state control.



5.4 Hate Speech and Online Radicalization

In parallel with the rise of social media, the use online of **dangerous or hateful speech** to disparage individuals and to promote violence against them based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other difference has grown exponentially. In some contexts, **VEGs exploit the internet to capitalize on offline grievances** such as the increased vulnerabilities created by COVID-19 as well as pre-existing social tensions and divisions, to manipulate public sentiment around current events through online propaganda, and to incite violence. Hate speech is observed to spread at heightened levels during periods of political transitions, and discriminatory discourse and hate speech against vulnerable groups and gender-based hate speech and disinformation are especially widespread during election campaigns.⁶⁰ UNDP's survey of young people across the Western Balkans found **that hate speech online or offline was the most reported form of violence or discrimination**, but only 17 percent of those affected reported it and just 58 percent felt the reporting brought positive results.⁶¹

In this context, across **49 countries**, UNDP is **building awareness and capacities speech as well as information pollution** by following the commitments and guidance set forth in the [UN guidance for the implementation of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech \(2019\)](#).



In 2022, UNDP has:

1) Increased understanding and monitoring of hate speech and its impact on societies and offered alternative narratives to counter hate speech:

- Across the **Asia Pacific** region, early warning efforts have been supported through monitoring efforts that include mapping digital ecosystems and establishing violence monitoring centres to identify trigger points for violence.
- In **Bangladesh, Chile, Iraq, Kenya, Panama, Sri Lanka, Thailand** and **Venezuela**, UNDP used Google Ads campaigns to improve digital literacy and raise awareness on hate speech with the Fighting Hate and False Narratives Initiative. Over six months, the online content developed by UNDP on positive civic engagement, awareness and education on misinformation, cybercrime and information pollution reached 67,605 internet users.
- In **Kenya**, UNDP partnered with the Media Council of Kenya to launch the [iVerify Network of Fact-Checking Desks](#), an AI tool used to identify and mitigate misinformation, disinformation and hate speech and promote information integrity in the electoral process. UNDP also launched campaigns using digital marketing strategies to fight hate and false narratives online, increasing public capacity to verify information and recognize credible information sources. The campaigns reached 19,000 users from Kenya and its neighbouring countries, with the majority being young people.⁶² Moreover, in the #LetPeaceWin campaign, UNDP worked with partners from the UWIANO Platform for Peace to counter evolving trends in online

⁶⁰ UNDP, 'Mapping and Analysis of Efforts to Counter Information Pollution in Europe and Central Asia Region' (Istanbul, 2022).

⁶¹ UNDP, *Shared Futures: Youth Perceptions on Peace in the Western Balkans* (New York, 2021).

hate speech, by supporting grassroots initiatives and peace campaigns across the country aimed at mobilizing youth as local peace champions.⁶³

- In **Lebanon, Libya, Peru and Tunisia**, the eMonitor+ platform was used to monitor hate speech and misinformation during elections. This AI-powered tool uses machine learning to track and analyse digital media content in order to identify hate speech, misinformation, online violence against women and electoral violations. It works in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.
- In **Sri Lanka**, UNDP with the UNRCO continued to support a local CSO to monitor, identify and analyse public social media content for dangerous speech. UNDP observed that social media platforms responded to 88 percent of reports and took down 56 percent within a week of a report being registered. Data from this monitoring initiative also indicated that the proportion of harmful content targeting women increased considerably, from 25 percent in 2021 to 44 percent in 2022. This insight was used for evidence-based advocacy during the drafting process for a landmark code of practice aimed at improving technology platforms' accountability for preventing digital harms in Sri Lanka, which UNDP supported. As a result, provisions to mitigate risks and reduce the prevalence of online gender-based violence were incorporated into the code's Guiding Principles and Commitments. UNDP also established a UN-supported Community of Practice on Monitoring and Countering Dangerous Speech, consisting of 22 organizations.
- In **Thailand**, the UNDP-led online campaign No Hate Thailand provided a platform where people could share hateful words they encountered in their everyday life. The campaign reached more than 266,000 people and its audience has expanded beyond the country to the global level. Additionally, UNDP supported the development of a video in which stateless youth addressed the stigma against their ethnic communities, aiming to dispel stereotypes and promote acceptance.

2) Designed, identified and scaled up programmes to address the drivers of hate speech:

- Across **all regions**, UNDP is engaging with new and traditional media; using technology and online platforms to counter hateful messages and promote alternative narratives (i.e. through community influencers and faith-based actors); making use of education as a tool to

address and counter hate speech; bringing together relevant actors and leveraging partnerships (i.e. with parliaments, civil society, youth, media, the private sector, etc.); and supporting Member States in capacity-building and policy development to address hate speech.

- In **Bangladesh**, UNDP held Peace Talk Cafés to create a space for informal dialogue in which young people could interact directly with experts, government officials and influencers on subjects related to the digital space. Topics included addressing cyberbullying as a form of hate speech that affects many women and girls, an issue emphasized during the 16 Days of Activism campaign against gender-based violence.
- In **the Gambia**, UNDP worked through media and local community structures to strengthen the capacity of youth to address hate speech and counter misinformation. In 2022, 10 youth-produced content pieces were created to sensitize peers on media information literacy and hate-neutral speech. In community mediation efforts, youth community members were engaged as advocates against hate speech and champions of positive messaging. In addition, UNDP trained 30 media professionals in fact-checking skills.
- In **Iraq**, UNDP trained young journalists, including 105 new members of the citizen journalism project first launched in 2020, to promote social cohesion, combat hate speech and prevent violent extremism on social media using citizen journalism tools. UNDP supported these journalists in creating and promoting over 500 new media products on the Tanawo3 platform. Taking its name from the Arabic word for “diversity”, the Tanawo3 platform was created in 2021 to share short news stories, images and videos related to peacebuilding and cohesion in Iraq.
- In **Mali**, UNDP supported the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Worship in developing a strategy for the dissemination of PVE messages. Under the framework of this strategy, several meet-ups were organized to develop and begin disseminating messages against radical discourse, attended by 135 youths and women from religious groups.
- In **South Sudan**, UNDP partnered with young innovators to mount locally-led responses to the negative impacts of hate speech. Participants in the programme highlighted the need for greater awareness raising, including through targeted messaging to community leaders, educators, religious actors and women leaders.

⁶² See Lillian Njoro, 'Learning from successful digital marketers to fight hate and false narratives online', UNDP Kenya, 27 June 2022. Available at <https://www.undp.org/kenya/blog/learning-successful-digital-marketers-fight-hate-and-false-narratives-online>.

⁶³ For more information, see UNDP, 'Focus Note: Youth-Led Initiatives Promoting Peace in Kenya' (Nairobi, 2022). Available at <https://www.undp.org/kenya/publications/focus-note-youth-led-initiatives-promoting-peace-kenya>.

Preventing hate speech and violent discourse through online engagement in South-east Asia

In the digital world, hate speech can be conveyed not only through words, but also through images, music and even symbols. Underpinned by a rhetoric that perpetuates stigmatization and dehumanization, hate speech and misinformation threaten social stability and peace, creating an environment conducive to violent extremism. In recent years, UNDP Regional Hub for Asia and the Pacific has undertaken diverse initiatives against hate speech. UNDP **successfully trained over 47 talented young creators** to produce over 212 videos challenging hateful messages in order to create a positive impact. These videos have been viewed 30 million times. In 2022, UNDP's partnership with TikTok on the Creators Forward programme **has empowered 19 youth influencers collectively representing over 25 million followers** to use their strengthened digital skills and creative thinking to produce campaigns that engage their community on countering cyberbullying, celebrating cultural diversity and advocating for global empathy. Lastly, UNDP Asia Pacific, in partnership with the SecDev, produced a **digital ecosystem mapping** which highlighted potential counter-narratives that will guide new campaigns and help identify drivers of hate speech. The mapping also found a clear need for enhanced digital citizenship skills among youth in South-East Asia: skills that can enable individuals to fully participate in their communities, be more self-critical of the content of their posts, make smart choices online and in life and address digital violence against women.



Creators Forward Project



5.5 Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to contribute to his or her community.⁶⁴ Many studies – for example, on online behaviour and emotional expression on social media – suggest that over the past two decades, manifestations of overly negative perceptions of the world and its future have surged, and that **today's distress levels are unprecedented**.⁶⁵ Prolonged crisis, violent extremism, generalized violence and conflict not only have devastating consequences for the mental health and well-being of communities and individuals, but also negatively impact people's resilience, hampering their ability to rebuild their lives. Such levels of mental distress pose a serious constraint to achieving SDG target 3.4: “by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being”.

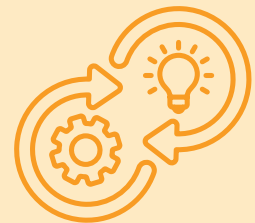
Today, planetary change, economic insecurity, digitalization, violence and discrimination add to existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, further impacting mental well-being and multiplying the threats to human development.

In his 2020 report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the United Nations Secretary-General emphasized the need to **better integrate mental health and psychosocial support into peacebuilding**. Since then, UNDP has undertaken several initiatives related to policy, programming and partnerships, advancing the prioritization of MHPSS on the global agenda and ensuring a comprehensive, operational and system-wide approach to integrating mental health and psychosocial support in prevention and peacebuilding.⁶⁶ UNDP supports the **structural integration of MHPSS** in peacebuilding programming by developing guidance, enhancing advocacy, providing seed funding and engaging experts.

According to the World Health Organization, one in eight people suffer from a mental health disorder.



Across 21 countries, UNDP provides knowledge-sharing opportunities, technical assistance and capacity-building for MHPSS.



⁶⁴ World Health Organization, *Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice (Summary Report)* (Geneva, 2004).

⁶⁵ Data from UNDP, *Human Development Report 2021–22*.

⁶⁶ UN Secretary-General, *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/668–S/2022/66)*.

In 2022, UNDP has:

1) Built the capacities of national authorities to meet the MHPSS needs of vulnerable populations:

- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNDP built the capacity of government officials engaged in the repatriation of returnees in order to improve returnees' social, medical and psychological rehabilitation. UNDP developed a training module to improve probation officers' knowledge and skills in developing psychological portraits of their probation clients, in providing social, legal and psychological assistance and in understanding resocialization and reintegration dynamics.

2) Empowered local actors to address the mental health and psychosocial needs of communities affected by violent extremism, through dialogue, education, counselling, mentoring and livelihood support:

- In **Indonesia**, UNDP initiated work on MHPSS by organizing a round table on MHPSS from a PVE perspective, sharing best practices and lessons learned on MHPSS in PCVE programmes.
- In **Iraq**, UNDP organized dialogues with local and national authorities in charge of providing MHPSS and livelihood opportunities for previously displaced returnees. UNDP also organized awareness sessions and provided counselling services and specialized assistance for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, UNDP supported the rehabilitation of community centres, ensuring the sustainability of MHPSS services.
- In **the Philippines**, UNDP supported the review of the implementation of the Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2020–2022 and the formulation of the next cycle of the Regional Action Plan, highlighting the need for MHPSS to strengthen community resilience and social cohesion. The findings also informed the review of the National Action Plan on WPS. In addition, UNDP promoted youth peace initiatives:
 - UNDP organized two workshops with 64 youth participants on the integration of Islamic microfinance and MHPSS in youth peacebuilding initiatives in Maguindanao. Youth peace advocates who participated in both activities developed action plans for community-based initiatives on MHPSS and peacebuilding.

- UNDP supported the training and mentoring on MHPSS of 99 women peacebuilders, as part of continuing efforts in promoting young women leaders in the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte.

3) Built the capacities of front-line service providers to offer MHPSS services and to manage their own mental health and well-being:

- UNDP supported all five Country Offices in Central Asia⁶⁷ with hands-on technical support in integrating MHPSS into their PVE activities. Please refer to Chapter 3 for more information.

4) Developed global research and promoted information-sharing:

- In May 2022, UNDP published a pioneering *Guidance Note on Integrating MHPSS into Peacebuilding*.

5) Created a pool of experts for dedicated capacities:

- To support the operationalization of the MHPSS and peacebuilding portfolio, 114 individuals were vetted as experts and are now part of UNDP's ExpRes roster on MHPSS. These individuals can now be mobilized as and when needed to provide dedicated capacity for staff training and for in-country programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation related to MHPSS and peacebuilding.

6) Strengthened communications and advocacy:

- UNDP initiated a story series presenting a people-centred perspective on the importance of integrating MHPSS into peacebuilding. The purpose of the series is to promote this new area of work and position UNDP as a leader in the field. The published stories are:
 - Pilot story: [The collective mental health of communities. Settled minds, settled lives: A conversation with Zhanna Chmut on #InnerPeacebuilding in Ukraine](#)
 - Story 2: [Bridge over troubled waters. The role of religion and faith in integrating MHPSS and peacebuilding](#)
 - Story 3: [From surviving to thriving. Mental health and psychosocial support for the reintegration of people \(formerly\) associated with violent extremist groups](#)

⁶⁷ Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Integrating MHPSS into peacebuilding to rehabilitate women and children returnees in Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, supporting the return and reintegration of former terrorist fighters and people who may be associated with VEGs poses serious challenges.

UNDP Kazakhstan initiated its programme on repatriation and reintegration in 2018 to support family members of the former terrorist fighters, including children brought to conflict zones in the Middle East (Iraq and Syria) or, in some cases, born there. With UNDP's support, **more than 600 family members of ISIL fighters have been repatriated from Syria to Kazakhstan over the last three years**, of whom around 400 were children. UNDP partnered with the national education sector, including the Ministry of Education, to address the re-socialization challenges faced by children who speak neither Kazakh or Russian. Since mental health issues are common among child returnees, UNDP Kazakhstan supported the **provision of targeted MHPSS for children**. In addition, UNDP funded 26 national NGOs working to equip women with the labour skills they need to be financially independent and successfully reintegrate into society. Recognizing the value of an **inclusive and holistic approach** towards effective rehabilitation, reintegration and re-socialization, UNDP engaged front-liners, social workers and psychologists and assisted partner CSOs and national authorities (including correctional institutions) to jointly apply a development-based approach towards the safe reintegration of returnees and their families. MHPSS activities not only helped returnees recover from the trauma of being involved in or affiliated with VEGs, but also supported them in finding a renewed sense of purpose and belonging in their community.



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**Prevention of
Violent Extremism
(PVE)**