

NEWSLETTER



REGIONAL PROGRAMME IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: UPDATE

January - March 2020



In this quarterly newsletter, for the period January - March 2020, you will get an update of recent activities and upcoming events in the Regional Programme Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism Project in Africa.

PVE REGIONAL PROGRAMME NEWS

UNDP Leads Consultations on PVE in the South Borderlands of Libya

At the [Berlin Conference on Libya](#) in January 2020, the international community acknowledged that the threat posed by violent extremist groups in Libya undermines opportunities for sustainable peace, security and reconstruction of governance in the country. To address the emerging violent extremism threat in the borderlands of South Libya, UNDP seeks to leverage its expertise with the development approach to PVE built in other countries on the African continent. To kick-start the PVE action in the southern borderlands of Libya, the Regional PVE team in close collaboration with the UNDP Libya Country Office organized a consultation on 2nd March with representatives from the Sudan, Niger and Chad country offices with the overall aim of ensuring a comprehensive cross-border approach in the region.



Libya South Borderlands, UNDP Libya

Due to prevailing political and security challenges, PVE-activities have been marginally implemented in Libya. While most of the fighters were homegrown, ISIL also attracted nationals from neighboring countries such as Chad, Mali and Sudan ([2019, ISS](#)). After ISIL gave up its control, many of the surviving extremists melted into urban populations or fled to Libya's ungoverned southern steppes in search of safe havens. Some allegedly crossed the border into Niger on their way to join emerging branches of the Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliated groups. Desert camps of cells of alleged ISIL-members exploit smugglers' networks in the borderlands with Chad, Niger and Sudan for recruits, arms and further utilities to reconstruct their position.

A comprehensive cross-border approach towards addressing violent extremism in the region is a necessity. As a first step, an analysis of the threat of violent extremism in the south Libya border communities, as well as those in North Chad, North Niger and North (-West) Sudan is required. The analysis will also take into account the potential role of Nigerian VE-groups in sustaining those VE-groups active in South Libya with arms and materials or operating as a 'source country' for foreign terrorist fighters. The research team for the threat assessment will be composed of organizations and individuals that will bring existing expertise and networks in one (or multiple) of the geographical areas: North Chad, North Niger, South Libya or Sudan. The outcome of this research will reinforce ongoing work on Journey to Extremism 2.0. Collaboration with UN-agencies will be sought to maximize access to the remote regions that the research should take place in. The research team will work under the guidance of a Reference Group who will provide a review and validation of methodology, as well as review and validation of the final report. A follow-up to the inception meeting will be held in Q2 with the Reference Group members and the research team.

UNDP Sudan Resumes Discussions on National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism

In February 2020, the United Nations Office for Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) visited Sudan for consultations with the UN Country Team, Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism (SNCT), the Office of the Prime Minister and CSOs working on PVE. These consultations build on earlier work by UNDP in the provision of support to the SNCT. The consultations discussed the timeline and efforts for the development of a National PVE Strategy and Action Plan. UNOCT concluded that the Strategy development process in Sudan could be finalized in 2020, due to high government ownership and successful UNDP-efforts in PVE capacity building in 2016-2019.

SNCT and the Office of the Prime Minister acknowledged the intention to develop both the National PVE Strategy and a National Action Plan for PVE in 2020.. Alongside UNDP and UNOCT, it was agreed that the development process should be timebound, efficient and inclusive. The Regional PVE Project will continue to support UNDP Sudan in this process, in terms of coordination with UNOCT as well as providing for (peer-to-peer) exchanges of good practices and lessons learned with PVE Strategy Development in other countries, in the IGAD region and in collaboration with the African Union.

Considering the fact that the VE-threat in Sudan does not seem to decrease in the era of political transition, UNDP Sudan continues its community-level PVE-activities in parallel to the development of the National PVE Strategy. PAVE outreach efforts also include social media, and application use and rollout, TV and films. One of the unique communication initiatives regarding pathways to radicalization in Sudan included the production of a film called **"Iman – when faith is at the crossroads"**. The film has been utilized in community dialogue meetings to raise awareness on violent extremism and has had millions of views in inspirational screenings for international audiences. SNCT has informed UNDP that the film will also be screened on **national television for the first time, in April 2020.**

UNDP Participates in the First African Forum of Prison and Rehabilitation Administrations



Nirina Kiplagat, UNDP Regional PVE Project Manager

Nirina Kiplagat, Regional PVE Project Manager, represented UNDP at the first African Forum of Prison and Reintegration Administrations held in Rabat, Morocco on 30-31 January. The Forum was convened by the Government of Morocco under the theme, "Towards a common vision to strengthen South-South cooperation and confront the challenges and constraints of prison management."

The main objectives of the Forum were to present the Moroccan experience in the management of prison affairs in terms of security and reintegration; to unify the management of security challenges common to African countries; and, to promote the modernization of prison governance at the continental level. The two-day Forum was attended by representatives from

penitentiary systems from thirty-six African countries, representatives from penitentiary systems in Spain, France and Switzerland, as well as the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNDP.

UNDP Morocco has, since 2016, undertaken activities to support development and implementation of an action plan to counter radicalization amongst Moroccan prison populations. In partnership with religious association 'Mohammadia League of Scholars', UNDP Morocco developed and applied a tool to sensitize inmates to engage in early warning of (religiously inspired) radicalization. In her presentation, Nirina introduced UNDP's role in preventing the spread of violent extremism among prison communities and emphasized the importance of sharing experience and best practices across the continent.

At the conclusion of the Forum, representatives of the 36 African States adopted the Declaration of Rabat 2020 on "Prison management and the reintegration of detainees", which stressed the importance of improving conditions of detention and humanizing penitentiary administrations, while also paying proper attention to respect human rights; ensuring Africa-specific research is used to inform programmes; prioritizing prison reforms to address challenges such as over-crowded jails and continuing to enhance South-Southcooperation and exchange of expertise. Towards that end, this Forum will be held on a regular basis.

ONGOING ACTIVITY BRIEF

The Regional project 'Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: a Development Approach', co-chaired by UNDP's Regional Service Centre for Africa and Regional Hub for Arab States, held its **4th Board meeting on Monday 27 January 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**. The Project Board, with the presence of ECOWAS, IGAD and LCBC representatives, highlighted achievements and progress on activities carried out in 2019 and approved the Project's Annual Workplan for 2020. As a result, 12 country offices have received financial support of more than USD 3.4 million for national PVE projects under the umbrella of the Regional PVE Project in 2020.

UNDP Mali and UNDP Sudan plan to conduct research on Drivers/Triggers of VE in their respective countries in 2020. These contextualized studies will contribute and feed into the Journey to Extremism in Africa 2.0 research project. Both COs have been liaising with the Regional PVE team and agreed to work jointly on aligning the data collection and data analysis processes. This brings the countries contributing to data collection for the Journey to Extremism 2.0 research project to 7 – Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan.

A Project initiation plan (PIP) for a PVE cross-border programme in West Africa was approved. The objective of the PIP is to mobilize the required resources and expertise to initiate and develop PVE national actions plans in Benin, Ghana and Togo. The rise of violent extremism in the region is increasingly prominent, in a context where current cross-border and transnational threats extend beyond national boundaries. A regional approach is therefore critical as it would allow the three countries to share their experiences and propose guiding principles for the development of PVE strategies.

The Regional PVE Project has received a support request from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) combatting Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region to join efforts in preventing violent extremism. Collaboration with MNJTF and LCBC will focus on inclusive community-level alternative messaging against (ideological) narratives of the violent extremist group. The objective of the collaboration is to develop a Regional Strategic Communications Strategy for PVE following the whole-of-society methodology that UNDP's Regional PVE Project has established through its support to regional and national PVE strategies. Dialogue between the Regional Programme and the MNJTF leadership also focused on potential support to the implementation of the Strategy in the longer term.

In collaboration with the country offices, UNDP's Regional PVE Project have exchanged views on the potential to leverage existing national and **community-level PVE networks in the combat against the spread of Covid-19**. For example, religious leaders engaged in PVE-efforts seem powerful sources for messages encouraging communities to follow preventive health measures.

ANNOUNCEMENT: INTRODUCTION OF JOELLE SEME PARK, REGIONAL PROGRAMME ANALYST



Joelle Seme Park joined the Regional PVE Project Team in March as part of the JPO programme sponsored by the Republic of Korea. Prior to her arrival at the Regional Service Centre, Joelle worked at the KOICA Tunisia Country office as a Development Coordinator on programmes under the Governance Pillar with the Tunisian government and development partners.

Regional PVE Programme Overview

Preventing and Responding To Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach, UNDP'S six-year regional development project is designed to strengthen the development responses to mitigate the growth of violent extremism in Africa.

The Project is a joint initiative between **UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa** and **Regional Hub in Amman**. It articulates development response and addresses structural, causative or perpetuating factors. The initiative focus on eighteen countries across Africa.

The project has received support from **the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)**, government agency working on behalf of the Swedish government, and by the **Government of Netherlands**. In the period between 2016 - 2018, the project also received financial support from the Government of Japan and the Government of the United Kingdom.

Read more information about the project in the **[Regional PVE Project Document](#)**.

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