

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



*Regional Service Centre for Africa
Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: a
Development Approach*



Source: Lake Chad, Aurelia Rusek for UNDP Chad

Lake Chad Basin Civil Society Network on Inclusive Reintegration Launched

On Thursday, 24th June, ten Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in collaboration with UNDP, launched a CSO Network on Inclusive Reintegration for the Lake Chad Basin. The hybrid event, held in Abuja, was attended by national and international development actors, government stakeholders, members of the donor community and over 200 online participants who discussed the contributions so far, as well as opportunities to strengthen CSOs' participation in facilitating inclusive reintegration and the stabilization efforts of the Lake Chad region.

The conceptualization of the initiative began in 2018 at the Kigali Symposium on Community-driven Approaches to Reintegration, emphasizing the integral roles that CSOs can play to achieve regional stabilization efforts, prevent and counter violent extremism, and support effective and sustainable reintegration programming. In situations of protracted conflict, such as the insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin, promoting and enhancing civic spaces in the design, implementation and monitoring of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) interventions is pivotal to ensure societal acceptance of ex-combatants by the communities.



Source: NEEM Foundation

REGIONAL PVE PROJECT OVERVIEW

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

The project is a joint initiative between the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa and the Regional Hub in Amman. It articulates development responses and addresses structural, causative and perpetuating factors. The initiative focuses on 18 countries across Africa.

The project has received support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), a 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.

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

“We must tackle the issue of insecurity and violence with utmost concern not just for providing a solution but ensuring that the solution is crosscutting and inclusive,” stated Mohamed Yahya, UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria, during his remarks. The two leading organizations of the network, Elman Peace Centre and Neem Foundation, highlighted the need for greater cooperation between civil society organizations and key security agencies in implementing peace and DDR programmes. “We must leverage on collaborative opportunities between the government and civil society organizations in the pursuit of a more resilient and secure society,” agreed Maryam Uwais, Special Adviser to the President of Nigeria on Social Investments and Protection, in her statement.

The CSO Network, supported by the UNDP Regional PVE Project and UNDP’s Global Programme on Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights, is envisioned to create stronger societal alliances, enhance offline and online cooperation, beginning with primary engagements in the Lake Chad Basin region with key actors in the Screening Prosecution Rehabilitation and Reintegration (SPRR), Community based Reintegration, and DDR domains with an ambition to facilitate exchanges with similar sub-regional platforms on the continent. Importantly, stakeholders agreed to ensure complementarity of the CSO Network on Inclusive Reintegration with existing civil society structures in the Lake Chad Basin, including a broadly focused Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) CSO Platform, established under the umbrella of the LCBC Secretariat, to synergize efforts and identify and mainstream capacity building needs.

Introductory workshop on Early Warning/Early Response and PVE Toolkit for the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Following the validation of the Early Warning/Early Response and PVE Toolkit, in collaboration with the African Centre for Research and Study on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Regional PVE team hosted an online workshop to introduce the Toolkit to the SADC Regional Early Warning Centre (REWC) and representatives of National Early Warning Centres (NEWC) from 6 member states.

Leveraging on ACSRT’s mandate to provide capacity building for early warning to encourage early response, UNDP and ACSRT jointly proposed a set of three workshops to support the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in exploring opportunities from the recommendations of the Toolkit on EWER and PVE to strengthen the Regional Early Warning Centre’s (REWC) role to prevent violent extremism in the region. The online introductory meeting of the Toolkit to SADC’s REWC and its member states was held on 18th May 2021 to present the Toolkit on EWER and PVE, understand the current status of SADC REWC and identify preliminary entry points for collaboration between SADC, ACSRT and UNDP on implementation of the Toolkit.

On behalf of the SADC Director of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and the member states, Mr. Habib Kambanga, head of the SADC REWC, expressed his appreciation on the timeliness of the event. He added that SADC was responding to the emerging regional threat of violent extremism through its regional counter-terrorism centre and the REWC. Through the cooperation with ACSRT and UNDP on the Toolkit, SADC intends to strengthen its REWC and thereby collectively address regional threats including terrorism and violent extremism.

The introductory workshop was also attended by representatives from the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden, and the Human Security Collective as observers, given their interest in PVE and the region. The second session of the online workshop is scheduled to take place on 28th July 2021 and will entail the provision of practical examples by different levels of stakeholders from the West and East African regions to promote South-South cooperation.

UNDP Tunisia shares key findings on the drivers of violent extremism to inform the national PVE strategy

In 2021, the Tunisian National Counterterrorism Commission (CNLCT) was mandated to coordinate the revision of the National Strategy to Counter Extremism and Terrorism (SNLCET). This process aims at adapting the policy framework for the next five years, drawing from key learnings from the first phase of implementation of the strategy starting in 2016.



Source: UNDP Tunisia

The context of violent extremism (VE) in Tunisia has changed since the SNLCET was adopted in 2016. The analysis of the evolving conditions is useful to ensure that the new policy framework will be evidence-based and specific to the current Tunisian context. UNDP Tunisia, through the 'Tarabot – Cohesion to prevent violence' project, has supported the analytical review of the existing literature on violent extremism trends in Tunisia. The research provides an analytical framework to inform interventions both at the social (improving the resilience of the Tunisian society and State to violent extremism) and individual (addressing the factors of radicalization) levels. This initiative is part of a broader effort jointly implemented by the CNLCT and UNDP to support context specific research on VE in Tunisia and to accompany the process of PVE policy formation.

Key findings of the study were shared during the workshop, held on 23rd June, with the committees that are responsible for drafting the new national strategy. The workshop convened 15 senior officials from different ministries (Defence, Interior, Justice, Religious Affairs, Youth, Education, Finance, etc.) who engaged in working groups to discuss the key guiding principles to distill from the research in order to inform the strategy. 40 PVE practitioners and civil society stakeholders also joined the discussions online and shared their insights on the new VE trends.

The research highlights the potential counterproductive effects of hard security measures on the preventive efforts of the State and provides a general consensus on the necessary enabling conditions to sustain prevention. Also, it highlights some factors with trends as a result of COVID-19 such as economic and social marginalization of part of the youth population, rise of unemployment due to harmful economic and social measures taken by the Tunisian authorities and further decrease in trust in public institutions. The research provided key strategic implications and conclusions such as the need for structural reforms in the security and judiciary sectors as well as the strengthening of social cohesion and trust in public institutions. These key strategic implications will be incorporated in the National PVE Strategy revision, which was kicked off on the same day of the research presentations, as well as in the development of future PVE national action plans.

[1] SNLCET: *Stratégie Nationale de lutte Contre l'extrémisme et le terrorisme*.

UNDP Morocco Strengthens the Capacities of Civil Society Organizations to Support Rehabilitation and Reintegration Efforts

UNDP Morocco in partnership with the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Reintegration of Detainees (FMVI) organized five awareness-raising and training workshops for local Civil Society Organizations/actors (CSOs) to strengthen their capacities and skills in the field of C/PVE and to equip them with the necessary tools to support the rehabilitation and reintegration efforts of ex-combatants and returnees as well as their families.



Source: UNDP Morocco

The workshops were held between 14th and 29th June 2021, in five FMVI regional Support and Reintegration Centers in the regions of Rabat-Salé, Casablanca-Settat, Fez-Meknes, Marrakech-Safi and Tangier-Tetouan-El Hoceima.

While taking into account approaches related to gender, child protection and psychosocial support, as well as the use of strategic communication as a mechanism to raise awareness of these issues, participants had the opportunity to discuss regional action plans that can help reinforce the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of targeted populations into their local communities.

The workshops aim to explore implementation approaches of reintegration programmes such as the participatory societal approach, which involves all civil society actors, government institutions, as well as international organizations to better understand and foster synergies and cooperation in preventing the spread of violent extremist ideas.

"This is the first time that I have benefited from a training that introduced me to a new set of methods and approaches that will help me better support and understand people involved in cases of violent extremism and returnees from conflict zones, especially in terms of strategic communication," shared a representative from a civil society organization.

On-going Activity Brief

The Government of the Czech Republic signed a partnership agreement with UNDP and committed to support the Regional PVE Project's intervention in the Sahel in 2021 with a total allocation of USD 450,000, which will contribute to the rollout of the Toolkit on PVE and Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) in partnership with the Republic of Burkina Faso, and country-level PVE interventions in Mali.



The Oslo III, a virtual conference under the title [Tides of Change: Emerging Trends in Violent Extremism and the Future of Prevention](#), was held between 14th - 16th June, 2021. The aim of the conference was to understand how the violent extremism landscape had evolved since the onset of COVID-19 and to distil lessons for future research, policy and programming. The conference was attended by various stakeholders including UNDP PVE Project partners Simon Nyambura, Director of the IGAD Center of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (ICEPCVE) and Ilwad Elman, Director of Programs & Development at Elman Peace & Human Rights Centre. The Regional PVE Project presented a [spotlight session](#) to launch and discuss the findings of a [policy brief](#) on Climate Change and Violent Extremism Nexus in Africa. The project also supported participation of the Human Rights Observatory in the Far North Region of Cameroon as part of the Stories on the Ground initiative.

The UNDP Tunisia PVE Team hosted a spotlight session on ['Development and Security at the Tunisia-Libya Border: Two Sides of the Same Coin?'](#).



The Regional Governance and Peacebuilding Team has commenced inclusive online consultations on "Reimagining Governance and Peacebuilding in Africa". The aim of these consultations is to explore assumptions of governance and peacebuilding and develop an innovative approach while incorporating the lessons from previous programmatic interventions. It focuses on fostering trust between States and People through accountability; transparency; transformational leadership; supporting elections and local governance; promoting human rights and rule of law; prioritizing prevention and peacebuilding; and addressing political, digital and economic governance deficits. This process includes multiple consultations with diverse stakeholders and a [SparkBlue](#) forum - UNDP digital platform for online engagement - open from 28th June to 19th July 2021.

On 17th May 2021, in collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), the UNDP Africa Regional PVE team organized a webinar on "Sharing Best Practices to Mainstream Human Rights Based Approaches in PVE" with the aim of increasing the capacity of PVE project staff to mainstream human rights-based approaches in PVE intervention. The sessions of the webinar included the introduction of human rights policies and tools, the human rights due diligence policy on UN support to non-UN security forces, and presentation of practical examples and emerging good practices on mitigating measures that were undertaken to address human rights issues through PVE programmatic interventions in Cameroon and Sudan. With a total of 32 participants, the survey indicated a high satisfaction rate with a further request to seek in-depth support in human rights-based approaches in the development of National PVE Strategies, as well as exchange of best practices between countries. This webinar is part of the Africa PVE Community of Practice scheduled series for 2021.



The UNDP Regional PVE team and UNDP Country Offices in the IGAD region participated in the review and validation of the IGAD study on Early Warning and Early Response as part of the stocktaking of the IGAD Regional PCVE Strategy. The study will be launched in Q3 2021.



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