

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

“Development Solutions to Address Violent Extremism in Cote d’Ivoire”: Multi-stakeholder workshop

As a follow up intervention from the scoping mission on “Strengthening Social Cohesion through Prevention of Violent Extremism and Conflict”, held from July-August 2021, a multi-stakeholder event, organised by the UNDP Cote d’Ivoire Country Office, “Development Solutions to Address Violent Extremism in Cote d’Ivoire”, was held on 15-16 December 2021 in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire.

The main objective of the event aimed to identify and define development solutions that will concretize the coordination mechanism and its relevant interventions for the prevention of violent extremism in Cote d’Ivoire. Inaugurated by the Minister for the Promotion of Youth, Professional Integration and Civic Service, the event successfully demonstrated the importance and interest in PVE by high-level national stakeholders and representatives of international partners eager to take part in discussions on the development priorities in Cote d’Ivoire in addressing violent extremism. Carol Flore, UNDP Resident Representative in Côte d’Ivoire, noted that the workshop was meant to provide a platform for stakeholders to ensure that the collective and individual determination, and strategies for preventing violent extremism are up to today’s challenges while the recommendations outlined reflects the reality and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the dynamics of violent extremism in Côte d’Ivoire.

Key recommendations that emerged from the workshop include strengthening the synergy of actions between all development actors for collective and concerted action with a view to greater effectiveness and cohesion on the ground; establishing a coordination mechanism for PVE-relevant interventions that will ensure the coherence and complementarity



Source: UNDP Cote d’Ivoire

of initiatives on the ground; designing and implementing a development programme to prevent and respond to violent extremism in Côte d’Ivoire based on the achievements of past and current interventions, and focus on issues related to violent extremism that were previously insufficiently addressed or not yet addressed.

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](#).

Border communities in Ghana urged to increase vigilance to prevent violent extremism

UNDP Ghana, in partnership with the Government of the Netherlands and Sweden supported border communities in the Upper West Region to increase their vigilance and deepen collaboration with other stakeholders to identify and respond to potential threats of violent extremism.

The 3-day training equipped communities, security agencies, district assembly members and youth groups with skills to identify, analyze and report early warning signs and capacitated them on topics such as gender, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and advocacy.



Upper East Regional Peace Council

“The threat of violent extremism is real. Therefore, I am pleading with everyone, especially those living in border communities to be extra vigilant and report individuals with suspicious characters to the security agencies. We need to learn how to speak about the issues concerning threats when we see them,” noted the Municipal Chief Executive for Sisaala East Municipality, Hon. Karim Nanyua.

The participants expressed satisfaction with the engagement and pledged their commitment to helping in the fight against violent extremism and terrorism. The training also created an opportunity for community members to interact with state security officials present to foster partnership and collaboration to promote peace and security. A total of 82 participants made up of 50 men and 32 women were trained.

In 2022, UNDP and the Regional Peace Councils will continue to engage the participants on reporting early warning signs to the security and traditional leaders for early action and response. Community level advocacy will also continue to raise awareness of the violent extremism threat and the implementation of early response.

“Dialogue and advocacy workshop with administrative authorities, defense and security forces and community leaders” in the Far North Region of Cameroon

Since the establishment in 2020, the aim of the Human Rights Observatory is to alert trends in violent extremism and contribute to the prevention of human rights violations in the Far Northern Region of Cameroon through data collection, data analysis and regional/local advocacy.

In partnership with the Human Security Collective (HSC), under the Regional PVE project, UNDP was able to raise awareness of the Human Rights Observatory as a framework and tool for monitoring, dialogue and advocacy of human rights and violent extremism; to address the major issues and challenges of human security; to identify channels for dialogue, advocacy, referrals that constitute the main methods of action of the Observatory and to conduct dialogues with the various administrative, traditional, military and local authorities on the importance of taking human rights into account in security and humanitarian responses. With more than 40 participants from various levels, a regional workshop for inclusive dialogue for PVE in the Far North of Cameroon was held on November 12th to conclude the intervention of the Human Rights Observatory and discuss the sustainable opportunities with the public authorities, military hierarchical leaders, local elected officials, civil society and United Nations agencies on the current challenges of human security at the regional (Extreme-North) and sub-regional (Lake Chad Basin) levels. The final evaluation report with concrete lessons learned and recommendations for the sustainability of the Human Rights Observatory will be available in February 2022.

Africa PVE Community of Practice session on PVE and Inclusion

As part of the Regional Africa PVE Community of Practice (CoP), the PVE team organised a webinar on “PVE and Inclusion: Coordination Mechanism for PVE Strategies, Development Process, Implementation and Monitoring” on 8th November 2021.

The webinar highlighted PVE coordination mechanisms/structures (formal/informal) where the different stakeholders have been engaging throughout the PVE strategies and plans’ development process, implementation and monitoring at the regional (IGAD), national (Mali), sub-national (Kenya) and community (Chad) levels. With the rich presentations and in conjunction to the responses from the survey evaluation, there is a considerable interest for further discussion on the following topics: inter-ministerial coordination, interventions to address trust deficits by citizens, and regional level cross-border engagements. In particular, the experiences shared by the Kenya Country Office on its county action plan calls for in-depth consideration for sustainability of PVE interventions beyond the project period. The diverse experiences shared by the CO colleagues at different levels on PVE inclusion and coordination was regarded as a positive indicator on the evolution of the implementation of the Regional PVE Project since its inception.

On-going Activity Brief

Regional level

The PVE Project recorded a podcast session to discuss findings of a policy brief on Exploring Patterns in Child Recruitment and Retention of Violent Extremist Groups in Africa and Pathways for Preventative Efforts featured at the Geneva Peace Week. The policy brief was informed by data assessment from the dataset on Journey to Extremism in Africa 2.0. The session was streamed, promoted and stored on the [GPW webpage](#).

The Regional PVE Project organized an introductory Meeting on the Regional Strategic Communication Plan of Action for PVE in the Lake Chad Basin. UNDP supported the development of the Plan of Action through an inclusive, whole-of-society process to establish alternative means to address Boko Haram ideology through collaborative efforts between the military and the affected communities. An introductory meeting was convened on 13th December 2021 with the Executive Secretary of Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and newly appointed Force Commander of the Multinational Joint Task Force. The Plan of Action, envisaged to be officially launched in March 2022, opens avenues for establishing a transparent information flow regarding military and stabilization interventions and establish mutual trust between military and civilian actors in communities affected by violent extremism.

Country level

Between December 6th and 10th 2021, an observing mission was carried out in Chad by the Regional PVE Project jointly with a long-standing partner – the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The mission served to monitor interventions and activities supported by the UNDP Regional PVE Project in the provincial capital Bol, situated on the shores of the Lake Chad. The PVE Project, since its launch in 2019, made significant contributions, as a vanguard for Stabilization, to restore trust and enhance collaboration among security forces and local communities affected by Boko Haram insurgency in the Lac province. The visiting delegation interacted with Chadian members of the [Civil Society Organizations \(CSO\) Network on Inclusive Reintegration](#) at an event dedicated to address community-based approaches to absorb and reintegrate recent waves of disengaged ex-associates of insurgent groups.

On December 15th, UNDP Morocco in partnership with the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Reintegration of Detainees (FMVI), and with support of the Government of Japan, held an international conference to exchange best practices to prevent and target online radicalization and violent extremism. The conference rallied together seasoned academicians, practitioners from government, civil society, and youth organizations in an assembly to formulate recommendations for the development of global policies and orientations for stakeholders.

The PVE Project held a training session for UNDP PVE practitioners to raise awareness and build capacities at country-office level to enhance practitioners' capabilities to leverage and utilize available tools to integrate Behavioral Insight (BI) and Behavioral Science into PVE programming. The PVE Project joined efforts with thought leading organizations – Busara Center, NudgeLebanon, and the Centre for Behaviour Change and Communication, who have extensive experience in implementing behaviorally-informed interventions in areas of conflict and governance, civic engagement, social inclusion and education. Participants learned about common biases and assumptions that can prevent us from processing new information and about the importance of pinpointing contextual aspects that contributed to a successful intervention in one country with caution to analyze the extent these aspects can be even remotely replicable in different context. Application of behavioral science has been growing rapidly in the development sector and UNDP PVE Project aims to capitalize on the existing partnership to pilot a behaviorally-designed intervention to strengthen PVE programming in 2022.

On December 13th, UNDP-supported [Civil Society Organizations \(CSO\) Network on Inclusive Reintegration](#) and PVE in the Lake Chad Basin co-organized an end-of-the-year stocktaking webinar with the broader CSO Platform facilitated by the Secretariat of Regional Stabilization Strategy. An online, duo-lingual space – www.peacebyafrica.com – was introduced to improve collaboration among the members through a digital platform and foster safe-information sharing of best practices on inclusive reintegration as well as to provide an advocacy tool to showcase the efforts of the Network to external partners.



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