

Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

The continuous spread of violent extremism and terrorism have posed a great threat to national security of the United States and its allies around the world. The unremittent radicalization of people from diverse backgrounds, races, religions, and ethnic groups, makes terrorism a difficult enemy to define, let alone undermine. The difficulty in combating violent forces such as terrorism has only increased over the course of the last decade. In May of 2016, in order put an end to the threat of terrorism, the **Department of State** and **USAID** formulated a *National Security Strategy* calling for a sustainable approach in countering all aspects of violent extremism. The main goals of this strategy are to ensure that extremist groups are unable to attract new recruits and strengthen governments so that the conditions for violent extremism are never allowed to fester.

Strategic Objectives

- 1. Expand international partnerships, and nurture the necessary expertise to better understand violent extremism**
- 2. Encourage partner governments to utilize more effective policies to counter violent extremism (including changing unhelpful practices)**
- 3. Utilize foreign assistance programs to combat political, social, and economic factors which contribute to violent extremism**
- 4. Empower local voices to change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideologies**
- 5. Encourage and ensure the reintegration of previously radicalized citizens**

Implementation Strategies to Achieve Objectives

1. Enhancing CVE Diplomacy:

Through bilateral, multilateral, and people-to-people diplomacy the State and USAID will continue to promote the cooperation of partners in fighting CVE around the world. People-to-people diplomacy programming will assist anti-extremism efforts on a more functional level within many afflicted regions. By utilizing faith leaders and civil society groups to promote CVE partnerships and initiatives, the overall sociopolitical agenda is more likely to address the needs of the most vulnerable individuals, that is those individuals who are most likely to be radicalized.

2. CVE Strategic Communication:

With the help of the **Global Engagement Center (GEC)**, the State will support the efforts of regional hubs to counter online recruitment efforts by the radical groups. The GEC will also ensure that all U.S government public information which is geared toward foreign audiences have CVE information included in them.

3. Expanding Rule of Law and Development Programs to Advance CVE:

The State Department and USAID will focus efforts on targeting rule of law and development programs which address the drivers of violent extremism and enhance CVE partnerships.

Resources from Congress will be allocated to the following areas as they are believed to have the most critical impact:

- a. **Criminal Justice** (*prisons, justice sector, law enforcement*)
- b. **Development and Civil Society Strengthening** (local governance and community resilience, educational institutions, service providers, youth engagement, women and gender)

4. Promoting Research and Learning:

State and USAID will promote the importance of understanding trends of violent extremism. By releasing aggregated information on who is most susceptible to join violent extremism groups; where most of the groups are located; and what the terrorist are focused on, there will be more of an opportunity for conflict management.

5. Elevating CVE within Broader U.S Foreign Policy:

While the United States determines measures to identify/address immediate terrorism threats, the State and USAID will ensure that longer term CVE strategies are considered.