



# GCTF

GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM FORUM

## GCTF TOOLKIT TO ADDRESS THE LIFECYCLE OF RADICALISATION TO VIOLENCE

### Introduction

The world today is facing an increasingly sophisticated terrorist threat that is transnational, decentralized, and dynamic. Terrorists in one country are now able to inspire, recruit, and radicalize individuals in other countries to commit terrorist acts either where they live, or to travel abroad to become foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). These same FTFs can then travel home or to a third country to commit further acts of terrorism. Meanwhile, domestic terrorists and home grown violent extremists continue to constitute threats in their own right, with some adopting techniques used by transnational terrorists or even seeking to affiliate with them. While criminal justice and security methods aimed at imprisoning convicted terrorists will continue to feature uppermost in counterterrorism efforts, there is a growing recognition that a broader approach is needed to address these complex challenges of radicalization and recruitment, one involving a wider range of interventions to address these issues. This more expansive approach is one that can be applied across the full life cycle of radicalization to violence, from preventing susceptible individuals from being attracted to the ideologies promoted by terrorist groups, to intervening with individuals who are on the path to radicalization to violence, to the rehabilitation and reintegration back into society of some of those already radicalized individuals.

In order to provide stakeholders effective responses for any stage of the radicalization to violence process, the GCTF launched a new **“Initiative to Address the Life Cycle of Radicalization to Violence” (“Lifecycle Initiative”)** in September 2015. The Initiative consolidates and builds upon existing GCTF good practices and recommendations regarding key countering violent extremism (CVE) topics, such as community policing, the role of education in CVE, the importance of partnerships with local communities, and the role of rehabilitation and reintegration in dealing with violent extremists.

The “Lifecycle Initiative” supplements the existing GCTF good practices by developing new doctrine in critical, but previously unaddressed areas – such as alternatives to prosecution – and to expand previous doctrine on issues where additional granularity was needed (for example, outlining the types of legal regimes that are necessary to establish rehabilitation and reintegration programs). It includes additional guidance produced by the Abu-Dhabi-based *Hedayah* Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) in Valletta, Malta. The result is a comprehensive “toolkit” of non-binding good practices and practical recommendations that stakeholders can use to address the full range of challenges in their own communities. It will soon include a web-based forum where practitioners can seek and offer each other advice on their specific problems, and eventually will be available in a mobile “app” version.

### Radicalization to Violence

Radicalization to violence can best be described as arriving at a belief that the status quo is unacceptable and that violence must be used to change the status quo. There are no clear-cut profiles of violent extremists, as is illustrated by the fact that one person may resort to violence whereas so many others with very similar characteristics do not. Local conditions and circumstances play a critical role. Violent extremists come from all strata in society, are born of many races and ethnic groups, and belong to many diverse religious and non-religious groups. Still, while the “push” and “pull” factors that serve as drivers of violent extremism vary across individuals, communities and localities, there is commonality in the violent extremists’ narratives to which individuals, especially young people, are attracted. ISIL/Da’esh, formerly known as Al Qaida in Iraq, in particular continues to draw international focus with its ambition of establishing a self-styled caliphate in Syria and Iraq, its recruitment and appeal to extremist individuals and groups from around the world, and its ability to direct and inspire attacks by radicalized individuals. Yet, other terrorist organizations, including al-Qaeda and its affiliates but also ethnic, separatist and extreme leftist/right-wing terrorist groups, seek to influence and inspire individuals and groups to violence at the local and regional levels.

The global appeal of such groups continues to inspire people to travel to conflict zones and take part or support terrorist organizations. More than 36,000 FTFs have travelled to Syria and Iraq since the conflict began in 2012. States are increasingly concerned with the potential threat posed by FTFs who return home or travel to another State. The threat posed by returning FTFs ranges from involvement in plotting terrorist attacks to establishing new terrorist cells or linking up with existing local terrorist networks. Returning FTFs can also provide operational expertise, raise funds for terrorist activities, or be actively involved in the recruitment or radicalization of others susceptible to terrorist ideologies. On the other hand, there is also the risk that returning FTFs may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disillusionment and vulnerability to (further) radicalization to violence.

GCTF-recommended measures to prevent FTF travel have begun to work, but have given rise to calls by ISIL/Da’esh for individuals to carry out attacks where they live. This sort of “crowd-sourcing of terror” can happen with little planning or no warning, making it difficult for authorities to detect and prevent. Violent extremist ideologies have taken on a new dimension with technology helping to amplify and facilitate extremist narratives and networks. Groups and individuals continue to take advantage of easily accessible technology, including rapidly evolving encryption technology, mobile-messaging applications, and the dark web, to pursue their objectives. Online recruitment, especially involving encryption, poses new challenges to states and communities; examples show that vulnerable individuals have been deliberately targeted by extremist groups and were radicalized to violence within months in online chat rooms, unnoticed and out of reach of peers and law enforcement officials.

### **Breaking the Lifecycle**

Most existing analytical studies on the process of radicalization to violence describe a series of phases or stages that start with pre-radicalization, or when radicalization of a susceptible individual is incipient. The process of radicalization then progresses through one or more additional stages until the person commits an actual act of terrorism. While there has been increased attention given to prevention (most notable in the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism [A/70/674]), recent experience has demonstrated the need for concepts, policies and programs that address what is done with an individual who has committed a terrorist act. If the terrorist is subsequently captured, even from prison or after

release he or she can go on to radicalize or inspire others to violence, or themselves commit new terrorist acts, thus perpetuating the lifecycle.

The Lifecycle Initiative provides responses that can be used to break the lifecycle of radicalization to violence at any stage, including before and beyond the point of arrest and conviction. **The responses are grouped into three categories: (1) prevention; (2) detection & intervention; and (3) rehabilitation & reintegration.** Countries should undertake a range of activities and interventions in all of these categories to have an effective effort to prevent, counter, and reverse the radicalization to violence process. While these categories may be helpful in defining the scope of activities needed in one area, it is important to note that they can overlap significantly, and that many programs and interventions may be applied in multiple categories. For example, building stronger ties between law enforcement and communities through community policing programs can help reduce incidents of radicalization to violence in response to abusive law enforcement actions (prevention); increase law enforcement's ability to successfully identify individuals on the path to radicalization and intervene at early stages through increased reporting by communities (detection & intervention); and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists back into communities where and when appropriate (rehabilitation & reintegration).

## **Prevention**

Identifying factors that make communities susceptible to radicalization to violence and preventing it from evolving and expanding in the earliest possible stage with a comprehensive set of measures is likely to have the greatest chance of success. Prevention efforts must address both “push” and “pull” factors that create conditions for violent extremism to take root and gain traction, as well as factors that allow for recruitment and facilitation. Understanding the nature of the challenge is at the heart of the *Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism*. As its title suggests, the *Ankara Memorandum* stresses the value of governments employing a multi-agency approach as well as the sorts of whole-of-society approaches recommended by the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism. Thus it addresses the role of government institutions, agencies, and civil society in CVE, with sections on public-private partnerships, the role of law enforcement agencies, and socioeconomic approaches. Hedayah has developed an excellent complement to the *Ankara Memorandum* in its *Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies*. The *Hedayah Guidelines* can help countries develop a prevention-focused CVE framework when designing their CVE strategies in line with the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action.

Taking the position that locally-relevant initiatives are central to the success of any CVE or prevention strategy, the *Good Practices on Community Engagement and Community-Oriented Policing as Tools to Counter Violent Extremism* provides tools that focus on building trust with local communities and engaging them as partners to develop information-driven, community-based solutions to local issues. Such engagement can raise a community's awareness about the threat of violent extremism and provide it with the necessary tools to intervene and prevent radicalization to violence. *The Doha Plan of Action for Community-Oriented Policing in a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Context* offers an illustrative list of rule of law-based, rights respecting, community-oriented policing initiatives aimed at youth, women, families, and communities in general, as well as training programs for both law enforcement and communities.

Promoting critical thinking skills among youth and harnessing the positive potential of education and educational institutions in prevention efforts are detailed in the GCTF's *Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and Countering Violent Extremism*, which served as a reference for UNESCO's *A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism*, which provides context about violent extremism, offers tips on how to manage the classroom discussion, and key messages to deliver. Additionally, Hedayah developed the *Abu Dhabi Action Plan on the Role of CVE in Education*, which catalogues a range of programs that can help in the design and implementation of the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum's* good practices. More recently, the GCTF and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) have together launched a dialog on the role of religious education in promoting peace and preventing violence that should provide additional, more specialized recommendations.

Other tools intended to help mobilize civil society take into consideration the central roles that women and families can have in preventing radicalization to violence. The GCTF, together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), first developed the *Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism*, which includes a section on countering women and girls' involvement in violent extremism and terrorism. The GCTF then developed *The Role of Families in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Strategic Recommendations and Programming Options*, which addresses the vital role families play in preventing and countering violent extremism. From shaping attitudes toward non-violence to serving as "front line" actors in identifying signs of possible radicalization to violence, preventing such radicalization's onset, and intervening in the radicalization to violence process, families represent key prevention partners. The document also recognizes family members can be part of the problem in some cases, especially when the parent-child relationship does not exist or is strained. In such cases a credible community figure or mentor can play a critical role in engaging an individual who may otherwise be susceptible to violent extremism.

The *Plan of Action for Identifying and Countering Terrorist Recruiters and Facilitators* provides an important, more specialized roadmap of example initiatives for governments to consider when dealing with the complex challenges posed by terrorist recruiters and facilitators. The *Plan of Action* builds upon the relevant good practices in *The Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon*, which contains material related to preventing, detecting, and intervening against recruitment and facilitation as well as the criminal justice sector responses. Furthermore, the *Plan of Action* builds upon the *Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector*, which notes the need for a broad-based system of criminal offenses that include inchoate or preventive ones such as attempt, conspiracy, providing material support, training, incitement, and solicitation. Also of relevance are the *Recommendations Related to the Full Range of Preventative and Rehabilitative Measures that can be Employed in a Criminal Justice System*, as well as the *Neuchatel Memorandum on Juvenile Justice in a Counterterrorism Context*, which provides recommended good practices that take into consideration the vulnerability of youth and the need for a different, tailored approach, such as developing "off-ramps" or alternatives to prosecution, so as to avoid having a youngster's contact with the criminal justice system turn into an experience that radicalizes him or her to violence.

## **Detection and Intervention**

Although preventing an individual from radicalizing to violence is clearly preferable, some individuals will escape timely detection, efforts may be unsuccessful, or the situation cannot be addressed at the prevention stage. Therefore, law enforcement, legislative, judicial and other measures are needed to deter individuals or groups from committing crimes and to better detect, investigate and prosecute those radicalized individuals guilty of violent extremist crimes. The *Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector* provides a solid foundation for a rule of law, human rights-compliant approach to the issue. It recognizes that the primary objective of any effective criminal justice response to terrorism is to prevent terrorist incidents, but that it must also be able to respond to terrorist acts with fair and effective investigation, prosecution, and punishment in the unfortunate event that terrorist acts occur. As UN Secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon has said, “counter-terrorism should not be counter-productive.”

In addition to certain good practices in the *Rabat Memorandum* which require legislative action, the GCTF and the IIJ also assisted a group of legislators to develop the *Valletta Memorandum on Good Practices for Parliamentarians in Developing an Effective Response to Terrorism*, which addresses issues such as parliamentarians’ role in adopting effective counterterrorism legislation, establishing effective criminal justice institutions, and providing the necessary budgetary resources for such endeavors. The *Valletta Memorandum* also considers oversight of law enforcement and security services and how to balance the needs of such oversight with state secrecy and public disclosure, as well as the benefits of inter-parliamentary dialogues and cooperation.

The role of the judiciary in detecting and intervening to stop the lifecycle of radicalization to violence is explored in *The Hague Memorandum on Good Practices for the Judiciary in Adjudicating Terrorism Offenses*, which was developed by senior judges and justice sector experts from around the globe. This memorandum covers such topics as the need for specially trained judges, the use of continuous trials in terrorism, special measures to protect victims and witnesses in the trial process, and legal frameworks or guidelines for the use and protection of evidence from intelligence sources. This latter topic, which is Good Practice 6 of the *Rabat Memorandum*, was further elaborated in *Recommendations for Using and Protecting Intelligence Information in Rule of Law-Based, Criminal Justice Sector-led Investigations and Prosecutions*. With a rule of law-based framework for handling intelligence in place, these legal safeguards may allow investigators and prosecutors to use intelligence and sensitive law enforcement information as evidence, as appropriate, in a manner that both protects the sources and collection methods and maintains the accused person’s right to a fair trial.

Other GCTF documents that can help law enforcement leaders develop sound counterterrorism strategies include the previously mentioned *Ankara Memorandum*, the *Good Practices* and *Doha Plan of Action for Community-Oriented Policing in a CVE Context*, the *Plan of Action for Identifying and Countering Terrorist Recruiters and Facilitators*, and the seminal *The Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon*, which includes a number of good practices addressing increased sharing of information among communities, law enforcement, and security services at the local, state, regional and international levels in order to detect and intervene against persons seeking to travel abroad for terrorist purposes. The GCTF *Good Practices on Regional Border Security Issues Related to Terrorism and Other Transnational Crime Suspects in the Sahel Region*, although tailored for that part of West Africa, nonetheless provides widely applicable concepts on building cooperation with and among trans-border

communities to be part of the solution, as well as a range of good practices related to “hot pursuit” across international borders.

One of the central features of the Lifecycle Initiative is incorporation of the idea that countries need to develop tools other than prosecution to deal with radicalized individuals, including returning FTFs. These can include intervention programs to divert suitable individuals from this path, or other alternatives to prosecution and incarceration, as laid out in *Recommendations on Effective Use of Appropriate Alternative Measures for Terrorism-Related Offenses*. These types of approaches are particularly important when it comes to certain categories of individuals, such as juveniles or the mentally ill. Measures for juveniles must be specifically targeted, compliant with international law and juvenile justice standards, and take the well-being of the juvenile as one of the key starting points, as described in the *Neuchatel Memorandum on Juvenile Justice in a Counterterrorism Context*. Countries should seek to involve a wide range of actors such as social workers, psychologists, defense lawyers, community leaders, judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers – both at the policy and operational levels. In doing so, it is vital to apply appropriate risk assessment tools, so as to reduce the level of risk to society as well as the individual, and to consider these alternative approaches as part of a broader strategy that will carry over into and affect the disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration stage of the lifecycle. In this regard, the IJJ’s *Prison Management Recommendations to Counter and Address Prison Radicalization* can be used with respect to terrorist suspects incarcerated prior to and during a trial, as well as for persons convicted of terrorist offenses and who are sentenced to prison.

### **Rehabilitation and Reintegration**

Ultimately, the intention of policymakers and practitioners is to ensure that individuals radicalized to violence eventually disengage from violent extremist groups, abandon violence and successfully reintegrate into society. Integrating rehabilitative measures within and beyond the criminal justice response will include *inter alia* training of prison staff in the use of adequate risk assessment tools, psychological and mental health support, and engagement with families and community leaders. The central GCTF document for such matters is the *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders*, which takes up the *Rabat Memorandum*’s suggestion that prison systems should “prevent further radicalization of prisoners, prevent terrorist activities from being directed or supported from within the prison system, and provide for the de-radicalization and reintegration of prisoners into society where possible and thereby reduce recidivism.” The document includes sections on defining goals and objectives, the prison context, the role of different actors in prison, and reintegration components. The *Addendum to the Rome Memorandum* provides additional good practices related to the specific sorts of legal frameworks states may need to allow certain types of rehabilitation and reintegration measures.

Building on the general principles outlined in the *Rome Memorandum*, the UN Inter Regional Crime and Justice Institute (UNICRI) and the Government of Spain held a workshop that produced *Additional Guidance on the Role of Religious Scholars and other Ideological Experts in Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programmes*. The outcome document addresses such issues as specialized training and qualifications, classification of inmates, building a relationship of trust, protecting and vetting scholars and material, restorative justice, and outreach to families and communities.

The rehabilitation and reintegration process, which ideally should start at the pre-trial stage, will require a tailored approach at the individual level, once again involving a wide range of actors, depending on the case itself. Depending on the assessed risk, alternatives to imprisonment such as reporting to the authorities, monitoring (e.g., with anklets or other electronic devices), community service, and/or voluntary participation in a reintegration program, could also be considered. Here the *Recommendations on the Effective Use of Appropriate Alternative Measures for Terrorism-Related Offenses* and the *Neuchatel Memorandum on Juvenile Justice in a Counterterrorism Context* may prove useful in helping design such approaches. Given the scale of the FTF phenomenon, it stands to reason that over time many of the individuals requiring rehabilitation and reintegration will be returning FTFs, including disillusioned defectors. For this topic practitioners and policy-makers can consult the *Addendum to The Hague-Marrakech Memorandum for a More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon*, which expands significantly upon Good Practice 19 regarding development of comprehensive reintegration programs for returning FTFs.

### **The Toolkit**

A practitioner-oriented Toolkit, consisting of all existing and new tools that address the life cycle of radicalization to violence, will be presented to GCTF Ministers in September 2016. The Toolkit is a web-based instrument available to policy makers and practitioners in GCTF member countries and elsewhere, from which they can draw guidance and inspiration in developing tailor-made responses to any given specific context. This Toolkit provides a user-friendly mechanism for (evolving) guidance for policy makers and practitioners as they develop frameworks and responses for their own communities, states and regions, in responding to the full life cycle of radicalization to violence. Additionally, the Toolkit is intended to serve as a resource to assist policy makers and practitioners to identify the frameworks and principles inherent in a rule-of-law compliant civilian response addressing the lifecycle of radicalization to violence. The Toolkit will provide a platform through which GCTF members and non-members can share and learn from the experiences of other governments, their programs and lessons learned, as new, innovative and tailored-made approaches are developed.

The Toolkit's content is based upon non-binding GCTF documents, reflecting experts' input and experience and empirical, concrete lessons learned. Consistent with the GCTF's mission, the tools are designed to be action-oriented and flexible, and fully consistent with international law, human rights and the rule of law. Although the GCTF Toolkit is generic, the tools are meant to inspire policy makers and practitioners, each working in different conditions and circumstances, to incorporate good practices and lessons learned into their contextualized responses across all stages of the lifecycle.