



PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

P/CVE AT A GLANCE

After years of conflict and instability, Somalia is making strides towards State building. Despite the progress, the country continues to suffer from terror attacks and threats of violent extremism. Al Shabaab still control and influence territories and communities in large parts of Somalia, particularly in the South and Central part of the nation. In addition, in the North, a small fraction of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – ISIL or Da'esh – has taken ground. Territory gains made in recent years by the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), have allowed for the control of the main urban centers. In 2019, in line with the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS) adopted in 2017, the transition plan intends to hand over security responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali security institutions and allow for restoration of Somali local authorities and service delivery.

In an environment of volatile politics and security vacuums, violent extremism and non-state actors have space to thrive and can fill the void left behind by the absence of a functioning state and accountable institutions. Factors conducive to violent extremism are complex and multifaceted and this reflects in how these extremist groups continue to influence Somalis – elders and religious

AL SHABAAB INCIDENTS AND CASUALTIES (JAN 2018 - AUG 2019)

475 Reported attacks by Al Shabaab

627 Civilians killed by Al Shabaab

1,014 Civilians injured by Al Shabaab

leaders, women and youth, through successful communication strategies, service delivery, including justice and indoctrination via radical curricula for young children and threats or coercion. Until today, conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism are a reality not only in areas controlled by Al Shabaab but also in urban areas as well as in newly recovered areas. Indeed, without efforts for local reconciliation, political inclusion, human rights-centered justice and provision of security, critical thinking education and employment opportunities, groups like Al Shabaab have the potential to maintain their influence and strengthen credibility as provider of crucial services.

SITUATION UPDATE

On 1 July 2016, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted by consensus resolution (A/RES/70/291) on the Fifth Review of Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy reinforcing global consensus in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The UNGA recognized the importance of preventing violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism and, recommended that Member States consider the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as applicable to the national context. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has taken initial steps to implement its obligations under United Nations Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions by adopting a National Strategy on Preventing and Countering of Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in September 2016. Following this adoption, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) established a P/CVE Coordination Unit with coordinators and focal points in the Federal Member States (FMSs) as well as in the relevant line ministries. This forms the basis for a horizontal cooperation framework between the FGS and FMSs, as well as with relevant line ministries. With the support of the UN, the line ministries and FMSs have developed action plans that identify the priority needs thematically and geographically and present local solutions to address the root causes to prevent recruitment and radicalization. Somalia has also introduced the Somali term "Dulqaad iyo Wada Hadal" which means "tolerance and dialogue" as translation for P/CVE.

Recognizing that the national P/CVE strategy needs to be embedded in an institutional framework with an appropriate mandate and resources, the UN established a P/CVE platform to coordinate

the international response and to build capacity of the Somali Government and local partners. Through this P/CVE forum, the UN, in collaboration with international partners, strengthens the Somali coordination on measures to prevent and counter recruitment and radicalization.

In 2017, in the broader restoration of authority and security context, the UN, in cooperation with the Government of Somalia, international partners and AMISOM, developed the CAS, which aims to enable Somali authorities on the federal and sub-federal level to provide services for Somalis, beginning with security, without having to substantially rely on external partners such as AMISOM. Under the CAS, five strands have been developed to structure progress towards that objective. P/CVE (Strand 4) is divided into two components: 1) Stand-alone assistance, political and strategic guidance to the FGS in operationalizing their P/CVE strategy; 2) Cross-strands support.

The former P/CVE platform has now merged into Strand 4 in order to better coordinate the efforts to strengthen national capabilities and institution building. A comprehensive support package for the national coordination structure was then signed by Somalia and the UN in September 2018 for one year. The project has provided operational support for the OPM-P/CVE coordination unit, in addition to training and technical assistance. Consultations and workshops have been held with relevant stakeholders at FGS and FMS level to build the capacities of networks to engage on P/CVE issues and provide feedback on P/CVE priorities. Outreach activities through P/CVE responsive platform were held at district level in at-risk areas. The project also supported small scale action research, including mapping of existing P/CVE initiatives at community level.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

In January 2016, the UN Secretary-General launched the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which emphasizes how violent extremism undermines peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. The Plan acknowledges that violent extremism doesn't arise in a vacuum, and how narratives of grievance, actual or perceived injustice, promised empowerment and sweeping change become attractive perspectives where good governance does not exist and aspirations are being crushed.

The Plan of Action recommends greater coordination and integration of efforts to prevent violent extremism into activities of UN peacekeeping operations, special political missions and UN country teams, wherever relevant and in accordance with their respective mandates. There is no international definition of Violent Extremism or the Prevention of it, but the concept of Prevention of Violent Extremism is "to limit the traction of terrorist groups on individuals, communities and society at large." Solid analysis and evidence-based assessment of specific, settings-based factors that

lead to affiliation with violent organizations is needed.

This requires a bottom-up approach to identify root causes, push and pull factors, recruitment strategies and drivers of violent extremism. It will be crucial to link those efforts with a top down approach that addresses progress required and led by the Government on the policy and programmatic level to enable national and sub-national authorities and international actors to effectively address root causes and drivers of violent extremism. It is precisely here where the UN's P/CVE approach plays a critical role, in building capacity upstream to support coordination, prioritization, sequencing and regular review of Somalia's P/CVE efforts at the high governmental level, and linking to downstream efforts – reaching out to local communities and civil society to bring them in as partners for continued analysis, advocacy, joint implementation and to monitor and evaluate progress. Following the UN Security Council Resolution 2358 (2017), 2408 (2018) and 2461 (2019), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, in coordination with other international partners, has a mandate to advise and assist Somalia in the implementation of its National Strategy and Action Plan to prevent and Counter Violent Extremism and to strengthen its capacity on implementation of obligations under these resolutions and the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. The mandate covers support to enable coordination of P/CVE activities, advise on specific thematic issues, share good practices and enable information exchange with other partners. The resolution furthermore encourages cooperation with UN agencies, particularly on promoting appropriate education/based efforts to recognize and prevent radicalization to violence and recruitment.

LOOKING FORWARD

In support to the national organization and institutionalization, efforts are being made to extend the current support until the second half of 2020 including in newly recovered areas in line with the transition plan. In parallel, with the new cycle of programming for the overall development aid in Somalia and the elaboration of the national Development Plan 9, the challenge is to make sure that the programming integrated P/CVE responsiveness in the four development pillars: 1) inclusive politics, 2) security and justice, 3) social development and, 4) economic development. In this framework, the effective articulation of an all UN P/CVE Somalia response strategy supporting joint programming and comparative advantage of UN in Somalia. This will allow for increased P/CVE targeted interventions supported by the UN Somalia and International Community, delivering P/CVE specific programming for at risk populations, such as civic education and critical thinking, creating economic alternatives, rehabilitating and reintegrating defectors, rehabilitation programmes for prisoners as well as community dialogue and forgiveness, risk reduction at community level, and promoting counter-narratives through strategic communication.



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