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WOMEN'S ALLIANCE FOR SECURITY LEADERSHIP

Preventing Extremism by Promoting Rights, Peace & Pluralism

Preventing Violent Extremism, Protecting Rights and Community Policing

Why Civil Society and Security Sector Partnerships Matter

A Brief on Policy and Practice to Inform National Strategies for Preventing Violent Extremism and Promoting Sustainable Peace

ICAN International Civil Society Action Network

For women's rights, peace and security

Preventing Violent Extremism, Protecting Rights and Community Policing

Why Civil Society and Security Sector Partnerships Matter

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"There is no trade-off between policing and human rights. Policing at its best should be the guardian and amplifier of human rights in society."

— Sir Stephen House QPM, former Chief Constable Police Scotland

Executive Summary

In February 2017 the Global Solutions Exchange (GSX)[1] meeting on the nexus of security, gender and extremism was held in London[2] bringing members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) and other women and youth-led organizations engaged in the prevention of violent extremism efforts together with military and security personnel, representatives of governments and multilateral organizations to analyze the impact of security interventions in contributing to and mitigating extremist violence. They also highlighted their own practical experiences in engaging the security sector to prevent and counter violent extremism including through trust building with communities, respect of human rights, and gender sensitivity as well as the provision of training to the police and military. Their experiences, combined with desk research on the state of current policy and practice, and consultations with over 70 women peacebuilders from 30 countries at ICAN's 2015 and 2016 annual Women, Peace and Security forums inform this report.

[1] The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) is a mechanism for regular high-level civil society-government dialogue on issues related to preventing extremism first launched by ICAN and WASL with the support of the Prime Minister of Norway in September 2016 at the United Nations, now expanded to a steering committee of 6 organizations. For more information see: http://www.icanpeacework.org/our-work/global-solutions-exchange/.

[2] The GSX working group meeting on "Preventing Violent Extremism by Educating for Rights, Peace, & Pluralism" meeting was co-convened by ICAN and Open Asia/Armanshahr, co-hosted by the Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Norway to United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in coordination with the U.S. Permanent Mission to UNESCO to align with UNESCO Ambassadors' "Friends of PVE-E" group meeting, and funded by the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Our Approach to PVE

In spearheading the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) is committed to ensuring that the perspectives, experience and pioneering work of locally rooted women-led organizations active in preventing violent extremism by promoting peace and pluralism are heard and heeded in global settings. As a co-founder of the Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) we are also committed to enabling systematic multi-sectoral exchanges between women, youth practitioners, scholars and policy makers across countries to highlight alternative perspectives on aspects of PVE. Sometimes these exchanges are provocative as comfort zones and conventional wisdoms are challenged. Always they are productive as they inform our collective understanding of extremist violence and serve to improve our responses in policy and practice.

Key Findings

1. Preventing violent extremism (PVE) in practice is a continuum of interventions that includes countering violent extremism and extends to counter-terrorism. Such interventions can take place simultaneously in each context. PVE does not replace these approaches, but recognizes that security based responses alone cannot solve the problems.

2. At an operational and local level, civil society has trust and access and can ensure that programs are relevant and authentic to the context while advising security actors, facilitating interactions between them and communities and monitoring interventions to prevent and limit abuse.

3. Civil society actors are indispensable bridges between the state and communities and many run innovative security sector/police related programs. Internationally, particularly among security sector actors, there is recognition of the immense value that local CSOs bring to the table.

4. In insecure and conflict-affected settings, the proliferation of security actors ranging from militias, community vigilantes, military or others can severely undermine the authority of the police. This can have long term damage even after other formal security actors have gone.

5. There is no trade-off between policing and human rights. The police are often the frontline and first responders to violence. If they are trusted in communities, they can prevent violent extremism. Trusted policing at the community level is also critical for deepening the public's resilience against the messages of extremist groups who often rail against the injustices, oppression and corruption of security actors to rally support.

6. A key factor damaging public trust in the police is the levels of corruption and abuse that exist. This is often due to poor pay and inadequate training.

7. Effective community policing cannot be imposed simply as a strategy or a tactic for PVE. Rather, it is an ethos that must be infused into the culture and practice of security actors to bridge gaps between themselves and the people and communities that they are bound to protect and serve.

8. To build trust between the police and communities, a critical first step is the need to humanize the police, while also making them more relatable to ordinary people, this includes enabling police to serve in communities close to home, ensuring they speak local languages, and that units reflect the diversity in the community (e.g. based on gender, ethnicity, religion).

9. Engagement between police and the community on issues of violent extremism should not center on intelligence gathering and threat detection. This creates an informant dynamic that securitizes the community, and risks backlash against the stakeholders best positioned to serve as a bridge between security actors and community members.

10. From assessing and scoping the nature of the threats and challenges as well as the solutions, to the design of national policies, their implementation in communities and through to monitoring impact and providing feedback, independent local CSOs should be key participants. Given the tendency to exclude women and youth organizations, particular efforts should be made to identify and engage them, as they have critical access, expertise and understanding of dynamics and trends, which are often invisible to more formal entities.

Guidance for Policymaking, National Strategies and Programming

The guidance is divided into three operational areas relevant to the design and implementation of national policies, action plans, and strategies for PVE and promoting sustainable peace: policy priorities, technical and programmatic actions, and financial and logistical support. Given the importance of "whole of society" approaches, the guidance offered is relevant to all stakeholders involved and interested in the provision of community policing.

Policy Considerations

1. The ethos of serving the community, ensuring the safety, protecting and upholding the human rights of men, women and children, particularly those most vulnerable to violence must be at the core of security services present and active in society. This requires a profound shift in countries where security services including the police are trained to protect the state or national security interests at the cost of human security.

    a. Effective community policing, rooted in mutual trust, inclusivity and dialogue between the police and community members, is crucial to successful PVE.

    b. Security interventions at the local level for P/CVE need to be part of a holistic approach to policing that addresses other local security concerns that community members identify.

    c. Community policing must be developed hand-in-hand with the community from its inception. The public and the police must foster trust between

themselves and hold shared values that underpin it. Existing models can guide but cannot be transplanted wholesale without adaptation to the unique features of each context.

d. Respecting police and security actors as human beings, including through adequate pay, dignified working conditions, and insurance in case of death or injury must be prioritized by states, and by the same token they must be held accountable for abuse or corruption.

2. Governments and security actors must recognize and respect independent civil society as trusted partners not adversaries. Cooperation and trust take time and resources but they are necessary given the unique expertise, access, authenticity and commitment that CSOs bring.

   a. There can be a practical division of labor between civil society and the security sector in communities that leverages the strategic advantages of each. For example, civil society organizations are better poised to mentor individuals, facilitate community processes, provide police with trainings on addressing women's concerns, and can fill in specific technical gaps such as on gender and youth engagement.

   b. Global networks of women and youth-led CSOs should be tapped for their expertise in each national context and on localization, particularly and their extensive work with the police and security sector along with national action planning for the women, peace and security agenda, as enshrined in UNSCR 2242 and 2250.

3. The best "early warning" mechanism for violent extremism is to hear and heed civil society, especially women, youth and other marginalized groups, when they raise the alarm about rising extremism and radicalization within their communities and societies. Early warning should not solely focus on intelligence gathering about individuals.

    a. Before extremism becomes violent in actions it is often violent in words by promoting hatred, violations of human rights, and bigotry. While freedom of expression must be upheld and guaranteed, those who incite or condone violence must be held to account.

4. Through diplomacy, hold states accountable for repressive actions in the name of counter-terrorism as counter-productive to the goals of peace and security.

Programming and Technical Considerations

1. Conduct assessments before programs to promote CSO - security sector interactions from the outset:

    a. Consider the ethos of the police force and whether it protects the state or the citizenry;

    b. Assess police behavior as a contributing driver of violent extremism (e.g. corruption, abuse). Where possible conduct studies to establish baseline measures;

    c. Consider the role of civil society in relationship to the government, ask does it function as a contractor, collaborator, consultant or opposition; and,

    d. Consider the conflict context, ask is it active conflict, post conflict or none? Many policing dynamics are shared across diverse contexts at similar stage of dealing with violent conflict (i.e. Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka).

2. Provide support and strengthen the respect for civil society actors in engaging government, multilateral and security officials by issuing letters of recognition, facilitating introductions and publicly acknowledging their work.

3. Consult reputable and independent national, regional or international networks to help identify, facilitate outreach to and ensure the participation of local, community civil society actors particularly CSOs led by women, youth, and marginalized groups.

4. Consult with civil society, especially women, youth and other marginalized groups, and respect their knowledge and local expertise. This can be particularly valuable in order to:

    a. Identify increasing repression and human rights abuses as warning signs of extremism;

    b. Support existing innovative practices, avoid duplication and ineffective practices; and

    c. Support inclusion of civil society in the monitoring of P/CVE policies and strategies led by national and international actors.

5. Foster trust-building by funding community forums for dialogues between police and civil society to address community concerns, including but not limited to violent extremism.

6. Include civil society, especially youth, women and other marginalized groups, in process design, implementation, and monitoring of community-police engagement from the beginning to ensure efficacy and foster support for such policing.

7. Integrate feedback mechanisms, including independent civil society monitoring, to measure impact and ensure learning across all security sector-civil society engagement efforts and police trainings, and share findings to improve practices and address emerging issues and gaps.

8. Recruit and deploy police officers locally to establish trusted relationships with the community.

9. Follow the lead of civil society on how/when/which actors to engage within the security sector at the local level and avoid putting civil society actors at risk.

10. Support peer networks and existing platforms for capacity development and exchange of knowledge across contexts and between sectors.

11. Encourage and facilitate more systematic multi-sectoral PVE engagement between security sector actors and civil society, including through the Global Solutions Exchange (GSX).

Financial and Logistical Considerations

1. Link funding for local security agencies to effective community and civil society partnerships and monitor for responsible spending.
2. Ensure provision of adequate and timely pay and benefits for police, and dignified work and living conditions commensurate to the professional role and personal risks of the job.
3. Ensure adequate funds are devoted to support and build existing resilience through civic engagement and social cohesion, not only to address the few who turn to violence.
4. Ensure engaged civil society actors receive adequate personal security protection, review protocols regularly, especially if they face threats from state actors.
5. Provide support to overcome logistical barriers to collaboration and exchange:
    a. Ensure events are confirmed with ample time and documentation to support civil society participants to obtain necessary visa;
    b. Convene in different regions whenever possible to reduce travel burdens; and,
    c. Budget for security sector practitioners at the local and national level to engage in cross-sectoral and international convenings as part of their professional development.

6. Provide resources for the documentation and dissemination of case studies of success and failure in international military and peace operations with relation to the fueling of militias and violent extremist groups, for purposes of transparency and to inform future policy.

7. Fund research and dissemination of findings on the impact of foreign fighters on both host and home communities, with special attention to gender dynamics and implications for community policing to prevent returnees from radicalizing others.

Introduction

The security sector and security-oriented interventions have long dominated the global struggle against violent extremism. Most governments have dedicated vast resources to hard security and counter-terrorism measures, and far less on the softer, though more complex security approaches. But national and international programs, training and related funding for countering violent extremism (CVE) without adequate oversight have allowed state security actors to legitimize abuse in communities and against civilians. Such counter-productive practices not only result in decreasing public trust in the state, but have also fueled radicalization and the perception that government actors are more problem than solution.[3]

Recognizing the limitations of anti-terrorism and security approaches in 2015, numerous governments and multilateral organizations rallied around the call for a shift to countering and preventing violent extremism through greater attention to the social and economic dimensions of the problem, as well as, inclusion and partnership with communities and civil society. The former United Nations Secretary General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism (2016) emphasized the role of women and youth organizations. The Security Council affirmed its support and commitment to these sectors through the adoption of Resolutions 2242 and 2250.[4]

Preventing violent extremism (PVE) in practice is part of a continuum of interventions that includes countering violent extremism and extends to counter-terrorism. PVE does not replace these approaches, but recognizes that they alone cannot solve the problems. Moreover, the PVE framing also shifts the discourse and

[3] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini et al, *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms: Women's Perspectives on Violent Extremism and Security Interventions,* International Civil Society Action Network & Women's Alliance for Security Leadership: Washington D.C., March 2016, Executive Summary, available at: www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/WASL-Security-Brief-Exec-Summary-2016.pdf.

[4] UN Security Council, *Resolution 2242* (2015), available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2242(2015); UN Security Council, *Resolution 2250* (2015), available at: http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/SCR-2250.pdf.

practice away from being reactive and negative towards more proactive measures that address root causes and promote peace, rights and pluralism in the face of violence, abuse and intolerance.

By emphasizing an inclusive and gendered approach, the PVE framework also helps to reveal the crucial work that independent civil society, specifically grassroots women-led and youth organizations, have been doing to restore dignity, foster social cohesion and provide an alternate vision for our societies.

Local civil society organizations are highly relevant to the prevention and countering of violent extremism because they are trusted and key interlocutors in their communities. They also have long experience with the types of programming that are increasingly recognized as important for prevention.

As noted in *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms,* "experience demonstrates that internationally and nationally driven strategies are rarely effective if they exclude communities and organizations that have a track record and vested interest in preventing violence and promoting rights and pluralism. By contrast inclusive processes deepen local ownership and accountability, and reduce corruption among all parties."[5]

Community policing sits at the nexus between state security actors, local communities and civil society. It is a critical but often-overlooked and under-resourced aspect of effective PVE. In the past decade, the international community has made important strides toward engaging civil society particularly in the provision of effective community security. At an operational level, civil society can ensure that programs are relevant and authentic to the local context while advising security actors, facilitating interactions between them and communities and monitoring interventions to prevent and limit abuse.

[5] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini et al, *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms*, Executive Summary (p. 8).

Security Interventions and Civil Society Engagement: Advancing the Ethos of Community Policing to Preventing Violent Extremism provides a summary of critical issues and gaps for policy makers and related security sector on good practices and recommendations for effective community policing to not only prevent violent extremism, but ensure safety trust in the sector and promote peace and social cohesion for all community members.

Methodology

This is a joint report of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) and the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) based on research conducted with a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral group of peace practitioners, civil society activists, security sector practitioners, scholars, policymakers and others with expertise in preventing violent extremism, security interventions, gender and civil society engagement throughout 2015 and 2016. ICAN published the findings and recommendations in the 2016 report *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms: Women's Perspectives on Security Interventions and Violent Extremism*[6].

In February 2017 ICAN co-hosted the first Global Solutions Exchange (GSX)[7] experts meeting on the nexus of security interventions, violent extremism and gender[8] to review the recommendations and highlight trends and good practices. The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) is designed to enable open and horizontal exchange of analysis, perspectives and experience among diverse civil society and governmental stakeholders across relevant sectors and geographic contexts to generate sustainable

[6] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini et al, *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms*, Executive Summary (p. 8).
[7] The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) is a mechanism for regular high-level civil society-government dialogue on issues related to preventing extremism first launched by ICAN and WASL with the support of the Prime Minister of Norway in September 2016 at the United Nations, now expanded to a steering committee of 6 organizations. For more information see: www.icanpeacework.org/our-work/global-solutions-exchange.
[8] The GSX working group meeting on "Security Interventions & Violent Extremism" was convened by ICAN and WASL at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London in February 2017, with the support of the Royal Norwegian Government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

solutions for preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). ICAN's approach elevates the perspectives and expertise of independent women civil society actors and integrates gendered analysis to address the gender gap in peace and security policies.

This report provides a summary of the critical common themes that have arisen, hones in on a holistic solution and presents actionable recommendations to national and international policymakers, security sector practitioners, experts and civil society actors for improving security sector interventions on preventing violent extremism.

"People need to see the human face of the police."

— Acheleke Christian Leke, National Coordinator, Local Youth Corner Cameroon

Advancing The Ethos Of Community Policing Key To Preventing Violent Extremism

In the struggle against violent extremism, police, especially those at the community level, are often the first contact between citizens and the state, and their conduct has the potential to either demonstrate themselves to be protectors of the people, or exacerbate grievances that often contribute to radicalization.

Civil society practitioners and security actors concurred that trusted policing at the community level is critical to the prevention of extremism and related violence. It can also deepen the public's resilience against the ideology and messages of extremist groups who often rail against the injustices, oppression and corruption of security actors to rally support for their cause.

But effective community policing cannot be imposed or developed simply as a strategy or a tactic for PVE. Rather, it is an ethos that must be infused into the culture and practice of security actors to bridge the disconnect between themselves and the people and communities that they are bound to protect and serve. As former Chief Constable of Police Scotland, Sir Stephen House QPM, said: "It is difficult to define community policing… It depends on the consent of the community. You cannot overnight create community policing, it needs partnership with the community. You cannot take it from a consenting community and force it upon a non-consenting community. They must be part of designing it and part of [implementing] it… The public must have the values and also the officers. [Otherwise] it may be badged community

policing but it isn't community policing. It is like planting a plant in the incorrect environment, it won't survive."

At its best, community policing establishes or reinforces a social contract between citizens and the state to ensure freedom from all violence. The Women's Alliance for Security Leadership called for this change in its 2016 brief, highlighting the political implications for donor governments: "A doctrinal and paradigm shift is needed in the concept of security: from power through violence and a history of service to oppressive regimes to upholding and protecting the rights of the civilian population and being held accountable to them. International actors must take heed: if they fund, equip, and train regimes, yet remain silent when they are abusive, they are guilty by association."[9]

Barriers to Effective Community Policing

As noted in *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms,* "While the responsibilities they shoulder are tremendous, it is not uncommon to hear of police officers working with no pay for months on end. These factors contribute to high drop out rates, corruption and invariably the police being a key source of violence and injustice that further fuels the tide of extremism."[10]

When it comes to addressing this disconnect between police and communities, a critical first step is the need to humanize the police, while also making them more relatable to ordinary people. Too often governments themselves are disparaging or disrespectful towards their police officers. This is evident in the low (or absent salaries), and absence of protection for them and their families despite the risks they face. Simultaneously, particularly in countries with a history of abusive policing, it is essential that officers are trained and inculcated with the ethos of respect and service to

[9] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini et al, *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms*, Executive Summary (p. 45)
[10] Ibid (p. 3).

the public, and not armed or uniformed in ways that create further distance, fear or mistrust. As Sir Stephen House emphasized, "There is no trade-off between policing and human rights. Policing at its best should be the guardian and amplifier of human rights in society… That starts with [governments] treating police officers and staff with respect and as human beings... How can we expect them to treat the public fairly if they are not?"

A second factor noted was that the common practice of locating police far from their homes, ostensibly to prevent corruption and nepotism, can also be detrimental to the goal of establishing robust dialogue and trust between police and communities. Lack of ties to the community and short assignments provide no incentives for them to invest in community relations. In some countries, there may even be a language or cultural barrier between police personnel from different regions and community members that contributes to the erosion of trust.

In countries where territorial and political cohesion is tenuous or the authority of the central state is threatened (or perceived to be so), governments may be resistant to effective community-oriented policing as it devolves power to the local level.

Distrust of police may be intensified among those affected by trauma perpetrated by uniformed security officers. This was the case in post-conflict Sri Lanka, where female police officers were afraid to go alone into villages, but female civilians were afraid of male police officers. A solution was found by creating a dialogue space to discuss these fears and the best approach to address them—male police accompanied female police into villages, but only the women officers would enter people's homes.

Conflict-affected settings, and contexts in which other military actors have a strong and visible presence, are particularly challenging for police. People are likely to trust (and perhaps be more cautious

towards) those who protected them during the conflict or that have regained control contested territory. The proliferation of security actors ranging from militias, community vigilantes, military or others can severely undermine the authority of the police, particularly if they are the "poor cousins", badly trained and equipped and underpaid. In Nigeria, for example, in areas recently reclaimed from Boko Haram, civilians are more likely to seek assistance from the military than the police. It is a catch-22 as the more the police are marginalized the less they are able to establish relations with the community and thus build trust. However, this degradation of trust is not limited to conflict-affected or underdeveloped contexts: in Mexico, 90 percent of the population would not report a crime to the police[11], and in the U.S.[12] and the U.K.[13] just over half the population expressed trust in police. These numbers are even lower among marginalized communities and those where police are most active. They are indicative of mistrust and absence of effective relationships over years that must be redressed through fundamental transformations policing cultures.

Last but certainly not least, engagement between police and the community on issues of violent extremism should not center on intelligence gathering and threat detection. This creates an informant dynamic that securitizes the community, and risks backlash against the stakeholders best positioned to serve as a bridge between security actors and community members. For example, there is much discussion about mothers seeing the signs of radicalization in their sons or male relatives and wanting to prevent them. Similarly, in many communities women can walk into any house in the community and discover issues that police are not aware of, thus giving early warnings about threats of extremist violence. However, instrumentalizing

[11] Claire O Neill McCleskey, "92% of Crimes in Mexico Go Unreported: Survey", *Insight Crime*, September 28, 2012, available at: http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/crimes-mexico-unreported-inegi. Original survey in Spanish available at: http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/enchogares/regulares/envipe/2012/.
[12] Jeffrey M. Jones. "In U.S., Confidence in Police Lowest in 22 Years", *Gallup*, July 19, 2015, available at: http://www.gallup.com/poll/183704/confidence-police-lowest-years.aspx.
[13] Ipsos MORI. "Two in three Britons say they generally trust the police to tell the truth", *Ipsos*, March 14, 2014, available at: https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/two-three-britons-say-they-generally-trust-police-tell-truth.

community members, especially women, as intelligence assets is a shortsighted approach. It risks their personal safety and security while also sowing distrust and division within communities. In the case of international interventions, this can lead to further conflict and reinforce the perception that foreign governments are using women, especially peace activists or "different political, ethnic, religious or ideological factions to pursue their own goals, to the detriment of the country".[14]

Good Practices at the Nexus of Community Policing and PVE

In Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Morocco and elsewhere, civil society actors—including women—are working with local police by, for example, providing trainings to enhance their capacities for effectively addressing the needs of the community. The key impact of such initiatives is that they build the relationship between police and the community by making the police relatable and accessible to citizens.

- ***Partner with Communities and Local Civil Society from the Beginning:*** In Northern Ireland, the "policing with the community strategy"—reforms adopted to build police legitimacy in the post-conflict environment following the 1998 Belfast Agreement—provides lessons learned on how to establish and institutionalize consultation with civil society and other sectors by identifying community security concerns, policing priorities, and critiquing past practices when appropriate.[15] In Pakistan too, women, youth, and community leaders have themselves developed locally resonant models of engagement with police, resulting in a collective mechanism for early warnings and prevention extremist violence.

[14] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini et al, *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms*, Executive Summary (p. 17).
[15] Dr. Jonny Byrne, *Reflections on the Northern Ireland experience: The lessons underpinning the normalisation of policing and security in a divided society,* Police Service of Northern Ireland, Intercomm And Saferworld, June 2014, available at: http://uir.ulster.ac.uk/37801/1/reflections-on-the-northern-ireland-experience.pdf.

- ***Building a Common Understanding of PVE Concepts:*** In Morocco, Search for Common Ground emphasized the need for a common frame of reference between CSOs and the security sector. Through dialogue sessions, they ensured that both understood the complexity of violent extremism in the country, used the same language, drafted strategic action plans and agreed on a long-term approach that highlighted investment in local leadership. As a result, SFCG was able to build trust between the police and civil society and allowed them to collaborate on a series of initiatives that included—for instance—bringing victims of human rights violations to communities to discuss their experiences.

- ***Prioritizing the Building of Relationships over the Building of Capacity:*** In Nigeria, the Neem Foundation deploys a collaborative PVE approach that engages youth, women, traditional leaders, religious leaders, civil society, academics, security services and government institutions. The Foundation's Executive Director, Fatima Akilu, found that there exists a large gap between the government, military and civil society, with the government not believing that a CSO had anything to offer in a volatile, militarized context. In order to put education on the national security agenda, Akilu and her organization spent two years building trust, forming a network and demonstrating that civil society was ideally positioned to reach out and communicate with Nigeria's youth.

- ***Creating Space for Discussion to Address Mistrust and Inform Solutions:*** In Sri Lanka, following the civil war, there was profound lack of trust between local communities and state security personnel including the police in the worst

war affected areas. Women in villages were concerned about male officers entering their communities, while female police were afraid to enter villages alone; and there was little to no communication between the police and the communities they served. The Association for War Affected Women (AWAW) provided training to personnel in over 400 police stations regarding the ethos of policing in communities. Drawing on the UN SCR 1325 agenda, the police identified their key security concerns in communities and developed relevant interventions that would enable informal interaction with community members to gradually build trust. AWAW also advocated the state to deploy female officers and ensure that in the Tamil areas the police officers could speak Tamil. One simple solution was that local stakeholders agreed to have male police officers accompany female officers, but only the women officers entered their homes.

While every context will be unique, there are common features across settings where community policing has been effective. Trust is at the foundation of the positive community police relationships, but to build and deepen it requires space for dialogue and exchange that is inclusive of all community concerns on an ongoing basis. Crucially, such initiatives must not only focus on the priorities identified by the police, government or international forces. To perform better and improve relationships to the community, police must identify, respect and address the security and law enforcement needs of the community. For example, in Morocco this shift was observed after civil society brought victims of human rights abuses into dialogue with security actors.

Civil Society – Security Sector Engagement: Why It Matters And How To Move Forward

Independent local civil society forms much of the backbone of PVE in practice. They are often "of the community" and thus have legitimacy, trust and access in ways that states and international actors cannot have. Civil society actors innately understand the concept of the "whole of society" approach and, are by definition, indispensable bridges between different sectors as well as government and communities.

At the international level, particularly among security sector actors, there is recognition of the immense value that local CSOs bring to the table. In our consultations, across the board with security actors, policymakers and practitioners there is agreement that the "entry point" should be at the very start of any process. In other words, from assessing and scoping the nature of the threats and challenges as well as the solutions, to the design of national policies, their implementation in communities and through to monitoring impact and providing feedback, independent local

"Civil society in Nigeria was much better at communicating with the youth of today. It took the government a long time to recognize that. We had to work for almost two years to put education on the national security agenda. The gap between the government and civil society was large and there was a total lack of trust. The government did not believe that civil society had anything to offer. We eventually formed a network with academics, private sector, development actors. No country can do it without marrying the two."

— Dr. Fatima Akilu, Executive Director, Neem Foundation, Nigeria

CSOs should be key participants. Given the tendency to exclude women and youth organizations, particular efforts should be made to identify and engage them, as they have critical access, expertise and understanding of dynamics and trends, which are often invisible to more formal entities.

But there is a persistent question about identifying the "right" civil society organizations and actors. This issue was been highlighted and tackled in the context of inclusive peace processes as well. ICAN's Better Peace Tool, provides a summary of basic criteria for identifying relevant CSOs (see box on pages 32-33). In the context of PVE efforts, the core values are still needed and the criteria could be adapted to identify groups that are engaged in direct or PVE-relevant activities.

A related concern among international security actors is that their engagement with local CSOs could put such organizations at risk. This too can be addressed by fostering communication between security and state actors and international CSOs that are well networked with local organizations. The Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) that ICAN spearheads, and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth, Peace and Security co-chaired by Search for Common Ground are among examples of locally rooted but globally connected entities. They have trusted ties with local partners and can consult with them on whether and how local entities wish to engage with international security actors such as police or military trainers providing services in their countries, and facilitate the contacts when needed. Simultaneously they are trusted, credible and independent actors in the international space as well, with established relationships with state and multilateral institutions.

To be effective in the security space, these relationships must be fostered based on mutual trust and recognition of the value

added that each sector brings. The key operating principle can be collaboration structured around a division of labor based on the comparative advantages.

While the idea is simple enough, there are still many bureaucratic and systemic barriers to overcome. CSOs, even international ones, rarely have the resources to maintain regular contact with a variety of sectors and actors within the same state. In other words, communication and relations may be strong with the ministry of international development or foreign affairs, but not with the security or international policing and peacekeeping arms of the same state. Each sector should commit to facilitating and enabling the communication.

International security actors can play a significant role in promoting community policing. Particularly where they provide advisory services, trainings or funding in the context of security sector reform (SSR) programs, they must ensure that the ethos of service, protection of human rights particularly for minorities, youth, women and children, community dialogue and civil society partnerships are central to the skills and capacities they are developing.

Funding of PVE programming remains a challenge with CSOs often facing three to six-month implementation periods for work that requires long term commitment to establish relevance and authenticity at the local level, and to overcome the perception that international actors view the lives and communities of those affected by extremism as a "project."[16]

The donor community must revisit its own processes to allow for greater flexibility in funding timelines to allow for a better balance between measuring the quality of programming, not just the quantity of funds disbursed.

[16] Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini et al, *Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms,* Executive Summary (p. 40).

Sample Criteria for Identifying Local Civil Society

Excerpt from ICAN's Better Peace Tool (2015)

There are old and new civil society groups doing work relevant or specific to the prevention and countering of violent extremism and peacebuilding. For programming involving engagement with security sector, a set of criteria can help identify the most relevant civil society organizations. The following criteria were derived from consultations with peace practitioners and advocates globally.

Core values and commitments to:

- Non-violence and peaceful resolution of the dispute;
- Human rights, women's rights, and peace;
- Gender sensitivity in security and governance issues;
- Political independence and/or non-partisanship;
- Representation/inclusion of diverse sectors such as women, youth, minorities, and marginalized populations.

Competencies in at least one of these areas:

- Practical experience and gendered understanding of ground realities;
- Strong record of representing women/civil society;
- Provision of aid, early recovery, or alternative livelihoods;
- Access to armed groups and/or prevention of recruitment into militias;
- Disarmament/rehabilitation and citizen/community security;

- Experience in mediation/peacemaking—particularly among communities;
- Promotion of social cohesion and a culture of peace;
- Focus on justice and reconciliation issues and working with victims;
- Resource issues, including national resources and land rights, with an understanding of local communities and women's needs.

Nature of constituents:

Organizations vary in the depth and breadth of their constituency, but it is useful to include organizations that have:

- A connection to a constituency "on-the-ground";
- Feedback mechanisms to inform and hear from local communities including marginalized groups;
- Capacity to mobilize and influence public opinion;
- Diverse representation of women, youth, minority groups, and/or geographic/ethnic areas/religious communities.

The Better Peace Tool, 2015, www.icanpeacework.org

Simultaneously there is a critical need to shift resources to local independent organizations, not just large international NGOs. The former are rooted in their communities and have chosen to engage in promoting social cohesion, peace and prevention of extremism and related violence because they are existential matters for them. Their way of life and their families are directly at stake. They have a long-term commitment and no "exit strategy". Their activities are not dependent on funders' priorities or interests. The latter meanwhile have the institutional structures in place to handle the heavy but necessary financial requirements of governments. But to be effective they need their local counterparts. Transparency regarding the resources available, participatory design and credit for implementation of initiatives, and commitment to strengthening local organizations are essential to effective collaboration and sustaining trust.

Feedback loops from the local to the global are critical to ensure timely adjustments and changes to programming to meet the changing realities on the ground and avoid inadvertent harm.

Conclusion

There are some profound challenges remaining but the interactions between the relevant stakeholders, particularly security actors and local CSOs as evidenced at the GSX event in London, demonstrate how much commonality of vision and values exist, and the wealth of opportunities for future partnerships. Much of it can be accomplished through facilitating and leveraging informal communication, outreach and consultation among cross-sectoral peer networks and in person interactions. Moreover the ideas and solutions offered in the guidance section of the report should be integrated into national PVE strategies, to enable clear advancements in effective PVE, while addressing many of the long standing and enabling root causes, and laying foundations for sustainable peace, security and pluralism.

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