



From Policy to Action

Advancing an Integrated Approach to Women and Countering Violent Extremism

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Women and women-led organizations have worked globally, through formal and informal channels, to resolve conflicts, build peace, promote development, and strengthen security sectors. These powerful roles were formally recognized more than 15 years ago with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and follow-on resolutions.¹ Experts and practitioners working to advance women's inclusion in peace and security processes—a practice referred to as women, peace, and security (WPS)—can provide valuable insights to strengthen policy and practice on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) at the international, national, and local levels.

For decades, researchers and practitioners have documented the role of women in enhancing the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of conflict prevention and resolution efforts.² Yet within national debates and strategies on P/CVE, women continue to be systematically excluded despite their possibly critical insights into the underlying drivers and dynamics of violent extremism and terrorism. Inclusive approaches

are more vital than ever, particularly as women and girls across the globe continue to bear the brunt of extremist violence. The UN Secretary-General's report in March 2015 on conflict-related sexual violence catalogued widespread acts of sexual and gender-based violence committed by extremist groups, including as a tactic of war.³ The October 2015 study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 also highlighted the serious impacts of violent extremism on women and girls and emphasized that this “escalation in violence and insecurity demands the attention” of the WPS agenda.⁴ Women and girls further suffer from harmful practices that have rolled back gains they have made, especially with regard to politics, health care, and education.

Although the violence committed against women by many extremist groups demands the full attention of the international community, effective P/CVE strategies, plans, and programs must recognize and account for the broad range of roles women play. There is a long history of women planning, supporting,

¹ Subsequent resolutions include Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2422, passed during 2008–2015. For more on these resolutions, see PeaceWomen, “About Women, Peace and Security,” n.d., <http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions>.

² Marie O'Reilly, “Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies,” *Inclusive Security*, October 2015, <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Why-Women-Brief-10.12.15.pdf>.

³ UN Security Council, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Report of the Secretary-General, S/2015/203*, 23 March 2015.

⁴ UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, 2015, <http://wps.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>.

and executing terrorist attacks.⁵ Female combatants remain few in number worldwide, but they have played key roles as ideologues, facilitators, fundraisers, and recruiters for violent extremist groups and have inspired others to join these groups. Today, there are increasing reports of women journeying to territory controlled by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), with some reports suggesting women make up 10 to 15 percent of the foreign contingent, many of them playing supporting roles such as marrying frontline fighters and helping to enforce ISIL laws.⁶ Neglecting women's agency and motivations in advancing support for violent extremism can result in an incomplete understanding of these dynamics and ineffectual responses.

Norms and principles related to advancing women's inclusion and accounting for the diversity of women's roles within the field of P/CVE have started to emerge within the United Nations and among other multilateral actors, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Global Counterterrorism Forum, and European Union. These norms and principles are noteworthy, but less attention is given to the practical dimensions of implementing a gender dimension into P/CVE efforts, strategic coherence, and coordination and how the United Nations can support member states and civil society actors working on this agenda. Moreover, there are few funded opportunities for practitioners in the counterterrorism, P/CVE, WPS, humanitarian, and development fields to interact and advance more integrated and effective P/CVE strategies that draw on the broad range of expertise and experience available to multilateral organizations such as the United Nations.

This policy brief explores ways of enhancing a cross-sectoral approach to integrating inclusion of gender and women as a core component of UN and member state P/CVE efforts while developing a closer understanding of the potential points of convergence between the P/CVE and WPS agendas. In addition to desk research and consultations with key stakeholders, including UN actors and member state officials, experts, and national and international civil society actors, it draws extensively on discussions during an April 2016 workshop on the topic cohosted by the Global Center on Cooperative Security and Inclusive Security.⁷ It takes stock of multilateral efforts in this area and discusses practical means of advancing the WPS and P/CVE agendas in a more integrated manner. This brief draws on lessons and experiences not only from the WPS space, but also from the fields of development and human rights, which for a long time have advanced comprehensive approaches to gender integration, to help inform P/CVE efforts. It concludes with a set of practical recommendations for UN member states, entities, and stakeholders on ways to integrate attention to gender and enhance women's meaningful inclusion in P/CVE.

The NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK ON WOMEN AND P/CVE

At the multilateral level, a number of different processes and frameworks have underscored the need for greater attention directed toward preventive efforts in addressing terrorism and violent extremism. Within this discourse there is an increased need for strategic coherence and coordination among security, development, and human rights policies and interventions, particularly greater prioritization of

⁵ The reasons for which women join or support terrorist or violent extremist groups remain a topic of debate. For example, see Maj. Marne L. Suttin, "The Rising Importance of Women in Terrorism and the Need to Reform Counterterrorism Strategy," School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, May 2009, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA506225>.

⁶ Peter Bergen et al., "ISIS in the West: The Western Militant Flow to Syria and Iraq," *New America*, March 2016, <https://static.newamerica.org/attachments/12898-isis-in-the-west-march-2016/ISIS-in-the-West-II.8a0c30a894ec4b96a8340d5b26779456.pdf>.

⁷ This policy brief builds on the Global Center's ongoing work to raise awareness among the international community about the multiple roles of women in terrorism, violent extremism, and P/CVE, as well as its work with international, national, and local partners to help shape and inform policy and programming. See Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Rafia Barakat, and Liat Shetret, "The Roles of Women in Terrorism, Conflict, and Violent Extremism: Lessons for the United Nations and International Actors," *Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation Policy Brief*, April 2013, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/13Apr11-Women-and-Terrorism-Prevention_Final.pdf.

The April workshop builds on a March 2016 workshop by Inclusive Security, the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and the International Peace Institute on advancing inclusive, national-level countering violent extremism (CVE) strategies. For the outcome report from that workshop, see Inclusive Security, "Generating Inclusive National Strategies to Prevent Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism: Roundtable Event Outcome Document," n.d., <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Final-Report-Generating-Inclusive-National-Strategies-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism-and-Counter-Terrorism-Outcomes.pdf>.

women's participation and gender integration in preventive efforts.

UN Counterterrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism Architecture

In 2006 the General Assembly adopted by consensus the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which shifted the focus from a reactive posture to a more preventive and comprehensive approach toward terrorism and involved addressing “conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism.” The Strategy did not explicitly mention the roles of women, but this has been integrated within its tenets over the past four years during the biennial reviews of the Strategy. Significantly, the Strategy review resolution in 2014 noted “the important contribution of women to the implementation of the Strategy” and encouraged member states, UN entities, and international, regional, and subregional organizations “to consider the participation of women in efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.”⁸ This was the General Assembly's first recognition of the roles of women in a resolution on counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE), and it provided an important foundation on which to build.

Since then, additional initiatives by the General Assembly have called for a greater focus on women in counterterrorism and CVE. For example, in December 2015, the General Assembly adopted a resolution titled “A World Against Violent Extremism,” which urged member states to, among other things, place greater emphasis on understanding drivers of violent extremism, particularly for women and youth, and to develop targeted and comprehensive solutions.⁹ Furthermore, in his 2015 plan of action to prevent violent extremism, the UN Secretary-General urged member states to mainstream gender perspectives in efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism.¹⁰ The plan highlighted the need to promote women's participation and leadership across governments, the security sector, and civil society. It also encouraged

member states to develop national and regional plans that reflect a number of priority areas, including gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Within the Security Council, there has been a greater push to link the WPS and counterterrorism agendas. In renewing the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Resolution 2129 cites Resolution 2122, which calls for an increased focus on WPS in all relevant council work, including threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. Additionally, Resolution 2178 on foreign terrorist fighters is notable as it calls on member states to strengthen engagement with local communities and nongovernmental actors, including by empowering women and other civil society groups. The increase in attention and initiatives focused on women in the UN counterterrorism architecture is reflected in the 2016 report of the UN Secretary-General on the activities of the UN system on Strategy implementation.¹¹

Yet, the UN counterterrorism community has been criticized for not substantially including references to women's participation and attention to gender in its resolutions or activities and, importantly, not advancing women's inclusion and attention to gender in implementation of these efforts.¹² References to women, it is argued, are often made in connection to sexual violence and as victims of terrorism and violent extremism, with little attention to topics such as women's leadership and autonomy, as well as their voluntary involvement in violence and terrorism.¹³ In fact, a recent report from the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security analyzing the work of the Security Council in 2015 found that, in that body alone, there continues to be a “more acute focus on issues related to women's protection and promotion of women's rights” and a failure to recognize women's

⁸ UN General Assembly, *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review*, A/RES/68/276, 24 June 2014.

⁹ UN General Assembly, *A World Against Violence and Violent Extremism*, A/RES/70/109, 17 December 2015.

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/674, 24 December 2015.

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/826, 12 April 2016.

¹² For example, see Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, “Counter-Terrorism Committee: Addressing the Role of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism,” *Just Security*, 17 September 2015, <https://www.justsecurity.org/25983/counter-terrorism-committee-addressing-role-women-countering-terrorism-violent-extremism/>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

participation and leadership consistently.¹⁴ Integrating and prioritizing the experience, lessons, and good practices from those working on WPS issues would be particularly valuable in addressing this issue within the United Nations' P/CVE and counterterrorism work.

Additionally, UN P/CVE work could gain valuable insights from areas such as human rights and development, which are beginning to focus on violent extremism. For example, in October 2015, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution focusing on human rights and P/CVE, which urged member states to ensure that counterterrorism and P/CVE measures and strategies respect and protect human rights. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights encouraged the development of strategies that address “conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, including by empowering women, religious, cultural, education and local leaders.”¹⁵ The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has also increased its focus on P/CVE, asserting that violent extremism not only deprives people of their freedoms but limits opportunities to “expand their capabilities.”¹⁶ In an African development project that focuses on P/CVE, UNDP has not only mainstreamed attention to gender throughout the project activities but has also developed a stand-alone, gender-specific engagement strategy that will focus on capacity building, participation, protection, and engagement.¹⁷

Women, Peace, and Security Architecture

For actors who address the impact of conflict on women and the roles of women in building peace and security, including conflict prevention and resolution, this is not a new agenda. Recognition of the need for women's participation and protection as a core component of peace and security efforts was institutionalized with the landmark adoption of Resolution 1325 and the seven follow-on resolutions on WPS. As a result, more than 60 countries have designed national-level strategies, known as national

action plans (NAPs) on WPS, aimed at translating these resolutions into reality.¹⁸ These action plans are comprehensive mechanisms for integrating gender throughout a country's defense, diplomacy, and development processes with the goal of increasing women's participation in preventing, resolving, and rebuilding from conflict. Resolution 1325, however, did not specifically address terrorism and violent extremism. Resolution 2122, approved in 2013, was the first time a WPS-focused resolution mentioned terrorism. At that time, the council expressed only its intention to increase attention on WPS issues in all relevant thematic areas of work, including threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

Two years later, with the adoption of Resolution 2242, the Security Council finally called for an integrated approach in efforts to promote the WPS, counterterrorism, and CVE agendas and to apply the principles enshrined in Resolution 1325 to counterterrorism and CVE efforts. The resolution, cosponsored by more than 70 member states, called for greater gender-sensitive research on the drivers of radicalization for women and the impact of counterterrorism activities on women and women's organizations, urged member states and the UN system to “ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies” to counter terrorism and violent extremism, encouraged the meaningful participation of civil society organizations at international and regional peace and security convenings, and called for increased financing for projects related to P/CVE and counterterrorism that address a gender dimension, including women's empowerment.

Also notable in 2015 were the three systematic UN reviews focusing on peace operations, peace-building,

¹⁴ NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, “Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council: 2015,” n.d., p. 2, http://womenpeacesecurity.org/media/pdf-NGOWG_MappingWPS_PolicyBrief_2015.pdf.

¹⁵ Human Rights Council, UN General Assembly, *Human Rights and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism*, A/HRC/30/L.25/Rev.1, 1 October 2015.

¹⁶ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*, 2015, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf.

¹⁷ UNDP, *Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach*, 2015, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Local%20Governance/UNDP_RBA_Preventing_and_Responding_to_Violent_Extremism_2016-19.pdf.

¹⁸ For a complete overview of each of these NAPs, see Inclusive Security, “National Action Plan Resource Center,” n.d., <https://actionplans.inclusivesecurity.org/> (accessed 21 June 2016).

and WPS.¹⁹ The Resolution 1325 study included a discussion on CVE, which reflected concerns within the WPS community about the dangers of instrumentalizing or securitizing women by promoting their inclusion in P/CVE. Although these concerns have merit, women civil society leaders in terrorism-affected countries where Inclusive Security and the Global Center operate continue to highlight that women are already working on P/CVE programming. Thus, concerns about instrumentalizing or securitizing them may minimize recognition of the important efforts they are leading.²⁰ These efforts include mediating ceasefires with state and nonstate armed actors, leading community dialogues to identify key factors driving radicalization and violent extremism, and advocating against human rights abuses that create conditions conducive to violent extremism.

Greater attention is also being paid to the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism, which was highlighted in the Secretary-General's 2016 report on sexual violence in conflict.²¹ In addition, the Secretary-General asserted in his January 2016 report on ISIL that "the nexus between sexual violence and violent extremism is becoming increasingly evident, and combatting extremist groups is an essential component of the fight against conflict-related sexual violence," echoing language by the Security Council in Resolution 2242.²² Additionally, in his May 2016 report on ISIL, the Secretary-General called on member states to "continue to deepen their understanding of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and formally recognize victims of sexual violence as victims of terrorism in order to build counter-narratives and counter-strategies and pave the way for reparations and redress."²³ This critical, increased recognition of the connection between sexual violence and violent extremism brings greater attention to sexual violence in the counterterrorism discourse at the United Nations and underscores the need for better

gender analysis and practical measures aimed at increasing the participation and inclusion of women and girls in counterterrorism and P/CVE efforts.

THE PROBLEM WITH INTEGRATION

Taken together, these resolutions, reports, and related initiatives represent the status quo of the normative framework on women and counterterrorism and P/CVE at the United Nations, which continues to be debated. Evidently, much of this framework has emerged in silos among the counterterrorism, P/CVE, WPS, development, and human rights areas of work. The lack of coordination and communication among the different UN entities that oversee these efforts, such as those within the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), has been a recurring theme in UN-level consultations for this brief and fieldwork with different stakeholders.

Despite calls for a more integrated approach to the WPS and P/CVE agendas, a number of practical challenges remain to realizing full integration, which are outlined below. To address many of these challenges, experts and practitioners have underscored the need for gender-sensitive conflict analysis, which is critical to informing the development of P/CVE strategies and programs that account for and integrate the perspectives of women and the differential impact of violent extremism between genders.²⁴

The following section will explore additional key issues that have emerged as existing or potential roadblocks in better integrating these fields of work, particularly WPS and P/CVE.

Differing Definitions, Concepts, and Labels

The difference between counterterrorism and P/CVE is not immediately clear to many working on WPS,

¹⁹ For a synthesis of these reviews, see Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, "Synthesis Report: Reviewing UN Peace Operations, the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and the Implementation of UNSCR 1325," 2016, http://www.un.org/pga/70/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2016/01/NUPL_Report_2_16_Stamnes_Osland.pdf.

²⁰ For some of the perspectives of these national-level civil society representatives, see Inclusive Security, "Generating Inclusive National Strategies to Prevent Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism."

²¹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, S/2016/361, 20 April 2016.

²² UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Threat Posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to International Peace and Security and the Range of United Nations Efforts in Support of Member States in Countering the Threat*, S/2016/92, 29 January 2016.

²³ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Threat Posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to International Peace and Security and the Range of United Nations Efforts in Support of Member States in Countering the Threat*, S/2016/501, 31 May 2016.

²⁴ For example, see Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Sara Zeiger, and Rafia Bhulai, eds., "A Man's World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism," Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, and the Global Center, 2016, http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/AMansWorld_FULLL.pdf.

development, and human rights, largely due to the dearth of consensus on the official definition of P/CVE, as well as the similarities in definitions often used for terrorism and violent extremism by national and international policymakers.

Given this lack of clarity, women-led civil society organizations that have been negatively impacted by counterterrorism operations or measures may also deem P/CVE to be antithetical to their work. Furthermore, some civil society representatives have expressed concern that the same tools used for counterterrorism are employed for P/CVE, further blurring the lines between the two efforts. Conversely, some WPS advocates who find merit in the goals of P/CVE expressed concern that policymakers and P/CVE practitioners perpetuate unnecessary silos by not recognizing the ways in which P/CVE is a strategy that fits within the broader WPS framework.

Additionally, as the concept of P/CVE has grown in prominence and popularity, there have been expanded calls at UN forums from member states to invest more resources in these efforts, although some have questioned whether the current resources being provided by donors are actually sufficient.²⁵ A number of implementers and practitioners have shared that they are therefore pressured to brand their work as P/CVE to access donor funds, even when that label might put their work or themselves at risk in certain contexts. For those working to mitigate conflict and instability, a further source of grievance is that the singular focus on P/CVE ignores the relationship between the drivers of violent extremism and those that hinder development and peace to the detriment of all three fields.

Furthermore, because violent extremism is typically associated with nonstate actors, UN mandates, resolutions, and programs have largely ignored acts of sexual and gender-based violence committed by state actors and multilateral institutions. This lack of accountability can exacerbate community grievances

with the state, fuel resentment, and contribute to conditions conducive to violent extremism.

Availability and Access to Gender-Sensitive Research

Although much research exists on women's roles in building sustainable peace and security, additional quantitative and qualitative field studies are needed to document women's specific roles in P/CVE. Moreover, research on violent extremism and terrorism often is not shared with actors who may need it to implement effective programming and policies. This problem is not unique to any level, but civil society and nonsecurity actors within governments and multilateral institutions frequently have the most difficulty accessing critical implementation research. Prioritization should be given to creating a more robust framework for research sharing. For example, some women-led civil society organizations stated that they do not have access to data on individuals recruited to violent extremist groups, yet their government is asking them to develop programs aimed at preventing recruitment. Other local women leaders noted that they could advocate for women's inclusion in security matters but they sometimes lack access to concrete research on the positive effects of women's participation in conflict mitigation that would help them argue their case.

Adverse Effects on Women and Women's Groups

Some women's organizations working in the areas of peace-building, conflict resolution, development, and human rights report being "squeezed" between terrorism and counterterrorism.²⁶ For example, these groups face constant threats from terrorist and violent extremist groups yet simultaneously bear the brunt of counterterrorism policies, such as counterterrorism financing measures. In other instances, due to the very nature of their work (e.g., on gender equality and women's rights), they may be subjected to greater scrutiny and labeled as antigovernment, thereby providing grounds for those governments to shut down their operations. This is also part of a chilling effect on

²⁵ Eric Rosand, "The Global CVE Agenda: Can We Move From Talk to Walk?" Brookings Institution, 20 April 2016, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2016/04/20-global-cve-agenda-rosand>.

²⁶ Jayne Huckerby, "A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism," *CHRGJ Briefing Paper*, n.d., <http://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Briefing-English-decade-lost.pdf>.

civil society more broadly, in which governments have used counterterrorism as a rationale for diminishing the space for civic engagement and nongovernmental actors.

Limited Representation of Women in Law Enforcement

Beyond enhancing basic search and seizure capabilities, research suggests that the full integration and promotion of women in the security sector, particularly law enforcement, can enhance the overall effectiveness of these forces and help to address grievances held by local communities due to a lack of trust and negative experiences with security entities. Policewomen are vital to enhancing counterterrorism and P/CVE efforts because they are more likely to reduce the occurrence of human rights abuses, access marginalized communities, limit the use of excessive force, and more efficiently deescalate tension.²⁷ Stories from Kenya and Nigeria, for example, demonstrate the counterterrorism impact that female police can have; civil society has documented instances of female suicide bombers that more likely would have been detected had female officers been present to perform body searches.

Despite the critical importance of female police in these efforts, a number of structural, cultural, and societal challenges and often a lack of political will to advance women's meaningful participation in the security sector have hindered their equal representation. For example, surveys show that Afghan communities are increasingly supportive of policewomen,²⁸ yet families and communities are still reluctant to encourage or allow female members to serve. This can be attributed to a multitude of issues including conservative cultural norms, pervasive sexual harassment and assault within the forces, and lack of adequate facilities, equipment, and child care for female personnel.

Lack of Technical Capacity and Logistical Support

A number of civil society actors, especially those working in areas directly affected by violent extremism, have indicated their desire to undertake CVE programming but believe they lack the capacity to implement these programs. Many highlighted ongoing challenges with large-grant administration, lacking staff resources and capacity on program design and grant management. Some also advocated for enhanced knowledge concerning security policies and religious education to combat violent extremist ideologies.

Furthermore, women-led civil society groups have missed out on valuable opportunities to share their stories and contribute to the development of international P/CVE and counterterrorism policies and discussions because they are unable to request and receive a visa in time. Many advocates and implementers have urged that policy discussions, workshops, and other events be announced well in advance to allow interlocutors time to request visas and that member states implement policies that allow for the review of visa requests in a timely manner. Although this challenge impacts men and women, in the space of UN counterterrorism discussions, women have historically been underrepresented.

THE WAY FORWARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The drivers of violent extremism affect peace, stability, and development efforts in ways that cannot be ignored. To this end, it is critical to ensure integrated approaches to P/CVE to address these issues effectively and sustainably. Although the United Nations has taken a number of positive steps to increase the focus on women and P/CVE, it must be more to achieve strategic coordination and coherence.

There are a number of opportunities moving forward to operationalize and integrate the P/CVE agenda with

²⁷ Kim Lonsway et al., "Hiring and Retaining More Women: The Advantages to Law Enforcement Agencies," National Center for Women and Policing, Spring 2003, p. 2, <http://www.womenandpolicing.com/pdf/NewAdvantagesReport.pdf>; Allison Peters, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Pakistan: Why Policewomen Must Have a Role," *Institute for Inclusive Security Policy Brief*, 31 March 2014, <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/IIS-Pakistan-Memo-v5c-web.pdf>.

²⁸ One survey was conducted by UNDP under the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan in January 2012. See Oxfam International, "Women and the Afghan Police," 10 September 2013, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/multimedia/video/2013-women-and-afghan-police>.

the WPS agenda. First, the 2016 review of the Strategy provides space for the United Nations and member states to reaffirm their commitment to advancing women’s leadership and gender equality and to recognize that these are core tenets to strengthening international peace and security. In acknowledging some of the positive steps forward in this regard, the Secretary-General recently called for accelerated efforts in addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and asserted that, in doing so, member states “must also acknowledge the important role and needs of women and girls, who are increasingly bearing the brunt of terrorist acts and being radicalized and recruited by terrorist groups.”²⁹

In addition, to be effective, P/CVE strategies and programs must prioritize the meaningful inclusion of key stakeholders, particularly women from civil society and the security sector, in their development and implementation. To facilitate these efforts on a national level, components of NAPs on WPS designed to increase women’s meaningful participation in peace and security processes should be integrated into national P/CVE strategies, and vice versa.³⁰

In some cases, however, government officials claim to integrate attention to gender within P/CVE and counterterrorism strategies and implementation processes without specifically including it as a core component. Without explicit inclusion, these gender-blind strategies do not ensure attention to gendered issues. History has shown the only way to mainstream gender and to discern differential impacts of violence among men, boys, women, and girls and develop effective solutions is to ensure attention to gender throughout all aspects of a strategy or program.

Finally, civil society holds the key to effective integration. It is a core component of all areas of these work streams—counterterrorism, P/CVE, WPS, development, and human rights. Civil society plays key roles in strengthening community resilience, advocating for critical policy changes, creating support groups for victims of terrorism, and addressing trust

deficits between communities and state institutions. To this end, UN entities and member states must take steps to ensure that these groups are supported in their P/CVE efforts. Yet, as some civil society representatives cautioned, donors should be mindful of the practical challenges faced by civil society in implementing programming with a P/CVE lens and should note that it is not always necessary to dedicate massive amounts of funding to a single project, particularly if the goal is to support small, local initiatives that may face capacity challenges in implementation.

The following recommended actions are presented for UN member states, entities, and stakeholders to further integrate attention to gender and ensure the inclusion and participation of women in multilateral P/CVE efforts. These recommendations are intended to help inform consultations in advance of the biennial review of the Strategy and the outcome resolution and to guide the development of policy and programming that advance a more comprehensive approach to P/CVE that aligns with WPS, development, and human rights principles.

National P/CVE Strategies

1. *Develop and update NAPs on WPS and ensure that they integrate a P/CVE dimension.* On a practical level, this could mean that representatives on NAP steering committees or lead agencies are meaningfully engaged within the processes and structures established to develop and implement P/CVE strategies. NAPs support implementation of Resolution 1325 and the seven follow-on resolutions adopted by the council on WPS. Therefore, UN member states and entities should ensure that all national strategies on P/CVE include the benchmark and indicator commitments under these plans to enhance cooperation and avoid duplication. To advance integration, the steps below should be taken.
 - *Invest in NAP localization efforts.* For example, community dialogues undertaken to advance this process can identify pressing daily security needs and systematic drivers of

²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.

³⁰ For further guidance on developing inclusive, national P/CVE strategies, see Allison Peters, “Creating Inclusive National Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism,” Institute for Inclusive Security, 10 August 2015, https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CVE_Policy_Recommendations_Brief.pdf.

conflict to inform the development of more context-specific local NAPs on WPS and P/CVE strategies.

- *Determine baseline statistics.* Surveys to assess levels of national representation of women’s engagement in P/CVE decision-making positions will help to determine the largest institutional gaps in their participation and inform more strategic investments.
 - *Commit resources to assessing areas of overlap in national strategies on WPS and P/CVE.* Results from these assessments should help to identify potential synergies and inform the development of more integrated NAPs and P/CVE strategies.
 - *Consult and engage with a broad swath of civil society actors.* Engaging with those working on related issues, such as security sector reform advocates, human rights defenders, peace builders, development workers, and conflict mediators, can be useful in developing integrated NAPs and P/CVE strategies. The factors that can create conditions conducive to violent extremism are multidimensional in nature and should be addressed as such.
2. *Facilitate continuous feedback through formalized consultative mechanisms within P/CVE strategies to align policy objectives and plans.* Further engagement and dialogue between women-led, in-country civil society organizations and policymakers at the national and multilateral levels are needed to ensure flow of information and communications and guard against disconnect between policy frameworks and realities on the ground. Feedback mechanisms formalized in P/CVE strategies and their implementation plans could take the form of monthly roundtables, phone surveys, or town halls but should be included and tracked with indicators in any national P/CVE strategy.
 3. *Ensure that P/CVE strategies are guided by a bottom-up approach informed by local input and assessment*

done in a context-specific manner to avoid actions that contribute to conditions conducive to radicalization and violent extremism. The “do no harm” principle should be considered in all P/CVE programmatic activities. Before undertaking any activities designed to amplify the role and increase the participation of women, practitioners should conduct an assessment of the appetite, feasibility, and security of doing so within the local context. This will ensure that programs intended to help do not inadvertently put communities at risk.

UN Gender Personnel and Representation

4. *Ensure that dedicated, long-term, and expert-level gender staff is hired within all UN counterterrorism entities, including the CTITF Office, UN Counter-Terrorism Centre, CTED, and UN Office on Drugs and Crime.* Gender staff within counterterrorism entities should advise on effective implementation of the Secretary-General’s commitment to ensure that 15 percent of peace-building funds are dedicated to projects whose principal objective is to address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality, and empower women.³¹
5. *Task gender staff with evaluating lessons learned from WPS and P/CVE efforts that could be integrated into the work of these entities.* Staff should be given a mandate to liaise directly with other UN entities working on counterterrorism, P/CVE, and WPS to help identify synergies and areas for collaboration.
6. *Give gender staff the mandate to coordinate with other entities and member states, as well as civil society.* In particular, staff for UN Women and the CTITF Office should ensure that the work of the newly established CTITF Working Group on Gender is informed through regular meetings with nongovernmental organizations that have expertise on integrating attention to women and gender. Gender staff can also advise member states, as requested, on integrating a gender dimension into their national P/CVE strategies.
7. *Support the representation of women and women-led civil society organizations at the United Nations.* UN

³¹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security*, S/2015/716, 16 September 2015, para. 54.

entities and member states must ensure that all UN-supported events highlighting civil society or governmental leaders on the topic of P/CVE or counterterrorism feature equal representation of women and provide the necessary supporting documentation to these women in a timely manner to allow them to secure appropriate visas.

Civil Society Support

8. *Establish dedicated funding streams to support civil society organizations conducting P/CVE programming, particularly those led by women or having access to rural communities.* These funding streams should include developing small-grant financing mechanisms, which can have significant impact on the ground and can provide opportunities to test pilot projects. Such small-grant mechanisms can be implemented through independent third parties if not governmental agencies. All civil society funding mechanisms should allow for core operating support and longer-term programming to account for program traction, impact evaluation, and sustainable progress. Relevant programming could include the elements listed below.

- Facilitation of dialogue between women in local communities and law enforcement, particularly discourse that brings women in civil society together with women police, to strengthen trust and ensure that the police are aware of local needs.
- Support for the inclusion of women into inter- and intrareligious training opportunities.
- Provision of medical and psychosocial support for victims of terrorism, including the training of counselors, social workers, and psychologists focused on treating victims of sexual violence.
- Awareness-raising and capacity building of lawmakers on their role in preventing and reducing radicalization and violent extremism.
- Capacity building of women in civil society, the security sector, and other critical sectors to develop and advocate for policies aimed at

preventing and reducing radicalization and violent extremism.

- Awareness-raising and training of media personnel on the documented benefits of producing educational entertainment that highlights themes of inclusion, peace, and tolerance and encouraging the creation of traditional media programming that emphasizes the promotion of women's leadership to help change perceptions.
- Provision of financial support for the establishment of safe houses for women and human rights activists who speak out against violent extremists and have concerns about their safety.
- Creation of a platform that allows women's groups to anonymously report violence, threats, conflict, and concerns free from backlash or stigmatization, for example, through a telephone or text-based hotline operated by a neutral third party and independent of law enforcement.

9. *Facilitate the creation of local, national, and regional platforms for information exchange between women-led civil society organizations working on all relevant aspects of conflict prevention and resolution.* Many women's groups currently work in isolation, missing opportunities to learn from the experiences of their counterparts in other communities, regions, or countries. Such platforms can allow women leaders to exchange good practices from their contexts on advancing women's inclusion in P/CVE. Platforms can also provide space for dialogue among security actors, government officials, and civil society leaders.

10. *Ensure that CTED dedicates significant time to holding consultations with women-led civil society organizations during its assessments of national-level P/CVE strategies.* Due consideration should also be given to commitments made in NAPs on Resolution 1325, for example, by meeting with NAP implementers. Not only will these actions inform the results of the assessments, but they will also ensure that attention to women and gender is

incorporated into all aspects of the assessment indicators. Member states should provide CTED with the support to implement this, for example, with direct funding or by strengthening its mandate to engage with civil society.

Research

11. *Support quality, in-country research to inform gender-sensitive P/CVE policy and programming.* To achieve this, funding and support should be made available for technical training for researchers, particularly female researchers who can best access certain communities, on such research methodologies as the collection of sex disaggregated data, program design, grant reporting, and research dissemination tactics.
12. *Examine the long-term effects of trauma and conflict on societies and on community resilience against violent extremism.* This research should include targeted assessments on the psychosocial impact of prolonged trauma and conflict on communities, including differences in impact by gender.

Security Sector Integration

13. *Ensure that there is dedicated funding to support the inclusion and participation of women in the security sector to enhance the overall ability of these forces to counter terrorism and violent extremism.* These efforts should include a commitment to dedicate at least 15 percent of funding from security sector capacity-building and technical assistance programs implemented by CTITF entities to support for the recruitment, training, and professionalization of women in the security sector, particularly female police. Additionally, there should be a commitment by member states to ensure equal representation of women police and security forces within these programs when nominations are requested by UN counterterrorism entities.
14. *Facilitate meetings between civil society and senior UN peacekeeping leadership to ensure they are*

informed of the ground situation from a civilian perspective, particularly from women, which is critical to the effectiveness of UN entities operating in terrorism-affected countries. In appointing peacekeeping operation force commanders and police commissioners, the Secretary-General should mandate quarterly meetings with civil society representatives.

15. *Provide human rights and gender-sensitivity training to all national security sector institutions and UN peacekeeping forces.* These trainings can serve as tools to educate forces on the impact of human rights violations in driving violent extremism and to highlight the operational benefits of protecting the population. They can also sensitize male-dominated institutions and organizations to the necessity of attention to gender and women's inclusion for the effectiveness of their operations.

CONCLUSION

As the United Nations and member states develop frameworks for action at national and multilateral levels, they must not forget that women overwhelmingly shoulder the brunt of violent extremism and terrorism and have critical insights that must be taken into account if they want to effectively address the drivers of this violence. Yet, women continue to be systematically excluded from the implementation of policies and programs aimed at P/CVE despite decades of research and practice in the space of WPS that highlight the critical importance of their participation. Esoteric high-level debates on the correct terminology for preventing violent extremism and debates on whether to include women in these efforts often have little relevance to the daily realities of communities, women in particular, in countries experiencing prolonged conflict and instability. To translate norms into concrete action and help advance women's inclusion within these efforts, UN entities and member states must put aside their preconceived notions and undertake substantive efforts to understand the practical considerations for advancing attention to gender and women's inclusion.

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The Global Center works with governments, international organizations, and civil society to develop and implement comprehensive and sustainable responses to complex international security challenges through collaborative policy research, context sensitive programming, and capacity development. In collaboration with a global network of expert practitioners and partner organizations, the Global Center fosters stronger multilateral partnerships and convenes key stakeholders to support integrated and inclusive security policies across national, regional, and global levels.

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Inclusive Security is transforming decision-making about war and peace. We are convinced that a more secure world is possible if policymakers and conflict-affected populations work together. Women's meaningful participation, in particular, can make the difference between failure and success. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has equipped decision-makers with knowledge, tools, and connections that strengthen their ability to develop inclusive policies and approaches. We have also bolstered the skills and influence of women leaders around the world. Together with these allies, we are making inclusion the rule, not the exception.

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