Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons
Risk Assessment, Offender Management, and Interventions Training for Corrections Officials

JULY 2015

BACKGROUND

With increasing numbers of terrorism offenders in custodial settings across the globe, effectively managing this specific prison population and ensuring that violent extremist radicalization does not spread through the system have become key priorities for many governments. Certain prisons seem to have become incubators for radicalization and recruitment, while others have managed to curb violent extremism and promote reform, supported by the implementation of good prison standards and practices of positive treatment. The challenges are many and complex: How can violent extremist radicalization and de-radicalization be identified? How to prevent already radicalized individuals from spreading their ideology and actively radicalizing or recruiting others among the general inmate population? What kind of interventions can be undertaken to prevent, reduce, or counter violent extremist radicalization within the correctional system?

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Building upon ongoing support to the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) Detention and Reintegration Working Group (DRWG) and its previous work on these issues, the Global Center on Cooperative Security (Global Center) is developing a program for prison officials that aims to provide them with the knowledge and the skills to identify and respond to violent extremism in prisons. The training program aims to produce a cadre of mentors who can share the knowledge and skills gained through this program with other colleagues, and support them in developing institutional and national strategies to address terrorism.
Through interactive discussions, the training will cover several themes, including: the social and psychological dimensions of violent radicalization; assessing the extent and risk of violent extremist radicalization in prisons; identifying active recruitment; the benefits and disadvantages of radicalization indicators; risk and impact analysis; and intervention methods. The training program will initially focus on two partner countries, one in Southeast Asia and one in East Africa, with further iterations in other regions anticipated.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL CENTER ON COOPERATIVE SECURITY (UK)

The Global Center (UK) is a registered charity in the United Kingdom that works closely with its U.S. counterpart on criminal justice, countering violent extremism, corrections, and rule of law programming that promotes responsive, fair, and accessible justice and security systems to help address a range of complex security challenges, safeguard human rights, and promote sustainable development. Together, the Global Center offices work with governments, international organizations, and civil society actors worldwide to develop and implement comprehensive and viable responses to these multifaceted issues through collaborative policy research, context-sensitive programming, and capacity development. By these efforts, the Global Center fosters stronger multilateral partnerships and convenes key stakeholders to support integrated and inclusive security policies at the national, regional, and global level.

The team leader for this project is Eelco Kessels, London Office Director and Senior Analyst. He can be reached via email at ekessels@globalcenter.org.