



SCN Program Description
October 2018

Advancing the Role of Local Authorities in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Background

Local authorities, including mayors, city administrators, and municipal-level practitioners, have a crucial role to play in addressing conditions that create an enabling environment for violent extremism. They are often closest to their communities and are well-positioned to better understand local factors and grievances that drive support for violent extremism and to take corrective steps in this regard. Local authorities can help to identify early signs of violent extremism in their locales, foster trust between and among law enforcement and communities, and facilitate multiagency and multi-stakeholder approaches in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

In many cases, however, local authorities have few opportunities and/or face significant obstacles to engagement in P/CVE efforts. In some jurisdictions they may not be involved in discussions and decision-making around national security issues and may not be consulted in the design and development of national P/CVE plans and strategies. In many jurisdictions, there are no formal mechanisms to facilitate vertical integration and cooperation between national and local authorities on P/CVE efforts. Furthermore, many local authorities do not have adequate capacity or know-how to develop their own P/CVE plans, strategies, and programs if the need arises.

Recognizing the importance of local authorities to effective P/CVE, the international community supported the launch of the Strong Cities Network (SCN) in 2015 during the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The SCN is the first ever global network of mayors, local policymakers, and frontline community practitioners working on P/CVE. The SCN aims to increase connectivity, facilitate effective peer learning, and deliver expert training on designing and implementing prevention strategies at the local level. It comprises 120 cities across more than 40 countries across various regions, including East Africa, West Africa and the Sahel, Middle East and North Africa, Europe, North America, and the Western Balkans. The SCN is supported by the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States, and several member cities and embassies.

About the SCN Program

Since 2016, the Global Center on Cooperative Security (Global Center) and ISD have collaborated on a number of activities for the SCN. These activities included convening a regional workshop for municipal-level practitioners in East and West Africa and managing SCN local innovation grants to civil society organizations in East Africa, South Asia, and Western Balkans.

From 2018-2020, the Global Center and ISD will continue to work together to deepen engagement with local authorities across Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Southeast Asia and sensitize them and national-level counterterrorism and P/CVE officials in their respective countries to their potential role in P/CVE. The program will focus primarily on engaging local authorities in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan; and in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Activities will include engagement with and recruitment of cities and other local government units for membership in the SCN. Assessments of the cities' capacities, gaps, and needs in P/CVE will be conducted, which will help to shape and inform two regional training workshops in Central Asia and Southeast Asia. The workshops will bring together local authorities from the engaged cities to explore ways of building resilience to violent extremism, particularly through local action planning for P/CVE.

About the Global Center

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. The Global Center's work focuses on enhancing community resilience to violent extremism and on supporting national and non-governmental institutions in responding to multidimensional security challenges. 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.

About ISD

ISD is a global counter-extremism organization dedicated to powering new generations against hate and extremism in ways that are practical, affordable, effective, and scalable. For 10 years, ISD have responded to the rising challenge of extremist movements and the ideologies that underpin them, delivering cutting-edge programs built from world-leading expertise in communications and technology, grassroots networks, knowledge and research, and policy advice. ISD manages the SCN - for more information, visit www.strongcitiesnetwork.org.

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