

Partnering against violent extremism



VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SUDAN

AN EVIDENCE-BASED STUDY



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الهيئة الوطنية لمكافحة الإرهاب
Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism
اللجنة الفنية لتنفيذ قرارات مجلس الأمن بالأرقام 1267 / 1373



Partnering against violent extremism



This study is an attempt decipher the trends of violent extremism in Sudan, and their implications to the region and the globe. It is a humble attempt by all concerned parties in Sudan to understand why people join violent extremism.

The study would not have been possible but for some extraordinary partnerships, formed to prop up a pledge and a solemn resolve of the government and the people of Sudan to partner against violent extremism. Consequently, the programme response has been named

“PAVE”, Partnering Against Violent Extremism.



VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SUDAN

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PREFACE

The upsurge of violent extremism in the last few years has been a challenge on many fronts, affecting countries and regions across the globe and presenting a real threat to their development. Sudan and the surrounding region has unfortunately been no exception to this phenomenon, and the Government of Sudan has taken this issue very seriously.

In order to be able to formulate an appropriate response to violent extremism, it is critical to understand why it arises. The Government of Sudan and UNDP, in coordination with a number of national, regional and global partners; and in close partnership with civil society organizations, have come together to try to articulate a response to this phenomenon. As a first step, a study was initiated jointly by UNDP and the Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism (SNCCT) to understand the root causes of violent extremism in Sudan; and its implications for the country and the region.

Collecting the survey data for the study entailed a number of challenges, as the respondents were very sensitive to perceived threats from and fear of violent extremist groups. The respondents covered a broad spectrum—current prisoners, returnees from Guantanamo Bay and Islamic State; families and friends of people who joined violent extremism, either still active or killed in action; religious leaders; university staff and students, and more. Across all respondents, however, it was clear that collecting and collating information carried with it more than the usual level of difficulty, due to the sensitivity of the subject. Much groundwork was needed to gain entry into the communities. Public events, such as street plays and football matches, were organised to facilitate access, and far more preparation time than expected was required for each individual interview.

During the process of the survey, stakeholders and partners realised that due to the subject matter, innovative methods for obtaining and analysing information were required. The Government of Sudan was very committed from beginning to end, giving unprecedented access to prisoners and their families. The technique of chain-referral sampling, whereby affected families and individuals recruited their acquaintances to add to the pool of respondents, added considerably to survey results. Nevertheless, no survey or research is ever considered fully complete, and all the more so in such a sensitive, dynamic and changing context. It is thus our intention to continue the research beyond the current survey results.

The current report is intended for a broad-based audience, including Sudan policy-makers at the national, regional and local levels, civil society and academia, international partners, the public and youth. I am confident that our findings can help to inform the interventions of interested stakeholders and partners in Sudan and the region as appropriate. I look forward to the report generating extensive discussions on this subject in Sudan, as well as on the role of different stakeholders in joining forces to collectively work on the prevention of violent extremism.

As a parallel initiative to the study, and with support from the governments of Japan and Canada, we thought it would be valuable to capture some of the main findings with regard to the paths that violent extremism takes in Sudan in the form of a film, and to use it as advocacy material in the discussion on violent extremism. As a result, we made a film called ‘IMAN—when faith is at the crossroads’, which reflects the very real experiences of people affected by violent extremism. The film and its trailer have had an unprecedented

reception and have generated a good discussion among youth, academia, faith leaders and families in Sudan.

Youth make up the majority of the population in many Arab and African countries, and Sudan is no exception. Unfortunately, many young people are unemployed and subjected to challenges like migration, displacement, conflict and other stresses, which makes them vulnerable to recruitment into violent extremism. In that context and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, which focuses on leaving no one behind, UNDP and its partners will endeavour to harness the positive potential of its youth.

I sincerely hope that the outcome of this study will help organisations and institutions in Sudan, the region and around the globe—in whatever way possible—to prevent and counter violent extremism.



Marta Ruedas

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
UNDP Resident Representative in Sudan

FOREWORD

President of the Republic of Sudan, Field Marshal Omar Hassan al-Bashir, has presided over the state institutions working in the field of advocacy and promoting dialogue to tackle the issue of violent extremism across different elements of society. First Vice President and Prime Minister of Sudan, General Bakri Hassan Saleh, has declared Sudan's strong political commitment at the highest level of leadership in the country, to actively contribute with the international community in combating the phenomenon of violent extremism. They send a clear message of political commitment of the presidential institution to combat this phenomenon.

The Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism (SNCCT) is a governmental body established in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1373. The commission's role is to coordinate the government's efforts in combating terrorism and violent extremism. It includes members of several governmental institutions related to counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, as well as members of other relevant organizations.

Our efforts go beyond the borders. Sudan has strong regional partnerships to counter and prevent violent extremism with various continental and regional institutions, including partnerships on combating money laundering and financing of terrorism and proliferation. In the area of international partnerships, our institutions are characterized by continuous active participation, exchanges and good coordination with the Security Council and its Sanctions Committee, the Sixth Judicial Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and the Moscow Annual Meeting on Counter-Terrorism Frameworks and Methods. Similarly, Sudan has established high-level coordination with the European Union in the areas of raising the efficiency of law enforcement agencies,

combating money laundering and tackling the financing of terrorism offences.

This study on violent extremism in Sudan is the first result of an effective and genuine partnership between the SNCCT and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Through the meticulous research conducted in the selected states, we had set as the first step to identify the root causes for radicalization towards violent extremism in our country. As any other country in the world, Sudan is characterized by unique context-related challenges and threats. Our country suffers from the fact that so many young people are being recruited through various means and platforms—from social networks to direct contact with recruiters inside or outside the country.

Our experience shows that partnerships are key in addressing, preventing and countering the issue of violent extremism. We believe that the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the SNCCT and the UNDP in early 2017 for collaboration in the area of prevention of violent extremism was a significant step. This study was conducted within the framework of the MoU and we believe it will help understand at-risk youth's and vulnerable people's potential to be affected by extremism in Sudan.



Dr. Mohamad Jamal Al-Din Ahmed
Director of SNCCT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The gravity of the subject of violent extremism is in the spotlight around the world. This report on violent extremism in Sudan is the first empirical study of its kind in the country. The study was guided by the overall framework of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism that was adopted in December 2015, and UNDP's strategy on Preventing Violent Extremism through inclusive development. The study is the result of the research contributions, expertise and support of dedicated individuals and organizations from different walks of life. The team which prepared the report wishes to express the deepest gratitude to all those who provided their intellectual inputs and feedback through numerous consultative meetings, extensive research and preparatory work between June 2016 and May 2017.

Conducting research of this magnitude on such a sensitive subject, was not an easy task. We have had to involve a number of partners and interlocutors to be able to reach reasonable outcomes. This document is a testimony to these combined efforts. Given the situation, there will inevitably be some gaps, which need to be addressed subsequently. We are in discussion with numerous partners to reach this goal.

First of all, I would like to thank the Government of Sudan, who were instrumental at all levels in making this study a reality. In particular, I want to express my appreciation for the efforts of Sudan National Commission on Counter Terrorism (SNCCT) colleagues, with a special mention of Dr. Mohammed Jamal Eldeen, Director of SNCCT, and his team, notably Mr. Muawia Medani Ahmed and Mr. Mohamed Kamal Ahmed and the representatives from various ministries.

I would also like to thank the civil society actors: General Sudanese Students Union, National Federation of Sudanese Youth and Sudanese National Women's Union, without whom this study would not have had its character of neutrality; and Alnasaïem, a development organization, for providing a development perspective to the study. We were also in touch with universities and think tanks who provided invaluable inputs on the situation.

From the UNDP side, I myself played a role in developing the idea and bringing the study to this stage; and my sincere gratitude goes to the UNDP team, led by Srinivas Kumar, with Tomokazu Serizawa and Khalid Eltahir leading the study locally; and Mohamed Elsidieg, Iman Mohamed, Ranjita Mohanty, Amal Elshiekh, Jalal Elias, Khalid Awadalla, Ali Muntasir, Desislava Kyurkchieva and Omer Elhag coordinating and shaping the report. Abdel-Rahman Ghandour, Deputy Country Director, UNDP also contributed a lot of inputs into the analysis. Above all, continuous guidance and support was bestowed by Marta Ruedas UN Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP.

I also want to place on record the support that was rendered by UNDP Regional Bureau of Africa (RBA) and Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS). In particular, Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, Mohammed Yahya and their team from UNDP Regional Service Centre in Addis Ababa have lent a lot of technical support for the initiative to be in tune with the architecture of Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism for a study in Africa. Colleagues from UNDP RBAS in general, and from UNDP Regional Hub in Amman, in particular Jos De La Haye and Malin Herwig, rendered technical support to

facilitate streamlining of the report to the context of the region.

I would also like to recognise the contribution made by other individuals in the preparation and finalization of this report. Dean Piedmont from USA, who is head of The Countering Violent Extremism & Reintegration Initiative in New York and also Professor at the Milano Graduate School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy at the New School; and Anneli Botha from South Africa, a renowned expert on this subject matter, both rendered technical support to make this report a possibility; and Karin Enskog Ali for her expertise in design and infographics. A lot of technical inputs were received from Ben Fisher and David Foster from DFID / British Embassy and Phillip Herzog from the German embassy for correlating study and response.

Our gratitude is also extended to the Royal United Services Institution (RUSI) and the Canadian Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV), for their invaluable inputs into the report. I would also like to thank, in particular, the Ambassador of Japan to Sudan, Hideki Ito, and his team, and the Canadian Charge d' Affairs to Sudan, Salah E. Bendaoud, and his team, for supporting us on this initiative.

As a parallel initiative to the study, with the support from the Governments of Japan and Canada, a film called 'IMAN—when faith is at the crossroads' was produced as part of an advocacy effort on the violent extremism effort taking the clues from the real-life stories. Thanks go to the cast and crew of the film.

Last but not least, special thanks go out to all those brave families, women and youth who came forward to participate in interviews and

pledge their support for Sudan's efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism and lend stability to the region.



Dr. Selva Ramachandran
Country Director
UNDP Sudan

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A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS
OF RADICALIZATION AND
VIOLENT EXTREMISM

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The last few years are testament to the proliferation of violent extremism. No geographical region remains untouched by this phenomenon, which has gained ground every day as the world contemplates how to eliminate the threat. Numerous incidents have captured international attention, with terror attacks taking place across Western Europe, Northern America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. The growth of violent extremism and its impacts are setting in motion a reversal of development gains and threaten to stunt future prospects of attaining objectives enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals. It is estimated that religious-based extremism has claimed the lives of more than 18,000 people in Africa alone in the last 4 years, according to the Global Terrorism Database¹.

Violent extremism has impacted immeasurably upon the lives, and livelihoods, of people across the globe, irrespective of age group, gender, faith, education or employment status. For example, as a result of the increasing levels of violence and insecurity, many students across the African and Arab regions are no longer able to attend schools or universities, which will have a profound influence on their future. Indeed, the phenomenon is disproportionately impacting youth. Marginalized from political processes, lacking viable employment options and suffering from an increasing sense of isolation, youth are easy targets for recruiters who lure or coerce boys, girls, young men and young women with a diverse mix of religious narratives, financial incentives, a glimmer of hope, a sense of belonging and identity, and—often—violence.

Regional issues

Regional drivers leading to violent extremism are complex and inter-linked. They include failures in promoting socio-economic equalities; lack of appropriate opportunities for youth and other vulnerable groups; marginalization, frustration, anger, and lack of good governance. The Arab and African regions in particular are affected, with a swathe of territory across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Sahel under siege. Somalia, Nigeria, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Iraq have become epicentres of VE. Confronted by a wave of radicalization and terrorism, countries in these regions are directly impacted by the spread of extremist groups, such as the so-called Islamic State; Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram. Regional efforts to cooperate to hinder the spread are stymied by porous borders and the limited reach of governments. Violent extremist groups prey on migrants and refugees, engaging in human trafficking to fill their ranks and radicalizing forced recruits. Regional migration and violent extremism patterns include the aforementioned countries² in addition to Chad, Niger, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR) Ethiopia, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt and Europe.

Trends of violent extremism in Sudan

The social and economic situation in Sudan is complex. Fragile relations with the international community, along with climate change, have constrained the country's growth prospects and poverty reduction efforts. This contributes to prolonged conflict, which remains a key driver for Sudan's complex displacement crisis with approximately 2.23 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 584,000 Sudanese refugees

1 UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, "UNDP Regional and Multi-country Project Document. (2016). Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach"

2 Yemen is excluded from the countries in which violent extremism is expanding due to forced migration and human trafficking.

This map has been created with the highest degree of accuracy possible. However, UNDP cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. Depiction of boundaries is not authoritative.



MAP 1: SUDAN AND REGION

in neighbouring countries.³ The problem is compounded by Sudan's hosting a large number of refugees from South Sudan (this number reached 399,827 refugees and asylum seekers⁴ in May 2017), Ethiopia (111,001) and Eritrea (13 396)⁵. This reality is gradually undermining social cohesion, where communities are caught in a negative vulnerability spiral, and youth are exposed to increasing risks. Disparities contribute to vulnerability, particularly affecting the poorest and most resource-deprived.⁶

Categorized as an 'at-risk' country, according to the regional classification system adopted by

UNDP Sudan⁷, the nation demonstrates several distinct dynamics and characteristics that place it at risk for violent extremist groups to take hold. Currently, 47% of the population lives below the poverty line. The national Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (2012)⁸ indicates that poverty remains persistent due to inefficient development plans and strategies, reduced public expenditures on basic services and erosion of land and natural resources. Significant disparities between urban and rural areas contribute to an increasingly urban informal sector which accounts for more than 60% of Sudan's gross domestic product (GDP). Investments and services are concentrated in

3 UNOCHA, "Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan" (2016)

4 UNHCR, South Sudan, Information sharing portal (May 2017) <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=204>; [June, 2017]

5 UNHCR, Sudan, Information sharing portal (May 2017) <http://data.unhcr.org/Sudan/country.php?id=204>; [June, 2017]

6 UNDP Sudan. "Sudan Country Program Document" (2018-2021)

7 UNDP. "Regional and Multi-Country Project Document – Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa" (2016). The classification system for countries includes 'epicenter' countries where violent extremist groups are active – Mali, Nigeria, Somalia; 'at risk' countries that display some underlying root cases – Tanzania, Uganda, CAR, and; 'spillover' countries ramifications of violent extremist groups are palpable – Cameroon, Niger, Chad, Mauritania

8 IMF, "Sudan Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (2013) <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2013/cr13318.pdf>, [April, 2017]

and around Khartoum state. This encourages rural-urban migration, which weakens agricultural productivity and deepens poverty in both urban and rural areas. The net primary school enrolment rate reached 70% in 2012⁹. However, regional disparities account for variances in drivers towards violent extremism. The integration of the joint United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Sudan National Commission for Counter Terrorism (SNCCT) evidence-based survey underpinning drivers of radicalization of former violent extremists is contextualized cognizant of these.

Being an 'at risk'¹⁰ country, Sudan is affected by push factors that include youth marginalization, social and political inequalities associated with high unemployment, economic disparities, rule of law, and social isolation. The former is experienced by youth of Sudanese origin who have migrated back to Sudan from other countries and are unable to self-reintegrate into society. Pull factors include material benefits such as economic and financial benefits, a sense of belonging; and spiritual and religious rewards. Sudan demonstrates several enabling characteristics associated with violent extremism. Currently, almost 47% of the population lives below the poverty line. Evidence suggests that persons in Sudan may begin the radicalization process in-country, and then, upon migration into another country, the radicalization process escalates towards violent extremism. Sudan is therefore a net 'supplier' country for violent extremism, a secondary dynamic occurs, where persons radicalized towards violent extremism in Sudan migrate to a foreign country to carry out the terrorist act. However, violent extremism is becoming mainstreamed in Sudan.

Efforts made in Sudan

In response to the increasing trend of violent extremism in Sudan, the Government of Sudan established the Sudan National Commission for Counter-Terrorism (SNCCT) in 2003. In 2014 the SNCCT received a presidential decree, allowing it to operate internationally and cooperate with international bodies. In early 2017, UNDP Sudan signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SNCCT, agreeing to cooperate on prevention of violent extremism. Since its inception, the SNCCT has made significant strides in addressing violent extremism in the country.

These efforts included various events and initiatives, such as a regional conference named "Arab Media Forum on Combating Terrorism", organized by the Ministry of Information, in partnership with prominent Arab media and religious leaders. The aim of the conference was for the media from different countries in the region to come up with appropriate counter-terrorism narrations. In May 2017, a workshop in Khartoum took place under the title "Combating Terrorism and Money-Laundering". It was co-organized by the Government of Sudan and the European Union's Mission in Sudan, and aimed to enhance the efficiency of the regular forces, judicial organs and central banks. The European Union declared its support to Sudan to meet the international standards for combating terrorism-financing and money-laundering. These efforts were further expanded through various partnerships with non-governmental organizations, universities, centres of excellence and religious centres. Among them are the Renaissance and Civilizational Communication Forum (RCCF), the Supreme Council for the Care and intellectual Dialogue, and the International Center for Da'wa Studies & Training (ICDST).

9 UNICEF "Education Report 2011/2012" (2012)

10 UNDP Sudan "Regional and Multi-Country Project Document – Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa" (2016). The classification system for countries includes 'epicenter' countries where violent extremist groups are active – Mali, Nigeria, Somalia; 'at risk' countries that display some underlying root causes – Tanzania, Uganda, CAR, and; 'spillover' countries ramifications of violent extremist groups are palpable – Cameroon, Niger, Chad, Mauritania

This is the first empirical, evidence-based study into the sensitive subject of violent extremism in Sudan conducted within the framework of the MoU between the UNDP and the SNCCT, under the 'Partnering against Violent Extremism' (PAVE) programme. The study probes the drivers behind violent extremism, through interviews with former violent extremist combatants, former members of violent extremist groups; and their families and associates.

STUDY DESIGN
AND METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to assess the root causes, enablers and drivers of violent extremism (VE) in Sudan. The study provides relevant statistical and primary sources of information for use by UNDP, the Government of Sudan the SNCCT, local and international stakeholders who wish to develop programmatic, policy, and procedural action regarding violent extremism in Sudan.

Methodology

Data collection was informed by structured questionnaires. Due to the sensitivities surrounding issues related to radicalization towards VE in Sudan, special precautions were taken by preparing teams of enumerators on survey techniques and data collection methods, including community entry skills, and appropriate protocols when gathering data from respondents. Information for the study was gathered from five states by a data collection team, consisting of one researcher and five enumerators and a number of supporting staff members. Composition of data collection teams considered gender, cultural familiarity, and knowledge of the people, history and politics of each State.

General Procedures

Upon arrival in each community, research teams briefed local authorities, prominent traditional leaders, and key members of civil society. Community members were informed that this survey was not intelligence-gathering but rather a research endeavour that can contribute to the peace and security of Sudan. Often, interviewees asked about the purpose of the survey and how it would benefit them. The team answered their questions with respect and understanding. It was decided from the beginning that the structured questionnaires would be administered to males by male enumerators and to females by females accordingly. The team completed 377 interviews according to plan and without serious incident, despite many challenges.

Sampling

The study adopted the Snowball sampling technique (chain-referral sampling technique) as it was particularly hard, given the subject, to identify potential participants. With the Snowball sampling technique, identified participants recruits other participants for the study. Snowball

Gathering information from communities about such sensitive topics as radicalization and violent extremism was no easy task. To help people feel more comfortable, a number of activities were organised: a religious speech about radicalization and its negative impact; a drama show; a youth football tournament and a school drawing competition.



Community interacts with Imam during his speech on radicalization and its negative impact on their communities. Aljazira Mosran community, White Nile.



Audience interacts with drama demonstration. Karari community, Gedaref.

Most families have been running after making a living and they forget to look after their kids, and see who they go with and who their friends are. Absence of the family's attention leaves the kids vulnerable"

—Imam on the role of families

sampling is a non-probability sampling method. The study adopted this technique based on the assumption that some people who would have been targeted for the survey study may not wish to participate. For example, if a study was investigating on drug use or any other "unacceptable" social behaviour, potential participants that use drugs, or who were in some way affiliated with production and/or distribution of drugs, may be wary of coming forward because of perceived ramifications. However, other study participants would likely know others in the same situation as themselves, and could inform them of the benefits of the study, and thus assist in attaining a quorum for valid survey results.

Survey questionnaires

The structured survey questionnaires focused on the issues of P/CVE. After a critical review and modification of the draft questionnaires by the study team, the revised questionnaires were pre-tested on a small sample of residents living in Khartoum. Results analyzed from the pre-test

helped to further improve the quality and clarity of the questionnaires. The researchers gathered data from the capital city, and a town, in each of the selected states. Key informant interviews for the sampling included government officials, community leaders and the Sudanese Women's Union. Using the above methodology, the survey questionnaires were administered to the requisite number of selected respondents within each state. Responses were then encoded and cleaned before they were analysed using statistical software (SPSS).

Survey challenges and limitations

As this is the first empirical study of its kind in Sudan, an initial challenge which presented itself was the lack of baseline information from which to launch an evidentiary analysis study. As such, this study serves as that baseline. The sensitive nature of issues around radicalization and VE from a security perspective provided challenges in gaining the trust and confidence of interviewees, especially those associated with violent extremist groups. Most interviewees stated their issues and concerns explicitly, highlighting fears over how the data would be used, and whether it could implicate them in VE. While the margin of error was not statistically calculated, it is a consideration based on the above. Relatedly, accessibility was a constraint faced by the study team due to the



Drama demonstration on radicalization and its negative impacts. Diem Alnour community, Gedaref.



State Governor during the drama demonstration. Diem Alnour community, Gedaref.

‘Ali’ was the eldest sibling in the family. The aspiration of his parents, particularly his mother, was for him to support the family and be a mentor to his younger siblings. A fluent French and English speaker, Ali graduated from University of Khartoum’s department of Arts and Literature. This is where he was exposed to extremist ideology. While we interviewed Ali, he switched languages three times, from Arabic to English, English to French and back to Arabic again. Ali’s abrupt way of communicating made it hard to follow his interview; and even though he seemed academically clever, he contradicted himself when he stated his support to religious coexistence and Daesh actions at the same time.

—One of the interviewers

sensitivity of the topic. Acquiring and reporting relevant information from interviewees required interviewers to have existing knowledge of VE and the ideologies that inspire it. Conveying this to interviewers was a challenge. Furthermore, the psychological status of the respondents was unstable in some cases, which created confusion in the interviewers themselves. Regular adjustments to the study’s questionnaires and databases needed to be made throughout the process to facilitate access and to improve the quality of collected data. Based on systematic feedback, it

was pointed out that some reformulations and adjustments were required to continue the data collection and reduce uncertainties. While being time-consuming and requiring serious considerations, investigations and reflections; these adjustments might be perceived as incoherencies in the formulation of some questions. Lastly, the study gathered information on why people join and remain in violent extremist groups. However, to complement the findings, additional studies need to be conducted in order to identify why people ‘disengage’ and/or become ‘recidivists’¹ or not even join, having been exposed to the same triggers that promoted others to join. This information would significantly aid programming for preventing and countering violent extremism and promote reintegration.

1 In the context of PVE recidivism refers to persons who have disengaged from violent extremist groups and subsequently reengaged with these groups



Youth football competition. Alsharief community, White Nile.



School drawing competition. Karari community, Gedaref.

DEFINING TERMS

Programming around preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) benefits from a clarification of terms. It is evident that the terminology on violent extremism (VE) has been diverse and is still the subject of debate. At the policy and programme levels, terms associated with these areas tend to be used inconsistently at best, and interchangeably at worst. This is an issue when we consider the political sensitivity around security-governance programming in general and P/CVE specifically. On the front end, achieving consensus on definitions facilitates risk management for all stakeholders and provides a locus for managing expectations. On the backend, knowing terms lends itself to consistency in metrics when reporting and evaluating programme responses. We start by choosing a list of terms inherent to this study, and those predicted to inform a programmatic response. Where possible, UN terms are used. In some cases, the definitions offered are distinct to this effort, while in others definitions are drawn from academic and scholarly literature. Citations are offered throughout. The overall aim is a report where all stakeholders can achieve consensus on the frames of reference for the key terms used.

On one of my regular visits to the barbershop, I asked the barber to shave my beard, but that day he refused to do so. 'Why?', I asked. He said he saw on Facebook that shaving your beard is prohibited in Islam. "Some people don't have any background knowledge of religion. They listen and believe anything they are told. We need to reach people in this space. Raising awareness the conventional way is not working.

—One of the interviewers on awareness-raising

Radicalization and violent extremism

To start, radicalization needs to be distinguished from violent radicalization, which is the focus of this document. Violent radicalization can be defined as "an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarization, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is, on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order¹. Radicalization can escalate into violent radicalization; "the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change"²

Terminology for partnering against violent extremism (PAVE)

VIOLENT RADICALIZATION is the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance a political, religious, or social agenda with the aim of bringing about systemic change³.

¹ Schmid (2013) "Radicalization, De-Radicalization, Counter-Radicalization: a Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review", ICCT Research Paper, Le Hague

² U.S. Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act

³ U.S. Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act

It's dangerous when people start following what I call 'google imams', preachers of misinterpreted content from unreliable sources on the Internet.

—Imam on social media

The concept of reintegration is borrowed from Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) efforts and from the field of refugee reintegration and includes a safe transition to the community and a change in the attitudes and behaviours that led the individual initially towards violent extremist activities⁴. Reintegration is a long-term process through which the individual “acquires attitudes and behaviours that generally lead to productive functioning in society”⁵; the ability of returning refugees to secure the political, economic, legal and social conditions needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity” (UNHCR, 2004 Handbook on Repatriation and Reintegration Activities), and for former fighters, the acquisition of civilian status.

REINTEGRATION is the process of formally disengaging from a violent extremist group, a de-radicalization process associated with a change in behaviour that eschews violence to advance ideological or political objectives in favour of civil actions, the acquisition of political and personal agency, as well as community acceptance.

Rehabilitation programs prepare affected individuals to return safely to society, assisting them to lead a good and productive life. Definitions generally centre around three concepts: i) rehabilitation is a purposeful, planned intervention rather than an accidental occurrence; ii) which aims to change

characteristics of the offender that are believed to be the cause of the offender's criminal – or in the present discussion violent extremist – behaviour, and; iii) which aims to reduce the chance that the individual will re-offend. In the context of rehabilitating violent extremist offenders, the offender's ideological belief system plays an important role in the rehabilitation process.

REHABILITATION is a purposeful intervention and set of planned activities targeting individual victims, survivors or offenders with an aim to positively impact changes in attitudes, cognitive skills and behaviour, personality or mental health issues believed to be the cause of the individual's criminal behaviour, through social, educational and/or vocational skills acquisition with the intention to reduce the chance that the individual will experience recidivism. (ICCT – Tinka).

According to the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), “disengagement denotes a behavioural change by which individuals or movements reduce or stop using violent methods. Disengagement can be partial and does not necessarily imply a complete move away from violence. Disengagement may or may not involve de-radicalization, which requires not only a change in behaviour but also a change in belief.”⁶

DISENGAGEMENT for our purposes is the process by which, and event whereby, an individual formally, or otherwise, engaged with a violent extremist group permanently disassociates from that group physically, severing all ties inclusive of operational, psychologically, social or other modes of support.

DE-RADICALIZATION is a psychological process

4 Background Paper for the Roundtable Expert Meeting and Conference on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremism Offenders, 2012, ICCT, Le Hague

5 Veldhuis (2012) “Designing Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programmes for Violent Extremist Offenders: A Realist Approach”, ICCT Research Paper, Le Hague

6 Background Paper for the Roundtable Expert Meeting and Conference on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremism Offenders, (2012) International Center for Counter-terrorism (ICCT), The Hague.

whereby individuals undergo a change in belief worldview where it is unacceptable to use violence for social change⁷. The process includes rejecting extremist ideology in favour of mainstream values⁸. For Partnering Against Violent Extremism (PAVE), de-radicalization is a behaviour shift whereby a person may or may not keep radical attitudes and values but does not commit, or support, violence in any form to affect social or political change.

According to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy – Report of the General Secretary, April 2016, violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon which at present lacks an agreed-upon definition by the international community. Nevertheless, events in recent history prove instructive. Terrorist groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al-Qaida and Boko Haram continue to shape, and concretize our image of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the debate on how to address this threat. These groups transcend national, cultural, ethnic, gender and religious boundaries, underscoring the need for international cooperation to prevent, counter and combat them.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM is an act of violence emanating from a radicalized position, whereby individuals, acting alone, or in concert and sponsorship of a group, commits to the planning, support, carrying out or other activity directly, or indirectly, based on ideological and/or political motives and objectives.

Terrorism has been described as a set of “criminal offences against persons and property that, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or international organization where committed with the aim of: seriously intimidating a population; or

She was a schoolgirl at a private school. She was a popular student, who represented the school in sports, especially hockey. She got 7 A:s and was a member of the student council. She sent a smiling selfie to her sister as she crossed the border from Turkey on March 13 to reach Islamic State territory.

– News article on radicalized medical student

unduly compelling a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act; or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, economic or social structure of a country or an international organization”⁹

TERRORISM is an act associated with indiscriminate violence; ideologically and/or politically motivated, that may target civilians with the express intent to create an environment of intimidation within the general populace, undermine and delegitimize the State, its institutions and organs.

The UN Counter Terrorism Strategy consists of four pillars: i) addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; ii) preventing and combating terrorism; iii) building the State’s capacity and strengthening the role of the United Nations, and; iv) ensuring human rights and the rule of law.¹⁰ “This strategy seeks to both guide and unite us by emphasizing operational elements of dissuasion, denial, deterrence, development of State capacity and defence of human rights. What is common to all of these elements is the indispensability of the rule of law, nationally and internationally, in countering the threat of terrorism”¹¹. The PAVE effort does not directly address counter-terrorism measures as defined directly below.

7 Muhlhausen (2016). “Conflict Management, Transitional Justice and De-radicalization – Different, but common goals, Journal for De-radicalization”

8 Rabasa et al. (2011) “Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists”, RAND

9 European Union’s Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism (2002).

10 Based on UN SC 60/288 (2006) and Report of the General Secretary “Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy” (2006).

11 Report of the General Secretary “Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy” (2006).

People from the age of 17 to 28, they are excited. They are excited by the religion. It is good, he said, but they don't have a role model to follow.

—Imam on age

COUNTER-TERRORISM is the dissuasion, denial and deterrence of terrorist groups, or those persons committed to acts of terrorism, from planning and carrying out such acts through operations that may include intelligence gathering, military or other 'hard' stabilization and co-optive measures or activities associated with state security apparatuses including leveraging assets from, or informing the intelligence sector and community.

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM - "A comprehensive approach encompassing not only essential security based counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive steps to address the drivers of violent extremism"¹²

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM - An approach that includes preventing radicalization towards violent extremism, recruitment, and mobilization of individuals into violent extremist groups. Differing from PVE, CVE includes 'hard' security components, such as border management and police training, and may be associated with 'stabilization' measures including military operations.

'PUSH' FACTORS - "The conditions conducive to violent extremism and the structural context from which it emerges. These include: lack of socio-economic opportunities; marginalization and discrimination; violations of human rights and the rule of

law, prolonged and unresolved conflicts; and radicalization in prisons"¹³.

'PULL' FACTORS - "The individual motivations and processes, which play a key role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action"¹⁴. "These include: individual backgrounds and motivations; collective grievances and victimization stemming from domination, oppression, subjugation or foreign intervention; distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and leadership and social networks"¹⁵.

'PROXIMATE' FACTORS - Factors that provide means and opportunity to become violently radicalized, and eventually a violent extremist¹⁶ that are environmental and related to access to persons, social media and networks where violent extremism is espoused, and further supported by material access to weapons and comparative lack of government, community and familial support systems.

e drugs, or who were in some way affiliated with production and/or distribution of drugs, may be wary of coming forward because of perceived ramifications. However, other study participants would likely know others in the same situation as

She told her parents via WhatsApp that she had gone to Syria to 'help, not to fight', by treating victims of war. Her family set up a mourning tent in a district in the Sudanese capital following her death.

—News article on reasons for joining

¹² UN Global Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015).

¹³ UN "Geneva conference on preventing violent extremism – the way forward" (2016).

¹⁴ UN Global Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015).

¹⁵ UN "Geneva conference on preventing violent extremism – the way forward" (2016).

¹⁶ Sinai (2012) in Schmid (2013); "Radicalization, De-Radicalization, Counter-Radicalization: a Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review", ICCT Research Paper, Le Hague.

themselves, and could inform them of the benefits of the study, and thus assist in attaining a quorum some questions¹⁷. Lastly, the study gathered information on why people join and remain in violent extremist groups. However, to complement the findings, additional studies need to be conducted in order to identify why people ‘disengage’ and/or become ‘recidivists’²⁶ or not even join, having been exposed to the same triggers that promoted others to join. This information would significantly aid programming for preventing and countering violent extremism and promote reintegration.

¹⁷ In the context of PVE recidivism refers to persons who have disengaged from violent extremist groups and subsequently reengaged with these groups



A woman being interviewed for the study. El- Daein town , January 2017.

AN OVERVIEW
OF STUDY FINDINGS

AN OVERVIEW OF STUDY FINDINGS

The trend towards VE is rising in Sudan. Evidence shows a **high level of radicalized youth**, as 94% of those who join VE groups are aged between 16-34 years old and 40% between the ages of 25-29. Women represent 17% and all of them join under 35 years of age with 43% between the ages of 21-24. This percentage is critical, as the country's population is comprised of 60% youth with an unemployment rate of 32%. It was found that youth between the ages of 16 and 29 (both male and female) represents 76% of those who join VE groups. Findings from our statistical analysis indicate that believing in religious ideologies (17%) supporting the creation of the caliphate (18.2%) and economic factors (nearly 20%) are the three main factors why individuals **join** VE groups in Sudan. This varies from the reasons individuals **remain** within the VE groups with, almost 15% believing that VE groups can bring change to their situation as Muslims¹, 22% out of responsibility and duty, 42% out of faith in the ideology of the VE groups and 20% remaining for financial benefits.

Khartoum has the highest percentage of persons radicalizing towards VE coming in at just under 60% of the total. **Economic factors** are the main reason people join VE groups in Darfur, with 29% of respondents stating that they join VE group to improve their economic situation. This number is 25% in White Nile, 24 % in Kassala, and 21 % in Gedaref. Interestingly, Khartoum remains an outlier as only 3% of persons remain for financial purposes.

Not having sufficient education severely limits employment opportunities beyond low-paying, unskilled jobs, making **education** one of the most important factors to be taken into consideration in P/CVE. It was found that the further away the

respondents studied from their homes, the more vulnerable they were to highly qualified recruiters. Furthermore, students coming from far away were mainly drawn to the religious ideas of the extremist groups through these recruiters.

Another interesting finding is identifying the **emotions associated with joining** violent extremist's groups: almost 50% of respondents cited anger towards the international community and Government of Sudan as a reason for joining. Just under 21% of persons cited hope. These were registered as more prominent emotions compared to the feeling of social isolation, guilt, vengeance and hate.

Although there are variations, nearly 64% of individuals who join extremist groups have become fighters. The respondents experienced some emotional feeling when they join the group. Anger is probably one of the most common and powerful emotion associated with political violence and terrorism. The majority of the respondents joined IS (86%), 17% out of which were female, and mainly students from different universities. It was found that young people are most often radicalized and recruited in their twenties.

Survey respondents and analysis

Two groups of people were interviewed for the study. The first group consists of 96 individuals personally affiliated with violent extremist groups at the time the study was conducted or in the past. They will be referred to as '**primary respondents**'.

The group consisted of prisoners given amnesty (28%), individuals returned from abroad and being integrated back into their communities after a custodial period (37%) and individuals still

¹ Darfur is not represented in this figure, and did not report back for the survey study under this domain. As such, the median used to draw this statistic is Khartoum, White Nile, Kassala and Gedaref.

FIGURE 1: SURVEY RESPONDENTS

PRIMARY RESPONDENTS



Their answers are referred to as
'actual' in the study

96 Individuals

80 males, 16 females



SECONDARY RESPONDENTS



Their answers are referred to as
'perceived' in the study

281 Individuals

202 males, 79 females



affiliated with violent extremist groups (35%). The information gathered through these interviews is referred to as **'actual'** (vs. perceived) situation in the chapters exploring the perception gap in Sudan in regards to radicalization. ²

Finally, 17% of the primary respondents are women, allowing to integrate a gender perspective in the data analysis.

The second group or **'secondary respondents'**, is comprised of 284 interviewed individuals with different roles in their communities. It is composed of 30% male community members, 15% community leaders, 13% female community members, while 4% represent the affected families who lost a relative after joining the extremist groups in Iraq, Syria, or Libya. It is important to note that 11% of the secondary respondents are persons who had a family member currently enrolled in an extremist group at the time the study was conducted.

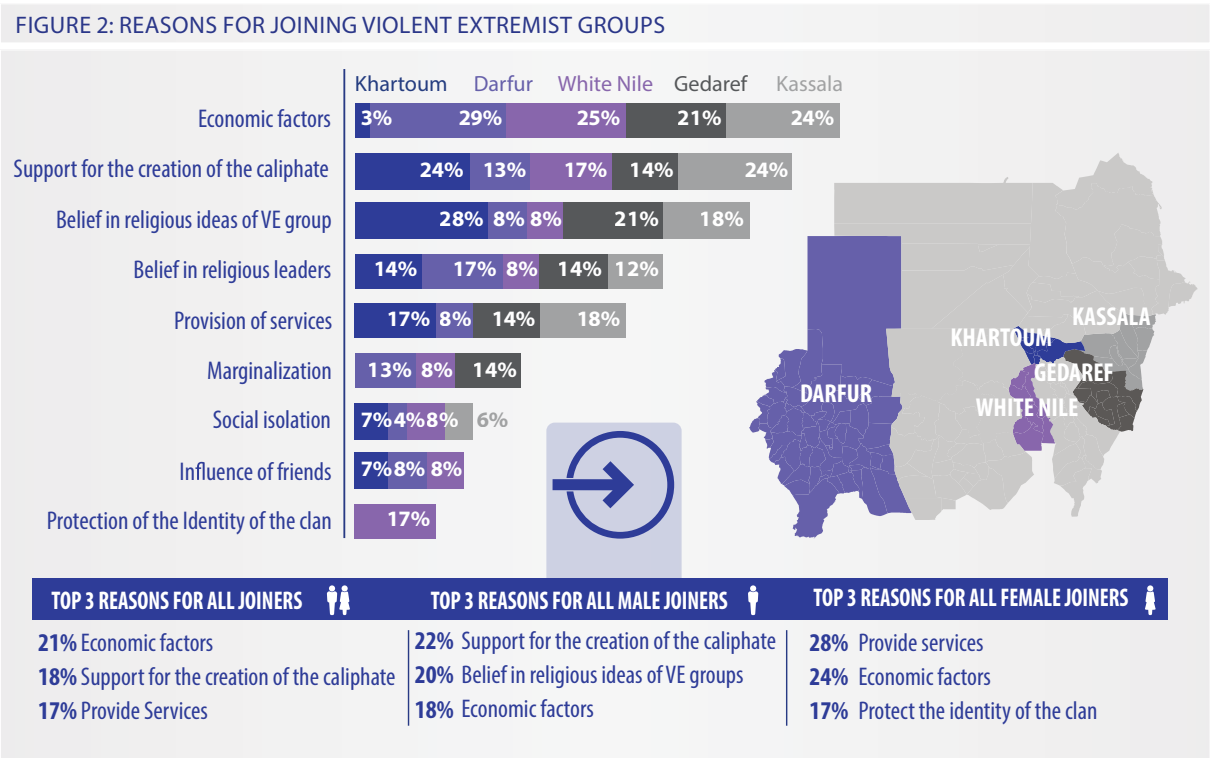
The data collected through the interviews with the secondary respondents will be referred to as **'perception'** (vs. 'reality') in the chapters exploring the gap between perception and reality in Sudan in regards to radicalization.

Reasons for joining violent extremist groups

When respondents were asked about their reasons for joining violent extremist groups ideological beliefs came up very strongly. 28 % of respondents in Khartoum and nearly 22% of those in Gedaref cited **beliefs** in the religious ideas of VE groups as their reasons for joining. In Darfur **ideology** is most strongly present through beliefs in religious leaders (over 17% of respondents). An equal number of people expressed **support for the creation of the caliphate** in the states of Khartoum (24 %) and Kassala (24%).

17% of respondents in Khartoum informed that

² Ref. to 'Perception gap', p35



they joined violent extremist groups in order to **provide services** such as medical support, logistical support etc. Nearly 7 % cited **social isolation** as their main reason for joining. Most of them were students coming from abroad who didn't speak the language, which prevented them from interacting with the rest of the students in the campus. This created a strong sense of **isolation**, making it easier for recruiters to convince them to join violent extremist groups.

In other states, **economic factors** appear to be the main reason for joining: in Darfur the percentage of people who joined to improve their economic situation exceeded 29%. The situation is not very different in other states: 25% in White Nile, 24% in Kassala, and 21% in Gedaref.

In Gedaref **political marginalization** was a factor for 14% of respondents who stated that they felt politically marginalized and did not have a

platform to express their political views or influence decisions. Almost 13 % of respondents in Darfur affirmed that they felt marginalized which included a feeling of being ignored by the international community.

In White Nile, the desire to maintain clan **identity** came second after the economic factors (25%) with almost 17%. Respondents stated that they have joined VE groups under the influence of the events taking place in West Africa and the effect that has on their parent tribes in Nigeria.

When we disaggregate the same data by gender, we discover that the **humanitarian imperative** (provision of services) is significantly stronger for women, reaching 67% in Khartoum and 50% in Darfur. **Economic factors** remain as important as for men (percentages are slightly higher in some states, reaching their highest in Gedaref with 40%).

Ideology appears to be equally important for women and men, while **marginalization** only came up among respondents in Darfur (50% of interviewed women).

As we see also in Figure 3, **protecting the identity of the clan** is a very serious motivation for 6% of women in White Nile while it is not registered for men.

Reasons for remaining in violent extremist groups

Interestingly, the reasons people join VE groups are not always the same reasons that make them stay.

As shown in the figure below, **ideology** features very strongly among the reasons why individuals remain in violent extremist groups. In Khartoum 59% do so because they still believe in the ideology while 22% remain because of **sense of duty**. 14% believe that violent extremist groups can **bring change** in the Arab region and for the Muslims globally.

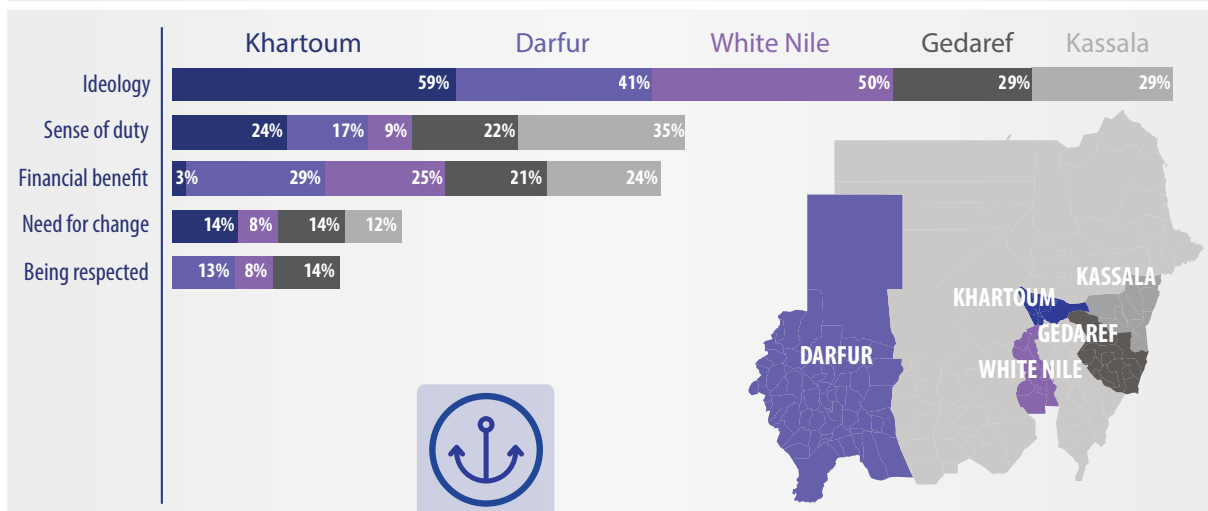
In White Nile on the other hand, where there is a presence of Al-Hijra Wa Al-Takfeer (a violent

extremist group associated with Boko Haram) 50% of individuals remain for ideological reasons. This could indicate a process of radicalization within the group after joining for other reasons such as economic factors and desire to protect the identity of the clan.

The **need for change** was equally important for respondents in Gadaref and Khartoum (14% in both states) 12% of respondents in Kassala named this reason. No respondents from Darfur cited the need for change as important to them.

In Darfur, 29% of people claimed they remained for **financial benefits**. However ideology remains the leading motivation at 41%. Financial benefits are very important in all states (24% Kassala, 21% Gadaref and 25% in White Nile) except in Khartoum where only 4 % of respondents stated that was their reason. This can be explained by the radicalization processes occurring after joining the extremist group: some respondents stated they were initially attracted by the financial benefits but remained in the group when they started to identify with the ideology. In Kassala and Gadaref, **ideology** is a less important factor compared to

FIGURE 3: REASONS FOR REMAINING IN VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUP



compared to other states with an equal 29%. A lower 24% of respondents in Kassala and 21% in Gadaref stated that they remain for financial benefits while 35% and 22% respectively stay because of their **sense of duty**.

The feeling of **being respected** was a determining factor for 14% of people in Gedaref, 13% in Darfur and 8% in White Nile.

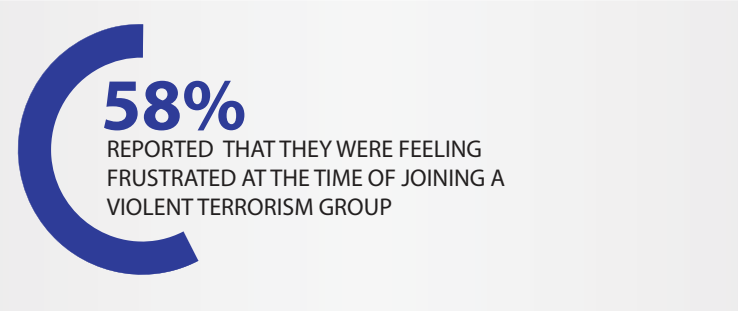
to the group and actually joining the organization, a large proportion informed of a period of several months.

Emotions associated with joining violent extremist groups

The relatively short period between being introduced to and joining the extremist groups is reflective of the emotional state in which individuals take that decision.

As **frustration** is often associated with joining and VE groups, for the purpose of this study, respondents were asked whether they were frustrated at the time of joining. 58% of them stated that they were frustrated at the time they joined. Two of the most prominent reasons for their frustration-threats to religion and ethnicity - were already referred to above. Due to its vagueness and sometimes ambiguous cultural interpretations, frustration was used as a basis to define the main emotional states for joining. The next step during the interviews was to determine the level of influence

FIGURE 4: FRUSTRATION

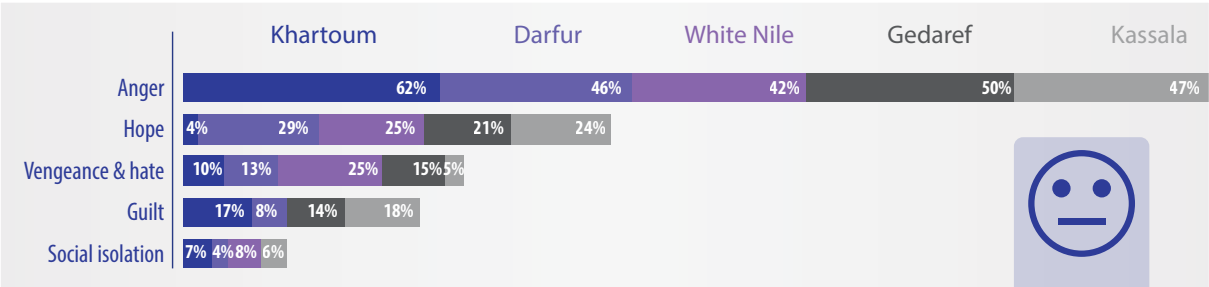


of **five major emotional states** beyond frustration: anger, hate and vengeance, hope, guilt and feeling of social isolation.

The data shows that some emotions seem to predominate in certain states, while other are rather evenly distributed. For example, 62% of the respondents in Khartoum pointed to **anger** as the emotion associated with joining; in the rest of the states this number is between 42% and 50%. Khartoum also had the lowest percentage of individuals citing **hope** as their dominant emotion with only 4% of respondents versus 21-29% for the rest of the states. Overall 19 % of respondents claimed they felt hopeful when making the decision to join violent extremist groups. **Guilt** and **hate** were identified by an equal number of respondents (13%).

Anger was the most common and powerful emotion associated with radicalization towards

FIGURE 5: EMOTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH JOINING VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS



violent extremism on a national level, with 44 % of respondents stating they felt angry at the time of joining. Most of them addressed their anger towards their respective governments for not applying Islamic law. Others stated they felt angry at the International Community and at the West for intervening in the Middle East

Interestingly, **hope** is the second most important emotion associated with joining violent extremist groups in Sudan. An average of 19 % affirmed they hoped to bring positive change when taking the decision. Some respondents, particularly foreign students interviewed in Khartoum, confessed their strong sense of **guilt** for doing nothing for those suffering in Iraq, Syria. The perceived importance of guilt (22%) nevertheless remains overestimated compared to the actual feeling influencing the actions of respondents (with nearly 13%).

Feelings of **vengeance and hate** come third alongside **guilt** with the same number of respondents defining them as their leading emotion (13%).

Another important finding is that a feeling of

social isolation is a more powerful motivation than perceived, especially in Khartoum (7%) and White Nile (8%) states which report above the average of 5% for the rest Sudan. The reasons for this, particularly in Khartoum, are the language barriers experienced by foreign students which reinforce the feeling of social isolation and facilitate the actions of recruiters.

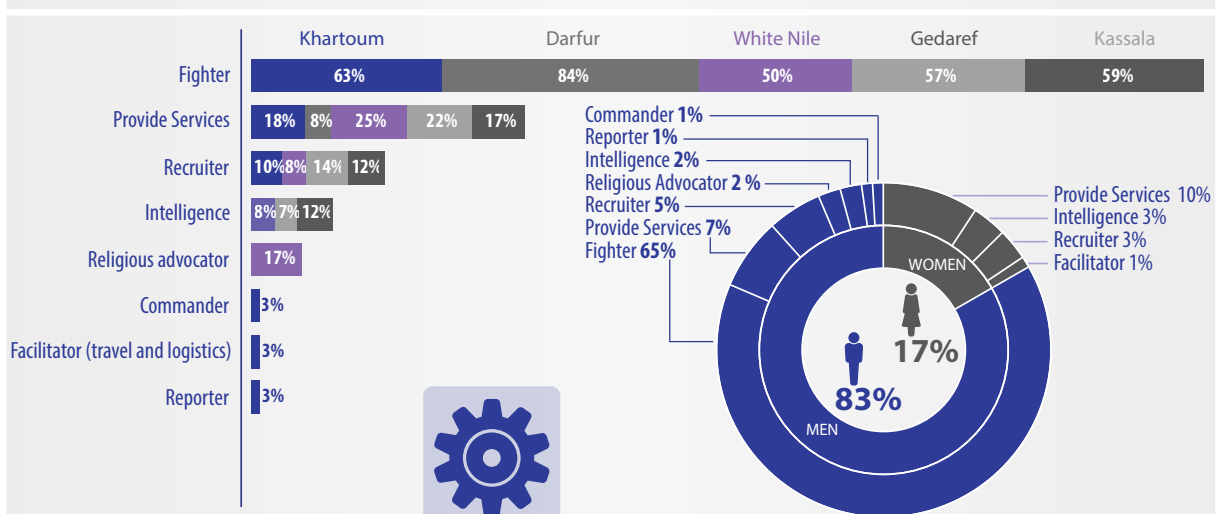
Roles in the group

Although there are variations, most of the individuals who join the extremist group become fighters. In Darfur the number reaches 84% with the second highest in Khartoum at 63%. The lowest percentage of recruited fighters was registered in White Nile where the proportion is 50%.

The second largest group of respondents stated that their roles were to provide medical or logistical support or other services. Recruiters, intelligence agents, as well as religious advocates, commanders, reporters or facilitators were identified among these other roles

Interestingly, some roles are predominantly associated with a particular state. For example, roles

FIGURE 6: ROLES IN THE GROUP-STATE AND GENDER DISAGGREGATED



such as “reporter”, “commander” and “facilitator” were attributed only to recruits from Khartoum state. Similarly, the role of “religious advocator”, according to the collected data, is only limited to White Nile state with a surprising 17% of the respondents.

When we filter results by gender, we find that no women were recruited as fighters. Their roles consist predominantly of services provision and makes 9% of all respondents.

Employment status before joining extremist groups

Employment status at the time of joining VE differs widely across states. The highest percentage of unemployment is among respondents from the White Nile state 100% for women and 89% for men. The highest level of employment among recruits, on the other hand are recorded in about Gedaref (33% among men vs 20% for women) and Darfur (27% of men and 50% of women).

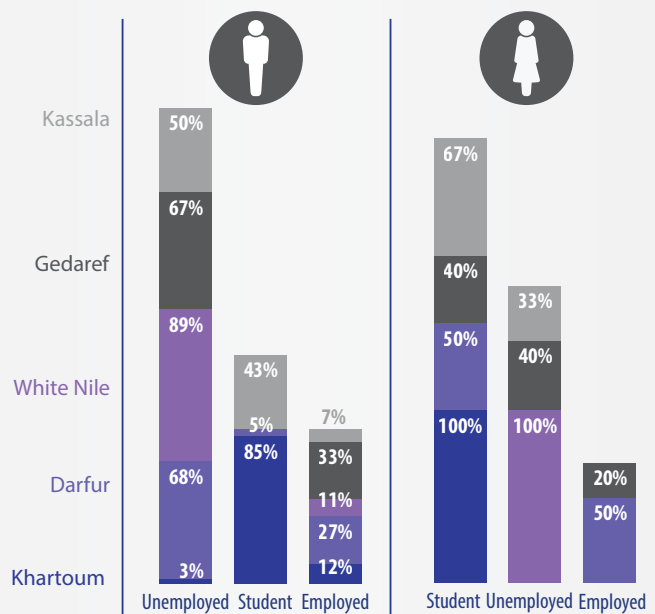
The data shows that male recruits who were students at the time of their recruitment are only limited to three states: Kassala (43%), Khartoum (85%) and Darfur (5%). These percentages are considerably higher among female recruits and concern four states, with 100% for Khartoum, 67% for Kassala, 50% for Darfur and 40% for Gadaref. It is important to notice that all interviewed women were recruited while studying or being employed.

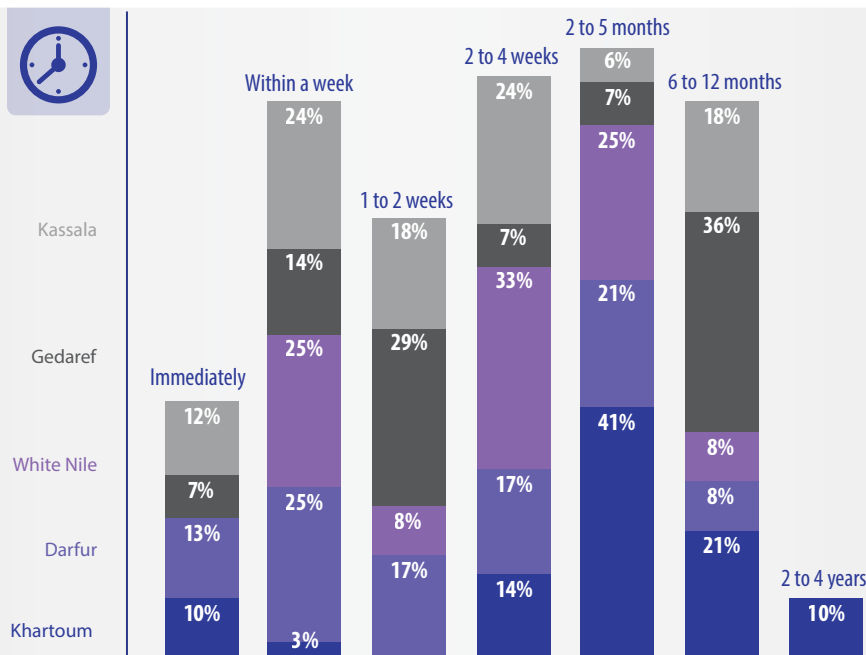
Period between introduction and joining violent extremist groups

Radicalization is a gradual process which makes it very difficult to define the moment in time it occurs. When respondents were asked to provide the duration of time between their first introduction to the group and actually joining the organization, a large proportion informed of a period of several months.

The length of this process varies dramatically by state. Seemingly, the recruits from Khartoum

FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT STATUS BEFORE JOINING EXTREMIST GROUP—PER STATE AND PER GENDER





took the longest to join VE (21% inform about a period of 6 to 12 months, versus 41% for a period of 2 to 5 months). They are the only ones who took years to join: 10% of all respondents from the state. It is important to note that the same percentage applies to those whose decision to join VE groups was immediate (10% for Khartoum).

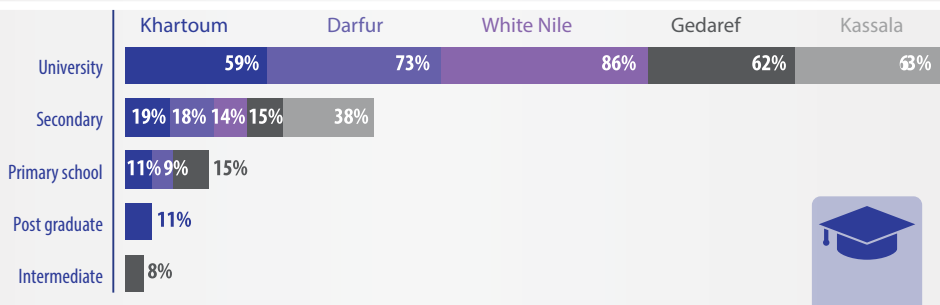
A small number of respondents in all states attested that they joined immediately after being recruited. These numbers grew to over 20% when

this period is extended to a week. In Darfur and White Nile states, 25% of respondents informed they joined within a week of being introduced, in Kassala this number is very close, with 24% of recruits.

Education received

Education is one of the most important factors to be taken into consideration in preventing future radicalization and the only way through which better career opportunities and upward social

FIGURE 9: LEVEL OF EDUCATION

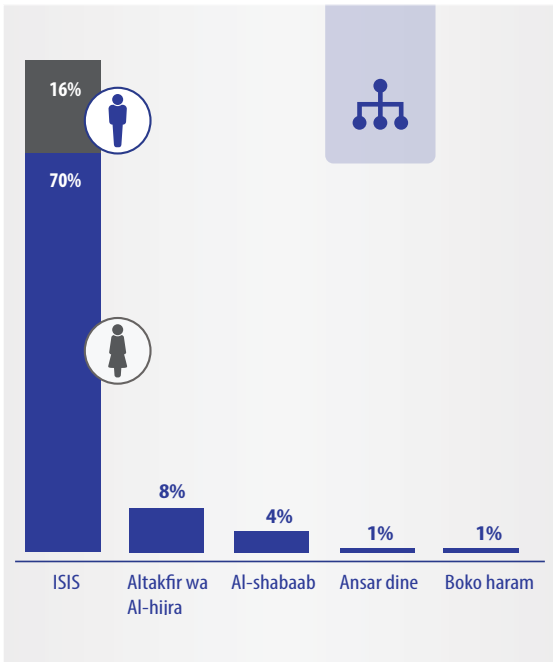


mobility can be achieved. A majority of respondents 28%, 17%, and 14% stated that they received an education in Khartoum, Kassala, and Gedaref respectively. It was found that those who studied further away from home were mainly drawn to the religious ideas of the extremist groups through high-qualified recruiters.

Respondents were asked if they have an education, what level of education they have received and where. The results show that a wide majority of primary respondents from all five states have a **university degree**. Their number is highest in the White Nile state with 86 %, followed by Darfur with nearly 73%, Kassala and Gedaref with 62% and 63 %, and Khartoum with 59%. Khartoum, on the other hand, is the only state where recruits with **post graduate qualifications** were interviewed. They represented 11% of respondents in the state.

The highest number of individuals with **secondary education** is in Kassala with almost 38%, while the rest of the states vary between 14% (White Nile) and 19% (Khartoum). There is no data for individuals with **intermediate education**, except for 8% of respondents in Gedaref.

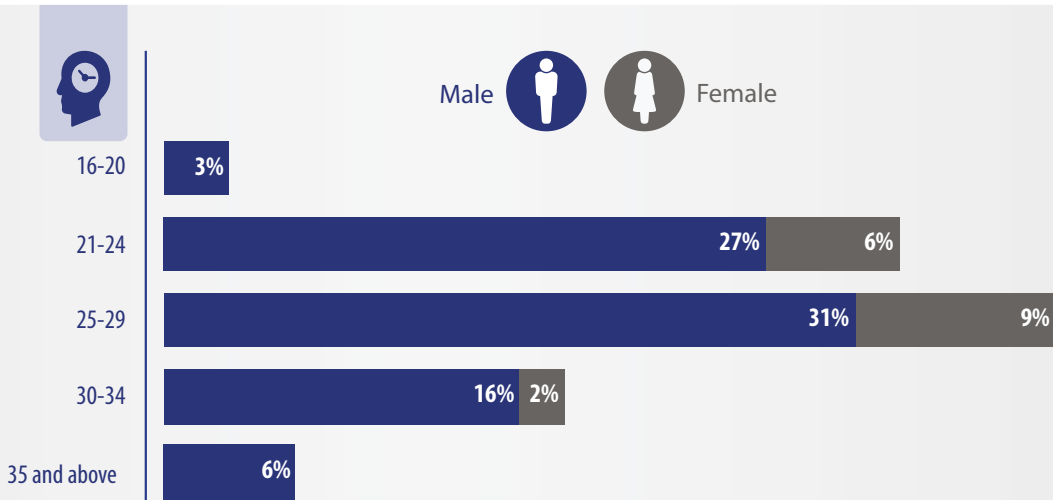
FIGURE10: ORGANIZATIONS JOINED



Organizations joined

The study data shows that five major violent extremist groups recruit in Sudan. A large majority of interviewed individuals, 86%, have joined IS. Interestingly, 17% of recruits in Sudan were female,

FIGURE11: AGE AT JOINING VE GROUP



mainly students of various universities. All of them (100%) were recruited by IS. The second number is dramatically lower: 8% of the respondents joined Altakfir Wa Al-Hijra (a group associated with Boko Haram) while only 4% stated that they joined Al-Shabab in Somalia. Ansar Dine and Boko Haram were each responsible for the recruitment of 1% of respondents.

Age at joining violent extremist groups

According to the collected data, 80 % of the people joining violent extremist groups do that between the ages 15 and 29. More than half of recruits (58%) stated they were **in their twenties** at the time of joining, regardless of their gender. Only 3 % of respondents admitted to have been recruited in their teens and 6% were radicalized **after turning 35**.

Women are most likely to join radical groups in their twenties and early thirties, with the highest percentage (9%) of female respondents informing that they joined **between the ages of 25 and 29**. Only 6% of female recruits joined

between the ages of 21 and 24, and 2% as 30-34 years old.

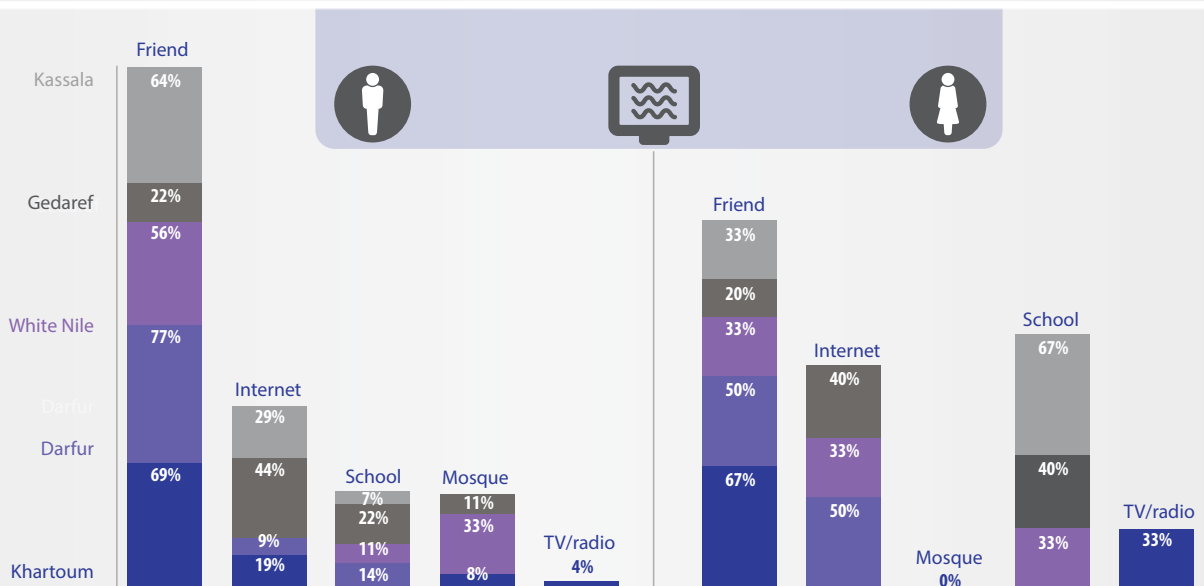
Channels of exposure to ideas of violent extremist groups

When asked about the channels through which respondents were first introduced to ideas of violent extremist groups, the majority of them (59%) stated it was through **friend** networks.

Unsurprisingly, the second most common channel of exposure is the **internet** with 20% of primary respondents citing this. Traditional **electronic media** (radio and TV) were only referred to by 2 % of recruits, while mosques were used as a channel for only 6% of cases.

Nevertheless, these findings vary by gender **television and radio** appear to be a significantly more important channel for women (33%) than for men (4%). It is very important to note that these findings only concern Khartoum state.

FIGURE12: CHANNELS OF EXPOSURE TO RADICAL IDEAS



The overall importance of the **internet** is also higher for women compared to men. The biggest difference in answers for Darfur (9% men versus 50% of women) and White Nile, where 34% of women and 0% of men stated they were exposed to radical ideas through the internet.

Another interesting finding is that all female recruits for Khartoum were introduced through radical ideas through only two channels (friends: 67% and TV/radio: 33%).

Perception gaps

To understand how people perceive violent extremism the team interviewed 281 secondary respondents and then compared the data with the answers of 96 individuals who enrolled in VE groups. The findings show wide gaps in perception of the **motives of recruits to join** VE groups, in terms of their emotions and motives as well as in the understanding of some key issues.

The widest gap between perceived and actual motivation concerns the importance of economic factors. The lowest is in regard to the creation of the caliphate. The results show that 38 % of the secondary respondents think that recruits join violent extremist groups to improve their financial situation, while only 19 % of the individuals interviewed stated that they joined for that reason. On the other hand, another 19% of the primary respondents pointed to support for the creation of the caliphate as their main reason. The difference between actual and perceived importance of this number is only 1%, showing that both individuals and the community recognize it as equally important. This establishes a direct correlation between the belief in the ideas of IS and beliefs in the religious leaders of the group, as 31% of individuals joined IS due to these two reasons. The gap between the perceived and actual importance of the belief in ideas of VE groups, on the other hand, is very wide: 18% of primary respondents pointed to

this as a reason for joining while only 2% of the interviewed community members assumed this.

21% of families and the wider community consider that provision of services was the reason people join violent extremist group, while the actual number of people doing so is 12%. Some of the respondents, mostly religious leaders, perceive that individuals join the extremist groups out of a sense of adventure and others, due to confusion over Islamic beliefs. Surprisingly, these reasons are only perceived motives with only 0% of respondents pointing to adventure or confusion as their real drivers. (See fig 13.)

The influence of friends appears to be underestimated by the communities. Only a little over 1% perceived them as important, while 5% of primary respondents claimed that was an important reason. The same differences were noted for the importance of social isolation (5% actual vs. 1% perceived importance).

These tendencies remain in establishing the gaps of perception with regard to the **reasons for remaining** in VE groups. The widest gaps concern ideology and the importance of financial benefits. Interestingly no gap was identified when it comes to the importance of the sense of duty. The feeling of being respected appears to be underestimated with 1% of secondary respondents noting it, while 6% of primary respondents assume its importance. (See fig 13.)

The differences in the importance of individual motives and emotions (pull factors) were found to be less significant compared to the reasoning related to the environment (push factors). The widest gap is noted for the importance of guilt with 10% difference, and anger with almost 8%.

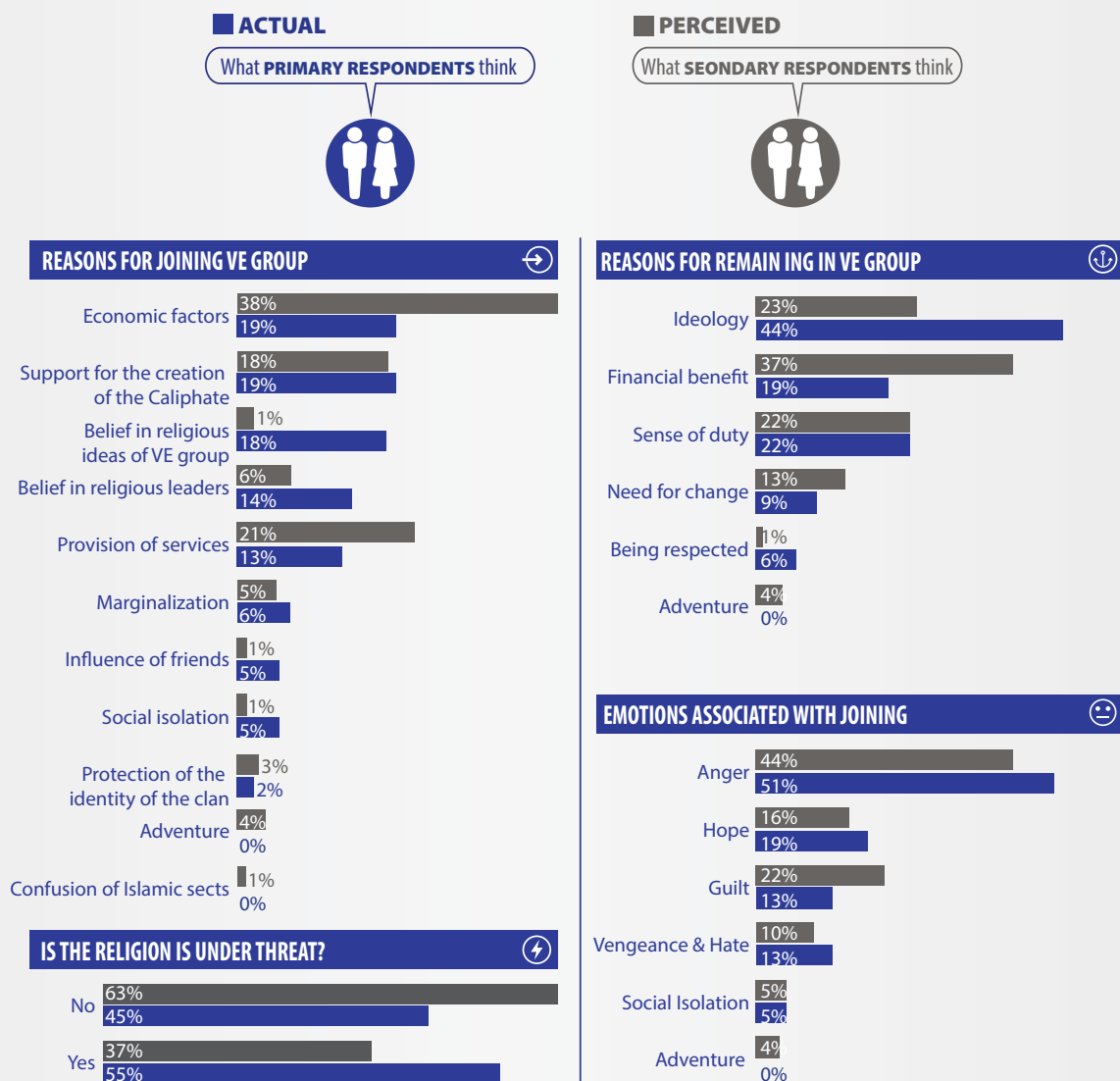
Families and friends of former or current members of violent extremist groups perceived that their

sons and daughters felt guilty and socially isolated at the time that they joined, but these are the second lowest stated reasons: only the perception of adventure counted less with almost 4%. Some family members and Imams stated that, exclusion in the form of political marginalization and fragmented identities can become powerful structural forces for driving and sustaining violent extremist

narratives and groups. (See fig 13.)

When asked whether they considered that there were threats to their religion, 55 % of the primary respondents stated that they considered religion was under threat when they joined the violent extremist groups. Only 37 % out of the secondary respondents stated this as a reason. (See fig 13.)

FIGURE13: PERCEIVED VERSUS ACTUAL MOTIVATIONS FOR JOINING VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS



ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report takes statistical data presented above in the findings sections and cross-references various elements with the intent to deepen knowledge of violent extremism (VE) in Sudan. By highlighting congruencies and disparities in data findings from respondents, dynamics are drawn out that will directly inform a programme response as envisaged from the outset of the study. Illustrative comparisons and complementarities include state-by-state variances, as well as national composites across various survey domains where deemed relevant by the subject matter experts commissioned to undertake analysis. Cognizant that this survey provides a baseline for Sudan, the following analysis verifies assumptions on VE in general, as well as radicalization and VE specific to Sudan. The information presented below is accompanied by recommendations.

Gaps in the study

This section is distinct from the introductory section on 'Challenges and limitations' of the study, which concerns itself with difficulties and shortcomings experienced when undertaking the study. The following section refers to gaps in useful information gleaned from the results of the study that can be used for evidentiary and analytical purposes when designing a programme response. These are naturally related, though distinct. A case in point is gender. Issues constricting access to women and girls affected respondent sample sizes, while analysis revealed a need for more gender-balanced datasets to better inform programming options. The first case concerns itself with accuracy of findings, and the second with their breadth.

One gap in the study was that the analysis does not reveal the reason why individuals leave VE groups, though it does show why they join and remain. Notably, 37% of the primary respondents

voluntarily 'disengaged' from VE groups, but the reasons for leaving are not systematically captured in the survey findings. Understanding the underlying (proximate) causes will facilitate a P/CVE response. Notably, the use of the term 'proximate factors' refers to enabling conditions related to radicalization towards and away from VE in Sudan. This is instructive when developing a programme based on a working Theory of Change (ToC). The perception, and use, of 'enabling factors' as causal to why persons are attracted to and join VE groups is as important as those factors that aid 'disassociation' and 'disengagement'.

A second gap in the study is the dearth of information regarding how a programmatic response would look, or what it might entail. This is, arguably, a necessary condition and function of the study. The aims and objectives were to gather baseline information on radicalization and VE, rather than gather information on prevention or mitigation. To this end, the survey and study address the issue of 'why' the phenomenon is taking place, not 'what can be done'. Recommendations offered below do, however, speak directly to the 'what can be done' aspect of VE and radicalization in Sudan.

A third gap in the study concerns gender. While the study is groundbreaking with regard to informing a baseline, quantitative gender disaggregated data collected is restricted to the employment and education status by state and VE group affiliation and the age at joining. This study results do not benefit from information regarding the reasons remaining or means of recruitment. Additionally, emotions associated with joining, perceptions around the threat that religion is under, or the role these play in the radicalization process are not captured in the survey results. Neither are the roles played by women and girls while with VE

groups. Further, perception surveys are not gender disaggregated, making analysis and programmatic recommendations challenging.

This research recognizes the gaps in the above analysis as it evolved as an unexpected outcome of the research and does not vouch or establish facts. The aim is to inform interested stakeholders on the trends to pursue further on these trends.

Issues for further consideration

An interesting point from a programmatic perspective when examining primary respondents' survey results is that feelings of social isolation (6%)¹, and a perception that joining and remaining in VE groups bring thrill and adventure, are not major reasons for attracting people to VE in Sudan. There are also relatively small variances when one examines urban vs. rural distributions in this domain, as well as the domains of poverty, employment and education. Where Khartoum is used as the indicative variable representing the most urban, educated and highest rate of employed per state, the widest range is 4%; with 7% of Khartoum respondents reporting back a feeling of social isolation a reason for joining a VE group and 3% in Darfur. Respondents from White Nile State, a poverty-stricken state, reported back at 8%, closing the gap for emotions related to social isolation to a mere 1%.

In White Nile, the unemployment rate for youth joining VE groups is 89% for males and 100% for females, with no persons joining VE groups being students, while in Khartoum 85% of males and 100% of females are students. On the one hand, **there is a definitive need to address structural issues related to poverty and unemployment**, while, on the other, these are not primary drivers across Sudan. Also, there is a definite need to address the lack of social cohesion throughout

Sudan as **most youth experience social isolation irrespective of education, poverty and/or employment status**. Analysis indicates that combined with enhanced socio-economic opportunities and increased pathways for social engagement, a combination of enabling factors can be addressed in tandem to positively mitigate and prevent VE.

A further examination of emotions related to radicalization and VE reveals that the most dominant emotion which respondents cited as a reason for joining a VE group was anger towards the international community and the government (49%). The second most highly recorded emotion as a reason for joining a VE group is hope (21%). Interestingly, when disaggregated by state, Khartoum registered as the highest on youth experiencing anger (62%) and the lowest on hope (4%). When we exclude Khartoum from the mean for all five states for hope, we note that there is almost a 5% jump in the mean: from 22% to nearly 25%. Again, this points towards **an express need, and opportunity, for a governmental P/CVE response by addressing structural issues directly affecting poverty that acutely affects outlying and rural areas, and related governance issues as demonstrated by the relative affluence and discontent of the educated class**.

A telling finding is that seeking vengeance, and guilt—both at 13%—are less dominant motivations for joining VE groups across all surveyed states than anger or hope. Social isolation, at 5%, is also not one of the prominent motivations for joining among respondents in Sudan but points to robust peer group engagement as outlets for frustration, vehicles for engagement and therefore opportunities for programmatic interventions. This indicates that tendencies towards VE may not be deeply ingrained in the mindsets of persons

¹ White Nile State indicators came back at 8%, Darfur at 4%, and 6% in Kassala and 7% in Khartoum. Gedaref did not report back, and is excluded from this statistic

(youths) undergoing radicalization processes.

Upon examining spiritual reasons for joining VE groups, respondents cited belief in religious leaders, the ideas of VE groups (15%) and the creation of the Caliphate, where they (youths) can be of ‘service’ (14%)² The correlation between persons joining due to religious beliefs of VE groups, and the messages that the groups espouse, and the altruistic sense of service provision, or humanitarian imperative, is striking. The most dominant reason that people remain in VE groups is ideological in nature (42%). 21% are related to a sense of duty.

Further analysis concludes that **enhanced socio-economic opportunities can be combined with increased pathways for civil engagement, each enabling factors, to positively mitigate VE**. In doing so, persons at risk of joining VE groups can be provided with ‘service-oriented options’ to fulfill their sense of civic duty and spiritual responsibility. To this end, the study findings show that radicalization and VE in Sudan are phenomena fuelled by ideology, yet driven by grievances.

When we compare the reasons for joining VE groups, support for the Caliphate comes up with 19% as an ‘actual’ reason—with only a 1% differential as ‘perceived’ reason (18%). This ‘gap’ closes to zero when we examine the reason for remaining, which is cited as a ‘sense of duty’ (22%). However, when examining the ‘perception’ by secondary respondents of the feeling that religion (Islam) is under threat (37%) and the ‘actual’ feeling of this threat by primary respondents (55%) we see a significant widening in respondent experiences. This may account for variances in attitudes related to ‘feelings’ of marginalization and ‘behaviour’ associated with acts of VE. The finding indicates **an opportunity for youth to work closely with community members to address P/CVE, and a need**

to develop relevant interventions to close the ‘perception gap’.

Sudan and the region

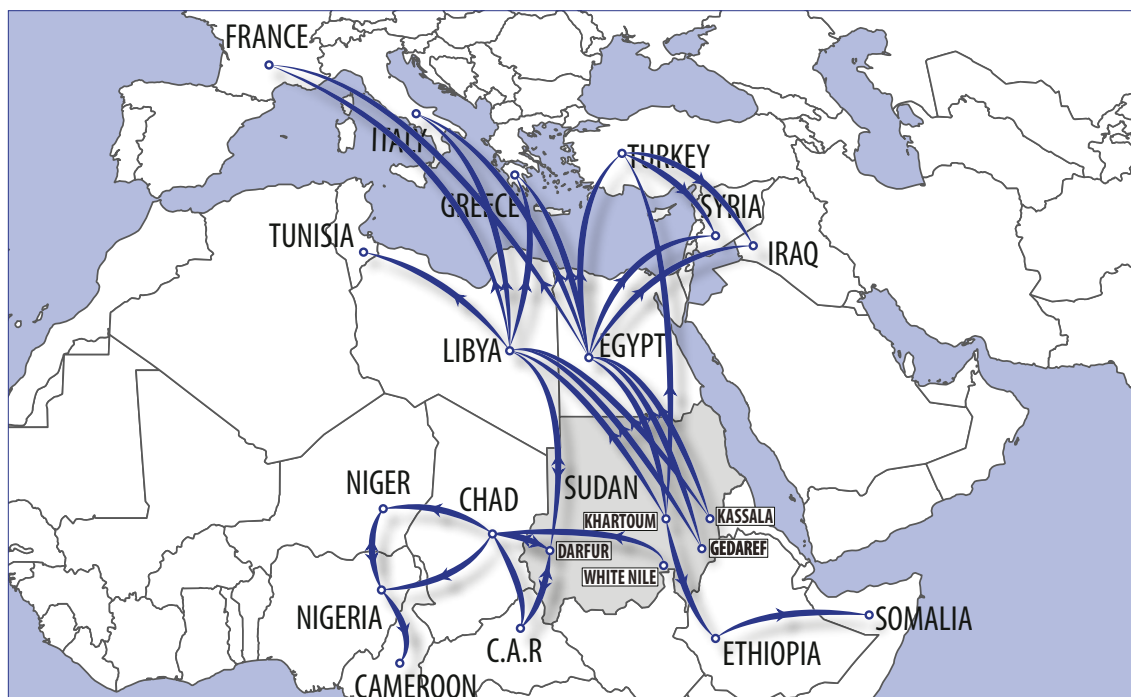
While the trends in Sudan are alarming with regards to violent extremism (VE), it also becomes apparent that there is a spill-over of these trends on the region and beyond. It is difficult to establish its quantum and magnitude given the case-load for the present research. Nevertheless, a clear inference can be drawn on the linkages between Sudan and the region. It is also apparent that such linkages have diverse background reasons when it comes to geographic and regional connotations. Broadly, they can be categorized into four groups.

Darfur, a region which has been pervaded with conflict for over a decade, has a trend of ex-combatants and combatants of numerous groups shifting allegiance on account of economic factors. As per the account of some of the ex-rebels, financial aspect represented a determining factor for the gravitation of people in Darfur towards VE groups in Libya, and to some extent, West African countries. Respondents mentioned that most of the fighters hardly recognize the geographical borders between Chad, Central African Republic, Cameroon and Libya and keep moving between these countries depending upon the opportunities. It is also noticed that such a movement is not linked to radicalization but to sheer economic gains, again rooted to the issues of underdevelopment and unemployment in Darfur. It was beyond the scope of this survey to establish if the fighters who joined ISIL in Libya eventually became radicalized on account of unremitting indoctrination.

The Eastern part of Sudan, notably Kassla and Gedaref states, are witnessing linkages between radicalization and migration. This part of Sudan is considered to be springboard for migration for the

² While Nile State is not represented in this statistical finding.

This map has been created with the highest degree of accuracy possible. However, UNDP cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. Depiction of boundaries is not authoritative.



MAP 2: RECRUITMENT TRENDS AND MOVEMENT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE REGION

Horn of Africa. Despite the best efforts of the Government of Sudan, human traffickers still operate in the region, dealing with diverse nationalities. Both aspiring migrants and migrants who returned back from Libya revealed that human traffickers treat them differently on the basis of their nationality and do not mix them. Aspiring migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia are separated from the aspirants from Sudan. Some respondents mentioned that the Sudanese are subsequently passed over to IS, who provide temporary shelter and food for the migrants. They also mentioned that migrants are not coerced into VE but are given sermons on religious ideology and the objectives of IS. It is reported that some of the people targeted left for Syria as many others moved to the Mediterranean coast. It was difficult to establish the spread or intensity of such phenomenon as it was beyond the scope of this research.

An interesting observation came from the states south of Khartoum, especially in White Nile State.

Respondents revealed that some of the Falata tribes (tribes who migrated long ago from West Africa) maintain an affinity with their parent tribes in West Africa. As a result, if the parent tribes are affiliated with VE outfits like Boko Haram, these tribes follow suit. Consequently, some of the members of these tribes reportedly resorted to recruitment in Boko Haram.

Finally, the trends in Khartoum reflected a different analogy, an analogy mainly rooted on religious ideals alongside other factors and which tended to be influenced by some of the foreign citizens from Syria, Egypt, Saudi and Palestine. Most of the people who joined VE from Khartoum travelled to Turkey before moving to Syria & Iraq

Gender responsiveness

Due to the scarcity of quantitative data gathered on women and girls compared to other data sets used in this report, triangulating data points for analysis

at this juncture employed the following methods:

- i) utilize the study's entire dataset as an overview and presentation of the quantitative statistics related to employment and education status, as well as age disaggregation;
- ii) consider a comparative analysis of the quantitative data available from this study with regional information for radicalization and affiliation with VE groups for girls and women as a means to determining initial programmatic responses, and;
- iii) obtain more qualitative information drawn from the team who administered the survey and use this data to inform a trend analysis to draw conclusions from the situation in Sudan, which in turn informs recommendations for programming support.

In doing so, the study has drawn preliminary conclusions relevant to gender (women and girls) in Sudan regarding VE group association and affiliation. We know that the entire female caseload of members of violent extremist groups interviewed in Sudan (100%) are affiliated with Islamic State. We also know that women make up a minority (17%) of the total caseload, with no (0%) child members (girls below the ages of 18) being directly associated with the Islamic State. In this first instance this **corresponds with regional trends where it is estimated that one in every seven of persons affiliated with VE groups (14%) are females.**

The study also pointed to **a need to understand the variations in roles that women and girls play in Sudanese society.** Understanding both women's and girls' vulnerabilities and agencies will impact how they can be serviced and leveraged in P/CVE. In Khartoum, 100% of women associated with VE groups are students, while in White Nile State 0% are students and 100% are unemployed.

When examining Khartoum respondents' reasons for joining and remaining, the analysis shows that both a perceived need to provide services, and a sense of duty, feature prominently (21%). However, when the data is disaggregated by gender we see that **women's sense of service provision is considerably higher (67%) than men's (12%).** Conversely, in Darfur, marginalization (13%) is the overall respondent figure, although when the data is disaggregated by gender, it becomes clear that males experience a significantly lower level of perceived marginalization than women (9% versus 50%). In Khartoum, we see women having particular roles as service providers that can support P/CVE, perhaps as they do not serve in a fighting role (males 65% and females 0%). In **Darfur, acute vulnerabilities and powerlessness experienced by women comes to light.** In the former programmes should leverage agency, and, in the latter, provide agency.

Youth

In Sudan, youth between the ages of 15 and 34 represent no less than 94% of persons joining VE groups. While this number includes children defined as boys, we also know that women make up a minority (17%) of the total caseload, with no (0%) child members (girls below the ages of 18) being directly associated with the Islamic State. Children then comprise a very small percentage of the caseload: only 3% are between the ages of 15 and 20. The youth unemployment rate at 32% nationally lends itself to considerable 'enabling conditions' and vulnerabilities for VE groups to find a potential recruitment base. When the actual roles of former VEs and the perception of these roles are examined, there is considerable congruence in understanding, with the actual role of fighters at 65% and the perception of persons serving in this role at 69%.

Secondary (perception) respondents have a composition of 64% community members and leaders,

including religious leaders and women. The state with highest rate of seeking vengeance for joining VE groups (White Nile: 25%) and a state with a lower rate (Khartoum: 10%), have dramatic disparities in employment and education. In White Nile, the unemployment rate for youth joining VE groups is 89% for males and 100% for females, with no persons joining VE groups being students; while in Khartoum 85% of males and 100% of females are students.

Findings are consistent with VE dynamics in other countries, whereby poverty and lack of economic resources and livelihoods cannot be ascribed as primary motives for VE group engagement. Primary motives are reinforced when examining the reasons for joining and remaining in Khartoum and White Nile respectively. In Khartoum, the dominant reasons for joining are support to the Caliphate (24%), belief in religious ideas and leaders (22%), and a wish to be of service (17%). Reasons for remaining are ideologically driven (60%) and a sense of duty (24%). In White Nile, the dominant reason for joining and remaining is 25%, equal to the dominant emotion of seeking vengeance.

While poverty and a lack of economic opportunities are not primary drivers for VE association, there is a positive correlation between poverty and the timeline between first contact with, and joining, a VE group. In this regard poverty and economic deprivation are critical drivers towards VE affiliation. In the outlying states of Darfur, Gedaref, White Nile and Kassala, all of which have poor socio-economic and education indices, 83% of persons joining a VE group do so within six months of first contact. If we exclude Gedaref, we see a further increase (89%) in percentage of persons joining within this period. Survey results showed a clear criticality in timelines for intervention.

³ The majority of respondents informed the most efficient recruitment method was influence through friends and peers. See "Overview of Study Findings, Fig12.

Internet and communications

While the study does not provide a breakdown in percentage regarding the use and utility of social media as a recruitment tools for VE groups, there is sufficient data to draw conclusions that can credibly inform programme interventions. For the highly educated and urbane areas in Khartoum, several conclusions come to light.

Primarily, a high number of students and youth susceptible to recruitment use social media regularly. Islamic State uses Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp as its primary communications and advocacy tool. Among many Twitter accounts associated with IS which have been identified over the past years, it is worth mentioning that one account has been widely followed in Sudan for receiving updates on ISIS issues in Syria and Iraq.

Although respondents, especially those from the universities, stated that ISIS propaganda online was not the main recruitment mode³, most of them confirmed that messages on the Internet helped in consolidating their radicalization. Evidently, various communication technologies have proven to be valuable tools, especially in Khartoum where a majority of the students recruited were so through advanced applications and social media platforms. For instance, special applications have been developed for Android phones. Subsequently, low-cost phones were distributed among radically-oriented individuals to gravitate them into the groups. One of these applications enabled the recruiters to be in touch with the recruits while the application is reportedly deleted two weeks after its installation. It was also reported that the technology doesn't allow for the capturing of screen shots and doesn't leave loose ends on smartphones.

This is juxtaposed with the outlying states of

Kassala, White Nile, Gedaref and Darfur. In each of these states, there is limited access to social media due to a lack of telecommunications infrastructure. However, WhatsApp is noticed to be the most commonly used web-based application. There is no evidence of recruitment through social media in any of the outlying states. Often embedded as a part of a Strategic Communications component of programming, the study results clearly indicate that developing and employing a uniform outreach effort using modern (internet and social) media platforms will have limited efficacy. A Strategic Communications component will require a combination of media tools to reach the highest number of those vulnerable.

A WAY FORWARD

An in-depth understanding of enabling factors for radicalization towards violent extremism is the first step in addressing the issue. Sudan's position between the Arab region and the African continent makes it strategically important and influential to the stability within the vulnerable region, and hence it could play a pivotal role in shaping prevention approaches. This study has succeeded in unraveling some of the root causes for violent extremism and as such, it will help inform PVE initiatives in Sudan and globally. Nevertheless, continuous research is crucial to refine and improve approaches to PVE. Areas of further research might include: learning the reasons why some people are not joining violent extremism despite being exposed to similar conditions to people who do join; unveiling the causes of disengagement and abandonment of VE groups amongst individuals; understanding the operations of recruiters and their successes and failures; and discerning complex gender issues.

As evidenced by the study, a myriad of factors—social, economic, psychological, and cultural—contribute as triggers and reasons for people to join violent extremism. Diverse tools and methods are required to decipher these reasons accurately. For instance, behavioral insights methodology could enable stakeholders to better understand the attitudes and emotions of people joining VE; and facilitate an appropriate response. Even livelihoods components cannot be applied as traditional remedial measures unless they address the behavioral and emotional status of the affected and at-risk population.

It is evident that the threat of violent extremism can be surmounted only through cooperation and coordination. No single approach could disperse the phenomenon, and any approach would require partnerships between government

departments, the security apparatus, civil society actors, international organizations and their partners, the private sector, religious leaders and institutions, families, traditional leaders, youth and women.

This study is a modest effort to fathom a complex issue, but we (all partners in this effort) believe that these first steps can make a big difference in the effort to chisel an approach that is pragmatic and appropriate; leading to further research and facilitating coordination among partners. This is precisely the reason for naming the response in Sudan 'PAVE' (Partnering Against Violent Extremism). We want to help pave the way.

Partnering against violent extremism





Thanks to the people and governments of Canada and Japan

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