

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO
VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA:
A DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



Stories of Prevention

The growth of violent extremism is an imminent threat to peace, stability and development in Africa. Despite significant investment by the international community to counter the devastating impact of violent extremism, it has further expanded and spread in sub-Saharan Africa, not retreated, effectively turning the sub-Saharan region into a new epicenter of violent extremism.

According to the Global Terrorism Index, in 2022 alone, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 48% of global terrorism deaths, with numbers of attacks having accelerated tenfold since 2007 in the Sahel. Moreover, four of the ten most impacted countries in the world were in sub-Saharan Africa – Somalia, Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali – which together accounted for 34 percent of all fatalities in 2021.¹

The transcending nature and spillover effects of violent extremist groups, which particularly thrive on lived experiences of socio-economic marginalization and grievances as well as remoteness, have enabled violent extremist groups to further take roots in peripheral territories particularly affected by experiences of socio-economic hardship and lack of state presence.

In 2017 the UNDP flagship report *'Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment'* provided more nuance to this phenomenon, leveraging its unprecedented empirical evidence and diverse dataset on the drivers, tipping points factors and trajectories shaping individuals' journey towards recruitment.

The research firmly established that lived and widespread perceived grievances towards, and limited confidence in, government is associated with the highest incidence of violent extremism in the regions of Africa. **Strikingly, it revealed that state security-actors' conduct emerged as a prominent driver in recruitment, fueling, catalyzing, and accelerating violent extremist activity, rather than the reverse.** As such, it contributed to making a compelling case for development-based responses to preventing violent extremism (PVE), which have been formative in shaping policy discussion on the complementarities between development and securitized responses in efforts on countering and preventing violent extremism.

1. Institute of Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index (2022)

Yet, five years on since the first report, security-centered and reactive responses to counter violent extremism continue to be on the rise.

Investments in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy shows that insufficient commitment was made to addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism (Pillar I: 24 percent) and ensuring human rights and the rule of law (Pillar IV: 3 percent), as compared to a 73 percent allocation in support of measures to combat terrorism (Pillars II & III).²

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) estimated the economic cost of terrorism in Africa from 2007 until 2016 at a total annual cost of USD 97 billion. In 2021, the cost of violence to the global economy was \$16.5 trillion, or 10.9% of global GDP, which is the equivalent to \$2,117 per person.³

This is despite the emergence of a growing, strong evidence base putting forward both the **cost-effective multiplier effects of preventive efforts and investments in sustainable peace**. The Global Peace Index illustrates those preventive efforts and investments in 'positive peace', as a measure of societal resilience associated with many desirable socio-economic outcomes such as higher income, greater economic stability and more efficient, transparent and inclusive governance, are highly cost-effective. It suggests that countries that are more peaceful have higher GDP level.⁴

GDP growth in highly peaceful countries has been three times higher (about 2.8 per cent per annum) than in countries with low levels of peace. Furthermore, investments in prevention activities, especially in geographic areas under threat of violent extremism spill-over, are found to reduce state losses of about 2 and 8 percent of GDP per year.⁵

Beyond the immeasurable cost of lives and livelihoods, countries affected by the impact of violent extremism experience significantly greater declines in GDP per capita. Analysis has shown that on average, between 2002 and 2016, of the 18 African epicentre countries under review experienced a 17 percent decline in GDP per capita. The share of female employment in the agricultural sector fell nearly three times further in that period compared to that of male employment, indicating the disproportionate indirect impacts

2. UNDP "Annual Report, Prevention Violent Extremism" (2021)
3. The Institute for Economics and Peace, "Measuring the Economic Impact of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism in Africa" (2020)
4. The Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace index (2022)
5. The Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace index (2022), Measuring Peace-building Cost-effectiveness (2016)

of violent extremism on women's livelihoods and living conditions. As such, the rationale to halt further growth of violent extremist dynamics is not only from the threats to peace and security, but also from the threat to development prospects at macro and community levels.⁶

Based on the notion that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; it is further estimated that for every \$1 invested in prevention and peace-building activities can reduce the cost of conflict and violent extremism by \$16 over the long term. Projected forward from 2017 to 2027, this would save \$2.94 trillion in direct and indirect losses from conflict. Achieving this outcome would, however, require an approximate doubling of peacebuilding expenditure in the 31 most fragile and conflict-affected nations of the world.⁷

6. The Institute for Economics and Peace, "Measuring the Economic Impact of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism in Africa" (2020)

7. Institute for Economics and Peace, "Measuring Peace-building Cost-effectiveness", (2016)

This underscores the urgent need for investing in much needed prevention approaches and long-term support, beyond standalone securitized and reactive responses.





PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA: A DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



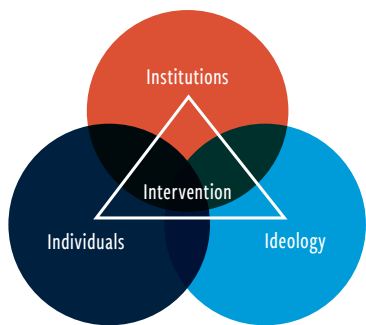
Responding to Preventing Violent Extremism: A Development Approach

In response to the growing threat of violent extremism in Africa and in line with the Secretary General's Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism, UNDP put forward in 2016 a six-year regional project, entitled **“Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach”**, with the aim to address the immediate and underlying factors that foster the growth of violent extremism. This approach is aligned with UNDP's ‘core’ programming, including areas which address weak state capacity, poor service delivery, endemic marginalization and poverty, and the lack of coordination at the national and regional level.

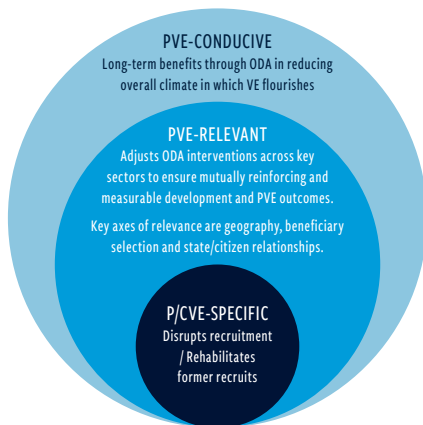
Recognising that drivers and enablers of violent extremism are multiple, complex, context-specific and have religious, ideological, political, economic and historical dimensions, the project is focused on strengthening the interlinkages between the level of individuals, institutions and ideology, in order to reflect the web of factors at micro-meso and macro level that shapes an individual's trajectory and journey to extremism.

The framework is further informed by a *nesting approach*, which focuses on embedding PVE-specific interventions into broader PVE-relevant development portfolios as a more cost-efficient way to address underlying root causes, such as core governance deficits. This serves to enhance mutually reinforcing outcomes of standalone *PVE-conducive* interventions that focuses on addressing the long-term conditions in which violent extremist activity flourishes, and more short-and medium-term *P/CVE specific* interventions that are focused on mitigating and countering the direct risk associated with violent extremism.

The project scope covered 25 countries across six key areas: socio-economic; rule of law and security; disengagement and reintegration; media and technology and public awareness: including countering violent narratives and extremist propaganda; community resilience and gender-specific initiatives. Programming in these areas was supported by two cross-cutting initiatives: research, policy and advocacy; and capacity-building for regional and sub- regional organizations.



Underpinning theoretical three-tiered approach,
UNDP Responding to Preventing Violent Extremism:
A Development Approach (2016)



Three-layered framework to understand how
development cooperation can relate to PVE.
UNDP Journey to Extremism (2017)



Key results and milestones (2016-2022)

NATIONAL and COMMUNITY LEVEL

1. **Supporting the development of 13 national strategies and/or plans of actions (NAPs) as a lever for reinforcing whole-of-government, whole-of-society engagement, enhanced coordination and collaboration in the broader P/CVE domain and localized implementation.**
 - **Connecting PVE nation actions plans to Early Warning Response infrastructures:** In **Togo**, the consultative formulation of Togo's National PVE Strategy and with support of local level PVE committees paved the way for the development of a joint community-level assessment of dynamics of violent extremism, informing how the national-level strategy can add value to communities at local level. This, in turn, provided the basis for connecting the existing Early Warning/Early Response (ERAR) structure and peace dialogue methodologies to the implementation of the National PVE Strategy.
 - **Championing bottom-up approaches and the localization of PVE NAPs:** In 2019, **Kenya**, the adoption of a whole-of-society approach resulted in the comprehensive roll-out of County Action Plans in all of its 47 counties with a dedicated structure for ensuring buy-in and collaboration between local government and CSO actors and local consistencies. Reflective of the local ownership, some counties formed local government directorates to ensure more effective implementation of the action plan at the local level.
 - **Leveraging PVE NAPs to bridging the gap between civil society and security sector actors:** In **Sudan**, the development of the nation-wide PVE action plan served to bridge the gap between government and civil society. While such discussions had previously been dominated by government security actors, the process paved the way for an inclusive, bottom-up approach that brought together more than 200 community members in regional consultations undertaken in Khartoum and the North Kordofan state. The fact that civil society participation in the consultations increased after the revolution demonstrates a contextual potential for UNDP to invest more in civic space in the PVE-domain.

2.

Strengthening trust, and confidence between law enforcement and communities through a system of accountability on human rights as an entry point for preventing violent extremism.

“I AM TELLING YOU... MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE FACTORS THAT ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY VIOLENCE NOW IS THAT IT IS GENERALLY THE DIVISIONS WITHIN OUR FAMILIES THAT SERVE AS A BULWARK FOR CRIMINALS TO RECRUIT AND ENLIST OUR YOUTH IN EXTREMIST GROUPS... WE [the community of Djenné] HAVE NOW BECOME AWARE OF THIS SITUATION AND WE ARE ABLE TO RESPOND WITH A COMMON VISION.”

Advisor to the village chief in Djenné

“THE MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS SHEDS LIGHT ON ABUSES THAT ARE NO LONGER SOLELY THE WORK OF BOKO HARAM ONLY BUT ALSO OF DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES. IT HELPS TO UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR COMMUNITIES TO UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE OF THE POWERS OF SECURITY FORCES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.”

*Local Supervisor,
Human Rights Observatory,
Cameroon*

- **Up-scaling the recipe for human-rights based and accountable local-level security institutions through a *community policing* approach:** In Mali, the establishment of a localized community dialogue framework for the return of peace, pacts for the cessation of hostilities between community groups and the re-establishment of trust between the defense and security forces contributed to facilitate the return of more than 3,120 displaced persons in the cercle of Djenné in central Mali. As a result of targeted support to communities in the cercle of Djenné, 54,41 % of community leaders indicated increased confidence in law enforcement, showing an increase of 19,41% from its inception. To support a more sustainable infrastructure for restoring trust with security actors, UNDP Mali has since 2021 supported the establishment of Security Advisory Committees in 14 cercles, with dedicated support to train security actors in human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches to community policing as a viable approach for strengthening accountability of such actors.

- **Strengthening human rights-based monitoring frameworks for reinvigorated accountability.** In 2020 a CSO-driven Human Rights Observatory (HRO) was established to deepen the understanding of state violence as a driver of violent extremism in the North of **Cameroon** to monitor and to better address human rights violations by state security actors that can give rise to recruitment. Since its inception, it has documented more than 170 human rights violation taking place in the context of counter-terrorism operations, including cases of extortion, arbitrary detentions and gender-based violence and sexual abuse, throwing into stark relief the question of how counter-terrorism and wider security functions of governments in at-risk environments conduct themselves with regard to human rights. The HRO further serves as a referral, response and accountability mechanism that highlights such issues at the policy level, using the data to inform dialogues with security forces and government representatives.

3- Strengthening at-risks youth's capacities through improved livelihood opportunities, youth entrepreneurship, mentorship and skill-building as a pathway for transforming socioeconomic grievances into resilience and aspiration, an empowering model for preventing violent extremism.

— Supporting youth resilience and positive aspirations towards entrepreneurship in times of economic crisis:

Following dedicated livelihoods support to more than 100 at-risk youths in hotspot communities in Kogi and Plateau states in **Nigeria**, a study in 2021 revealed that as many as 95 % stated positive outlooks for the future in terms of the likelihood of getting a good job or business in the future following the training, amidst the economic crisis. 95 % stated they believed they would be more likely to earn an income from the new skills acquired. Reflective of the increased resilience, a majority also expressed greater motivation to start their own business with potential customers in the local market. 89% of the respondents felt confident to take care of their family and live comfortably upon the completion of the vocational trainings.

— Reinforcing behavioral skills and self-determination through mentorship and livelihood support:

In **Tanzania** UNDP supported a series of catalytic peer mentorship interventions in complement to the strengthening of entrepreneurial skills of 321 'at-risk' youth in 3 target areas of Tanga, Mwanza and Zanzibar. This included support for developing life skills, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, coping skills and confidence and career development. An evaluation found that the project not only contributed to improving entrepreneurship skills, but also succeeded in positively changing participants' mindsets vis-à-vis youths' own perceived ability to realize their livelihood potential and enhanced self-determination.

4- Strengthening the capacities of religious institutions in PVE and leveraging the role of inter/intra religious dialogues as a means of strengthening community resilience and cohesiveness in prevention of violent extremism

— Amplifying the voices of religious leaders to counter violent extremist narratives and ideas:

"A religious network was established for the promotion of Islam as a religion of tolerance and peace in 16 different locations across 5 different states of Somalia to engage outreach against violent extremism. It has

"DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD LIFE HAS NOT BEEN EASY BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING TO DO, NO JOB, NO BUSINESS, BUT NOW I KNOW WITH THIS OPPORTUNITY LIFE IS GOING TO BE BETTER."

Youth participant from Livelihood training

"WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A TANZANIA THAT ENGAGES YOUTH AND WOMEN IN PEACE AND SECURITY AS WELL AS DECISION MAKING PROCESS FROM THE GRASSROOTS LEVELS. WE BELIEVE THE INCLUSION OF YOUTH AND WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING AND LEADERSHIP ENSURES A SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITIES AS THEY WILL NOT ONLY FEEL PART OF THE PROCESS BUT ALSO OWN THE PROCESS AND CREATE A SOCIETY FREE FROM VIOLENCE."

Coordinator of #VijanaNaAmani255, a passionate youth worker, and UN trained Youth Champion of Sustainable Development Goals in Tanzania

“...THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT POSSIBILITY THAT IF WE DO NOT AS A COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER AND MAKE INCLUSIVE DECISIONS, OUR COMMUNITY OR YOUNG PEOPLE MAY GET INVOLVED IN SUCH ACTS AND HARM OUR COMMUNITY IN ZANZIBAR AND THE WORLD OF ISLAM AT LARGE. LACK OF CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM IS WHAT LEADS TO TERRORISM, AND METHODS OF TEACHING CAN CAUSE THIS. LET US NOT LIE TO EACH OTHER; OUR MADRASSAHS HAVE BEEN RUN IN A WAY THAT EACH HAS ITS DIRECTION AND POSITIONS DUE TO LACK OF ESSENTIALS LIKE A UNIFYING CURRICULUM.”

*Osman, Kathi of the Court,
Mwanakorekwe District,
Zanzibar*

been been actively engaged in countering misinformation, while preaching messages of tolerance, solidarity and human sympathy. It also supported the disengagement and reintegration of 36 ex-members of violent extremist groups into communities.

- **National dialogues on peace and tolerance with religion serving as a connector for national identity and cohesiveness in times of transition:** In the context of the transition process, UNDP Sudan has been working closely with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to develop new counter narrative suitable to the context. To upscale efforts, they further organized a national Conference on “Religious Freedoms and Peaceful Coexistence” which among other, highlighted the need for addressing politicization, monitoring hate speech against religions and the role of religion in building social cohesion, religious coexistence and values of tolerance.
- **Strengthening religious institutions and curricula:** In Zanzibar 51 mosques and madrassahs were part of a pilot on strengthening religious institutions. The support, which was through the Office of the Mufti of Zanzibar also involved support to finalise a standardized madrassah curriculum.

5.

Strengthening disengagement, community-based reintegration and reconciliation through storytelling, data-driven response and online campaigns.

- **Storytelling as a powerful device for sensitization and advocacy:** Despite the current transition environment, UNDP Sudan through the film entitled “*Iman: When faith is at the crossroads*”⁸ was able to facilitate multi-level conversations and generate better awareness, particularly among youth, regarding violent extremism, pathways to it, and alternative options – drawing on real events and stories. Since its launch in 2017, It has been screened to over 15,000 people across Sudan. The film prompted open community discussions on violence, religious identity, crime and gender-based violence. Instigators of violence were confident enough to share their own stories, considered a success with the film creating a safe space for people to reflect. Outside Sudan, the film has also captured attention from agencies and organizations working to prevent and address violent extremism. Peace, conflict or security-focused institutions in Stockholm, Barcelona and Accra have used the film in practitioner and policymaker training programmes, and agencies in Nigeria and the Philippines have used the film for training,

8. <https://www.undp.org/sudan/news/watch-%E2%80%998iman%E2%80%99-when-faith-crossroads>

particularly relating to territories recovered from extremist groups. Similarly, the United States Military Academy, West Point, has used the film to highlight extremist recruiting imperatives, while in Cameroon Iman has been used in schools as part of religious education. Similarly, the film has used to raise the issue of violent extremism at Ministerial-level global meetings, including the 37-state International Conference on Counter Terrorism, and the Africa Security Forum. The film resonates among diverse audiences due to its accurate portrayal of ‘soft’ recruitment tactics and relatable characters.

– **#NamesNotNumbers - Centering PCVE work in the voices of victims:**

In **Somalia**, through dedicated dialogues with victims and trauma-affected individuals of the 2017 attack, 35 PCVE grievances were identified. These laid the foundation for building further dialogue to ensure their views were reflected in PCVE works. As part of the commemoration, a national campaign was launched under the banner #NamesNotNumbers, relayed by Sheikh Bashir further led to dialogue between the government and al-Shabaab. Acknowledged by the Prime Minister of Somalia, the event also highlighted the importance on the role of religious leaders in the fight against violent extremism and informing the public through awareness-raising campaigns to tackle misinformation.

- **Integrating behavioural insights into PVE interventions:** In an effort to prevent young prisoners from relapsing into violent extremism, in UNDP **Sudan**, behavioural insights analysis was conducted in the Elhuda prison in order to measure the impact of ideological change of the prisoners. Based on a values affirmation exercise, the experiment revealed that providing a moment for self-reflection would instill self-confidence in prisoners and motivate them to focus on their educational outcomes.

6.

Strengthening public awareness on PVE while amplifying voices of former violent extremist and victims for social cohesion and harmonious living.

- **The catalytic role of community radio:** In UNDP **Mali**, community radio stations were strengthened and supported through a series of awareness-raising and prevention activities in the cercle of Djenné in central Mali as a platform for challenging stereotypes, and addressing tensions, while also supporting messages of social cohesion, community security and PVE and putting youth voices at the forefront.

“I LEARNED UNLAWFUL THINGS TO MAKE LIVINGS... [after watching the film] I LEARNED WHAT GREAT DAMAGE THAT HAPPENED TO ME,” HE SAYS. NOW, AHMED⁹ FRONTS A RAP GROUP, WRITING MUSIC DISPARAGING VIOLENCE, AND TAKES PART IN COMMUNITY PREVENTION EFFORTS.

9. Name changed to protect identity.

- **Strengthening awareness on national indicators of social cohesion:** UNDP **Tunisia** provided support in strengthening the capacity of the government to detect and analyse early indicators of social tensions and violence, with the engagement with of Tunisian National Counter-Terrorism Committee (CN-LCT) and the office of the Prime minister. This initiative raised awareness about the challenges to social cohesion, the sources of rising mistrust in government and potential conflict fault lines. Not only did it contribute to the revision of the national strategy to ensure better complementarity of security and inclusive development agendas to effectively mitigate the fragility of Tunisian society in the face of violent extremism; it also contributed to the development of a programme on prevention of violent extremism through cohesion (2022-2025).
- **Comic Books as an Approach for Alternative Narratives:** In Mwanza, north **Tanzania**, the joint development of comic book ‘Our Hero’ with youth at-risk and ‘local heroes’, was developed through a visualization exercise allowing youth to narrate their life story and to reflect on the push and pull factors in their own life journeys. The comic book not only served as a powerful advocacy tool, but through peer exchange and youth-led processes served to deepen local level engagement with youth, as influencers in the communities.

7.

Strengthening the role of women and girls through a gender-differentiated approach to the prevention of violent extremism

- **Facilitating safe, and gender-sensitive, spaces in reintegration efforts:** UNDP **Kenya** in collaboration with National Counter-terrorism Centre (NTCT), brought together 50 participants comprising of mothers and wives of the violent extremists and returnees and the returnees themselves who are in the process of disengagement, rehabilitation, and reintegration. The forum provided the opportunity to share experiences, establish support groups, deploy a psychologist, and include a counsellor to update NCTC on the progress.
- **Strengthening gender-sensitive data in the monitoring of PVE NAPs:** In Togo’s National Action Plan on PVE, analysis was conducted of 195 (57% women) youth and women on the potential factors of radicalization and socio-economic vulnerabilities in 3 regions of **Togo**. Gender-sensitive and youth and women centered data was collected in partnership with WANEP

contributed to provide guidance on a number of gender-sensitive prevention actions and to shape entry points for improved engagement with local authorities and local leaders on gender-sensitive PVE efforts.

- **Gender equality as a sound proxy for increased community resilience and positive peace:** Since 2016, the inception year of the programme, gender equality has improved by 1.3 percent on average in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Positive Peace—a measure of the factors that build and sustain peace—has improved across these countries by 1.37 percent. The data indicates that efforts to build community-level resilience and an enabling national and regional policy environment have been effective, even against the backdrop of violent extremist groups’ increasing presence.¹⁰

“I WAS NOT COMFORTABLE TO NARRATE MY LIFE STORY TO ANYONE IN THE COMMUNITY, BUT THE ROAD MAPPING EXERCISE HELPED ME TO NARRATE MY STORY WITH COURAGE IN THE GROUP”

REGIONAL LEVEL

8.

The PVE project contributed to strengthening the capacity-building of regional and sub-regional organizations and leveraging influencing efforts at the regional and national levels through enhanced south-south collaboration and trust-building measures between securitized infrastructures and communities.

- **Supporting the Regional Communication Strategy Plan of Action on PVE in the Lake Chad Basin as a framework for enhanced communication between the security actors and civilians in stabilization interventions in the sub-region:**
As a lever for *whole-of-society* processes, the Communication Strategy Plan of Action on PVE in the Lake Chad Basin enabled communities affected by the threat of Boko Haram in the sub-region to identify concrete community-based interventions to improve communication and to enhance trust between the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the sub-region. This also paved the way for identifying concrete actions for strengthening more conflict-sensitive military interventions through civil-military dialogues.
- **Amplifying, elevating and broadening civic actors’ space and community-driven approaches on reintegration**

10. Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Peace Index (2022)

through the establishment of the subregional civil society organisation networks in Lake Chad: The sub-regional Network in the Lake Chad Basin, integrated as a subset under the Lake Chad Basic Commission Civil Society Organisation Platform, provided support to community-based organizations to contribute to support inclusive community reintegration as well as positioning of CSO voices in the stabilization infrastructure. It led to more effective regional coordination and joint planning.

- **Strengthening the capacity of regional and sub-regional national organizations to adopt development-based approaches to prevent and respond to violent extremism through the development of the regional PVE strategies and action plans.** As a result of the development of IGAD’s East African Regional Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, which includes Tanzania, that involved national level multi-stakeholder consultations, there was momentum created in countries in the sub-region that did not yet have PVE Strategies and Action Plans to develop them. This led to the development of national strategies and action plans on PVE in Uganda and Tanzania.

9.

An evidence-based approach at the heart of policy, programming and influencing and advocacy efforts on PVE

- **Leveraging UNDP’s evidence-base as a powerful advocacy tool for promoting development-based solutions to PVE.** Among key flagship reports, the ground-breaking flagship *“Journey to Extremism: Drivers, Incentives and Tipping Points for Recruitment in Africa”* played an important role in carving out a space for advocating for prevention and development-based approaches to violent extremism. It translated into an increased demand for country-level support on prevention, as was seen in the case of Mozambique and the Gulf of Guinea Countries. In the latter, UNDP since 2019 supported the development of PVE National Strategies in Benin and Togo; capacity building of key institutions as well as community resilience work in select at risk borderland communities in Benin, Ghana and Togo, thus providing a policy framework and enhancing capacities to address violent extremist risks as the threat has increased.
- **An evidence-based approach to strengthen PVE programming at country-level.** Through targeted support the project has supported a number of studies to deepen the evidence-base

of programmatic interventions at national level, such as the NUPI-led research **“Local Drivers of Violent Extremism in Central Mali”** (2020) outlining a clear-cut strategy for action on the security-development nexus and which contributed to ascertain the potential for PVE programming in the sub-region. Other examples include a comprehensive perception study undertaken in Benin across 21 cross-border communes¹¹, undertaken in direct collaboration with border communities and government authorities as an entry point for strengthening awareness raising on existing infrastructures for peace for prevention and cohesiveness.

— **Contributing to guidance and good practices on measuring PVE. A key question on prevention is how to measure results?**

UNDP invested in the development of several guidance notes such as the **“Toolkit for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation”**, **“Monitoring National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism”** and **“Measuring Protective Factors Against Violent Extremism.”** These tools were designed for UNDP practitioners and partners who are working on programmes that are either specifically focused on preventing violent extremism (PVE) or have PVE-relevant elements to them. They draw on best practice for design, monitoring and evaluation in complex, conflict contexts adapting these for PVE programming. An indicator bank was also developed that can be used as part of a capacity-building approach around monitoring. These have contributed to strengthening practitioners’ capacities to design and measure results of prevention of violent extremism interventions.

— **Connecting the dots - Early Warning/Early Response and PVE:**

In a joint endeavor by the African Union (AU) and UNDP, in 2020 a Toolkit was developed in follow-up to a UNDP - AU Dialogue on Conflict Prevention, Early Warning and Horizon Scanning held in 2019, where the need to strengthen early warning in the context of violent extremism strongly emerged. The Toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to integrate violent extremism monitoring into existing community, national, regional and continental early warning mechanisms and to improve information-sharing for early warning and cooperation on early action. As part of an initiative to strengthen the operationalisation of early warning mechanisms in Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) Regional Early Warning Centre and their Member States, it contributed to strengthening knowledge sharing on experiences of Early Warning/Early Response (EWER) and PVE at national and regional levels.

11. Original title of the Study: “Rapport de l’étude multifonctionnelle sur la perception du conflit, de l’extrémisme violent et des mécanismes endogènes de consolidation de la paix dans 21 communes frontalières du Bénin”



© ELMAN PEACE



© UNDP MALI



© UNDP DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

A renewed approach and strategy (2023-2025)

Designed around solid lessons learned from the 1st phase of the PVE project and grounded in the extensive research and studies undertaken by UNDP, a second iteration of UNDP's Regional PVE project is being launched in 2023.

The second iteration will expand its scope to **include the dynamic nexus between violent extremism in Africa and in the Mashriq of the Arab region**. This will enable the project to better address cross-continental dynamics of violent extremism between Africa and the Mashriq of Arab region.

Moving from the first catalytic phase which laid the foundation for an evidence-based, tried and tested development approach towards PVE informing this new phase, this second iteration will be oriented towards further leveraging key entry points, existing capacities and infrastructures strengthened through an **enhanced sub-regional perspective**.

The project will seek to further build on the approach of nesting **PVE-specific interventions** within broader, state-led, development responses for more catalytic, integrative and sustainable outcomes. As such, the sub-regional strategies will focus on leveraging enhanced technical support to **PVE-relevant** approaches to existing (or new) projects and programmes.



Project strategy

1. Support to further leverage and build upon the quantitative evidence base on pathways to and from violent extremism, facilitating south-south and peer-to-peer learning on PVE and practitioner-orientated tools to apply a PVE-lens to analysis and development programming.
2. Capacity building of grass-root CSO's; engagement with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the League of Arab States (LAS) through inter-Regional Economic Community (REC) dialogue and coordination.
3. At the sub-regional level, the project will be implemented in 6 sub-regions - East Africa, Central Africa, West Africa (including the Lake Chad region, the triangle Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger and the Littoral States), Southern Africa, North Africa and the Mashrig of the Arab States region.
4. The sub-regional window firstly focuses on evidence-driven, well-coordinated strategies to position PVE as part of the puzzle providing a development solution for underlying development challenges contributing to violent extremism.
5. At the national-level, PVE-specific interventions will focus on 5 pathways to prevention:
 - Whole-of-government and whole-of-society strategies that give way to enhanced trust relations between state security services and at-risk individuals:
 - Disengagement and reintegration (including mental health support);
 - Alternative narratives:
 - Resilience of faith-based organization: and
 - Gender interventions.



PROJECT STRATEGY AND EXPECTED RESULTS 2022-2025

The renewed approach is outlined in the figure below

REGIONAL WINDOW

Broadened and deepened evidence base	PVE Africa Community of Practice functions as a platform for capacity building on applying a PVE-lens	CSO's enabled to craft enhanced civic space and a strengthened social contract	Policy dialogue facilitates inter-REC/regional collaboration and vice-versa
--------------------------------------	---	--	---

6 SUB-REGIONAL WINDOWS: ANNUAL VE-ASSESSMENTS & COMPLEMENTARY STRATEGIES

EAST AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICA	SOUTHERN AFRICA	NORTH AFRICA	WEST AFRICA		MASHRIQ
				Triangle Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger	Lake Chad Region	Atlantic Corridor / Littoral States

SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGIES INTERLINKED MODES

REGIONAL Policy Support & Dialogue - Regional Communities, Regional Institutions

NATIONAL / STATE-LEVEL Policy support & Dialogue with national governments & security services

COMMUNITY-LEVEL interventions - Context-specific, grass-root driven, bottom-up activity designs addressing 5 development mechanisms to prevent violent extremism

Whole-of-society approaches to enhance state-citizen trust relations

Strengthening governance capacities and resilience of religious authorities

Community-driven reintegration

Addressing masculinities and male-female (family) patterns that feed into VE

Violent narratives and extremist propaganda are replaced by alternatives



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME