

Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism

Good Practices for Law Enforcement



Published by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Vienna, May 2019
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Layout and design by designMind, Marianne Michalakis.
Printed by Druckerei Ferdinand Berger & Söhne GmbH

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ISBN: 978-3-903128-38-5
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Wallnerstrasse 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria
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The publication of this guidebook was made possible thanks to a generous contribution from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The content of this publication, including the views, opinions, findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the donor. It is not a consensus-based document.

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Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

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Acknowledgements

This handbook was prepared by the OSCE Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) under the direction of Camilla Bognoe, Counter-Terrorism Officer. The ATU would like to thank Kathrin Quesada for her lead in developing and writing the guidelines, to Jagoda Walorek and Allison Peters for their excellent technical contributions and expertise, and to Michelle Barsa for her research in the initial stages of the development. Special thanks go to Georgia Holmer, Senior Adviser on Anti-Terrorism Issues, for her ongoing support and guidance.

Valuable support was also provided by the Head of the ATU, Argo Avakov, and by the ATU staff members Agnieszka Hejduk, Orlaith King, Aleksandra Klosinska and Katerina Koci. The ATU is also grateful for the collaboration and feedback provided by the many peer reviewers. In particular, the ATU would like to thank the following individuals for their special contributions to the case studies and the Expert Working Group Session that supported this project:

Ankica TOMIC

Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Barbara CHALGAF and
Kathleen WHITE**

Aktis Strategy

Shpresa MULLIQI

OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Lise CROUCH

Royal Mounted Canadian Police

**Andreas CORVALAN and
Kim HIORTH**

Oslo Police District

Ulrich GAMS

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Sammy DOUGLAS

Social, Economic & Community
Regeneration Facilitator, Northern
Ireland

**The Women's Intervention
Partnership and Alastair HUGHES**

Department for Communities,
Northern Ireland

Abdumannop SAITOV

OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe

The ATU is also grateful for the collaboration and feedback provided by staff at the OSCE Secretariat's Gender Section, the OSCE Presence in Albania, Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mission in Kosovo, Mission to Montenegro, Mission to Serbia, and Mission to Skopje, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and at other OSCE entities and institutions, as well as by individual experts and organizations that provided critical input.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ATU	Action against Terrorism Unit
CCCEPV	The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence
CSO	civil society organization
CVE	countering violent extremism
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
GCTF	Global Counter-Terrorism Forum
GFP	gender focal point
GIRDS	German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies
GRASP	Gang Rescue and Support Project
Incel	Involuntary celibacy (<i>referring to the movement of this name</i>)
ISD	Institute for Strategic Development
ISIL/Daesh	the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
MRM	Men's Rights Movement
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSU	National Socialist Underground
PaT	Parents against Terrorism
P/CVERLT	prevention and countering of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism
PVE	preventing violent extremism
RAN	Radicalization Awareness Network
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SAVE	Sisters Against Violent Extremism platform
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SSG	security sector governance
SSR	security sector reform
SSG/R	security sector governance and reform
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
TNTD	Transnational Threats Department
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VEO	violent extremist organization
VERLT	violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism
WaE	Women and Extremism network

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

WEIP	Women's Early Intervention Programme
WPS	women, peace, and security
WwB	Women without Borders
YMCAV	Young Men's Clubs Against Violence

Glossary

This glossary serves to clarify key terms used in this guidebook. The definitions are for this guidebook only and are not official OSCE definitions.

“alt-right” or “alternative right” — Contemporary description of white supremacism and white nationalism, which is connected to the notion of preserving and protecting the white race in Europe and North America. The movement has been described as a mix of racism, nationalism and far-right populism. It criticizes “multiculturalism” and demands less rights for non-whites and immigrants, as well as for religious, ethnic and sexual minorities. These movements are often misogynist, and both men and women who are part of them hold the belief that women should primarily stay at home, raise children and care for the family. Women may perform the role of “wife with a purpose” or that of “tradwives” (traditional wives who supporting the involvement of their husbands, through social media in particular). Few women can be found in leadership functions.

Community cohesion — The extent to which people bond based on shared interests and goals, or develop mutual understanding and a sense of collective identity and belonging that results in mutual trust and collective efficacy.

Community-oriented policing — A philosophy and organizational strategy that promotes partnership-based, collaborative efforts between the police and the community it serves, in order to more effectively and efficiently identify, prevent and solve problems of crime and the fear of crime, as well as the issues of physical safety and security, social disorder and neighborhood decay, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone.

Community resilience — The ability of a community to withstand, respond to and recover from a wide range of harmful and adverse events, including crime and violent extremism.

Foreign terrorist fighters — Individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of terrorist acts, or participation in them, or for providing or receiving terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflicts.

Gender — Gender is a term used to describe socially constructed roles for women and men. It is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. In contrast, the term sex is used to indicate the biological differences between men and women.

Minority — A group whose identity lies outside the dominant or mainstream cultural, social and political norms in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical and mental ability, class, religion and belief, language or culture. A minority is often numerically smaller in comparison with the rest of the population, may be in a position of political, economic or other disempowerment, and often seeks not only to maintain its identity, but also to give stronger expression to that identity.

Neo-Nazism — Militant social or political movements seeking to revive and implement the ideology of Nazism. Neo-Nazis aim at creating a fascist political state, employing their ideology to promote hatred and attack minorities. It is a global phenomenon, with organized representation in many countries and within international networks. It borrows elements from the Nazi doctrines of the 1930s and 1940s, including ultra-nationalism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia and anti-Semitism. Holocaust denial is a common feature, as is the use of Nazi symbols and admiration of Adolf Hitler.

Aggressive nationalism — Aggressive nationalism is characterized by the promotion of the interests of a particular nation at the expense of other nations or minority populations, especially with the aim of gaining and maintaining sovereignty over a real or perceived homeland. It is oriented towards developing and maintaining a national identity based on shared social characteristics such as culture, language or the belief in a common ancestry. Aggressive nationalism holds that a nation should govern itself, free of outside interference (as for example attacks from outside forces, or individuals seen as interested in undermining the common characteristics of a nation).¹

Profiling — The systematic association of sets of physical, behavioural or psychological characteristics with particular types of offenders, and the use of such characteristics as a basis for making law enforcement decisions. In the context of this handbook, profiling on the basis of gender, age and ethnicity is most relevant.

Toxic masculinities — A notion referring to socially constructed attitudes that see, and celebrate, the stereotypical masculine gender role(s) as being violent, unemotional, sexually aggressive, dominant and so forth.

¹ The 2001 OSCE Bucharest Plan of Action promotes "measures aimed at preventing and fighting aggressive nationalism, racism, chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the media." See: The Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 4 December 2001), para 12.

Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) — A dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or to engage in terrorism.

Foreword

Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) are transnational challenges which are not restricted to any nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideology or gender. The unpredictable and evolving nature of these threats makes them difficult to prevent and counter. The OSCE participating States have been unequivocal in their condemnation of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as in their support of a multi-dimensional approach that focuses on the prevention of VERLT.

The OSCE believes in a whole-of-society approach to preventing and countering VERLT. This reflects the understanding that efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism can no longer be the responsibility of only security actors; to be effective, a co-operative and inclusive approach to preventing and countering VERLT (P/CVERLT) is required, one that involves other government entities as well as civil society actors. This also means that trust and communication between security actors and communities must be improved. While successful civil society efforts to prevent and counter VERLT take into account the importance of families, women, youth, educators, and religious and community leaders, the security sector has historically been slower in embracing diversity, including aspects related to gender. This can be seen in the percentage of women working in the security sector, as well as in the common lack of gender sensitivity in police services that engage directly with communities.

This handbook reflects the OSCE's commitment to supporting a gender-aware approach for the security sector in preventing and countering VERLT. The OSCE participating States have recognized the significance of gender in several commitments, including the OSCE Ministerial Council Declaration No. 4/15 on preventing and countering VERLT, which was adopted in Belgrade in December 2015. The OSCE also supports the UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015), which calls for the greater integration by States of their agendas on women, peace and security, including on counter-terrorism and P/CVERLT.

A key component in achieving a gender-sensitive response to the threat of VERLT is to ensure adequate representation of women in the security sector, around the table when policy and programming is being defined, as well as in operational law enforcement roles. It is also necessary, however, to ensure that both men and women in law enforcement are aware of the different experiences and challenges VERLT presents to women and men, as well as girls and boys. This includes how different people are targeted for recruitment, how they work to prevent VERLT, and how they may differently experience victimization by

violent extremist groups. It also includes a deeper knowledge of the gender stereotypes exploited by violent extremists, and why it is important that communities and law enforcement work together to debunk such stereotypes. This can promote positive role models and narratives that serve to strengthen tolerance and prevent VERLT.

The Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) in the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department continues to be a resource hub for the OSCE's 57 participating States, field operations and independent institutions, helping them to support and implement the OSCE's counter-terrorism commitments. It is our hope that this resource will contribute to improving capacities of law enforcement and civil society in working together on P/CVERLT. We believe that the case studies in this publication will help illustrate some of the good practices that exist and showcase how enforcement, through improved gender-sensitivity law, can better streamline its operational work on P/CVERLT.

This handbook serves as guidance for law enforcement and security actors on how to better understand gender dynamics in VERLT, and aims at helping them create better and more gender-sensitive responses. It complements the series of regionally focused handbooks published by the ATU in 2018/19 about the challenges in developing and implementing effective programmes on P/CVERLT. While this handbook is tailored to law enforcement, we anticipate that it and our other publications will be valuable resources also for those policymakers and civil society actors across the OSCE area who are working to foster inclusive approaches to peace and security.



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Executive Summary

The OSCE has recognized the significance of gender considerations in the prevention or countering of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (P/CVERLT) in a number of declarations agreed upon by its participating States. In particular, the OSCE has embraced recommendations from the relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions through the OSCE Ministerial Council Declaration No. 4/15 on P/CVERLT, which was adopted in Belgrade in December 2015.

With the emergence of relevant research and policy frameworks and programmatic initiatives aimed at P/CVERLT, there has been an increased understanding of the need to address the gendered dimensions of VERLT both in policy and practice. Gender stereotypes and grievances are frequently manipulated and exploited by violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in their propaganda to enhance recruitment, a fact often overlooked in the law enforcement response. A number of international and regional bodies have recognized the imperative of gender-aware approaches to P/CVERLT, of including women in these approaches, and of addressing the toxic masculinities that contribute to the attraction of VEOs.

Evidence shows that police forces whose composition also includes uniformed men and women representing religious, ethnic, and racial minority populations may help build trust between law enforcement agencies and communities. This also helps increase access to the conditions conducive to VERLT and the ability to address them. To be effective and sustainable, government strategies for P/CVERLT must incorporate strong gender analyses. Moreover, both men and women in law enforcement working on P/CVERLT must understand, at a minimum, how gender factors impact VERLT.

This handbook focuses primarily on law enforcement and on how gender awareness improves its ability to prevent or counter violent extremism. Additionally, it explains how civil society and other non-state organizations and institutions play key roles in providing services as well as in oversight. It also offers further resources on the topic for security actors.

The case studies and research presented in this handbook demonstrate how fully integrating a gender perspective into P/CVERLT strategies, policies, programmes and projects is vital to their effectiveness and sustainability. Not only presenting a detailed overview of how gender influences VERLT, this handbook also provides policy recommendations and tools to help law enforcement actors integrate an awareness of gender into their P/CVERLT work.



1. Terms and definitions

1.1 Definitions of preventing violent extremism (PVE), countering violent extremism (CVE) and violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT)

Discussing violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) is challenging due to the lack of a universally agreed upon definition. National governments as well as various organizations at both the international and regional level have tried to classify both phenomena for the purpose of their criminalization, as well as for designing effective prevention strategies.

1.1.1 Terrorism

While defining terrorism is an issue of debate among experts and governments alike, and variations in national definitions exist, the United Nations, in a number of international instruments, refers to terrorism as a set of criminal acts (e.g., hostage-taking,² bombing,³ attacks on board civilian aircraft⁴) or the activities of groups it considers to be terrorist, as for instance the Taliban in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1267 (1999), and ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front in UNSCR 2253 (2015).

2 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (United Nations General Assembly, 17 December 1979). Available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/terrorism/english-18-5.pdf>

3 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (United Nations General Assembly, 15 December 1997). Available at: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-9&chapter=18&clang=_en

4 Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (14 September 1963). Available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/Conv1-english.pdf>

Additionally, UNSCR 1566 (2004) describes the purpose of terrorism as “criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, (...) are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature.”⁵

1.1.2 Violent extremism that leads to terrorism

The OSCE has developed the following working definition of VERLT: “Radicalization that leads to terrorism is the dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or to engage in terrorism.”⁶

In addition, some of the OSCE participating states have their own definitions of violent extremism. The Canadian Government describes it as “beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve extreme ideological, religious or political goals.”⁷

The Council of Ministers of Albania defines the phenomenon as “the use of violence to pursue political goals”⁸ and the United States Agency for International Development refers to violent extremism as “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives.”⁹

Defining violent extremism is an ongoing effort, due to the changing nature and vast variety of individual and societal contexts, motives, targets and features. It is possible for an individual or an ideology to be extremist and yet non-violent. This is a reality that democratic societies try to live with, however challenging this is when values directly oppose the core values of democracy. If violence

5 UNSCR 1566 (2004). Available at: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1566>

6 *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach* (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2014), p. 15. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/111438?download=true>

7 *National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence* (Government of Canada, Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, 2018), p. 7. Available at: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc-en.pdf>

8 *Albanian National Strategy, Countering Violent Extremism* (Republic of Albania Council of Ministers), p. 5. Available at: <https://www.rcc.int/p-cve/download/docs/Albanian%20National%20Strategy%20on%20Countering%20Violent%20Extremism.pdf/eca873b0e6bd733938a73f957471a75c.pdf>

9 *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice* (United States Agency for International Development, September 2011), p.2. Available at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacs400.pdf

is associated with extremist activity, this ambiguity is clearly overcome. It is important to note that any ideology has the potential to produce extreme members of a population who resort to violence. This, again, testifies to the fact that violent extremism is not associated with any one ideology or religion.

Violent extremism is thus a distinct category that is broader than “terrorism”, because it also includes violence such as politically motivated riots and hate crimes, or actions that although considered terrorist in nature by some, are not legally defined as such. It is important to note that radical and extremist views alone are not necessarily problematic. It is when violence is added as a justifiable modus that they become a security issue.

1.1.3 Preventing and countering violent extremism and VERLT

Preventing violent extremism (PVE) and countering violent extremism (CVE) are both expressions that describe means of addressing VERLT. They are often used interchangeably. However, prevention implies stopping problems from materializing. This requires addressing conditions conducive to VERLT. Countering violent extremism means applying strategies and measures that serve to deconstruct terrorist narratives and promote healthy alternatives. This can also include the rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremist offenders.

The UN Secretary General’s 2015 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism sees PVE as a set of broad and systematic measures geared at addressing the drivers of violent extremism. It emphasizes “tackling conditions conducive to terrorism” while “ensuring respect for human rights for all and the rule of law while countering terrorism.” The Plan of Action argues that “the creation of open, equitable, inclusive and pluralist societies, based on the full respect of human rights and with economic opportunities for all, represents the most tangible and meaningful alternative to violent extremism (...)”.¹⁰

In turn, the OSCE understands CVE as “proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit and mobilize followers to engage in violent acts and to address specific factors that facilitate and enable violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence”.¹¹

10 Available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674

11 *The Role of Civil Society in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Focus on South-Eastern Europe* (OSCE, 2018) p. 6. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/400241?download=true>

1.2 The expressions gender, gender awareness and gender mainstreaming in the context of PVE/CVE/VERLT

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female as well as the relationships and power dynamics between women and men, and girls and boys.

Unlike biological sex, these attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes. They are not static, but are context and time-specific. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in the responsibilities they are assigned, activities they undertake, their access to and control over resources, as well as their opportunities for making decisions.¹²

The principle of gender equality and the corresponding prohibition of discrimination are fundamental principles of international human rights law. The promotion of gender equality is stipulated in the OSCE's Parliamentary Decision No. 638, and OSCE participating States have committed themselves to making gender equality an integral part of their policies.¹³

Two key strategies for promoting gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex and gender **are raising gender awareness and mainstreaming gender**. Gender awareness refers to the “ability to view society from the perspective of gender roles and understand how this has affected women’s needs in comparison to the needs of men.”¹⁴ Mainstreaming gender “involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination.”¹⁵

In the context of VERLT, gender awareness and gender mainstreaming contribute to better informing and targeting those measures taken for preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism. This ultimately makes them more

12 <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

13 <https://www.osce.org/pc/14713?download=true>

14 *Engendering Economic Governance* (United Nations Fund for Women – Unifem, n.d.). Available at: <http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/engendering/definitions.html>

15 European Institute for Gender Equality. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

effective. What this means in concrete terms is elaborated in Chapter II of this handbook. Other lessons learned and good practices on integrating gender awareness and sensitivity into work on P/CVERLT are highlighted with case studies in Chapter V.



2. Why gender mainstreaming in the prevention and countering of VERLT matters

2.1 VERLT as a security threat

The OSCE region remains vulnerable to the security threats caused by terrorist activity and violent extremism. In particular, the activities of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) or other forms of violent groups in situations of continued instability and/or long-lasting ethnic and sectarian grievances remain an ongoing threat to the region. The violent extremist groups that continue to emerge across the region are a potential source of increased intolerance and ideologically-motivated violence.

OSCE participating States have seen a large number of casualties as a result of terrorism. In 2016, the Global Terrorism Database found that several major areas of terrorist activity fell within the boundaries of OSCE participating States: Turkey (1,047 casualties), Russia and Central Asia (1,395 casualties), Western Europe (143 casualties), and the Western Balkans (92 casualties).¹⁶

¹⁶ See: https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=6&casualties_type=&casualties_max=®ion=7&count=100&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=CountryText&od=asc#results-table

2.1.1 ISIL/Daesh and ideologically influenced terrorism

Many of the acts of terrorism in the OSCE region have been attributed in particular to the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh). In 2014, the group claimed territory in Syria and Iraq, but aspired to a global reach by recruiting members from far beyond that region and having its followers and supporters perpetrate violence around the world.

At the peak of its operation in 2014–2015, ISIL/Daesh attracted to its ranks approximately 40,000¹⁷ so-called foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)¹⁸ from around the world. A significant number of these originated from OSCE participating States.¹⁹ It is thought that the number of FTFs from countries of the former Soviet Union may have reached 9,000 fighters,²⁰ with more than 1,000 FTFs from the South Caucasus, and more than 4,000 fighters from the countries of Central Asian. Moreover, nearly 6,000 Western Europeans and more than 400 North Americans were estimated to have joined ISIL/Daesh in Iraq and Syria.²¹

Of these FTFs and individuals associated with FTFs, women constituted a significant proportion. According to a 2018 study undertaken by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, women comprised 13% of ISIL/Daesh FTFs or affiliates, and on average 17% of the nearly 20,000 FTFs accounted for as coming from the OSCE Region.²²

Based on data from 2014 and 2015, there were around 1,000 women from Central Asia in the ISIL/Daesh combat zones in Syria and Iraq.²³ According to data gathered by Central Asian government institutions, there were over 150 Kazakh,²⁴ 200 Tajik and up to 500 Uzbek²⁵ women in ISIL/Daesh ranks. In Kyrgyzstan, studies show that women have constituted a fourth of those leaving to join ISIL/DAESH.²⁶

17 *The Challenge of Returning and Relocating Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Research Perspectives* (United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, 2018), p. 4.

18 According to UN Security Council Resolution 2178, foreign terrorist fighters are defined as individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict. See S/RES/2178 (United Nations Security Council, 2014).

19 Richard Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees* (The Soufan Center, 2017), pp. 12–13.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

21 Richard Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees* (The Soufan Center, 2017), pp. 12–13.

22 Joana Cook and Gina Vale, *From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State* (King's College London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2018), pp. 3–14.

23 Uran Botobekov, "The Central Asian women on the frontline of Jihad" (*The Diplomat*, January 2017).

24 "Kazakhstan Intelligence: 150 Kazakh Women Are Members of IS" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Nov. 2014).

25 "Uzbekistan struggles with women recruited by ISIS" (*Antiterror Today*, June 2015).

26 Mataeva, A. "Radicalisation" and Violent Extremism in Kyrgyzstan. *The RUSI Journal*. Vol. 163, 2018, Issue 1. pp. 30–46. p. 34

Table 1. Media and analytical estimates of foreign fighters and migrants to the Islamic State from the Western Balkans.

	Estimated Total	Estimated Women
Albania	90-150	13-29
BiH	192-340	36
Croatia	1-6	1-4
Kosovo ²⁷	100-232	42
Macedonia	12-146	1
Montenegro	13-30	N/A
Serbia	50-350	1

Source: Belgrade Center for Security Policy, Belgrade 2016

While the number of female FTFs originating from South-Eastern Europe was significantly lower (see table 1), these figures must be viewed in comparison to the overall populations of these countries, which in some cases are lower than other countries of the region.

Among Western Europeans, the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation estimates that women accounted for 1,023 of the individuals affiliated with ISIL/Daesh who travelled to Iraq and Syria, or 17% of the total, as mentioned above.²⁸ In 2016,

women accounted for 36% of the French “contingent”²⁹ to ISIL/Daesh, 40% from the Netherlands, and 20% of those travelling from Germany and Finland.³⁰

In recent years, the OSCE region has seen a decline in terrorism, but the threat to participating States remains. While the entire OSCE region saw a clear decrease in numbers of completed deadly terrorist acts in 2017 in comparison to the previous year, there were nonetheless still 61 casualties in Western Europe, 57 in Turkey, and 16 in Russia and Central Asia.³¹ The falling numbers are mainly thought to be due to ISIL/Daesh’s territorial losses in Iraq and Syria and its decreasing recruitment.

As a result of these territorial losses, the number of FTFs returning from Iraq and Syria to their home or third-party countries has increased in many OSCE participating States.³² The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation recorded that 7,366 individuals associated with ISIL/Daesh returned from Iraq and Syria to their home countries (20%) in 2018, or appear to be in the process of doing so. Globally, only 256 (4%) of the total returnees have been women. Of

²⁷ All references in this text to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, should be understood as being in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

²⁸ Joana Cook and Gina Vale, *From Daesh to ‘Diaspora’: Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State* (King’s College London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2018), p. 14.

²⁹ *Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Trends, Dynamics and Policy Responses* (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016).

³⁰ *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2016* (EUROPOL, 2016), p. 29.

³¹ Terrorist Attacks Database January 01, 2017–December 31, 2017 (ESRI, 2017). Available at: <https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/terrorist-attacks/?year=2017>.

³² S/2017/35 – *Nineteenth Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da’esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities* (United Nations Security Council, 2017), para. 9.

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the returnees, 17% are minors, who present a number of challenges to states upon their return, especially for criminal justice systems.³³ Of the returnees to Western and Eastern Europe, women constituted 8% and 5%, respectively.³⁴ Reports suggest that many of the women and children who are still in Syria and Iraq are in camps full of stranded wives, sons and daughters of ISIL/Daesh fighters, whether dead, incarcerated or escaped.³⁵ Their release is conditional on political decisions regarding repatriation by their home countries.

The fate of returnees associated with ISIL/Daesh has varied widely. Some, both male and female, have been taken into the respective criminal justice systems of the countries they have returned to and face accountability for their assistance to or association with a VEO.

Some returnees appear to have abandoned their violent extremist ideology for various reasons, including disillusionment about promises that led them to join ISIL/Daesh not coming to fruition. For others, returning to their country of origin or a third country has not been synonymous with rehabilitation or abandonment of the motivations that originally led them to leave. These individuals may continue to present a real security threat for these countries.³⁶ This is for instance the case of Rachid Kassim, a French FTF and ISIL/Daesh recruiter, who supported a number of attacks and attempted attacks in France.³⁷ Indeed, not all OSCE governments have “claimed” their nationals, fearing they may spread the violent ideology at home.

Though returning FTFs and foreign terrorist networks continue to pose a threat in terms of potential violence and inspiration to others, the majority of ISIL/Daesh-inspired attacks in 2017 were carried out by so-called “homegrown” terrorists who have been radicalized in their countries of residence and have never travelled abroad to join a terrorist group. This is often contrary to popular beliefs, particularly as presented by certain polarizing political forces. It is such lone actors, people who do not have direct links to ISIL/Daesh or any other terrorist organization, who may present one of the most difficult threats for law enforcement to detect.³⁸

33 Joana Cook and Gina Vale, *From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State* (King's College London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2018), p. 3.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

35 Arutunyan, *ISIS Returnees Bring Both Hope and Fear to Chechnya* (International Crisis Group, 2018).

36 Byman, *What happens when ISIS goes underground?* (The Brookings Institution, 2018).

37 S/2017/573 – *Twentieth Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities* (United Nations Security Council, 2017), para. 6.

38 *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2018* (EUROPOL, 2018), p. 6.

Nonetheless it is important to remember that even though ISIL/Daesh has lost physical territory, its ideological appeal is still present. Moreover, although only 16% of attacks or attempted attacks in the European Union in 2017 were ISIL/Daesh-inspired, they comprised the largest number of fatalities.³⁹ The recurrent attacks claimed by the group long after its large swaths of territory have been lost prove that the group can still attract support and continue operation. It is also important to note that ideologies linger after their creators are gone. Thus, military firepower cannot be the sole weapon used to combat ideologically motivated violence. While security mobilization and military approaches can tackle the symptoms of VERLT, they do not remove its root causes. Instead, effective preventative approaches require consideration of factors that lead young men and women to accepting violence as a means to an end.

2.1.2 Far-right and left-wing terrorism

The changing political climate in many OSCE participating States has increased concerns about security threats stemming from forms of violent extremist movements other than those inspired or linked to ISIL/Daesh or groups with similar ideologies.

Across the United States, Europe and beyond, polarizing rhetoric has been spread by movements that are increasingly xenophobic. The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) finds that this has provided fuel to the “violent right-wing extremist spectrum”.⁴⁰ Due to increased migration flows from conflict zones outside the OSCE area, the appeal of this kind of rhetoric, especially when presented in a populist political package, has been increasing.

Attacks by ISIL/Daesh-inspired groups and individuals around the world have added to the public’s fear, as has the notion that the refugee and migrant crisis presents an imminent security threat. For example, political parties claiming that immigrants exploit the European welfare state,⁴¹ undermine the “European way of life”,⁴² or pose a direct security threat to local populations⁴³ have prevailed at the polling booths in several countries. Violent right-wing extremism in the United States also appears to be on the rise⁴⁴

39 Ibid., p.9.

40 Ibid., p. 7.

41 Cf. McKie, “Far-right Geert Wilders calls Moroccan migrants ‘scum’”, (*The Guardian*, Feb. 2017); and Warren, “Marine Le Pen calls immigration a ‘THREAT’ to French values”, (*Express*, March 2018).

42 Dearden, “Burkini ban: Why is France arresting Muslim women for wearing full-body swimwear and why are people so angry?” (*Independent*, April 2016).

43 For example, the attack in Berlin on a Christmas market in 2016 was perpetrated by an asylum seeker.

44 Seth G. Jones, *The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2018). See also: <http://time.com/5249811/neo-nazis-burn-swastika-georgia/>

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Also nationalist movements, including violent ones, are garnering popular support, something that has been unseen in Europe since World War II. In recent years, deepening fissures have surfaced in societies across the OSCE area, often involving hate speech and extremist violence directed at immigrants or at ethnic, national or religious minorities. Polarizing discourse and identity politics have in some cases been provoked by or silently endorsed by mainstream political parties.

This new trend has given impetus to violent extremist groups re-emerging after decades of being perceived as irrelevant fringe movements. They are now gaining wider groups of followers and being more open about their ideological motives and goals.⁴⁵ The extent to which violent extremist mindsets are spreading can be observed by the increased attendance at events such as music concerts and rallies organized by this type of group. For example, a nationalist rally co-organized in Warsaw by Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (Nationalist Radicalist Camp) on Poland's Independence Day in 2017 reportedly attracted 60,000 participants from across Europe. The rally was banned in 2018.⁴⁶

While violent right-wing extremism has traditionally been perceived as a problem among (young) men, women also play key roles in these movements. In far right-wing movements, women have and continue to be active members and supporters. They are, however, often less public in their activities and therefore their numbers are harder to determine. This warrants its own gender-focused research.

A study on the participation of women in neo-Nazi and other forms of right-wing extremist groups in Germany has found that there is an increase in “the number of active extreme right-wing women as well as a growth in the number of women’s groups in the extreme right-wing scene. The possible roles and positions which can be assumed by women have also expanded: from activists, street fighters and gang leaders to local government politicians, and from demonstration coordinators to internet activists.”⁴⁷ This mirrors other studies that have been written on this topic.⁴⁸

In addition, left-wing terrorism remains a persistent threat in a few key OSCE participating States. EUROPOL found that in 2017, 12% of failed, foiled and completed attacks in the European Union were left wing in nature.⁴⁹ In the European Union, the year 2017 saw a slight increase from the year before in

45 See for example: Gray, “Neo-Nazis Burned a Swastika After Their Rally in Georgia” (*TIME*, April 2018).

46 “Polish independence day march by nationalists banned in Warsaw” (*BBC News*, Nov. 2018).

47 Overlooked and Underrated: Women in Right-Wing Extremist Groups (Amadeu Antonio Foundation), p. 3.

48 Claire Provost and Lara Whyte, “Why are women joining far-right movements, and why are we so surprised?” (OpenDemocracy.net, Jan. 2018).

49 *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2018* (EUROPOL, 2018), p. 9.

arrests of left-wing terrorism suspects.⁵⁰ The target of this kind of terrorism is more often government buildings, and it leads more to civil unrest than violence against individuals and groups.

2.1.3 Potential factors conducive to VERLT

Governments together with civil society actors need to take decisive action to avert what triggers individuals to undertake journeys to foreign battlefields or to launch terrorist attacks at home. This includes addressing how vulnerabilities, often gender-specific, are used by VEOs to provoke young men and women to join their groups.

It has been argued that there is not a single path to radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism.⁵¹ This is why every case of VERLT must be seen as the result of a unique combination of the personal trajectory and psychology of a given individual and the (possibly enabling) environment in which that individual lives. The European Commission's Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) has organized the factors driving VERLT into the following groups:

- **Individual socio-psychological factors:** This encompasses grievances and emotions such as alienation and exclusion; anger and frustration; a strong sense of injustice; feelings of humiliation; a rigid worldview; the tendency to misinterpret situations; conspiracy theories; a sense of victimhood; personal vulnerabilities; and/or living in opposition to mainstream cultural norms.
- **Social factors:** This includes factors related to social exclusion; stigmatization, marginalization and discrimination (real or perceived); limited social mobility; limited education or employment opportunities; an element of displacement; criminality; and/or lack of social cohesion and self-exclusion.
- **Political factors:** This includes grievances framed around victimhood as a result of government action or inaction, including human rights violations. These factors are associated with a strong sense of alienation and injustice, for example, the sense of not being represented by political leadership and police, often reinforced by xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization. Ideological and “religious” dimensions: This refers to joining a violent extremist group due to a belief in a sacred duty, a historical mission, an apocalyptic prophecy and/or as a means for achieving vengeance or

50 Ibid. p. 48.

51 *Discussion Paper | Root Causes of Radicalization in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (UN Development Programme, 2016).

redemption. Certain religious norms can affect how men and women view their roles in societies and family structures, which can also have an impact.

- **Culture and identity crisis:** This relates to cultural marginalization, which can produce alienation in societies. For instance, second generation immigrants in Western Europe sometimes lack a sense of belonging, feeling neither part of the new "home" nor of the country their parents left behind.
- **Trauma and other trigger mechanisms:** This involves psychological trauma. It can be experienced directly, or from parents who have post-traumatic stress disorder or other complex psychological problems.
- **Group dynamics:** This includes aspects such as a fascination with a charismatic leader; pre-existing friendship and kinship ties; socialization; self-isolation; polarizing behaviour and counter-cultural elements; seeking a sense of belonging that cannot found in mainstream society; or associating with others who share similar needs or demands. For instance, men who are interested in accessing and using guns are sometimes inclined to join militarized groups. One study found that "extremism arises, in part, when membership in a group reinforces deeply held ideals, and an individual's identity merges with that of the group."
- **Radicalizers/groomers:** This includes exposure to hate preachers and those who prey on people's vulnerabilities and grievances, channelling recruits into VERLT through methods such as persuasion, pressure and manipulation.
- **Social media:** This provides connectivity, virtual participation and an echo-chamber for like-minded extremist views. The internet can accelerate the process of radicalization and increases opportunities for "self-radicalization".⁵²

There is no clear-cut path to terrorism and no consistent set of factors driving VERLT. Each case of VERLT results from a unique combination of individual factors. Studies undertaken by the International Centre for Counterterrorism,⁵³

52 *RAN Issue Paper: The Root Causes of Violent Extremism* (Ranstop, Radicalisation Awareness Network, European Commission, 2016).

53 Boutin et al., *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union: Profiles, Threats, and Policies* (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016).

the UN Office of Counterterrorism,⁵⁴ and the Council of Europe⁵⁵ have also enumerated reasons for VERLT as cited by FTFs (both male and female) from the OSCE region. These included:

- Feeling lonely and isolated, including confusion over one's identity and uncertainty of belonging within the mainstream or community structures, a situation sometimes experienced by second-generation migrants in host countries across Europe and North America; majority populations being faced with increased migrant and refugee flows; Central Asian migrants suffering discrimination in Russia and Turkey; conservative societies in certain countries that restrict financial independence, mobility and the agency of women; and liberal societies with higher gender equality in which men feel intimidated by women's independence, as exemplified by the "involuntary celibacy" (Incel) movement.⁵⁶
- Believing that one's community is at risk of violence or persecution, this including xenophobia and profiling against the Muslim population in Europe and North America, or the perceived threat to the security and local "way of life" experienced when immigrants of different cultural and religious backgrounds settle in European cities. Ideas of this sort were expressed in the manifesto entitled "2083: A European Declaration of Independence" by Anders Breivik, the perpetrator of the 2011 terrorist attacks in Norway.
- Grievances related to discrimination and persecution by state services and/or unequal access to them. This can include the profiling of terrorist suspects by law enforcement based on ethnicity in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Europe and North America; human rights abuses perpetrated by law enforcement; or the perception that security and access to justice is different for men and women.
- Anger at the state's failure at the international level, as for example, frustration over the lack of international action in response to the persecution of Muslims, or frustration over official decisions to accept the EU's immigrant quotas in eastern Europe.

54 el-Said and Barrett, *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria* (United Nations Office of Counterterrorism, 2017).

55 Committee of Experts on Terrorism, *The Roles of Women in Daesh: Discussion Paper* (Council of Europe, 2016).

56 "Involuntarily celibacy", otherwise known as "Incel", refers to men who believe that for reasons beyond their control they are destined to remain celibate. Incels blame women for their inability to find sexual partners, this linked to feelings of self-loathing, low self-esteem, and outward-directed rage.

The above factors involve elements of negative life experiences as well as socio-economic conditions. They have contributed to “pushing” men and women towards extremist ideologies.

2.2 Effective prevention and response measures

The complexity of the factors conducive to VERLT reveals the need for comprehensive prevention strategies, strategies that are designed in compliance with international law and human rights standards. There are various relevant fields involved in developing such strategies, including security, good governance, conflict prevention, education, socio-economic development, youth engagement and communication.⁵⁷

Given that the factors leading to or creating conditions conducive to VERLT impact men and boys differently than women and girls (see Chapter III, Section 1, below), to be effective and sustainable, it is also critical that P/CVERLT strategies incorporate a strong gender analysis and a comprehensive gender awareness. These strategies must be specifically designed in a way that reflects the socio-economic, cultural and political needs of the entire society, also taking into account the many gender differences that exist.

To address the myriad factors driving VERLT, approaches aimed at preventing and countering it need to focus on building inclusive and tolerant societies. Initiatives undertaken by governments, CSOs and international organizations can support inclusive societies by strengthening broad participation in political and/or peace and security processes, as well as by addressing marginalization and discrimination.

Also effective can be gender-sensitive and tailored awareness-raising campaigns for men and women at risk of VERLT, campaigns that inform them about various facets of extremist propaganda. To understand VERLT and adequately respond to the needs of those who feel aggrieved in society, aspects that can have an impact on prevention, it is important to build and strengthen dialogue with and between youth representatives, religious leaders, women’s groups, social workers, educators, parents, people not part of formal organizations, and law enforcement.

⁵⁷ *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/70/674).

Ultimately, effective preventative approaches will require the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including the state (governance structures, service providers), civil society (social and front-line workers, educators and mentors), families and peers within the community, and the private sector (including internet/communications providers and local businesses). Introducing community-policing programmes, in which both male and female police officers engage in dialogue with communities about local matters, may help identify hotspots of radicalization, track localized trends, and bridge the gap between the state and citizens to help the detection and prevention of crime and violence, including violent extremism.

The component of the state that communities most often see and interact with is law enforcement. In P/CVERLT, law enforcement plays a particularly important role. Grievances generated by law enforcement abuses or, more broadly, abuses perpetrated by the security sector or by institutional corruption can generate conditions that are conducive to P/CVERLT. This hinders the overall effectiveness of the security sector to prevent and counter this threat.

If certain communities, particularly marginalized populations, are discriminated against, stereotyped or mistreated by law enforcement, this is counterproductive in the fight against VERLT. If the police do not generate the trust of the entire population, members of minority groups and communities may suffer de facto discrimination, whereby they are treated less favourably, solely or mainly on the basis of factors such as race, gender, age, disability or ethnic origin.⁵⁸

There are a number of research studies and assessments that highlight the impact of negative experiences with law enforcement on communities and the resultant ability or inability of those police forces to counter security threats.⁵⁹ A 2009 assessment of the drivers of violent extremism produced by the United States Agency for International Development found brutal and degrading treatment at the hands of police to be an indirect driver of VERLT.⁶⁰

While it is vital for law enforcement, especially local police, to take an active part in the prevention of VERLT, the state must ensure accountability and oversight of police actions. Law enforcement, in the process of recognizing and addressing VERLT, must ensure that its actions do not fuel the phenomenon.

58 *Handbook on European non-discrimination law* – 2018 edition (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Agency, 2018).

59 See, for example, those highlighted in: Peters and Saeed, *Promoting Inclusive Policy Frameworks for Countering Violent Extremism: Bridging Theory and Practice: A Pakistani Policewomen Case Study* (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and Inclusive Security, 2017), pp. 6–7.

60 Denoux and Carter, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism* (Management Systems International, US Agency for International Development, 2009), p. 31.

Ensuring that a police service is diverse and representative of the local population helps maintain credibility. The inclusive composition of a police force, including uniformed men and women who represent religious, ethnic and racial minority populations, may help build trust between law enforcement and communities. It seems that more inclusive forces can better address existing grievances with law enforcement, whereby reducing VERLT-conducive conditions. Yet, if law enforcement agencies lack diversity and representation of their societies, this is a factor that often hinders their effectiveness.

As will be discussed in more depth in Chapter IV, a key component of building inclusive police forces is ensuring that women are meaningfully represented. Women's inclusion in law enforcement, particularly in leadership positions, ensures that these forces represent the populations they are protecting. Research has shown that such inclusion enhances the ability of these forces to reach marginalized communities and build trust.⁶¹ Those at risk of VERLT, men and women "at risk of radicalization", often come into contact with the law; the criminal justice sector needs to be able to detect early signs of this risk before the behaviour of such people becomes criminal. Moreover, it needs to understand the gender dynamics related to radicalization and violent extremism and provide gender-sensitive responses, as well as to activate the available prevention mechanisms, such as referral to or co-operation with frontline, educational or social services.

2.3 Legislative and policy requirements for gender-based prevention and countering of VERLT

With the rise in policy frameworks and programmatic initiatives aimed at P/CVERLT, there has been increased focus on the need for integrating a gender perspective to ensure efficient operational work and to avoid blind spots. This includes promoting the participation of women into these efforts to ensure that they are effective, sustainable, and protect and promote women's rights.

A number of international and regional bodies have recognized the imperative of gender-based prevention and women's inclusion in combatting VERLT. Violent extremist movements manipulate and use gender stereotypes and norms in their

⁶¹ Peters and Saeed, *Promoting Inclusive Policy Frameworks for Countering Violent Extremism: Bridging Theory and Practice: A Pakistani Policewomen Case Study* (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and Inclusive Security, 2017), pp. 6–8.

propaganda⁶² to enhance recruitment, a factor that is on occasion overlooked in P/CVERLT efforts. For P/CVERLT strategies, policies and programmes to be most effective, gender analyses are required. This includes gathering knowledge about the experiences of men and boys who have encountered VEO recruitment efforts. Law enforcement, along with other actors in the P/CVERLT space, need to take into account the prevalence of toxic masculinity that is often used to promote an image of a stereotypical, yet desirable way of male life, a type of life that can ostensibly only be had by joining the VEO in question.

The OSCE has recognized the need to account for gender in a number of declarations agreed upon by its participating States. In particular, the OSCE has embraced recommendations from the relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions through the OSCE Ministerial Council Declaration No. 4/15 on preventing and countering VERLT, which was adopted in Belgrade in December 2015. The Declaration recognizes that UNSCR 2242 (2015) calls for greater integration by States of their agendas on women, peace and security (WPS), counter-terrorism, and countering violent extremism which can be conducive to the spread of terrorism.

The Declaration calls on OSCE participating States “to take into account a gender perspective in their efforts to counter terrorism and to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, with a focus on women’s empowerment and the participation of women as well as men in these efforts.” The role of women in preventing VERLT was later reiterated in the OSCE Ministerial Council Declaration from December 2016 on Strengthening OSCE Efforts to Prevent and Counter Terrorism.⁶³ The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Berlin Declaration also called on OSCE participating States to uphold their commitments on promoting the advancement of women, including in security sector institutions.⁶⁴

Additionally, many UN resolutions and documents have recognized the importance of increasing women’s inclusion in and strengthening the gender dimensions of P/CVERLT. The General Assembly’s 6th review resolution of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in June 2018 highlights the important role of women in countering violent extremism and the need for gender analyses to be integrated into programmes aimed at addressing the drivers of radicalization.

62 Lahoud, *Empowerment or Subjugations: An Analysis of ISIL’s Gender Messaging* (UN Women, 2018).

63 *Declaration on Strengthening OSCE Efforts to Prevent and Counter Terrorism* (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Ministerial Council, Dec. 2016, MC/DOC/1/16).

64 Berlin Declaration and Resolutions Adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly, July 2018), para. 17.

Since the 2006 adoption of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the UN has adopted a number of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions highlighting the importance of integrating a gender perspective and promoting women's participation in efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.⁶⁵ These resolutions are supported by years of research that demonstrates the important role women play in enhancing the efficacy and long-term sustainability of conflict prevention and resolution strategies and processes. They also account for the spectrum of roles women have played in violent extremism, be it in preventing or supporting it, or as victims of terrorism. They have also examined the strategic manipulation of gender norms and stereotypes by violent extremist organizations

Further, a number of UN Security Council (UNSC) women, peace, and security (WPS) resolutions stress the importance of aligning efforts to counter violent extremism with efforts to advance women's inclusion in preventing, resolving and rebuilding from conflict. In 2015, the UNSC adopted milestone resolutions that reflect the importance of including women and youth in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. UNSC resolution 2242 (2015) calls for the greater integration of the women, peace, and security agenda into counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism measures, including by "integrating women's participation, leadership and empowerment" in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.⁶⁶

The call to align the WPS agenda and efforts with P/CVERLT acknowledges that these efforts will be more effective and sustainable in the long term if women's participation is advanced and a gender perspective is taken to ensure more holistic approaches. The WPS agenda, first formally recognized by the UNSC in 2000 with the passage of UNSCR 1325,⁶⁷ establishes that conflict affects women and girls differently from men and boys, and that comprehensive engagement with women in conflict prevention, resolution, and rebuilding and their meaningful inclusion is integral to long-term peace and security. This reflects the understanding of the impact of gender dynamics on the factors that drive or create conditions conducive to VERLT, the disparate roles men and women can play in countering and preventing the phenomenon, and the differing impact such violence has on them.

⁶⁵ A/RES/60/288 (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

⁶⁶ S/Res/2242 (United Nations Security Council, 2015), OP11.

⁶⁷ S/Res/1325 (United Nations Security Council, 2000).

Subsequent resolutions relate to the specific experience of women in conflicts and their role at different stages of the conflict cycle, including their participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery.⁶⁸

For example, UNSCR 2242 (2015)⁶⁹ emphasizes the different impact on the “human rights of women and girls of terrorism and violent extremism, including in the context of their health, education, and participation in public life”, and also points out that “they are often directly targeted by terrorist groups.” Furthermore, UNSCR 2178 (2014) on FTFs encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in countering violent extremism, including by empowering women and other concerned civil society groups.⁷⁰ Building on this call, the 2017 UNSCR 2396 also encourages Member States to ensure the leadership and participation of women in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies aimed addressing the fate of returning and relocating FTFs and their families.

In addition to these resolutions, the UN has also acknowledged the importance of women’s empowerment, participation and leadership as well as gender equality in its policy and programmatic efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. For example, the 2015 UN Plan of Action on the Prevention of Violent Extremism⁷¹ calls on UN Member States to ensure that C/VERLT strategies do not adversely impact women’s rights. It also calls for the protection and empowerment of women as a central consideration in strategies devised to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

The UN’s PVE Plan of Action establishes gender equality and empowering women as part of the seven core areas underlying the UN’s VERLT prevention strategy. These include:

- a) Mainstreaming gender perspectives across efforts to prevent violent extremism;
- b) Investing in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women’s roles in violent extremism, including identifying the drivers that lead women to join violent extremist groups as well as the impact of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives, in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses;
- c) Including women and other under-represented groups in national law

68 Additional United Nations Security Council Resolutions on women, peace, and security: 1820 (2008/2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013).

69 S/Res/2242 (United Nations Security Council, 2015).

70 S/RES/2178 (United Nations Security Council, 2014), OP16.

71 *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/70/674).

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- enforcement and security agencies, including as part of counter-terrorism prevention and response frameworks;
- d) Building the capacity of women and their civil society groups to engage in prevention and response efforts related to violent extremism; and
 - e) Ensuring that a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism are committed to projects that address women's specific needs or empower women, as recommended in the 2015 report of the Secretary General to the Security Council on women and peace and security (S/2015/716).

The Plan of Action urges national and regional plans for the prevention of VERLT to take these recommendations into consideration, and in their development, for Member States to consult a wide range of actors, including women's groups.



3. How gender dynamics influence the prevention and countering of VERLT

3.1 Women and violent extremism

A greater understanding of the scope of women's involvement in VERLT is necessary for a comprehensive approach to preventing and countering the threat. Women's involvement in terrorism and violent extremism is not a new phenomenon — women have been active in terrorist groups and networks throughout history. Yet, their presence as frontline activists, propagandists, recruiters, and fundraisers has become more prominent in contemporary terrorist groups around the globe.⁷²

In the 1960s and 1970s, women were active in the Baader-Meinhoff far-left terrorist organization in Germany. They have also served in key leadership and combatant roles in the separatist movements in Europe that have turned to terrorism. Additionally, women have played and continue to play a role in al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda affiliates, including in operational activities and providing ideological support⁷³

⁷² Bloom, *Women and Terrorism* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁷³ Von Knop, "The female Jihad: Al Qaeda's women", in: *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30.5 (2007).

While much attention has been given to the numbers of women in terrorist and violent extremist groups, less explored are the reasons why women choose to leave such groups.

The motivation for women to leave nationalist or far right-wing groups that vehemently support populist parties can have various forms. These include the disillusionment that not all members of the group are deeply committed to the cause, or unmet expectations and feelings of betrayal, especially for women who joined the far right hoping to find a healthy and welcoming family to substitute for troubled relationships they experienced elsewhere. Reportedly, women also leave when the prospect of violence, including attacks on the group from the outside community, becomes a threat to their children. And finally, encounters or friendships with members of those groups condemned by the movement — such as religious or sexual minorities — have influenced women to abandon them.⁷⁴

The reasons for women leaving ISIL/Daesh are not fully known. Research has indicated that some of their reasons are similar to the motivations listed above. In interviews with researchers, some women who were directly involved in or associated with ISIL/Daesh have indicated that they left or attempted to leave the group due to the brutality they witnessed or concerns about their children. Others became disillusioned with what they saw as broken promises from ISIL/Daesh, including the role they would be able to play after arriving in Iraq or Syria. Research indicates, however, that women trying to leave ISIL/Daesh have been able to break away at much lower rates than men.⁷⁵

3.2 Gender awareness and gender-based analysis of VERLT

Gender awareness in P/CVERLT involves an understanding of the myriad roles women play in preventing, countering and supporting VERLT, as well as of their experiences as its victim. It also requires an understanding of how P/CVERLT strategies, policies and programmes may impact women and women's groups, also adversely.

Terrorism and VERLT are gendered phenomena: They are experienced differently by women and girls than by men and boys (be it as victims, perpetrators, or

74 Blee, Simi, Latif, and DeMichelle, "Why Do Women Leave the Far-Right?" (University of Oslo, Center for Research on Extremism, July 2018).

75 Speckhard and Shajkovi, "Beware the Women of ISIS: There are Many, and They May Be More Dangerous Than the Men" (Daily Beast, Aug. 2017).

those working to prevent or counter the threat). It is important to recognize that while men may constitute the majority of violent extremists, women also play important roles in violent extremist organizations. For authorities to effectively prevent or counter VERLT, an awareness of this is essential.

Strategies, policies and programmes that lack a gender-based analysis will especially fail to see the gendered differences in the drivers of VERLT. A gender analysis allows a comprehensive assessment, in a given context, of the differences between women and men regarding opportunities, constraints, distribution of resources and power structures. Performing a gender analysis of the drivers of the VERLT as well as of the differentiated roles men and women play in society helps in understanding the different motivations behind men and women joining extremist and terrorist networks.

While there is no doubt that many men, women and children are forced or manipulated into joining VEOs, there is an urgent need to break the stereotyping of why individuals join such groups, particularly stereotypes that portray women as passive and submissive “followers”. Authorities as well as civil society need to recognize the agency of each individual who makes a conscious decision to join a VEO, including the gender differences in their motivations to do so. Understanding these gender dimensions will allow for a better understanding of radicalization processes among both men and women, and for developing responses that are better suited to addressing the gender-based dynamics related to people choosing to join such groups.

The same must be recognized regarding women and girls who decide to be part of P/CVERLT. Women are often underrepresented in the public/government sphere and the security sector, particularly in leadership positions. The involvement of women in these sectors allows their participation in key decision-making processes related to P/CVERLT and the responsibility for matters that concern the welfare of communities.

A thorough gender analysis should include a review of how norms factor into personal experiences, norms such as stereotypical masculinity or femininity: a “true man” or a “good woman”. It should also include grievances, interpersonal interactions, and organizational behaviour, as for example, assessing the impact of cultural and religious independence, responsibilities at home or in the community, the sense of belonging, etc. A number of organizations have developed guidelines on conducting a thorough gender analysis, guidelines that might be used when developing and implementing P/CVERLT strategies, policies and programmes.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ See, for example, *How to Conduct a Gender Analysis: A Guidance Note for UNDP Staff* (UN Development Programme, 2016).

3.2.1 The different roles of men and women in VEOs

An understanding of the gender dynamics of VERLT requires an understanding not only of the scope of women's participation in violent extremism, but also the gendered differences in the roles within violent extremist organizations, roles that depend on the nature of each organization. It is important to recognize that in no organization do women and men form a uniform group; they hold different roles.

In many VEOs, men are the chief players in leadership, combat and operational roles.⁷⁷ They may also tend to be more outspoken about extremist tendencies and their involvement in VERLT, and also more visible to the outside world, including in acts of violence. Far-right rallies, such as those of neo-Nazis, are often dominated by images of young men wearing ideological symbols and shouting violent extremist slogans.

Similarly, much of the propaganda images of ISIL/Daesh activity that has entered the public sphere has been footage of armed men from the battlefields of Syria and Iraq. Men have dominated the fighting ranks of ISIL/Daesh, al-Qaeda and affiliated groups, as well as other terrorist groups. Women's role in combat has been largely restricted or is less visible.

Nonetheless, although women's participation in violent extremism has been limited when compared to that of men, researchers have noted that failing to understand the extent of women's roles in VEOs and the impact of gender dynamics in recruitment into these groups has represented a tremendous gap in P/CVERLT efforts. The mainstream understanding of men as violent actors leads to gender-blind policies in attempts to prevent and counter violence, violence to which women also contribute.⁷⁸

Initial efforts to understand the roles of women in VEOs and terrorist groups suffered from quick quantitative analyses. Despite the fact that there are indeed women who hold leadership and operational roles in some VEOs and terrorist groups, their relatively low numbers in the ranks of extremists has often been misperceived as women being irrelevant in these groups' overall functioning. Consequently, the role of women in VEO and terrorist groups has usually been seen as "passive, victims, helpless, subordinate and concerned family members".⁷⁹

77 See, for example, the Terrorist and Extremists Database (Counter Extremism Project), <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists>.

78 Pearson, *Why Men Fight and Women Don't: Masculinity and Extremist Violence* (Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2018).

79 Idris and Abdelaziz, *Women and countering violent extremism* (GSDRC, 2017).

An exception has been seen in the few groups in which women represent a larger proportion of the ranks or perpetrate more violence. Events in which terrorist acts have been female-perpetrated or directed (e.g., the Chechen “Black Widows” in the 2002 Moscow theater hostage crisis, or the “White Widow” allegedly behind the 2013 Nairobi Westgate attack) have often been described by the media as exceptional, which leads to the sensationalizing of women’s engagement in violence. The popular convention of describing extremist women through their relationship to a man (the wife or bride, the widow) ironically de facto strips women of their agency to decide on their involvement in terrorism, and misrepresents the generalized views on women’s proclivity to violence. As a consequence, responses by law enforcement are often inefficient.

A better understanding of the role of women in ISIL/Daesh, in particular, has been gained since researchers have had opportunities to interview ISIL/Daesh defectors and returning FTFs. It has been revealed that women, like men, play significant roles in the operation of this group, although their roles are often different.

According to the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, women in ISIL/Daesh have been found to fulfil active roles as recruiters, propagandists and members of the group’s organization. It has also been found that significant levels of brutality have been perpetrated by women against women who did not comply with the strict moral code imposed by the group.⁸⁰ Many women in ISIL/Daesh also play key care-taker roles, including raising and indoctrinating the children of ISIL/Daesh fighters.

The Council of Europe’s Counter-Terrorism Committee has divided the role of women in ISIL/Daesh into three main categories: necessary agents of state-building, recruiters, and militants.⁸¹

The first category comprises tasks that involve active contributions to keeping ISIL/Daesh running, including the roles of wife and mother, teacher, doctor or nurse, as well as performing logistical tasks for the terrorist organization. Secondly, as recruiters, female members of ISIL/Daesh appeal to other women to join the group. They spread propaganda and provide guidance on how to overcome objections posed by recruits’ families before departure. And thirdly, while women have played more active combat roles in other terrorist groups, women affiliated with ISIL/Daesh have also played an active role in encouraging terrorist acts. The Council of Europe has also documented cases of women associated with ISIL/Daesh participating directly in acts of terrorism.⁸²

80 Almomhammad and Speckhard, *The Operational Ranks and Roles of Female ISIS Operatives: From Assassins and Morality Police to Spies and Suicide Bombers* (International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, 2017).

81 Committee of Experts on Terrorism, *The Roles of Women in Daesh: Discussion Paper* (Council of Europe, 2016), pp. 5–8.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 8

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While other VEOs and terrorist groups have allowed women to serve in direct combat roles, including as suicide bombers, women's engagement in combat in ISIL/Daesh has been considered undesirable, although it is permitted in exceptional circumstances. This has been the case in the Levant battlefields in months leading to ISIL/Daesh's military defeat. Women have also been featured in more recent propaganda distributed by ISIL/Daesh, which includes images of them in combatant positions.⁸³

Women have also marked urban warfare in their home countries. For example, in 2016 in France a cell composed entirely of women allegedly plotted to set off a car bomb near Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.⁸⁴ The active role of women in terrorism has also included suicide bombings. According to research that has been done on this aspect, women perpetrators accounted for approximately 15% of all suicide attacks between 1985 and 2006.⁸⁵

Additionally, women have assumed various roles in far right-wing extremist groups, groups that could possibly perpetrate terrorism. Some case studies of right-wing extremist groups find that men play more of a public activist role in these groups and networks, in which anti-feminism rhetoric and calls for restrictions on women's rights are often defining feature of their ideologies.

However, women are nonetheless increasingly playing key operational roles in these groups,⁸⁶ spreading ideologies and balancing the violent masculinity of the men in these groups through propaganda.⁸⁷ In the public image, right-wing extremism is often only presented as a male phenomenon, with the role of women often remaining unrecognized. P/CVERLT efforts may also overlook men who do not conform to the image of the masculine "right-wing man" or do not present their ideology in a publically visible manner.⁸⁸

3.2.2 Gender-based motivation for violent extremism

VEO groups understand gender dynamics well and manipulate gender norms and stereotypes to their advantage in their recruitment and propaganda messages, messages that often specifically target men or women.

83 Ingram, "The Islamic State's Manipulation of Gender in their Online Information Operations" (Vox Pol, March 2018).

84 Dickey, "Now ISIS is turning women into cannon fodder in France" (*The Daily Beast*, September 2016).

85 Davis, "Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq" (*Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2013).

86 See, for example, Pegida – protests of men (Amadeu Antonio Foundation). Available at: <http://www.gender-und-rechtsextremismus.de/gmf-und-gender-1/pegida-und-gender/>

87 Flood, "Gender and Violent Extremism: Contemporary Debates" (University of Oslo Center for Research on Extremism, July 2018).

88 Background (Amadeu Antonio Foundation), <http://www.gender-und-rechtsextremismus.de/hintergrund/>

For instance, the German alt-right campaign ‘#120db’ (120 decibels — reference to the volume of pocket alarms carried by some women as a defense against street harassment) blames immigrants and refugees for sexual violence in Europe. The campaign’s website⁸⁹ invites women to share their experiences with “imported violence” and join the “resistance” against the “replacement” of (white) Europeans with migrants.

In ISIL/Daesh’s propaganda, the claim to constitute the “true” Muslim community (Ummah) in its territories in the Middle East has appealed to female European recruits who have suffered forms of discrimination on religious grounds in their home countries. For example, women who choose to wear the hijab or niqab have experienced forms of verbal and physical abuse in public due to the more visible marker of their Muslim identity.

Such feelings of isolation within a larger non-Muslim community was cited by some as motivation to join ISIL/Daesh, as well as the desire to have a sense of belonging within a Muslim community.⁹⁰ Many have referred to the camaraderie and sisterhood among ISIL/Daesh women as being superior to the shallow relationships they had in European societies. The need of belonging has also been cited as motivation for enlisting in the ranks of far-right groups, groups that often appear to have healthy and family-like structures.⁹¹

In VEOs across the spectrum, women have also been drawn by the prospect of becoming mothers to a future generation of children holding the group’s ideology.

3.2.3 The role of masculinity and femininity in violent extremist mobilization

In their recruiting and propaganda, VEOs also take advantage of the notions of masculinity and femininity. In many traditional societies, “a good man” is often equated with being a strong family patriarch, defined in comparison to other men whom one seeks to surpass in status, wealth and social standing. Men who have difficulty meeting traditional expectations of masculinity — such as being the main income earner, being respected and honored, or having access to sexual partners of choice — may find that VEOs offer a compelling substitute for confirming their masculinity.⁹²

89 See: <https://www.120-db.info>

90 “Women in Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Kosovo” (Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, 2017).

91 “Why Do Women Leave the Far-Right?” (University of Oslo Center for Research on Extremism). Available at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/news-and-events/right-now/why-do-women-leave-the-far-right.html/>

92 Ní Aoláin, “Masculinity, Jihad and Mobilization” (Just Security, October 2018). Available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/33624/masculinity-jihad-mobilization/>

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For example, ISIL/Daesh propaganda tends to portray fighters as hyper-masculine defenders of the faith or community, surrounded by attributes of wealth and sexual gratification. The acceptance and use of violence applied by violent extremist groups corresponds to the masculine ethos of physical strength. Additionally, far-right violent extremist networks often appeal to historical narratives, of times when “men were men”, fought on battlefields and died in glory. The element of battling for “what is right” in some VEO ideologies intends to project the image of a strict military order in which blood and honour are prime values, even if in reality this is not the case.

Additionally, alt-right extremist mobilization often relies on gender roles⁹³ in which men are protectors and belong to the front-line, while the function of women is relegated to caring for the family. Some female members willingly subscribe to this dogma and actively oppose feminism, viewing the notion of equality between the sexes as challenging the mainstream of their (Western European or North American) societies.⁹⁴ For instance, the notion of “tradwives” (traditional wives) in some alt-right movements, related to the “traditional” (white) family, defines the role of women as fulfilling domestic duties only. Emphasizing the “whiteness” of this image, the movement spreads racist views and opposes immigration.⁹⁵

In VEOs, strict adherence to men’s and women’s “traditional” gender roles often impacts how they establish their social order. VEOs are intimately familiar with how sex-based oppression and sexual and gender-based violence can be used to their advantage. This is done in many ways, including sexual slavery, human trafficking, rape and gang rape, restrictions on women’s rights and access to basic social services, forced breeding, and even punishing women as “the enemy”.

As is expressed in UNSCR 2331 (2016), the UN Security Council has found “that acts of sexual and gender-based violence, including when associated to trafficking in persons, are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups, used as a tactic of terrorism and an instrument to increase their finances and their power through recruitment and the destruction of communities.”⁹⁶

The strict and systematic control of assigned gender roles also applies to men. Those who are not deemed mentally or physically strong enough to fight may be ostracized or even forcibly used as human shields. In certain terrorist groups,

93 Kitchener, “The Women Behind the ‘Alt-Right’” (The Atlantic, Aug. 2017).

94 Bowman and Stewart, “The Women Behind the ‘Alt-Right’” (*National Public Radio*, Aug. 2017).

95 Michelle, “Women With a Purpose: The New Wave of the Alt-Right Tradwives” (Medium, June 2018).

96 S/RES/2331 (United Nations Security Council, 2016).

elements of sexualized violence are used to galvanize male fighters and entice recruits.⁹⁷

In Europe and North America, such gendered narratives appeal to men who see violent forms of misogyny as a retribution for their own limitations. The increasingly popular narrative of white men as victims of feminism has become the focus of the Men's-Rights Movement (MRM) and is rife in far-right movements.⁹⁸ The MRM voices hatred and resentment of women, and views feminism and the emancipation of women as emasculating and undermining "male dominance". This misogynistic rhetoric ranges from disrespect to the promotion of violence against women.

Some MRM online chatrooms entertain arguments such as the inexistence of date rape or marital rape, while others celebrate and encourage misogynistic violence. For instance, so-called "involuntary celibates" (Incels) see their inability to find a sexual partner as a form of female oppression.⁹⁹ They advocate violence against women, whom they hold accountable for their aggrieved entitlement. "Incel rebellion" was cited as motivation by the perpetrator of the April 2018 terrorist attack in Toronto, in which women were the primary targets.¹⁰⁰

In policies, programmes and the media, the social construct of femininity has often been expressed as one of subservience and inferiority to men in the context of VERLT. The result is an inaccurate presentation of the extent to which women participate in VEOs. Media coverage of women affiliated with these groups often portrays female recruits solely as silent followers of their partners.¹⁰¹ It is a stereotype, however, that does not give justice to the full picture, since there are many women who have initiated, supported and incited the extremist cause.

The generic qualification of women as "harmless" and unlikely to perpetrate violence has undermined the accuracy of VERLT policies and operational responses. It also has clear counter-terrorism implications. For example, there have been cases of male VEO members dressing as women to escape crime scenes or gain access to restricted spaces, since they know that guards at security checkpoints are more lenient towards women, or that there are often not enough female personnel at such checkpoints to conduct searches of women.¹⁰²

97 Malik, *Trafficking Terror: How Modern Slavery and Sexual Violence Fund Terrorism* (The Henry Jackson Society, 2017).

98 *When Women are the Enemy: The Intersection of Misogyny and White Supremacy* (Anti-Defamation League Center on Extremism, 2018).

99 Johnson, "It's a short step from angry misogynist to violent extremist" (*Stuff*, May 2018). Available at: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/103591936/verity-johnson-its-a-short-step-from-angry-misogynist-to-violent-extremist>

100 "Alek Minassian Toronto van attack suspect praised 'incel' killer" (BBC News, April 2018).

101 Committee of Experts on Terrorism, *The Roles of Women in Daesh: Discussion Paper* (Council of Europe, 2016).

102 Barsa, "U.S. Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism Must Prioritize Women" (*New America*, March 2015).

3.2.4 VERLT, gender and the criminal justice system

While a comprehensive analysis of gender and criminal justice in cases of VERLT is beyond the scope of this publication, there are some points worth noting for a general understanding.¹⁰³ Criminal justice systems often fail to take into account the gender dynamics highlighted above, which results in ineffective or inadequate responses when addressing VERLT. Often, criminal justice sectors are one-sided in their gender perspective, adopting approaches primarily aimed at male offenders, while ignoring the different approaches needed for women. This problem is often compounded by the lack of women working in criminal justice sectors, this in turn due to the lack of recruitment, retention and promotion of women in these systems.

Given that men commit the majority of criminal offenses overall, criminal justice systems are typically developed to handle the male offender. This is the case for all parts of criminal justice systems: prevention and investigation of crimes, intelligence gathering, general or specific contacts with law enforcement agents, verdicts and imprisonment. The lack of insight into gender aspects of criminal behaviour can lead to law and justice stakeholders relying on gender stereotypes when dealing with men and women who come into contact with the law.

For instance, the tendency to see female alleged offenders as guided by emotions and psychological instability rather than actual criminal intent is often observed in the criminal justice chain (for a related case study, see Chapter V). The same can be said about how women are viewed within the framework of those VERLT elements connected to violence and criminal activity.

While many researchers have examined the risk factors that can lead to women's proclivity towards violence and militancy (also motivated by ideology), these risk factors require more exploration. Such risk factors include reactions to grievances with state institutions or communities, to the perception of there being different security measures for men and women, or exposure to gender-based violence with its resultant psychological aspects.

The stigma that women face in some societies when victims of certain types of crimes may also impact their ability to get justice for such crimes, particularly in jurisdictions in which there is a "moral charge" related to forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).¹⁰⁴ Victims of such crimes might enjoy less protection or limited access to redress. In the administration of justice, gender

103 For more information on gender-sensitive approaches to criminal justice responses to VERLT, see the UNODC handbook *Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*, forthcoming 2019.

104 *A Practitioner's Toolkit on Women's Access to Justice Programming* (UN Women, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2018).

stereotypes may lead to biases among criminal justice stakeholders, including police, lawyers and judges. Such biases may manifest in sexual violence cases that are influenced by, for example, beliefs about victim behaviour or attitudes towards marital violence.¹⁰⁵ The inability of a criminal justice system to provide justice for victims of gender-based crimes may impact the trust that women and men have for criminal justice actors. This is relevant since it directly impacts women's willingness to engage with the criminal justice system. It is evident that potentially alienating half of the population will work against a criminal justice system seeking to identify, arrest and prosecute criminals, including violent extremists. For police officers and the intelligence agencies, it also lowers their capacity to prevent and counter crime, including VERLT.

In the context of VERLT, lack of trust in a criminal justice system may create conditions conducive to violence and abuse. Negative experiences with criminal justice actors, including sexual and gender-based discrimination or violence perpetrated by these actors, may be a driver into VERLT for both women and men. Moreover, gender gaps in a criminal justice system may give VEOs strategic and tactical advantages, such as those drawn from gender-based assumptions that women are more peaceful or less likely to engage in violence.¹⁰⁶

3.3 The role of women in preventing and countering VERLT

Violent extremism is a complex phenomenon affecting nations and communities at a range of levels. Addressing its multiple dimensions requires a holistic approach to the expressions and causes of extremism. According to the UN PVE Plan of Action, balanced and well-structured VERLT prevention requires action in the priority areas of conflict prevention, good governance, engaging communities, empowering youth, gender equality, education, and strategic communication.¹⁰⁷

Preventative initiatives within these areas must be inclusive and account for the various factors that drive men and women to extremism. P/CVERLT approaches aimed at addressing the underlying causes of violence must be gender sensitive. Moreover, they should prioritize the meaningful inclusion of key stakeholders, particularly women, in their development and implementation.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁶ Bloom, "Bombshells: Women and Terror" (*Gender Issues*, 2011), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/70/674).

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Conflict prevention, peacebuilding and security sector reform (SSR) are accurately linked to the prevention of terrorist radicalization. In volatile environments, the rate of success of VEO recruitment often corresponds to conflict triggers such as a legacy of unresolved collective grievances, or injustice or discrimination on ethnic or religious grounds. It has been found that women are well positioned to detect the signs of impending violence. Women's central roles in families and communities place them in a good position to recognize unusual patterns of behaviour and activity, such as arms mobilization and stockpiling of weapons.

For instance, in Kosovo, women were the first in their communities to voice concerns that men were amassing weapons and training for battle in 1998. These signs were reported well before violence broke out.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, approximately six to eight weeks before the outbreak of widespread violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, large numbers of women, particularly of Muslim origin, left the city of Prijedor. They described this as having been a measure for protecting their families from danger, because they saw the warning signs of impending violence.¹⁰⁹

Additionally, women are well positioned to perceive negative trends in their communities, because their rights and physical integrity are often the first targets of violent extremist ideologies.¹¹⁰ Restrictions on women's rights have accompanied the rise of extremist groups – particularly those with fundamentalist religious ideologies – across the globe, as has been documented with regard to the Taliban, ISIL/Daesh, al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram.¹¹¹ The UN has therefore called for the greater integration of WPS and CVE efforts, as well as for women's increased participation, leadership and empowerment in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.¹¹² Moreover, evidence has shown that when women are included in peace negotiations, the agreements reached are more likely to last and also more likely to address the root causes of the violence.¹¹³

In many countries affected by terrorism, civil society has identified negative experiences with law enforcement as a driving factor in the corrosion of state legitimacy. The grievances generated create conditions conducive to violent

108 Hill, *Women's Contribution to Conflict Prevention, Early Warning and Disarmament* (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2003), p. 18.

109 https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/ToolkitWomenandConflictPreventionandResolution_InternationalAlert2004.pdf

110 *Women and Violent Radicalization in Jordan* (UN Women, 2016).

111 Bigio and Vogelstein, *How Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention and Resolution Advances U.S. Interests* (Council on Foreign Relations, Oct. 2016), p. 4.

112 S/Res/2242 (United Nations Security Council, 2015).

113 Peters, "Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Pakistan: Why Policewomen Must Have a Role" (*Inclusive Security*, 2014).

extremism. Discriminatory practices perpetrated by the security sector can also exacerbate existing grievances among marginalized populations, driving an even wider wedge of distrust between the security sector and communities.

If a police force is representative of the population it is tasked to protect, this can help in addressing such grievances. Research has found that policewomen (also within the model of community policing) are critical for enhancing the operational effectiveness of police forces, including the reduction of violence and building trust with local communities.¹¹⁴ They are more likely to detect and deter the occurrence of human rights abuses, to restrain from using excessive force, and to de-escalate tension efficiently.¹¹⁵

Uniformed female personnel may be particularly more effective in P/CVERLT efforts and in collecting vital information about security threats in contexts where gender differences and cultural expectations restrict men from accessing certain communities. In such contexts, there are also cases in which only female police officers can serve as first responders in the care of female victims of terrorist attacks. If a community has had negative experiences with male police officers in the past, female uniformed personnel may receive a better response. Additionally, women are more likely to report cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to female officers. This can have an impact on the trust communities have in the police and for getting justice, something that in turn can have implications for the ability of law enforcement in P/CVERLT.¹¹⁶

Further, if women serve in leadership positions in government institutions responsible for P/CVERLT, this helps ensure that these efforts present a whole-of-society approach and holistically address the gendered drivers of VERLT¹¹⁷ This is because women's presence in developing and implementing national and regional P/CVERLT strategies, policies and programmes may allow the inclusion of more diverse stakeholders willing and able to come to the table in consultations. Ultimately, this allows such strategies, policies and programmes to be more inclusive.¹¹⁸

114 Lonsway et al., *Hiring & Retaining More Women: The Advantages to Law Enforcement Agencies* (National Center for Women & Policing, Spring 2003), p. 2.

115 Fink, Zeiger and Bhulai (eds.), *A Man's world? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (Hedayah and The Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2016).

116 Miller and Segal, "Do Female Officers Improve Law Enforcement Quality? Effects on Crime Reporting and Domestic Violence Escalation" (SSRN, Feb. 2014), p. 4.

117 For a gender analysis of some national strategies on P/CVERLT, see: Fransen et al., *Analysis: National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism: A Gendered Content Analysis* (Women's Alliance for Security Leadership, International Civil Society Action Network, 2017).

118 *Guidelines and Good Practices for Developing National CVE Strategies* (Hedayah).

3. HOW GENDER DYNAMICS INFLUENCE THE PREVENTION AND COUNTERING OF VERLT

The breadth of functions women can serve stretches across all aspects of P/CVERLT.¹¹⁹ They can be critical interlocutors between government institutions, including law enforcement and communities, in particular, helping to identify the security concerns and needs of communities. As members of citizen advisory groups and municipal security councils, women can interact with local law enforcement representatives and alert them of gendered safety issues (as has been observed in Serbia¹²⁰ and Albania¹²¹).

As part of so-called referral mechanisms — a formal or informal mechanism involving practitioners and professionals from different disciplines and/or agencies and organizations who aim at identifying, assessing, assisting, and treating persons showing signs of being at risk or vulnerable to engagement in or on the path to VERLT¹²² — female CSO representatives and women from different professions (for example, teachers, psychologists or religious leaders) can provide a valuable perspective on cases of young men and women at risk of becoming involved in violent extremism. (For a case study on how women can be empowered to take part in referral mechanisms, see Chapter V). Moreover, women's participation in community safety commissions and other law enforcement oversight entities reinforces the sense of police accountability and shared responsibility for security.

Due to their position at the heart of community and kinship structures, women are often best placed to identify, predict and respond to potential vulnerabilities to extremism.¹²³ To capitalize on this critical P/CVERLT function held by women, CSOs often work with women to raise their awareness about the risks of involvement with VEOs, as well as of early signs of children and adolescents becoming interested in violent ideologies. If equipped with the skills to recognize such signs, mothers can contribute to the formational stages of their children's education and support the critical thinking skills needed to create barriers to harmful influences.

Numerous networks for connecting women across the globe have been established by CSOs (e.g., the Women and Extremism [WaE] network of the Institute for Strategic Development [ISD], Women without Borders [WwB] and its Sisters Against Violent Extremism [SAVE] platform, the Mothers for Life Network of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies

119 *The Role of Civil Society in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Focus on South-Eastern Europe* (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2018).

120 *Police Reform: Developments in Serbia and Montenegro* (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, May 2005).

121 "USAID Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the Kucova Citizen Advisory Panel" (US Agency for International Development, May 2018).

122 OSCE Guidebook on Referral Mechanisms, April 2019

123 Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism (Global Counterterrorism Forum).

[GIRDS]). These networks facilitate knowledge exchange between women in a multitude of contexts affected by extremism. For example, through innovative projects such as MotherSchools, WwB supports training for mothers in personal, communication and parenting skills so they can recognize and react to early warning signs of possible radicalization in their children.

These networks aim at achieving broader education about P/CVERLT by tapping in on women's ability to humanize the impact of terrorism. This is used to offer meaningful counter-narratives.¹²⁴ Through such CSO-facilitated initiatives, women are given a platform to share stories of how their children's choices have destroyed their own and their families' lives. Through the strategic use of the internet (through websites,¹²⁵ online platforms or forums¹²⁶) and traditional media (such as film¹²⁷), these messages can empower mothers and fathers to take action to protect their families, and prompt meaningful conversations at the grassroots level about terrorism, radicalization and the importance of mothers and fathers in its prevention.¹²⁸

Understanding the context-specific gender roles in family structures forms a crucial part of effectively preventing VERLT. The function of women in family structures must be complemented by an understanding of the integral function that adult male family members have in the life of adolescents. Positive male and female role models are important for guiding young people through the transition to adulthood. CSO mentors can provide practical advice and emotional support for young people whose difficult family relationships may draw them to extremism and violence.

Positive role models are particularly powerful when they involve former extremists themselves. In initiatives like Life after Hate and Exit USA,¹²⁹ former extremists conduct individualized education and job training initiatives to help individuals get their life back on track. Also valuable is interaction between young people and survivors of violent networks or those who have ended their involvement in such groups (such as nationalist or neo-Nazi groups). Other intervention programmes have former gang members run one-on-one mentorship sessions with youth at risk of being drawn into gang violence (as for instance the Gang Rescue and Support Project [GRASP]).¹³⁰

124 *The Role of Families in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Strategic Recommendations and Programming Options* (Global Counterterrorism Forum).

125 For example, see: <http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr/>

126 For example, see Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE): <http://womenwithoutborders-save.blogspot.com/>

127 See: <http://womenwithoutborders-save.blogspot.com/2012/09/your-mother-new-film-by-save.html>

128 *Radicalisation and violent extremism – focus on women: How women become radicalized, and how to empower them to prevent radicalization* (European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Dec. 2017).

129 See: <https://www.lifeafterhate.org/exitusa>

130 See: <http://graspyouth.org/>

3. HOW GENDER DYNAMICS INFLUENCE THE PREVENTION AND COUNTERING OF VERLT

Security institutions actively working in the prevention and countering of other kinds of criminal activity have a great deal of experience. The good practices of those institutions, as well as lessons learned and their integration of gender awareness, can all be used to contribute to efficient and human rights-compliant responses in countering VERLT. Some of these practices will be examined in the next Chapter.



4. Lessons learned about gender mainstreaming and women in the security sector

In most countries, the core security sector institutions are those provided by the state, such as law enforcement/police and armed forces. The security sector (or security system) can be understood as comprising all state institutions and other entities that have a role in ensuring the security of a state and its population. Of course these include core security actors such as armed forces, police, gendarmerie and border guards. But they also include security management and oversight bodies such as parliaments and their respective committees, government agencies and ministries, as well as justice and rule of law institutions (prisons, courts and tribunals, etc.). In addition, the sector can be seen as including non-statutory security forces, as well as civil society groups, research institutions, advocacy and religious organizations, and the media.¹³¹ At the local level, inclusive and gender sensitive law enforcement can transpire when community-oriented police initiatives work hand in hand with civil society organizations, or when certain kinds of structural changes are made within the police to better address key security concerns, such as specific family violence units being set up.

¹³¹ For an overview of all actors in the security sector, see Kristin Valasek, "Security Sector Reform and Gender", in: Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.), *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008)

In addition to providing security for a state and its institutions, implied in a security system is also security of people, that is, human security. For people this means that security should be equivalent to freedom from fear (including threats from violent extremist and terrorist groups) and freedom from want, which includes economic, health and environmental aspects. The process of security sector reform (SSR) has been high on the agenda of governments and organizations since the 1990s. SSR is widely understood as the political and technical process of improving state and human security by making security provision, management and oversight more effective and more accountable. Within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights, the process of security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) has contributed to a more “people-centred” approach to security.¹³²

The process of SSG/R has focussed on all security institutions, including law enforcement agencies, fulfilling their respective roles, responsibilities and missions to a high professional standard and providing good services to the entire population, regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity or age. It has also involved clear expectations for security institutions to be accountable in their provisions, management and oversight, whereby it is foreseen that independent authorities oversee whether these expectations are being met.

4.1 Inclusive law enforcement and the prevention and countering of VERLT

People-centred security and inclusive approaches of law enforcement agencies help address a number of problems that may exist between a society and its security sector. Some of these problems are directly linked to or create conditions conducive to VERLT: corruption and human rights violations by security sector personnel, their lack of technical or social skills, or deficits in accountability and oversight of the sector at large.¹³³ Two significant factors are involved in this:

- Whether the police are seen as trustworthy, bound by and adhering to the law (the notion of a **credible and human rights compliant** police service), and

¹³² See for example: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/thematic-areas/access-to-justice-and-rule-of-law-institutions/ssr/>

¹³³ For an in-depth examination of the links between violent extremism and security sector abuses, see UNDP 2017, “Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives, and the Tipping Point for Recruitment”. Available at: <https://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf>

- Whether the police are capable of effectively addressing the security needs of the entire population and whether they serve the community as a whole (the principle of **effective and community-oriented policing**).

4.1.1 Human rights compliance

There is not and cannot be a trade-off between policing and human rights. While the police are often the first responders to violence, they also perform preventative work, including systematic outreach to communities. If they are trusted in communities and build relationships with them, they can be an important contributor to preventing violent extremism.

In the context of preventing and countering VERLT, it is possible that members of a community experience human rights violations based on racial/ethnic or gendered profiling by law enforcement officials. Good practices to address such violations include the work of independent human rights mechanisms and interest groups that are well placed to advise and support the police. Also open communication lines between the community in question and the local police are important. Additionally, a diversified team of front-line police officers, including both women and men, as well as officers of various ages and ethnic and religious backgrounds, mitigates the risk of stereotyping from police officers.

In 2017, the Ontario Human Rights Commission in Canada asked the Toronto police to turn over seven years of data regarding interactions with the black community, including stop and questioning practices, the use of force, and arrests for the reason of, amongst others, simple drug possession, obstructing or assaulting a police officer, causing a disturbance, or failing to comply with a bail condition. In 2010, the *Toronto Star* daily newspaper had reported that black community members were more likely to be carded — the practice of police stopping and asking for identification without cause.

(From the *Toronto Star*, 30 November 2017, <https://www.thestar.com/news/crime/2017/11/30/human-rights-commission-launching-inquiry-into-racial-profiling-by-toronto-police.html>)

Trusted policing at the community level is critical for deepening the public's resilience in response to narratives of violent extremist groups, which often use perceived or real injustices, human rights violations, and corruption of security actors to gain support in local communities. In fact, studies have shown that grievances generated by security sector abuses committed against populations and institutional corruption are significant push factors in many different

contexts.¹³⁴ Eliminating such human rights abuses, including SGBV by police or other security sector personnel, is thus of utmost importance.

Joint activities between the police and independent human rights institutions, such as civil society organizations at both the local and national level, can range from addressing the functioning of internal oversight structures of the police, providing training in human rights, and assessing the institutional culture of the police and its ability to work towards change.¹³⁵

4.1.2 Effective and community-oriented policing

Community-oriented policing focuses on establishing trust and creating partnerships between the police, other public authorities, and communities, trust that can lead to proactive problem solving. This is an essential tool in preventing and countering VERLT. It is addressed in depth in the OSCE publication *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community Policing Approach*.¹³⁶

To be effective, community-oriented policing must become an attitude and philosophy that penetrates the culture and practice of the entire service, from its top management to front-line officers. In practice, this can lead to citizens being able to relate to and communicate with the police more comfortably. It also means that it is advantageous if police officers work in communities close to their own homes, speak the languages spoken in those communities, and reflect the diversity of the community they serve (for example, in terms of ethnicity, religion and gender). The goal is to build trust in order to increase security in local communities.

Studies on community-oriented policing in religiously diverse areas, such as Northern Ireland, show that tolerance toward different religions increases community co-operation with the police.¹³⁷ Similarly, the United States Department of Justice has compiled a number of research studies which have found that when diversity is increased in law enforcement agencies, including

134 For latest research on the effects of harsh responses of the criminal justice system on ISIS/Daesh, see Kristen Kao and Mara Redlich Revkin, "To Punish or to Pardon? Reintegrating Rebel Collaborators After Conflict in Iraq" (The program on governance and local development at Gothenburg). Available at: <https://gld.gu.se/media/1503/gld-working-paper-17-final.pdf>

135 For an overview of joint projects of this kind, see the Ontario Human Rights Commission website. Available at: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/about-commission>

136 See also the text box on the following page. For in-depth background as well as case studies across the OSCE region, see the *Guidebook on Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community Policing Approach*, (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Vienna, February 2014).

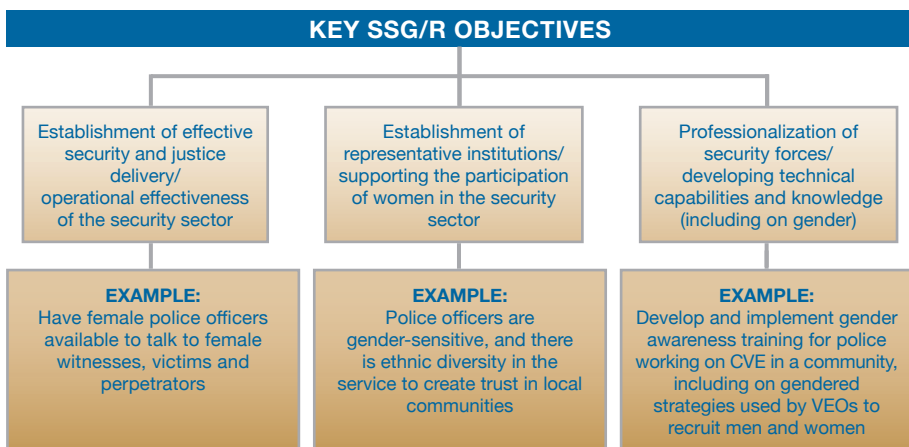
137 Topping, J. & Byrne, J., "Shadow policing: the boundaries of community-based 'policing' in Northern Ireland", *Policing and Society* 26.5 (2014), pp. 522–543.

race, ethnicity and gender, this helps instil trust and confidence in the police and reduces negative perceptions of them.¹³⁸

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties points to evidence from Minneapolis, where residents of East African origin were distrustful of the city’s law enforcement. Among the reasons for the distrust was the lack of diversity of race, religion and ethnicity in the police services. Some of this tension decreased when Somali-American staff was hired for airport security and policing roles.¹³⁹ This example, as well as others detailed in this handbook, demonstrates the operational value of having diversity within law enforcement agencies. It increases the credibility of these agencies as well as their operational effectiveness.

4.2 Gender mainstreaming in the security sector and the prevention and countering of VERLT

Integrating a gender perspective is a key part of ensuring the legitimacy and operational effectiveness of the security sector. To draw lessons learned from mainstreaming gender in SSG/R and examine what these signify for the prevention and countering of VERLT, the following SSG/R objectives and areas of intervention will be examined more closely:



138 *Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement* (United States Department of Justice Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, October 2016), pp. 7–9. Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case-document/file/900761/download>

139 Farah, A., Interview with the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (Washington D.C., 2017).

Gender mainstreaming: key objectives for security actors

“
Experience from previous operations shows that if we are able to implement a gender perspective in accordance with the UNSCR 1325/2000, we will have an improved chance to succeed with our mission, to bring peace and security to the whole society in our AO [area of operation].
”

– Lieutenant General Anders Lindström, *Director of Operations, Swedish Armed Forces*

4.2.1 Operational effectiveness of law enforcement agencies

A key objective for all security sector personnel is to work effectively. For law enforcement officers, this means being able to deliver security and justice to the entire population within their area of operation. In order to do this, it is necessary to understand the different security and justice needs of men, women, boys and girls, as well as the different ways they perceive and interact with the security sector, in particular with the criminal justice system and the police. Recognizing these differences and being able to address them requires all law enforcement personnel to understand the gendered needs and dynamics in the society they work in.

Both anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that women can contribute to strengthening overall situational awareness in security efforts, in particular in vulnerable situations.¹⁴⁰ Through their position in communities and families, women often have access to first-hand knowledge about people and events, access that men do not have. Examples include the knowledge women gather through informal and social networks, as well as through their relationships with their children.

Similarly, in many cases, male family members have more direct relationships with the younger men and boys in their families. This is also a factor that demonstrates the need for comprehensive gender awareness to be able to detect potentially harmful changes and influences in a society, particularly on children and youth.

¹⁴⁰ For a comprehensive information base of women's participation in peace and security efforts, see "A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325", 2015. Available at: <http://wps.unwomen.org/>
For several anecdotal examples, see Tobie Whitman and Jacqueline O'Neill, "Attention to gender increases security in operations: Examples from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)". Available at: https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NATO-Report_8.pdf

Gender-aware policing can increase access to the whole community. In many cases women report certain crimes and express their concerns more easily to female police officers,¹⁴¹ which means having female officers available is vital. When it comes to VERLT, important is also ensuring that male and female police officers understand the gender dynamics present in a particular community as well as the different experiences of men and women.

Gender analysis contributing to more effective patrols and ties with communities

In an example from Afghanistan, an all-male patrol within the Swedish Provincial Reconstruction Team approached the team's gender adviser to inquire why they never saw Afghan women in public. The gender adviser asked where the male soldiers were regularly patrolling, and suggested that they also venture into less busy streets. Very quickly, the patrol began to encounter local women, who also approached the team. This happened despite the fact that the team consisted only of men. On one occasion, several women approached the patrol and, after a brief conversation, invited them to their home to meet their male family members.

While at the home, in a conversation that ensued over tea, the topic of "what they were looking forward to" came up. The women told the team that they were looking forward to a large wedding that was going to take place in the town in two days. Several hundred family members and relatives were going to come the town for the celebration. None of the men mentioned this.

Knowing that this event was going to take place was critical to enhancing the soldiers' situational awareness. When hundreds of people arrived 48 hours later, the mission knew to expect them and was able to create a plan for monitoring the flows of people. Knowing that the wedding was happening also prevented a potential escalation of tension. If the mission personnel had not received the simple explanation of the event, they could easily have interpreted the large movement of people as an insurgent tactic or another form of aggression. This in turn could have led to violence, and a resultant longer-term risk to the force from a resentful community.

141 For a recent study on reports to the police about sexual violence in the United States, see: <https://news.virginia.edu/content/study-hiring-female-police-officers-helps-women-report-violence-sexual-assault>

Although the example in the textbox above deals with a place that has an elevated security risk, with security being provided by armed forces, the conclusion one can draw from this story is that men and women often have different perspectives and thus provide different types of information. Such information is potentially security related.

In another example, from the Oslo police district in Norway, the police regularly visit mosques and Sikh temples with the objective of building trust and strong relations with the different minority communities in the city. After this programme was initiated, the police officers soon discovered that while male officers were quickly accepted and could meet with male elders, religious leaders and regular (male) attendants of the mosques, they needed female officers in the team to be able to reach the entire population. For several years, two of the five diversity police officers specifically working on preventive policing and trust building with minority communities in Oslo have been women. Efforts are made by the police to attend important community events and visit their cultural centres, which contributes to showing their interest in community welfare. (For a full account of the work of the Oslo police, see the case study in Chapter V.)

Such initiatives are not necessarily implemented because of a specific security threat in these communities, but as an effort to build trust and ensure that the citizens in these communities know where they can go if they need police assistance. Furthermore, it helps lower the fear of authorities that exists among some minority populations due to past negative experiences with security personnel. Thus, should a member of these minority communities have concerns about VERLT or other criminal behaviour, they feel safe to communicate this to their local police.

These examples demonstrate the necessity to be able to communicate with both men and women, as well as boys and girls, not only to obtain a complete picture of their different security needs in order to address them, but also to establish trustful relations with all members of a community. While this can prove challenging depending on the cultural and social context, these examples also showcase that including gender sensitivity and awareness in the daily work of the police is possible, also in presumed conservative societies.

Each local and national context must be assessed individually and with great care. While in the example from Afghanistan, the particular all-male patrol team had no difficulties meeting local Afghan women once they changed their patrolling routes, the Oslo police discovered that female officers were generally better suited to speak with women attending mosques.

4.2.2 Representation in numbers and promoting awareness

The example from the Oslo police demonstrates how the police (and the security sector at large) can represent the population they serve. Indeed, security threats and crimes are committed against all parts of society. However, police organizations throughout the OSCE area continue to be predominantly male, with poor representation of women or minority groups.

Policing as a profession has long been considered a “masculine” occupation. This is a gendered stereotype and is due to the association of policing with crime, danger and physical force.¹⁴² With a stronger focus on community-oriented policing, research indicates that the masculine profile (which also impacts who wants to be, and is, recruited into the police) is slowly changing towards qualities and skills such as patience, compassion, communication and collaborative problem solving.¹⁴³ According to the National Center for Women & Policing in the United States, women officers receive more favourable evaluations and fewer citizen complaints, which potentially leaves them better positioned to develop community-oriented policing.¹⁴⁴

A critical mass of women within an institution has shown to affect institutional gender awareness. An increase in female police officers has the added effect of increasing the likelihood that crimes of SGBV are reported and investigated.¹⁴⁵

In the context of preventing VERLT, understanding and adequately responding to SGBV, including intimate partner violence, can be essential to prevent further violent crimes.

As the following findings demonstrate, a number of perpetrators of VERLT carry either childhood trauma from exposure to domestic violence, and/or have committed abuse against intimate partners or family members, normalizing the resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution.

142 S.E. Martin and N.C. Jurik, “The nature of police work and women’s entry into law enforcement”, in: *Doing Justice, Doing Gender: Women in Legal and Criminal Justice Occupations*, 2nd edition (Sage publications, 2006).

143 Lorene M. Sandifer, “Police use of force: Does gender make a difference?”, unpublished Master’s thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 2006.

144 National Center for Women & Policing, 2003.

145 Ibid.

4. LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

Data on mass shootings in the United States from 1999 to 2013, including some cases related to VERLT,¹⁴⁶ shows that a domestic dispute of some kind was a contributing factor in about a fifth of all mass shootings.¹⁴⁷

The perpetrators of the attacks in Orlando, Westminster, and Nice, as well as the Boston Marathon bombers, had known records of intimate family abuse. Seung-Hui Cho, who shot and killed 32 people at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 2007, had previously been charged with stalking and harassing female students.

Evangelical Christian Robert Lewis Dear, who shot and killed three people in a women's health clinic in 2015, also had an extensive history of violence against women and domestic abuse. Dylann Roof, the white supremacist who killed nine people in Charleston in 2014, allegedly grew up in a home affected by domestic violence.

In the case of Anders Behring Breivik in Norway, psychologist reports from his early childhood indicate physical and psychological abuse, as well as "sexualised behaviour" in his close family while growing up.

(<https://www.tv2.no/a/8241631/>)

Highlighting these findings in a discussion on the importance of representative security sector institutions is not to suggest that women police officers are better equipped to respond to SGBV, including intimate partner and family violence. It is important to note that while female victims may feel more inclined to report incidents of sexual or family violence to other women (as may men, due to fears of stigmatization), it would be counterproductive to suggest that women should work on "women's issues", or that women are inherently experts in gender questions. Women and men should be included in all institutions of the security sector because of their professionalism and expertise, not because of their gender. Overall, this will contribute to optimizing security organizations' ability to respond to the *entire* public, as well as to lowering the threshold of citizens and communities to reach out to security actors.

Any effort to recruit more women must be accompanied by structural and cultural changes in the respective institution. Focusing on increasing the number of women officers is not enough. In the context of P/CVERLT, women should be provided with professional opportunities for career advancement so they can also become an

146 "Mass shooting" refers to "a multiple homicide incident in which four or more victims are murdered with firearms, within one event, and in one or more locations in close proximity." Krouse and Richardson, "Summary", in: *Mass Murder with Firearms: Incidents and Victims, 1999–2013* (United States Congressional Research Service, 30 July 2015, R44126).

147 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

integral part of decision-making processes impacting preventive strategies against violent extremism, as well as developing adequate countering initiatives.

4.2.3 Gender mainstreaming and the professionalism of law enforcement

Professional behaviour and attitudes coupled with technical skills and knowledge of the job is crucial for security personnel who are in direct contact with the public on a daily basis. Supporting the strengthening of skills and knowledge is often required in a number of areas. This includes knowledge of the laws and principles that govern the security sector as well as the national and international human rights framework relevant for law enforcement work.

In Berlin, the Expert Center on Gender and Right-Wing Extremism of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation has focused, amongst other things, on training for the police in questions of gender and right-wing extremism. The establishment of the Center dates back to 2007 and focuses on “strengthen[ing] democratic civic society and eliminat[ing] neo-Nazism, right-wing extremism, and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry and hate in Germany.”

The Center has its origins in a local project in the eastern German federal state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, which was founded under the name “Lola für Lulu”. The project’s aim is to encourage women and girls to engage in political processes from a feminist standpoint, with a focus on strengthening civil society processes in democratic structures.

For more information (in German) see <http://www.lola-fuer-lulu.de/wir-ueber-uns/fachstelle-gender-und-rechtsextremismus/>

In addition, police officers as well as other security sector personnel working in direct contact with service users, such as court and prison staff, should be trained in critical thinking, conflict analysis, empathy, communication skills and other social skills.

In addition to other gender mainstreaming initiatives, such as support in recruiting and retaining women in the security sector and establishing gender sensitive policies, training in gender is needed to ensure that all security sector actors are capable of delivering security and justice effectively, and can contribute to a respectful working atmosphere that fosters equal rights. More specific gender training, such as training in what constitutes sexual harassment and how to prevent and address it, is equally important.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Research has shown that the financial impact of sexual harassment on institutions is huge. This impact includes loss of productivity, lowered morale, absence from work, and increased staff turnover. Sexual harassment also hinders the effective and sustainable integration of women into security institutions.

Capacity building activities on gender awareness can be developed by security sector institutions themselves (such as police academies), organized by international organizations who specialize in training for law enforcement, or by local or international NGOs. When providing gender awareness training for the police, for example, incorporating local women's NGOs, which have often developed expertise in a particular area, such as supporting victims of SGBV, can be instrumental.

In the context of the prevention of VERLT, a considerable number of CSOs — local and international alike — have experience in supporting the security sector with training on community outreach and other preventative work. **Including CSOs in the training of law enforcement on VERLT not only ensures that the police is provided with a civilian perspective on the threats for radicalization leading to terrorism of certain groups and what to do about it, it also increases the credibility of the security sector in the eyes of the population that is their duty to serve.**¹⁴⁹

4.3 What we can learn from security sector governance/reform¹⁵⁰

4.3.1 Mainstreaming gender in police reform

It is in the mandate of the police to maintain public order and protect all people and their property from criminal acts. This mandate includes the protection of women and girls, yet there has been remarkably little focus on ensuring that women are part of the police services both as first-line responders and as managers and decision makers. Mainstreaming gender into police work is an operational necessity to create better outreach, trust and access.

149 For more information on gender training for the security sector, see Toiko Tönisson Kleppe, "Gender training for security sector personnel- good practices and lessons learned," in: Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW 2008), Available at: <https://dcaf.ch/gender-training-security-sector-personnel-good-practices-and-lessons-learned-tool-12>

150 Defence reform is an integral part of SSR and just as important as police and justice reform to ensure a system-wide transformation that is effective and sustainable in the long term. For the purpose of this handbook and its main target audience, however, a separate chapter on gender and defence reform is not included. For more information on the topic, see Cheryl Hendricks and Laura Hutton, "Defence Reform and Gender". Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/143082/Tool%2003_Defense%20Reform%20and%20Gender.pdf

In Georgia, an initiative supported by the EU in March 2018 prepared a thorough gender analysis of the security sector. This analysis had the objective of providing the Security and Defence Committee of the Georgian Parliament with facts and figures to enable Committee members to inquire about gender related aspects when holding their annual hearings with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence.

In addition, members of the committee can make use of a gender impact assessment tool that the Parliament's Gender Equality Council has developed. The tool consists of a set of indicators used to foresee how specific policies and laws may affect men and women, and how these policies can be used to promote gender equality.

This gender analysis was an internal report prepared by the lead author of the handbook. For more information on the gender impact assessment tool in English, see <http://www.parliament.ge/en/parlamentarebi/deputy-chairmen/tamar-chugoshvili/news1/kanonmdeblobis-genderuli-gavlenis-shefaseba.page>

Reforming or developing the police is an opportunity to integrate gender in all SSG/R activities and processes, including the development of sound institutional policies and operational protocols and procedures, the provision of capacity building and training, as well as making structural changes, such as the setting up units to deal with SGBV and intimate partner and family violence.¹⁵¹

Some good practices on mainstreaming gender in police work have already been highlighted in the context of the key objectives of SSG/R: the effort to increase operational effectiveness, build representative institutions, and professionalize the service through knowledge and capacity building.

Other lessons learned have originated from mainstreaming gender into institutional policies and procedures, and the support to integrate gender into efficient civilian oversight mechanisms (see the text box with the example from Georgia).

Gender aspects play an equally instrumental role when implementing community-oriented policing approaches. When such approaches are part of police reform processes, it is essential that gender is mainstreamed from the beginning. This includes ensuring political will and support from the senior management level, as well as specifically earmarked funding for projects focused on improving gender awareness.

¹⁵¹ For more information on gender and police reform, see Tara Denham, "Police Reform and Gender", in: Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW 2008). Available at: <https://www.dcaf.ch/police-reform-and-gender-tool-2>

4.3.2 Mainstreaming gender in criminal justice reform

Justice and security are inextricably linked. A strong justice sector protects and enforces people's rights and deters would-be violators. Just as security needs may differ, so do experiences with the justice system, as well as how efficiently it functions – or does not. For instance, women often face barriers in accessing justice, and men are more likely to be imprisoned.¹⁵² Both factors can influence people's ability to communicate with the police and other security authorities about their concerns and grievances. This is detrimental to police efforts to counter violent extremism and other crimes.

One of the key barriers to justice for both men and women remains the stigma around SGBV and intimate partner and family violence. In many societies, it is the victim who is blamed when reporting sexual violence. Due to the fear of being stigmatized or humiliated, many victims never report such incidents. This is even more common for male victims of sexual violence and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) victims, who may be subjected to additional harassment and violence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In many cases, the common response of communities to blame the victim is mirrored by courts, which leads to secondary victimization by the justice system. Hence, effectively reforming or developing a criminal justice system requires a thorough understanding of the different security and justice needs of all groups in a society.

There are multiple facets to how perceptions of gender roles impact the way women and men – both as victims and perpetrators – are treated in the courtroom. Recent research on female violent extremists in the criminal justice system indicates that in some instances, traditional gender biases have dominated judicial proceedings and led to less severe sentences for women offenders.¹⁵³

Not only defence attorneys, but also news commentators regularly portray female terrorism offenders as naïve and susceptible targets of violent extremism, even when they admit their culpability by pleading guilty.¹⁵⁴

152 For more information on gender and justice reform, see Shelby Quast, "Justice Reform and Gender", in: Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRRAW 2008), Available at: Shelby Quast, "Justice Reform and Gender"

153 See, for example, the research conducted by Audrey Alexander and Rebecca Turkington in: *CTC Sentinel* 11.8, Sept. 2018. Available at <https://ctc.usma.edu/september-2018/>

154 Ibid.

Research findings show, however, that men and women striving to pull off plots demonstrate similar rates of success in acquiring the materials they need and in attempting to carry out their plans. Data has also shown that the same proportion of women and men (26%) were successful in executing their plots. Men and women were equally prone to conceal plot-related information and the same proportion of men and women were affiliated with violent extremist groups prior to “engaging in ideologically motivated radical behaviours”.¹⁵⁵

In Germany, the case of Beate Zschäpe, a member of the Nationalist Socialist Underground, serves as an illustrative example. On trial for plotting ten murders, two bombings, and fifteen robberies in a gruesome series of racially motivated attacks, Zschäpe’s defence attorneys portrayed her as “merely the submissive lover of two murderous men.” (For a more in-depth case study on her investigation and trial, see Chapter V)

4.3.3 Mainstreaming gender in penal reform

Other lessons learned in establishing gender responsive institutions stem from mainstreaming gender in penal reform. In any security sector, the penal system is an indispensable part, one that at the same time is highly sensitive. All states adhering to good governance and the rule of law require a system that imposes and enforces sanctions on people convicted of crimes, these in line with international human rights law and other relevant standards of protection. Most justice systems have several different sanctions that can be used, ranging from warnings, fines and community service to imprisonment.

Key functions of a penal system include the deterrence of would-be offenders, the removal from society of persons who pose a serious security threat to others, the rehabilitation of offenders, and showing society’s disapproval of their acts. Additionally, it aims to provide a sense of justice and reparation to victims of crime. Just as in other parts of the security sector, however, discrimination and other human rights violations do occur, in particular through discriminatory sentencing procedures and how penalties are administered.

Understanding and integrating the different needs, rights and abilities of men and women, boys and girls in all areas of penal reform is vital for establishing an effective penal system that is human rights compliant, non-discriminatory and strives to rehabilitate offenders.¹⁵⁶

155 Ibid.

156 For more information on gender and penal reform, see International Centre for Prison Studies.: “Penal Reform and Gender”, in: Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds.) *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW 2008), Available at: <https://www.dcaf.ch/penal-reform-and-gender-tool-5>

Considering gender differences and relations is paramount in addressing SGBV and abuse in prisons: As single-sex institutions with stark imbalances of power, prison environments are conducive to sexual violence such as rape and other forms of sexual exploitation of men and women alike. To mitigate this risk, women prisoners should be attended to and supervised by female prison staff only.¹⁵⁷ Addressing the risk of abuse and SGBV is particularly relevant if prisoners (either male or female) belong to a minority community — something often the case for perpetrators sentenced for terrorism-related offences.¹⁵⁸

Gender-sensitive prison management thus means paying explicit attention to the recruitment, retention and advancement of female correctional staff. Such efforts can be carried out, for example, by means of **targeted recruitment campaigns through the media, but also by supporting the introduction of more flexible and family friendly working hours, and developing policies to counter sexual harassment and discrimination.**

When incarcerating perpetrators convicted of terrorist offences, regardless of their sex, their specific situation and potential vulnerabilities must be taken into consideration. Because of the limited number of women convicted to prison sentences, there may often only be one prison in the country able to house them. When this is the case, consideration should be given, for example, to whether a woman is the only caregiver in her family, or how family who lives far away can still regularly visit. Women in prison obviously also need other health and hygienic care than men.¹⁵⁹

157 A/RES/65/229 (2121 December 2010), entitled "United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)". Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Bangkok_Rules_ENG_22032015.pdf

158 For women prisoners, see Rule 54 of the Bangkok Rules.

159 Ibid, Rules 10 and 11.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has established key principles and recommendations on managing violent extremist prisoners and preventing VERLT in prisons. This guidance recommends that violent extremist prisoners be:

- a) separated according to sex, legal status, and age;
- b) classified according to information gained through a risk and needs assessment;
- c) categorized according to the appropriate level of security they will need to be held in; and
- d) held in the least restrictive setting necessary for their safe and secure custody.¹⁶⁰

Gender plays an important role when those suspected of terrorism-related offences (like other suspected criminals) must be classified and categorized after being separated according to sex and age. This classification serves to group prisoner peer groups in a way that should support their rehabilitation. Classification also occurs on the basis of prisoners' health and safety needs, which are both also gendered factors.

In some countries, individuals suspected of terrorism-related crimes spend years in pre-trial detention and are consequently not able to access the range of services and programmes available to sentenced prisoners. Women prisoners face higher risks of abuse in pre-trial detention settings, as has been recognized in the UN's Bangkok Rules.¹⁶¹ It is also recognized that the period between arrest and trial can be a highly vulnerable one, in which perceived or real grievances against a government can be fostered. It is also a period that provides fertile recruiting ground for detainees suspected of terrorism-related offences to radicalize other inmates.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ *Key principles and recommendations for the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), p. 4. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Summary-of-recommendations-on-VEPs.pdf

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, Rule 56.

¹⁶² *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons* (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2016), p. 67. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf

In Germany, a few prisons have hosted coaching initiatives called “Praefix R” for parents who are a) orientated to right-wing extremism themselves and have potentially transferred this attitude to their children, or b) have noticed their teenager’s tendency towards violent right-wing extremism.

The coaching has aimed at intensifying and/or stabilizing the relationship between children and parents by supporting parents to improve their competencies to raise their children, and to critically reflect their values and attitudes in which their parenting is embedded. It has targeted fathers and mothers equally, avoiding any biased premises regarding the primary caretaker role in families. It has thereby given both men and women the space to think about what parenting means for them.

The initiative was based on the premise that children of imprisoned parents are particularly vulnerable. They often suffer from missing the imprisoned parent, experience shame and guilt connected to their parent’s wrong-doing, and may also be exposed to rejection and bullying in their environment. (For more information, see the comprehensive study on children of imprisoned parents in four different European countries: <http://childrenofprisoners.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/COPINGFinal.pdf>.) Together with other factors, such as insecure attachment patterns and transgenerational transmission of traumatic experiences, these children are potentially more at risk to join violent radical groups.

Praefix R was a pilot project funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. It ran for two years.

For more information and the final evaluation report, see <https://www.ifgg-berlin.de/prae-fix-r.htm> (in German)

4.3.4 Learning from existing men’s programmes on peace, security and masculinities

Even though direct causal links between security and masculinities may be hard to establish, methodologies from existing men’s programmes dealing with these two aspects can provide valuable lessons and tools for crafting effective policies and measures to prevent terrorism and VERT, as well as to counter the toxic masculinities that are often prevalent in violent extremist groups.

The efforts of men’s programmes are effective because they provide a sense of belonging and a much-needed space for men to deconstruct their preconceptions of masculinity. They also offer an opportunity for men to evaluate their harmful

behaviours without judgement. All of this is needed to foster true behavioural change. Some successful examples of such programmes are the White Ribbon Campaign and the Young Men’s Clubs Against Violence organized by the international NGO Promundo. Another good example of work focusing on security and masculinities is the positive parenting programme offered by the organization Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa, a programme that specifically targets fathers.

The **White Ribbon Campaign** is a global movement of men and boys working to end male violence against women and girls. It was founded by a group of pro-feminist men in Ontario, Canada in November 1991 as a response to the École Polytechnique massacre of female students in 1989. The campaign was intended to raise awareness about the prevalence of male violence against women, with a white ribbon as the sign of their pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls.¹⁶³ The movement is active in over sixty countries, and seeks to promote healthy relationships, gender equity and a compassionate view of masculinities.

Projects by the White Ribbon Campaign in Canada specifically target the engagement of male youth and adults from immigrant and refugee communities, and seek male allies or champions to facilitate awareness-raising events in these communities.¹⁶⁴

The **Young Men’s Clubs Against Violence** (YMCAV) organized by Promundo is a “gender-transformative group education project” aimed at reducing street violence by preventing 10- to 19-year-old boys from joining local street gangs — or helping them to leave. It is being conducted in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

In 2016 Promundo carried out research in Kinshasa to examine how to reduce violence-supportive norms and promote gender-equitable attitudes among young men, as well as how to effectively create environments, programmes and policies that prevent young men’s involvement in violent groups.

The resulting YMCAV project carries out group education for young men, challenging them to redefine what it means to be a man. It also creates supportive environments in schools and youth centres, and works to expand programme and policy support from other Congolese stakeholders.¹⁶⁵

163 See: <https://www.whiteribbon.ca/about.html>

164 See: <https://www.whiteribbon.ca/projects.html>

165 <https://promundoglobal.org/work/?program=conflict-and-security>

In South Africa, the **Sonke Gender Justice** organization discovered that many fathers were not involved in their children's lives. Reasons for this varied, but often fathers were unemployed or low earners and thus felt unable to provide materially for their children. For this reason, they left their families or were barred from seeing their children. In such situations, children lose out on the many social and emotional benefits of having an active father in their lives.

In addition to relieving the care burden of mothers, research has shown that involved fatherhood helps children thrive. It has been linked to higher cognitive development and school achievement, better mental health for both boys and girls, and lower rates of delinquency in sons. Studies in many countries have shown that fathers' interaction with sons and daughters is important for their developing empathy and social skills.¹⁶⁶

The Sonke Gender Justice organization works to create healthier family dynamics, the sharing of parental roles in children's lives, and gender-equitable relationships. Through the **MenCare Global Fatherhood** campaign, the programme engages men as caregivers and as fathers. It offers 12-week-long community-based fathers' groups around South Africa and support their implementation in over 25 countries on five continents.

Since its establishment in 2011, MenCare has reached an estimated 250,000 individuals. In these fatherhood groups, fathers, expectant fathers, and caregivers – along with some mothers and women caregivers – discuss their own experiences of fatherhood, learn practical parenting and communication skills, are encouraged to support their children's mother, and learn positive discipline methods. Sonke is co-ordinating this campaign with Promundo.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ <http://genderjustice.org.za/project/child-rights-positive-parenting/>

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.



5. Case studies from the OSCE region. Lessons learned on gender awareness in the prevention and countering of VERLT

OUTREACH WORK AND ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES

5.1 Working on the prevention continuum: The case of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Toronto’s “situation tables”

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

- ▶ Women officers are crucial for ensuring that public engagement teams have access to both men and women in the community;
- ▶ Having senior police officers in these teams (at least initially) helps give credibility to outreach activities;
- ▶ Women play important roles in their families and so are well placed to recognize vulnerabilities toward radicalization that could turn into violence;
- ▶ To prevent violent extremism, women are eager to understand protective factors, such as strong family and social support, positive self-esteem and community engagement;
- ▶ Data gathered from the so-called “situation tables” in Toronto show that they are able to serve equal numbers of men and women.

BACKGROUND

While the number of Canadian victims in incidents related to violent extremism remains comparatively low, in the past few decades several hundred civilians have been killed or injured.¹⁶⁸ Like other countries around the globe, Canada sees violent al-Qaeda and ISIL/Daesh-inspired terrorism as one of the leading threats to its national security.¹⁶⁹ The country is also not immune to violent acts stemming from right-wing extremist groups or other forms of extremist violence.¹⁷⁰

To prevent and counter violent extremism, Canadian authorities work at various levels. Of the measures and activities they are taking to counter violent

168 <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/canada>

169 See Public Safety Canada’s 2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada. Available at: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrst-thrt-cnd-2017/index-en.aspx>

170 Public Safety Canada’s 2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada states that while the extreme right is “not an ideologically coherent group”, there is “always the potential” for terrorism motivated by right-wing ideologies.

extremism, the most relevant is the national counter-terrorism strategy, which has been designed to build resilience against terrorism and provides a framework for addressing domestic and international terrorist threats. It guides more than twenty federal departments and agencies to help them better “prevent, detect, deny and respond” to terrorist threats.¹⁷¹

For the prevention of radicalization leading to violence, Canada takes a whole-of-government approach. The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (CCCEPV) works with all levels of the government, not-for-profit organizations, communities, youth, frontline practitioners, academia, law enforcement, and international organizations.¹⁷² Activities of the CCCEPV include:

- Developing and implementing Canada’s National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence;
- Supporting intervention efforts through funding, research, policy and programming;
- Working with partners to better measure and evaluate what works, what does not, and what is promising for countering radicalization to violence;
- Engaging with groups across diverse sectors with a particular focus on women to foster relationships and create opportunities for collaboration.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the community level, the police in Canada engage in a variety of preventive initiatives, including specific activities designed to better their contact with all communities. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s (RCMP) Public Engagement Unit in Toronto, Ontario, works to reach out to the public, in particular youth, to speak about violent extremism and vulnerabilities connected to it. While everyday policing duties like traffic stops, responding to calls and neighbourhood patrols are carried out by the municipal and provincial police, the RCMP steps in when the police encounter cases that are connected to national issues — such as VERLT. The RCMP public engagement teams work closely with the local police at the local level to build community relationships.

When the Public Engagement Unit was first initiated in 2005, the team worked hard to become known in the communities around Toronto. Networking and building connections were the main priorities for the small unit, which was at first poorly received by the city’s communities. The team focuses on engagement, and thus it was important to convey to residents that their mandate was not to gather intelligence, but to inform, educate and prevent community members from entering the path towards radicalization.

171 <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrnt/cntr-trrrsm/cntr-trrrsm-strtg-en.aspx>

172 For more information on the Centre’s work, see <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/bt/cc/index-en.aspx>

To build lasting relationships with the local community, the Public Engagement Unit communicates with trusted community actors, such as political and religious leaders, school representatives, and others in well-regarded positions. Specific emphasis is given to reaching out to women in the city's communities. Given the important roles they play in their families, they are well placed to recognize vulnerabilities toward radicalization that could turn into violence. They are also eager to understand protective factors that can prevent violent extremism, such as strong family and social support, positive self-esteem, and community engagement. Town hall meetings are organized for all citizens, as well as meetings specifically for gathering women together.

Thought has been given to the composition of the Public Engagement Unit: It comprises both men and women police officers of various ethnic origins and with different educational backgrounds (including, for example, analysts and researchers). This effort was consciously made in order to ensure that the Public Engagement Unit is perceived as credible and trustworthy by communities as a whole. In addition, it was deemed crucial that a top command officer is also part of the team. As one team member stated, "The fact that they could speak to the top command closed the gap [between the police and the community] very quickly and helped us build that critical trust."¹⁷³

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING TO PREVENT VERLT

A second example involves an evidence-based collaborative problem-solving approach for addressing complex human and social problems (like VERLT) in the pre-criminal space. The police service in Toronto received financial support from the government in September 2018 to expand "Focus Toronto", a collaborative programme to prevent and counter VERLT drawing on cross-sectoral support and the expertise of the police, other service providers as well as civil society.¹⁷⁴

This collaborative approach is also known as a "situation table" or the "hub model". One of the first such collaborative problem-solving models was established and lead by a woman in the Ottawa police in the late 1990s. In the meantime, similar models are operating successfully also in other cities across Canada.¹⁷⁵

173 OSCE interview held in 2018 with Supt. Lise Crouch, RCMP assistant criminal operations officer.

174 <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/federal-funding-for-toronto-police-to-expand-counter-radicalization-to-violence-initiative-1027515358>

175 http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/COR_Hub_PEI.pdf

For more information on research findings on these models, see Chad Nilson: "Canada's Hub Model: Calling for Perceptions and Feedback from those Clients at the Focus of Collaborative Risk-Driven Intervention" in *Journal of Community Safety and Well-being*, 2016. Available at <https://www.usask.ca/cfbsjs/documents/FINALArticleNilsonCanadasHubModel.pdf>. See also Dale R. McFee and Norman E. Taylor, "The Prince Albert Hub and the Emergence of Collaborative Risk-driven Community Safety", *Canadian Police College Discussion Paper Series*, 2014. Available at: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/sp-ps/PS67-1-1-2014-eng.pdf

A “situation table” involves weekly co-ordination meetings between the police, other service providers and civil society actors. They work together to identify individuals, groups and places at high risk of VERLT, either as perpetrators or victims, and co-ordinate appropriate measures and interventions. These multi-agency teams are able to apply a comprehensive approach, connecting their beneficiaries with the appropriate services. Following these meetings, the first response is usually swift, happening within two days after the discussions have taken place.¹⁷⁶

An analysis of 479 situations discussed in FOCUS Toronto meetings has demonstrated that 93% of the cases could be referred to particular services such as the police or justice, social, welfare or housing services. In 88% of the cases, the overall risk was lowered – risk referring to the circumstances of a situation, individual, family, group or place indicating that there is a high probability of harm or victimization occurring.

Data gathered has also revealed that FOCUS Toronto is able to serve equal numbers of men and women (49% of beneficiaries of responses were women, 48% men).¹⁷⁷ This is a significant finding, as it indicates that the service is able to address the different experiences and needs of both men and women in the community.

5.2 Effectively engaging minority communities: The case of the Oslo police in Norway

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

- ▶ Women police officers are well placed to take the lead in establishing trustful relations with women from minority communities (“minority community officers”);
- ▶ Community engagement officers often have the knowledge and skills to develop and implement capacity building activities for women on a number of topics, including gender equality, civic rights, and the prevention of radicalization;
- ▶ Bringing women from different minority communities together at regular events strengthens their trustful relations with the police and enables them to create networks amongst themselves;

¹⁷⁶ For more information, see <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/community-safety-programs/focus-toronto/>

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

- ▶ Including a gender perspective in community outreach work does not mean focusing on women only. Understanding what the specific concerns of young men were was vital in improving the security situation during Ramadan in comparison to previous years;
- ▶ Police units focusing on P/CVERLT value and depend on the work carried out by community outreach teams;
- ▶ More women officers need to join P/CVERLT teams.

BACKGROUND

Compared to other Western European countries, Norway's crime level is relatively low. In 2017, the total number of crimes reported in the capital of Oslo even decreased by 5.3% from the previous year 2016.¹⁷⁸ The majority of criminal cases reported to the police are theft-related incidents.¹⁷⁹

With regard to cases related to VERLT, Norway has fewer foreign fighters travelling to Syria or Iraq than other Western European countries such as Sweden, France, Denmark or Belgium.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Norway's domestic security service, the "Politiets Sikkerhetstjeneste", reported in its annual threat assessment of 2018 that "individuals and groups inspired by an extreme Islamist ideology still represent the most significant terrorist threat."¹⁸¹ There is also a fear of home-grown terrorists – including from violent right-wing individuals and groups.

In July 2011, Norway suffered the "most devastating attack on a Scandinavian country since the second world war."¹⁸² Far-right extremist Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people and injured over 300 in two devastating "lone wolf" attacks. In October 2013, a Norwegian citizen of African descent also played a prominent role in planning and carrying out a terrorist attack on a mall in Nairobi, Kenya.

To prevent VERLT effectively, the Norwegian government adopted a national "Action Plan Against Radicalization and Violent Extremism" in 2014.¹⁸³ The Action Plan helps improve preventative efforts against radicalization and

178 <https://www.ssb.no/en/sosiale-forhold-og-kriminalitet/statistikker/lovbrudda>

179 For recent crime figures in Norway, see: <https://www.tnp.no/norway/panorama/crime-rates-decrease-norway>

180 Recent figures point to a total of 100 known persons who have travelled from Norway to participate in terrorist organizations in Syria. For more information, see Yngve Carlsson and The Norwegian Association of local and Regional Authorities, "Violent Extremism: Prevention of a wicked problem - the role of local authorities" (C-REX Center for Research on Extremism, 2017). Available at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/publications/c-rex-working-paper-series/Violent-extremism-working-paper-2-2017.pdf>

181 Norway's security service's Threat Assessment 2018. Available at : <https://www.pst.no/alle-artikler/trusselvurderinger/annual-threat-assessment-2018/>

182 As reported in *The Economist*. See: <https://www.economist.com/newsbook/2011/07/22/terrorism-strikes-scandinavia>

183 For the Action Plan, see <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/Action-plan-against-Radicalisation-and-Violent-Extremism/id762413/> (in English).

violent extremism by strengthening inter-agency co-operation and addressing persons at risk as early as possible.

As in other countries, VERLT is often a greater concern in larger urban settings, such as the city of Oslo, where differences in income, education and cultural backgrounds are potential points of tension. One third of Oslo's population belongs to a minority community, with many coming from countries where trust in the police and criminal justice system is low.¹⁸⁴

To address this lack of trust, the Oslo police began focused outreach activities to engage in regular dialogue with a number of communities in the city. This was done to show that the police have genuine interest in the well-being of the people, even before a criminal problem occurs. While senior police officers were initially at the forefront of these initiatives to lend import and credibility, it was clear that there was a need for specifically trained police personnel (both men and women) to support these teams.

Since 2009, “minority community police officers” have been assigned to reach out to and regularly meet with men and women from the different minority communities of the city. This initiative has been implemented mainly in Oslo's city centre and its northern parts. To ensure that meetings include both men and women from the communities, three men and two women are currently part of the minority community police officer team.

In addition to regular visits to schools, places of worship and community centres, larger gatherings are organized to bring together women from different minority communities to give them an opportunity to connect and exchange thoughts and experiences.

In October 2018, 225 women from all over Oslo participated in a joint co-operation forum organized by the police to listen to Iram Haq, an Oscar nominated actress and film director of Norwegian-Pakistani origin, tell her life story. It is planned to hold such co-operation forums on an annual basis.

Other activities addressing women of all ages include training and courses on general topics

Currently, about 30% of all police officers in the Oslo police district are women. In 2018, women accounted for almost 50% of newly enrolled students at the Norway's Police University College.

When recruiting new police officers, particularly for preventative police work, applications from women and staff with a minority background are actively encouraged.

184 <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/innvbef/aar/2017-03-02>

such as gender equality and civic rights in Norway, but also on violent extremism and terrorist radicalization, as well as the risk factors and vulnerabilities connected to it.

Gaining the trust of women from the different minority communities has enabled the police in 2015 to effectively hinder a number of young men from further radicalization and joining ISIL/Daesh in Syria.¹⁸⁵

Through regular exchange between the minority community police officers and other units and teams in the Oslo police, police officers get a better understanding of the living conditions of women and men in minority communities as well as their particular security concerns. They can thus better respond to security needs of these communities.

Oslo police's so-called "anti-radicalization team" values the work of the minority community officers in particular. This team currently consist of eleven officers, including one female intelligence officer. Although the team leader has made an active effort to recruit more women, this remains problematic since few women apply.

In addition to reaching out to women from minority communities, the Oslo police has introduced initiatives to address young men. The police noticed that during the month of Ramadan, it was common for young men to gather in large numbers on the streets until very late while waiting for the sun to set so that they could return home and eat. This led to a number of tense situations and an increase in petty crimes.¹⁸⁶

To ensure that the situation in the streets remained calm during the fasting period in 2018, the police engaged with religious leaders, community elders, as well as parents and teachers several weeks before the start of Ramadan. The objective was to discuss the fasting principles and teachings of the Qur'an, identify risks that the long wait until sunset could trigger, and discuss ways in which some of these risks could be mitigated.

As a result, neighbourhood groups were formed consisting of the police, religious leaders, other respected community members, as well as parents and teachers. When these groups were out in the streets in the evening and established contact with the young men, the situation remained much calmer. In comparison to previous years, the police reported a substantial decrease of petty crimes in 2018.¹⁸⁷

185 Private telephone interview with a member of the Oslo police, October 2018.

186 Ibid.

187 Ibid.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR COMMUNITIES

5.3 The Programme for Women Involved in Community Transformation and the Women's Early Intervention Programme: The case of Northern Ireland

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

- ▶ Women are crucial partners in helping to end ideologically inspired violence;
- ▶ In particular women who have not been active in their communities can become effective agents of change if they receive support and empowerment in a number of areas, including women and the justice system, women in peace building, leadership and mentoring, and citizenship;
- ▶ To ensure that the most suitable beneficiaries of a capacity building programme at the community level are identified, it is important for the first step to involve awareness raising about the key objectives of the programme;
- ▶ Capacity building programmes for the community level benefit from close partnerships with local NGOs, since NGOs often have in-depth knowledge about specific issues and concerns that can be used in establishing community networks;
- ▶ Enabling women from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences to learn together can provide a much-needed space for dialogue and the exchange of different views and perceptions on highly delicate issues, such as ideologically inspired violence, imprisonment and restorative justice;
- ▶ There is evidence that after having participated in this programme, women who were previously isolated are now actively participating in and even leading community projects.

BACKGROUND

Between 1969 and 1999, almost 3,500 people died as a result of political violence in Northern Ireland.¹⁸⁸ The conflict (also referred to as “the Troubles”) had its origins in the 1921 division of Ireland. It has involved a struggle between different national, cultural and religious identities.

¹⁸⁸ For a detailed account of deaths related to the conflict per year, see <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/jun/10/deaths-in-northern-ireland-conflict-data#data>

Protestants in Northern Ireland (48%) largely define themselves as British and support remaining part of the United Kingdom (unionists). Most Catholics in Northern Ireland (45%) consider themselves Irish, and many would like a united Ireland (nationalists). While a political settlement was reached in 1998, tensions and grievances related to the legacy of “the Troubles” remain. These primarily concern victim’s rights, the ongoing division regarding issues of identity, the continued existence of ideologically inspired violence, as well as, particularly in recent years, the blurring of distinctions between paramilitary organizations, criminality and organized crime.

To address these issues and bind the parties and communities closer together in resolving them, the “Fresh Start Agreement” was produced in 2015. Amongst other areas of development and reform, it identifies the particular need for a new comprehensive strategy for disbanding paramilitary groups.

PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

With regard to community engagement and prevention, the Agreement points out the ongoing need to develop “a programme to increase the participation and influence of women in community development.”¹⁸⁹ Consequently, the programme for Women Involved in Community Transformation was established by Northern Ireland’s Department for Communities, together with other departments and representatives from community and women’s organizations.

This programme aims at increasing the participation of women in community development as one of a range of actions designed to help bring an end to ideologically inspired violence.

More specifically, the programme is designed to:

- Be supportive and enhance the ability of women to work in their communities by connecting them to NGOs and involving them in community action;
- Support the creation of influential relationships for women that build participation in political structures and increase civic leadership from the neighbourhood level upwards.

During the process of designing and developing the programme, the need was recognized for an early intervention programme as a precursor to the main programme. The objective of this Women’s Early Intervention Programme (WEIP) was to raise awareness and promote the engagement of women in line with the recommendations of the Fresh Start Agreement. It was especially

¹⁸⁹ For a complete overview of this agreement, see: <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/northernireland/20151117-A-Fresh-Start---The-Stormont-Agreement-and-Implementation-Plan.pdf>

interested in including women who were not yet involved in (or had disengaged from) community activities.

The WEIP was presented in February and March 2017 in 24 different communities. As findings in a detailed report establish, the programme reached 263 women, although it had targeted 250. It was also able to connect with women who were disengaged from their community in a wide range of areas.¹⁹⁰

The report also highlights that while women were interested in supporting their communities and saw themselves as active contributors to change, they had experienced a feeling of powerlessness with regard to changing local issues of concern.¹⁹¹

Building on lessons learned from the WEIP, the first phase of the Programme on Women Involved in Community Transformation (WICT) took place between April 2017 and March 2018 in 26 locations across Northern Ireland.¹⁹² It offered training and development opportunities to 505 women, covering areas such as:

- Personal development;
- Health and well-being;
- Women and the justice system;
- Women in peace building;
- Leadership and mentoring;
- Citizenship.

Before the training on these topics took place, the co-ordinators of the programme conducted a one-to-one training needs assessment with each woman to develop an individual learning plan. Along with the training modules, additional support was provided, such as life coaching, mentoring, and the possibility to participate in the training during a stay away from home (particularly for women whose home environment was volatile and working on such issues could place them in an ambivalent position).

RESULTS

According to an internal evaluation report,¹⁹³ it seems that this first phase of the programme has helped the participating women to gain the self-confidence and self-esteem needed to become more involved in their communities (or

190 For a complete overview of WEIP, see <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dfc-review-womens-early-intervention-programme.docx>

191 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

192 For a complete overview of places where the programme was held, see <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/women-involved-community-transformation-programme-locations>

193 Internal report made available to main author of this handbook.

involved at all), to find suitable opportunities to become involved, and to better understand some of the key problems faced by their communities.

The report also notes that the mix of women engaged in the WICT programme was an important element of its success. Participants came from a wide range of backgrounds and experience and, although the training dealt with highly delicate issues such as ideologically inspired violence, imprisonment and restorative justice, the sessions had provided a much-needed space for dialogue and the exchange of very different views and perceptions.

In addition, there is evidence that women who were previously isolated are now actively participating in and even leading community projects, and 80% of those who participated in Phase 1 have indicated their intention to move on to Phase 2.¹⁹⁴

5.4 The Parents against Terrorism campaign: The case of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

- ▶ Tajikistan's latest National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism and corresponding Action Plan has provided opportunities for increasing the engagement of women in the prevention of violent extremism;
- ▶ Nearly 1 million predominantly male citizens are labour migrants working outside Tajikistan, making it imperative to engage women in such strategies, since many have taken over the role of main caretaker for their families;
- ▶ The Parents against Terrorism (PaT) campaign of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, targeting awareness raising and training on P/C VERLT, has reached over 8,000 beneficiaries, almost half of them women;
- ▶ The project has established that involving community members whose relatives have left as FTFs are credible voices in these communities. They are able to raise awareness and help spread persuasive counter-narratives through storytelling;
- ▶ The training in the framework of the PaT campaign provided valuable opportunities for police officers to connect with local community members, gain a clearer understanding of their needs, and improve their relationships with them.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

BACKGROUND¹⁹⁵

According to official estimates, there have been 1,900 cases of FTFs coming from Tajikistan, a large number when compared to the country's population of approximately 9 million.¹⁹⁶ While these figures have been decreasing since 2016, threats emerging from home-grown violent extremists have become apparent.¹⁹⁷

To effectively work on P/CVERLT, a National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism 2016–2020 was signed into law in November 2016. This strategy includes an Action Plan containing specific activities to promote the role of women in PVE. These activities include awareness-raising activities on the dangers of violent extremism, as well as steps to increase women's participation in local councils and law enforcement. There is growing understanding that women can help prevent violent extremism by engaging directly with their family and community members. This can be done by sharing information about violent extremism and providing counter-narratives, but also by women building up their own resilience to extremism by taking stronger public roles.

This is particularly needed, since nearly 1 million predominantly male citizens of Tajikistan are currently labour migrants working in the Russian Federation and other neighbouring countries, which has left many women in the role of key caretaker for their families.

THE WORK OF THE OSCE PROGRAMME OFFICE IN DUSHANBE

The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe has provided systematic and tailored capacity-building for the law enforcement agencies of Tajikistan in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. To this end, it supports research, awareness raising, policy formulation, and training activities on VERLT, bringing together government and civil society.

Recognizing the crucial role women play in effectively countering and preventing VERLT, specific emphasis has been placed on reaching out to parents in general, and mothers in particular, through the Parents against Terrorism (PaT) campaign.

The campaign was launched in 2015 in direct co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment. It involves 180 local trainers and experts,

195 For information on women's involvement in VEOs in Central Asia, see Anna Matveeva and Bahrom Faizullaev: "Women and Violent Extremism in Europe and Central Asia" (*UN Women*, June 2017). Available at: http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2017/iii_unw_eca_tajikistan%20chapter_final-02%20final.pdf?la=en&vs=1241

196 Figures provided by the State Committee for National Security in November 2018.

197 U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 – Tajikistan*, September 2018. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bc1f17da.html>

and has reached over 8,000 direct beneficiaries, almost half of them women. The campaign has had several purposes:

- To enhance the knowledge and understanding of the local population about VERLT;
- To build and maintain confident links between grassroots and law enforcement agencies in the context of P/CVERLT;
- To highlight the role of mothers as positive agents of change;
- To gather feedback from local communities on how to counter VERLT from their perspective; and
- To help establish links with stakeholders in relation to VERLT, particularly with law enforcement agencies, clergy and local governance bodies (*khukumats*).

The training delivered in the framework of this campaign has targeted local community members, such as parents, students, teachers and religious leaders, as well as law enforcement officials and representatives of local *khukumats*. In addition, it has specifically aimed at the participation of parents and close relatives of FTFs.

The training events, which have been held in various parts of the country, covered a wide range of topics, including “Key Concepts of VERLT and Distinctions between Them”, “Signs and Causes of VERLT”, “Push and Pull Factors”, “Introduction to the National and International Legal Framework on the Fight Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism”, “The Family and its Role in the Prevention of VERLT”, as well as “Culture of Tolerance”.

Findings from the training sessions indicate that communities were very appreciative of the initiative and demonstrated a clear desire to understand the topic. It was also found that involving those community members whose relatives had left as FTFs was an effective way to sensitize the community to the topic and support the spread of credible counter-narratives. In addition, the training provided valuable opportunities for police officers to connect with local community members, gain a clearer understanding of their needs, and improve their relationship with them.

For future activities, the Programme Office plans gradually to shift the focus from awareness raising and capacity building of parents to working directly with youth.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE SECURITY SECTOR

5.5 Training in CVE for women police officers: The project of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

- ▶ Women police officers who work closely with communities benefit from additional training and capacity building in understanding, detecting and addressing signs of radicalization toward violent extremism;
- ▶ A group of diverse trainers from different disciplines were able to offer the participants different perspectives on how to foster the prevention of VERT;
- ▶ Such training can provide participants and trainers a platform for continued communication;
- ▶ Women officers who participate in such projects are found to reach out and interact more frequently with religious leaders to discuss preventive interventions in individual cases.

BACKGROUND

Kosovo accounts for the highest per capita number of ISIL/Daesh foreign recruits in Europe. A total of 255 men and 46 women, as well as 59 children (and another 40 children born on foreign territory) of the 1.8 million citizens of the Balkan nation emigrated to Iraq and Syria between 2012 and 2015.¹⁹⁸ They first joined the Free Syrian Army and the Al-Nusra Front. After the ISIL/Daesh split from the Al-Nusra Front, most Kosovars joined the ranks of ISIL/Daesh.

According to a 2017 study by the International Republican Institute,¹⁹⁹ the move to the Middle East was motivated for many by their desire to support ISIL/Daesh in its plans to create a “true” Muslim community. Messages propagating this idea were spread by foreign and foreign-educated imams, who exploited the lack of religious literacy among young men and women in Kosovo, as well as existing grievances.

198 “Kosovo, struggling to stamp out its homegrown problem”, The Washington Post, 24 Aug 2018.

199 *Understanding Local Drivers for Violent Extremism in Kosovo* (International Republican Institute, Spring 2017). Available at: http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2017-9-17_kosovo_vea_report.pdf

Vulnerable segments of Kosovo's population have been deprived of their sense of agency and self-worth due to lack of opportunities for social mobility, as well as society-wide corruption and unresponsiveness in local governments. In the past decade, this has grown to a point whereby departure to the territories of ISIL/Daesh seemed a viable alternative.

Among the women from Kosovo, the most common motivation to join ISIL/Daesh was to join their husbands. According to local stakeholders, there is no information available about these women's direct involvement in combat. But the wish for strict observance of Sharia law under the ISIL/Daesh regime, as well as freedom to practice the Muslim faith, often subject to discrimination in Kosovo, may be seen as reasons for their involvement.²⁰⁰ Nonetheless, none of the women travelled to the Middle East alone, which indicates that their radicalization occurred within family structures.

Although there have been no new reported departures since 2016 and the government no longer sees terrorism as a major threat,²⁰¹ it is nonetheless recognized that the causes underlying ISIL/Daesh's appeal for the population have not subsided. The government of Kosovo has included the prevention of terrorism and VERLT as a core element in its security strategy. Two consecutive Strategies and Plans of Action against Terrorism (2014–2018; 2018–2022) have been enacted.

These strategies are based on four objectives: To prevent by identifying perpetrators and opposing violent ideologies; to protect through the increase of institutional defence capacities; to pursue terrorist suspects through law enforcement agencies; and to respond to potential terrorist attacks by preparing institutions to manage and minimize their consequences.

Although the strategies do not specifically refer to the role of women in VERLT, the government and its agents has increasingly recognized the necessity to establish gender-based initiatives geared at addressing the different needs, motivations and functions among men and women in the prevention of the phenomenon.

200 Rudinë Jakupi dhe Vesë Kelmendi, *Women in Violent Extremism, Lessons Learned from Kosovo* (Kosovo Centre for Security Studies, Jan. 2017). Available at: <http://www.qkss.org/en/Reports/Women-in-Violent-Extremism-Lessons-learned-from-Kosovo-841>

201 Kujtim Bytyqi, Senior Security Policy Analyst, for the Washington Post in Aug. 2018.

THE WORK OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

To support this effort, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo has been working to strengthen the preventative functions of different representatives of the community (men, women, law enforcement, religious leaders and journalists). In late 2018, 35 projects geared at preventing and countering VERLT were underway. Aims of these projects include strengthening the understanding of the drivers of VERLT, promoting interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance, as well as equipping different groups in the society with the skills necessary to identify and address signs of radicalization.

One OSCE project in particular aims at strengthening the role of women in VERLT prevention efforts, a project with the Association of Women in Kosovo Police (AWKP) designed to support the ability of policewomen to understand, detect and address signs of radicalization toward violent extremism. The project has capitalized on the specific role women play in family and community structures to access youth at risk of radicalization and influence them before they start a path towards extremism.

Through a series of workshops for women police officers, the project has provided knowledge about VERLT that can be shared and utilized by all of the Kosovo police force's specialized units, as well as throughout society. Trainers from different disciplines (including members of the security sector, gender studies practitioners and religious scholars) have offered different perspectives to the policewomen on how to foster the prevention of VERLT, both on and off-duty.

In the various training sessions, forty participating officers exchanged their views and tested new approaches towards:

- How to encourage community engagement and empowerment in P/CVERLT, with a special focus on empowering the role of women and mothers in the community in order to effectively interact with and influence individuals at risk of radicalization;
- Improving communication with different groups of influencers, including parents, elders and religious leaders, to demonstrate inclusivity and foster more trusting relationships with the agents of the state, as well as to promote tolerance within and across communities to prevent polarization, prejudice and discrimination;
- Adopting a gender perspective in police work in order to better understand the different experiences of men and boys as well as women and girls when they are confronted by radicalization and extremism, and to devise strategies in tackling VERLT that genuinely account for these different roles and needs;
- Providing skills in psychology and sociological conflict management to

- ease communication with volatile or traumatized individuals, including youth at risk of radicalization and victims of violence and abuse;
- Strengthening knowledge of how to address individual cases of radicalization, including designing online and off-line messages that provide an alternative perspective for aggrieved individuals, or encourage critical evaluation of religious propaganda.

The Mission in Kosovo noted that following these workshops the group of participants and trainers continued communicating in the form of a consultative platform. The police have been exchanging information on specific situations they encounter and seeking advice from the trainers as well as other colleagues. Additionally, the policewomen who participated in the project were found to reach out and interact more frequently with religious leaders to discuss preventive interventions in individual cases. Some of the subsequent initiatives have also involved other governmental entities. Following the identification of potential cases of VERLT in some communities, for example, representatives from the Kosovo government's Department of Women in the Islamic Community made field visits to offer assistance and to draw lessons for prevention strategies.

In the next stages of the project, the OSCE Mission plans to hold further training sessions in other parts of Kosovo, including training for trainers, to make these approaches available to a still broader group of recipients. A comprehensive evaluation of what has been gained in these workshops, including their tangible impact on the prevention of VERLT, is planned for early 2019.

To understand the dynamics of the evolving context of VERLT in Kosovo, the OSCE Mission plans to instate a broad set of activities. These will aim at equipping civil society, women's groups, young people and religious leaders with the tools to recognize and address radicalization that leads to violent extremism; promoting the co-operation among experts from government, civil society, academia, the media and the private sector; and promoting community policing approaches.

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL GENDER FOCAL POINTS

5.6 Gender focal points in the Ministry of Security: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

Gender focal points are instrumental to providing expertise on gender-related issues to ministries and their administrative units, particularly for staff not generally focused on gender-related issues;

- ▶ In order to ensure that gender is not seen merely as a “women’s issue”, it is essential to have an equal number of men and women serving as gender focal points;
- ▶ A system of gender focal points contributes to gender no longer being “taboo” and to more staff members understanding the importance of a gender perspective and how to include it in their work;
- ▶ The gender focal points in this case have managed to create a network inside the ministry that shares knowledge and supports the development of strategies to give the efforts being undertaken the most impact;
- ▶ Those gender focal points who have a personal commitment to the topic have had more impact;
- ▶ If gender focal points are provided possibilities for actively participating in the development and implementation of P/CVERLT strategies, they can be a strategic resource;
- ▶ Remaining challenges are connected to the fact that all of the gender focal points in this case have other functions and do not work on gender issues only.

BACKGROUND

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has faced a broad spectrum of violent extremist threats. Foreign terrorist groups have operated on its soil and inspired terror attacks, often using sentiments remaining from the violence that occurred

during the 1992–1995 Bosnian War as a recruitment tool.²⁰² As of December 2016, an estimated 250 foreign terrorist fighters from BiH had travelled to Syria or Iraq to join ISIL/Daesh. It is estimated that over 60 of these FTFs are women.²⁰³ It is thought that the majority of these individuals have remained in Syria or Iraq; about 50 have returned home.²⁰⁴ This is possibly the largest contingent of foreign fighters from the Western Balkans.²⁰⁵ This flow of foreign fighters was dramatically reduced after 2016 due to a number of legal and societal efforts that were undertaken in the country.²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, Al-Qaeda, the al-Nusra front and other terrorist groups have maintained support among radicalized Bosnians and continue to recruit.²⁰⁷ Additionally, other forms of violent extremism, including ethno-nationalism, remain a threat.²⁰⁸

The BiH government has taken a number of critical steps toward P/CVERLT. *The Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2015–2020* is one of the key strategic documents guiding this work of the government.²⁰⁹ The BiH Ministry of Security has also named a first state-level co-ordinator for international and domestic efforts to P/CVERLT. The government has prioritized efforts to strengthen the resiliency of “at-risk communities” and supports civil society efforts to P/CVERLT in partnership with a number of international organizations, including the OSCE.²¹⁰

GENDER FOCAL POINTS AS A TOOL FOR STREAMLINING GENDER ASWARENESS SECURITY SECTOR

The BiH Ministry of Security is responsible for a number of key security tasks, including the protection of international borders, the prevention and detection of perpetrators of crimes related to terrorism, of drug and human trafficking and other crimes with an international nexus, the provision of support to BiH police bodies, and forensic examination.²¹¹ The administrative units of the Ministry include the Border Police, the State Investigation and Protection

202 “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Extremism and Counter-Extremism” (Counter Extremism Project). Available at: <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/bosnia-herzegovina>

203 Joana Cook and Gina Vale, *From Daesh to ‘Diaspora’: Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State* (King’s College London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2018), p. 16.

204 Richard Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees* (The Soufan Center, 2017), p. 12.

205 Bosnia and Herzegovina: Extremism and Counter-Extremism (Counter Extremism Project). See: <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/bosnia-herzegovina>.

206 Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 (United States Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, July 2017), pp. 106–107.

207 Bosnia and Herzegovina: Extremism and Counter-Extremism (Counter Extremism Project). See: <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/bosnia-herzegovina>.

208 Western Balkans Extremism Research Forum: Regional Report: Understanding Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans (Azinović, British Council, June 2018).

209 *Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2015–2020* (Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers, 2015).

210 Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 (United States Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, September 2018), pp. 76–78.

211 For further information, see: <http://msb.gov.ba/onama/default.aspx?id=3053&langTag=en-US>

Agency, the Directorate for the Coordination of Police Bodies of BiH, the Agency for Forensics, the Agency for Police Support, the Agency for Education and Professional Training, and the Immigration Office.²¹²

The BiH Ministry of Security, together with its administrative units, has established a network of gender focal points (GFPs) who serve as a key resource for integrating a gender perspective into all work being done at the ministry. The GFP model can serve as a practical example for other security sector entities to better integrate gender considerations into their work, including in counter-terrorism and P/CVERLT.

The BiH Ministry of Security was a key stakeholder involved in the development of the first BiH Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which was adopted on 27 July 2010. The Action Plan was drafted by an inter-agency group of government ministries and non-governmental organizations and was the first-ever comprehensive strategy developed by the government aimed at increasing women's participation and the integration of gender in peace and security processes, including within the security sector. The Action Plan has eight goals, including increasing the number of women in the BiH police and armed forces, and providing criminal justice and military actors with training on gender.²¹³ Since the first Action Plan was launched in 2010, the inter-agency group has updated the Action Plan twice, with the most recent update expiring in 2022.²¹⁴

To support the Ministry of Security's commitments under the BiH Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Ministry has established a network of GFPs for each department, and GFPs have also been established in the administrative units. The goal of the GFPs is to provide expertise to the Ministry and its administrative units on gender-related issues and, working with staff members who do not focus primarily on gender-related issues, ensure that these efforts are fully integrated into all of the work undertaken by their departments.

The work of establishing the GFPs was led by Ankica Tomic, the head of the Ministry's International Cooperation Department and Deputy Chairperson of the Coordination Body for the UNSCR 1325 Action Plan, with the support of other key partners and allies.

212 All cited information about the Gender Focal Points Network was provided by Ministry of Security officials by phone and email in November 2018.

213 Tomic, *Gender Mainstreaming of the Security Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina: From the Policy Papers to Reality* (Connections: The Quarterly Journal XIV.3, Summer 2015), p. 91.

214 National Action Plan: Bosnia and Herzegovina (PeaceWomen, Women's League for Peace and Freedom). Available at: <https://www.peacewomen.org/nap-bih>

The tasks of the GFPs have been defined as follows:

- Advise supervisors on how to improve gender equality principles in their department;
- Analyse all documents, programs, plans, activities with regard to the integration of a gender perspective (e.g. gender disaggregated data, gender sensitive language, gender sensitive budget, and gender balance in educational programmes, training, conferences, commissions, different bodies, commissions, and peace support operations);
- Recommend actions to improve gender equality in the various department and units; and
- Prepare reports to the Coordination Body of the Ministry of Security on these recommended actions, which are then submitted to the Minister of Security twice a year.

The GFPs are selected by the head of each of the departments within the Ministry of Security, along with a deputy named for each. In order to ensure that gender is not just seen as a “women’s issue”, the ministry aims at having an equal number of men and women serving as focal points – a goal the ministry has nearly achieved. Most of the focal points do not have previous experience working on gender issues, but they have been provided training by the ministry. This training has included how to integrate gender into all relevant documents of the various departments (e.g., strategies, actions plans, laws and bylaws, procedures, decisions). The co-ordination of the GFP network is led by a Coordination Board within the Ministry of Security. The Board consists of all of the GFPs and their deputies. The Chair and Deputy Chair co-ordinate meetings of the GFPs to discuss issues of concern and ensure that they have regular contact.

POSITIVE RESULTS

The GFPs have had an important impact on the work of the Ministry of Security. Ministry officials have noted that their efforts have ensured that gender is no longer “taboo” when discussing the work of the ministry, and that more people in the ministry now understand the importance of a gender perspective and how to include it in their work. The GFPs have also provided education to their peers and superiors to change the common mind-set that “gender” is synonymous with “women”. They have shown that a gender analysis requires looking at the differences between women and men, as well as girls and boys. This can result in effective and holistic strategies, policies and programmes.

Importantly, the GFPs have created a network of people inside the ministry who share their knowledge and support the development of strategies. Those GFPs who have been supported by their supervisors and the heads of their departments and units have had the most impact on the work of those entities.

For example, as a result of this support and the work of a GFP, the BiH Small Arms and Light Weapons Strategy contains a commitment to consider the different impacts these weapons have on women and men, and attention to their use in domestic violence cases.

CHALLENGES

While the GFP network is an innovative approach to gender integration in the security sector, challenges remain. One of the biggest challenges is that the GFPs are not dedicated gender staff and thus also have other duties. This presents challenges in their ability to focus on these issues, particularly in the implementation of dedicated gender programmes and policies. Often, the most successful GFPs are those who have a personal commitment to these issues. The GFP network made considerable progress over the last year in the process of harmonizing legislation of issues of relevance to the Ministry of Security with the BiH Gender Equality Law and Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. However, further harmonization is still necessary.

The lack of women in decision-making positions in the security sector as well as the lack of sufficient understanding of the importance of gender in the work of the various departments and units also remain enormous challenges for progress. Turning commitments made by these entities into action requires tremendous support from senior leaders in the ministry and administrative units.

Additionally, monitoring and evaluating progress on gender integration and women's participation in the Ministry of Security can be a difficult task. Nonetheless, one GFP network has integrated this as a priority in its work.

Finally, the GFPs remain challenged in achieving the commitments in the UNSCR 1325 Action Plan for the promotion of women to high-level decision-making positions. Currently, there is only one woman serving as the head of a department in the ministry; all other posts are filled by men. While women serve at greater levels in middle management positions, they are still rarely elevated to senior level positions.

GFP'S AND VERLT

If GFPs are given the possibility to participate in developing and implementing VERLT strategies, they can be a strategic resource for ensuring that national strategies for P/CVERLT fully integrate gender into their objectives and output. This can be critical to the effectiveness of strategy commitments.

Currently, the GFPs of the BiH Ministry of Security are not included in any of the internal co-ordination processes for implementing the Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2015–2020. However, the strategy’s pillar for prevention includes a broad spectrum of activities designed to prevent “vulnerable persons and groups from choosing” VERLT. This may allow for a gender perspective to be integrated into its commitments.

When the BiH Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism expires in 2020, its updating will offer an opportunity to ensure that GFPs are involved in the strategy’s implementation. Further, the third generation of BiH’s Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 includes an objective related to the integration of gender into efforts to strengthen “human security”, including P/CVERLT activities. These include workshops on the gender aspects of the VERLT phenomenon, the promotion of women and women’s groups into P/CVERLT efforts, and initiatives aimed at reintegrating women and children associated with ISIL/Daesh when they return to BiH from Iraq and Syria.

GENDER SENSITIVE COMMUNITY POLICING AND REFERRAL MECHANISMS

5.7 Programme on community-oriented policing and CVE referral mechanisms: The case of Jendouba and Tabarka, Tunisia

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

Throughout the programme's development and implementation phase, it has been ensured that stakeholder engagement, training and mentoring has particularly encouraged women to lead and influence institutional change;

- ▶ The programme supports local police officers to include a gender analysis in their community security analyses to make sure they consider safety concerns and experiences from the perspective of both women and men, as well as both boys and girls; it also pro-actively encourages women to become involved;
- ▶ Results from regular programme monitoring and evaluation have indicated that men, women, boys and girls are benefitting equally from the programme's individual case support;
- ▶ Results also show that women youth mentors are on the whole more engaged, more influential, and perform better in the delivery of their duties, something that has been welcomed by their male peers.

BACKGROUND

Following the events in December 2010, when people successfully took to the streets to overturn the government, Tunisia has passed some important democratic milestones. This has included several free and fair elections and the development and adoption of a new constitution. Nonetheless, the country still faces a number of challenges, not least terrorist radicalization and the public's lack of trust in the police.

In 2015, Tunisia suffered a number of major terrorist incidents, followed by insurgent attacks near the border with Libya in 2016, which dealt a heavy blow to the economy, with its strong focus on tourism. In October 2018, a woman carried out a suicide attack near a gathering of police cars in an upscale area of

Tunisia’s capital Tunis. Overall, Tunisians have made up a significant proportion of the FTFs in Syria, Iraq and Libya, with many having joined the ranks of ISIL/Daesh.²¹⁵

To counter violent extremism at the local level, the Tunisian Ministry of Interior, supported by the Dutch government²¹⁶ and a group of experts from Aktis Strategy’s Counter Extremism team,²¹⁷ have created a specific community–police partnership model in January 2017.²¹⁸ The programme has been implemented in two municipalities of the Jendouba governorate in northwest Tunisia, the city of Jendouba and the town of Tabarka. It also engages policymakers at the governorate and national level in order to align the operational components of the model with national-level CVE strategies, as well as to influence strategic decision-making based on lessons being learnt “on the ground”.

THE JENDOUBA MODEL

This programme for building community–police trust to counter violent extremism began as a pilot project in Jendouba and Tabarka to develop and test a model, in the Tunisian context, for community policing and engagement on CVE,

Figure 1: The Jendouba Model



drawing on Dutch and other international good practices. The first 18 months of the programme worked to establish a feasible model, led by the police in close collaboration with the municipal government and other community-based resources.

Overall, the model has aimed at identifying individuals who seem to be moving towards violent extremist behaviour and referring them to intervention that may disrupt this path, while also building capacities that can contribute to more long-term trusting and co-operative community–police relationships. To do this, the programme’s CVE-specialist police officers and youth mentors provide

215 For an extensive report on this phenomenon, see “Assessing the Threat Posed by Tunisian Foreign Fighters” (Institut Tunisien des Etudes Stratégiques, January 2018). Available at: <http://www.ites.tn/fr/english/Assessing-the-Threat-Posed-by-Tunisian-Foreign-Fighters/15>

216 Through its Embassy in Tunis.

217 With expertise across the spectrum of security sector reform and transitions, political governance and justice/rule of law, Aktis Strategy’s Counter Extremism team specializes in devising, managing and evaluating evidence-based counter violent extremism/counter terrorism programmes in various fragile and conflict-affected states. The key experts who designed and led the Tunisian “Jendouba Model” were Barbara Chalghaf, Saskia Marsh, Kathleen White and Tim Donnelly.

218 The programme draws on two Dutch models that have been adapted to the Tunisian context: the *Wijk Agent* (police community liaison officer) and trained networks of community mentors.

direct safeguarding support, or draw in other community-based experts (such as medical professionals or police child protection units) to prevent and address different types of abuse, neglect or exploitation (e.g., domestic violence), or other kinds of harmful circumstances (e.g., substance abuse).

The model comprises a referral mechanism and case management system for vulnerable individuals. It also features a specific community engagement component led by teams of community police liaison officers and youth mentors. These core components are intersected by three key crosscutting components: gender sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, and building Tunisian capacity to measure results and impact.

Throughout the development and implementation phase, the programme has ensured that stakeholder engagement, training and mentoring encourages women in particular to lead and influence institutional change. In practical terms, this means for instance that the youth mentor teams are gender balanced, and that their outreach and awareness-raising activities specifically target and work with women project stakeholders and women's CSOs.

In the city of Jendouba, recent community activities conducted by the youth mentor team included, for instance, meetings with mothers to discuss children staying in school and to raise awareness about women's health in partnership with local CSOs.

The project also supports local police officers to include gender analysis in their community security analyses, to make sure they consider safety concerns and experiences from the perspective of both women and men, boys and girls, and pro-actively encourages women to become involved. The youth mentor focal points who sit on the CVE case referral committee are comprised of one young man and one young woman. The community liaison police teams all include at least one woman officer.

Tunisian stakeholders increasingly champion the Jendouba Model. It is the first time in Tunisia and the wider North African region that such a multi-stakeholder approach is being successfully implemented.

RESULTS

At regular intervals, the project has undertaken an analysis of its positive, negative, intended and unintended effects on political, gender and conflict issues. Results have indicated that:

- Men, women, boys and girls have benefited equally from the programme's individual case support (there have been cases of each)*;
- Women community liaison officers are as engaged as their male peers,

and contribute and lead on equal footing with them within the constraints of their rank and daily duties** ;

- * On the whole, women youth mentors are as, if not more, engaged and influential than their male peers, and also perform better in the delivery of their duties, something that their male peers have welcomed;
- ** There are signs of women's perspectives and capacities being incorporated into local-level prevention plans (the action plans of the community liaison officers and youth mentoring teams), and the activities of youth mentoring teams specifically involve women and women's organizations in upstream prevention measures.

Over time, the objective is to increase women's participation still more. This may be done by involving more women representatives of local statutory authorities directly in the CVE referral mechanism, and ensuring that the youth mentoring teams regularly include women and girls in their community outreach activities and safeguarding follow-up.

The proposal for the third phase of the programme²¹⁹ builds on the lessons that have been learned for increasing gender awareness and empowering women. It aims to identify specific ways, either within the programme or through complementary partnerships, to train women officers in technical CVE and safeguarding skills, encourage career advancement mentoring through links with the Tunisian women police officer's association (La Ligue Nationale Tunisienne De La Femme Policière) in Tunis, and to provide capacity building for both men and women police officers in gender inclusivity and leadership skills.

219 At the time of the drafting of this handbook, Phase III was under consideration for funding by the Dutch government.

GENDER-BLINDNESS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

5.8 The case of the investigation and trial of Beate Zschäpe in Germany

KEY FACTORS AND FINDINGS

Alleged perpetrators under investigation by the police and on trial experience different biases depending on their sex;

- ▶ Women, particularly women from majority populations, are often stereotypically regarded as peaceful, non-violent, loving and caring individuals, which can lead to serious omissions and blind spots in criminal investigations;
- ▶ Gender biases in criminal proceedings can be perpetuated by the media and the public, leaving these proceedings even more vulnerable to omissions;
- ▶ Law enforcement and court staff should receive training in gender biases and the potential harmful effects they may have on criminal investigations and proceedings.

BACKGROUND

In July 2018, the Higher Regional Court in Munich declared Beate Zschäpe, a former member of the “Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund” (National Socialist Underground [NSU]), a right-wing terrorist group, guilty of committing murder on ten accounts, two bombings and several crimes of attempted murder and robbery. The verdict: lifelong imprisonment.

The trial had run for five years (437 days in total) and was one of the largest, longest and most expensive in German history.²²⁰ Over the course of the trial, evidence emerged that for years, the German federal police had ruled out neo-Nazis as potential suspects in the killings. It was assumed that they were related to gang violence amongst the country’s German-Turkish population (nine of the ten victims had an immigration background).

220 Philip Oltermann, “German neo-Nazi Beate Zschäpe sentenced to life for NSU murders” (*The Guardian*, July 2018).
Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/11/german-neo-nazi-beate-zschape-gets-life-for-nsu-murders>

The investigation also revealed that the NSU had repeatedly crossed paths with the intelligence service's paid informers within the neo-Nazi scene. When the two other NSU leaders died in an apparent murder-suicide after a failed bank robbery in November 2011, much attention focused on Zschäpe, hoping she would shed light on the trio's underground terrorist activity, activity that had gone undetected for thirteen years.

Perhaps the most noteworthy concern is the fact that the police had been close to Zschäpe on several occasions without suspecting anything. This reflects a recent report by the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, a NGO working against racism and anti-Semitism in Germany, which argues that white German women are stereotypically regarded as peaceful, non-violent, loving and caring individuals.²²¹

The report continues by noting that women were actively involved as perpetrators in the German Nazi movement during World War II in a variety of positions and functions. After the end of the war, women also assumed positions in right-wing extremist organizations and political parties in West Germany. Some were ideological masterminds and propagandists working in leadership positions. Others participated as members of militant (and sometimes terrorist) groups. Frequently, such women engaged in youth work.²²²

The report also points out the marked increase in the course of the past twenty years in both the number of women who can be classified as “active right wing” and of women's groups in the right-wing extremist scene.

Over the last few decades, neo-Nazi and other aggressive nationalist groups have become more popular in Germany, particularly amongst young men and women.²²³ It is a trend that continues: In September 2018, violent demonstrations and targeted attacks on citizens with an immigration background by right wing extremists in Chemnitz have been under investigation and several suspects arrested (all male).²²⁴

As in the case of Beate Zschäpe, many of those involved in violent right-wing groups began their “career” as adolescents. Zschäpe quickly reached key positions in a variety of right-wing organizations in her hometown of Jena. Already at this point in time, Zschäpe was involved in several violent attacks

221 “Overlooked and Underrated: Women in Right-Wing Extremist Groups in Germany”, Summary report, Amadeu Antonio Foundation, 2014.

222 *Ibid.*

223 Richard Stöss, “Zur Entwicklung des Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland” (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2015). Available at: <http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtsextremismus/198940/zur-entwicklung-des-rechtsextremismus-in-deutschland> (in German).

224 <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2018-10/chemnitz-sechs-mutmassliche-rechtsterroristen-festgenommen> (in German); <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/30/world/europe/germany-neo-nazi-protests-chemnitz.html>

on left-wing activists, demonstrating her complete break with stereotyped assumptions of female virtues such as being peace loving, calm and caring.

In fact, throughout her tenure as one of the three leaders of the NSU, Zschäpe used exactly such biased views on race and gender to successfully disguise her criminal activities. As a case study on her role in the NSU demonstrates, she managed to successfully fool not only her neighbours about her criminal intentions, but the police as well.²²⁵

At the end of 2006, Zschäpe was questioned by the police about water damage in an unused neighbouring flat. In this conversation and later questioning at the police station, she gave contradictory answers and presented a different name than that on her identification card. Despite this suspicious behaviour, the police were not alarmed.²²⁶

Later, when Zschäpe handed herself over to the police, rather than analysing the trend of women in violent right-wing organizations or Zschäpe's biography itself, much time (in particular by the media) was devoted to assumptions about the presumed sexual nature of her relationship with the other two key members of the cell, and her having played a negligible and passive role in the trio's violent crimes. This demonstrates how women's importance in violent extremist groups is measured and valued against their relationship with men, leading to dangerous blind spots in investigations of violent extremism.



“The devil got all dressed up.” Germany’s main tabloid *Bild* reports on the NSU trial on 7 May 2013, featuring Beate Zschäpe on the cover page.

During the trial, media attention focused extensively on Zschäpe's clothing, hairstyle and body language,²²⁷ none of which was reported on for the male suspects on trial. Similarly, her apparent lack of empathy for the victims was commented on, which was not highlighted as remarkable in the case of the male suspects.

225 Ulrich Overdieck, “Overlooked and Underrated: Women in Right-Wing Extremist Groups in Germany” Case study on Beate Zschäpe (Amadeu Antonio Foundation, 2014).

226 Ibid.

227 See for example: <https://www.n-tv.de/politik/Wie-man-Beate-Zschaepedeuten-koennte-article10688391.html> (in German).



6. Guidance for integrating a gender perspective into the security sector

This chapter seeks to provide practical step-by-step guidance for frontline law enforcement officers and senior law enforcement officials working on P/CVERLT, as well as for police academies. It draws from the lessons learned on gender mainstreaming in the security sector in Chapter IV and the case studies from the OSCE region documented in Chapter V.

6.1 Frontline officers

Front-line officers are crucial actors in establishing trust and relationships with the communities they serve. Front-line officers working on P/CVERLT can be police officers performing regular patrols, community policing activities, or criminal investigations. The following guidance notes are specifically designed for those officers working in community outreach, the prevention of VERLT, and community patrols.

In all of these areas, it is absolutely necessary to have a sound understanding of different gender roles and attitudes, as well as of the relations and power dynamics between men and women. This is true not only to be fully operationally effective, but also to be able to establish and nurture trustful relations in a community.

For community engagement officers who primarily seek to establish relations with the community without gathering specific information for intelligence purposes, it is particularly important to highlight this in all conversations they engage in.

Front-line officers are ideally placed to partner with religious leaders, other important community members, as well as with teachers and parents. This means they need to be able to connect with both men and women.

In some communities, police officers may need to make additional efforts to ensure they reach women and girls. For various reasons, women may not be as visible on streets, in community centres, or in public places such as cafés. As the case study on the Oslo police in Chapter V has illustrated, it is essential to have women as members of community engagement teams to ensure that women and girls can be reached as well.

As soon as police officers speak to community members, they display their awareness of and attitudes about gender. They reveal whether they are gender-sensitive or gender blind. Integrating gender considerations into their reflections and questions is thus of utmost importance.

When a request is received for the police to intervene, there are several key questions that should be asked:

QUESTIONS	GENDER CONSIDERATIONS
Is there a role for the police in this request?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In dealing with this request, is a male or female officer needed? • Can men/women who want to talk about this request safely stay in their environment? • Should men and women involved in this request be separated from one another for any fact-finding conversations?
If yes, what exactly is the role of the police?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the persons involved in this request require special protection? • Do other family members need protection? • Could an intervention by the police, such as ordering an arrest, have negative implications on the household? If yes, how can this risk be mitigated?
If not, who should be mandated to provide the service needed in this request?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there specific CSOs that have established expertise in the service that is needed? • Should community referral mechanisms be deployed?
How can the police engage with the agency needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there specific focal points who are connected with CSOs within the police?

Frontline officers are also well placed to work together with other agencies and CSOs to undertake training and capacity building activities in the communities in which they work. Targeted capacity building can, for instance, address women and men in minority communities, or individuals deemed at risk of VERLT (see the case studies above on the RCMP in Toronto and the Oslo police).

Topics for such activities might include:

- Civic rights and gender equality;
- Care taking and parenting skills for both men and women;
- The functioning of government institutions and the role of the police in particular;
- The relevant rights of citizens under the law;
- The prevention of radicalization and violent extremism and what to do if signs of either are recognized in families or communities;

- SGBV;
- Crime prevention and delinquency;
- Sexual harassment;
- Hate crime.

6.2 Senior leadership

The support and active contribution of the senior management and leadership is vital for ensuring that law enforcement institutions genuinely integrate gender considerations into their strategic and practical work on P/CVERLT. For this reason, senior leaders need to fully understand the advantages of incorporating gender considerations into P/CVERLT, as well as what steps can be taken to do this.

Among other things, senior leaders can:

- **Develop and support specific outreach programmes** that aim, in particular, at establishing relations with women in minority communities. Such teams should consist of both women and men to ensure equal access to both women and men beneficiaries.
- **Suggest setting up internal structures facilitating the integration of a gender perspective into P/CVERLT** when institutional review and re-structuring is taking place. This may involve establishing gender advisers or focal points in all departments, and having gender experts in community outreach teams and in teams that are working on anti-radicalization and terrorism.
- **Introduce regular meetings between community engagement teams and officers working on P/CVERLT** to share relevant information and to ensure that there is a mutual understanding about the benefits of establishing community relations.

*Moreover, senior law enforcement leaders are well placed to **allocate funding** for projects involving gender questions. Such projects might include:*

- Initiating gender self-assessment within their institution;
- Supporting the recruitment, retention and promotion of women police officers;
- Providing capacity building for women in minority communities about civic rights and the role of the police;
- Providing capacity building for young men, such as on positive masculinities.

It is also recommended that senior leaders:

- **Mainstream gender into all of the programmes they develop.** To do this effectively, they need to have a gender analysis conducted that covers all phases of a programme, beginning with the programme's assessment or background phase, and ending with its monitoring and evaluation. A gender analysis allows context-specific gender norms, stereotypes, relationships and the power dynamics that shape gender roles to be identified. Recognizing such issues internally within an institution and its programme management team is just as important as understanding them in the context of a beneficiary community.

In the process of assessing a planned programme or doing background research, gender sensitive questions may include whether:

- The programme examines the social, economic, cultural, and/or political situation of both women and men. In a C/PVERLT programme, an example of this would be whether there are gendered differences in any of the push/pull factors toward radicalization and violent extremism.
- It considers the different impacts the measures being developed will have on women and men, including any negative impacts. For instance, when developing measures for C/PVERLT, it should be asked whether there is a sufficient number of women officers in the work force to be able to reach out to women from minority communities.
- Any data assessing the issue being addressed has been disaggregated according to sex, and if not, whether there is a reason for not doing this.
- Any relevant women's organizations have been consulted, or whether information from such organizations is available.

Gender sensitive questions about a programme's planned activities and objectives might include whether:

- The programme's objectives address the needs of both men and women, including any unique needs of women and girls, and if so, whether this is clearly indicated.
- The proposed activities appropriately address the gender dimensions highlighted in the programme assessment/background research. For example, if a programme is targeting women at risk of VERLT, it should include an awareness of the gender norms and biases frequently used by terrorist organizations.
- The programme has been developed and is being regularly assessed together with women's CSOs and women law enforcement officers.
- There are any barriers or risks for women being involved in the

programme, and if so, what they are and how they can be overcome or mitigated. For instance, when developing capacity building activities for women from minority communities on how to identify drivers and risks of radicalization, it should be asked whether this can be done in their own environment, or whether these women need a safe space.

- The programme activities might potentially have a negative impact, in particular on women's human rights, and if so, whether mitigating steps can be found.

Senior leaders should also:

- Ensure that standard operating procedures and risk assessment protocols are **reflective of gendered differences**. For instance, when evaluating a specific person's tendency to become engaged in VERLT, the evaluation should take account of the concept of toxic masculinities, recognize that grievances of men and women may differ, and reflect the fact that women's trust in the security sector may be particularly weak.
- Work on strategies to **increase the recruitment of women officers**. Women officers should also be included in anti-radicalization and countering terrorism teams, and be encouraged to strengthen their skills and knowledge on the topic.²²⁸
- Promote a **work environment that respects the rights of women and men and is free of gender stereotypes**. Steps for this may include developing a **zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment** and a **code of conduct on gender equality and non-discrimination**. To ensure that all personnel is aware of these institutional commitments and applies them, gender focal points may be appointed to support their implementation, and regular awareness raising events carried out.

6.3 Police Academies

As highlighted in Chapter IV, tailored training and education on what gender means and why it matters in C/PVERLT is essential to ensure the operational effectiveness of the security sector as a whole, and law enforcement in particular.

Police academies, with input from CSOs and other actors such as academics doing research on specific questions like masculinities and femininities, are well placed to develop and implement this kind of training. When doing so, the topic of gender should be integrated into the basic training curriculum for all police officers, as

²²⁸ See the next section on police academies.

well as into programmes for specialized and advanced training and education. In addition to specific gender training for all police officers, gender should be mainstreamed into the entire curricula of police academies. In the context of this handbook, it has been specifically shown how gender questions can be incorporated into training on community policing and the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism.

Basic gender training should include:

- Defining gender, gender awareness, gender equality and gender mainstreaming;
- Explaining why gender matters at the institutional level as well as in active police work;
- Laws and regulations applicable to gender in a given country or context, as well as the institutional policies that implement these laws;
- SGBV;
- Sexual harassment.

Training on gender as related to P/CVERLT should include an overview of the international architecture regarding gender and PVE/CVE, including all relevant UNSCRs and strategic UN and OSCE documents. Above all, these include the OSCE Ministerial Council Declaration No. 4/15 on preventing and countering VERLT, and the UN General Assembly's 6th review resolution of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

It should also discuss why gender awareness matters in P/CVERLT. This not only involves the different roles that women can play in preventing and countering VERLT, but also their role as active contributors to VERLT and related crimes. Training should also explain the notion of “toxic masculinities”, as well as the drivers and push and pull factors of VERLT, in particular for younger men.

To ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of training that addresses gender, both basic and advanced training should undergo an evaluation process. Specific effort should be devoted to developing indicators designed to measure behavioural changes of the participants, as well as changes in attitude. Police academies should also ensure that training groups include both men and women.

Women officers working in community policing, or patrol or intelligence-led policing units should be specifically targeted and encouraged to participate in advanced and specialized training on P/CVERLT to increase the likelihood that women join anti-radicalization and anti-terrorism units/teams. Such specialized training for women officers might build on inter-cultural competencies, conflict sensitivity, and languages useful for reaching out to minority communities.



7. Integrating a gender perspective into strategies, policies and programmes for the prevention and countering of VERLT

The case studies and research featured in this handbook, together with the experience of the experts and practitioners who were consulted, have revealed a number of key considerations recommended for security sector actors in OSCE participating States to address when integrating gender into P/CVERLT strategies, policies and programmes.

7.1 Gender analyses

Before developing P/CVERLT strategies, policies and programmes, an analysis should be conducted by security sector actors to assess context-specific differences and gaps between women/girls and men/boys to assess how this might impact the effective and sustainable implementation of their efforts.

A gender analysis allows a comprehensive assessment to be made of the differences between women and men in the distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power structures in a given context. This is particularly necessary to ensure that any gender differences in the factors driving VERLT in a given community are accounted for before any P/CVERLT efforts are initiated. This can help security sector actors to understand distinct motivations for joining extremist and terrorist networks. A gender analysis can evaluate such things as:

- The influence of gender roles and norms in the recruitment strategies of VEOs;
- The differences in the roles of women and men within targeted VEOs;
- The possible impact of such differences on disengagement, de-radicalization and reintegration programmes;
- The gender-specific roles in family structures and how this may differently impact the resiliency of family members against violent extremist recruitment;
- Constraints, opportunities and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering women in prevention strategies;
- Potential differing impacts of strategies, policies, and programmes on women/girls and men/boys, including unintended or negative consequences.

Security sector actors do not necessarily have to have “gender expertise” to conduct such an analysis. They just need to take time to consider the above factors. Many tools have already been developed for this kind of analysis, tools that do not need gender expertise. They involve questions that can be asked by security sector actors to ensure that gender differences and dynamics are being incorporated into their strategies, policies and programmes throughout the lifecycle of these efforts.²²⁹

229 For examples of such questions, see: *Gender Mainstreaming Made Easy: Handbook for Programme Staff* (United Nations Development Programme, 2013), p. 22–23. Available at: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/somalia/docs/Project_Documents/Womens_Empowerment/Gender%20Mainstreaming%20Made%20Easy_Handbook%20for%20Programme%20Staff1.pdf

7.2 Gender personnel

Security sector institutions involved in P/CVERLT efforts should invest dedicated resources for staff dedicated to gender questions to help these institutions integrate gender sensitivity into their work. Ideally this would involve full-time gender advisors serving as technical experts on integrating gender awareness across the entirety of these institutions' P/CVERLT work. This might also involve training gender focal points (not necessarily full-time advisors²³⁰) who can provide day-to-day support to specific offices, departments or other types of entities within an institution. Moreover, all security sector personnel should have training in how to integrate a gender perspective into their work.

The work of all gender personnel in security sector institutions must have a clear mandate that is supported by senior leaders. Without such support, it has been seen that gender advisors and focal points often face constraints on their ability to make an impact or enforce gender accountability in the work of all personnel. Ultimately, support from senior leadership can often be one of the most important factors in the success of gender personnel. Networks that provide regular meetings, training and exchange of information between dedicated gender personnel are also critical to their success.

For gender personnel to be most effective, reporting mechanisms must be established within security sector institutions that enable senior leadership to hold entities accountable for progress on gender, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of this work. Critical to these efforts is integrating these reporting mechanisms into national strategies on P/VERLT as well as national action plans on women, peace and security, and ensuring there is alignment between these strategies. A number of recommendations and guidebooks have been developed that may be of help to security sector actors in establishing such reporting mechanisms.²³¹

7.3 Capacity building initiatives

Those at risk of VERLT and the communities around them are likely to come into contact with security sector actors, particularly members of law enforcement teams. How law enforcement actors understand the threat and its impact

²³⁰ See, for example, the network established by the BiH Ministry of Security discussed above, p. 78.

²³¹ See, for example, *Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism* (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, 1st Edition). Available at: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org/counterterrorism.ctitf/files/UNOCT_PVEReferenceGuide_FINAL.pdf

on communities shapes how effective their responses are. Also important is an understanding of how gender dynamics relate to VERLT and influence the communities in which individuals at risk of radicalization and violent extremism live or with which they interact. It cannot be assumed that every security sector actor has a clear understanding of these gender dynamics. It is thus recommended that OSCE participating States invest resources into training initiatives for security sector actors with the goal of integrating gender into their operations. Leaders in these institutions should enable their personnel to take part in such training and then hold their personnel accountable for integrating what they learn into their daily work.

As this handbook has made clear, an understanding of the scope of women's participation in violent extremism can be gained through capacity building initiatives. This involves the gendered differences in the roles played by women and men within VEOs and how these organizations use gender norms, stereotypes and dynamics to advance their recruitment and operations. This handbook can help in creating a curriculum for such training.

Further, dedicated capacity building initiatives for female security sector actors, particularly police, on a broad spectrum of issues related to VERLT is often necessary, particularly in contexts in which women are not significantly represented in these institutions and/or not currently serving in frontline roles. The training which has been implemented for women police in Kosovo demonstrates such a capacity building initiative²³² Women's representation in the security sector is also critical for ensuring that its institutions are representative of the populations they are tasked with protecting – something vital for effective P/CVERLT. This means that security sector institutions must invest in the education and professional development of women.

7.4 Security sector reform

This handbook has presented a number of key considerations related to the integration of gender into security sector reform efforts, particularly criminal justice reforms. Such reforms are core components for effectively responding to VERLT. They include recruiting more women into operational police roles and leadership positions, as well as ensuring that both male and female police officers understand the gender dynamics at work in VERLT. A number of valuable

²³² See above, Chapter V, section 3, p. 74.

resources have been developed about strengthening attention to gender in the work of security sector actors.²³³

In particular, the integration of gender awareness into community-oriented policing mechanisms is critical for effective P/CVERLT. As this handbook has made clear, community-oriented policing mechanisms should not be seen merely as a strategy or tactic, but should involve changes in the attitudes and philosophy of a police force, changes that shift to goal to building trust with communities. This requires police units to reflect the diversity (in gender, ethnicity, race and religion) of the communities they serve.

The community-oriented policing initiatives in Oslo and Tunisia featured in this handbook²³⁴ demonstrate the importance of having police forces in which both female and male officers serve in positions that enable them to interact and form partnerships with local communities. This builds trust, particularly with marginalized or hard-to-reach communities. This can become an important component in P/CVERLT efforts. It is often the case that female officers tasked with reaching out to women in local communities and women's organizations build trust more easily than male officers can. Such models should be considered by police institutions.

7.5 Co-ordination with civil society

Effective community policing mechanisms often cannot be implemented without the support and co-operation of civil society organizations. This requires the security sector to dedicate time, attention and resources toward efforts aimed at building trust and partnerships with all parts of civil society. It is also important to address policies and law enforcement abuses that may hinder building relationships with such organizations. Civil society has knowledge of local dynamics that may be useful for preventing crime, including VERLT. The police should work with civil society to facilitate local P/CVERLT efforts as well as to open communication lines to recognize activities that are of concern to communities. For the reasons outlined in this handbook, women's groups should also be included in this work.

This handbook has highlighted a number of models for enhancing co-operation and co-ordination between security sector entities and civil society organizations,

233 See for example: Kristin Valasek, "Security Sector Reform and Gender" Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit, Eds. Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek, Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008.

234 See above, Chapter V, section 1.2, p. 66, and section 5.1, p. 82.

as for example, mobilizing such organizations in partnerships with police using so-called referral mechanisms. These are formal or informal mechanisms involving practitioners and professionals from different disciplines and/or agencies and organizations that aims to identify, assess, assist, and treat those showing signs of being at-risk of or vulnerable to engagement in or on the path to VERLT.

Such models aim at engaging with individuals who are vulnerable to VERLT although they do not warrant law enforcement action. This opens such mechanisms to a broader range of expertise, experience and community representation.²³⁵ The same can be said about the participation of civil society in so-called situation tables, as described above,²³⁶ in which the police, other service providers and civil society actors work to identify individuals, groups and places at high risk of VERLT, either as perpetrators or victims, and co-ordinate appropriate measures and interventions. Civil society organizations can also provide a valuable and integral perspective on the gender dynamics related to individuals' vulnerabilities towards VERLT. Security sector actors should thus dedicate resources and attention for including such organizations. Without investing efforts to build trust and partnerships with such civil society organizations, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to convince them to participate in referral mechanisms.

Additionally, the inclusion of civil society organizations, including international groups, in security sector training on VERLT may help boost understanding about the nature of the threat, how gender dynamics impact it, and how to mainstream gender into the work of security sector actors. Including civil society organizations in capacity building initiatives not only ensures that the police receive a civilian perspective on the VERLT threat and gender-related dynamics, it may also help security sector actors to better understand how their own actions may be a factor in creating conditions conducive to VERLT.

More detailed information on engagement with civil society can be found in the OSCE publication *The Role of Civil Society in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Focus on South-Eastern Europe*. It is a useful tool for law enforcement and community policing officers.²³⁷

235 For more guidance on this, see: *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community Policing Approach* (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2014).

236 See above, Chapter V, section 1.1, p. 63.

237 *The Role of Civil Society in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Focus on South-Eastern Europe* Available at: https://www.amazon.com/Religion-Violence-Encyclopedia-Conflict-Antiquity/dp/0765620480#reader_0765620480

7.6 The VERLT spectrum

This handbook has raised key considerations about the nature of the VERLT threat and how it should be viewed by security sector actors. Importantly, it has pointed out that gender considerations should be a core component of P/CVERLT efforts. This is true for a broad range of VERLT threats—not just in relation to specific types. As the findings have made clear, gender dynamics are not unique to a single violent extremist organization, or even to organizations with similar ideologies. Women play a range of roles in groups and movements that follow violent extremist ideologies. Further, gender norms and stereotypes, including concepts of masculinity and femininity, are often manipulated as a tool for recruitment, for building group cohesion, and in certain contexts, for state-building among an array of different groups and movements.

It is critical that women's involvement in VERLT, or their affiliation with such groups or movements, is not seen and measured only as an aspect of their relationships with men. Women must be viewed as actors with agency. Moreover, it is important that women and men are not viewed as a uniform group. Their motivations for joining violent extremist organizations will vary based on each and every individual. Moreover, the roles they play in different groups will vary. Understanding the gender dynamics in the broad spectrum of VERLT threats will allow security sector actors to respond, effectively and sustainably, to the radicalization processes among men and women who support these groups. Integrating this handbook's findings on gender dynamics into security sector capacity building initiatives is a first step in achieving this goal.

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