

REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM



Message from the IGAD Executive Secretary

Violent extremism is a growing transnational threat that is increasingly undermining security, stability, and development, globally. It is in this context that in July 2016, we at the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) decided to embark on developing a regional strategy for preventing and countering violent extremism through a highly comprehensive and inclusive consultative process that included all IGAD member states, and Tanzania. IGAD is indebted to the governments of Japan, Sweden and The Netherlands that provided the funding and UNDP for providing technical support in the development of this regional strategy. We discovered that the first, and unavoidable, challenge in developing a regional strategy on countering violent extremism is agreeing on a common definition. For the purpose of this regional strategy, violent extremism refers to two inter-related things. First, it is purely an ideology that rejects the principles and values that underpin a peaceful orderly and non-violent society, instead espousing violence, terror and coercion as a pathway to change and to realizing specific beliefs and vision of society. Second, preventing and countering violent extremism is primarily a strategy that highlights non-coercive approaches designed to address the drivers or root causes of extremism in order to neutralize the efforts by extremists to radicalize and recruit followers to violence.

In Eastern Africa, a historically volatile region, terrorists are taking advantage of a mix of civil wars, conflicts and insurgencies, tapping into criminal networks, occupying weakly governed and sparsely populated spaces as safe havens and exploiting widespread grievances relating to poverty, joblessness, exclusion, injustice and repression to radicalize and recruit to violence and using social media platforms to spread messages of hate against sections of communities. IGAD has taken bold measures to defeat and rout out terrorist groups, particularly the Al-Shabaab Islamist group in Somalia with the aim of restoring peace and security as enablers of sustainable development. IGAD is not a newcomer to the efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism. In 2005, its member states formed the Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM) to end civil wars, defeat terrorism and restore law and order in Somalia, the precursor to the current African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

While IGAD member states continue to be the primary contributors of troops to AMISOM, it has embraced the global shift to preventing and countering violent extremism and refocused attention to local solutions to the challenge of radicalization to violence. IGAD welcomed the recommendations and initiatives arising from the series of high-level meetings on countering violent extremism, which called for new commitment to broad-based partnerships involving governments and non-state actor such as civil society, private sector and religious leaders. These consultations at the regional and global levels culminated in the launch of the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which embraced the "whole of society" approach to propel efforts to eliminate the threat of radicalization and recruitment particularly of young people to violence.

IGAD has directed its efforts to enhancing the soft power capabilities, coordination and partnerships to prevent and counter violent extremism. This is the agenda driving the Regional Strategy. The strategy will deepen our understanding of the drivers of violent extremism and concrete measures to diminish the appeal of radical ideologies and messages that are pulling people to violence. The strategy will also help states in the region to coordinate their response internally within government and with other non-state stakeholders while expanding space for cooperation across the region and to forge meaningful international partnerships to support efforts aimed at eroding the appeal of extremists. The newly created IGAD Center of Excellence on Countering Violent extremism will provide guidance and to the necessary coordination to ensure the effectiveness of the activities and programmes proposed by the strategy. Reducing the threat posed by the violent extremists to regional peace and security is central to sustainable development and our shared prosperity. The Strategy signals a new beginning in our determination to rid the region of extremist ideologies and terrorism.



H.E. Amb (Eng) Mahboub Maalim
Executive Secretary
Intergovernmental Authority on Development

25 April 2018

List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| AfDB | Africa Development Bank |
| AMISOM | African Union Mission to Somalia |
| AQAP | Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula |
| AU | African Union |
| CEWARN | Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism |
| CEWARU | Conflict Early Warning and Response Units |
| COMESA | Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa |
| CT | Counter-terrorism |
| CVE | Countering Violent Extremism |
| EAC | East African Community |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community Of West African States |
| EU | European Union |
| FIUs | Financial Intelligence Units |
| FMs | Field Monitors |
| HISS | Heads of Intelligence and Security Services |
| ICSF | IGAD Civil Society Forum |
| ICU | Islamic Courts Union |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| IGAD SSP | IGAD Security Sector Program |
| IGASOM | IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia |
| IOC | Indian Ocean Community |
| ISIS | Islamic State in Iraq and Syria |
| KDF | Kenya Defence Forces |
| LRA | Lord's Resistance Army |
| MRC | Mombasa Republican Council |
| NRIs | National Research Institutes |
| OAU | Organization of African Unity |
| OECD | Organization for Cooperation and Development |
| PRDP | Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (for Northern Uganda) |
| PSC | Peace and Security Council |
| PVE | Preventing Violent Extremism |
| REC | Regional Economic Communities |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SFG | Somali Federal Government |
| SJPN | Sahel Judicial Platform or the Network |
| SUPKEM | Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims |
| TST | Transnational Security Threats Initiative (IGAD) |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United National Development Programme |
| UPDF | Ugandan People's Defense Force |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WACAP | West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors |

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**IGAD's Center of Excellence for Preventing and
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25 April 2018



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25 April 2018

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*It is our trust
that this regional
strategy will
immensely
contribute to the
region's peace
and security
architecture.*

Executive Summary

The threat of violent extremism has grown steadily in Eastern Africa, undermining security and development in regional states and the mandate of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to provide regional stability as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Successfully preventing and countering this transnational threat calls for concerted efforts at the local, national, regional and international realms. It is in this context that IGAD has developed a comprehensive regional strategy to guide the generation and implementation of effective policy and action to avert and neutralize violent ideologies.

Violent extremism defies a single definition. This strategy, while defining violent extremism as a phenomenon that refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals, also underscores that the new focus on violent extremism is primarily a strategy that involves a set of policies and actions designed to neutralize the efforts by extremists to radicalize and recruit followers to violence. In this regard, although violent extremism as a concept includes other related terms such as terrorism and radicalization, it is important to draw a distinction between its meaning and responses to the threat it poses. Counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism are two sides of the same coin—combating violent extremism—but differ radically as strategies, the former prioritizing ‘hard’ approach the other ‘soft’ power. But terrorist groups and their agendas are neither static nor seamless. The strategy deepens our understanding of categories of terrorists—including international networks, terrorist franchises, homegrown terrorists and radicalized political or criminal groups—that require specific responses.

The drivers of violent extremism are also diverse and complex. Charismatic preachers, teachers and mobilizers have used powerful strategic communications, compelling messages and promise material and financial benefits or perceived social status as pull factors that get people to join radical groups. But extremists are exploiting widespread grievances linked to such structural factors as underdevelopment, poverty, lack of access to education, unemployment, corruption, real or perceived social exclusion, ethnic, national and religious discrimination to radicalize and recruit to violence. In this regard, effectively neutralizing the efforts of extremists calls for a nuanced understanding of the space within which violent extremism unfolds. This regional strategy targets two distinct groups in this space including the ideologically driven core of extremists or the ‘owners of war’ exemplified by the Al-Shabaab, and the bearers of grievances, also known as “the disenfranchised,” who are the targets of the extremists.

Similarly, the levels of vulnerability of regional states to terrorism have also varied. This strategy identifies three categories of state vulnerability to violent extremism including “the epicenter” (Somalia), “spillover states” (Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and Ethiopia) and “at-risk states” (Tanzania, South Sudan and Sudan). This classification is likely to change. Continued civil wars in regional countries can produce a new epicenter and increase the vulnerability of the region to violent extremism. The regional strategy stresses the role of research and analysis to deepen our understanding of the drivers of extremism and sites of radicalization and recruitment to violence such as refugee camps, remand facilities and prisons, social media, religious and educational institutions and to underpin evidence-driven policy responses.

In the light of this complex terrain of violent extremism, this strategy stresses the need for a long-term view of the efforts to neutralize violent extremism. This will entail strike a clear balance between the two horizons of security (short-term) and development (long-term). Preventing and countering violent extremism must be embraced as a multi-generational enterprise. In this regard, the overall objective of the regional strategy is to enhance the collective capacity of regional actors to prevent and counter violent extremism. Specifically, the strategy aims at providing a comprehensive regional framework for the coordination of regional engagement; creating platforms for cooperation and coordination among regional states; generating and sharing research perspectives to better understand the drivers of violent extremism, mobilize effective interventions and inform evidence-driven policy and action; and to strengthen the capacity of regional governments and non-state actors to reject and resist radicalization to violence. The strategy adopts a spectrum of concrete measures and activities to realize these objectives. The proposed measures and activities are organized around five pillars: building regional capacity; research and analysis; empowering local communities, addressing the political, legal, social and economic push factors; and promoting P/CVE diplomacy to underpin broad-based partnerships. Extremists are operating regionally across territorial borders, effective response must also take a regional and global approach.

1 | INTRODUCTION

1. Eastern Africa¹ is one of the regions in the world most imperiled by violent extremism as a fast-evolving transnational security threat. In many ways, violent extremism in Eastern Africa constitutes a complex hybrid of civil wars, insurgencies, separatisms, terrorism, political violence and criminality deeply rooted in internal and regional conflicts that that the region has experienced in recent decades, natural disasters (drought, famine and food insecurity largely as effects of climate change), widespread poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment, especially affecting a rapidly growing youth stratum.

2. Violent extremism is complicated by geopolitical tensions that have undermined a common approach to global security challenges in the 21st century. In the context of this amalgam of political, socio-economic and geopolitical challenges, violent extremism has continued to undermine the efforts of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to fulfill its mandate to promote peace and stability as enablers of sustainable development. As such, effectively preventing and countering violent extremism in Eastern Africa as elsewhere demands concerted efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels. In this regard, a comprehensive regional strategy will provide the necessary framework to guide effective policy and action.

The P/CVE approach places communities at the center of the fight against all forms of violent extremism.

A. Understanding Violent Extremism

3. Preventing and countering violent extremism is a new term, which has been adopted across the spectrum from governments to practitioners to academics. But confusion still remains as to what the term 'violent extremism' means, and how it is connected with the related concepts of 'terrorism', 'counter-terrorism' and 'radicalization'.

Defining Violent Extremism:

4. At a basic level, violent extremism has been used synonymously with terrorism and radicalization and is widely assumed to include other forms of politically motivated and communal violence. However, although they collectively threaten national or global security in an interlocking way, as operational concepts violent extremism, terrorism and radicalization have distinct meanings and implications for policy and programming. Even though the three terms are closely interlinked and interdependent, violent extremism refers to an ideology or strategy, terrorism to the act, and radicalization to the process.² This Regional Strategy considers violent extremism as a more inclusive term that includes terrorism and all other forms of politically inspired, sectarian or communal violence.

¹ In this Regional Strategy, 'Eastern Africa' refers to East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) and the Horn of Africa region (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan). All these countries, except Tanzania and Eritrea, are member states of IGAD.

² Jason-Leigh Striegler, "Violent-Extremism: An Examination of a Definitional Dilemma", Conference Proceedings of the 8th Australian Security and Intelligence Conference, November 30-December 2, 2015 (pp. 75-86), Edith Cowan University Joondalup Campus, Perth, Western Australia, available at: <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/asi/47>.

5. Despite this, an all-embracing ‘official’ definition of violent extremism does not exist.³ While prevailing definitions lack precision and rigour,⁴ they exhibit two tendencies that are important in understanding the phenomenon. One is a clear focus on violent extremism as a means-to-an-end that highlights more what the concept seeks to achieve than what it actually means. In light of this, violent extremism has been characterized as the “beliefs and actions” that sanction, encourage and justify the use of fear, terror and violence to achieve ideological, religious, political, social or economic goals.⁵ The second tendency is a moral focus on the values that undergird the agendas and actions of violent extremists. In all its forms, violent extremism seeks change through fear and intimidation rather than through peaceful means such as dialogue. Terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence are included in this definition.⁶ While useful, these definitions hardly fill the gap on what violent extremism is—or is not.

6. For the purpose of this Regional Strategy, violent extremism refers to two inter-related things. First, it is *an ideology* anchored on violence. As an ideology, violent extremism rejects the principles and values that underwrite a peaceful society, instead espousing violence, terror and coercion as a pathway to change and to realizing specific beliefs and vision of society. It is an ideology that exploits real or perceived grievances—that can otherwise be addressed through dialogue and other peaceful, non-violent means—to rally support and to justify the use of violence as a means to achieve specific social, economic, religions or political ends.

7. Inversely, the new accent on violent extremism is *primarily a strategy*. As a new strategy, widely embraced in governmental and multilateral circles, its logic is to counter the violent ideology of the militants and secure at-risk communities from the allure of radical and violent solutions to their grievances. As a strategy, preventing and countering violent extremism adopts non-coercive measures designed to address the drivers or root causes of extremism in order to neutralize the efforts by extremists to radicalize and recruit followers to violence.

Responses to Violent Extremism:

8. Nevertheless, understanding violent extremism as a strategy requires drawing a clear line between what the phenomenon means and the responses—policies, actions and tactics—it has elicited. Strategic responses to violent extremism are threefold.

9. The first response is *counter-terrorism* (CT). From the start, this response stressed the use of ‘hard’ security measures: military, law-enforcement or policing resources, covert responses that involve force, the criminal justice system or (most controversially) extra-judicial processes. Even though CT strategies have downgraded the military capacity of extremists and liberate communities from their grip, the use of military and militarized law enforcement efforts has had limited results in dissuading at-risk populations from joining violent armed movements. According to some, as an integral part of the ‘global war on terror’ in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, this strategy “is in part to blame for the spread of radical Islamic militancy over the last decade.”⁷

³ Neither the United Nations nor the European Union has an official definition of violent extremism.

⁴ The United States defines it as “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives”.

⁵ This particular interpretation forms the kernel of the United Nations Secretary General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (January 2016) as well as the Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (Washington, May 2016).

⁶ This definition is widely adopted to guide policy and action by many governments, see for example Australian Government, “What is Violent Extremism?” <https://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au/aboutus/Documents/what-is-violent-extremism.pdf>, Retrieved October 30, 2016.

⁷ Jason Burke, *The New Threat from Islamic Militancy*, London: Vintage, 2015, p.8.

Preventing and countering violent extremism adopts non-coercive measures designed to address the drivers of extremism.

10. The second response is countering violent extremism (CVE). Although it lacks a consistent definition, CVE is generally held to mean increasing reliance on ‘softer’ responses to terrorism and radicalization involving preventative and mostly non-coercive policies, actions and programmes that seek to address the underlying causes of violent extremism.

11. The third response is risk reduction, or preventing violent extremism (PVE). Closely connected with CVE, PVE stresses non-coercive interventions to mitigate the threat from sections of populations already engaged in violent extremism to ensure that militants do not cause harm. Risk reduction measures are increasingly focusing on research, diagnosis, and recommending innovative ways to identify and secure individuals, groups or communities at risk of radicalization.⁸

CVE as a Strategic Shift:

12. Simply put, preventing and countering violent extremism(P/CVE) marks a radical strategic shift from over-reliance on ‘hard’ security measures to no-coercive efforts to thwart the strategies and tactics of violent extremists. It entails policies, actions and tactics designed to de-legitimize the ideologies of violent extremists and reduce their ability to win support. These include, devising alternative narratives and capabilities to enable at-risk individuals, groups or communities to resist radicalization to violence and addressing specific grievances and factors that militants exploit to recruit and radicalize populations.

13. Significantly, the P/CVE approach places populations and communities, including civil society, women, youth and faith-based groups at the center of the fight against all forms of violent extremism. It also ensures that the fight against violent extremism adheres to the rule of law and good governance, protects the rights and freedoms of individuals and communities and does not undermine the larger efforts to consolidate democracy. The highlighting of violent extremism is a clarion call to ensure that violent extremists do not change us from what we are!

Target Groups and Drivers of VE:

14. This Regional Strategy recognizes both the extremists and those they seek to radicalize and recruit to their violent course are not seamless categories. The Strategy distinguishes between two target groups. The first consists of the extremists also known as the ‘owners of war’ who control the ideologies and the infrastructure of extremism as propagandists, recruiters and as funders who radicalize, recruit and incite people to violence. The other target group consists of at-risk communities, individuals and groups popularly known as “the disenfranchised”⁹.

15. What connects the ‘owners of war’ and ‘the disenfranchised’ is not just a shared sense of grievance, a common cultural heritage, ethnic, racial, religious or ideological bonds. It is also a set of factors, commonly known as ‘drivers of violent extremism, that fall into two categories: the “push factors” and the “pull factors” which provide a fertile ground for violent ideologies to take root in at-risk communities.

Violent extremism has been characterized as the “beliefs and actions” that sanction, encourage and justify the use of fear, terror and violence to achieve ideological, religious, political, social or economic goals.

⁸ J. Khalil and M. Zeuthen. (2014). “A Case Study of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programming: Lessons from OTI’s Kenya Transition Initiative, Stability: International Journal of Security & Development 3 (1); USAID, The development response to violent extremism and insurgency. USAID Policy, Washington D.C.: USAID, 2011.

⁹ Ziadi Alahdad, “Countering Violent Extremism: Shifting the Emphasis Towards the Development Paradigm”, in Laurie Fenstermacher (ed), Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods and Strategies. Air Force Research Laboratory, Topical Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment and Air Force Research Laboratory Multi-Disciplinary White Paper in Support of Counter-Terrorism and Counter-WMD, July 2015, pp. 83-89.

16. On their part, the extremists radicalize and recruit to violence by exploiting a slew of 'push factors,' including such structural factors as underdevelopment, endemic poverty, lack of voice or opportunity, lack of access to education, high levels of youth unemployment, food insecurity, real or perceived social or political exclusion, human rights violations, persecution, corruption, ethnic, national and religious discrimination and marginalization. Besides the youth stratum, extremists have focused sharp attention on women as a source of support and recruits as fighters, suicide bombers and jihad brides, thus highlighting the need to re-conceptualize the role of women as both victims and perpetrators in combating extremism.

17. Extremists make promises and provide immediate incentives to lure people or communities to accept their extremist beliefs. Extremists have also managed to expand the space of radicalizing and recruiting to violence by using charismatic preachers, teachers and mobilizers; powerful strategic communications and compelling messages; as well as such 'pull factors' as promises of socio-economic development, immediate material and financial benefits, or perceived social status that people expect to gain by being members of a militant organization.

18. Militants have also taken advantages of protracted and unresolved conflicts, political instability, insecurity, civil wars, weak institutions, porous borders, vast stretches of sparsely populated and 'ungoverned' spaces, rampant illegal or forced migrations and illicit flows of arms, drugs contrabands, cattle rustling and poaching to recruit to violence and to fund their activities. Also aiding the efforts of extremists is the absence of coherent and coordinated action, effective system of information sharing among security, immigration and other agencies at the local, national and regional levels to detect, deter, and defeat their activities. Added to this is the weak or absence of cooperation and collaboration in governmental, civil society and multilateral circles in the fight against extremism.

Core Strategic Issues:

19. This Regional Strategy is designed to tackle radicalization by addressing conditions that expand the pool for extremists to radicalize and recruit to violence. The Strategy singles out four core issues for strategic focus in the prevention and countering of violent extremism, which emerged during the consultations:

a. Sites of Radicalization: The first strategic focus consists of the sites of radicalization. It is imperative that this strategy pays attention to the changing dynamics in the various sites of radicalization including poor neighbourhoods, social spaces such as video-kiosks, refugee camps, remand facilities and prisons, internet and mass (social) media, religious institutions (mosques, madrassas, and Islamic Welfare Institutions) and educational institutions such as primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities.

b. Vulnerability of Regional States: It is important that the strategy gain a nuanced understanding of the varying scales of vulnerability of regional states to radicalization. States in the Eastern Africa region fall into three fluid categories of vulnerability: the epicenter (Somalia); spillover states (Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and Ethiopia); and countries at risk (Tanzania, South Sudan and Sudan), presenting different challenges to the prevention and countering violent extremism.

c. The Security-Religion Nexus: Also important in designing a strategic response to violent extremism is the need to understand the link between religion and violence.

As a concept, violent extremism is the nexus between security and religion. Although religion can—and has—contributed to security threats such as terrorism, it is seldom a threat in itself. Extremists have instrumentally used faith to frame a violent response to real or imagined grievances. Unfortunately, this has fed the flawed trend to liken terrorism to Islam. In Eastern Africa, as elsewhere, the reality is that violent extremism is not limited to any specific faith, race, ethnicity or culture. From Islam to Christianity to Hinduism to Buddhism, religion is a marker of identity, itself an important dimension of group violence.¹⁰ Violent extremists have adeptly used the religious identity to frame an ‘us-versus-them’ divide in order to mobilize support and recruit to violence.

d. Balancing Security and Development Horizons: Realizing development in Eastern Africa is integral to effectively preventing radicalization to violent extremism and ensuring security in the region. On the one hand, policies and actions to reduce the threat violent extremism are largely short-term, and often retaliatory, defined by the need for rapid response to the threats. On the other hand, the development horizon is long-term and pursues a fundamental transformation of society, which requires massive overlay of resources and largely depends on interventions that stretch over generations. This strategy must, therefore, adopt a long view of the efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in the region that reconciles the imperatives of security and those of development as a multi-generational enterprise. It demands strong partnerships based on long-term commitment to strengthening the capacity of regional and national actors. As the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action noted, violent extremism is an existential threat, and “no country or region is immune to its impacts.”¹¹

B. The Threat of Violent Extremism in Eastern Africa

20. This Regional Strategy is conceived as a logical and long-overdue response to the growing threat of violent extremism in Eastern Africa. Discernibly, four categories of extremists have been engaged in radicalizing and recruiting to violent extremism in the Eastern Africa region.

21. The first is that of international terrorist groups. Activities of these groups in the region in the 1960s through 1980s were traced to Palestinian or pro-Palestinian militants. These started with the assassination of the American Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission and a Belgian diplomat by the Palestinian terrorist group, Black September, in Khartoum Sudan in March 1973.¹² On December 31, 1980, pro-Palestinian militants bombed the Norfolk hotel in Nairobi, killing 20 people and wounding 87 others in an act of revenge for Kenya’s role in supporting Israel’s Operation Entebbe in 1976.¹³ In 1995, the Egyptian terrorist group, Gama’at al-Islamiyya, made an abortive attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.¹⁴

22. The late 1990s witnessed the emergence of major international terrorist groups, mainly al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS), which had its serious ripples in Eastern Africa. Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for a series of attacks in the region including the simultaneous bombing of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in

¹⁰ Gelfand, M.; LaFree, G.; Fahey, S.; & Feinberg, E. (2013). *Culture and extremism*. *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (3): 495-517; Wolffe, J. and Moorhead, G. (2014). *Religion, security and global uncertainties*. Milton Keynes: The Open University.

¹¹ United Nations, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary General to Prevent Violent Extremism, Seventieth Session, Agenda Items 16 and 17, January 2016*.

¹² S. K. Gosh, *Terrorism World Under Siege*, New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1995, p.71.

¹³ Saul David, *Operation Thunderbolt: Flight 139 and the Raid on Entebbe Airport, the Most Audacious Hostage Rescue Mission in History*, Little Brown, 2015.

¹⁴ Galal A. Amin, *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak: 1981-2011*, Cairo & New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2011.

The proliferation of ISIS and Al-Qaeda in the region indicates that violent extremism in Eastern Africa is entering a more deadly phase.

August 1998, which left a total of 224 people dead and 4085 others injured.¹⁵ Again, in November 2002, al Qaeda cells were also responsible for a car bomb attack on the Kikambara Paradise Resort in Mombasa popular with Israeli tourists, which killed 13 people and injuring 80 others. At the same time, Al-Qaeda militants fired two SA-7 man-portable air-defense missiles at, but missed, an Israeli passenger airliner taking off from Moi International Airport, Mombasa. Moreover, Al-Qaeda supported parties involved in the Somali civil war in Somalia and Eritrea.¹⁶ In 2007, as soon as the allied Somali and Ethiopian forces drove the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) fighters out of Somalia, al Qaeda supplied arms to ICU militants and supplied fighters who formed part of a foreign alliance that attacked the Somali government positions. And when the Al-Shabaab group emerged from within the ranks of ICU's armed forces, it soon became affiliated to al Qaeda.

23. In the 21st century, the rivalry between the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda has played out in Eastern Africa. ISIS has made serious inroads into Eastern Africa, establishing its own cells in the region. It has been recruiting fighters from the region and facilitating their travel to Libya, Iraq, Syria and other parts where it is most active. In April 2016, ISIS launched its own attacks in Eastern Africa, taking responsibility for the bombing of an AMISOM vehicle and an attack on Somali Government troops. The Somali Government overran an ISIS training camp in Southern Somalia.

24. The second category of violent extremists working in Eastern Africa consists of affiliates of the two major international terrorist groups. Since 2007, fighters of the 'Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula' (AQAP) have conducted operations in the Eastern African region, particularly in Somalia and Eritrea. The war in Yemen revitalized AQAP, Al-Shabaab's strongest link to Al Qaeda, giving incentives to the Somali extremist group to remain in al Qaeda. On its part, ISIS has used pledges of allegiance by existing terrorist groups and insurgents to establish affiliates around the world in order to establish its "global caliphate". In March 2015, Boko Haram joined ISIS, calling on fellow jihadists in sub-Saharan Africa to follow suit. In April 2016, a splinter from Al-Shabaab known as 'Jahba East Africa' pledged loyalty to ISIS, claiming to have fighters in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan and Eritrea. The proliferation of franchises of ISIS and al-Qaeda in the region indicates that violent extremism in Eastern Africa is entering a more deadly phase.

25. The third category of violent extremists operating in Eastern Africa consists of indigenous or 'homegrown' Islamic terrorist groups styled along the lines of Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Chad Basin. Indigenous militant groups differ in their origins, motivations, strategies and tactics. In the early 1980s, the Somali Islamic Brotherhood movement gave rise to the Somali Islamic Union or Al Ittihad Al Islamiya (AIAI) in 1984.¹⁷ From the Brotherhood also stemmed the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and the Harakaat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujaahidiin, shortly after its founders defected from the ICU in 2006.

26. Al-Shabaab is far and away one of the most successful homegrown terrorist groups in Africa, which gained control over most of Somalia until it lost much of the territory to the African peacekeepers (AMISOM). Despite suffering serious military setbacks, Al-

¹⁵ Sundara Vadlamudi, "The U.S. Embassy Bombings in Kenya and Tanzania", in James J. F. Forest (ed.), *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century: International Perspectives, Volume 3: Lessons From the Fight Against Terrorism*, Westport, Connecticut & London: Praeger Security International, Chapter 7, pp. 103-127.

¹⁶ In 2006-2007, as soon as the allied Somali and Ethiopian forces drove the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) men out of Somalia, al Qaeda maintained ties and supplied arms to ICC militants in Eritrea. Its fighters formed part of a foreign alliance that attacked the Somali government positions. When the Al-Shabaab group emerged from within the ICU's armed forces, it became affiliated to al Qaeda.

¹⁷ Alex de Waal (ed), *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2004; Medhane Tedesse, *Al-Ittihad: Political Islam and Black Economy in Somalia*, Addis Ababa, 2002.

Shabaab has demonstrated immense capacity to effectively strike prime targets inside Somalia and across the Eastern Africa region. Its terrorist activities have targeted those countries contributing troops to AMISOM. It is active in the six countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda, and has mounted cross-border attacks in all of them except Tanzania. In July 2010, in its maiden external attack, the group orchestrated its dual bombing in Kampala, Uganda. It has carried out retaliatory attacks on targets in Kenya for the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) joining AMISOM, including the killing of 67 people in Westgate Mall in September 2013 and the killing of 148 people, mainly students, in Garissa University College. It also launched a suicide attack on a busy resort in Djibouti in May 2014, made a series of abortive attempts to bomb targets in Ethiopia.

27. Al-Shabaab has also established its own affiliates such as Al-Hijra in Kenya to radicalize, recruit and train operatives inside Somalia and its neighbours.¹⁸ At the height of its power between 2010 and 2012, Al-Shabaab opened links with Boko Haram in Nigeria. Boko Haram fighters travelled to Somalia where they received specialized training from Al-Shabaab trainers in South Central Somalia previously controlled by the group while the two Islamist groups have continued to share tactical operational skills and maintained cyber and physical contacts.¹⁹ Internationally, Al-Shabaab has affiliated to al-Qaeda while some of its individual members and factions have pledged loyalty to the leadership of ISIS.

28. The fourth category consists of non-Islamist indigenous militant organizations such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Allied Democratic Front (ADF) in Uganda. The rise of Christian fundamentalism in Uganda in the 1980s gave birth to the Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena and Lord's Resistant Army in Uganda.²⁰ LRA has been responsible for terror attacks and serious human rights violations across Northern Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. Although the LRA's military strategy and tactics suggest that it has not adhered to any clear political ideology and has in practice operated as a personality cult identified with its leader Joseph Kony, the group's stated goal of ruling Uganda according to the Ten Commandments reveals its Christian fundamentalist origins and orientation.²¹ Also in this category are groups such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), a secessionist organization seeking independence for Kenya's coastal region, which has maintained links with Al-Shabaab and its Kenyan affiliate, Al-Hijra. A growing number of its youth have trained in Somalia.

C. The Response of IGAD Member Countries to Violent Extremism

29. This Regional Strategy signifies the ever-evolving efforts by states in Eastern African to coordinate their response to the threat of violent extremism. One of IGAD's earliest and boldest responses to the threat was the decision to launch the Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM) in 2005, which was replaced by the current African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007. The AU force has provided support to the

This Regional Strategy signifies the efforts by states in Eastern Africa to coordinate their response to the threat of violent extremism.

¹⁸ IGAD, *Al-Shabaab as a Transnational Security Threat: Fostering Resilience, Regional Integration and Peace for Sustainable Development, Djibouti: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, March 2016.*

¹⁹ Stephanie Busari, "Boko Haram sought terror training in Somalia, security chief says", CNN, February 26, 2016, available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/25/africa/boko-haram-al-shabaab-somalia/>.

²⁰ Heike Behrend, *Alice Lakwena & the Holy Spirits: War in Northern Uganda, 1986-1997, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1999.*

²¹ Widely regarded primarily as a Christian militia, the LRA sprung from the Holy Spirit Movement led by Alice Lakwena, and started off as "the United Holy Salvation Army" or "Uganda Christian Army/Movement."

The Strategy answers to the clarion call by UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (January 2016) on regional organizations and states to develop national and regional strategies to combat violent extremism.

internationally recognized Somali Federal Government (SFG), enhanced the military capacity of Somali Security Forces and degraded Al-Shabaab militarily.

30. Besides implementing a wide range of regional and international instruments to enhance cooperation, legal and diplomatic capacity to combat terrorism IGAD also adopted its *"Plan of Action for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism"* (2003) and *Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition* (2009). Recently, IGAD has also established the Transnational Security Threats (TST) initiative to advance research and underpin evidence-based and effective policy and action on violent extremism. IGAD teamed up with the East Africa Community to convene high-level meetings of country Heads of Intelligence and Security Services (HISS) (the Djibouti Process), which culminated in the decision to establish a Center of Excellence to Counter Violent Extremism in Eastern Africa.

31. In preparing this Regional Strategy, IGAD is putting into operation the recommendations of high-level conferences on countering violent extremism, including the White House Summit to Countering Violent Extremism (February 2015) and the African Regional Conference on CVE held in Nairobi (July 2015). Significantly, the Strategy answers to the clarion call by UN Secretary General's [Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism](#) (January 2016) on regional organizations and states to develop national and regional strategies to combat violent extremism.²² The UNSG Plan of Action marks a new paradigm of confronting the threat of violent extremism that emphasizes the "whole of government approach" that coordinates diverse sectors (including economic development, education, health, communication and security) and the "whole of society approach" that seeks to empower local communities, social sectors (gender, youth and faiths) and aims at addressing socio-economic grievances as drivers of violence.

D. Rationale for a Regional Strategy

32. A regional strategy to combat violent extremism in all its manifestation in Eastern Africa is critically important. Militants have been planning radicalizing and recruiting transnationally across territorial borders. Therefore, a regional strategy provides the requisite framework for coordinating the responses of communities, governments and organizations to detect, deter and defeat extremist groups. At the one level, the Strategy will help address serious challenges aiding the efforts of extremists to operate across territorial borders such as massive displacement and migration of populations, the plight of refugees in overcrowded camps, porous borders, unguarded coastlines, and weak governance of sparsely populated spaces. It will also offer an ideal mechanism for coordinating efforts to tackle transnational security threats and crimes linked to the financing of terrorist activities, including money laundering, the trafficking of drug, humans, illicit arms and light weapons, cattle rustling, poaching and piracy.

33. Extremists are exploiting capacity gaps in regional responses to thrive. The Strategy will help address national and regional capacity gaps, including the absence of strong legislations, human, technical and financial capabilities as well as weak institutions and structures for sharing information and intelligence. It will also provide a much-needed tool to address intense suspicion and weak partnerships between regional governments and non-state actors (civil society, the private sector and faith-based

²² As of November 2016, only two countries in the Eastern Africa Region (Kenya and Somalia) had developed national strategies.

organizations and communities), which undermines collaborative action and counter-narratives to effectively prevent and counter the growth of radical ideologies. The Strategy will also help address the spectrum of vulnerabilities or drivers of violent extremism across the region that enables the ideologies and agendas of extremists to take root. These include the presence of a large army of unemployed youth, widespread poverty, illiteracy, instability, human rights violations and weak rule of law, which have fueled perceptions of social exclusion.

34. Securing peace, security and stability across the region is recognized as a necessary condition for the realization of African Union's **Agenda 2063** on socio-economic transformation and long-term development of the continent. Extremism poses an existential threat to the countries of the region. In this context, this Regional Strategy contributes to the larger vision of a stable, free and prosperous region in several ways. First, it will support the development of national strategies to guide efforts to address security threats posed by violent extremism. Second the Strategy will help draw from the collective experiences, comparative cases and good practices from regional countries as well as other regions and parts of the world to provide useful lessons to guide policy and action across the Eastern Africa region. Third, the Strategy offers a comprehensive mechanism to help coordinate the effective implementation of the various regional and international instruments to deal with the menace of violent extremism and terrorism.

35. At the regional level, these include the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/AU **Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa**, the recommendations of the **July 2015 Africa Regional Conference on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)**. Related to this, the Strategy provides the platform to share experiences across regions and borrow from existing regional counter-terrorism strategies such as the SADC **Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy** and the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Counter-terrorism Strategy**. At the global level, the Strategy will promote compliance across the region to international conventions, protocols and policy recommendations from international processes on preventing and countering violent extremism particularly the **United Nations (UN) Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** (2006) and the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (January 2016). It will also enable regional countries to comply with their obligations under International Law in their efforts to combat violent extremism, including the **Charter of the United Nations** and the **African Union Constitutive Act** and **African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights**.

E. Methodology

36. In developing this Regional Strategy, IGAD ensured that it followed a comprehensive and inclusive methodology that adhered to the highest standards of professionalism. In this regard, between June and October 2016, a team of experts comprising of two consultants and specialists from IGAD and UNDP executed a wide-ranging consultative processes towards the development of the Regional Strategy. The methodology started off with a comprehensive review of the state of knowledge—both published and unpublished—on the subject of preventing violent extremism, including existing international, regional and international strategies, published articles, reports, books and papers. This provided the baseline knowledge on the subject to guide the consultative process and the writing of the strategy.

The strategy will help address serious challenges such as massive displacement and migration of populations, the plight of refugees in overcrowded camps, porous borders, unguarded coastlines, and weak governance of sparsely populated spaces.

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37. Second, and in line with the “whole of government” and “whole of society” approaches to countering violent extremism, focus group forums (FGFs) were held in the seven IGAD member states plus Tanzania. Ultimately, nearly 800 participants attended the 39 consultative forums. Participants to the consultative forums included senior government officers and experts from the relevant departments (mainly in the law enforcement, intelligence, internal security, judiciary, prisons and departments tasked with the rehabilitation of offenders, ex-combatants and returnees); development partners operating in the respective countries and regional organizations; representatives of non-state actors including civil society, the private sector, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, academics, media, women and youth organizations. Also invited to the country consultations were representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), including the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the relevant UN agencies. A special session was held with representatives of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Host governments also organized visits by the IGAD teams to key offices where briefing meetings were held with senior officials.

38. The process benefited immensely from a high-profile team of country focal points from specialized agencies dealing with issue of radicalization, terrorism and violent extremism representing each of the seven IGAD member states plus Tanzania. This team served as a panel of experts during the consultations and helped in reviewing progress, collating the lessons learnt and good practices from each country and suggesting measures to improve the quality and effectiveness of subsequent consultations. The draft Regional Strategy document was eventually subjected to a comprehensive peer review process involving 202 experts or practitioners from a wide range of organizations and institutions.

2 | STRATEGIC VISION

39. The desired end-states of this regional strategy are twofold:

- i | A relatively peaceful, just, secure and prosperous region where violent extremist groups and individuals are unable to radicalize and attract new recruits or gain support for their activities in communities; and
- ii | All sectors of society at the local communities, national and the regional levels have a strong, well-coordinated collective capacity to reject and resist violent extremist ideologies to minimize the number of individuals whom terrorists can radicalize and recruit to violence.



Students collaborating at the Ntutumeti Primary School, Kenya. October 2010. Narok County, Kenya. UN Photo

CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES GUIDING THE STRATEGY

3

40. Broadly, this Regional Strategy is guided by a human security approach to security that combines national or state security with the larger imperative of involving a wider range of non-state players in addressing security concerns. Specifically, the strategy is anchored upon three principles and values:

- i* | Inclusiveness and complementary nature of actions, including establishing partnerships between government and all stakeholders such as private sector, civil society and communities to prevent and counter violent extremism.

- ii* | A culture of tolerance, dialogue and mutual respect; harmony in diversity, equity, tolerance, peace and equality; and rejection of violence as an instrument for redressing identity, socio-economic, ideological or political grievances.

- iii* | Adherence to democratic values, the rule of law and protection of human rights, including the responsibility of regional governments and regional organizations to protect.

4 | STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

41. The overall objective of this Regional Strategy is to enhance the collective capacity of regional actors in the Eastern Africa region to prevent and counter violent extremism, including IGAD, regional states, other regional economic communities (RECs), and non-state stakeholders, guided by the UNSG Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (January 2016); the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (2006), the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (1999), and existing national strategies of regional states to prevent and counter violent extremism. The specific objectives of the Regional Strategy are to:

- a | Provide a comprehensive regional framework for the coordination of collective and proactive regional engagement to prevent and counter the security threat posed by radical ideologies and violent groups and individuals in conformity with regional and international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2001), the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and all other relevant international conventions and protocols.
- b | Create platforms for cooperation and coordination among regional states, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and non-state stakeholders in programmes and activities designed to empower and amplify regional credible voices capable of challenging and changing the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideologies to reduce the threat of radicalization of at-risk communities to violence.
- c | Generate and share research, knowledge, analysis and information to better understand the drivers of violent extremism, mobilize effective interventions and inform evidence-driven policy, decision-making and collective actions by regional states and non-state stakeholders to counter messages, ideologies, strategies and tactics of extremists.
- d | Forge strategic partnerships at the national, regional and international levels to mobilize financial support for development and socioeconomic initiatives designed address specific political or social and economic grievances and to empower at-risk communities to reject radicalization and recruitment to violence.
- e | Strengthen the collective capacity of regional governments, non-state actors (civil society, private sector and faith-based organizations) to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence, in accordance with the principles of the rule of law and human rights.

MEASURES OF ACHIEVING THESE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

5

42. The Regional Strategy will seek to realize the above strategic objectives by adopting concrete measures and activities to prevent and counter radicalization and violent extremism organized around the five pillars of strengthening regional capacity; strengthening the capacity of at-risk communities; strengthening rule of law and justice systems; enhancing capacity for diplomacy on P/CVE; research and knowledge sharing.

Measures to strengthen regional capacity for preventing and countering violent extremism:

43. Measures and activities under this pillar address enhancing the capabilities and coordination of IGAD, regional states and non-state stakeholders for the development, coordination and implementation of national CVE/PVE strategies and institutions. They also involve the capacities to implement the Regional Strategy and national strategies to ensure multi-stakeholder participation.

44. *Development and Implementation of National P/CVE Strategies:* The Regional Strategy will help coordinate the support for states in the region to develop national strategies through inclusive and comprehensive processes. It will aim at ensuring that national strategies are based on clear assessments of local drivers of violent extremism, including the identification of factors that may contribute to or undermine the capacity of communities to reject radicalization to violence. To this end, regional states are encouraged to mainstream P/CVE approaches across all government agencies and processes.

The Regional Strategy encourages a ‘whole of society’ (inclusive) approach to the development of national strategies that involves broad-based consultations with government officials, non-state actors such as religious leaders, women and youth representatives, community leaders, the private sector, academics and think tanks. An inclusive process will greatly contribute to raising local awareness about the issue of violent extremism. It also highlights the role of good practice in the region, especially the need to involve multiple stakeholders from the government, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, faith-based organizations and local communities in the process. National strategies should be flexible enough to allow governments and communities to develop and implement P/CVE projects that respond to their specific local contexts and needs. The UNSG Plan of Action highlights the need by states to “take a more comprehensive approach which encompasses not only ongoing, essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism that have given rise to the emergence of these new and more virulent groups”.

45. *Multi-Agency Coordination Bodies:* This Regional Strategy underscores the importance of multi-agency coordination bodies in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national and other strategies to tackle violent extremism. Establishing these structures where they do not exist or strengthening the capacity of existing ones will also enable regional states to share and benefit from intelligence and research on actors and drivers of violent extremism. Specific ministries and agencies serving at the coordination points often lack the requisite capacity to implement the strategy including technical support, training, equipment and expertise to monitor financial flows, coordinate law enforcement, security and intelligence agencies, border management and immigration, judiciary and prosecution. In this regard, IGAD and

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its specialized agencies, including its new Center of Excellence on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, will work with regional and international organizations and development partners to ensure that regional states have coordinating capacity to implement national and regional strategies.

46. Enhance the Capacity and Role of National Counter-Terrorism Centers/Units:

National Centers tasked with the prevention and countering of terrorism and violent extremism are the lynchpins of this regional strategy within regional states. The Regional Strategy, therefore, stresses the urgent need to establish a special regular forum bringing together all the existing national coordination units or focal-points to share good practices, experiences, information, network and take collective action in response to the threat of extremism in the region. IGAD's specialized agencies will work closely with national coordination bodies to establish and manage such a regional forum to serve as a formal platform where national coordination units strengthen their own institutional capacity through learning lessons from each others' experiences, compare their strategies and tactics, align their interests, share concerns and seek support from one another. The platform will also facilitate greater cooperation between agencies of regional state working on specific issues that are raised at the forum. The forum will be the first step in consolidating regional coordination and cooperation on the prevention and countering violent extremism. Through the forum, IGAD will organize meetings at the national and regional levels to sensitize and train public officials, including law enforcement and intelligence agents, in areas previously unaffected by extremism, in order to help them identify and react appropriately to potential threats.

47. Legislation to address terrorism and Violent Extremism: Successful implementation of this Regional Strategy will hinge on the development of legislative frameworks to guide the implementation of programmes and activities. A good practice comes from Kenya, which in 2014 harmonized its laws to create a legislative framework for monitoring, preventing and countering radicalization and terrorist activities. IGAD and its specialized agencies should convene regional workshops of regional states and provide technical support to review and amend existing legislations to ensure that they are in line with international and regional commitments, including human rights obligations and the various international treaties on serious transnational crime and terrorism, and domestic constitutional commitments. Such workshops will also promote inclusive participatory approaches to the drafting and passing of new laws to deal with the threat of radicalization to violence to avoid claims of further targeting, repression or marginalization and increase tensions between states and at-risk groups and communities.

48. Capacity of Civil Society and Private Sector: IGAD and its specialized agencies will prioritize the empowerment of non-state stakeholders including civil society organizations, the private sector, organizations of academics and faith-based organizations to contribute to P/CVE. They will work with regional states and development partners to revitalize the IGAD Civil Society Forum as the main coordinating unit with civil society and the private sector within IGAD. Because civil society organizations have not been involved in the security sector, which is traditionally held as an exclusive domain of states, IGAD and its relevant agencies will periodically organize seminars involving government officials and representatives of civil society and private sector to foster confidence, mutual trust and strong partnerships especially in countries where civil society is nascent and state-civil society relations weak or confrontational. Promoting strong government-civil society partnerships also demands establishing communication channels and mechanisms for regular and direct engagement between government officials and civil society representatives. This will also ensure that regional governments provide protection to civil society actors who face security threats for engaging in CVE work.

However, in promoting strong partnerships between governments and civil society, IGAD and its relevant agencies will stress the need to safeguard the space and independence of civil society to operate without excessive control by governments. Creation of CVE hubs at the national level for civil society groups will guarantee the requisite independence of civil society. IGAD and its specialized agencies will also work with regional and external funders to initiate programmes to support the leadership and capacity development of civil society and private sector, including funds

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capacity

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mobilization, skills in management, finance and budgeting, leadership, community engagement, political participation, lobbying or raising awareness and policy development and technical support on understanding P/CVE matters. Strong capacity will also enable civil society and private sector to be effective strategic partners with governments and to undertake innovative initiatives and community-based programs seeking to empower youth, women, faith leaders and to address drivers of violent extremism. Support will also be extended to civil society initiatives, programmes and activities aimed at the rehabilitation and re-integration of ex-fighters.

Measures to strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities to reject ideologies and aims of violent extremists:

49. Measures under this pillar of the Regional Strategy focus on ways to ensure sustainable economic, social and political development as well as counter-narratives to the ideologies and messages of the extremists. This pillar of the strategy recognizes the critical role that civil society and other non-state stakeholders will play to engage the youth, women and other sectors of at-risk communities to strengthen their capacity and resilience to resist radical ideologies and programmes.

50. Youth Engagement: IGAD and its relevant agencies will engage with youth organizations to support the development of projects that focus on empowering young peoples to reject violent extremism. Priority will be given to promoting skills and training, including leadership, analytical and strategic thinking skills, vocational training, employment and livelihood opportunities. IGAD will encourage tripartite arrangements involving regional governments, civil society and private sector to determine youth needs and responses, in consultation with youth themselves, in designing the projects. Through its relevant structures involved in development, IGAD will also work with regional governments and financial institutions such as the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the World Bank (WB) to initiate and expand development programmes targeting youth in communities facing the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violence. Further, IGAD will work with regional governments and partners to develop youth platforms to facilitate interaction between the youth and other thought leaders and promote robust debate on the threat of violent extremism. IGAD will also encourage, and where possible support, regional governments to work with youth unions and youth faith groups to reach and communicate with youth at the grassroots level, including through sports and cultural activities.

51. Social economic development: IGAD will encourage regional governments to support and empower local authorities to develop community-level programmes to address socio-economic grievances that can be drivers of violent extremism. A model case of a successful grassroots initiative is the Uganda's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP), mooted as an intervention to eradicate widespread poverty and improve the welfare of the people Northern Uganda, the area most affected by the activities of the LRA. IGAD will collaborate with structures of civil society and private sector focusing on grassroots development, local authorities and communities to analyze drivers of radicalization and devise context-specific responses.

To this end, IGAD's specialized bodies will hold regional forums to encourage states and partners to engage with local communities and devise programmes that respond to the actual needs of the people and empowers them, ensuring that such initiatives do not stigmatize or further marginalize the communities. IGAD will also organize seminars on local development to assist at-risk communities in defining their development priorities and identifying the projects that will most effectively address their specific needs. Local participation in choosing the projects ensures the sustainability and success of programmes. Further, IGAD will design projects aimed at training and supporting local authorities to strategically partner with relevant non-government organizations to implement locally defined community programmes to address existing social, economic and political grievances.

IGAD will also support programmes aimed at promoting strategic partnerships between local government authorities, non-government organizations and local leadership structures to ensure the sustainability of development programs to create jobs and redirect the youth to productive activities and away from the lure of radicalization. IGAD, through its relevant agencies, will create a regional partners' forum consisting of regional governments, regional banks, economic communities and development agencies and external partners to support mechanisms such as rapid response funds to allow for urgent action to promote development. Working through its lead agencies, IGAD will also host roundtable meetings involving forums and other structures of local communities, local governments, NGOs and local leaders to provide a space to share good practices and lessons learnt across the region.

52. Engage Civil Society: IGAD will support the IGAD Civil Society Forum (ICSF) to address CVE matters, including by promoting networks amongst existing civil society groups within and across borders. IGAD, through the IGAD Civil Forum, will also engage civil society groups to conduct public awareness events and education on the nature and risks of violent extremism. Consultations leading to this strategy revealed that many communities in diverse countries as Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan are vulnerable to the threat of extremism, but they do not understand the problem and may need to be sensitized. IGAD will promote the role of civil society organizations as critical partners for government in addressing drivers of violent extremism. IGAD will support the establishment of communication channels and mechanisms for engagement between government officials and non-government actors.

It will establish local forums where community members can meet with local authorities to identify, discuss and devise solutions to the grievances that make them vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists groups. IGAD will work through its conflict management structures to support local authorities to manage and mitigate potential areas of conflict or instability in communities. It will devise programmes to support existing peace-building infrastructure such as local peace committees, and community reconciliation activities. Such programmes will include empowering local governments to address, and mitigate these potential situations of instability, through actions such as the provision of services (security, justice, healthcare, etc.) to all groups. This can help to improve community and state-society relations and decrease the space for violent extremists to leverage support. Kenya's peace committees were raised as one example that has been replicated in other regional states.

53. Engage the Private Sector: IGAD will engage private sector companies in programs to reduce the threat of radicalization to violent extremism. This will include highlighting the risk of violent extremism to their businesses. IGAD will, therefore, publish and disseminate information to the private sector about the impact of violent extremism on their businesses. The Center will devise programmes to mobilize investments to support P/CVE programmes, including supporting entrepreneurship, providing vocational and technical skills training, providing business mentoring, communication tools, and financial and other resources to at-risk communities.

54. Strengthen At-risk Communities: IGAD and its specialized agencies will formulate an assessment framework to identify and map-out at-risk communities and the specific drivers of instability and factors making the region vulnerable to violent extremism. It will work with civil society organizations with strong community ties to undertake the necessary assessments and data gathering. During the process, care will be taken not to further stigmatize or marginalize at-risk groups.

55. Empower Women and Gender: Recognizing the gender dynamics of violent extremism, IGAD through its relevant agencies, will create a gender forum to engage women leaders, unions and civil society organizations working with girls and women in implementing programmes to prevent and counter radicalization at the community level. It will convene workshops to provide leadership training, mediation and conflict resolution skills, strengthening existing women's networks and organizations to engage in activities to reduce the threat of radicalization to violence. As significant influencers in communities and families, women will be engaged and empowered to be key partners in strengthening the resolve of communities to resist radicalization and recruitment to violence, noting that women's perceptions and experiences of violent extremism may differ to that of men in their communities.

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the capacity
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Strengthening the capacity of at-risk communities

IGAD will prioritize working with established networks of women and women's groups. IGAD will leverage these networks in regional states to share messages on the threat of radicalization to women and girls and raise awareness on how to detect and address early signs of radicalization in an individual. Further, it will also work with women organizations to develop and implement programs to create spaces for friends and family to engage in sensitive dialogue about the dangers of radicalization. Dialogue with the local law enforcement will help deepen understanding of the legal ramifications of radicalization and the best methods of intervention.

56. Intervene in the Education Sector: IGAD, through its relevant agencies, will also design programmes to detect and prevent extremists from radicalizing through educational institutions including primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. It will support an array of activities to ensure that extremists do not use education facilities to radicalize and recruit to violence. These measures will include ensuring that there is a common state-approved curriculum used in all private and government schools and encourage programs that promote respect for diversity. Further, IGAD will form partnerships to facilitate the training of teachers to identify early warning signs of potential radicalization amongst students and to promote links between school, communities and local police to ensure that staff and student concerns can be raised with trusted authorities.

57. Engage Religious Institutions: IGAD and its specialized agencies will work with respected religious institutions to organize training for current and future male and female religious leaders on the threat of radicalization and violent extremism and leadership skills and their role in advancing peace and nonviolence in religious institutions. IGAD's relevant agencies will engage religious leaders on the possibility of harmonizing curriculum in Islamic schools (madrassas), including the possibility of training of future and current imams in presentation skills. IGAD will also support intra-faith forums involving key religious, government and civil society representatives to develop joint strategies for harmonizing and strengthening the curriculum taught in religious schools and institutions.

58. Engaging Religious Leaders: Extremists have played on the differences between faiths, especially Christians and Muslims, to radicalize and recruit to violence. To counter this strategy, the relevant IGAD agency will initiate activities and programs to promote harmony, tolerance and peaceful co-existence among the various faiths in the Eastern Africa region.

- i. **Promote Inter-faith Dialogue:** IGAD will convene national inter-faith dialogues involving religious leaders from all faiths and drawing in government and civil society representatives to advance the aims of preventing and countering violent extremism. It will support efforts to develop joint strategies for enhancing inter-faith cooperation to promote peace and tolerance and counter violent extremist ideology. In a number of countries, governments have established ministry of religious affairs with wide ranging influence over religious leaders and institutions. However, in Tanzania, religious leaders have registered a unique civil society organization to specifically to act as a bridge between the government and religious community. Strengthen the capacity of inter-faith institutions to provide leadership in promoting religious diversity and tolerance, inter-faith dialogue and mobilizing religious moderate voices in communities. In addition, IGAD will work with faith-based organizations to prevent violent extremism. These institutions are also important partners for governments in peace-building and addressing religious tensions that may arise in the community.

59. Generating Counter-Narratives: The narratives and messages of extremists are the main instruments of radicalizing and recruiting the youth to violent extremism. The relevant IGAD agencies will, therefore, support civil society organizations and faith-based institutions to generate counter-narratives and work with respected religious leaders in programmes to challenge and undermine the narratives of violent extremist groups. Because Imams and other preachers are often respected, credible and powerful voices in communities, IGAD will engage qualified leaders to advance the goals of the Regional Strategy. Respected and qualified religious leaders are critical in efforts to intervene to save a potential target of radicalization who may be suspected of adopting radical ideas but has not yet committed an act of violence. IGAD will prioritize

programmes aimed at de-radicalizing society. These programmes will be developed and implemented as part of a 'whole of society' approach that involve local law enforcement, youth, community leaders, religious leaders, civil society organizations and schools. Such programmes should also focus on ex-violent extremists. Although some of these programmes may be government-sponsored, it is imperative that non-state actors implement them to ensure effectiveness. In Sudan, the government has a programme of conducting intellectual dialogue involving respected scholars of Islam and extremists/potential extremists aimed at convincing them to change their course and reject radical ideologies. IGAD's relevant body will support such programmes as the Religious Scholar Committee in Sudan, which implements the dialogue forum on behalf of the government.

60. Strategic Communication: IGAD's relevant agencies will work with media practitioners and professionals to develop training programmes and materials on media ethics, awareness raising and sensitization to prevent extremists from radicalizing and spread propaganda using the media. IGAD will also develop capacity to provide media practitioners with timely and accurate information the operations of extremists and on the actions IGAD and regional governments are taking to counter them.

- i. **Strategic Communication Plan:** IGAD will embark on a consultative process to develop a strategic communications plan to counter and neutralize the narratives, messages and propaganda of extremist groups. In developing the strategy, IGAD will engage the relevant centers and units of regional governments, media practitioners, civil society and private sector organizations. A successful Strategic Communications plan has to address two salient questions. First is the need to set the criteria for determining the effectiveness of messaging and counter-narratives to underpin a successful counter-messaging campaign.

Second is the imperative to determine the most appropriate channels of communication (TV, radio, internet and so on) to target specific at-risk communities. In some communities, radio shows are a popular medium for disseminating counter narratives to violent extremist ideologies and narratives. In others, especially in urban areas, the TV and the Internet (social media) are considered the most popular and effective. While engaging former extremists to appeal to those still maintaining links with violent extremist groups and those vulnerable to recruitment has been a successful tactic, ensuring the safety of these actors is a challenge that needs to be carefully addressed. Safety is also required for journalists and other media practitioners involved in efforts to combat radicalization to violent extremism.

- ii. **Media Forums:** IGAD, through its relevant agency, will convene regular regional media forums involving media experts, youth, government actors and others to discuss and share experiences regarding the role of the media, including social media in P/CVE. Therefore, the media forums will address the best ways of influencing the content of social media, including the need to engage online platforms like Facebook and Twitter, to address radicalization, without breaching the right to privacy and freedom of expression. Related to this, they will also deliberate on how to strike a balance between necessary restrictions on the media to confront extremism and the freedoms of information and communication.

Strengthening
the capacity
of at-risk
communities

Measures to strengthen the rule of law and criminal justice systems:

61. Measures and specific activities under this pillar engage the range of state criminal justice actors including police, judiciary, prosecution, prisons and legislatures involved in making laws. The measures aim to develop effective mechanisms for the intervention, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of radicalized persons and returnees, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights.

Strengthening the rule of law and justice systems

62. Law Enforcement: This Regional Strategy recognizes that law enforcement practices can easily morph into a driver of violent extremism if issues of the rule of law and respect for human rights of suspects are not upheld. The Regional Strategy stresses the need for good relationship between local law enforcement and communities as a powerful tool for preventing violent extremism. It highlights community-oriented initiatives that also inculcate a service-wide ethos that is applicable to all communities.

- i. Human Rights Training:* IGAD, through its specialized agency, will commission a review of training curriculums for the law enforcement officers in training institutions across the region. The review will guide the process of ensuring that law enforcement officers receive comprehensive training in human rights have the relevant skills and disposition to treat violent extremist suspects humanely, with respect and in accordance with the law to prevent the actions of these officers becoming drivers of violent extremism.
- ii. Annual Law Enforcement Stakeholders' Conference:* IGAD will host an annual conference for law enforcement stakeholders, including the police, judiciary, prosecution and corrections, to focus on the challenges facing law enforcement in combating violent extremism. The conference will also help law enforcement agents to become familiar with (and in subsequent years to review) national strategies and the Regional Strategy in the context of changing dynamics of the threat of violent extremism in the region. Finally, the conference will be necessary to sensitize the criminal justice stakeholders on the challenges to investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating violent extremism cases and to develop strategies for overcoming those barriers.
- iii. Joint Training of Law Enforcement Officers:* IGAD will partner with a specialized institution from the Eastern Africa region to co-host an Annual "Summer Institute" aimed at strengthening regional capacity to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases related to violent extremism. The Institute train officers from law enforcement agencies, the prosecution and the judiciary on good practices, lessons and shared experiences and skills on handling cases of violent extremism, including addressing illicit financial flows and transnational criminal networks, in accordance with the norms of human rights and the rule of law.

63. Criminal Justice Sector: The aim of this sub-pillar is to improve the treatment of suspects of radicalization and violent extremism who come into contact with the criminal justice system in line with human rights standards and norms. Extremists have adeptly exploited claims of mistreatment in the judicial system to aid their efforts to radicalization and actually drive individuals to violent extremism. This underscores the need to treat radicalization and violent extremism as criminal acts. This particular genre of crimes should be adequately covered by existing criminal laws. Where they are not, amendments of the existing law may be necessary, without necessarily requiring the passing of new legislation to criminalize the activities of violent extremists. The Regional Strategy also recognizes the need for countries to avoid passing new legislation to criminalize violent extremism and terrorism. Specific activities under this sub-pillar will include:

- i. Assessment of the Capacity of Regional Criminal Justice Sectors:* The specialized IGAD agency will undertake an integrated baseline review of the capacity of the criminal justice sectors in the Eastern Africa region to effectively cope with the growing threat of radicalization and violent extremism. The baseline study will focus on the following issues, among others:
 - a) The existence of legislative framework to address issues related to violent extremism, including criminalization of violent extremist acts, the financing of violent extremist activities, cross-border cooperation, prison laws and rehabilitation.
 - b) Whether cases of violent extremism are heard in ordinary courts or are dealt with by military courts or other mechanisms.
 - c) The existence of specialist courts, special chambers or special benches assigned to deal with serious crimes.

d) Whether joint trainings involving judges, prosecutors and investigators take place. Such joint trainings are considered useful for examining and overcoming challenges in the investigation and prosecution of violent extremism cases.

e) The level of access to justice for disaffected, marginalized or at-risk groups.

f) Level and mechanisms of coordination and cooperation between intelligence agencies, law enforcement and prosecution and the challenge of ensuring that intelligence is ably transformed into admissible evidence in violent extremism cases.

g) Measures taken by regional states to strengthen the rule of law and criminal justice institutions, norms and systems to more effectively prevent and counter violent extremism. This includes strengthening case management systems to enhance the legitimacy and overall capacity of the justice system. Experience from regional states like Kenya indicates that this is useful in promoting the timely resolution of cases related to violent extremism.

- ii. **National Level Conferences:** IGAD will sponsor national-level conferences on a wide spectrum of country-specific challenges to criminal justice actors and the role of the criminal justice systems in tackling the threat of radicalization to violence.
- iii. **Regional Programme on Witness Protection:** IGAD's relevant agency will develop a pilot witness protection program for witnesses who are current or former members of violent extremist groups during trials. The Center will draft template legislation on witness protection and encourage member states to review their existing law to domesticate the legislation to ensure effective protection of witnesses across the region. It will also collate and publish best practices on witness protection from across the world, which are applicable to the region.
- iv. **Regional Judicial Network:** IGAD will establish a regional judicial platform or network to enhance co-operation between prosecutors and judges in the region to address violent extremism. This judicial network will draw from the lessons of the Sahel Judicial Platform or the Network (SJPN) of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP).

64. **Remand Facilities and Prisons:** Under this sub-pillar, this Regional Strategy acknowledges that the treatment of suspects of crimes relating to terrorism and violent extremism in remand facilities, detention or prisons can become a push factor towards violent extremism. To reduce the risk, officers must ensure the rights of all suspects and prisoners in prisons and police detention cells are upheld. Under the sub-pillar, IGAD's relevant agency will undertake the following specific activities:

- i. **Regional Conference on the Prevention of Radicalization in Prisons:** IGAD will convene an annual regional conference on radicalization in prisons, focusing on measures to protect human rights, prevent radicalization and promote reform of the inmates. Some countries in the region have limited experience with this problem. Uganda only faced this for the first time after the 2010 terrorist attacks. However, Kenya and Somalia have more experience and lessons that can be shared with the rest of the region. Participants to the conference will share experiences and good practices in preventing the risk of radicalization. The conference will focus on an array of key issues including overcrowding, poor prison conditions, exposure to radical ideologies, obtaining prison intelligence, and good practices and strategies for addressing the threat.
- ii. **Specialized Training on Preventing Radicalization in Prisons:** IGAD will organize specialized training for prison officers and managers on measures to curb the proliferation of terrorist networks in custodial systems, including:
 - a) Measures to tighten control over the flow and distribution of contraband, especially communication devices such as mobile phones in prisons;

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b) Vetting of prison personnel and enhancing penalties for prison staff found breaching contraband rules; and

c) Develop targeted disengagement programmes for extremist in the prison systems.

65. Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Returnees: This sub-pillar highlights individuals who were once members of violent extremist groups but are seeking to return home and disengage from violent extremism. A number of countries in the region are grappling with the question of how to address returnees. These include disillusioned youth who were coerced into joining violent extremist groups, were under peer-pressure, and were lured by false promises of monetary benefits or by sheer desire for adventure. IGAD and its specialized agencies will undertake the following activities in line with this sub-pillar.

i. **Regional Conference on the Rehabilitation of Returnees:** IGAD and its specialized agencies will convene a regional conference on measures and policies to address the issue of returnees. The conference will be held on an annual basis to allow countries to continue sharing experiences and information on disengagement and rehabilitation of returnees in a highly dynamic environment. Those attending the conference will represent both government and nongovernment stakeholders from multiple disciplines including the security and justice sectors, religious institutions, and social sciences. Key issues that the conference will focus on include sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learnt from others in the region, and practical or technical solutions to the complex problem. Some countries such as Kenya, Somalia and Uganda have experiences with amnesty laws; others such as Sudan and Somalia have developed reintegration and de-radicalization programs.

ii. **National Programmes for Rehabilitation and Integration of Returnees:** IGAD's relevant agency will partner with national counter-terrorism centers to develop national programs for rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, which are inclusive and involve multiple stakeholders. In this regard, the process of designing of national programmes for returnees will involve:

a) A 'whole of society' approach and multiple stakeholders, including civil society organization, women, youth, reformed extremists, the judiciary, the legislature, law enforcement and corrections, national security and intelligence services, local government authorities, affected communities, families, and religious leaders.

b) Engagement with the criminal justice system at all phases of the criminal justice process from pre-trial through to sentencing and rehabilitation and involving law enforcement, intelligence services, the prosecution, judiciary and correction services.

c) A range of services or support for returnees, including legal support, psychosocial care, education and livelihood training.

d) Strong cross-sectorial collaboration and coordination between governmental sectors (law enforcement, justice, social, health, and education) and non-state capacity in civil society, faith-based and community structures.

e) A process of vetting and classification of returnees from low, medium to high-risk categories. Whereas a high-risk returnee may be prosecuted and their case adjudicated, a low risk person may be eligible for immediate rehabilitation.

f) Attention to special rehabilitation and social reintegration needs of children, including the development of initiatives targeting juveniles.

g) Robust sensitization of the public about the returnee programmes to facilitate their reintegration into the community.

h) A comprehensive review of existing policies, legislations and requisite

amendments to align the programmes with the rule of law. The laws will determine whether there should be a policy of segregation of prisoners involved in violent extremism and other categories of in-mates.

i) Training for all those engaged directly and indirectly in national returnees programmes, including government officials, judges, law enforcement officers, prison staff, social workers, health care professionals and educators among others.

j) A clear system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the programmes including follow up with the returnee over a period of time to determine the rate of recidivism.

66. Engaging Ex-Combatants and Returning “Foreign fighters” in Dialogue: Consultations in the development of this Regional Strategy on dialogue with ex-combatants generated diverse responses and experiences. This Regional Strategy provides for flexibility on the vexing issue of “talking to the terrorists” determined by the specific circumstances of the regional state. IGAD can provide support and facilitate the sharing of good practices in order for members states to put in place frameworks to guide programmes for engaging ex-combatants and returning 'foreign fighters'.

67. National and Regional Parliaments: Under this sub-pillar of the Regional Strategy, it is recognized that national and regional legislatures bear a primary responsibility in establishing legal and policy frameworks to protect populations from threats arising from terrorism and violent extremism. Parliaments also ensure that actions are taken to deal with the threat respect of human rights and adhere to the rule of law. In this regard, an engaged and independent legislative body is a vital element in the development of a comprehensive regime for preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism. Parliament can also take the necessary oversight measures to protect the human rights of suspects, increase the effectiveness of policies by ensuring enhanced accountability, good governance, civic participation, resources, adherence to international good practices, and bolstering the resilience of at-risk communities.

- i. Annual Forums of National and Regional Legislatures: IGAD's specialized agency will convene an annual conference of members of law-making bodies including national legislatures, regional assemblies such as the Arusha-based East African Legislative Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament based in South Africa to deliberate on the state of the law to prevent and counter violent extremism in Africa in general and the Eastern African region in particular.

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Measures for enhancing the capacity for diplomacy on P/CVE:

68. IGAD and regional governments recognize that violent extremist groups such as the Al-Shabaab are operating regionally and internationally across transnational borders, forging broad-based collaborative networks to radicalize and recruit fighters and foreign soldiers worldwide. With this understanding, measures and activities under this pillar of the Regional Strategy are designed to enhance the capacity of IGAD and regional governments to undertake robust diplomatic engagements on P/CVE with multilateral partners (donors, international financial institutions, UN organizations and regional agencies), bilaterally involving regional states, and through people-to-people diplomacy (communities, civil society and private sector, religious groups and other regional stakeholders). Specifically, IGAD and regional states will undertake the following activities.

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69. Regional Diplomacy on P/CVE: Under this sub-pillar, this Regional Strategy aims to tap into regional diplomacy (RD), defined as the conduct of relations between states that belong to an identifiable geographical region, as a new strong force in international relations in our globalized world. In this regard, IGAD and regional states will take advantage of the mutual benefits that stem from neighborhood cooperation to leverage efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. It will also expand and strengthen existing diplomatic networks, structures and mechanisms designed to promote regional socio-economic and political cooperation to empower local communities and effectively tackle radicalization and violent extremism. IGAD will enhance its programmes to prevent and counter violent extremism within its counter-terrorism framework at the regional level, including expanding and elevating existing partnerships with regional organizations such as the East African Community (EAC), the Indian Ocean Community (IOC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the African Union (AU).

70. Promote Cross-border Diplomacy: IGAD and its specialized agencies will convene an annual meeting on cross-border and area-based programmes in the region aimed at reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of communities affected by conflict, the threat of radicalization to violence across common boundaries. The conference will draw in regional experts working on cross-border management issues, regional countries representatives of local communities, civil society organizations and the relevant regional and UN agencies. A model for cross-border management initiatives is the Kenya-Ethiopia Agreement for the Cross-Border Integrated Programme, signed in 2015 and overseen by IGAD and the United Nations, to promote peace-building, economic development and reduce the risk of radicalization among rival communities across a common border. But other cases from across the world will help enrich the experience of regional actors on how to tackle the threat of violent extremism through cross-border cooperation and development.

- i. Regional Forum for Young Diplomats on Violent Extremism:* IGAD's relevant organs will work with regional states and international partners to convene a regional forum young diplomats from the region to share and gain better knowledge and understanding of the challenges of violent extremism across national boundaries and to suggest solutions. The forum will borrow good practices from other regions such as Central Asia where young diplomats from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Iran have been meeting to share knowledge and perspectives on issues of violent extremism and terrorism affecting their countries.
- ii. Regional Conference on Migration and Violent Extremism:* The relevant IGAD agency will convene a regional conference on violent extremism and migration. There is a need for a regional cooperation regarding how to manage lawful immigration and prevent illicit cross-border movement. The aim is not to close borders, but to improve the system for managing people flows. This requires greater information and data sharing amongst agencies across borders. The conference could be a first step in establishing or strengthening formal relationships between immigration and border agencies in the region and the adoption of a regional strategy for migration.
- iii. Training Workshop on Financial Intelligence:* IGAD will organize training workshops aimed at strengthening the capacity of financial intelligence institutions and agencies in the region to investigate illicit financial activities that is connected to the financing of violent extremism, including money laundering. These interventions will target the strengthening of the financial intelligence units (FIUs) of regional states to receive, analyze and disseminate information related to suspicious transactions, money laundering and other offences and financing of violent extremism and terrorism. Regional states will be urged to introduce or amend legislation to address anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing as well as cooperation agreements with other national or regional government agencies, including law enforcement.

71. Joint Forums with Existing Regional Mechanisms: IGAD, through its existing regional mechanisms such as IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), will convene joint meetings and develop common strategies on detecting early signs and taking action on radicalization to violence designed to empower stakeholders to resist and reject radicalization. In boosting the capacity of regional mechanisms to combat radicalization to violent extremism and conflict, the Center will work within the CEWARN framework to expand and strengthen existing national collaboration units linking regional governments to non-governmental stakeholders such as Conflict Early Warning and Response Units (CEWERUs), National Research Institutes (NRIs) and Field Monitors (FMs) and to engage with other regional organizations and regional economic communities (RECs) on P/CVE related matters.

72. Multilateral Diplomacy: Under this sub-pillar, IGAD, and regional states will increase their participation in regional and international platforms within the African Union, United Nations and other multilateral forums, such as the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, to enhance their influence and shape policy debates and actions on P/CVE. As part of its international obligation, IGAD will promote the implementation of good practices, cooperation on P/CVE and core documents, including the UNSG Plan of Action. IGAD will also seek to deepen its engagement with the relevant UN agencies to implement these documents, including UNDP. It will also engage multilateral development banks including the Africa Development Bank, the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank to deepen cooperation on P/CVE. Specific activities under this sub-pillar will include:

- i. Stabilization of Somalia:* IGAD, and its relevant agencies, will engage key stakeholders, including the AU Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), AMISOM, international partners and the United Nations, to deepen stabilization and state building efforts in Somalia. Such efforts would include ensuring the creation of a strong government and robust security architecture, including a professional well-trained and unified military and police force. It will also involve multiple stakeholders at the regional and international levels to build the resilience of Somali communities to reject and fight radicalization and violent extremism.

73. People-to-People Diplomacy: IGAD consider "People-to-People diplomacy", which connotes a transnational conflict-resolution strategy that stress the role of citizen exchanges and dialogues in mitigating hostile relations at the regional and global levels and which has become a key element of foreign policies of states, as an effective and indispensable tool of preventing radicalization to violence in the region.

74. Regional Dialogue on CVE: IGAD, through its specialized agencies, will convene a regional dialogue on violent extremism for civil society representatives engaged in P/CVE programmes. The dialogue will be a response to observations by civil society representatives from the region that they have limited experience working in the P/CVE field and have resources constraints and serious knowledge gaps. They requested more peer-to-peer contacts on this issue. The forum will create a regional platform for civil society and private sector to share experiences, good practices, tools, and cooperate regionally on regional P/CVE issues and developments.

- i. Youth Exchange Programme on Preventing Extremism:* IGAD and its relevant agencies will work with funding agencies to establish a youth exchange programme to be hosted in one institution within the region to bring together young people from all walks of life including non-governmental organizations, private sector, civil society, academic institutions and faith-based organizations to debate and find solutions to violent extremism.

75. Cultural diplomacy: Also related to "people-to-people diplomacy is Cultural Diplomacy, which refers the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding. In this regard, the Center will convene a regional inter-faith dialogue on violent extremism for religious, government (national and local) and civil society representatives to share vital experiences from across the region. These meetings will also involve former extremists and also youth at risk of radicalization.

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Measures to promote research and knowledge sharing:

76. Activities under this pillar will ensure evidence-based PVE/CVE policy and action by strengthening local, national and regional capacity for generating and sharing research knowledge, information and analysis. Focus will be on building the capacity of local, national and regional institutions to undertake research, analysis and share knowledge and information to underpin evidence-based policy and action on PVE/CVE. Research need to focus on local context of radicalization, drivers of radicalization and violent extremism, vulnerable individuals and groups and why individuals and groups are motivated to be recruited.

77. Regional Observatory on Violent Extremism: IGAD will establish and run a knowledge hub/repository or resource center to gather, analyze and disseminate research on violent extremism from the region and beyond. The information from the observatory will be accessible by both government and nongovernment stakeholders online and in print. The Observatory will support research at a national and regional level that focuses on the following critical issues:

- i. Multidisciplinary approach to drivers, push and pull factors for violent extremism;
- ii. The role of sectorial groups such as women, youth and religious actors in facilitating and combating violent extremism;
- iii. The actors (violent extremist groups), their motivations, strategies and ideologies;
- iv. Recruitment strategies, techniques and messaging;
- v. Connections between violent extremist groups and forced migration, transnational crime and other criminal activities;
- vi. Processes of radicalization, including in prisons;
- vii. Rehabilitation of returnees and “foreign fighters”;
- viii. The financing of violent extremism.
- ix. The role of the internet and mobile technology as tools for promoting violent extremism and as counter-messaging tools.

78. Further, the Regional Observatory will undertake the following specific activities:

- i. **Mapping of CVE Research and Analysis:** IGAD, through its relevant agency, will undertake a mapping of existing CVE research expertise within the region, focusing on civil society organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and international agencies. IGAD will rely on local/regional expertise to undertake the mapping. It will also encourage regional governments, donors and other non-state actors to partner with these research institutions to further the CVE agenda. It will produce briefs based on the mapping processes.
- ii. **Annual Regional Workshop of Researchers:** IGAD, through its relevant agency, and working with regional and international partners, will convene an annual regional conference on violent extremism that brings together researchers, policy makers, practitioners and beneficiaries to share cutting-edge knowledge on this highly dynamic field. It will also organize a research capacity workshop to provide capacity building and training for non-state actors and organizations to undertake field research, analysis and publishing on violent extremism.



Community celebrating Peace Week in El Fula. March 2015. West Kordofan, Sudan. UN Photo/Omer Abdelrahem,

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL STRATEGY

6

Considerations for Setting Operational Priorities:

79. In order to effectively prevent and counter violent extremism, IGAD and its specialized bodies will work with regional states and partners to set out clear priorities to maximize on the impact of this strategy's activities and programmes. It will have to take into account the limited resources at its disposal, number of countries, actors and organizations involved, the magnitude and changing dynamics of the threat and risks posed by radical groups. In this regard, in setting its operational priorities, IGAD will consider the following:

- i. Degree of Threat:* IGAD will prioritize the magnitude of threat that terrorist groups pose to the overall regional security and stability. It will pay special attention to those threats of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism likely to have the highest level of threat to the largest number of regional states and populations.
- ii. Havens and Conflict Areas:* It will prioritize areas and issues in the region with the highest potential for expanding and deepening vulnerability to extremists, including cross-border areas adjacent to terrorist havens such as Somalia, countries embroiled in violent conflict such as South Sudan, and protracted refugee situations such as Dadaab camp.
- iii. Low Hanging Fruits:* Finally, IGAD will give precedence to areas and countries with potential for quick results, impact and innovation, especially where there are on-going initiatives and projects involving regional states, local communities and international development partners. To this end, IGAD will give priority to areas and countries where actors (governments, communities, non-state players and partners) have shown political will to work together or such political will can be fostered to leverage the implementation of prevent and counter violent extremism.

Implementation Structure:

80. The implementation of this regional strategy will be supported by a three-tier architecture comprising of the IGAD Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism, national coordination units of regional states and units of regional organizations on CVE.

81. The IGAD Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism: IGAD, with the support of its international partners, has created the IGAD Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism ("the Center") to guide, oversee and coordinate its P/ CVE activities. When fully established, the Center will strengthen and synchronize the activities of IGAD and regional states on CVE diplomacy. The Center, based in Djibouti, is located within IGAD's Peace and Security Division. In view of the urgent need to implement the Regional Strategy, IGAD's Peace and Security Division will increase its own staffing and resource capacity and that of the Center. The PSD, through its new Center, is the main coordinating unit for national focal points, national structures and units of other regional economic communities (RECs) in Eastern Africa tasked with the implementation of violent extremism programmes.

82. National CVE Structures: IGAD will work closely with national focal points and the respective national structures charged with the implementation and coordination of national strategies and IGAD PVE/CVE policy and activities. These will include working with National Counter-Terrorism Centers or National CVE centers. As such, IGAD encourages regional states, through their national centers, to integrate the principles of the Regional Strategy into their national P/CVE efforts.

83. CVE Units of Regional Organizations: IGAD and its specialized agencies will coordinate with the units of other regional organizations, including the African Union, and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the Eastern Africa Region, such as the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Central Africa (COMESA) and the Indian Ocean Community (IOC). IGAD will convene a regional consultative forum of regional organizations to create a working group made up of key heads of peace and security units to coordinate region-wide initiatives and avoid duplication and overlaps and potentially conflicting initiatives.

Two young boys sit on tires on the side of the road in Qoryooley during a routine foot patrol by African Union troops one month after the town was liberated from Al-Shabab militants. April 2014. Qoryooley, Somalia. UN Photo/Tobin Jones



84. IGAD, through its specialized agencies, will develop a results framework for measuring progress towards achieving the strategy's objectives. It will develop a set of common indicators capable of evaluating medium-term and long-term effectiveness of projects, activities and programmes. Lessons and good practice arising from previous efforts will be collated and shared to avoid past mistakes and use monitoring information to improve on future efforts and to bring in innovations. IGAD will also collaborate with regional states and regional organizations to enhance regional monitoring and evaluation capabilities for the implementation of the Regional Strategy, including identifying a baseline, developing indicators, timelines, roles and responsibilities, monitoring tools and mechanisms such as a national database and an accountability framework.

85. Finally, every three years, IGAD member states will undertake a comprehensive review of the Regional Strategy to ensure effectiveness of the implementation of programmes and activities.



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