



PEACEBUILDING AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

APRIL 24-28, 2017

750 Posts

116 Participants



Photography: Dania Ali; Stars Foundation; Aware Girls

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BACKGROUND

The concept of “Countering Violent Extremism” (CVE) has become central to the security policy of governments around the world. Yet despite the near-ubiquitousness of term there is widespread disagreement over what the concept means, and even more on what successful CVE looks like.

The rise of the concepts of ‘violent extremism’ (VE) and CVE has caused much discussion within peacebuilding communities around the world. Some see opportunities where the agenda of CVE and peacebuilding overlap, while others believe it is an agenda that distracts from the real root causes of conflict, and could actually undermine peacebuilding efforts.

This online consultation brings together a range of experts in violent extremism and peacebuilding, from diverse contexts and expertise, to discuss these issues. The dialogue will give space for discussion around what ‘violent extremism’ is, and what appropriate responses should be. There will also be a focus on sharing lessons from programmes and research around the world. Our hope is that discussions will provoke ideas, learning and collaborations that will result in better peacebuilding.

The consultation will be an opportunity for learning for all participants. A further outcome will be a short report to be circulated that will aim to share the knowledge and recommendations generated with other interested stakeholders.



The views expressed by participants represent their personal contributions to the dialogue and should not be taken as the positions of their organisations or institutions.



Executive Summary

DAY 1:

CVE & Peacebuilding -- what are the links?

Our first session probed the links between peacebuilding and violent extremism. We had a fantastic level of participation, with almost 100 participants in total, around 60% of whom contributed comments.

The first dialogue topic questioned what definitions of violent extremism and CVE are possible. I don't think any participant would have expected that we would come to one agreed definition, and indeed we did not! What we did achieve though was a useful discussion where some participants were able to propose some useful options, whilst also exploring some of the serious issues that participants identified, including the political and cultural biases and agendas that might come with such definitions inherent in such an agenda. The question of ownership of the concept repeatedly came up.

The debate was taken further in a thread led by Nora Lester Murad, who proposed that the peacebuilding community should reject the discourse of CVE.

Anne Martin Connell kicked off a challenging and nuanced discussion on gender and CVE. Several participants noted how stereotypical or simplistic views of gender dynamics has led to poor analysis and programmes.

Bridget Moix kickstarted a discussion on US policies around CVE brought to the fore a key issue for many: the tendency for CVE to stigmatise Muslim communities. Participants discussed the risks of a possible shift to "Countering Radical Islamic Extremism" both in terms of implications in the United States, and internationally.

DAY 2:

The lure of violent extremist groups

Day Two brought another fascinating set of conversations with an incredible level of participation -- over 140 comments in this Discussion Tab, and a total of 79 different people contributing their ideas and expertise over the two days thus far.

The day began with Luc Chounet-Cambas proposing the "5 I's" model as a way of understanding why people join violent groups. Many participants commented on how useful a framework they found it, alongside some suggestions for how it can or should be adapted to take into account different location contexts.

Christy Grace Provines and Sara Lind introduced the concept of "Identity vulnerability", which again provoked interest from participants as a useful lens for viewing the issue of recruitment to violent extremist groups.

Dr DB Subedi made the case that more focus needs to be placed on non-religious drivers of violent extremism. Whilst participants agreed on the need to look beyond religion when looking at violent extremism, there was also discussion about the usefulness of separating religious and non-religious drivers.

Joel Gabri asked why violent extremists seem to have been so successful in their use of new technology for recruitment and propaganda. Many participants stressed that we should remember that the vast majority of people do not join or support violent extremist groups. It was also pointed out that it is not the use of tech that is appealing to recruits, but rather the message that they push.

Ruairi Nolan opened a discussion on international recruits to extremist groups, which led to interesting discussion of the role of ideology and also issues around social integration in the countries where the recruits come from.

Executive Summary

DAY 3: Community-led resistance to Violent Extremism

Day Three has been full of more lively debate and analysis, under the overall theme of ‘community-led resilience’.

We started the day with a reflection of the surveys from Day 1. The findings showed that a large majority of participants rejects the linguistic shift from ‘Countering Violent Extremism’ to ‘Countering Radical Islamic Extremism’ in the USA, and also illustrated the lack of agreement on preferred terminology.

Esin Efe posed challenging questions about the role of civil society and the challenges of violent extremism in Syria. The discussion highlighted the severe constraints and dangers faced by any efforts at CVE-type activities in such an environment.

In his text about the recent rise in violence against Muslims in Myanmar, Taylor O’Connor raised the question of how peacebuilders could combat intolerant narratives that promote violent extremism. It provoked interesting discussion about how hate speech is based on ‘dehumanisation’ of certain groups, and how this can be countered.

Patricia Andrews Fearon asked if approaches to deradicalisation and the prevention of radicalisation should use the same psychological techniques that violent extremists use. Participants debated arguments for both sides, focusing on “us and them” framings.

A local peacebuilder introduced the work of SADO in Somalia to illustrate the potential of livelihoods work to combat the threats of violent extremism. Participants discussed the importance of livelihoods work, but also the limitations of such an approach in isolation.

DAY 4: Government-led approaches to CVE & the role of ex-combatants

Day 4 saw the group look at the roles played by a range of actors in relation to violent extremism, including governments, the military, ex-combatants, and diaspora communities.

The day began with Craig McCann introducing the UK government’s CVE programme. Participants highlighted the need for government-led approaches to not alienate communities, and the important role it can play in filling gaps.

Gordon Clubb used the experience of Northern Ireland to frame a discussion on the role former combatants can play in conflict transformation. It was widely stated that former fighters have the potential positive impact - but there are circumstances in which such engagement can have unintended outcomes. The need for restorative justice was also discussed.

Nicholas Dickson raised the question of whether the US Department of Defense can be a partner for civil society. Many expressed concern that directly working with the military would compromise the legitimacy of their work, but some opportunities were identified.

Yusuf Omar began a discussion on the role of diaspora communities. It provoked interesting discussions on what ‘integration’ means, and to what degree diaspora communities are prone to violent extremism.

Joel Gabri shared the experiences of the DDR model of Centre Resolution Conflicts in DRC. There was general agreement on the importance of reintegration to DDR. It was also stressed the needs and desires of communities must be at the forefront of DDR programming.

Executive Summary

DAY 5: Recommendations & emerging themes

A large part of the final day's dialogue focused on gathering recommendations - for the international community, practitioners, researchers, and Peace Direct. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the recommendations for the international community attracted the most interest from participants. These recommendations will form a key part of the final report.

We also took the opportunity to look at three emerging themes that were suggested in the Day 4 session - youth, future trend, and monitoring & evaluation. These are all large topics and rather than going into depth on each, the conversations helped identify areas for further analysis.

AGENDA

Day 1:	Day 2:	Day 3:	Day 4:	Day 5:
CVE & Peacebuilding -- what are the links?	The lure of violent extremist groups	Community-led resistance to Violent Extremism	Government-led approaches to CVE & the role of ex-combatants	Recommendations & emerging themes



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DAY 1

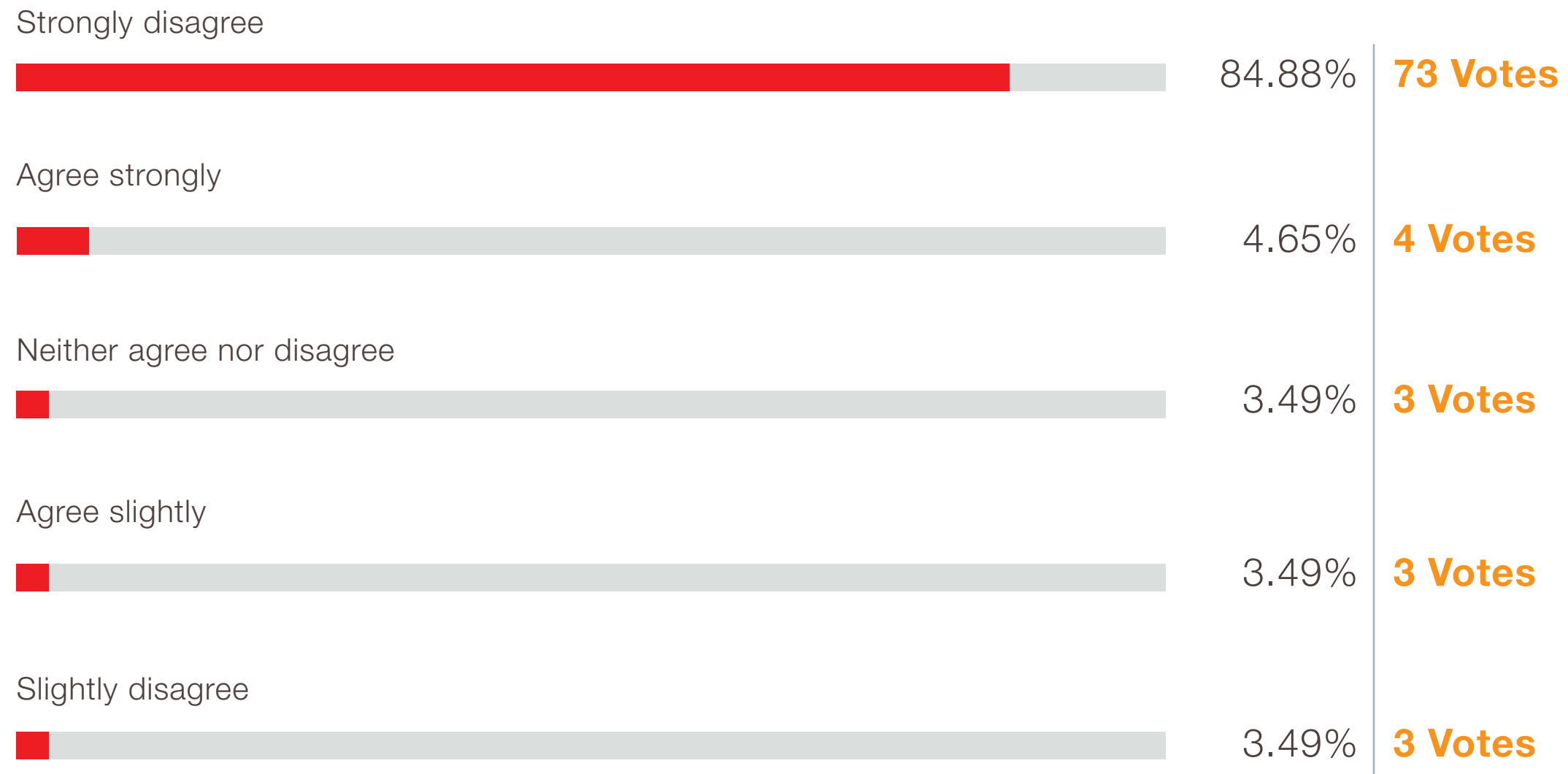
**CVE &
Peacebuilding
what are the
links?**



Photography: Igor Rugwiza

QUESTION

Reports suggest that the US government will seek to shift the focus of the programme “Countering Violent Extremism” (CVE) to “Countering Islamic Extremism” or “Countering Radical Islamic Extremism”. As a result, programmes would no longer target groups such as white supremacists who have also carried out bombings and shootings in the United States. How strongly do you agree/disagree with such a shift in focus?



KEY POINT:

Defining “Violent Extremism”

“Democracy was once an extremist idea, as was abolition of slavery as were the beliefs and values of the protesting states of the Protestant Reformation. These radical ideas and revolutions propelled us forward as societies.”



Alistair Legge

Democracy and Governance Consultant

“Viewing this from another angle. It seems violence is the only language some governments understand. If citizens or group of people such as labour unions and activism do not unleash violence to advance their “extreme demands or grievances”, many would not have had their breakthrough. Extremism depends on where one belongs.”



Olalekan Augustine Babatunde

Doctoral Candidate

“Those who are identified as extremist groups legitimize the use of violence in the same way that governments and other dominant powers legitimize their own use of violence. The determination of who is the extremist party and who is the justified party is a matter of political perspective.”



Taylor O'Connor

Consultant Freelance at Freelance

“When communities understand that a hegemonic power views them as a threat, they become defensive, which can lead to easier receptiveness to extremist ideas and, before long, violent responses. That is to say, CVE can be a self-fulfilling prophecy.”



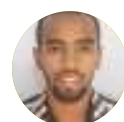
Steven Leach

Facilitator, Consultant, Researcher

KEY POINT:

Should the peacebuilding community reject the discourse of CVE?

“The emergence of the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) agenda reflects a recognition in policy circles that conventional security-based measures to counter terrorism have failed and, in some cases, has fueled greater marginalization and violence. With an emphasis on prevention, the CVE approach seeks to tackle the root causes of extremist violence by engaging with communities, with vulnerable groups and with households.”



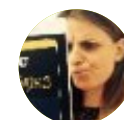
Halkano Boru
Peace and Cohesion Co-ordinator

“When it comes to the question of defining CVE/PVE, I think it’s worth it and serves a purpose from a peacebuilder’s perspective, as one needs conceptual clarity to be able to engage effectively with others, at the community level, in interventions that make sense.”



Luc Chounet-Cambas
Regional Head MENA - Integrity

“[I]t is crucial to challenge ‘donor-driven’ agendas that don’t really support local needs and local agency.”



Kloé Tricot O’Farrell
EU Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at Saferworld

“Therefore, we need to acknowledge that “non-political” approaches to discursive and rhetorical battles are likely not possible, and often undesirable, as to claim that one is “apolitical” simply implies that one is in support of the dominant modalities of the state, such as the militarized Global War on Terror, or nation-State-specific CVE programs.”



Michael Loadenthal
Visiting Professor at Miami University & Executive Director at Peace and Justice Studies Association

KEY POINT:

Gender and CVE

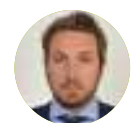
“Many women self-select into violent extremist groups for both pragmatic and principled reasons. Therefore, the assumption that women are always victims and thus allies, results in a misguided approach to intervening and de-radicalizing women in particular.”



Carolyn Williams

Peace & Conflict Fellow, Uppsala University

“There is abundant academic/empirical literature on the important contributions made by women to peacemaking. Yet in practice, on the ground, there seems to still be resistance - consciously-perceived or not, for genuine engagement with women. Over the years, there has certainly been greater openings towards civil society on the part of peacemakers/builders, however not specifically targeting gendered segments of it.”



Arnaud Amouroux

Peacebuilding & conflict specialist

“Approaches that favor peace building over militarized “hard security” initiatives, on the other hand, tend to promote a more inclusive and gender-sensitive ethos.”



Marisa O. Ensor

Professor

“Drivers vary across the gender spectrum in large part because the formulation of identities varies greatly. For example, adult men are more likely to be attracted by an opportunity that presents itself as protecting their loved ones, fulfilling a masculine role in society (by offering a wife, fatherhood, breadwinner etc.), or providing an economic opportunity not otherwise available. Young men are more likely to be attracted by comradeship and adventure. Similarly, women may be incentivized to join a VEO for protection (whether physical or financial), marriage, and agency (i.e. female brigades), whereas young girls are often lured by promises of love, companionship, freedom and adventure. That said, there are certainly cross cutting drivers such as retribution and justice.”



Cassandra Schneider

CVE Program Specialist at Creative Associates International

KEY POINT:

Shifts in US approaches to CVE

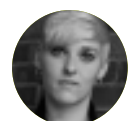
“I am concerned that, regardless of the reality of policies in the past, the discourse shift toward CRIE will have a direct, or indirect impact on the lived reality of many of my students for whom there are real concerns about violence from white supremacist groups and other violent groups.”



Ashleen Williams

Barksdale Fellow, University of Mississippi

“Local organizations combating Islamic extremism are often operating at the grassroots level and facing physical threats, closing civil society spaces, and a dearth of funding for activities - it's not strategic to alienate them. Not to mention the rhetoric change is certainly not helpful in convincing partner governments to cooperate with programming.”



Anne Connell

Assistant Director, Council on Foreign Relations

“The current CVE approaches of the US and other international actors are cosmetic and politicized, and are not addressing the underlying issues that lead to radicalization and extremism. For vote politics, and for getting popular support in the name of security, many Western countries are propagating against and targeting one religious community. This othering is, in turn, stigmatizing, and marginalizing Muslim community, and creating favourable conditions for further extremism in that community.”



Azizur Rahman

Teaching Assistant at University of Manitoba

“Islamophobia is an issue in the United States and this misleading association between Islam and Extremism can be enflamed by a simple change in name to ‘Countering Radical Islamic Extremism’.”



Carolyn Williams

Peace & Conflict Fellow, Uppsala University

DAY 2

The lure of violent extremist groups



KEY POINT:

What drives people to join violent groups?



“Rather than invest effort to curb the ‘perception’ of widespread injustice, shouldn’t we try to curb the widespread injustice itself?”

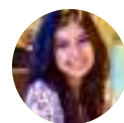


Nora Lester Murad

I lead organizations and communities to put social justice principles into practice.



“On the programming side: it is IMPERATIVE to sustain fragile gains. The voices of former fighters are only credible and effective if they are gradual and remain consistent. One off conversations and meetings will do little to yield benefits.”



Arsla Jawaid

Consultant



“If more individuals are denied access to basic necessities of life and access to their fundamental civil rights, the more the tendency for extremism to brew.”

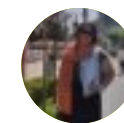


Olalekan Augustine Babatunde

Doctoral Candidate



“In regards to former extremist engagement, a good deal of literature suggests the importance and utility of employing credible, experienced voices for deterring would-be recruits.”



Kara Hooser

PhD Candidate and Grassroots Peacebuilding Advocate

KEY POINT:

Non-religious drivers of violent extremism

“I agree with the danger of sheltering religious aspects of recruitment/appeal of violent extremist groups which would lead to missing large component of the human experience; therefore leading to missed opportunities in facilitating reintegration and fostering further violence prevention. Through my experience in Africa, I have found that although religion plays a role in justifying actions while part of an extremist group, it is seldom the primary reason why these youth have joined.”



Pauline Zerla

Conflict transformation, Youth and Storytelling Specialist

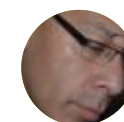
“In many societies religion is inseparable from other realms: religion is politics, power, food, social life, going to bed and waking up in the morning. It may seem strange and very ‘Western’ to go into a community and present religion as a separate factor while there is no secular space to start with.”



Jeffrey Jonkers

Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution Advisor

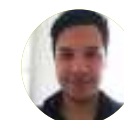
“The extremists appeal to the vulnerabilities in other areas such as the entrenched political conflict, overly authoritarian state, poor development and poor education.”



Alistair Legge

Democracy and Governance Consultant

“To create a non-religious umbrella concept would be as unwise as creating a religious one, under the false pretence that all religiously-motivated forms of extremism are homogenous in terms of organisation, recruitment and delivery of actions.”



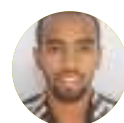
Adan Suazo

Researcher

KEY POINT:

“Identity vulnerability”

“Research by WTS on the key drivers of youth radicalization confirmed that young people’s alienation and abandonment by both the state and the community leads them to resort to radical measures to survive. According to WTS, youth find acceptance and meaning in extremist ideologies and groups who recognize their problems and give them a purpose.”



Halkano Boru
Peace and Cohesion Co-ordinator

“A threat to ones sense of identity (when competing systems of meaning-making collide) and need for need for self-preservation can result in ‘terror’ and anxiety as it serves to destabilise one’s sense of security and identity. This can result in severe intolerance such as hate crimes and, at the extreme, lethal violence”



Cathy Bollaert
Reconciliation and peace-building consultant

“In a place such as Syria, where options for an enticing counter-narrative are rather limited, I think that CM may be convenient from a donor perspective, but ineffective on the ground.”



Luc Chounet-Cambas
Regional Head MENA - Integrity

“There is also the research that suggests that it isn’t the first generation of migrants who are radicalised but their children and grand children - young people who don’t identify with the world of their parents and yet may not have integrated into the country their parents have adopted. The issue is one of belonging and acceptance.”



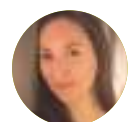
Alistair Legge
Democracy and Governance Consultant

KEY POINT:

Technology, social media and violent extremism

“I think that often proponents of peace have been prone to offer alternatives that either attempt to paint too rosy of a picture (thereby losing credibility) or that do not give an adequately exciting/significant/meaningful alternative.”

“I think it’s a fair characterization to say that violent groups have been more effective than proponents of peace. On the other hand, clearly the vast, vast majority of people are not joining extremist groups, so we should not overstate the problem.”



Sara Lind
Co-Founder at The ‘MPOWER Project

“I suspect the counter narrative to ISIS’ propaganda is not going to be ‘won’ on the internet but rather through our social policies, acceptance, integration, rule of law, strong institutions etc. It is strengthening our pluralistic democracies. Our ideas have to be put into practice and be real for the the most vulnerable not just for the well educated and resilient.”



Alistair Legge
Democracy and Governance Consultant

“Peace messaging needs to complement measures that are already being undertaken to address root causes and enablers of violent extremism; this is especially important in developing countries where there are significant development challenges and there are poor state- society relations.”

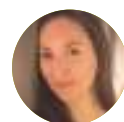


Florence Kayemba

KEY POINT:

International recruits to violent extremist groups

“Many [foreign fighters] identify with the grievances of the local fighters, but they often have a different relationship to that grievance. Local fighters may be drawn by a legitimate grievance about local situations but they may also be drawn by the need for money or a job.”



Sara Lind

Co-Founder at The 'MPOWER Project

“Groups labeled ‘extremist’ may offer actual help to people (food, protection, etc.) that lead people who have no ideological compatibility to join, and... people may be kept in the groups by force or lack of alternatives.”



Nora Lester Murad

I lead organizations and communities to put social justice principles into practice.

“Isolation and the lack of integration can lead to feelings of neglect and stimulate grievances which could trigger individuals to seek out a sense of belonging elsewhere – and the ideology of violent extremist groups like ISIS can fill this void.” [...] “The alternatives we can offer to those being recruited are not limited to livelihood and community but also deeper emotional needs like belonging and ‘sacred values’ -- as a peacebuilding community we need to match these values, which can also be seen as pull factors, with positive and constructive values for peace.”



Carolyn Williams

Peace & Conflict Fellow, Uppsala University

DAY 3

Community- led resistance to Violent Extremism



KEY POINT:

Civil society and the challenges of violent extremism in Syria

“I think it is too early to talk about extremism in Syria, while the country and the people are torn with wars. Extremism is the result of different issues (i.e. mechanisms of radicalization), we have to deal with these issues before reaching to extremism (if by then it still exists). From a “western-centric” perspective the problem in Syria is ISIS or the extremist groups, I think this is simpler than possible. Therefore, if we want to talk about Syria, extremism, understood as non-state groups only, should not be the central topic, but how to stop the war. However, if we want to talk about the westerns’ concerns, then yes this is the central topic, although I think the discussion will be unfruitful.”



Ramzi Merhej
Researcher

“In such an environment [as Syria] the best CVE programme I can think of entails in-country support (mostly humanitarian) to dedicated Syrian nationals who risk their lives to provide services to a given population, throughout opposition areas, irrespective of what armed group/local council is in charge (that is the case of organisations such as the white helmets and humanitarian actors such as UOSSM, a network of Syrian medical organisations). They set a remarkable example, albeit at a very high organisational and individual cost .. and show an inspiring path for those who wish not to join an armed group. [and] out of Syria, to groups working on questions of transitional justice, reconciliation and political dialogue. Interestingly, the space is now opening in Lebanon for such programmes.”



Luc Chounet-Cambas
Regional Head MENA - Integrity

“In terms of what type of CVE donors should support: there is no one-size-fit-all answer; the Syrian conflict is highly complex and fragmented and programs that can work in one area/community would fail elsewhere. Above all, it is important to tackle CVE in a broad way and related to broader efforts to curb day-to-day violence and build civilian peace. Also, CVE in Syria cannot be framed in a vacuum: there is a bloody and violent war being waged against the civilian population and civilian needs in war-time are necessarily different and need to be understood.”



Benedetta Berti
Int. Policy/Security/Humanitarian Consultant, Lecturer,
Author

“it is important at this stage to invest more in both the Syrian diaspora/refugees communities that have the potential of returning to the country at some point, and increase the knowledge of civilian initiatives on the possible role of CSOs in the future of the country.”



Mohammed Shikh Aiyob
Director

KEY POINT:

How can peacebuilders combat intolerant narratives that promote violent extremism? Case study: Myanmar

“Creating enemy images and using propaganda to divide populations into ‘us’ and ‘them’ has been a key element of all conflicts. If we can dehumanize our opponent then it is easier to kill and humiliate them, indeed, we can actually feel good about these genocidal urges as we are doing the ‘morally right’ thing by ridding the world of ‘evil’. We need to breakdown the negative stereotypes by building links and connecting people across group boundaries, discuss and highlight difference, but also legitimize how the groups have different aspirations and goals.”



Neil Ferguson

Professor of Political Psychology at Liverpool Hope University

“The narratives that feed violent extremism in any context or in any part of the world promote a singular version of reality besides being divisive, vilifying, and either dehumanising vis-à-vis self-aggrandising or deepening a self-perception of victimhood, thus justifying violence. Such narratives tend to normalise the ensuing or ongoing violence or sometimes even necessitate it.”



Anamika Gupta

National Programme Officer at UNESCO



“Local efforts to tackle xenophobia in South Africa may offer lessons for Myanmar. Xenophobic attacks often occur when a local leader is vying for control in a power vacuum.”

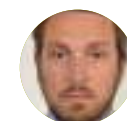


Leigh Hamilton

Project Manager at ALPS Resilience



“In Indonesia, following an acrimonious gubernatorial race for Jakarta, some public figures, including the President, called.. for the mending of political divisions in the country. This illustrates what should be expected from public officials and prominent ‘wise voices’ in any given context, i.e. show responsibility, diffuse tensions and call for restraint and tolerance.”



Arnaud Amouroux

Peacebuilding & conflict specialist

KEY POINT:

Fighting fire with fire?

“Countering is not just about “what works”; it is a choice about how societies and nations want to be. Recognising that neither societies nor governments should or could match the pure thrill and lure of rebellion, I suggest we need to 1. avoid “racing to the bottom” in reacting to base emotions and seek to invoke reasoning and larger relational/identity connections (cognitive complexity. Critical thinking, therapeutic engagement) 2. and work harder to change policies and how governments react to meet legitimate grievances and increase societal healing.”



Matt Freear

Communications Research Consultant

“From what we know from the research so far, it seems emotion can both help and hinder cognitive complexity ... SO... how can we help individuals learn to manage, regulate, or utilize emotion responsibly to promote more complex and empathic habits of thought?”



Patricia Andrews Fearon

Social Psychology Researcher

“Violence has to be part of propaganda. Propaganda will not work without it. In my opinion, propaganda should be considered a part of Psychological Warfare, which hence lands under the authority and responsibility of the military, not NGO’s.”



Miranda Holmstrom

Strategic Communications SME

“The best way for development and peacebuilding practitioners to have impact is to impart information literacy skills with a focus on using a “grey lens” - get people away from the black and white thinking of “extremist” narratives and counter-narratives.”



Colby Pacheco

Senior Program Officer at IREX

KEY POINT:

CVE and livelihoods

“Mercy Corps found that when secondary education was combined with civic engagement opportunities – e.g. community action campaigns -- youth’s propensity to support violence, as well as their propensity to participate in violent acts, dropped considerably. When not combined with additional opportunities, however, education by itself had the opposite effect, and instead promoted positive attitudes towards the use of violence.”

“It is worth considering how CVE approaches that focus on income generation, livelihoods and skill building differently impact females in societies where women, relegated to the domestic sphere, are socially ascribed primarily reproductive, not productive roles.”



Marisa O. Ensor
Professor

“Yes, the world would be a safer, better place if somehow employment and opportunity increased in these areas, but the security actors driving CVE are not well positioned to assess, endorse, and implement development projects.”



Steven Leach
Facilitator, Consultant, Researcher

“The reality is that youth unemployment in Somalia and in other fragile or failing states is a ticking bomb and when youth feel frustrated because of lack of basic life and employment opportunities they become vulnerable to join the extremist Al-Shabab, ISIS, and other criminal syndicates.”



Yusuf Omar
Global Advisor for Global Reconciliation. Peace Practitioner. Researcher and Forced Migration Consultant

KEY POINT:

Day 1 survey reflections

“I think the objection to shifting from CVE to CRIE is not surprising and well in-line with the expert-community at-large... The reason behind the shift (if it translates into anything more than posturing) is politically-driven and not evidence- or expert- based and the disagreement of the ‘expert community’ is probably not going to terribly bother the US Presidency or the advisers championing this approach.”



Benedetta Berti

Int. Policy/Security/Humanitarian Consultant,
Lecturer, Author

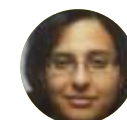
“I think the contrast between the individual confidence of respondents feeling they have a good understanding of CVE, and the utter lack of consensus over what CVE means, or indeed which terms are most appropriate is fascinating.”



Kieran Ford

PhD student

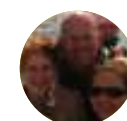
“I think the lack of agreement on terms or their importance is in many ways intrinsically linked to the way it’s being dealt with at the policy and political level. The increase in a militarised narrative on countering extremism and the US desire to narrow that even further to IE has so far lacked any meaningful theological or anthropological engagement around countering it. In someways perhaps those of us working with peacebuilding are adapting to the terms for the sake of speaking the same language but in reality feel C/PVE is just a term that we can fit peacebuilding into?”



Mariam Tadros

Tearfund Programme Coordinator -
Peacebuilding

“I think its great that there seems to be no consensus on term meaning. This is perfect because it means you actually need to analyze situations before automatically placing the CVE/ PVE/CRIE moniker on them.”



Nicholas Dickson

Active Duty US Army Civil Affairs

DAY 4

Government-led approaches to CVE & the role of ex-combatants



Photography: Dania Ali; Stars Foundation; Aware Girls

KEY POINT:

Counter Extremism initiatives within a climate of public sector austerity

“I think the perception of a securitization of Prevent (and of other similar prevention programs implemented elsewhere in Europe) is there; along with a general sense that the communities at the center of these interventions have been ‘targets’ rather than partners. To me, this certainly suggests a lack of an effective strategy when it comes to involving local communities in CVE.”



Benedetta Berti

Int. Policy/Security/Humanitarian Consultant,
Lecturer, Author

“I don’t think that we should speak in terms of a ‘perception’ of securitisation. The evidence of securitisation is strong, present, and for the communities involved, very real.”



Kieran Ford

PhD student

“One of the major problems plaguing this relationship is the inevitable power asymmetry. Research has demonstrated that power tends to make people and institutions bad listeners and bad empathizers.”



Patricia Andrews Fearon

Social Psychology Researcher

“Culturally sensitive community engagement and dialogue facilitated by joint teams consisted of well respected community members and security agencies are essential.”



Yusuf Omar

Global Advisor for Global Reconciliation. Peace Practitioner. Researcher and Forced Migration Consultant

KEY POINT:

The role of former combatants in countering violent extremism

“I think there are diverse groups of former combatants or violent groups ... there are the top leadership with a lot of vested interests driven by irreparable extremist views, and statuses versus the grassroots (probably 90%) who are stomach and pocket soldiers with little ideological loyalties.”



Yusuf Omar

Global Advisor for Global Reconciliation. Peace Practitioner. Researcher and Forced Migration Consultant

“Former combatants are and should be proactive actors in CVE, or at least in understanding issues such as recruitment and drive to join extremist movements. They offer unique insights into the internal mechanics of otherwise insular organisations and groups.”



Adan Suazo

Researcher

“I concur that former combatants should be the part of finding solutions, especially if they have gone through an adequate rehabilitation and reintegration programme. But the reality is that the ex-combatants are often seen as a threat to the society, and mostly get arrested as soon as they cross the border on the way back home.”



Jomart Ormonbekov

Peace and Development Advisor at UN in Maldives

“My advice is that, community and religious leaders can play a role here to help these ex-combatants to reintegrate into the society. History says that, these combatants are often ostracized by the society which impels them to reconsider joining the gangs again. This trend has to be changed anyway. Only then we can hope for an extremism free society.”



G.M. Shoeb Ahmed

Bangladesh Peacebuilding Expert

KEY POINT:

Is the Department of Defence a viable partner for civil society?

“The US DoD specially funds research and many other projects focusing on CVE around the world and can benefit from community level work or civil society groups in countries relevant to its CVE-focused work.”



Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization, Deakin University

“Being seen as in cahoots with DoD would instantly cast doubt on our motivations and worse could possibly put the security of local staff at risk if perceived to be Western military actors.”



Colby Pacheco

Senior Program Officer at IREX

“DoD can be the partner in civil society movement in CVE, peace building activities. They can share technical and real views with general people in the meantime can feel the pulse of common people.”



Kazi Nasrin Siddiqa

President & CEO

“This is probably the most palatable role for DoD to play -- identify initiatives and programs by USAID and State that are targeted to addressing VE and violent conflict upstream, then directly provide funding for those programs.”



Chris Bosley

Senior Analyst - Political Instability

KEY POINT:

What role do diaspora communities play in fuelling and countering violent extremism?

“Numbers of young Diaspora of Somalia origin that are joining to Jihadist groups in Somalia or Middle East are negligible compare to those are recruited locally.”



Abdullahi Isse

“The media can make a huge difference by actively and positively engaging in CVE narratives.”



Chinwe Ogochukwu Ikpeama
Adviser

“Diaspora communities are more prone to VE because of the feelings of alienation in education, employment, denial of rights and civil liberties. Labels often breed hatred, mistrust, racism etc. For example, In UK it has been reported that minority groups have mostly been targeted in stop and searches hence, the reforms that are currently being put in place. Stereotyping and prejudicing of minority and marginalised group will definitely strike a cord in people who have witnessed it happen to people they know or even themselves.”



Chinwe Ogochukwu Ikpeama
Adviser

“Sometimes diaspora community engaged themselves with VE from frustration, inferiority complex and suppression by the majority.”



Kazi Nasrin Siddiqa
President & CEO

KEY POINT:

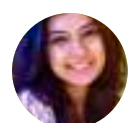
Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR) – time to reverse the acronym?

“The importance of trauma healing, reconciliation, retributive and restorative justice can not be under stated in this context”



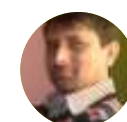
Florence Kayemba

“The state has been fairly active in many reintegration programs which has been helpful in terms of funding but anything beyond that has yielded few benefits.”



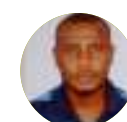
Arsla Jawaid
Consultant

“Traditionally, DDR is applied in post-conflict contexts where combatants are mobilised in political, criminal or opportunistic (greed-based) violence. The entire discourse of DDR has gone through an evolutionary process with the ‘Second Generation of DDR’ focusing more on community-based reintegration mechanisms. Certainly, DDR as an element of post-conflict peacebuilding has much to offer to the field of CVE, given that CVE focuses on ways to bringing actors of violence into normal, civilian life. And in this regard, community-based reintegration might be something worth looking at.”



DB Subedi
Academic / Researcher

“I believe strongly, DDR must be built in trust and credibility, and it is very fundamental that it is community driven and people-oriented in all its spheres, if not it cannot hold any water both for suspects, citizens and the government.”



Obi Peter

DAY 5

Recommendations & emerging themes

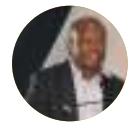


KEY POINT:

Recommendations: to international community

“Local ownership should be embraced.”

“Offer capacity-building programmes aimed at strengthening national and local capacities to develop institutional plans designed to prevent violent extremism and share good practices.”



Hassan Mutubwa

Countering Violent Extremism Practitioner

“There are no quick or easy solutions to these very difficult and deep-seated issues, and it will take patience, consistency, and commitment to see impact.”



Esin Efe

Participant

“I would like to see more funding become available from international cooperation agencies for NGOs for the peace building approach to P/CVE.”



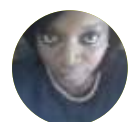
Leigh Hamilton

Project Manager at ALPS Resilience

KEY POINT:

Recommendations: to practitioners

“There is need for improved information “extraction” and exchange from the grassroots level to the regional and even perhaps global level. All this, while remembering the need to approach each instance on a case by case basis and emphasising the need to localise solutions to ensure that communities own the process and therefore cooperate to the highest possible degree.”



Nneka Ikelionwu

Research and Policy Analysis at Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution

“Practitioners need to do research that can help shape evidence-based programme theory for PVE/CVE. It’s important to understand the context and monitor the dynamics of conflict and its attendant triggers and enablers in fragile contexts in order to design strategies that can help inform design of PVE/CVE programmes.”



Florence Kayemba

“The most important lesson, I think, is to caution practitioners against accepting the easy and bountiful money available for CVE at present, because of the impressions that come with.”



Steven Leach

Facilitator, Consultant, Researcher

“Practitioners play a key role in creating forums to improve the state-society relationship.”



Lisa Schirch

Director of Human Security at the Alliance for Peacebuilding

KEY POINT:

Recommendations: to researchers

“In my opinion academia has delved into this topic quite extensively however trying to honor academic rigor sometimes researchers forget to make their conclusions more understandable and concise for decision makers. So I would emphasize the need for a closer collaboration between policy makers and social scientists in this sense.”



Lidia Cano

Graduate Teaching Assistant at Columbia University in the City of New York

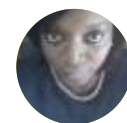
“Researchers should collaborate with the community to develop, pilot, and evaluate a multilevel community resilience-based prevention strategy as a basis for assessing other communities targeted by violent extremists.”



Aniekan Archibong

Research and Data Analysis Coordinator, Partners for Peace in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

“There is need to study community resilience in areas that have been ravaged with violent extremism and proffer policy suggestions that would capitalise on good practices and success.”



Nneka Ikelionwu

Research and Policy Analysis at Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution

“Before coming up with a decision, it is required to study the socio economic scenario, history of that particular region/ community, psychological barrier of that environ and most importantly what actually people of that region/community expect from life.”



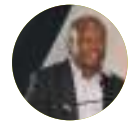
G.M. Shoeb Ahmed

Bangladesh Peacebuilding Expert

KEY POINT:

Recommendations: to Peace Direct

“Develop a friendly version of the key recommendations and lessons learnt from the engagements and disseminate them for possible implementations and follow up.”



Hassan Mutubwa

Countering Violent Extremism Practitioner

“Establish a network with all the participants interested in by sharing details.”



Daniel Ozoukou

Political Analyst

“It should be repeated from times to times, maybe in different forms, it can be followed by conferences and workshops in different countries, although I am aware of the funding dilemma. I think the findings will give Peace Direct more insight in its work with local partners organizations and in spotting new ones. I suggest more comprehensive joint reports produced by Peace Direct local partners and other experts.”



Sawsssan Abou-Zahr

Journalist

“Build a web-based resource that includes information and training about risks and safeguards for use by youth, parents, and community service providers on CVE.”



Aniekan Archibong

Research and Data Analysis Coordinator, Partners for Peace in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

KEY POINT:

Future trends

“My hope for the future of CVE is that we rally around a more positive phrase - not the militaristic “countering” language we have inherited from the GWOT and Counter Insurgency, but placing the well-being of marginalized peoples at the center of the concern, because that is where lasting differences can be made.”



Steven Leach
Facilitator, Consultant, Researcher

“I think that the topic itself deserves a second round of discussion focusing on the possibility of integrating the CVE concept with other types of international assistance such as livelihood or education.”



Amer Karkoutli
Program Specialist at NEA/AC

“As the CVE field is developing, more direct and indirect sides should be considered for sustainability.”



Kazi Nasrin Siddiqa
President & CEO

KEY POINT:

Youth

“I would argue that one key way to counter the factors of extremism among youth is to keep them engaged, politically and civically. We have to keep youth talking about issues that plague them. We have to keep youth at the forefront of discussions about justice, human rights, equality, and inclusion. Without giving youth a proper voice how can we possibly expect to counter the negative emotions and feelings that lead to radicalization and extremism.”



Jared Bell
Assist.Prof.Dr. Jared O. Bell

“Youths need more engagements, more opportunities, more space, more positive fun. Preaching sustains you as far as the gates of the worship centre until you are caught right in the realities of surviving life. We also need to create room for people to ventilate and be heard without physical violence. Mediation, conciliation, peace building educations and many more. Lets help them help themselves.”



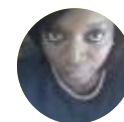
Kenneth Fashola
Chairman, National Advisory Board-Global Peace

“I agree that there is a need to focus on CVE/PVE with refugees but in many cases, it is about rising xenophobia and extremism in host communities.”



Zahid Shahab Ahmed
Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization, Deakin University

“The use of counter-narratives and other material should be improved to, at the very least, arm youth with information that would enable them make better decisions.”



Nneka Ikelionwu
Research and Policy Analysis at Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution

KEY POINT:

Monitoring and evaluation



“In our studies, this is not unique to the dod alone, with the vast majority of activities lacking in measuring impacts, and, what I would say is even more important, sharing these results openly.”



Nicholas Dickson

Active Duty US Army Civil Affairs



“I propose an interaction/dialogue in virtual space or through a face-to-face workshop for sharing best practices from their peace research and M&E projects”



Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization, Deakin University

KEY POINT:

Stories to inspire

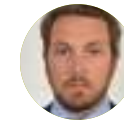
“With the introduction of integrated education [in Northern Ireland] much recent research has demonstrated how this intervention and other shorter interventions (e.g., Summer camps) have challenged enemy images and stereotypes, built stronger community relations and reduced prejudice, all of which will have made the communities more resilient to messages of hate, which could push people towards VE.”



Neil Ferguson

Professor of Political Psychology at Liverpool Hope University

“Sierra Leone is generally regarded as a ‘success story’ among nations recovering from a decade long civil conflict. Back in 2014, Ban Ki-moon spoke of ‘one of the world’s most successful cases of post-conflict recovery, peacekeeping and peacebuilding’.”



Arnaud Amouroux

Peacebuilding & conflict specialist

THANKS

On behalf of Peace Direct, I would like to extend a very sincere thank you to all participants for sharing so generously your ideas, expertise, and advice.

It would be wrong to suggest that any sort of unanimity was reached on the topics we discussed, but that was never the expectation, or even the intention. Rather, through the dialogue process, we hope that all participants will go away with an enriched understanding of how this topic is being analysed and acted upon around the world. A wide range of views have been expressed, and oftentimes strong differences of opinion have been clear; but above all it has been striking how respectful and supportive the discussion has been.

We've been delighted at the volume of engagement we've had from participants right across the week, and clearly it would have been impossible for any of us to fully absorb all that has been said across the five days within the week itself. Therefore, Peace Direct will work to bring together the learning into a report that absorbs some of the key recommendations and ideas shared on this final day.

We will also aim to hold a series of events in the UK and US (Washington and New York) to publicise the findings of the report and would welcome your participation, either virtual or in person, funding permitting. And we are keen to ensure that the report is shared with key government decision makers.

We hope that the week of dialogue has introduced to you new ideas (it certainly has for us!). At the same time, we also wanted the week to be an opportunity for people to get to know the work of other experts and practitioners from around the world.

In peace,

Ruairi, Joel, Leah, Laura and all the team at Peace Direct



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