Transforming Terrorists: Examining International Efforts to Address Violent Extremism

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Efforts to promote "deradicalization," or to rehabilitate detainees charged with terrorism-related offenses, have taken multiple forms in a wide range of countries, often as part of broader counter-radicalization strategies that seek to prevent the adoption of violent extremist ideologies or behaviors in the first place. Some are more formal rehabilitation programs, with well-defined agendas, institutional structures, and a dedicated full-time staff, while others are a looser combination of social and political initiatives. Programs vary in their objectives, their criteria for participation, and the kinds of benefits and incentives they might offer. The cumulative lessons learned from several states' experiences in dealing with violent extremist groups are of growing interest to countries now facing similar challenges.

With its global membership, neutral "brand," and powerful convening capacity, the United Nations has the potential to play a powerful role in setting global norms and shaping international legal frameworks regarding counterterrorism, as well as in providing a platform for the exchange of information and technical assistance for practitioners and governments. Moreover, the adoption of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and more recently, UN Security Council Resolution 1963, reflects an interest on the part of member states to explore both preventive and responsive counterterrorism measures and issues such as the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, the role of human rights in counterterrorism efforts, and combating the incitement of terrorism. Key stakeholders in the UN and a number of its member states have therefore suggested that the UN might play a valuable role in supporting states' efforts to develop rehabilitation programs.

This paper draws lessons learned from case studies of deradicalization initiatives in eight Muslim-majority countries, which corroborate the experiences of countries in other regions that have grappled with violent extremist groups. The paper concludes by making recommendations concerning how the UN could help to facilitate the provision of knowledge and resources to key stakeholders interested in establishing or strengthening their own rehabilitation programs.

Introduction

The last few years have witnessed increasing international interest in so-called "deradicalization" programs—initiatives designed to persuade detainees charged with terrorism-related offenses to disavow violent activities or ideologies. This interest has been driven by multiple factors. First, nearly ten years after the horrific events of September 11, 2001, there has been widespread recognition that military means alone are insufficient in combating terrorists who continue to perpetrate violent crimes throughout the world. Second, a burgeoning prisoner population has motivated several governments to consider how they might best reduce the likelihood that detainees join or re-join violent groups postrelease. Third, incidents of "homegrown" terrorism—such as the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004, the London bombings of July 2005, the Fort Hood, Texas, shooting in 2009, or the stabbing of British Parliamentarian Stephen Timms in May 2010—compel states to consider means of countering violent ideologies in order to prevent further attacks on their citizens. This has prompted countries to pay greater attention to the "soft" side of counterterrorism and explore alternative measures aimed at fostering behavioral and ideological change. Countering terrorism and violent extremism is therefore likely to remain an important policy preoccupation and gain further significance in international relations in the short-to-medium term.

Efforts to promote deradicalization have taken multiple forms in a wide range of countries, often as part of a broader counterradicalization strategies that seek to prevent the adoption of violent extremist ideologies or behaviors in the first place. Some are more formal rehabilitation programs, with well-defined agendas, institutional structures, and dedicated full-time staffs, while others are a looser combination of social and political initiatives. Programs vary in their objectives, their criteria for participation, and the kinds of benefits and incentives they offer.

Many of these programs focus on prisons and detainees charged with terrorism-related offenses. As several experts have noted, prisons are places which provide ideal circumstances for fostering the

adoption of hardened radical views among detainees. However, they are also places of opportunity where detainees are separated from their comrades, have the time and opportunity to reflect on their actions, and are accessible to security and social services, their families, and others who might influence their thinking.[1]

The cumulative lessons learned from several states' experiences in dealing with violent extremist groups are of growing interest to countries now facing similar challenges. The diversity of approaches undertaken and their operational details reflect a range of options for countries wishing to strengthen or develop their own rehabilitation programs, according to their own cultural, political, and financial parameters. The United Nations (UN) and its membership have taken an increasingly active interest in preventing and combating terrorism in the past decade, in large part due to the recognition that the transnational nature of contemporary terrorism leaves all countries vulnerable as potential bases of operation, transit points, or targets. Addressing diffuse terrorist networks and the ideologies which legitimize them therefore requires sustained international cooperation.

With its global membership, neutral "brand," and powerful convening capacity, the UN has the potential to play a powerful role in setting global norms and shaping international legal frameworks regarding counterterrorism, as well as providing a platform for the exchange of information and technical assistance for practitioners and governments. Moreover, the adoption of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (henceforth, the Strategy) and more recently, UN Security Council Resolution 1963 (2010), reflects an interest on the part of member states to pay greater attention to preventive counterterrorism measures, such as by focusing on the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and combating incitement to commit terrorism, as well as respecting human rights. Key stakeholders in the UN and in several member states have therefore suggested that the UN might play a valuable role in supporting states' efforts to develop rehabilitation programs.

Recent research on eight Muslim-majority countries has yielded some valuable insights emerging from their efforts to establish rehabilitation programs or broader deradicalization strategies. Many of these corroborate the experiences of countries in several other regions that have grappled with violent extremist groups, such as "Neo-Nazi" gangs in Northern Europe or violent Leftists in Italy and Colombia. This paper will therefore draw from this cumulative research some common lessons learned and challenges identified, and consider what role the UN might play in helping states address these.

Research for this paper draws on an extensive literature review and interactions with a wide range of experts, academics, government representatives, civil-society groups, and UN officials, undertaken by the International Peace Institute's Countering Global Terrorism project, led by Senior Policy Analyst Naureen Chowdhury Fink. Many of these took place during a series of workshops held in partnership by IPI and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in New York and, in cooperation with the Arab Thought Forum, in Amman, Jordan. Those discussions are reflected in two earlier IPI papers, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," (Naureen Chowdhury Fink with Ellie B. Hearne, *rapporteurs*) and "A New Approach: Deradicalization Programs and Counterterrorism," (Ellie B. Hearne and Nur Laiq, *rapporteurs*).[2] The eight case studies on Muslim-majority states draw heavily on field research undertaken by Hamed El-Said, generously funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

DEFINITIONS

The sensitive nature of this issue warrants a note on terminology. The terms "radicalism" and "violent extremism" are often used interchangeably. However, as radical thought should not be automatically conflated with violence, the latter will be used in this report. Consequently, "rehabilitation programs" will be used at times rather than "deradi-

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1   Peter R. Neumann, "Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries," London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2010, available at www.icsr.info/publications/papers/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf ; and Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, "Risk Reduction for Countering Violent Extremism: Explorative Review by the International Resource Center for Countering Violent Extremism," QIASS, 2010, available at http://qiass.org/pdf/summarye.pdf .

2   Available at www.ipinst.org/terrorism .

calization programs," as many programs aim not for ideological or cognitive change ("deradicalization"), but for behavioral change ("disengagement") or, more simply, for prisoner rehabilitation into mainstream society.[3] "Counterradicalization" refers to measures to prevent the development of violent extremist ideas or behaviors, while "deradicalization" is more often a response to those who have already committed—or are implicated in the planning or facilitation of—a violent act. While there is no accepted international definition of terrorism, this paper will draw on several widely referenced definitions and consider that terrorist acts are committed by nonstate actors and target noncombatants with a view to influencing an audience beyond the act itself and its victims, intending to intimidate governments and their citizens into effecting political change. It is this objective of political change and its psychological repercussions that differentiates terrorism from criminality.[4]

Critics have argued that programs aiming only for disengagement are incomplete, as the ideological rationale for violence remains intact, while others contend that the disavowal of violence is alone a sufficient objective. However, two leading researchers on this topic, Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, have argued that "there is no clear evidence to suggest that disengagement from terrorism may bring with it deradicalization, nor (and perhaps more controversially) is there clear evidence to support the argument that deradicalization is a necessary accompaniment to disengagement."[5] Nonetheless, several states have adopted a set of strategies and policies with the ultimate aim of effecting ideological changes among detainees and potential terrorists; rehabilitation programs may be one way of achieving such change.

WHAT DO SUCH PROGRAMS OFFER?

For states, rehabilitation programs offer a means of reducing the likelihood that detainees charged with terrorism-related offenses will revert to their former activities upon release. Moreover, such initiatives also aim to prevent the adoption of more rigid, violent, and extreme views by inmates in the course of their detention. This is of particular importance to states increasingly concerned about the threat of "homegrown radicalization."

For program participants, such initiatives offer various incentives that aim to build on "pull" factors which offer a more rewarding life outside the group and reflect a shift in personal priorities often associated with aging. These might include the desire to marry and/or start a family, better career prospects, and a longing for the freedoms associated with "normal" life.[6]

Programs also exploit "push" factors, which make it unpleasant to remain in a group; among these might be a loss of faith in the ideology of the group, disillusionment with the leadership, diminished status within the group, or weariness from a stressful life with a covert group that is engaged in dangerous activity. This was recently demonstrated in the defection of a number of Somali fighters from the *Al-Shabab* group who put down their arms once they realized that the group was not following Sharia law.[7] Incentives offered by programs therefore include, among other things, vocational training, education opportunities, counseling, financial assistance with marriage, and reconciliation initiatives to help detainees adjust to mainstream society. The eight case studies below demonstrate how states have offered various combinations of such incentives as part of their efforts to rehabilitate violent extremists.

Deradicalization in Muslim-Majority States: Eight Case Studies

Deradicalization efforts take a number of forms, depending on the context and the nature of the

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3 As the QIASS report cited in note 1 states, many of these programs aim for a combination of deradicalization and rehabilitation, and their target objective is to reduce the risk of violent activity posed by detainees or their associates.

4 Bruce Hoffman defines terrorism as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in pursuit of political change." Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 41-44. The US State Department highlights the noncombatant aspect of "terrorism" in its definition: "Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetuated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or transnational agents, usually intended to influence an audience." For more on this, and a wider selection of definitions, see David Whittaker, ed., *The Terrorism Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

5 Tore Bjørgo and John Horgan, eds., *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), p. 28. For more on the definitions of "deradicalization" and "disengagement" see John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), pp. 154-155.

6 Tore Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement from Violent Groups of the Extreme Right," in Bjørgo and Horgan, eds., *Leaving Terrorism Behind*.

7 The Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor*, January 6, 2011, available at www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_009_1.pdf .

challenges they seek to address. Some have a more formally structured rehabilitation program, with dedicated resources, staff, and after-care plans, as in Saudi Arabia. Other programs take the form of looser policy initiatives, as seen in Bangladesh and Morocco, while still others facilitate a deradicalization process once the decision to pursue that course has already been made by a group or individual, as is the case in Egypt. The case studies below reflect a wide variety of approaches to the challenge of combating violent extremism and offer those countries considering the development of their own rehabilitation programs a menu of options from which to draw out some good practices.

ALGERIA

The reform process following Algeria's "dirty war" in the 1990s took hold two years after President Abdulaziz Bouteflika came to power in 1999.[8] Immediately after becoming President, he announced two major policies he believed necessary to bring peace. To mobilize public support for these, Bouteflika personally promoted two referenda, one in 1999 and one in 2005. The former produced the *Civil Concorde Law* (CCL) and the latter, the *Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation* (CPNR). Both attracted overwhelming support from Algerian citizens and laid the foundations for the country's deradicalization and reconciliation strategy.

Algeria's policies, encapsulated in the CCL and CPNR, revolved around three central packages. First, there were measures aimed at restoring peace. These include amnesties, reductions in sentences, and the dropping of charges against all those who gave themselves up voluntarily, renouncing violence and handing in their weapons. Article 10 of the CCL, however, excluded from pardon those "who had committed, participated in or called for the implementation of collective atrocities such as

rape or the use of explosives in public places."[9]

Second, Bouteflika introduced measures aimed at supporting national reconciliation, solidarity, and reintegration. These included either reinstating people who had lost their jobs because of the war, or offering them compensation instead. The latter included the provision of health and education benefits to needy families of reformed militants, of imprisoned violent extremists, and of those killed during the war by either civilian or militant groups. Such incentives aimed to check hatred of the state, ease the pain and financial burdens borne by the families of incarcerated breadwinners, and thus prevent the future radicalization of the siblings and offspring of detained or deceased individuals. Bouteflika also extended financial compensation to the families of the missing, as well as to the families of other victims of the "national tragedy."[10]

Finally, Bouteflika implemented measures aimed at preventing the recurrence of violence. These prohibited "political activity, in whatever form, by any person responsible for the excessive use of religion that led to the national tragedy," as well as by "those who refused to acknowledge responsibility for devising and implementing a policy of glorifying violence against the umma and state institutions."[11]

Perhaps the most important lesson that emerges from the Algerian experience relates to the role of civil society. Civil society can be an important source of "soft power." Through their extensive social networks and their inherent dynamism, innovation, and energy, many civil-society organizations (CSOs) in Algeria have much wider access to society than the state and can build relationships based on trust. This also allows them to play an important role in countering violent extremism. To promote his reform policies, President Bouteflika relied on CSOs. As Mohammed Berkouk, Director

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8   Few countries have suffered more from internal violence than Algeria did during the 1990s in what came to be known as its "dirty war." Violence erupted after the army cancelled an election that would almost certainly have brought to power the religiously-oriented Islamic Salvation Front (ISF). In 1997, the Islamic Salvation Army (ISA), the ISF's self-declared armed wing and Algeria's largest militant group, unilaterally declared a ceasefire. The improved coercive power of the state was an important factor behind this decision. As one former Emir of a militant group stated, "before 1995 we were winning the war. Things changed after 1995 when the balance shifted in favor of the state and we began losing. This was the most important factor behind us declaring a ceasefire in 1997." (Hamed El-Said, personal interview, Algeria, December 2009.)

9   *Civil Concorde Law*, Article 10, available at www.ictj.org/images/content/5/2/520.pdf .

10 Compensation included payment for damage to homes and their contents caused by, for example, explosives or military action between the authorities and violent extremists. Algeria has more than 10,000 missing people attributed to the "national tragedy"––the largest number of missing people in the world after Bosnia. Article 30 of the CPNR defines the missing as "Any person whose death is declared by a judicial order and about whom there is no news and whose body has never been found after investigation by all legal means." The "national tragedy" is a term used to refer to the Algerian Civil War lasting from 1990 to 1998. See Robert Fisk, "The Tragedy of Algeria's 'Disappeared,'" *The Independent*, December 20, 2010, available at www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/the-tragedy-of-algerias-disappeared-2164859.html .

11 *Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation*, Article 26, available at www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,IRBC,,DZA,,46fb72f6a,0.html .

of the Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations at the University of Algiers, wrote "Civil society and political parties were also active in mobilizing the population against the phenomenon [of violence]. They were instrumental in creating a modus operandi anchored in peace and national reconciliation. … Even the bereaved, from victims-of-terrorism associations were actively involved in defending these principles and still fought for tolerance, peace, and stability. The role of the community, therefore, was of strategic importance in defeating terrorism."[12]

There is little doubt that the CCL and CPNR have achieved a great deal. The decline in terrorist incidents has prompted the Algerian government to worry less about violent extremism as a major threat to the state, though it retains a disruptive potential. Algeria today is a different country from the one which emerged from the 1990-1991 aborted democratic process with a bloody civil war that lasted for the rest of the decade and caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Algerians. Nonetheless, the reforms have not been sufficient to completely rid the country of violence. In 2005, President Bouteflika evaluated the situation as follows: "Now security and safety have been restored as a result of the policy of al-We'am al-Madani… However, our national wound has not been healed yet because of terrorism, whose evil has been reduced, but not completely removed."[13]

Additionally, several other issues are still cause for concern. For example, many deradicalized individuals feel neglected. They received neither compensation nor vocational training from the state to equip them for employment. Large numbers remain unemployed with low expectations for the future. Former members of radical groups are also disgruntled because, though pardoned, they remain politically, socially, and economically marginalized.

Some victims' families are also discontented because they wanted particular attention from the state and to be differentiated from the families of former fighters. Many families of missing individuals are also still awaiting news of loved ones. This has been a particularly difficult issue, as the state absolved its security personnel of any responsibility for crimes committed and based the benefits it extended families upon the premise that they could not pursue through the courts any state official suspected of committing atrocities.

Moreover, no guarantees were provided against the security forces' future engagement in politics. Whether they will intervene to derail election results in the future, as they did in the early 1990s, remains to be seen. For the time being however, most Algerians have had enough of bloodshed and instability, and have therefore accepted President Bouteflika's strategies.

Finally, the 2007 transformation of Algeria's Islamist opposition, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSCP), into *al Qaida* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)—violently brought to the international community's attention with the bombings of UN offices in Algeria's capital that year—also poses a serious challenge to President Bouteflika's counterradicalization and deradicalization efforts. The involvement of AQIM in criminal activities, including narcotics trafficking, is said to finance their terrorist activity, threatening regional security.[14] This has prompted the governments of countries like Algeria and the United Kingdom to call for strong international responses, such as the criminalization of ransom-paying for kidnapping.[15]

BANGLADESH

Bangladeshis have generally favored a moderate interpretation of Islam that coexists with a strong Bengali cultural identity, and elections have demonstrated a continued popular commitment to pluralist democracy.[16] Despite significant developmental challenges, Bangladesh has not experienced widespread religious unrest or extremism. However, between 1999 and 2005, Bangladesh was subject to a series of attacks, which revealed the

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12 Mohammad Berkouk, *The Role of Civil Society in Combating Terrorism in Algeria*, Algiers: Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations, University of Algiers, 2009.

13 Abdulaziz Bouteflika, speech delivered on the occasion of the National Seminar for Regional Activities, August 14, 2005, available at www.riassa.dz/arabe/discoursara/2005/08/htm1/D140805.htm .

14 Joelle Burbank, "Trans-Saharan Trafficking: A Growing Source of Terrorist Financing," occasional research paper series, Center for the Study of Threat Convergence, 2010.

15 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with member-state diplomats, New York, September 2010.

16 Approximately 88 percent of the population is Muslim, the remaining 12 percent is a combination of Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. CIA World Factbook, "Bangladesh," 2010, available at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html .

growing challenge posed by militant religious groups.

The influx of Bangladeshi veterans from the Afghan wars, rigid socio-religious practices imported by some members of Bangladesh's large labor force in the Middle East, and events in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East fueled greater interest in militant Islamism and anti-Western sentiment in the country. Weak governance and a confrontational political culture contributed to a permissive environment for this development, which was illustrated by a wave of several hundred well-orchestrated simultaneous bombings in 2005 in all but one of the country's sixty-four districts.[17] *Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh* (JMB), a group whose declared objective is to remove the country's secular government and impose an Islamic theocracy, claimed responsibility.

Further acts of violence included assassination attempts on then opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina, as well as the British High Commissioner, Anwar Choudhury, and suicide bombings targeting the judiciary, who were declared "apostates" by militant Islamists for enforcing the country's secular legal code.

With a technocratic caretaker government (CTG)[18] in office between 2005 and 2007, and the subsequent election of the left-of-center Awami League government, the threat of violent religious extremism was taken more seriously. The CTG reacted quickly and repressively with swift arrests and the adoption of new legislation that resulted in the execution of six of the JMB's seven leaders for the murder of two judges. It also proposed laws to address money laundering and the financing of terrorism, and capital sentences were set down for financiers, patrons, and trainers of terrorist groups. These punitive measures were also complemented by a "soft" counterterrorism approach, described as a hybrid of counterradicalization and deradicalization programs because it was both reactive and preemptive in nature, targeting already radicalized individuals and vulnerable communities.

One of the Bangladeshi program's key objectives was to expose violent interpretations of Islam as misconceptions. To achieve this, authorities relied heavily on the country's vibrant civil-society sector. After 2005, they deliberately facilitated the creation of new nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to help implement the country's deradicalization initiatives. It was felt that NGOs proved ideal partners in this endeavor given their embedded status in communities and their extensive local networks. A grassroots program was implemented mainly in three regions where violent extremism and criminality posed concerns: Cox's Bazaar, Bogra, and Sylhet.

The program did not focus on the rehabilitation of detainees, but rather consisted of workshops, seminars, and conferences. They targeted village madrassas, mosques, imams, and religious leaders with strong local followings. The program also used influential figures from outside the target areas to deliver its key messages. These events were highly interactive, with question-and-answer sessions and an open-floor format. Subjects discussed included the relationship of Islam to peace, modernity, political and social pluralism, human rights, and role of imams.

There was also a small financial component to the program. A few individuals—for example, the best madrassa graduates from each region and those having difficulty finding work—were offered small loans from NGOs, funded by the government, to set up businesses, such as tea stalls and rickshaw operations. Additionally, there were offers of vocational training with small scholarships in areas such as mechanics, air-conditioning maintenance, and plumbing. Families of convicted violent extremists received some financial assistance to help with the education of their children, in order to prevent militant groups from meeting those needs.[19]

Internal and external observers have commended Bangladesh's strategy of involving civil-society organizations in the country's deradicalization efforts. However, they criticize the Bangladeshi program for lacking focus and being overly reliant on the profiling of individuals, mainly young madrassa graduates, which risks radicalizing them

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17 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "Bombs and Ballots: Terrorism, Political Violence, and Governance in Bangladesh," New York: International Peace Institute, February 2010.

18 A group of technocratic officials served as a neutral "caretaker" in Bangladesh to supervise elections and the transfer of power. The 2007-2008 CTG was unusual in that its two-year tenure exceeded the designated three-month term and in that it was backed by the army.

19 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with senior military official, Dhaka, February 2008.

further. Critics have also commented that religious scholars and leaders involved in the program are seen to be poorly educated and not particularly articulate.[20]

The Bangladeshi authorities, on the other hand, have hailed the program as a success. Their judgment is based on three key indicators which have shown declines since the program's launch: the number of terrorist incidents, the level of local violence, and recruitment into religiously-based extremist groups. Causation, nevertheless, is notoriously difficult to prove. Some of the decline in extremist violence may be due to the greater and more effective use of force in tracking down and apprehending violent extremists following the JMB's 2005 bombing campaign. Moreover, the changing political climate after 2007 has negatively impacted the permissive environment for militant religious groups; and the sweeping victory of the Awami League, most closely associated with secular nationalism in contrast to other prominent political parties, reflected a widespread and explicit rejection of violent religious extremism.

EGYPT

Egypt's pioneering prison-based deradicalization and rehabilitation strategies, focused on debate and dialogue, were developed in the infamous Scorpion Cell of Cairo's Tora Prison. The process started in 1997 when members of *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* or the Islamic Group (IG), the largest and most organized violent Egyptian Islamist group, unilaterally announced a cessation of violence. The IG's imprisoned leaders subsequently expressed their views in a series of books and pamphlets, collectively known as The Revisions, which they wrote inside their cells. These works represented a disavowal of violent rhetoric and tactics and publicly declared the group's new strategy.

Almost ten years later, in 2007, Egypt's second most violent group, *al-Jihad al-Islami* or Islamic

Jihad (IJ) followed suit. IJ was founded by two of the most significant individuals in the history of Egypt's Islamist violence: Ayman al-Zawahiri, currently second-in-command of *al Qaida*, and Sayyid Imam al-Sharif ("Dr. Fadl"), one of the most influential ideologues of the movement. Indeed, the 2007 revisions were announced by Dr. Fadl himself, who expressed his revised views in a book, *Advice Regarding the Conduct of Jihadist Action in Egypt and the World*, in which he set new rules for "jihad" in a way that delegitimized all forms of terrorism as un-Islamic and restricted "holy war" to extreme circumstances of self-defense.[21] The book was also serialized in the influential London-based Arabic newspaper, *Asharq Al-Awsat*.[22]

The deradicalization processes within the IG and IJ were spontaneous, internal initiatives which received little impetus from the state. They were initiated by prisoners themselves, particularly by the "historic" leadership of both IG and IJ, who then sought collective reform from their followers.[23] Nonetheless, although the government did not initiate the reforms, it played an important role in facilitating the *muraja'h* (revision) process among imprisoned leaders and members once it started. It did this not only by sparing the IG and IJ leadership from execution but also by promoting dialogue, debate, and meetings inside prisons between the groups leaders, their members, and other secular and political prisoners.

The Egyptian government invited respected and credible scholars from Al-Azhar University to visit prisons to debate and discuss key issues with the leaders of the violent extremist groups.[24] As Ian Black writes, "Like the Gama'a before them, the Interior Ministry and State Security allowed Sharif and other prisoners to meet and consult each other in prison and hold religious dialogue with clerics from al-Azhar, the font of mainstream jurisprudence in the Sunni world."[25] Quietly, Egyptian authorities also allowed prison tours by the IG and

20 Jane Harrigan, "The Rise of Religious-Based Radicalism and the De-Radicalisation Programme in Bangladesh," in Hamed El-Said and Jane Harrigan, eds., *Beyond Belief: Learning from Counter-Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation Programs of Muslim-Majority States* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, forthcoming 2011).

21 For more details on both the IG and IJ deradicalization processes, as well as on Dr. Fadl's book and its content, see Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Groups* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009). See also, Lawrence Wright, "The Rebellion Within: An Al Qaeda Mastermind Questions Terrorism," *The New Yorker*, June 2, 2008.

22 The publication of this book elicited a lengthy and acerbic response from Zawahiri who suggested that it was authored under duress in an Egyptian prison and did not represent a genuine revision of Dr. Fadl's ideas. Wright, "The Rebellion Within."

23 Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists*. Also, Omar Ashour, "Lions Tamed? An Inquiry into the Causes of De-radicalization of Militant Islamist Movements," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, February 28, 2007; and Nicole Stracke, "Arab Prisons: A Place for Dialogue and Reform," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. I, No. 4 (2007).

24 Al-Azhar is considered by many to be Sunni Islam's foremost seat of learning, founded as a madrassa around 970.

25 Ian Black, "Violence Won't Work: How Author of Jihadist 'Bible' Stirred up a Storm," *The Guardian*, July 27, 2007.

IJ leadership to encourage their followers to repent and renounce violence.

Although the majority of members of both IG and IJ accepted and ratified their leaders' "revisions," a minority did not. Here the government played another important role. Through monitoring prisons, it was able to identify individuals who were attempting to sabotage the revision process. Therefore, "the Egyptian authorities decided to facilitate the process by separating the supporters of the reform or 'revision' process from the small group that was objecting to it. It did this by relocating about thirty of the 'rejectionist' militant Islamists to other prisons."[26]

Finally, once the reform process got underway inside prisons, the Egyptian authorities used the media to counter the appeal of violent extremism within wider society. For example, they allowed leaders of IG and IJ to publish articles in popular newspapers, explaining their new thinking on the renunciation of violence. Many of the emotional discussions that had taken place inside prisons were widely covered in the Egyptian press. Ideologues of IG and IJ and prominent members of Egyptian society were encouraged to challenge radical ideology and extremist groups through articles in daily newspapers, and by publishing more than twenty-five volumes of "revisions" in a series called *Tashih al-Mafahim* (Corrections of Concepts). The latter not only delegitimized violent ideology, but also tackled doctrinal issues, such as declaring someone *takfir* (apostate), attacking civilians (both Muslim and non-Muslim), and the meaning, conditions, and ethics of jihad.

Apart from releasing almost 12,500 repentant individuals, the Egyptian authorities provided few other incentives to counter radicalization more broadly. Indeed, the state made few, if any, attempts to facilitate the reintegration of released individuals into society through, for example, provision of jobs, financial stipends, training, education, or health care, as has been the case in Saudi Arabia. This led

many to argue that the Egyptian program was incomplete and that it "has not been actively pursued."[27] Some observers have even questioned the entire deradicalization process, arguing that these prison debates and recantations were no more than "fake cooperation" to "ensure a quick release of members" from prisons.[28]

However, several prominent experts who witnessed the prison debates and discussions believe that these were sincere.[29] They assessed that the leaders had "occupied themselves with endless theological debates and glum speculation about where they had gone wrong," prompting a change in their views and tactics.[30] Others noted that "Egypt's deradicalization work had helped to keep violence at bay: the proof…is that there has not been an incident in the Nile Valley since [the explosions in Luxor in] 1997."[31]

The lack of a strategy to counter violent extremism among wider Egyptian society has caused some concern as the country suffers from widespread poverty, inequality, corruption, restricted political rights, and regular human rights violations, which are considered potentially conducive to the emergence of violent radicalization. Some commentators warn that, if the prison program is not bolstered by measures to deal with these challenges, a resurgence of violence in the future is not unimaginable.

Recent events in Egypt, however, may pose a serious challenge to *al Qaida*'s narrative of violence as the only possible mode of effecting political change, and it remains to be seen how political developments impact the potential for violent extremist activity in the country, and in the broader region.[32]

JORDAN

In 2005, suicide bombers blew themselves up simultaneously in three of Amman's prestigious hotels, killing sixty people and injuring more than 100. It was the first suicide bombing ever experi-

26 Stracke, "Arab Prisons."

27 Katharine Seifert, "Can Jihadists be Rehabilitated?" *Middle East Quarterly*, spring 2010, pp. 21-30.

28 Ibid.

29 These include men such as Montasser al-Zayyat, legal adviser to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood; Makram Mohamed Ahmed, closely affiliated to the Minister of the Interior and the then editor of the government weekly, Al Mussawar; and Diaa Rashwan, analyst for the al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo.

30 Wright, "The Rebellion Within."

31 Black, "Violence Won't Work."

32 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, "Egypt: Countering the Narrative of Violence," International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, available at www.icsr.info/blog/Egypt-Countering-the-Narrative-of-Violence .

enced by Jordan, which has historically been known for its stability, its modern, secular regime, and its conservative, pro-Western policies.

Jordan, along with much of the region, experienced a dramatic growth in radical Salafi movements throughout the 1990s, as Jordanian veterans returned from the 1979-1989 Soviet-Afghan War. Regional and national politics, including the 1990 Gulf War, the 1993 *Oslo Accords*, and the close alignment between Jordanian and American policy contributed to radicalizing individuals opposed to Western involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. The state's failure to manage economic growth and stem unemployment and inequality, and to provide any vocational and socioeconomic rehabilitation for detained Afghan veterans, also contributed to the growth of discontent.

Jordan's approach to countering the growth of violent extremism was characterized initially by a total reliance on traditional security approaches, such as attempts to infiltrate extremist groups, arrest their members, and preempt their actions. By the late 1990s, according to Amnesty International, more than 1,700 people had been arrested in connection with religious and violent extremist groups. Though most detainees were put on trial, court proceedings were not perceived as free or fair. Allegations of torture, confessions extracted under duress, fabricated charges, and coercion of witnesses were widespread.[33]

The *Amman Letter*, launched by King Abdullah II in 2004, sought to catalyze a movement against the *takfiri* creed.[34] The letter, issued by a convention of 180 Muslim scholars handpicked by the King, advocated a more tolerant and moderate interpretation of Islam. To this end, the government organized a conference of prominent Islamic scholars in Amman in July 2005 which adopted the letter in full and approved fatwas advocating coexistence, moderation, and *al-Wasatiyya* (the middle way). They rejected all forms of violence as un-Islamic and a distortion of the basic peaceful principles of the religion.

In 2008, imprisoned extremists surprisingly called upon the Jordanian authorities to establish a program similar to that in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the Jordanian authorities organized a two-month ad hoc program, the aim of which was not so much to engage in debate with the inmates as to lecture them on the key religious issues such as a moderate version of Islam and a refutation of *takfiri* ideology. The scholars chosen to address the detainees came mostly from Jordanian universities; they were unfamiliar to the prisoners and perceived as instruments of the state, with little religious credibility. As a result, the most radical detainees refused to communicate with, pray alongside, and even eat and drink with the scholars and professors. The prisoners believed that they were sent by the state, "which made me an infidel in their eyes," observed Dr. Bassam Al-Emoush, one of the participating professors.[35]

Although the *Amman Letter* introduced a newer and softer approach to countering terrorism in Jordan, it did not prevent the state from restricting civil-society organizations, curtailing press freedoms, and instituting a controversial antiterrorism law further empowering the state's security and law-enforcement agencies. It was the November 9, 2005, bombings at the three hotels, rather than the *Amman Letter*, which turned the Jordanian public against religiously-based violent extremism—almost one year after the *Amman Letter*, and five months after the Amman conference.

Many observers of Jordan's attempts to counter violent extremism are skeptical of the country's efforts so far. For example, Ibrahim Gharbiya, a senior Jordanian expert on extremist Islamic organizations, notes:

> … [the] denunciations of terrorism and the information campaign to inculcate moderate Islam have not reached deeply into the general public, except among those who were already moderates. Extremist ideas and violent groups … continue to

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33 Beverly Milton-Edwards, "Climate of Change in Jordan's Islamist's Movement," in Abdelsalam Salam Sidahmed and Annoushiravan Ehteshami, eds., *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), pp. 123-142. Glenn E. Robinson, "Can Islamists be Democrats? The Case of Jordan," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (1997): 373-387. See also the following reports by International Crisis Group: "The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability," October 8, 2003; "Red Alert in Jordan: Recurrent Unrest in Maan," February 19, 2005; "Jordan's 9/11: Dealing with Jihadi Islamism," November 23, 2005.

34 For more on this, see Ellie B. Hearne and Nur Laiq, "A New Approach? Deradicalization Programs and Counterterrorism," New York: International Peace Institute, June 2010.

35 Hamed El Said, interview with Dr. Bassam Al-Emoush, one of the key professors chosen by the authorities to talk to prisoners, Amman, December 2008.

serve as an instrument for recruiting activists…[36]

MALAYSIA

Although Malaysia has not suffered a major terrorist incident in the past twenty years, it has not been immune to the threat. However, Malaysia has learned a valuable set of lessons from its experiences during the Communist insurrection which spanned nearly forty-one years, beginning in 1948, which have informed its responses to the contemporary terrorist threat. The guerrilla-style armed rebellion that targeted rubber plantations, tin-mine operators, the security forces, and the public and was based on tactics not unlike those used by contemporary terrorist groups like *Jemaah Islamiyya* (JI).

Between 2000 and 2005, the authorities arrested a small group of Muslim Malays for attempting to mount a violent struggle against the state. These were mostly young members of the opposition Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) who had been trained by the Taliban in Pakistan. They killed a Christian State Assemblyman, tried to steal arms from a police station, robbed banks, and detonated a few ineffectual bombs, but were eventually tracked down and arrested. The authorities established a prison-based rehabilitation and counseling program to persuade them to moderate their views.

The *Internal Security Act* (ISA) of 1960 has been used as an important preemptive law that gives the police sweeping, extrajudicial powers to search and detain suspects without trial in order to prevent any acts damaging to the security of Malaysia.[37] While in detention, prisoners are subject to a relatively well-designed rehabilitation program. Its objectives are to ensure that detainees understand that their activities are a threat to the country and contrary to the true teachings of Islam, and to instill an awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship, especially in a multiracial, multiethnic society.

The program involves religious and social counseling, moral education, self-esteem classes, and vocational training. Religious scholars are drawn mostly from the Jakim, the state religious department, and often work closely with police officers in drawing up tailored programs for each detainee. However, it is important to note here that establishing theological credibility for the Malaysian clerics has proved more difficult than previously expected. "The detainees," a high-ranked Malaysian state official closely associated with the program stated, "are more knowledgeable about religion than some of the clerics. Therefore, debates hardly focus on religion these days. Instead, they focus on politics, including international relations."[38]

External scholars, including widely respected university professors, are also invited to visit once a week, but the prison staff themselves give the majority of the classes. Topics discussed with detainees include jihad, *ousulfiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), interpretations of the Quran, and Islam's position vis-à-vis other races and religions, as perceived by the scholars and the state. Counseling sessions take place within groups but also, where appropriate, on a one-to-one basis, where detainees are encouraged to speak out. In addition to religious scholars, psychologists are involved in the rehabilitation program and are ready to discuss individual problems. Radical detainees are separated from others detained under the ISA and the most hardened among them who oppose the rehabilitation program are moved to a separate facility, as is done in Egypt.

During the program, detainees are subject to a series of evaluations, with one taking place at least every six months. Initially, a determination of progress is made by a committee comprised of the detainee's rehabilitation officer, the security officer, the accommodation-block officer, the welfare officer, and a counselor. Prior to release, another committee comprised of the department heads within the detention center must consider the individual's case and prepare a report that includes a plan for the detainee's future. This report is further assessed before being passed on to the headquarters of the Prison Service and, after additional consideration, to the Department of Home Affairs. On average, detainees spend almost three years in detention, during which their rights

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36 Yair Minzili, "The Jordanian Regime Fights the War of Ideas," *Current Trends in Islamic Ideology*, May 23, 2007, pp. 55-69.

37 The ISA allowed the police a sixty-day interrogation period. If an arrested individual was not released after this period, he was to receive a detention order for a two-year period that could be renewed indefinitely. Detention under the ISA cannot last for more than two years, but can be renewed once for a similar period if insufficient progress is shown and the original grounds for detention continue to prevail.

38 Hamed El-Said, personal interviews, Kuala Lumpur, April 2010.

to family visits, medical check-ups, legal counsel, and court appeals are constitutionally protected.

The Malaysian program places considerable emphasis on the humane treatment of detainees; police officers make determined efforts to befriend program participants and socialize with them outside the formal rehabilitation sessions. As in Saudi Arabia, the Malaysian program focuses on the role of spouses and families, who sometimes play a crucial part in shaping detainees' worldviews. Families are encouraged to visit regularly and detainees are permitted to telephone them daily.

Moreover, police officers involved in the program visit the families to see how they are faring during the period of incarceration, paying special attention to those where the detainee is the family's sole bread-winner. Apart from the benefits to the detainee, the prison staff can use visits to assess whether other members of the family also pose a threat. If so, those members can be brought into the program for a short period.

Significantly, the Malaysian program follows a detainee postrelease, usually under a Supervision Order. The Police Department takes over from the Prison Department at this stage, and the released detainee is provided with continued counseling and religious education, as well as with other support to facilitate his reintegration into society. This process includes employment assistance if necessary or start-up capital for a small business. From time to time, prison officials visit detainees to maintain their relationships to insure against recidivism. One police official noted that "our detainees, when they come out, they call us and tell us, 'thank you for arresting me.'"[39]

It is difficult to judge the long-term success of the Malaysian rehabilitation program. So far, none of the 169 radicals detained under the ISA between December 2001 and November 2010 has been found guilty of violent behavior and all but six have been released. However, many of those released remain under close supervision.

MOROCCO

Morocco's strategy for addressing violent actors in the past took the form of a social-reconciliation policy, which provides a valuable model for a deradicalization strategy or rehabilitation program. Accusations of grave human rights abuses under the reign of the late King Hassan II (1961-1999) prompted the establishment of a number of committees. Among them was the Equity and Reconciliation Committee (ERC), established by King Mohammed IV in 2002, which fostered social healing and promoted interactions between victims and perpetrators.[40]

In many respects, the ERC developed a very similar program to the CCL and CPNR in Algeria. For example, the ERC called for the release of all political prisoners and exiled individuals, and offered them amnesties. The authorities sought to return political prisoners and other victims of human rights violations to their former jobs. A scheme was also introduced to compensate all victims of human rights violations and their families financially. The ERC also encouraged a reconciliation process between former victims and the law-enforcement officials who detained them. Though such proceedings did not include trials or tribunals, victims' families could use the information elicited from such exchanges to initiate legal proceedings.[41]

However, such a response has yet to be applied to the case of suspected militants today. According to International Crisis Group, the Moroccan authorities have arrested "over 2,000 suspected militants or sympathizers" since 2003.[42] Yet, no attempts have yet been made to debate, counsel, or rehabilitate them. The Moroccan authorities remain adamant that *Salafi Jihadiya* detainees are "not subject to revisions" primarily due to a lack of consensus on, if not contradictory explanations for, the drivers of violent extremism in the country. This perspective also stems from the lack of engagement with civil-society actors, who could provide inputs that have proved so valuable elsewhere.

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39 Malaysian police official, New York, June 2010.

40 The ERC replaced the Independent Commission (IC) first established by King Hassan II, which was plagued by internal division and therefore unable to deliver a reconciliation process to satisfy Moroccans. The ERC was tasked primarily with collating empirical evidence about state violence—defined as including torture, arbitrary detention, and disappearances—with a view to better understanding how to "dismantle authoritarianism." Naureen Chowdhury Fink, *rapporteur*, "Justice, Reconciliation, and Human-Based Development: The Moroccan Experience," Meeting report, London: Chatham House, June 22, 2006.

41 Fink, "Justice, Reconciliation, and Human-Based Development."

42 International Crisis Group, "Morocco Conflict History," Brussels, 2008.

Instead, Morocco has initiated a multifaceted counterradicalization strategy that aims to prevent the adoption of violent extremist ideas and behaviors before any crimes are committed. To this end, Morocco has launched an extensive and wide-ranging religious-reform program following the 2003 and 2007 bombings intended to counter the appeal of violent ideologies to Moroccans. They did so by strengthening three key religious institutions of the state—the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MRA), the Supreme Council of Scientists (SCS), and the Al-Muhamadiya Foundation—and putting them in charge of all religious activities in the country.

Mosques are now the only officially sanctioned places of worship, and are controlled directly by the MRA. All donations to build new mosques or renovate existing ones must also go through the MRA. Moreover, Friday *khutbas* (sermons) have been brought more directly under MRA control; they are prepared in advance and delivered by imams on behalf of the king himself. Additionally, the MRA has been tasked with disseminating information on Islam. For example, before 2003, the MRA used to issue, at most, two magazines a year. In 2006, the MRA published seventeen books on subjects such as "true Islam," "religion and society," and "religion and the state."

The role of the mosque was expanded to include human development. Given the challenges faced by the education system in Morocco, literacy programs were incorporated as an important part of mosque activities from 2007. These courses not only teach basic reading and writing skills, but also incorporate religious literacy. More than 176,000 Moroccan students participated in such programs in 2007 and 2008 alone.[43] The Supreme Council of Scientists—the highest religious institution in the country—has also undergone similar reforms. For example, the number of local councils, supervised by the SCS, increased from fourteen in 2003 to seventy in 2007. These local councils have been delivering over 295,000 *wa'ath* (religious) lessons annually since 2007. A new, *Ifta'* (religious ruling) committee was created under the umbrella of the SCS, which today is in sole charge of issuing fatwas in Morocco.

The Moroccan authorities also turned to the media to spread a state-sanctioned interpretation of Islam based on tolerance, moderation, and Sufism. After 2003, the authorities licensed twenty-eight new religious radio stations, both private and public, including the popular government-owned-and-run King Muhammad VI Radio Station. In 2008 alone, Morocco's religious radio stations broadcast more than 200 *halaga dinyeah* (religious discussions) on Islam and contemporary life and values. The authorities also established the King Muhammad VI TV Channel *(al-Sadisha)*, which specializes in religion and regularly broadcasts live question-and-answer programs.

Finally, Moroccan authorities encouraged the MRA, SCS, key Moroccan *ulama*, and pro-regime religious groups to establish their own websites to rebut radical ideologies. This effort is now led by the Al-Muhammadiyah Foundation. Dr. Ahmed Abadi, the foundation's director, claims to have the most effective antiterrorism website (www.arrabita.ma), in the entire region, judged by the 7,500 daily hits that it receives. Al-Muhammadiya provides web-based lessons in religious education. Dr. Abadi has a live discussion program on the internet once every two weeks, where he says he "simply answers questions on all religious aspects, including terrorism. It is an open encounter for two hours." In addition, Dr. Abadi has a daily seven-minute program on Morocco's main television channel during which he provides a daily interpretation of the Quran, verse by verse (his plan is to cover the whole book), and runs a weekly interactive program on Morocco's main radio station.

It is still early to judge the effectiveness of Moroccan counterradicalization efforts. Moroccan authorities have sought to promote official religious institutions and practices in isolation from its vibrant, dynamic, and active civil society. This, along with denying Islamist detainees the right to fair trials, widespread allegations of torture, forced confessions, and a failure to engage the families of incarcerated violent extremists, has had negative effects. It appears that the authorities may already have lost the support of the families of detainees for their counterradicalization policies, with many

43 Moroccan Centre for Studies and Contemporary Research (MCSCR), "*Taqrir al-Hala al-Dineya* in Morocco (The Report of the Religious Status in Morocco)," 2009; Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1992).

displaying sympathy for extremist ideas. It was widely believed that the escape of nine radical violent extremists from the main security prison in al-Quonetirah in 2009 could not have been possible without the support of societal actors, including family members.[44]

SAUDI ARABIA

One of the major outcomes of the wave of terrorist attacks that struck Saudi Arabia in 2003 and 2004 was the introduction by the powerful Ministry of Interior (SMI) of a professional, coherent, and comprehensive counseling and rehabilitation program for which the Kingdom has become well-known. According to SMI, the aim of this initiative is, "to deal with the wrong convictions of the detained person in order to change and substitute them with correct convictions that agree with the middle way of Islam and its tolerance. This is realized by using dialogue, wisdom, and gentle preaching by competent people, specialists in religion, and psychology and other social sciences, with a follow-up program coordinated by security experts."[45]

The SMI established a special Advisory Committee to oversee the rehabilitation program. The latter relied on a large number of competent and credible clerics, psychologists, and scientists, mostly drawn from former anti-establishment movements, who were therefore able to emphasize to detainees their independence from the government. A core principle of the program is the treatment of the detainees as "beneficiaries" who are seen as having been "misled" and in need of "advice," rather than as criminals requiring punishment.

The PRAC strategy (prevention, rehabilitation, after-care) starts with the *al-Munasah* (advice) program which takes place inside prisons. Detainees voluntarily participate in short-term (up to two weeks) and long-term (up to six weeks) individual and group sessions. Toward the end of their sentences, detainees who successfully complete the course and renounce violence are moved to a purpose-built halfway-house facility

called the Mohammed bin Nayef Centre for Counseling and Care located in the outskirts of Riyadh. Here, the beneficiaries participate in programs offering religious instruction, psychological counseling, creative therapy, social engagements, and a history program.

In addition to the courses outlined above, the PRAC program includes extracurricular activities, such as sport, in which all program staff can participate. The objective is not only to create a better esprit de corps, but also to "give [program facilitators] the opportunity to study the participants' attitudes. Some show aggression in the games, which may suggest that they need more counseling."[46]

An important feature of the Saudi program is the extent to which families are involved. Relatives are encouraged not only to visit their sons regularly at the authorities' expense, but also to take part in the program itself. Families receive detailed briefings about their sons' experiences and development throughout the program. Moreover, families that may have rejected their sons for their violent activities are encouraged to pursue reconciliation and receive them back into their homes and communities.[47]

Upon release, beneficiaries receive a monthly stipend for up to one year, or until they are able to stand on their own feet without state support, and assistance in finding employment. The authorities also encourage and pay for beneficiaries to resume their education and facilitate marriages for those who are so inclined. These benefits are intended to create a set of interlocking responsibilities which make it difficult for an individual to revert to illicit violent activities.

When measured in terms of terrorist incidents and recidivism, Saudi Arabia is considered a success story for the "soft" approach to countering violent extremism. For example, Christopher Boucek, an expert on the Saudi program, noted that of those arrested, no one released from the program had been involved in terrorist violence within the kingdom (as of 2008). Though at least five years are

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44 Hamed El-Said, personal interviews. Rabat, December 2009.

45 Saudi Ministry of Interior, Muhammad Bin Nayef Centre for Advice, Counselling, and Care, Riyadh, Public Security Press, 2009, p. 2.

46 Hamed El Said, interview with Dr. Abdualrahman al-Hadlaq, Riyadh, August 2009; and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with Dr. al-Hadlaq, New York, June 2010.

47 The PRAC strategy focuses largely on men as, to date, there have not been significant numbers of women detained for violent extremist activities. Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with Dr. al-Hadlaq, New York, June 2010.

usually required to assess recidivism rates, Boucek cites Saudi officials' estimates that only 35 out of 3000 individuals who participate in the program have been rearrested for security offenses after completing the PRAC program.[48]

Nicole Stracke, an expert with the Gulf Research Center, Dubai, concurs, noting that "the program was successful, and Saudi officials confirm that only 3 to 5 percent of the hard-line prisoners from 2004 to 2007 relapsed into their old ways." However, she also notes that "prisoners are well aware of the consequences they face if they fail to cooperate with the program's objective…Only some prisoners would be able to cope with the prospect of having to spend even more years in prison."[49]

It is important to note, however, that Saudi Arabia has not succeeded in eliminating violent extremism altogether. Saudi officials have no control over what happens in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Israel and the Palestinian Territories, but "every time something happens there, recruitment in Saudi Arabia, including inside prisons, increases dramatically."[50]

In fact, some groups seem to have undergone further radicalization in recent years, evidenced by the merger of the Saudi and Yemeni groups into AQAP in January 2009 under the leadership of two PRAC graduates who publicly dismissed the program as a "trick."[51] In August that same year, a man posing as a repentant terrorist attempted to attack the program's patron, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Interior Minister.

Although recidivism will continue to occur, whether influenced by internal or external factors, public support for the program remains high. Prince Mohammed has said, "If a man reverts to violent extremism having been given everything by the state, he attracts little if any public support, whereas if a man returns to violence because he has been tortured or otherwise mistreated he is likely to take others with him."[52]

YEMEN

Catalyzed by the September 11, 2001, attacks, a Committee for Dialogue was established by presidential decree (on August 30, 2002) in Yemen to address individuals suspected of collaborating with *al Qaida*. Judge Hamoud al-Hittar, credited with pioneering the Yemeni rehabilitation program, described the underlying rationale as such, "If you study terrorism in the world, you will see that it has an intellectual theory behind it. And any kind of intellectual idea can be defeated by intellect."[53] However, only two other clerics, out of fifteen initially selected, agreed to participate in this initiative. Referring to the others, he stated that "The rest refused because they felt that this could undermine their reputation and they could be perceived to be overly complicit with the state. They also believed that these men were already radicalized and could not be changed as a result."[54]

Judge al-Hittar began the program with a handful of detainees who were believed to be among the most radical and hardened supporters of *al Qaida*. By persuading the most hard-line ideologues to modify their views, he hoped to increase the likelihood of success in dealing with less-committed detainees.

The first meeting took place on September 5, 2002, and lasted for five uninterrupted hours, during which the following subjects were discussed and debated: the Islamic nature of the state, the responsibilities of the Muslim ruler, the meaning of jihad, relations with non-Muslim states, and who has the right to issue fatwas in Islam. Participants pledged on a Quran not to engage in further violence or break Yemeni laws and, in the process of dialogue, were challenged to find elements in Yemen's constitution that were incompatible with Islam. On closer inspection, participants could not find anything in the country's framework that contravened Sharia and consequently acknowledged the legitimacy of the state.

48 Boucek also notes that Saudi authorities claim a success rate of 80 to 90 percent, but that included in the 10 to 20 percent failure rate acknowledged by Saudi officials are detainees who refused to participate in the program, as well as those who failed the rehabilitation program. The actual re-arrest rate is therefore lower than the 10 percent figure. Christopher Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's 'Soft' Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," report Number 97, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2008, available at www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp97_boucek_saudi_final.pdf .

49 Stracke, "Arab Prisons."

50 Hamed El Said, personal interviews, Riyadh, August 2010.

51 The Economist, "A Nice Safe Haven for Jihadists," January 29, 2009, available at www.economist.com/node/13041120?story_id=13041120 .

52 Hamed El Said, conversation with Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, Riyadh, November 2010.

53 Kathy Gannon, "Yemen Employs New Terror Approach," *The Washington Post*, July 4, 2007; and Michael Taarnby, "Yemen's Committee for Dialogue: Can Jihadists Return to Society?" Terrorism Monitor 3, no.14, July 15, 2005.

54 Hamed El-Said, interview with Judge Hamoud al-Hittar, Sana'a, June 2010.

Between 2002 and 2010, 500 detainees were released after engaging in debates, first with their colleagues and then in large group sessions with the official scholars of the state. Social and economic incentives were also provided to both detained and released prisoners. For example, as part of selective inducements provided by the state, families of the detained individuals were encouraged to visit their incarcerated sons and relatives more often. The Yemeni authorities wanted to demonstrate to the families that they were not torturing them as *al Qaida* publicly claimed. They also hoped that familial and tribal pressures would prompt detainees to moderate their views, repent, and persuade other *al Qaida* sympathizers to give themselves up voluntarily without fearing negative repercussions.

Released detainees received up to YR 20,000 each to help them rebuild their lives after prison.[55] The state also sought to ensure, whenever possible, the return of released prisoners to their former jobs in the public sector, though often with little success. After their release some received cheap loans and/or grants from the state to establish private businesses. Marriage was facilitated, too, with the state covering most of the costs involved. This went hand-in-hand with assistance in-kind, such as a package containing cooking oil, rice, sugar, tea and coffee.

The Yemeni program faced numerous challenges. First, the number of participating clerics was too small to address the views of the hundreds of detainees. Second, there was insufficient dialogue between clerics and detainees: "Detainees had more conversations and discussions with each other than they did with official clerics, and it was this which convinced most imprisoned individuals to moderate their views and tactics."[56] As Katherine Seifert notes, it was not a program per se, but rather an "attempt" to steer detainees away from violent extremism by going "through the motions of…signing up a slip of paper, [and] being granted their freedom" in return.[57]

Third, after 2004, the authorities faced a renewed *Houthi* rebellion in the North followed by an increasingly violent secessionist movement in the South.[58] The government's limited resources had to be redirected to meet these new challenges and there was little financing left for the rehabilitation program. Moreover, the poor qualifications of released detainees, combined with the high unemployment rate, made it difficult for the government to secure jobs for each one. Consequently, many detainees found they had spent the funds they received from the state and, in many cases, had to assume the added burden of caring for their families.

Abu Jandal, Osama bin Laden's former bodyguard, explained that "most [detainees] felt that they had to assist their families. Of those who got married, many quickly became short of money and marriage and family became a liability, rather than an asset." Under the circumstances, many "rejoined al-Qaeda who pays its cadre around $300 monthly."[59]

Finally, external interventions may also have led to recidivism. For example, after 2006, the Yemeni authorities started to rely on tribal leaders to convince *al Qaida* members of their tribes to give themselves up to the state and renounce violence. This mechanism found some success, but was undermined by attacks which were perceived to be generated by foreign powers, but were officially conducted by the government of Yemen. The deaths of civilians during such attacks made negotiations with tribal elders difficult. Moreover, they exerted pressure on the unity of Yemeni society, turning many tribes against the state and prompting some to shelter AQAP members.

The Yemeni rehabilitation program received some negative feedback from observers and state officials alike. President Ali Saleh himself spoke of only achieving a 60 percent success rate. Officials in the Political Security Organization (PSO), established in 2002 and put in charge of all issues related to security detainees, argue that the

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55 Hamed El-Said, personal interviews with former graduates and state officials at the Political Security Organization, Sana'a, June 2010.

56 Hamed El Said, interviews with four former detainees, Sana'a, June 2010.

57 Seifert, "Can Jihadis be Rehabilitated?"

58 Since 2004, Yemeni government forces have been sporadically fighting a Shiite rebel group known as the Al-Houthi in Yemen's northwestern Saada province. UNHCR estimates that 150,000 people have been affected by the conflict. more information available at www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31943&Cr=Yemen&Cr1= .

59 Hamed El Said, interview with Abu Jandal, Osama bin Laden's former bodyguard, Sanaa, June 2010.

program was successful between 2004 and 2006.[60] During this period, they state, the country saw not even a single act of terrorism and that none of the freed detainees returned to violence.

However, the situation started to deteriorate in 2006 when twenty-three detained violent extremists escaped from prison, mobilized a large number of sympathizers and began to reenergize the spread of violent extremism. Among the other factors mentioned, this was the main catalyst behind the termination of the program in 2006. However, as the United States struggles with the issue of what to do with Guantánamo Bay, where a large proportion of the inmates are Yemeni, it looks like Judge al-Hittar's program may be revived, though modeled more closely on the Saudi example. Yemeni officials claim they were offered $11 million by the US for such an initiative and are awaiting funding before restarting the program.[61]

Lessons Learned?

The brief overview above presents efforts to address violent extremism in some Muslim-majority states. Each program was designed within a particular context and to address varied terrorist and extremist groups. However, they reveal several common lessons learned from experiences in promoting deradicalization and disengagement from violent extremism undertaken throughout the past two decades in places as diverse as Sweden, Norway, Germany, Italy, Northern Ireland, and Colombia, an overview of which is available in IPI's report, "Beyond Terrorism."[62] These insights suggest that the body of knowledge and practical experiences with such programs are not limited to their country or region of operation and that countries can learn from each other's experiences despite distances of geography and time among their programs.[63]

CONTEXT IS IMPORTANT

The potential success of a rehabilitation program, as well as the responses of each of its participants, is often closely shaped by the domestic, regional, and international contexts. On the domestic front, programs make use of local customs and social mores when interacting with detainees and their families. The kinds of guarantees of personal behavior that families or tribes in Yemen or Saudi Arabia provide for detainees cannot be replicated in Europe or North America, for example. In some societies, the state cannot endorse a particular religion or religious interpretation, in which case efforts are directed more at offering educational and vocational opportunities which may touch on religious issues, without focusing on them.

Each state's own capacities also dictate the types and extent of resources available for rehabilitation programs. Weak states which face challenges in securing their borders or providing citizens with basic services may therefore find it difficult to establish their legitimacy or credibility in the eyes of some citizens. Consequently, establishing costly rehabilitation programs or influencing detainees' political or religious views will be particularly difficult for them. As one researcher noted, "such states are not really capable of fashioning, erecting and designing effective deradicalization or counter-radicalization programs. On the contrary, what you see is that the weakness of the state encourages different factions to take up arms against the state, because everybody believes it is about to fail."[64]

Not only is the domestic environment important, but the regional and international contexts are also vital in shaping the receptivity of participants to new ideas. As a senior Saudi official observed, "When Abu Ghraib happens, you see [terrorist] recruitment go up. When events happen in Pakistan, or Afghanistan or Iraq, you see recruitment go up." Indeed, one expert argued that external affairs are a primary ingredient in radicalizing young Muslims and recounted how the war in Gaza of January 2009) undermined some governments' efforts to promote deradicalization. "Saudis go to Iraq not because there's something wrong in Saudi, but because something is wrong in Iraq. They go to Afghanistan, because there is something wrong in Afghanistan. As long as we continue to

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60 Hamed El-Said, "Jordan's Approach to Violent Extremism," (forthcoming).

61 Kevin Peraino, "The Reeducation of Abu Jandal: Can Jihadists Really be Reformed? Closing Guantanamo May Depend on it," *Newsweek*, May 29, 2009, available at www.newsweek.com/2009/05/28/the-reeducation-of-abu-jandal.html ; and Seifert, "Can Jihadists be Rehabilitated?"

62 Naureen Chowdhury Fink with Ellie B. Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," New York: International Peace Institute, October 2008.

63 For more on case studies on these countries, see Bjørgo and Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*.

64 Hamed El-Said, discussions at IPI, New York, June 2010.

ignore the external environment, deradicalization will never be 100 percent successful."[65]

FAMILY MATTERS

Several experts have cited the importance of family in facilitating an individual's exit from violent extremist groups. In Norway and Sweden, for example, families played a vital role in speaking to teenagers before they got further involved in right-wing extremist groups.[66] In many instances, family visits, tribal pressures, the desire to establish a family, all provided important incentives for detainees to participate in rehabilitation programs.

However, it must also be recognized that families subscribing to violent extremist ideas themselves can have a negative impact on deradicalization efforts. In Malaysia, for example, a police official described how some wives encouraged their husbands to go and wage jihad; in Norway, families of extremist youths were sometimes more a part of the problem than the solution.[67] It is therefore important that counterradicalization and deradicalization strategies incorporate families and communities to the extent feasible.

ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL NETWORK IS KEY

Friends, colleagues, and relatives play an important role in encouraging youths to join extremist groups. Sometimes, this may simply be a social decision: Tore Bjørgo notes that radical extremist thinking often develops after the individual has joined the group.[68] The importance of a kinship and familial networks was also highlighted in the stories of groups of young men who have left the town of Tetouan, Morocco, in order to perpetrate acts of terrorism abroad.[69] In a report about the "homegrown" threat of radicalization in New York City, New York Police Department Senior Intelligence Analyst Mitch Silber recognizes the importance of like-minded groups in contributing to the indoctrination of an individual before they can commit an act of violence based on their extremist views.[70]

According to Marc Sageman, an expert on terrorist networks, the evolution of the Internet and the possibilities it offers for private and public conversations have removed the necessity of physically connecting to these like-minded groups. Describing such online communities as "blobs," due to their amorphous nature, Sageman argues that the Internet has allowed for the development of intense online relationships thanks to the anonymity and comparatively low risks offered by the internet. These online interactions can fuel moral outrage and peer pressure, often based on vicariously shared grievances, which move an individual to engage in violence.[71] Such groups allow users to exclude others with alternative perspectives and create a greater bond among the believers, what Sageman has called "in-group love" and "out-group hate."[72]

Consequently, rehabilitation programs need to effectively address the social networks or communities which enable an individual to radicalize, or facilitate the development of an alternative social network to support the individual once the program has been completed. In particular, new media tools for communication need to be an integral part of a strategy to counter violent extremism. Their important role in the recent uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa demonstrate the potency of these new tools and the speed at which they can translate online communications into offline activities, for better or worse.

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65 Ibid.

66 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversations with Swedish and Norwegian rehabilitation-program experts, New York, April 2008.

67 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with senior Malaysian Police Official and Norwegian Police Studies Professor and founder of the Exit Program, New York, 2008, June 2010 and April 2008, respectively.

68 Bjørgo, "Processes of Disengagement."

69 Andrea Elliott, "Where Boys Grow Up to be Jihadis: How Did One Small Neighborhood in a Moroccan City Give Rise to so Many Terrorists?" *New York Times Magazine*, November 25, 2007.

70 Silber argues that radicalization begins with a "pre-radicalization" stage of "normal" life; a "self-identification" phase follows, made possible by a cognitive opening (usually an emotional or psychological trauma which makes an individual receptive to new ideas). The next "indoctrination" phase often sees the radicalizing individual join a like-minded group before the final "jihadization" phase during which they might commit a violent act. Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt. "Radicalization in the West: the Homegrown Threat," report of the NYPD Intelligence Analysis Unit, available at www.nypdshield.org/public/SiteFiles/documents/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf ; also Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversations with Mitchell Silber, New York, November 2010.

71 "Vicariously shared grievances" indicates grievances that develop on behalf of someone other than the aggrieved individual. For example, a young man in Country A who is angry about the poverty and injustice he sees in Country B, though he is himself not affected by them, is said to vicariously share Country B's grievances. The Internet, since it allows individuals to connect more forcefully with communities across the world, fuels this phenomenon by removing the significance of geographic distance.

72 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with Marc Sageman, New York, March 2009 and April 2010.

PROGRAMS SHOULD ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATIONS

Individuals have as many reasons for choosing to leave a violent group as they had for joining in the first place, including the push and pull factors described earlier. Similarly, as Horgan notes, the reasons for leaving may not be the same as those which prompted individuals to join the group in the first place.[73] Comprehensive rehabilitation programs need to address many of these issues in order to be successful and sustainable in the medium to long run.

For example, family reconciliation, marriage, and vocational training address the need to develop personally and professionally; psychological assistance caters to the tensions of a covert and violent life; educational programs and dialogues can challenge terrorist leaders and their ideologies, as can increased interaction with "others." Moreover, highlighting the impact of violence on the perpetrators' own communities can help discredit extremist leaders and the ideologies that they promulgate.

CREDIBILITY OF INTERLOCUTOR IS VITAL

Ex-members of violent groups who have since disavowed their earlier actions and ideas can be powerful voices persuading others to follow suit. They have the credibility to speak to potential recruits and former comrades, the knowledge and ideological fluency with which to counter the narrative of violent groups, and the experience to help law-enforcement agencies develop better counter- and de-radicalization strategies. Omar Ashour has argued that it is only because the "historic leadership"—which provided the ideological rationale for the movement since inception—chose to disavow violence that the collective deradicalization process was successful in Egypt.[74]

Similarly, Horgan has described how "Lars," a forty-year-old former member of the Norwegian right-wing extremist group, the *Nasjonalt Folkeparti*, used his position as an "ex" to speak regularly with youths about the dangers of joining violent groups.[75] Nasir Abbas, a former JI member, forms a keystone of Indonesia's deradicalization efforts in speaking about his change of heart regarding the targeting of noncombatants. While he continues to uphold the validity of fighting foreign forces that occupy Muslim land, the deaths of over 200 civilians in Bali, in 2002, prompted him to speak out against the killing of civilians in the name of "jihad."[76] Likewise, author Ed Husain has been able to draw on his experiences as a former member of the Islamist group Hizbut Tahrir (HT) to speak out against the very dynamics that fostered his participation in the group and about the important factors which prompted his decision to leave.

Scholars, experts, clerics, and other interlocutors tasked with engaging with detainees need to ensure their independence from the government is respected and their expertise acknowledged, in order to be considered credible. For example, those who are debating matters of Islamic jurisprudence or theology with detainees need to ensure that they are perceived as independent and that their authority on the subject matter is recognized or acknowledged by the target audience.

PRISONER TREATMENT PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE

The central role played by the state and security services in many rehabilitation programs has given rise to concerns about detainees' human rights and civil liberties. The underlying threat of punitive action may create conditions under which detainees are not really free to debate and discuss issues without fear of reprisal. With the state and police authorities having the final say in most cases on who has been "rehabilitated," concerns have been raised that successful completion of the program may not indicate a sincere ideological shift but a submission—potentially temporary—to the state's authority.

Moreover, the treatment meted out to detainees often plays a fundamental role in fostering radicalization and anti-establishment views. For example, the systematic torture endured by Ayman al-Zawahiri and others plays a significant role in the

73 John Horgan, "Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation," *Perspectives on Terrorism 2*, No. 4 (2008).

74 Ashour, "Lions Tamed." Also, conversations with Naureen Chowdhury Fink, New York, June 2010.

75 Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, ch. 3.

76 BBC News, "The Jihadi who Turned Supergrass," September 13, 2006, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5334594.stm .

jihadists' narrative of Muslim victimization at the hands of the West and its willing Arab allies.[77] On the contrary, humane and better treatment of detainees has often resulted in cooperation and deradicalization or disengagement, as reported by Indonesian and Malaysian police officials.

For example, Nasir Abbas has reiterated his surprise at not being tortured or maltreated, which fueled his change of heart.[78] Matthew Alexander (pseudonym), author of *How to Break a Terrorist: The US Interrogators Who Used Brains, Not Brutality, to Take Down the Deadliest Man in Iraq*, has argued that detainee abuse in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay forms an important motivation for foreign fighters in Iraq and that the use of more humane methods delivers more effective results. He recounts how one detainee told him, "I thought you would torture me, and when you didn't, I decided that everything I was told about Americans was wrong. That's why I decided to cooperate."[79]

Ali Soufan, a former supervisory agent at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, argued not only that torture is unethical but that it is ineffective; he wrote that "there was no actionable intelligence gained from using enhanced interrogation techniques [on Abu Zubaydah] that wasn't, or couldn't have been, gained from regular tactics. In addition, I saw that using these alternative methods on other terrorists backfired on more than a few occasions—all of which are still classified."[80]

These examples underscore the vital importance of upholding human rights and civil liberties in all counterradicalization and deradicalization efforts. They attest to the need for countries to improve their prison systems and develop more effective, and humane, methods of eliciting information that are compliant with their international obligations. These transformations also provide a powerful challenge to the narrative of torture and violence which is used by extremist groups to persuade their members to act.

Detainees in several instances display anti-establishment sentiments and voice strong political views as part of their rationale for violence. Though no society is immune to this challenge, opportunities for constructive political debates among citizens, and between them and their governments, are therefore important valves, offering outlets for grievances and helping to build some resilience into the state-society relationship.

POSTPROGRAM MONITORING OR CARE

A consistent lesson learned is that continuous assistance and monitoring following a detainee's release are essential to preventing recidivism. In Malaysia, for example, a police official noted, "Even though they are released, we do not leave them. We will keep them busy. We will…because we are in a better position because we arrested them, we know their frame of mind."[81]

When there is the possibility that a detainee is being released into the same environment that initially fostered radicalization, postrelease monitoring and after-care become especially important, as former detainees may still be vulnerable to recidivism. Moreover, by disassociating themselves from former comrades, they often forego some of the social and material benefits they used to receive from the group; it is therefore important that detainees are provided with the tools and resources to retain their independence from former associates.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Most rehabilitation programs are administered by the government as they involve considerable resources and state-run institutions, such as the police, prisons, and the judiciary.[82] However, civil-society organizations (CSOs), including

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77 Chris Zambelis, "Is There a Nexus Between Torture and Radicalization?" June 26, 2008, available at www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=5015&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=167&no_cache=1 .

78 John Horgan, "Individual Disengagement: A Psychological Analysis," in Bjørgo and Horgan, eds., *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, p. 23; and BBC News, "The Jihadi who Turned Supergrass."

79 Alexander personally conducted over 300 interrogations and supervised nearly 1000, using "unique" interrogation methods that focus on developing a rapport with the detainee; it was his interrogations that led two US planes to bomb the house where Zarqawi was meeting insurgents and kill him in 2006. Matthew Alexander, "I'm Still Tortured by What I Saw in Iraq," *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2008.

80 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversation with Ali Soufan, New York, December 2010. See also, Ali Soufan, "My Tortured Decision," *The New York Times*, April 22, 2009, p.27-A.

81 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversation with senior Malaysian police officer, New York, 2010.

82 In most cases it is the government's religious or justice departments. Nicole Stracke notes that Saudi Arabia is unique in that the Ministry of Interior manages the program. Stracke, "Arab Prisons."

nongovernmental organizations, academia, think-tanks, and activist groups, can play a valuable role in establishing supportive programs and developing broader counter- and deradicalization initiatives. Their status as nonstate actors often affords them opportunities for research, analysis, and operational support that can provide valuable inputs into policies and projects drawn up by governments.

During the 1990s in Norway, Sweden, and Germany, Exit programs were established to foster the deradicalization and disengagement of members of racist "white power" groups. Though the program in Norway was conducted with the support of the police and other municipal agencies, those in Sweden and Germany relied more on nongovernmental organizations and individual activists.[83] In Sweden, former extremists run the Exit program; it is their status as former group members and their independence from the government which grant them greater credibility among the participants.[84] In Algeria and Bangladesh, CSOs provided important conduits for government efforts to address violent radicalization.

REACTIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE SITUATED WITHIN MORE PROACTIVE APPROACHES

Experts widely agree that rehabilitation programs must be one of many approaches in the counterterrorism toolbox. As responsive measures, they spring into action once the offense has been committed or individuals suspected of terrorism-related charges have been detained. However, the auxiliary effects of deradicalization initiatives—outreach to communities, support to families, production of educational and informational material, and promotion of more tolerant ideologies—also play a preventive role in addressing violent extremism.

It is therefore important for deradicalization strategies to be developed to complement broader counterterrorism and counterradicalization efforts. To be truly sustainable and effective, they should address some of the sociopolitical factors contributing to grievances about employment, education, political access, or civil liberties, which often underscore the motivations of individuals to join extremist groups.

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

Several experts have commented that their interactions with violent Islamists have exposed a poor level of knowledge about Islamic jurisprudence and theology. For example, nearly 64 percent of Iraqi detainees in US Camps Cropper and Bucca were illiterate. "After Iraqis here learn how to read and write, they can read the Koran themselves for the first time," says Sheikh Ali, tasked with counseling detainees in Iraq. "I've seen detainees break down and cry when they realize that the conduct they thought was sanctioned by God is actually a sin."[85]

This is not to say that ideological leaders or senior-ranking operatives are not highly educated or well-informed. Indeed, economist Alan Krueger argues that an analysis of the demand-side of terrorism indicates that terrorist groups are more likely to select well-educated candidates for suicide bombings, as it demonstrates a higher level of commitment and capacity to carry out dangerous and complex operations. Krueger adds, "well-educated individuals may participate disproportionately in terrorist groups if they think that they will assume leadership positions if they succeed; or if they identify more strongly with the goals of the terrorist organization than less educated individuals; or if they live in a society where the relative pay advantage of well-educated individuals is greater for participation in terrorist organizations than in the legal sector."[86]

However, lessons from the Saudi program, Iraq, and Malaysia suggest that recruits who have been misguided about the precepts and practice of Islam benefit greatly from an education which allows them to assess for themselves the legality of violence against civilians. This has also been highlighted by the experiences of Ed Husain, who argues that a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Islam, as well as more interaction with those of different ethnic backgrounds and

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83 For detailed description of the program, see Bjørgo and Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, and a related IPI report, Naureen Chowdhury Fink with Ellie B. Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism: Deradicalization and Disengagement from Violent Extremism," New York: International Peace Institute, October 2008.

84 Author discussions with Exit (Sweden) program administrators.

85 Judith Miller, "Anti-Jihad U," May 2, 2008, available at www.city-journal.org/2008/eon0502jm.html .

86 Alan Krueger, "Education Policy and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, No. 4 (Fall 2003), p.122.

religious, political, and social views—such as a "white, female, liberal, atheist, American from Chicago"—is what persuaded him to leave *Hizbut Tahrir*.[87]

Challenges to Implementation

Several countries also face common challenges in their efforts to counter violent extremism. An understanding of these shared obstacles can help countries develop counterradicalization and deradicalization approaches modeled on those examples which most closely match their own domestic contexts, socioeconomic constraints, and institutional capacities.

COST

The US-led initiatives in Iraq came with the hefty price-tag of a billion dollars for one year.[88] By one estimate, the Saudi program costs "tens of millions of dollars."[89] Such high costs make it prohibitive for many states, especially developing ones and those emerging from recent conflict, to establish their own rehabilitation programs. However, the examples of Bangladesh and others with nascent programs suggest that there are elements of rehabilitation programs which may be adapted to different contexts, if a program cannot be imported in its entirety.

The importance of combating terrorism and violent extremism may also outweigh its costs for many governments, as prevention is preferable to reacting after an attack has been carried out. As described above, in many cases, the programs address not only the detainees themselves, but also family members including parents, spouses, and children. Consequently, programs have both a reactive and preventive function, which must be considered when costs are assessed. As a senior Saudi official observed, the cost of these deradicalization initiatives is still far lower than that of the broader counterterrorism and counterradicalization effort, which can add up to "hundreds of millions" of dollars.[90]

THE DIVERSITY OF THREATS

Some countries are confronted by violent activities undertaken by groups subscribing to very diverse political, social, or religious objectives. This makes it difficult for them to develop a deradicalization strategy that focuses on only one group or ideology, as do the Saudi, Yemeni, and Malaysian programs described above. In Bangladesh, for example, violent left-wing groups have often posed a greater challenge than militant Islamists; Spain, for example, faces terrorist threats from a separatist group as well as from transnational jihadists. Moreover, some countries are confronted with acts of terrorism perpetrated in the context of multiple conflicts—ethnic, sectarian, or political—which pose a serious challenge to developing a broadly applicable rehabilitation program. However in such cases, elements of a program such as counseling, vocational training, and family reconciliation can still be made available to detainees.

POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BACKLASH

The after-care meted out by some rehabilitation programs is sometimes perceived by the public as an unjustifiable reward for criminality. However, many of these benefits deliver a series of interlocking commitments that raise the cost of returning to terrorism for an individual. Several examples suggest that, as activists mature and develop social and familial responsibilities, they become less prone to violent extremism. Consequently, ensuring that the detainees and their families are well supported following their successful completion of a rehabilitation program helps ensure that no vacuum is left for extremist groups to fill. After-care benefits and support provide important insulation against reprisals or punitive measures by former comrades and as such must be factored in to any long-term deradicalization initiative.

Governments will therefore have to make a clear case to their public as to the rationale for the benefits and incentives, or find ways to make them available in a more discreet manner. For example,

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87   IPI Speaker Series event at IPI New York, June 22, 2010. See transcript at IPI, "Ed Husain: 'You Do Not Tolerate Intolerance—You Challenge It,'" June 22, 2010, available at www.ipinst.org/events/speakers/details/215-husain-you-do-not-tolerate-intolerance-you-challenge-it.html .

88   Miller, "Anti-Jihad U"; also discussed in Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism."

89   Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversation with senior Saudi official, New York, June 2010.

90   Ibid.

the "half-way houses" for detainees in Saudi Arabia, in which they stay following their completion of the program but prior to full release, may seem to many an unjustifiably well-resourced environment, often equipped with swimming pools, televisions, and other recreational facilities. Yet, these amenities are also a means of supporting detainees' reintegration into "normal" social lives, and recreational exercises often allow psychologists and social workers to monitor how beneficiaries respond to aggression, stress, loss, injury, etc.[91]

DIFFICULTY OF SCREENING CANDIDATES

As more information about the programs becomes available to detainees and the broader public, it may be difficult to screen out insincere candidates. Several different means have been used to try and create a bond of trust and honesty among program administrators and detainees. In Germany, for example, multiple interviews were conducted before a candidate was even allowed to participate in an Exit program.[92] In Yemen, candidates swore on a Quran to abide by the law and disavow violence.[93] In Saudi Arabia, teams of psychologists, social workers, counselors, and clerics attempt to assess a candidate's sincerity throughout the program. However, the notorious case of Said al-Shihri, a Saudi national who was released from Guantánamo Bay then went through the Saudi rehabilitation program only to become the deputy leader of AQAP, demonstrates that even layers of assessment and monitoring can fail to identify those fervently committed to violence and terrorism.

Increasing the transparency of a program can also negatively impact efforts to screen candidates for sincerity. Potential participants alerted to the desired outcomes and methods employed by programs can more easily appear to comply with the criteria for successful completion. As one participant of the Yemeni program observed, "We understood what the judge [al-Hittar] wanted and he understood what we wanted from him. The Yemeni Mujahedeen in prison know Hittar is a way for them to get released so they ingratiate themselves with him. There was no long or complex dialogue."[94]

SOCIAL INTEGRATION[95]

Several states, such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Singapore, are struggling with the broader question of social integration in relation to their Muslim-minority populations. In Singapore, Muslim practices have been seen as potentially isolating them from the Chinese and Hindu communities in the multicultural state.[96] In many European states, religious and cultural differences combined with ineffective integration policies have led to the emergence of almost exclusive ethno-religious enclaves separated from mainstream society. A lack of economic opportunities, high crime and unemployment rates, and the inability to speak the native language are some of the factors contributing to the alienation minorities feel, particularly those of the second and third genera-tions. The high-profile cases of Mohammad Sidique Khan, Mohammed Bouyeri, and Cüneyt Ciftci—all young Muslim men who were born and became radicalized in Europe—highlight the need for better integration policies that avoid minority labeling and the creation of isolated Muslim communities.[97]

Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what causes individuals to radicalize, much less to commit an act of violence, it is widely believed that social marginalization, alienation, and a lack of a clear cultural identity are key drivers of the process. Olivier Roy, a professor and author of numerous books on religion in politics, noted how these

91 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversation with senior Saudi official, New York, 2010.

92 Fink and Hearne, "Beyond Terrorism."

93 Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy H. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek, *Deradicalizing Islamic Extremists*, RAND, 2010, p. 49.

94 G. Hannah, L. Clutterbuck, and J. Rubin, "Radicalization or Rehabilitation: Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners," RAND Europe, 2008, p. 37.

95 The authors would like to thank Joshua Amata for his insights on this topic and for his support in drafting this report.

96 In January, veteran leader Lee Kuan Yew suggested that Muslims adopt less rigid practices in order to integrate with broader Singaporean society. He has recently announced that he stands corrected, as since 9/11, the Muslim community has made a dedicated effort to integrate with other communities. See *The Straits Times*, "Malay Integration: MM Stands Corrected," March 8, 2011, available at www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_642614.html .

97 Mohammad Sidique Khan was born in Leeds, England, to immigrant parents of Pakistani descent. He was one of the four suicide bombers responsible for the July 7, 2005, bombings that targeted three London Underground trains and a double-decker bus in London killing fifty-two people. Mohammed Bouyeri was born in Amsterdam, Netherlands, to parents of Moroccan descent. He is serving a life sentence in jail for killing Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh on November 2, 2004. Cüneyt Ciftci was born in Freising, Germany, to Turkish guest-worker parents. On March 3, 2008, he detonated a van full of explosives at a NATO compound near Khost, Afghanistan, killing himself, numerous civilians, and two American soldiers.

factors can lead to the radicalization of youths in Muslim-minority countries. "The interesting thing is that the patterns of the radicals are exactly the same in Europe. These guys do not belong to a community…"[98] Additionally, he observed, "They have been uprooted….They are alienated from traditional Islam and their parents."[99]

Similarly, reflecting on what led him to join Hizbut Tahrir, Ed Husain remarked,

> I think my generation, children of immigrants growing up in Britain, were, and in some sense, still are…outsiders, and that sense of being outsiders at school, being outsider at work, being forever seen as somehow exotic, somehow interesting, somehow different, leads people to want, despite being born and raised in England, to have a sense of belonging, to want to have a network which is ours, to want to have ideals, aims that we can recognize in our lifetimes.[100]

It is therefore important that countries with significant Muslim-minority populations develop concepts of citizenship that are inclusive and foster a sense of belonging to a common society, without forcing communities to assimilate and reject their own backgrounds. Moreover, these states can take measures to prohibit discrimination in the pursuit of education, employment, or other facilities available to all citizens. According to Roy, "…the aim of the European policies should be, first, to act in the framework of the local political culture….Through these political cultures, we should consider Muslims as citizens, as individuals. We should stress freedom of religion and freedom to choose."[101]

Muslim-majority states are not immune to these concerns, often having to confront tensions between various ethnic, religious, or sectarian communities as in Iraq, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, for example. Moreover, those with anti-establishment views, or those favoring alternative religious or political ideologies, often cite some form of sociopolitical marginalization contributing to the adoption of extremist views. These states are similarly challenged to develop national identities and political cultures able to defuse tensions among their citizens and foster opportunities for constructive political engagement.

POOR PRISON CONDITIONS

Prisons often play an important role in radicalizing detainees, and many countries have overburdened and underresourced prison systems and judicial institutions. These limitations pose a significant obstacle to the development of effective and sustainable rehabilitation programs. In many instances, it is the very shortfalls of the detention system that foster participation in violent extremist groups within the prison. For example, in Pakistan—a country with a prison population of over 80,000—government and law enforcement officials "…refer to prisons as the 'think tanks' of militant groups, where networks are established and operations planned, facilitated by the availability of mobile phones and a generally permissive environment. Prisons have thus become major venues of jihadi recruitment and activity."[102] In Saudi Arabia, for example, several detainees in the rehabilitation program who were incarcerated had prior criminal records, underscoring the potential for prison radicalization.[103]

Even countries with better-resourced prison systems face significant challenges in how to address violent extremists. Countries continue to grapple with the question of whether to segregate radicals from other prisoners; or whether to sequester them in groups away from the broader prison population so that they can be monitored and addressed as a group. Prison officials' unfamiliarity with languages or religious practices can make it difficult to supervise the messages expounded by prison imams or activists; in other countries, such monitoring or discrimination based on religious practice is contrary to the national political culture. Moreover, the broader challenges of dealing with prison populations can make it difficult for states to develop a focused approach to violent radicals or religious extremists.

98 Olivier Roy, "Secularism Confronts Islam," speech presented at the Carnegie Council, "The Search for a New Umma," New York, November 5, 2007, available at www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/transcripts/0010.html/_res/id=sa_File1/Secularism_Confronts_Islam.pdf .

99 Henri Astier, "French Jihadis Thrive on Alienation," BBC News, December 5, 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4493706.stm .

100 Husain, Speaker Series event.

101 Roy, "Secularism Confronts Islam."

102 International Crisis Group, "Reforming Pakistan's Criminal Justice System," Asia Report N° 196, December 6, 2010, pp. 8-9, available at www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/196-reforming-pakistans-criminal-justice-system.aspx .

103 Rabasa, et al., "Deradicalizing Islamic Extremists," p. 59.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The difficulties of measuring success of, or developing broadly applicable indicators for, such programs have been widely discussed. It is a particularly challenging issue, as the desired objectives vary among programs. Is deradicalization the goal, or is disengagement sufficient? As one expert observed, "You'll find a lot of the deradicalized jihadists, the ones who abandoned political violence, they're not really liberals, so they'll still have misogynist views, xenophobic views, homophobic views, and so on and so forth."[104] An assessment of success will therefore depend on the desired objective, which is not clear in many of the programs reviewed.

Furthermore, data are scarce as many governments are reluctant to share details on such sensitive topics. Variations among programs and participants also make comparative studies difficult as there are no statistics to use as bases for comparison.

The most-often-cited indicator of success is the rate of recidivism. For example, Saudi officials claim that, of the approximately 4,000 beneficiaries of their program since 2004, the recidivism rate is between 10 and 20 percent.[105] However, as Marisa Porges has argued, these rates can be misleading and reflect only what is known to intelligence agencies.[106] Moreover, in the absence of comparative data, it is difficult to estimate what an acceptable rate of recidivism might be. The cases of detainees who return to violence often garner greater media attention than the larger numbers that recede quietly into their communities.

The need for developing a measurable indicator of success may, however, be seen as too academic an endeavor for practitioners more concerned with short-term results suitable to their particular context. The breadth of deradicalization and counterradicalization approaches, along with the diversity in objectives, argues against the creation of universally applicable indicators of success in contexts as diverse as Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and Norway, for example. In the absence of an internationally accepted definition of terrorism,

and consequently, of terms like "radicalization," it is difficult for countries to synchronize their counterterrorism approaches.

Thus, while many recognize the value of clearly articulating some benchmarks for evaluating "success," one senior Southeast Asian deradicalization official expressed deep concern about efforts to "objectively" measure what could be considered an inherently "subjective" and highly individualized process.[107] Every country may therefore develop their own sets of indicators which can form some basis for comparison with others, but may not contribute to any universally applicable or measurable indicators.

Nonetheless, there need to be some indicators of success that offer a preliminary basis for evaluating a program. Acknowledging that recidivism rates will remain for many the primary measure of success for a deradicalization program, Peter Neumann, Director of the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, suggested a set of six questions, the answers to which could give a sense of what makes a successful and sustainable program: First, is the government committed politically, and willing to commit the necessary resources to the program? Second, is the government willing to learn lessons and adapt them to the local context? Third, has the programming been well thought through? Fourth, are the interlocutors credible? Fifth, are there sufficient after-care provisions? And finally, is the social and political environment broadly conducive?[108]

The Role of the United Nations

As member states increasingly focus on ways in which the UN can support their efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism, the lessons learned and challenges discussed above suggest two primary roles for the UN in this area. First, the UN can serve as an important convener, providing a platform for the exchange of information and the development of new policy initiatives. Second, the UN can be a facilitator of capacity-

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104 Naureen Chowdhury Fink, conversations with Egyptian researcher and writer, New York, June 2010.
105 Jessica Stern, "Mind over Martyr," *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 2010.
106 Marisa Porges, "Getting Deradicalization Right," *Foreign Affairs*, May-June 2010.
107 QIASS, "Risk Reduction Strategies," p. 17.
108 As an example Neumann cited Afghanistan, which, he argued, did not fare well when evaluated against these questions. Naureen Chowdhury Fink, discussions with Peter Neumann, New York, June 2010.

building assistance, directing key stakeholders and donors to priority areas requiring assistance and supporting interested states through the provision of training, infrastructure support, or other resources necessary to create or strengthen rehabilitation programs, for example.

This section will therefore explore the instruments available to the UN and its membership in addressing terrorism and violent extremism and how these might be applied to the development of counterradicalization and deradicalization initiatives. Finally, the section will present current activities undertaken by the UN to address violent extremism, and offer recommendations for future initiatives.

Both the Security Council and the General Assembly have sought a role in shaping the UN's response to international terrorism. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, calls for members to (1) address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism;[109] (2) prevent and combat terrorism; (3) strengthen states' capacities to counter terrorism; and (4) ensure human rights are upheld in all counterterrorism efforts. The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) was institutionalized within the UN Secretariat in 2009 to support states in implementing the Strategy. Though deradicalization and rehabilitation are not explicitly mentioned, they have been linked with pillars one and four of the Strategy, most often associated with the work of the CTITF.

Although the topic of deradicalization is not in itself on the Security Council's agenda, resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), and, most recently, 1963 (2010) provide a basis upon which the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) engage with UN member states in their efforts address states' efforts to prevent terrorism and combat incitement to commit terrorism. In particular, Resolution 1963 encourages CTED to focus greater attention on combating the incitement of terrorism, ensuring human rights are respected in

all counterterrorism efforts, and the use of new technologies like the Internet for radicalization and recruitment purposes.[110]

The reports submitted by states pursuant to these resolutions, and subsequent country visits by CTED, have formed an important collection of good practices and lessons learned from these experiences, and an indication of priorities.

Together, these policy instruments and offices provide the UN with the necessary tools to assist states with deradicalization strategies and rehabilitation programs. There appears to be greater interest among Security Council members in aligning their counterterrorism work with the Strategy, and the focus on conflict prevention and resolution at the UN has also been mirrored by a strong interest in terrorism prevention, which relates closely to the subject of counterradicalization and deradicalization initiatives.[111] However, the UN is in an unenviable position. It is caught between parties that wish it to be more active on this topic and others who see it as mission creep in the UN's counterterrorism program and an unwarranted intrusion in national security matters. Nonetheless, these resolutions and the Strategy make it possible for states seeking UN assistance on these issues to interact with other like-minded states and UN counterterrorism officials.

IPI's 2008 meeting report, "Beyond Terrorism," suggested five ways in which the UN might support international efforts to promote deradicalization and disengagement. First, the UN could provide a forum to collate and exchange best practices and promote information sharing. Second, the UN might foster cooperative relationships among counterterrorism practitioners and support counterterrorism capacity-building initiatives. Third, the UN could assist in developing benchmarks and standards to evaluate programs. Fourth, the UN and its partners could help member states strengthen their criminal-justice systems overall, so that they might be better equipped to address prison radicalization, deradicalization, and associated issues. Finally, the UN could use its role

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109 These include "prolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization, and lack of good governance." United Nations, *Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, UN Doc. A/RES/60/288, 2006.

110 UN Security Council Resolution 1963 (February 26, 2011), UN Doc. S/RES/1963.

111 Paul Romita, Naureen Chowdhury Fink, and Till Papenfuss, "Issue Brief: What Impact? The E10 and the 2011 Security Council," New York: International Peace Institute, March 2011.

as a powerful global spokesperson for vulnerable people, to develop a media and outreach campaign to delegitimize the use of violence against noncombatants. The following section will explore how the UN has moved forward on some of these ideas and offer some additional recommendations on initiatives that it might undertake or support in the future.

PROVIDE A FORUM FOR EXCHANGING LESSONS LEARNED

The CTITF provides an invaluable bureaucratic umbrella under which the UN might convene key stakeholders and offer opportunities for the exchange of expertise and lessons-learned. CTED's country visits provide an opportunity for states to share their experiences regarding rehabilitation programs, and to request technical assistance necessary to strengthen their initiatives. CTED might draw on these discussions and create a compendium of good practices to be shared among interested member states. A password-protected Internet interface might be developed to facilitate the sharing of such information and develop case studies which can be annotated as they develop, for future reference.

Given the focus of Security Council resolutions 1373, 1624, and 1963 on human rights, and the importance of prisoner treatment discussed above, the Senior Human Rights Officer at CTED might consult with law-enforcement officials and other practitioners to draw up a set of guidelines to assist states in developing rehabilitation programs and deradicalization strategies that are compliant with international human rights obligations.

The CTITF has a comparative advantage in bringing together entities focusing on both development and security-related issues. Many CTITF members such as the UN Development Program (UNDP), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have decades of field experience in dealing with governments and civil society on issues like the rule of law, governance, and human rights.[112] Moreover, entities like the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and its Terrorism Prevention Branch work actively with states to develop their legislative and law-enforcement capacities to address criminal and terrorist threats.

The CTITF might therefore convene a series of workshops that draw on the extensive experiences of their entities in the field and offer opportunities to share them with experts and practitioners working on terrorism-prevention initiatives. Such workshops could themselves deliver benefits without being labeled "counterterrorism" yet could still contribute to international efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism. Workshops could focus, for example, on prison management; police reform (vis-à-vis effective and human-rights compliant interrogation); ensuring that educational materials do not promote or incite intolerance that leads to violent extremism; empowering women and minority groups; protecting refugee rights while ensuring they are not abused by illicit groups to move personnel across borders; and providing youth groups with vocational training.

Additionally, in order to help states develop more effective responses, the CTITF might work with civil-society organizations to develop, and circulate among relevant parties, studies that explore regional contexts in which violent extremism arises.

Although the CTITF Working Group on "Addressing Radicalization and Extremism that lead to Terrorism" has been disbanded following the publication of its report, the topic of "Countering the Appeal of Terrorism" will be addressed by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), also a constituent entity of the CTITF. In June 2010, UNICRI established the Center on Policies to Counter the Appeal of Terrorism in Lucca, Italy. The center is tasked with developing a searchable web-based database and producing an annual report that highlights broad trends in the policies, programs, and projects pursued by governments to counter the appeal of terrorism. Additionally, a series of roundtables and international conferences is planned to draw together practitioners and government representatives to examine states' experiences with rehabilitation programs and support those wishing to develop ones of their own.

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112 For example, though its focus lies in development rather than counterterrorism-related issues, the UN Development Programme supports the strengthening of the rule of law in twenty priority countries, working to promote security and justice as a basis for sustainable development.

FOSTER A COOPERATIVE RELATION-SHIP AMONG PRACTITIONERS

The CTITF and CTED have been running a number of workshops to bring together counter-terrorism practitioners and government officials from various countries to discuss issues of mutual concern and means of practical horizontal cooper-ation. Sessions at some of these workshops may be used to convene practitioners from various rehabil-itation programs to consider their common experi-ences and methods and discuss issues such as screening mechanisms for participants, addressing diverse groups and ideologies, reducing costs, and managing public perceptions and expectations of such programs.

Moreover, dedicated workshops might be convened to offer educational and training sessions for current and potential administrators of rehabil-itation programs. Instructive sessions might be offered by academic experts, national practitioners, and ex-militants to those tasked with developing new deradicalization initiatives. Additionally, they might offer sessions on the theology and jurispru-dence of other religions, where appropriate, so that administrators have a better understanding of other cultures and religions, which can inform their discussions with detainees. Organizations such as the Alliance of Civilizations, a group of experts tasked with exploring the roots of polarization between societies and cultures, might be best placed to send people to such workshops.

DEVELOP CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

Despite differences among some academics and practitioners regarding the usefulness of universal benchmarks or indicators of success, it seems some means of evaluating which programs meet their stated objectives will be useful. Based on all the information collated and interactions with practi-tioners, UNICRI could help develop a series of benchmarks or criteria against which the success of individual programs might be measured. As discussed above, some programs are difficult to compare. However, if key stakeholders exchange information such as recidivism rates, entry require-ments, postprogram follow-up (what do partici-pants do afterwards? Do they cease to engage with violent extremist groups or do they continue their association albeit in a nonviolent role? Do they become productive members of society? Do they speak out publicly against their former actions and comrades?), UNICRI could develop a set of indica-tors for success that states might adopt to assist in program evaluation.

SUPPORT STATES IN STRENGTHENING LAW-ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY

The institutions most often associated with govern-ment-administered deradicalization and rehabilita-tion programs are the police and prison systems. In many of the countries vital to international counterterrorism efforts, these sectors are under-resourced and overburdened. In several instances, they suffer from weak overall governance, chronic corruption, and the politicization of the public administration. UN entities like CTED, UNODC, and UNDP are doing important work in facilitating technical assistance to develop law-enforcement capacities in many states. While such efforts are not directly related to rehabilitation programs, they are vital to developing the very institutions most often tasked with undertaking such initiatives. It is therefore crucial that entities like CTED, UNODC, and UNDP continue their efforts to ensure that states develop the necessary law-enforcement capacity to meet their obligations to prevent and combat terrorism. Moreover, greater coordination and information-sharing among these entities could also help develop synergies and avoid duplication of work between them.

Tasked with identifying counterterrorism capacity gaps and suitable donors to contribute to their resolution, CTED might undertake an assess-ment, at the request of a state, of what resources are necessary to establish a rehabilitation program and liaise with relevant donors to solicit funds for interested states. Once identified, such needs can be highlighted to prospective donors or the Counter-Terrorism Action Group (CTAG), which can mobilize resources to establish projects designed to target these priority areas; this mirrors the work already undertaken by CTED in supporting states' implementation of Resolution 1373.

UNODC and CTED might also work with states to develop national training programs for law-enforcement personnel that have had little prior experience with rehabilitation issues and need to develop a professional skills aimed at the particular needs associated with such programs.

DEVELOP A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO DELEGITIMIZE VIOLENCE AGAINST NONCOMBATANTS

In a report on "Terrorist Dropouts," Michael Jacobson has argued that a public messaging campaign be an integral element of the US government's counterradicalization approach. He suggests a campaign to undermine the leadership of terrorist groups to detract from their authority and legitimacy; publicize that leaving is possible; demonstrate the hypocrisy of terrorist groups, in particular, how their violence primarily targets and destroys the lives of Muslims; challenges *al Qaida's* ideology; focuses on the reality of life as a terrorist, such as bleak conditions and poor treatment by group seniors; and finds the most effective messengers, such as ex-terrorists.[113]

CTITF members like the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), CTED, and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General could develop media initiatives to delegitimize violent extremism and terrorism that draw on these ideas, which also echo many of the lessons learned noted in this report, and highlight the impact of terrorism on its victims and vulnerable communities. The basis of such a campaign might be found in member states' condemnation of "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security," as expressed in the Strategy.

Among current CTITF projects that draw on the UN's vast outreach and communications potential is a series of documentaries focusing on repentant terrorists; those who have chosen to put down their arms and lead "normal" lives. The CTITF might work with states, civil-society organizations, and international media outlets to distribute and use these films as a basis for convening workshops and gatherings on deradicalization and rehabilitation issues. Such innovative projects exploit the UN's comparative advantages and bring together practitioners from varied fields to develop creative approaches to countering violent extremism and terrorism.

Additionally, the CTITF Working Group on "Countering Terrorist Use of the Internet" is working with UN member states and key stakeholders to develop and disseminate credible counter-narratives to those propagated by violent extremists. This strategy focuses on crafting comprehensive messages targeting the current and potential supporters of militant groups, finding credible messengers and then crafting a media and outreach campaign to disseminate the counter-narratives. The internet can play a vital role in this effort. It has been used more often by groups seeking to radicalize individuals and incite them to commit violence, but its potential as an active counterradicalization tool has been underutilized to date.

FACILITATE CULTURAL EXCHANGES TO PROMOTE INTERFAITH COOPERATION ON DERADICALIZATION

In a number of cases, interactions with others of diverse views and backgrounds were cited as a contributing factor which helped groups or individuals disavow violence. The UN can help foster such relationships by providing opportunities for people—in particular, youths—from various backgrounds to interact and debate issues of importance to them. For example, UNICRI might organize seminars for clerics from different religions to train together to develop a deeper understanding of each other's theology and jurisprudence that might be applied to dialogue with detainees and extremists using religious justifications for their acts.

The Doha Debates provide a valuable model for giving young and diverse audiences access to senior officials and policymakers. The CTITF, via members like UNESCO, DPI, and organizations like the Alliance of Civilizations, might facilitate regular public fora in which audiences have an opportunity to interact with government officials, counterterrorism practitioners, and other experts on important issues relating to violent extremism.

Conclusion

Research on deradicalization and rehabilitation programs is still in its infancy. Though the European Exit programs have been in existence for nearly twenty years, programs focused on violent

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113 Michael Jacobson, "Terrorist Dropouts: Learning from Those Who Have Left," *Policy Focus* No. 101, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 2010.

Islamist groups are no more than eight years old. Moreover, the sensitive nature of the issue makes governments wary of disclosing sufficient information to satisfy researchers. The time required for detailed research is not always available to policymakers and officials confronting a rapidly evolving terrorist threat and the responsibility to protect citizens from future attacks. Common patterns and indicators elicited from the variety of programs described above offer some preliminary lessons learned and good practices to inform those considering the establishment or further development of a rehabilitation program.

This is not to neglect the significant challenges to developing effective rehabilitation programs that still remain. However, as this report demonstrates, successful elements of programs may be adapted to suit varying contexts and constraints. Several countries have opted for cost-effective approaches that may not allow for one-on-one counseling but attempt to reach vulnerable communities and individuals through groups or community activities; partnering with CSOs, NGOs, or charities may also provide states with additional resources.

However, rehabilitation programs are not a panacea. International interventions have weakened the physical base from which *al Qaida* drew its strengths and projected its violent narrative. Nonetheless, individuals and groups have often adopted the methods espoused by *al Qaida*'s central leadership in order to perpetrate crimes; they've adapted the language and tools of "global jihad" and applied them to local contexts. The ideas and the narrative they have successfully disseminated, especially with the help of figures like Anwar Al-Awlaki, continue to spur acts of violence by individuals around the world with little if any direct relationship to *al Qaida* itself. This suggests that diminished capacities of "*al Qaida* central" due to

international action may not help mitigate the threat from lone or "homegrown" actors. It is therefore vital that deradicalization initiatives take place as part of a broader counterterrorism and counterradicalization effort that seeks to combat this ideology head on.

The international nature of the contemporary terrorist threat and the active role of the United Nations in setting global norms and facilitating international cooperation make it natural that some stakeholders wish to see the UN take a more active stance on this topic. In many ways, the UN contributes to global counterradicalization efforts just by carrying out its mandates to further economic and social development and preventing and resolving conflict. Its efforts to improve the lives of millions of citizens globally in its daily work contribute to addressing the "conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism" outlined by the Strategy. However, this paper has offered some brief recommendations which complement the UN's existing counterterrorism program and suggests how it might support states interested in developing or strengthening their strategies to counter violent extremism and prevent terrorism.

The UN has often been described, using the language of theater, as both a stage and an actor. As an actor, it can catalyze responses to global crises and use its perceived legitimacy and moral weight to defend the vulnerable. As a stage, however, it provides a platform for interaction among its membership and partners, and as such, member states hold the primary responsibility for shaping its activities. Ultimately, the UN's ability to play a constructive role in countering violent extremism and terrorism will depend on the resources and political maneuverability it is granted by member states.

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