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NATIONAL STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM

An Independent Review

By **Sebastien Feve** and **David Dews**

September 2019

**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report contains a comparative evaluation of national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism, to explore how they reflect recommendations and good practices outlined by the United Nations. Drawing upon a sample of 19 national strategies, the report analyzes the procedures and standards of policy planning that underpin the development of countries' strategies.

Using the guidelines of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism's "Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism" as a common analytical framework, the report is organized around the six procedural components outlined therein as essential in developing inclusive, context-specific, and robust national strategies. Analyzing national strategies against this framework, the report explores whether the procedures and considerations that led to the development of countries' national strategies meet this standard.

Based on this comparative analysis, the report provides a number of recommendations related to each of the six procedural components analyzed. It is hoped that these recommendations will help guide countries as they develop new or optimize existing strategies in line with international norms and common standards of promising practice and in turn design more effective national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism.

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INTRODUCTION

Through his plan of action to prevent violent extremism, the UN Secretary-General calls on all member states to adopt national strategies on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) to facilitate a more comprehensive implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.[1] This report contains a comparative evaluation of national strategies to explore how they reflect recommendations and good practices outlined by the United Nations. Based on this comparative analysis, the report provides a series of recommendations to assist countries in developing these strategies in line with international guidance.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES

The UN Secretary-General's plan of action encourages all countries to "consider developing a national plan of action to prevent violent extremism which sets national priorities for addressing the local drivers of violent extremism."[2] It advocates that countries "need to take a more comprehensive approach which encompasses not only ongoing, essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism that have given rise to the emergence of … new and more virulent groups."[3] Although the plan of action generated mixed reviews among countries, its general emphasis on mainstreaming preventative approaches to complement existing national counterterrorism policies was broadly welcomed by the international community.[4]

Many countries have developed and adopted strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism. These strategies provide a means through which greater coherence, coordination, and common goals can

be established across a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders in their efforts to reduce support for and engagement with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies. These strategies enable the establishment of priorities and targets; direct the allocation of financial, human, and technical resources; and assign roles and responsibilities among stakeholders to achieve strategic objectives. Through the process of developing and adopting a national strategy, countries broadcast their intention to comprehensively address the root causes and drivers of violent extremism in their domestic context.

Although some countries adopted their first strategy a decade ago, there has been a surge in the adoption of strategies since the Secretary-General issued the plan of action. Some countries directly reference or credit this international guidance in their domestic approach. One country states that, "with the strategy submitted here … the Federal Government is also continuing to follow the recommendations of the … current requirements of the UN Secretary General's 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism' … according to which all countries are to present a national plan of this type."[5] Another country suggests that its strategy is "consistent with the provisions of these international instruments" and "incorporates the accepted international norms and good practices."[6] Apparently, the plan of action is having a normative impact.

Although national strategies hold great potential and the number of countries adopting them is increasing, the pace with which strategies are adopted has raised concerns regarding a highly sensitive area of government intervention. Some commentators have suggested that governmental strategies rely on "template approaches, replicating models designed elsewhere that do not necessarily align with the nuances of their

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1   UN General Assembly, *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review*, A/RES/72/284, 2 July 2018.

2   UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/674, 24 December 2015, para. 44.

3   Ibid., para. 6.

4   Alistair Millar, "Blue Sky IV: Clouds Dispersing?" Global Center on Cooperative Security, May 2018, p. 11, https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GC_2018-May_Blue-Sky.pdf.

5   Federal Government of Germany, "Federal Government Strategy to Prevent Extremism and Promote Democracy," July 2016, p. 8, https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115448/cc142d640b37b7dd76e48b8fd9178cc5/strategie-der-bundesregierung-zur-extremismuspraevention-und-demokratiefoerderung-englisch-data.pdf (hereinafter German strategy).

6   Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," August 2017, p. 12, http://ctc.gov.ng/pcve-nsa-book/ (hereinafter Nigerian action plan).

specific country context or the actual causative factors of violent extremism domestically," further suggesting that such strategies hold little practical value and are unlikely to be implemented. Others have proposed that some countries may deliberately bias the strategy development process to implement policies that validate and formalize the suppression of political opposition.[7]

Despite these concerns, few studies have assessed whether these concerns are justified or have recommended how national strategies might be improved to realize their true potential.[8] This report presents a comparative evaluation of national strategies to explore whether and how they reflect good practices as outlined by the United Nations. It is hoped that the analysis may stimulate a more nuanced discussion about elements of good and bad practice in this area of policy planning. Based on the comparative analysis, the report provides recommendations to guide countries in developing new or optimizing existing strategies in line with international norms and common standards of promising practice.

SUBSTANTIVE VERSUS PROCEDURAL STANDARDS

The UN Secretary-General's plan of action urges countries to "translate our common commitment and political will to effect real change into new ways of formulating public policy to prevent violent extremism in their respective countries and regions."[9] To support countries in this task, an increasing amount of international expertise is available to inform and guide the development and design of strategies.[10] In addition to the growing expertise consolidated by

nongovernmental research and capacity development organizations,[11] the United Nations and its various agencies have invested considerable energy into offering assistance to national policymakers in translating international guidance to fit their domestic contexts.[12]

Much of the available international assistance offered to countries in this area of policymaking focuses on promoting substantive guidance. This guidance describes the policy measures that are said to contribute to an integrated and comprehensive national response to the problem; in other words, the necessary ingredients in a policy recipe. These measures include improving socioeconomic conditions of marginalized groups, implementing counter- and alternative-narrative communications or digital literacy campaigns, promoting engagement with and sensitization of multiagency partners and frontline practitioners, establishing multiagency intervention programs to escalate and address concerns, developing mechanisms to improve police-community relations, and promoting the safeguarding of cultural heritage.

This report does not compare the implementation of these measures by countries in their strategies. A basic review reveals that certain measures are listed across strategies with a significant degree of regularity and consistency. This is not necessarily problematic, and it is reasonable to expect that countries will source inspiration from each other and from a common body of international good practice. There have been suggestions of a growing "cut and paste mentality" among policymakers in preparing their strategies,[13] however, with language recycled to describe policy measures without critical interrogation of their meaning, relevance, or utility. This tendency to replicate may result

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7   Eric Rosand et al., "A Roadmap to Progress: The State of the Global P/CVE Agenda," Prevention Project and Royal United Services Institute, September 2018, p. 9, http://organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GCCS_ROADMAP_FNL.pdf.

8   Rosalie Fransen, "National Action Plans on Preventing Violent Extremism: A Gendered Content Analysis," International Civil Society Action Network, Fall 2017, http://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/GSX-2017-PVE-NAPs-Analysis-1.pdf.

9   UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, para. 43.

10 Geneva Centre for Security Policy, "Building a National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)," n.d., https://www.gcsp.ch/Courses /Building-a-National-Strategy-for-Preventing-Violent-Extremism-PVE.

11 Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, "Guidelines and Good Practices: Developing National P/CVE Strategies and Action Plans," September 2016, http://www.hedayahcenter.org/Admin/Content/File-1792016192156.pdf.

12 UN Development Programme (UNDP), "Heads of UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and UNDP Strengthen Collaboration to Prevent Violent Extremism," 23 May 2018, http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2018/Heads-of-UN-Office-of-Counter-Terrorism-and -UNDP-Strengthen-Collaboration-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism.html.

13 Prevention Project, "Ensuring an Inclusive Approach to the Development and Implementation of National P/CVE Action Plans: The Role of Civil Society," 18 December 2017, http://www.organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Meeting-Summary_Ensuring-an-Inclusive-Approach -to-the-Development-and-Implementation-of-NAPs.pdf.

in countries presenting individual policies that appear to tick many of the good practice boxes, but that, taken as a whole, fall short of a coherent, integrated, and fundamentally strategic response to the problem.

Of equal or even greater significance are the procedural standards of strategy development, or the underlying instructions for the policy recipe. Far less attention has been paid to promoting common procedural standards of good practice in the development of national strategies. For example, how were the policy measures identified? Who was consulted in the process, and how? How do the policies address the problem or the needs identified? Who is responsible for coordination, and what are the roles and responsibilities in implementation? How will resources be allocated? How will monitoring and evaluation occur, and when will the strategy be updated or revised? Although answers to these questions vary across countries, the strength of a country's strategies depends on whether these questions are raised.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To better understand the current state of play of procedural efforts informing the development of national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism, select strategies adopted by countries were reviewed and evaluated. Although a one-size-fits-all approach to strategy development does not exist, basic common principles of strategy development are emerging. To evaluate national strategies by a common analytical framework, one document provided the backbone of the comparative evaluation: the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism's "Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism"[14] The reference guide provides an authoritative account of the international community's perspectives on good practice in the development of

strategies. It was prepared by consolidating good practices and lessons learned as identified by a range of UN offices, governments, and nongovernmental actors.[15]

In addition to a comprehensive overview of substantive measures that may inspire countries considering their own approaches,[16] the reference guide provides recommendations to inform inclusive, context-specific, and robust policymaking when developing strategies (fig. 1).[17] Guidance was clustered according to the components identified in the framework presented in table 1, with each component informing a series of research questions. Many of the procedural good practices and

Figure 1. Procedural Components of National Strategies Identified by UNOCT's Reference Guide

Source: UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), "Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism," n.d., https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites /www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/UNOCT_PVEReferenceGuide _FINAL.pdf.

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14 UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), "Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism," n.d., https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/UNOCT_PVEReferenceGuide_FINAL.pdf.

15 The reference guide includes the outcomes of a retreat that was held in New York on 22–23 February 2017. For the list of participating organizations, see ibid., p. 5.

16 Ibid., pp. 17–50. The substantive guidance is divided into seven thematic priorities: dialogue and conflict prevention; good governance, human rights, and the rule of law; community engagement; youth empowerment; gender equality and women empowerment; education, skills development, and employment facilitation; and strategic communications, the internet, and social media.

17 Ibid., p. 6.

recommendations included in the framework are borrowed from more established fields of policymaking with a longer history and, therefore, a greater accumulation of good practices and lessons learned, such as development, peace-building, conflict resolution, and women, peace, and security.[18] The resulting guidance reflects standards in the design of national strategies in general, but the practical application of the recommendations may be impacted by unique challenges and obstacles specific to P/CVE policy.

Table 1. Procedural Components of National Strategies

STAGE	COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	QUESTIONS
1	Establish	Strategies begin with identification of and outreach to stakeholders and partners.[19] Strategies are developed in a multidisciplinary, inclusive, and holistic manner that draws upon and reflects input from a variety of governmental and nongovernmental actors.[20] Strategies are the result of a participatory process at every stage, and strategies benefit from broad multidisciplinary ownership.[21]	▶ How do countries describe the stakeholder identification process? ▶ How do countries describe the stakeholders consulted? ▶ How do countries describe the drafting processes implemented?
2	Gather	Strategies are informed by a comprehensive needs assessment.[22] Strategies are evidence based and contextualized to respond to local, national, and regional challenges through the analysis of local circumstances.[23] Strategies foster close cooperation among practitioners involved in advocacy, research, and policymaking to support such analyses to ensure evidence-based policies.[24]	▶ How do countries describe the evidence that informed their strategy? ▶ How do countries describe the availability of evidence? ▶ How do countries describe how they will improve the evidence informing their strategy?
3	Analyze	Strategies identify threats of violent extremism and analyze the corresponding context; local, national, and regional drivers; and vulnerabilities.[25] Drivers can be distinguished between (1) conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and the structural context from which violent extremism emerges, and (2) the individual motivations and processes, which play a key role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent action.[26]	▶ How do countries define violent extremism? ▶ How do countries describe the threat of violent extremism? ▶ How do countries describe the drivers of violent extremism? ▶ How do countries describe vulnerability to violent extremism?

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18 Ibid., pp. 4–5.
19 Ibid., p. 14.
20 Ibid., p. 10.
21 Ibid., p. 11.
22 Ibid., p. 14.
23 Ibid., p. 11.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 14.
26 Ibid.

4	Develop	Strategies synthesize a set of actions and interventions relating to the comprehensive needs assessment.[27] Strategies determine specific interventions to tackle existing as well as emerging challenges and gaps in addressing the drivers of violent extremism.[28] Strategies reflect and conform to specific regional, national, and local contexts and needs.[29]	▶ How do countries synthesize their policies? ▶ How do countries describe the relevance of their policies? ▶ How do countries describe the scope of their policies?
5	Implement	Strategies establish coordination mechanisms to supervise and manage implementation.[30] Strategies clearly distinguish the roles and responsibilities of participating entities and partners.[31] Strategies provide an implementation road map that clearly outlines the objectives, outputs, timelines, and resource and capacity allocations to address factors of violent extremism.[32]	▶ How do countries describe the roles and responsibilities? ▶ How do countries describe their implementation road map?
6	Monitor	Strategies include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.[33] These mechanisms are used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of strategies so that stakeholders can recalibrate plans to meet specified objectives in the short and long term.[34] Strategies are based on a do-no-harm approach.[35]	▶ How do countries describe their strategy monitoring and evaluation systems? ▶ How do countries refer to the principles of do no harm and respect for human rights?

SAMPLE OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Barriers exist in collecting a representative sample of strategies for analysis. Some countries have not made their strategies publicly available, despite recognition at the international level of the importance of doing so.[36] Moreover, aside from databases maintained by the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, both with limited geographical coverage,[37] no international repository of strategies exists. An open-source search produced 44

documents. The term "strategy" as used in this report refers to a range of documents with titles such as action plan, national plan, policy framework, and policy guidelines. All these documents were collected on the assumption that their content was broadly comparable in scope in communicating a country's national response to a domestic problem.

The strategies chosen for inclusion in the analysis exclusively related to policymaking concerned with P/CVE, in addition to other related or

27 Ibid., p. 15.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 10.
30 Ibid., p. 15.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., p. 15.
34 Ibid., pp. 15–16.
35 Ibid., p. 16.
36 Ibid., p. 15.
37 Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, "Prevent Strategies of Member States," 27 November 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-and-member-states/repository_en; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), "Inventory of Policy Documents and Legislation Adopted by OSCE Participating States and Partners for Co-operation on Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism (VERLT)," 15 December 2016, https://www.osce.org/secretariat/289911?download=true.

otherwise indistinguishable policy labels such as "counter-radicalization" strategies designed to put forward measures to prevent individuals from supporting or engaging with identified violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies. Counterterrorism strategies encompassing a P/CVE pillar or stream were excluded from this analysis,[38] as were broader community integration, social cohesion, and antiracism strategies that were not explicitly and exclusively concerned with P/CVE policy, although in practice some overlap exists among these interrelated fields.[39]

Lastly, the strategies were selected on the basis of their development at the national level, and therefore regional or local strategies were excluded. Selected documents were chosen due to their focus on domestic policy; those concerned with foreign development assistance were excluded.[40] Strategies had to be available in English or French,[41] and those not accessible to the general public were excluded.[42] Nineteen strategies were ultimately included in the analysis.[43] The contents were sorted into clusters, reflecting the categories of interest presented in the procedural framework, and then the strategies were compared and analyzed.

METHODOLOGY NOTE

There is growing concern about strategies being "paper exercises."[44] This report limits itself to an analysis of written strategies, which raises challenges in interpreting the results. Understanding the process of policymaking via a review of text included in a governmental communication has its limitations.

First, countries are constrained by challenges unique to their domestic context (historical, political, financial, legal) that influence their ability or willingness to

follow normative recommendations established at the international level.

Second, countries may not have included material of relevance to this review in their communications, particularly countries that published strategies prior to the availability of international guidance. Nevertheless, it is important that strategies demonstrate and reflect the integrity, inclusivity, and validity of the processes that led to their development and adoption. To do this, policymakers must not only give consideration to communicating to the general public the substantive policy measures they have adopted (the ingredients in the recipe), but help the general public understand the procedural strength of the underlying policymaking efforts that informed the new national response (the underlying instructions for the recipe). This accountability is important in any policy field, but it should be indispensable to policymakers who are consistently accused of implementing inadequate policymaking processes prone to manipulation, politicization, and abuse.

Third, this research does not seek to examine whether strategies adopted by countries actually prevent and counter violent extremism. Even the best strategy as it appears on paper does not guarantee successful outcomes, which are influenced by a range of external factors that cannot be captured in a study of this type. This fact is particularly true of a policymaking area such as P/CVE, where the evidence driving governmental policy is essentially contested and where corresponding policymaking responses are notoriously ambiguous. Although robust strategy documents will not guarantee successful policy outcomes, they can help indicate whether governments' underlying policymaking processes establish the necessary conditions through which successful policy outcomes at the

38   Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, and Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, "The Netherlands Comprehensive Action Programme to Combat Jihadism: Overview of Measures and Actions," 29 August 2014, https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/def-a5-nctvjihadismuk-03-lr_tcm32-83910.pdf.

39   German Federal Ministry of the Interior, "National Action Plan Against Racism: Positions and Measures to Address Ideologies of Inequality and Related Discrimination," June 2017, https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/2018/nap-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4.

40   Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, "Switzerland's Foreign Policy Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism," 2016, https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/43587.pdf.

41   Spanish Interior Ministry, "Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (PEN-LCRV)," n.d., http://www.interior.gob.es/documents/642012/5179146/PLAN+ESTRATÉGICO+NACIONAL.pdf/d250d90e-99b5-4ec9-99a8-8cf896cb8c2f.

42   Kenyan Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, "National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE)," 2016 (copy on file with the authors).

43   See the appendix for a list of the national strategies included.

44   Prevention Project, "Ensuring an Inclusive Approach to the Development and Implementation of National P/CVE Action Plans," p. 4.

national level may be achieved. A standardized review of the text included in strategies should help crystallize the strengths and weaknesses of the policy approaches presented, allowing one to paint a picture of current efforts across countries to develop national policy to prevent and counter violent extremism.

ESTABLISH

Strategies should be informed by identification of and outreach to all actors that may be relevant to contributing to an analysis of the problem, developing measures to address the problem, or implementing, monitoring, and evaluating these measures.[45] The process of stakeholder identification should be as broad and inclusive as possible, incorporating actors from diverse fields such as national and regional authorities, law enforcement, and social service providers, as well as community-based organizations, religious and cultural groups, youth and women's organizations, and the private sector.[46] The involvement of multisector stakeholders should be facilitated and sustained at every stage of the strategy development process.[47]

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Countries should begin the policymaking process by systematically identifying and mapping domestic stakeholders. Policymakers should identify stakeholders that possess the knowledge and resources (human, financial, technical) to inform the development of a comprehensive response to a national policy problem. The identification of the relevant interest groups within any country provides an operational foundation of policymaking, preceding the implementation of a structured consultation process. As one strategy notes, "[I]mplementation relies on professional administrative structures and a multitude of organizations and associations, as well as charitable activities and highly engaged individuals. Individual stakeholders often work isolated in their respective fields, however, and public authorities have their own official channels and specific approaches. In cases where expertise and specialized knowledge is needed, valuable time

and important information often get lost or existing resources are not used sufficiently."[48]

Identification of stakeholders is often achieved through implementation of a mapping process—a systematic overview of the relevant actors and their areas of strategic focus related to a policymaking subject. This process enables the government to identify the main interest groups and gatekeepers and assess their potential contribution to the strategy development processes, including the identification of policy priorities. Moreover, policymakers can identify the current state of available resources and any expertise that might be used at later stages of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The mapping process also reveals progress made on a specific policymaking agenda, to avoid reinvention of the policymaking and programming wheel, duplication of effort, and misallocation of resources to implement the national strategy.[49]

A number of countries reference the importance of a mapping process, recognizing the need to undertake the process prior to the implementation of their policies, but not all appear to have completed one. For example, policymakers in one country suggest that "it is, first and foremost, indispensable to establish at national, regional and local levels, a list of individuals and associations involved in preventing radicalization … individuals with a high degree of experience and expertise and capable of having formative, mediating, consultative or other resource persons for the different initiatives outlined" in the strategy.[50] This statement recognizes the importance of identifying relevant stakeholders and different interest groups through a systematic mapping process to facilitate strategy implementation, but it fails to recognize the

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45   UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 14.

46   Ibid., p. 10.

47   Ibid., p. 11.

48   Bundesweites Netzwerk Extremismusprävention und Deradikalisierung, "The Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation," n.d., p. 36, http://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2241.pdf (in German) (hereinafter Austrian strategy).

49   Sebastien Feve and Mohammad Elshimi, "Planning for Prevention: A Framework to Develop and Evaluate National Action Plans to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism," Global Center on Cooperative Security, June 2018, http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GC_2018-June_NAP.pdf.

50   Belgian Ministry of the Interior, "Programme de prévention de la radicalisation violente" [Program to prevent violent radicalization], 16 April 2013, p. 9, https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/68/134/316/ (hereinafter Belgian program).

potential contribution these stakeholders might have in shaping the policy measures they are being asked to implement.

Where countries do not identify and map relevant stakeholders prior to strategy adoption, questions may arise over the extent to which there is a shared understanding of the problem and how policymakers identify and prioritize their policy response. This shortcoming also raises concerns over the objectivity of any future mapping process that would identify stakeholders who may contribute to strategy implementation. Policymakers may prioritize interest groups that fit a predetermined vision, excluding those who may question the basis of parts of the strategy they are asked to support. In some countries, few interest groups may lend their support to strategy implementation on this policy topic. In these cases, questions should be asked about whether the adoption of a comprehensive, integrated national strategy represents a worthwhile investment to achieve the desired policy-making outcomes.

A good national strategy promotes and optimizes the existing work of multisector stakeholders, and countries should avoid enlisting the support of individuals and groups to implement activities that contribute to objectives identified independently of these stakeholders. A comprehensive approach to strategy development requires that policymakers identify stakeholders and take stock of their existing activities. Demonstrating the benefits of this approach, one country explains that it "systematically recorded the different activities of the departments working in the prevention of extremism." This "recording of the wide range of activities is the foundation for being able to further enhance specifically the effectiveness of government activity. With this paper, the [government] is providing a comprehensive overview of current measures and programmes and, for the first time, is adopting a harmonised strategy for the national optimisation of the prevention of extremism."[51] This approach to systematically identifying stakeholders and their existing P/CVE activities should be considered by all countries in the strategy development process.

GOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATION

The identification of relevant stakeholders enables policymakers to source and consider the views of relevant stakeholders in informing, shaping, and legitimizing the development and adoption of a national strategy. Countries should consult with a range of government stakeholders in the development of their national strategies, including non–security-related agencies at the national levels; and, crucially, countries should develop mechanisms to integrate the knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned of regional, local, and other subnational authorities in identifying and establishing the national policy priorities they may be responsible for implementing. Countries provide varying levels of detail on their consultation mechanisms. A lack of detail may be expected because a practical governmental response is involved, and policymakers may deliberately avoid describing the details of cumbersome consultation processes.

Commentators have expressed concern over the quality of consultation processes in the P/CVE policy field, noting that these processes are confined to a limited number of usual suspects and that an overreliance on international consultants in the formulation of domestic policy exists,[52] both of which could bias the identification and prioritization of policy responses. In some countries, a continued reliance on national security agencies provides the driving force behind the design and adoption of national strategies, for example, when the national counterterrorism agency is the strategy's sole publisher. This situation is not necessarily problematic if policy development processes are supplemented by structured consultation with governmental actors outside of the national security apparatus. In one country, statements draw attention to the multiagency nature of the development process.[53] A failure to list the specific contributing agencies raises questions over

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51   German strategy, p. 7.

52   Prevention Project, "Ensuring an Inclusive Approach to the Development and Implementation of National P/CVE Action Plans," p. 2.

53   For one example, see Maldivian National Counter Terrorism Centre, "National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," 2 November 2017, p. 1, https://nctc.gov.mv/publications/NSPCVE.pdf (hereinafter Maldivian strategy).

whether and how these strategies reflect the interests of agencies outside of the national security apparatus.[54]

A number of countries reference the involvement of regional and subnational authorities in the process.[55] There is a growing awareness about the potential contribution of subnational authorities in translating strategies and their policy measures into local programming and activities attuned to the needs of specific communities.[56] The nature of the relationship between national and local government is dictated by existing governance structures in each country, however. A recent multicountry study exploring the role of local authorities within national strategies concludes that "the degree of involvement and capacities of local authorities for decision-making vary from one country to another. Some give local authorities a large margin of autonomy to decide counter-radicalisation initiatives … while others define municipalities as mere implementers of national guidelines."[57] Differences in local authority involvement in strategy development processes are reflected in the national strategies reviewed.

Although some strategies appear to draw no specific reference to the involvement of local authorities at any stage of the policy development process,[58] a number of countries seem to systematically integrate subnational authorities in the strategy development process. One country states that "the Minister of Justice established an Inter-Sector Working Group … comprised of the representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Police Directorate, National Security Agency, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Union of Municipalities."[59] Similarly, one strategy was developed by "working across government with the active involvement of regional administrations."[60] Another country describes the resources made available to support the contribution of local authorities to the policy development process, whereby the "Government also gave the [Association of Local Authorities and Regions] financial support to compile a compendium of good practice of local measures initiated to counter violence-promoting extremism."[61] Countries should foster bottom-up policy development processes to minimize the disconnect between national policies and the subnational authorities that are often responsible for implementing them.

NONGOVERNMENTAL CONSULTATION

In addition to consulting with government partners, countries need to facilitate consultations with nongovernmental stakeholders as part of the policy development process. If national strategies hold the promise of fostering new whole-of-society approaches to preventing individuals, groups, and communities from supporting or engaging with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, it is inconceivable that countries could adopt and promote a strategy without the active and vocal involvement and support of these very same individuals, groups, and communities. It is therefore vital that countries work to identify and consult with the widest possible range of nongovernmental

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54 Ibid.

55 Pakistani National Counter Terrorism Authority, "National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines," January 2018, p. 6, https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NCEP-Guidlines.pdf (hereinafter Pakistani guidelines); and Federal Republic of Somalia, "National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," September 2016, p. 6 https://www.radiomuqdisho.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CVE-Strategy-26-August-English.pdf (hereinafter Somali strategy).

56 Magnus Ranstorp, "Developing a Local Prevent Framework and Guiding Principles," *RAN Policy Paper*, November 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/policy_paper_developing_local_prevent_framework_guiding_112016_en.pdf.

57 European Forum for Urban Security, "The Role of Local Authorities in European National Strategies Against Radicalisation," 2016, p. 1, https://efus.eu/files/2016/08/The-role-of-local-authorities-in-national-strategies_Efus_EN.pdf.

58 Albanian Council of Ministers, "Albanian National Strategy Countering Violent Extremism," 18 November 2015, https://www.rcc.int/p-cve/download/docs/Albanian%20National%20Strategy%20on%20Countering%20Violent%20Extremism.pdf/eca873b0e6bd733938a73f957471a75c.pdf (unofficial translation) (hereinafter Albanian strategy).

59 Montenegrin Ministry of Justice, "Action Plan for Implementation of the Countering Violent Extremism Strategy 2016–2018," April 2016, p. 3, http://www.mna.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=258031&rType=2&file=Action%20plan%20for%20implementation%20of%20the%20countering%20violent%20extremism%20strategy%202016-2018.docx (hereinafter Montenegrin action plan).

60 Somali strategy, p. 2.

61 Swedish Ministry of Justice, "Action Plan to Safeguard Democracy Against Violence-Promoting Extremism," Skr. 2011/12:44, 8 December 2011, p. 6, https://www.government.se/contentassets/b94f163a3c5941aebaeb78174ea27a29/action-plan-to-safeguard-democracy-against-violence-promoting-extremism-skr.-20111244 (hereinafter Swedish action plan).

stakeholders in the development of their national strategies, particularly with communities directly targeted by policy measures, in addition to other nongovernmental interest groups identified as potential contributors to the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policy measures.

Some strategies suggest that the stakeholders involved in the policymaking process were limited to governmental agencies. One country describes its strategy as stemming "from a wide consultation process … involving 20 government departments following feedback from trials and concrete initiatives implemented on the ground."[62] It is unclear whether, and if so how, nongovernmental stakeholders were involved in providing feedback or in advising the interagency group in identifying and prioritizing national policy measures. A truly wide process involves more than governmental agencies. Nongovernmental actors, many of which work with the communities targeted by such policies, are often expected to facilitate policy implementation. When strategies are the product of collaboration among governmental actors alone, they may promote false assumptions about the causes of the identified problems, as well as biased responses.

A number of strategies recognize the need for wider nongovernmental engagement and consultation in strategy development. One country describes developing a strategy in consultation with, among others, communities, the private sector, and other organizations with countering violent extremism (CVE) interests.[63] Another country involved "academics, religious scholars … minority representatives, media personnel [and] psychologists."[64] Knowing precisely which nongovernmental stakeholders were included or excluded from the consultation process reveals much about the

likely influence these groups may have had on policies adopted and any potential biases that might be systematically integrated in the selection and prioritization of national policies. Yet, few countries go beyond general statements to identify the groups consulted, standing in stark contrast to detailed descriptions of governmental departments consulted.

In some countries, the inclusion of nongovernmental actors appears to represent a future aspiration. For example, one strategy includes the objective that it "will ensure the inclusion of civil society,"[65] whereas another indicates that national authorities "will seek to engage civil society organizations in the national P/CVE efforts."[66] A strategy may be adopted to systematize and coordinate the involvement of nongovernmental actors, civil society, and communities in contributing to national policy priorities and objectives.[67] Although such coordination represents a valuable policy objective, countries should work to engage nongovernmental partners before adopting strategies dependent on their involvement.

Meaningful partnerships between governmental agencies and civil society are critical to effective strategies, especially when policymakers have a preexisting relationship with domestic groups.[68] As recognized by one strategy, the government had "established contact with a wide range of key figures in civil society and built up confidence in—and a greater understanding of—the idea that preventing radicalisation and violent extremism is in everybody's interest" and that it "helped to build trust between vulnerable local communities [and the security services] … and also improved the knowledge base." Furthermore, this outreach process "identified areas where more can be done, including more systematic outreach and dialogue with groups

62 French Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalisation, "Prevent to Protect: National Plan for the Prevention of Radicalization," 23 February 2018, p. 5, https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/02/dossier_de_presse_-_comite_interministeriel_de_prevention_de_la_delinquance_et_de_la_radicalisation_-_23.02.2018.pdf (in French) (hereinafter French plan).

63 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism," 28 October 2016, p. 2, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/16_1028_S1_CVE_strategy.pdf (hereinafter U.S. strategy).

64 Pakistani guidelines, p. 6.

65 Albanian strategy, p. 4.

66 Maldivian strategy, p. 10.

67 Swedish action plan, p. 7.

68 "For example, persistent community engagement can facilitate program implementation and related service delivery, while also helping avert conflict and deescalate tensions between law enforcement and communities." UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 27.

who may be most vulnerable to radicalisation."[69] When nongovernmental stakeholders are excluded from the policymaking process at an early stage, it may be difficult to reach a consensus on the nature of the problem or the suitability of the chosen policy responses.

Even when consensus is assumed or achieved among multisector stakeholders, policymakers may find it difficult to realize broad support for the implementation of national strategies when the strategies do not account for the capacities, resources, and expertise of the nongovernmental parties responsible for implementation. As observed by one country, "[T]he government has burdened civil society organisations with too much responsibility for implementing initiatives."[70] The assumption of the capacity and willingness of civil society to accept this responsibility is particularly problematic in P/CVE because despite being chronically underresourced, countries must rely on a broad range of local nongovernmental actors in the attainment of their national policy objectives. Without being aware of and allocating the necessary resources to support and sustain the long-term participation of nongovernmental actors, national strategies may generate new problems, creating a disconnect in the aspirations of government policymakers and the ability of nongovernmental parties to realize those aspirations.

DRAFTING PROCESS

Countries should work to sustain the involvement of the widest possible range of multisector stakeholders at all stages in the design and development of national strategies, incorporating their perspectives, experiences, and recommendations in the identification and prioritization of policy measures.[71] In doing so, countries promote opportunities for further trust building and increased confidence among stakeholders,

supporting the development of sustainable relationships and providing the foundation for the effective life cycle of strategies from development to implementation and evaluation.[72] As noted by one country, "the effectiveness of these strategies and approaches essentially depends on how and to which extent public and civil society institutions and organisations can be connected and if permanent, binding and target-oriented co-operation alliances can be established."[73] The implementation of strategies necessitates the inclusion of and a working relationship among stakeholders at all political levels and across governmental and nongovernmental entities.

A number of countries describe the mechanisms through which they sourced and considered the input of multisector partners at different stages of the drafting process. For example, one country's strategy describes the choice of a "bottom-up process … that has allowed actors from various sectors to express their concerns. In the interdisciplinary exchange and in working groups …, specific proposals have been developed into measures."[74] In another country, the strategy states that "34 rounds of specialized and cross-functional meetings were held" and "a multi-disciplinary and cross-functional workshop was held around six themes, wherein the participants of all previous meetings were divided in to six thematic groups."[75] In yet another country, "[w]hile the Plan was being prepared, it was presented to the representatives of, among others, cities, Muslim communities and different authorities with the aim of receiving their comments already at the draft phase."[76] Policymakers who not only identify relevant stakeholders from across diverse domains but also establish mechanisms by which the perspectives gathered through consultation can be meaningfully integrated into the drafting process are likely to see more positive implementation

69   Danish Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, "Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism: Action Plan," September 2014, p. 20, http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/sites/default/files/media/Pressemeddelelser/pdf/2015/SJ20150422125507430%20%5BDOR1545530%5D .PDF (hereinafter Danish action plan).

70   Swedish action plan, p. 7.

71   UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 15.

72   Feve and Elshimi, "Planning for Prevention."

73   Austrian strategy, p. 14.

74   Swiss Security Network, "National Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Radicalisation and Violent Extremism," 4 December 2017, p. 6, https://www .newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/50703.pdf (hereinafter Swiss action plan).

75   Pakistani guidelines, p. 6. The guidelines indicate that 305 stakeholders were involved in their formulation.

76   Finnish Ministry of the Interior, "National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism," 2016, p. 9, http://julkaisut .valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/75040/Kansallinen_vakivalt_radikalisoituminen_eng_NETTI.pdf (hereinafter Finnish action plan).

by ensuring that mechanisms facilitating multisector coordination are formalized prior to strategy adoption.

In some countries, nongovernmental stakeholders may not want to participate in or be identified as a formal contributor to a governmental strategy. Only one country openly references the nongovernmental stakeholders that either participated or presumably endorsed its strategy, thereby allowing for a better understanding of the entities that informed the strategy's policy priorities.[77] There are many reasons why nongovernmental stakeholders may not want to be associated with a governmental strategy, yet the absence of overt and vocal nongovernmental endorsement in some countries calls into question whether and to what extent strategies reflect the concerns of different domestic stakeholders or if these documents were adopted to promote the more narrow self-interest of political elites or other interest groups. At a strategic communications level, increasing the transparency with which countries identify the contributors to governmental policy may increase the credibility of the strategies among communities that may be distrustful of governmental intervention in this sensitive policy area, which in some countries is perceived to be a "toxic brand."[78]

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77   Austrian strategy, pp. 60–61.

78   Josh Halliday and Vikram Dodd, "UK Anti-Radicalisation Prevent Strategy a 'Toxic Brand,'" *Guardian*, 9 March 2015, https://www.theguardian.com /uk-news/2015/mar/09/anti-radicalisation-prevent-strategy-a-toxic-brand.

GATHER

Strategies should be developed in response to a comprehensive needs assessment.[79] An assessment can take many forms and may be informed by a range of inputs supplied during the consultation and drafting processes. Regardless of the types of input, governmental approaches should be evidence based, and the process of developing a strategy should include commissioning empirical research.[80] In doing so, closer cooperation among multisector stakeholders involved in advocacy, research, and policymaking can be fostered to support the analyses.[81] It is important that countries present the research and evidence that informed their national strategies. This presentation involves describing the underlying evidence shaping policy, working to make the underlying evidence accessible where possible, and, in cases with little or no domestic evidence, identifying the need for more research as a policy priority.

EVIDENCE TRANSPARENCY

In any field of policy, particularly policies calling for a national strategy, countries should refer to the evidence that informed their policies. Given the well-documented challenges associated with P/CVE, a relatively new field of study and practice, transparency regarding the evidence on the basis of which policy is developed should be a vital objective for policymakers. A review of empirical research publications on radicalization concludes that 34 percent of the surveyed literature is "either methodologically or empirically poor," in part due to research supported by "government money [that] may have (inadvertently) undermined scholarly standards."[82] Other researchers have expressed unease over an "unacknowledged but institutionalised bias" by governments in the selection and prioritization of the available evidence that is used to inform their policy priorities.[83] Despite these concerns, few sources of evidence are cited by policymakers in their strategies to support or validate their approach.[84]

In some countries, expertise at the international level was a key source inspiring the identification of policy measures, for example, by "drawing on the guidelines and best practices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the EU Radicalization Awareness Network, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe."[85] With few exceptions, specific international guidelines and good practices are not identified explicitly.[86] Some countries make general statements about the domestic knowledge on which their national policies are based. For example, some countries explain that the design of their strategy was based on the evaluation of past policies, suggesting that "approaches that have proved successful are to be expanded"[87] or that "the updated plan continues the actions which are still relevant and which proved effective."[88] Referring to a wide range of research while pointing to evaluations that inform strategy represents a step in the right direction.

Countries often do not provide access to underlying evaluations in their strategies, present the results of applied research, or propose the relevance and effectiveness of these as national policy. One country suggests vaguely that "this strategy incorporates the many lessons … learned from years working in close partnership with local communities"[89] and that "these domains have been formulated based on past experiences, international good practices and the lessons learnt from various social intervention programs."[90] Another country explains that it consolidated a range

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79   UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 23.
80   Ibid., p. 13.
81   Ibid., p. 11.
82   Peter Neumann and Scott Kleinmann, "How Rigorous Is Radicalisation Research?" *Democracy and Security* 9, no. 4 (2013): 360–382.
83   Derek M.D. Silva, "Radicalisation: The Journey of a Concept, Revisited," *Race and Class* 59, no. 4 (2018):11.
84   For strategies that cite evidence, see, for example, Swedish action plan, p. 4; Somali strategy, p. 4.
85   Albanian strategy, p. 8; Nigerian action plan, p. 11.
86   For a more detailed reference to available international guidance and assessment of their relevance to domestic strategy development, see Austrian strategy, pp. 18–19.
87   German strategy, p. 7.
88   Finnish action plan, p. 9.
89   U.S. strategy, p. 15.
90   Maldivian strategy, p. 6.

of research and evidence informing its strategy, affirming that the research and information were "based on national and international experience, the evaluation of existing measures and … analyses of the challenges posed by extremism,"[91] without referencing the results. A lack of transparency may stem in part from data being too sensitive for public distribution. If this is the case, however, the inclusion of little to no supporting evidence may be symptomatic of an overly intelligence-led strategy. Not only is this kind of strategy problematic in ensuring the accountability of policy-making, it may also promote research practices or prioritize evidence that reinforce biases on the domestic drivers of violent extremism or the response, particularly in the absence of information from nonintelligence sources which may act as a counterbalance.[92]

When claims or approaches adopted by governments are not supported through evidence, significant concerns about strategy development and appropriate application of evidence to inform policy arise. The level of transparency demonstrated in a handful of strategies enables some of the assumptions underpinning their policy priorities to be better understood, evaluated, and, most important, critiqued.[93] Countries can improve the transparency with which they present the data and analysis that underpin their strategies by describing and documenting the inferences generated from research in the body of the strategy or, ideally, making underlying evidence accessible via annexes or separate works. Referring to the evidence on which national policies are established is a particular priority for countries that have not implemented other knowledge-gathering processes during strategy development by, for example, completing a transparent, wide-ranging, multisector consultation.

EVIDENCE AVAILABILITY

A lack of transparency with regard to evidence that informs strategies may point to a more fundamental lack of evidence available for policy development. Some recent global assessments optimistically suggest that "a proliferation of contextualized, conflict-sensitive research on factors contributing to violent extremism" exists,[94] but countries consistently describe a lack of available localized research. One strategy suggests the "need for a better systematisation of existing research in the field,"[95] whereas another indicates that "there is a wealth of expertise and local insight into these phenomena but there is a need for this to be formalized … and more systematically categorised and analysed. There is also an acute need for a greater quantity of up-to-date research, field studies, and analysis to identify drivers of violent extremism in the [domestic] context that could provide a clearer evidence base with which to better inform policy and programme decision making."[96] In some countries, the adoption of strategies is considered a means by which policymakers could further improve their evidence base.[97]

The need to gather domestically relevant evidence to inform strategies and policy measures is welcome, but countries should ensure that a minimum level of research is conducted prior to strategy adoption. This research must at minimum be sufficient to justify the necessity and proportionality of the strategy's existence and should justify the relevance of suggested policy measures. Without a minimum of domestic evidence, countries should work to prioritize the development of a sufficient evidence base through which a series of future policies might subsequently be adopted. As observed by one country, "the components and elements of the strategy should be built on the basis that

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91   Danish action plan, pp. 7, 9.

92   Matthew Schwartz, "Shifting the PVE Paradigm: A Think Piece on Human Insecurity, Political Violence, and New Directions for Preventing Violent Extremism," *Global Center on Cooperative Security Policy Brief*, September 2018, https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GCCS -Shifting-the-PVE-Paradigm-07-09-18-v2.pdf.

93   UK Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," Cm 9148, October 2015, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads /attachment_data/file/470094/51859_Cm9148_PRINT.PDF (hereinafter UK strategy), p.13–14; Danish action plan, p. 6; Swiss action plan, p. 19.

94   Rosand et al., "Roadmap to Progress."

95   Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, "Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism," 2014, p. 17, https://www.regjeringen .no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism_2014.pdf (hereinafter Norwegian action plan).

96   Somali strategy, p. 4.

97   Norwegian action plan, p. 17; Swiss action plan, p. 13; Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, "National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence," 2018, p. 19, https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc/ntnl-strtg-cntrng -rdclztn-vlnc-en.pdf (hereinafter Canadian strategy).

the policies, plans and programs arising therefrom are based on scientific evidence."[98] When countries identify the need to improve the evidence base by which their national policies are adopted, they should also identify the domestic knowledge gaps, which will give direction to future domestic research and demonstrate the use of existing data.

RESEARCH PRIORITIZATION

If countries identify significant domestic knowledge gaps or are unable to present research and evidence informing the national strategy, they should make the collection of research and development of an evidence base the foremost policy priority. This policy priority should include outlining concrete measures and activities that will be implemented to improve the knowledge base while describing how the results will be made available for independent review. The complex, dynamic, and highly localized nature of violent extremism and the underlying factors that drive radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism require that research be conducted on a continuous basis during strategy implementation. In one country, "researchers and academic faculties are encouraged to engage more with security agencies to improve the quality of data [and] conduct more field studies in conflict areas to guide policy formulation, implementation, and strategic approach."[99] Some countries emphasize the need for further research more than others in their strategies, with a number of countries not considering research their number-one policy priority.[100]

When countries do not see the need to improve the evidence base as their top policy priority, transparency regarding the inputs that inform the identification of their policy measures is even more important. Where gaps remain, policymakers must clearly articulate how they intend to improve the evidence base for strategies, including resource commitment, given the barriers to multidisciplinary, multisectoral research activities, which are plagued by imperfect data that are scarce and often restricted. Encouragingly, a number of countries specifically identify the means through which such barriers might be overcome.[101] For example, one country proposes to "allow researchers and scientists specialising in the prevention of radicalisation to gain limited access to [a] database. A secure authorisation procedure and conditions respecting personal rights and the confidentiality of data and operational information will be introduced for this purpose." It also proposes to fund doctoral studies on radicalization to violent extremism and to assist teams with funding applications.[102]

When policymakers state that there is a need to "continue the building of competence and the systematisation and dissemination of research,"[103] they should identify how this need will be met. For example, one country identifies the need to improve the visibility of its programs and measures relating to violent extremism, proposing to "bring together all of its activities, organisations, projects and initiatives … on one website, which will be constantly updated."[104] Such commitments to transparency improvements are vital to governmental accountability and to the consensus as to what constitutes evidence in P/CVE policymaking. As one commentator explains, "since academic research is often in need of government funding and governments explicitly request scholarly work from the scientific system in their counter-radicalisation initiatives, identifying the output of those funding programmes is central to an analysis of how academic discourses are adopted by governments and government officials."[105]

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98   Lebanese Presidency of the Council of Ministers, "National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism," 2017, pp. 2–3, http://www.pvelebanon.org/Resources/PVE_English.pdf (hereinafter Lebanese strategy).

99   Nigerian action plan, p. 16.

100 Finnish action plan, p. 23; Albanian strategy, p. 19.

101 German strategy, pp. 45–47; Finnish action plan, pp. 23–24; French plan, p. 15.

102 French plan, p. 15.

103 Norwegian action plan, p. 17.

104 German strategy, pp. 28–29.

105 Silva, "Radicalisation," p. 44.

ANALYZE

Strategies require a clear definition of violent extremism and related concepts arising from evidence.[106] Countries should focus on the identification and analysis of the threats and vulnerabilities related to violent extremism, as well as on the suggested drivers of violent extremism in the domestic context. This focus might include structural conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism (push factors) and individual factors that might motivate individuals, groups, and communities to support or engage with violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies (pull factors).[107] Even if countries fall short of detailing the processes through which a strategy was developed or the evidence that informed individual policy measures, governments must identify and clearly articulate the problems that their strategy attempts to prevent and counter.

DEFINING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon without a universal definition.[108] To enable international cooperation in this area, the UN Secretary-General's plan of action "pursues a practical approach to preventing violent extremism, without venturing to address questions of definition."[109] Given the lack of an accepted definition, strategies must define violent extremism in their domestic context. The United Nations "left the definition of violent extremism to national authorities" but "cautioned that such definitions must be consistent with States' obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law."[110]

Although definitions of violent extremism are likely to vary, a strategy is expected to present a definition of some kind. Not all strategies do so, however. For example, some strategies do not define "extremism," "violent extremism," or "radicalization," despite at least one of

these terms appearing repeatedly in the document.[111] The absence of a suitably detailed working definition serves to delegate responsibility to those responsible for its implementation, potentially leading to disparate definitions among the diverse actors responsible for implementation.

When definitions of a problem are open to contextualization, they are also open to abuse. If concepts are not explicitly defined from the outset, it may "risk inefficiency, possibly bolster negative perceptions of governance and can even be harmful."[112] Ambiguous or nonexistent definitions may also result in confusion within communities about the problem to be challenged through capacity development and engagement, the scope and objectives of the local policy responses, and the contribution of these local policies to national outcomes. For example, one governmental evaluation of measures adopted as part of a strategy notes that, in the absence of clear definitions, it would be difficult for grantees to determine what training best supports P/CVE objectives.[113] In countries that avoid clearly defining what is being tackled and propose national subgranting, awareness raising, and capacity development programming, the proposals are likely to lead to confusion about the expected short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes of these activities.

In some countries, the breadth of definitions makes the goals of the strategy all-encompassing. For example, one country proposes that "extremism is broadly identified as having absolute belief in one's truth with an ingrained sense of self-righteousness. The entrenched sense of righteousness enables the holder of belief to grow [a] judgmental attitude towards other people's beliefs followed with intolerance."[114] The strategy suggests that "extremism is manifested in forms including sectarianism, religious persecution, distortion of

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106 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 23.

107 Ibid., p. 14.

108 UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, para. 2.

109 Ibid., para. 5.

110 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 23.

111 Montenegrin action plan; French plan.

112 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 22.

113 Peter Romaniuk, "Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism," Global Center on Cooperative Security, September 2015, p. 2, https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work_2015.pdf.

114 Pakistani guidelines, p. 9.

religious injunctions, hate-speech and literature, sense of deprivation amongst provinces, left and right wing political ideologies, smuggling, addictions, border control, and archaic traditions."[115] In another country, a strategy specifies that extremism encompasses "homophobia and transphobia, which are reflected in the stigmatisation and rejection of gays, bisexuals, trans- and inter-gender persons (LGBTI). … It is important to support the acceptance of same-sex lifestyles, to break down prejudice and hostility to LGBTI people and to take a stance against discrimination and violence on the basis of sex or gender, sexual identity and sexual orientation."[116] Although these policies reflect valid policymaking concerns and "a comprehensive social consensus condemning and rejecting any form of violence is required," the broad targeting of attitudes and conduct in strategies raises questions over how new strategies correspond to more established policy domains, such as integration, community cohesion, antiracism, antihate, or conflict resolution policy.

Strategies often lack consistency in their use of terminology such as "radicalization," "radicalism," "fanaticism," "terrorism," "militancy," and "extremism."[117] Some use "extremism" and "violent extremism" interchangeably or conflate the two, for example, listing the "suppression of extremism" as a priority in a "countering violent extremism" strategy.[118] By deploying such terms interchangeably, countries make assumptions about the role that problematic attitudes play in violent behaviors. As explained in one strategy, although "the borders between verbal violence and the freedom of opinion should be clearly defined, explained, communicated and executed,"[119] strategies frequently fail to describe or evidence where those borders exist. This disconnect raises fears that if policies "are not limited to 'violent' extremism, these risk targeting the holding of an opinion or belief rather than actual conduct,"[120] which could legitimize policies that impact the freedom of speech, expression, and belief.[121] Ambiguity over definitions can "become a convenient veil behind which some governments can mask the suppression of opposition and narrow the space for challenge by opposing political actors and civil society."[122]

Clarity is required when the fundamental concepts informing national strategies generate such debate that no neutral or objective definition seems possible. Concerns over definitions increase exponentially when strategies are the result of insular policy development processes involving a limited number of governmental stakeholders and the absence of meaningful nongovernmental stakeholder consultation and provide no access to evidence. Countries must improve the use of the terms included in their strategies, explaining the underlying assumptions driving policy development and implementation.[123] Strategies should clearly define the problem(s) that the strategies seek to evidence and address in the domestic context, distinguishing among key terms and describing their conceptual relationships. Definitions should be used consistently and developed in line with international law, including international human rights obligations.

ASSESSING THREATS

Countries should comprehensively assess the nature and scope of the threat in developing their

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115 Ibid., p. 13.

116 German strategy, p. 10. The Austrian guidelines, state that "the focus of prevention of violent extremism and de-radicalisation work is not only on groups and individuals advocating violence, but also on individuals who advocate and spread tendencies which are racist, sexist or hostile to pluralism." Austrian guidelines, p. 18.

117 Austrian strategy, p. 39; Danish action plan, p. 4; Somali strategy, p. 4.

118 Montenegrin action plan, p. 11; Danish action plan, p. 5.

119 Austrian strategy, p. 18.

120 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 23.

121 More than 60 countries have passed restrictive laws that criminalize or discriminate against civil society organizations, including under a counterterrorism rationale. See Renate Wilke-Launer, "Democracy Assistance Against a Headwind," in *For Democracy: The Heinrich Böll Foundation's Engagement in the World*, ed. Heinrich Böll Foundation (April 2016), p. 36, https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/hbs_-_demokratie_publikation_-_en_-_online.pdf.

122 Lucy Holdaway and Ruth Simpson, "Improving the Impact of Preventing Violent Extremism Programming: A Toolkit for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation," UNDP and International Alert, 2018, p. 15, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/PVE_ImprovingImpactProgrammingToolkit_2018.pdf.

123 For example, the Swiss strategy cites the sources of evidence from which it obtained its working definitions. Swiss strategy, p. 11.

strategies.[124] Although countries describe different threats in their strategies, the terms "threat" and "threat assessments" feature heavily. This use may be unsurprising, because an articulation of the threat is generally more analytically accessible and politically expedient and requires less in-depth analysis and self-reflection than a comprehensive examination of the factors that drive and sustain it. Not only does an assessment of a threat provide a means for understanding the threat in the national context, it also provides a basis for justifying policies to tackle the problem and evaluating progress toward a long-term goal. As mentioned by one country, "the threat analysis forms the respective foundation for managing the use of means and resources."[125] Policymakers must document the problem considered the basis for policymaking and, where possible, supply detail to develop an understanding of its nature and scope.

The level of explanation supplied by countries in outlining the domestic threat varies considerably. To assert urgency in the response, some use the term "threat" to establish the primacy and significance of the perceived national danger posed by violent extremism. This usage includes statements such as "violent extremism and radicalization, in all forms and manifestations, currently constitute the most serious threats to peace and security around the world";[126] violent extremism "continues to pose fundamental threats to national security";[127] and "violent extremism presents a critical threat."[128] Although such statements may generate political and public momentum toward a national response, statements related to the suggested threat are not always accompanied by descriptions to substantiate claims of scope or relative significance.[129] Some strategies may presume a national threat is assumed knowledge, particularly given the considerable international attention with regard to threats

of terrorism, and therefore requires no unpacking by policymakers seeking to mobilize partners. Given that countries define violent extremism differently, pointing to its threat without describing its occurrence may appear disingenuous.

A description of the threat contributes to an understanding of how the country assigns the violent extremist label and the proposed nature of the threat and its scale, especially relative to other policy issues that may be more or less deserving of national resource mobilization. A description of the threat also helps frame the legitimacy and proportionality of responses to it,[130] particularly given the sensitive nature of P/CVE policymaking and its predisposition to politicization and abuse. Although countries may want to avoid stigmatizing certain individuals, groups, and communities by suggesting that their strategies address violent extremism in all its forms,[131] describing the different forms is necessary. It is particularly important in countries that have developed or are developing strategies and where independent evidence of a threat of violent extremism is sparse or specific groups and communities appear disproportionately targeted by measures that disrupt and discredit legitimate political opposition.[132]

Countries should move beyond political rhetoric to carefully describe the threat(s) that the national strategy is intended to address in the domestic context. This description should be consistent with the terms defined and should provide evidence of the existence of the domestic threats, substantiated by reference to the intent and capability of individuals or groups to cause harm. A number of countries present information intended to evidence the nature and scope of the threat, with some dedicating portions of their strategy to detailing the groups of concern; their histories,

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124 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 7.

125 Austrian strategy, p. 23.

126 Albanian strategy, p. 1.

127 Maldivian strategy, p. 2.

128 Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism," 28 October 2016, p. 1.

129 Lebanese strategy, Introduction (b); Maldivian strategy, pp. 1–2; U.S. strategy, p. 1.

130 For example, Peter Romaniuk and Tracey Durner, "Violent Extremism in Tanzania: Evaluating the Risk, Debating the Response" (forthcoming).

131 The Austrian strategy states, "The present strategy does not list individual forms of extremism. In this way, it is made clear that it is essential not to focus on individual forms of extremism when implementing prevention and deradicalisation measures, but to always keep an eye on extremism in all its various manifestations." Austrian strategy, p. 20.

132 Peter Romaniuk and Tracey Durner, "The Politics of Preventing Violent Extremism: The Case of Uganda," *Conflict, Security & Development* 18, no. 2 (2018): 159–179, https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2018.1447863.

ideologies, and motivations; and their capability realistically to endanger the domestic or foreign interests of their country.[133] Data range from the number of violent extremist offenses and number of arrests and convictions, which vary in scope depending on the definition, to the scale of perceived recruitment to or support for violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies.[134] All these approaches may suffer from some form of potential bias and are likely to be incomplete and quickly outdated, but a lack of threat specification by some countries avoids any examination of what harm the strategies seek to prevent.

ASSESSING DRIVERS

Although an overview of the threat is necessary to establish the significance of the problem and consensus on the need to mobilize limited national resources, it does not provide a sufficient basis on which to prioritize and target these resources. It is important that countries provide an assessment of the domestic drivers of violent extremism. Countries should describe the national drivers of violent extremism that they consider to be relevant, explicitly referencing the available evidence for the occurrence of these drivers and how they relate to the threat(s) the strategy aims to address. Where countries support local authorities and other subnational entities to implement assessments of local drivers, the basis of this support should be described, as well as the relationship between national and local assessments, in addition to the influence that these assessments have on the allocation of national resources.

No singular profile of a violent extremist exists; a "kaleidoscope" of factors "create infinite combinations" that lead individuals down the path to violence.[135] Nevertheless, "[a]nalyses of local and national drivers

of violent extremism form an important point of departure for developing national plans."[136] Within the P/CVE policy field, these drivers are often presented as push and pull factors or structural motivators, individual incentives, and enabling factors.[137] Regardless of the conceptual model used, the factors that contribute to the problems must be domestically relevant and observed in their local context. As one country states, "[U]nderstanding these local dynamics is critical to implementing programming at strategic and operational levels."[138]

Almost all strategies use terms such as "driver," "root cause," and "underlying cause"; but the extent to which these terms are explained and unpacked varies considerably, with some references presented in abstract terms rather than rooted in the local context. This discrepancy often makes it difficult to understand the relevance of the factors that policymakers identify as being conducive to the spread of violent extremism domestically. For example, one strategy identifies social networks, grievances, vulnerabilities, a sense of belonging, and an inclination toward violence as factors contributing to violent radicalization.[139] Although this statement recognizes the need to distinguish among contributing factors, of more practical utility to the identification of policy measures is a determination if and how these factors manifest specifically within the domestic context and a reference to the evidence for and relative significance of different domestic factors in driving the threat of violent extremism.

One country states that it "addresses structural elements at the community, cultural and economic levels, which are the driving force behind the growth of violent extremism. Therefore, problems such as poverty, unemployment, and feeling of inequality and absence of justice are elements that shall be integrated in the

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133 Swedish action plan, pp. 11–23; German strategy, pp. 9–10.

134 Pakistani guidelines, pp. 46–51; French plan, pp. 27–29.

135 Magnus Ranstorp, "The Root Causes of Violent Extremism," *RAN Issue Paper*, 4 January 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs /files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_root-causes_jan2016_en.pdf.

136 UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, paras. 44(a) and 8.

137 Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism," U.S. Agency for International Development, February 2009, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadt978.pdf; James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, "Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation," *Whitehall Report*, no. 2-16 (June 2016), https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20160608_cve_and_rr.combined .online4.pdf.

138 Nigerian action plan, p. 16.

139 Canadian strategy, pp. 8–9.

strategy."[140] Another country points toward a policy measure to "address socio-economic drivers of radicalization," justifying this measure with the assertion that "jobless youth in areas with limited employment opportunities are vulnerable targets of extremist propaganda and recruitment."[141] No contextual evidence is provided to demonstrate that these drivers are sufficient or even necessary for violent extremism to materialize, raising questions about resource allocation and the meaningful impact of such investments on the proposed domestic threat(s).

Improving transparency is vital given that some countries have been accused of developing policy on the basis of assumptions that are not empirically supported or where credible secondary source material contradicts underlying hypotheses informing policy priorities.[142] Some countries provide contextualized descriptions of the relevant driving factors of violent extremism[143] and, in some cases, evidence for their conclusions. For example, one strategy notes that former members of a violent extremist group revealed that economic incentives were an "overwhelmingly powerful" factor in their decision to join. Young boys reportedly were persuaded to join after being given mobile phones and the promise of up to $50 per month. The strategy further explains that the violent extremist group played "on the divide between those in cities and towns," gave "salaries to elders who stay in rural areas with their clans," and "empowers younger men, especially from minority or less powerful clans, to better protect their communities and immediate families."[144] This level of nuance is welcome.

Without evidence to substantiate the relevance of threats to the domestic context, countries risk being accused of prioritizing factors without questioning their national significance. For example, one strategy states that "even if violent radicalisation and extremism are not mental illnesses per se, international research and experiences indicate that there is a strong correlation with mental health problems."[145] In the absence of evidence of the relevance of factors to the domestic context, there is a significant risk that strategies and resulting policy measures are built on abstract, decontextualized conjectures, which is not uncommon in the field of P/CVE research, which has been described as "plagued by assumption and intuition, [and] unhappily dominated by 'conventional wisdom' rather than systematic, scientific and empirically based research."[146] Greater transparency regarding the drivers that inform strategies also serves to ease concern that policymakers select factors that are politically expedient and self-serving while avoiding more problematic factors that may be of equal or greater significance.[147]

Some countries suggest that their national strategies facilitate the design, development, and implementation of local driver studies and assessments to enable subnational authorities to respond with locally tailored policies and measures. As one strategy notes, "[T]he drivers of violent extremism differ from locality to locality";[148] another states that "there will be specific local drivers of violent extremism that require specific local responses."[149] It is important to "support and utilize local research on conditions, factors, and drivers of radicalization to violence as well as existing levels of community resilience against violent extremism."[150] As one country mentions, this research "shall enable the local administration to have a first-hand knowledge and understanding of local issues."[151] The recognition of the need to target implementation on the basis of a local, contextual understanding of the factors that

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140 Lebanese strategy, p. 2.
141 Albanian strategy, p. 10.
142 Keiran Hardy, "Comparing Theories of Radicalisation with Countering Violent Extremism Policy," *Journal of Deradicalization*, no. 15 (Summer 2018): 76–109. See Harriet Allan et al., "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature Review," Royal United Services Institute, 16 October 2015, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf.
143 Pakistani guidelines, pp. 10–17; Nigerian action plan, p. 16; Somali strategy, p. 4.
144 Somali strategy, p. 4.
145 Finnish action plan, p. 17.
146 Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, "Why Conventional Wisdom on Radicalization Fails," *International Affairs* 86, no. 4 (2010): 889.
147 Schwartz, "Shifting the PVE Paradigm."
148 Nigerian action plan, p. 32.
149 Somali strategy, p. 11.
150 Albanian strategy, p. 14.
151 Pakistani guidelines, p. 44.

contribute to the identified problems is welcome, and having national agencies support local authorities to assess the causes of the problem and prioritize their own resources accordingly appears intuitive.

Countries that make generalized statements promoting opaque assumptions about the root causes of violent extremism at the national level risk transferring potential biases from national to local levels when they call for the adoption of local implementation plans to translate national policy into programming. In other situations, countries may avoid generalized assumptions about drivers, but present instead national policy measures or objectives that are contingent on the implementation of some form of national assessment of drivers of violent extremism. For example, strategies identify which local authorities to prioritize for support, which governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders to engage as partners, and which projects and programs to fund. Such approaches are not to be discouraged—the very essence of a strategy is to provide a basis through which greater coherence and common goals can be established—but countries should be clear about the specific drivers identified in assessment processes and how these contributed to policy design.

ASSESSING VULNERABILITIES

Countries frequently reference groups and communities susceptible to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism using two terms: "vulnerable"[152] and "at risk."[153] A fundamental objective of strategy development in many fields is deploying limited resources to target individuals, groups, and communities to reduce the likelihood of segments of society engaging in or experiencing particular harm. If strategies direct limited resources to reduce engagement with violent extremism, then, as one country confirms, "the prevention of violent extremism refers to specific measures focused on groups and individuals which

run the risk of becoming radicalised."[154] Although certain countries recognize the inherent barriers to such an approach, given the "complex nature of the risk group, which ranges from highly vulnerable youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds to apparently well-adjusted adults and young people in work or education,"[155] most strategies suggest that distinct groups are more vulnerable to or more at risk of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

This approach can be highly discriminatory, leading to the stigmatization of ethnic, religious, indigenous, or age-related groups.[156] In many cases, countries provide limited information about the groups they reference, describing "persons at risk" "identified vulnerable demographic segments and communities," or measures "concentrating on individual target groups."[157] Strategies most commonly identify the vulnerable group when it is young people, often generally described as "youth at risk" or in some cases as "vulnerable youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds."[158] Strategies frequently fail to describe why these groups are defined as such and, most important, how vulnerability is created, sustained, or reduced over time within the domestic context. This vagueness may be deliberate to avoid stigmatizing communities, but it does raise concern over how limited national resources and public services will be targeted and the intended impact of specific policies on the attitudes and behaviors of different target groups that are perceived as being at different levels of vulnerability to harm.

Similarly, the places and spaces described as vulnerable are generally poorly delineated and described in abstract terms. For example, one strategy states that "successful policies in [the educational, social and health services, employment, and integration and housing] sectors curb the breeding ground for violent radicalisation and extremism."[159] Few strategies delineate the geographic areas considered to be vulnerable, but some countries specify institutions, such as health

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152 Most frequently used in Danish action plan; Nigerian action plan; UK strategy.
153 Most frequently used in Swedish action plan; UK strategy; Danish action plan.
154 Finnish action plan, p. 9.
155 Danish action plan, p. 7.
156 Holdaway and Simpson, "Improving the Impact," p. 15.
157 Norwegian action plan, p. 21; Maldivian strategy, p. 10; Austrian strategy, p. 32.
158 Norwegian action plan, p. 21; Danish action plan, p. 7.
159 Finnish action plan, p. 17.

care institutions,[160] prisons,[161] schools,[162] and social media,[163] for specific concern. Although this delineation suggests a more sophisticated understanding of specific areas and a prioritization of certain populations, countries often identify these spaces without explaining their relevance to the domestic context. A few strategies identify contextualized factors to justify deeming places more vulnerable than others, with one strategy suggesting that due to a lack of regulatory oversight in supplementary schools, students "may be at risk of being presented with, and believing, twisted interpretations of their religion."[164]

If P/CVE is premised on the ability to target populations with different levels of susceptibility to violent extremism, policymakers must be explicit about how these segments are identified and the basis by which segments are prioritized for intervention. Many strategies note that more young people than older people join violent extremist groups, but descriptions of what makes particular young people more vulnerable to violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies are less available. Countries may have a generally underdeveloped understanding of vulnerability, which is concerning for their policymaking, resulting in a lack of accountability over how strategies target resources for implementation and obscuring the objectives that policy measures are designed to achieve. For example, in one country, "local authorities were selected

on the crude basis of having a population that was 5 per cent or more 'Muslim' (i.e. mainly of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, with ethic origin simplistically conflated with a 'Muslim' faith identity)."[165]

Where countries describe groups or segments of society as vulnerable to or at risk for supporting or engaging with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, the meaning of this classification and the reasons for its application to a specific group must be explained. Such clarity enables the clear articulation of assumptions underpinning national policy priorities, while allowing for the scope and nature of the domestic policy measures proposed to target individuals, groups, and communities to be better understood. As one governmental self-evaluation of its strategy states, without detail related to proposed target groups, "it is not possible to determine whether the measures are to reach out to all citizens, all young people, young people at risk. ... [T]here are good grounds to assume that these different groups are susceptible to different types of measures. The absence of a specific recipient for both the action plan as a whole and the individual measures means that the goal is unclear."[166] This self-evaluation explains that, "in order for an action plan to be effective, the measures should be adapted to the target group."[167] All countries should provide a description and evidence for proposed segmentation or altogether avoid policies that target individuals and groups.

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160 Norwegian action plan, p. 18; Canadian strategy, p. 16.

161 Norwegian action plan, p. 18; Swedish action plan, p. 7

162 UK strategy, p. 14; Lebanese strategy, p. 40.

163 Canadian strategy, p. 24; German strategy, p. 22.

164 UK strategy, p. 14.

165 Paul Thomas, "Prevent and Community Cohesion in Britain: The Worst of All Possible Worlds?" in *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly, and Lee Jarvis (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 39.

166 Government of Sweden, "Actions to Make Society More Resilient to Violent Extremism," Skr. 2014/15:144, 13 August 2015, p. 46, https://www.government.se/48fdb3/contentassets/ef243295e51d4635b4870963b18bfa89/actions-to-make-society-more-resilient-to-violent-extremism-2014-15-144.pdf.

167 Ibid., p. 47.

DEVELOP

Strategies should outline policy measures that improve a country's ability to reduce support for or engagement with violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies. Policy measures should go beyond the identification of security-based counterterrorism approaches and include preventive measures intended to address the drivers of violent extremism, which must be consistent with and informed by the domestic context and requirements at all levels.[168] Policy priorities that are presented by countries in their national strategies need to be connected to a needs assessments, and their relevance must be based on the drivers identified. Strategies must also describe the intended strategic objectives of the policies adopted and, where these target specific segments of the population, explain the specific change that a policy measure is expected to have.

FOCUS OF POLICY

Countries should outline policies in their strategies proportionate to the problems. Despite the acknowledgement in many strategies of significant knowledge gaps in the empirical evidence driving P/CVE policymaking, some strategies contain dozens or hundreds of distinct policy measures.[169] When priorities are shaped by multilateral donors and external consultants,[170] concern may arise over whether some policies were adopted without due consideration of the local context. A lack of evidence presented in strategies related to the domestic threat, drivers, and vulnerabilities associated with violent extremism may lead to an interpretation of the measures as having a disproportionate emphasis on policy over evidence.

When the evidence informing policymaking is limited, proposed measures must remain similarly modest and prioritize and invest in developing and maintaining systems to improve the evidence base on which national priorities are adopted. Countries must commit resources to domestic multidisciplinary research

to understand the problem better and inform relevant and targeted responses. One country demonstrates this approach, stating that "programming investments are focused in areas where evidence exists and best practices have been developed. In other areas, research and evaluation is planned or underway to build knowledge and measure success to determine how the [government] can most effectively counter radicalization to violence."[171] In this strategy, only one measure is identified alongside a national priority to improve the evidence base, supporting local and multiagency programs with a proposed capacity to address needs on an evidential and local basis.[172]

RELEVANCE FOR POLICY

Strategies determine "requisite interventions to tackle existing as well as emerging challenges and gaps in addressing the drivers of violent extremism,"[173] and these measures "address the specific challenges and circumstances in the particular context."[174] Countries should present the objectives of, and the underlying assumptions behind, individual policy measures and the proposed contribution of these individual policy measures to the strategy's short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Where policymakers propose targeted policies to reduce support for, or engagement with, violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies, these policies should be connected to specific domestic drivers and, if moving beyond primary prevention (structural) measures, include a target group. Given that strategies often provide limited detail on the local context, the rationale for responses may be as ambiguous as the challenges they are intended to address, making it difficult to examine their relevance.

Countries include measures such as "promot[ing] awareness among technical staff in sports federations and the organisers of non-affiliated sports and leisure activities (e.g. body-building, fitness training,

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168 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 10; UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, para. 6.
169 Pakistan includes 40 measures; France includes 60 measures; Lebanon includes more than 300.
170 Rosand et al., "Roadmap to Progress."
171 Canadian strategy, pp. 17–18.
172 Ibid., pp. 1–46.
173 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 15.
174 Ibid., p. 6.

paintball, airsoft, etc.)";[175] "develop[ing] 'homework' and 'half-day Wednesday' plans especially in disadvantaged areas to improve pupils' learning including in the field of media studies during school time and after-school";[176] "target[ing] smallholder farmers and introduc[ing] them to agricultural practices that increase the productivity of their fields and their income";[177] and "develop[ing] programs to train people with special needs and enhance their skills, allowing their full integration into society."[178] One country proposes that the "government may encourage building of new cinema complexes in order to increase the number of screens," in addition to "tutoring of a range of musical instruments and singing."[179] Although these measures reflect worthwhile policy concerns, their relevance to reducing support for or engagement with violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies is unspecified and therefore unclear.

Strategies should clearly articulate the assumptions underlying policy measures and the suggested relationship between measures and the drivers of the problems identified. They should describe the anticipated effect of measures on individuals, groups, or communities that are suggested to be vulnerable to supporting or engaging in violent extremism. Presenting the link, or "causal mechanism" between measures and expected outcomes helps determine if the policies flow logically from the drivers and target groups identified in the domestic analysis. Such an approach minimizes confusion about the factors to address and the scope and intended objectives of the activities implemented by local partners. A limited number of countries articulate the local context in their strategies and present a convincing rationale for the identification of their policy measures.[180]

A clear approach facilitates monitoring progress toward the strategic goals. When the underlying logic is not apparent, the relationship between implemented activities and policy goals may be confusing. For example, although one governmental evaluation of a strategy was "able to determine the status of the 44 domestically focused CVE tasks … [it] could not determine the extent to which the [country] is better off today as a result of its CVE effort … because no cohesive strategy with measurable outcomes has been established to guide the multi-agency CVE effort towards its goals. … Absent defined measureable outcomes, it is unclear how these tasks will be implemented and how they will measurably contribute to achieving the federal CVE goals."[181] Without clear descriptions of how policies in strategies may contribute to change, many countries will reach a similarly underwhelming conclusion when evaluating their national approaches.

SCOPE OF POLICY

There has been growing concern about blurred boundaries between the prevention of violent extremism and more traditional counterterrorism measures, including approaches that contribute to broadening and mainstreaming surveillance to detect and pursue individuals and groups at increasingly earlier points of intervention in their communities.[182] Countries should ensure that policy measures included in strategies contribute to the goal of building the capacity of groups to prevent violent extremism, avoiding counterterrorism practices or other measures that do not explicitly contribute to reducing support for or engagement with violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies in the precriminal space.[183]

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175 French plan, p. 13.
176 Ibid., p. 9.
177 Lebanese strategy, p. 35.
178 Ibid., p. 16.
179 Pakistani guidelines, p. 39.
180 Swedish action plan, pp. 38–48; German strategy, pp. 17–26.
181 U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts," GAO-17-300, April 2017, p. 16, https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/684243.pdf.
182 Therese O'Toole et al., "Governing Through Prevent? Regulation and Contested Practice in State-Muslim Engagement," *Sociology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 160–177.
183 As observed by Finland, "It is now more clearly understood that detecting, countering or investigating violent or terrorist crimes no longer suffices." Finnish action plan, p. 9.

One strategy seems to indicate the development of approaches aimed at building community capacity to prevent violent extremism. Yet, the proposed measures include the "exchange of criminal intelligence," the "use of existing technical resources for preliminary investigations and investigations," and the "detection and criminal prosecution of perpetrators of criminal offenses related to violent extremism and terrorism … as well as persons and criminal groups assisting with financing of violent extremism and recruitment and training of foreign fighters."[184] The country also proposes the "monitoring of international black lists and lists kept by other countries and international organizations on persons related to violent extremism, radicalism and terrorism and its incorporation into national databases."[185]

Similar counterterrorism measures are described in other strategies,[186] including "disrupting extremists" at national borders through improved data sharing[187] and measures to "detect activities of violent extremists, [and to] collect intelligence and information on the violent extremism dynamics and operations undertaken to disrupt and prevent recruitment activities."[188] Such examples illustrate the persistence of the fluid relationship between traditional security-dominated counterterrorism practices and newer community-centered policies that may stem from a fundamental misunderstanding of national policy interventions subsumed within the P/CVE policy field, an overreliance on national security actors in the design of national strategic objectives, or a desire among policymakers not to commit entirely to a softer approach. Although "there is growing recognition that effective prevention requires that traditional intelligence gathering and policing efforts are coupled with a wider-ranging, more inclusive approach that addresses the underlying causes of radicalisation and builds broader social coalitions against violent extremism,"[189] old counterterrorism habits die hard in some countries.

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184 Montenegrin action plan, pp. 16–17.
185 Ibid., p. 15.
186 Swiss action plan, pp. 17–18.
187 UK strategy, pp. 17–18.
188 Maldivian strategy, p. 8.
189 Danish action plan, p. 17.

IMPLEMENT

Strategies should establish an inclusive coordination mechanism to manage the implementation of the measures identified.[190] Countries should set out the roles and responsibilities of implementers across different sectors and outline the means through which multisector partnerships will function throughout the implementation period of the strategy.[191] These considerations should be formalized into an implementation road map that summarizes the objectives, outputs, and timelines by which partners will be responsible for identified measures, helping to keep track of implementation progress and demonstrating progress toward higher national goals.[192]

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Countries should "clearly distinguish the roles and responsibilities of participating entities and partners."[193] Establishing such coordination mechanisms supports ongoing management of the plan, decision-making during implementation, the inclusion of relevant stakeholders, and maintenance of these partnerships. Part of the responsibility of these coordination structures is to identify roles and responsibilities up front and to mobilize and coordinate resources to avoid duplication.[194] Furthermore, the working relationships among stakeholders and the chains of responsibility must be transparent, while indicating what types of mechanisms will be established to share information and coordinate strategy implementation. As observed by one country, "[I]nterdisciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-system co-operation requires, among other things, agreement on common goals, the definition of tasks and competences/responsibilities as well as binding rules for information exchange."[195]

Few strategies provide descriptions of structures that would facilitate strategy implementation. Some countries clearly outline the responsible authorities for each proposed measure.[196] For example, one country states that "the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth will be the lead institution in covering community outreach and engagement," but leaves other policies unallocated.[197] In one country, responsible authorities are identified, but it is unclear which particular measures are associated with which authority.[198] Some countries identify responsible authorities for each policy measure, yet the number ranges from a few entities, which could reasonably share responsibility for certain measures, to numerous entities, including broad categories such as "families" and nongovernmental organizations.[199] Sharing responsibility is possible and sometimes desirable, and there is increasing emphasis on developing "cross-cutting" policies that transcend line ministries and foster multidisciplinary cooperation. Failing to target and assign responsibility for individual measures to any specific entity creates confusion and risks diminishing accountability during implementation.

In certain cases, countries recognize the importance of civil society stakeholders by acknowledging that the effectiveness of P/CVE strategies "depends on how and to which extent public and civil society institutions and organisations can be connected,"[200] but these strategies fall short of explaining how these stakeholders would be involved. For example, one country notes that it will "explore funding options … to establish the most suitable mechanism for supporting civil society projects in targeted hot-spot areas."[201] The desire to identify how national agencies will support civil society in facilitating implementation of policy measures

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190 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 15.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
194 Feve and Elshimi, "Planning for Prevention."
195 Austrian strategy, p. 33.
196 Norwegian action plan, pp. 17–25; German strategy, pp. 30–49.
197 Albanian strategy, p. 17.
198 French plan, p. 25.
199 Nigerian action plan, p. 38.
200 Austrian strategy, p. 14.
201 Albanian strategy, p. 11.

is welcome, but ideally this identification is a foundational outcome of the strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP

When developing national strategies, countries should "include an implementation road map that clearly outlines the objectives, outputs, [and] timelines as well as resource and capacity allocations for addressing the push and pull factors of violent extremism."[202] Among other benefits, such a plan provides outcomes that the strategy seeks to attain with corresponding time frames. It also serves to outline the types and quantities of human, financial, and technical resources secured or required for each policy measure. A timeline is important to ensure that proposed measures are implemented on schedule and that the responsible authorities are held accountable for implementation.

Only a small number of strategies specify any type of timeline.[203] When countries provide timelines for strategy implementation, such as, "this Policy Framework and National Action Plan shall operate for three years before review,"[204] these timelines tend not to specify interim deadlines and milestones. Some countries provide no indication of when the strategy will end, raising concern over accountability for policy implementation.[205] A number of countries apparently do not construct a road map or do not release it publicly. When implementation road maps are not elaborated as part of the strategy and not presented as an outcome of that process, it is unclear whether policymakers have considered if their measures are open to implementation and if they have identified the necessary resource allocations required for progress toward strategic goals.

One of the few countries to present a detailed implementation road map sets out, for each policy measure proposed, tasks and milestones alongside associated objectives and outcomes.[206] Another country provides an overview of "current measures implemented by the departments involved in drawing up the strategy and an overview of supported organisations and subsidy recipients," indicating the lead implementer; the program or measure being implemented; a description of its activities and outputs; the individuals, groups, and communities targeted by each measure; budget allocations; and timelines for implementation of each activity.[207] Countries achieving this level of detail represent the exception rather than the rule.[208]

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202 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 15.

203 Some do provide some kind of timeline. German strategy, pp. 30–49; U.S. strategy, pp. 5–14; Montenegrin action plan, pp. 6–19.

204 Nigerian action plan, p. 6.

205 For example, see Belgian program Norwegian action plan, Somali action plan.

206 U.S. strategy, pp. 5–14.

207 German strategy, pp. 30–49.

208 For example, see Montenegrin action plan, pp. 5–19; Pakistani guidelines, pp. 41–43. See also Swiss action plan, pp. 13–22, (provides detail on the "target group; the group of people that a specific measure aims to reach and over whom the measure should have an influence," "operational implementation: the persons and bodies responsible for implementing measures," "political responsibility; the authority/agency/conference /association that calls for and supports the implementation of the measures," and "funding: the authority/agency that finances the implementation of the measures").

MONITOR

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential to ensuring effective strategy implementation. Monitoring and evaluation assist both policymakers and implementers in understanding what works, accounting for unanticipated consequences, and overcoming unexpected obstacles. Not only do these mechanisms help policymakers meet objectives through course correction, they help ensure that the measures being implemented are having the intended impact[209] and that they adhere to the principle of do no harm.[210] A strategy should include mechanisms for the systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of data related to implementation and impact of the policy measures and should establish a mechanism for overall strategy review and revisions.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Countries should consider monitoring and evaluation systems to enable stakeholders to track activities against policy objectives, determine if a strategy is on schedule, identify gaps, reallocate resources, and identify progress made toward strategy objectives.[211] The strategies reviewed vary in their descriptions of how, when, by whom, and for what objective monitoring and evaluation will take place and the extent to which these systems appear considered. In some, no clear reference is made to monitoring and evaluation.[212] Others specify that authorities will "review and refine the strategy as necessary"[213] and a strategy will be "dynamic and will therefore be updated when needed."[214]

Although not necessarily insignificant, such statements do not constitute a sufficient basis for monitoring and evaluation because they do not describe a schedule of

intervals or deadlines for when the various stages of evaluation occur or are considered complete. When strategies lack a schedule for monitoring and evaluation or a formal end date, concerns may be raised over the extent to which government will be held accountable for often considerable investments and resource expenditures. Some countries do provide timelines for monitoring and evaluation activities or deadlines for strategy revisions or updates.[215] For example, one country suggests that the strategy "should be implemented and evaluated within five years."[216] Helpfully, some countries identify the responsible authority for monitoring and evaluation.[217]

Countries identify various objectives for monitoring and evaluation, such as being able "to follow the developments and changes in the perceived threat"[218] and ensuring that "efforts keep pace with evolving threats."[219] Measurement of the emerging impacts, lessons learned, and unintended consequences of measures in strategies should be prioritized. Promisingly, one country suggests that its strategy will be updated in line with "assessments that evaluate … implementation efforts [and] measure the impact of those efforts."[220] Committing to resourcing impact evaluations is particularly important in a young field of policy, where assessments of impacts point to a significant potential for unintended negative outcomes of P/CVE practice. For example, a government evaluation in one country suggested that of 33 domestic projects recorded, 95 percent were ineffective or counterproductive.[221]

There is surprisingly little information on how strategies intend to overcome some of the barriers to

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209 UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, para. 44.
210 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," pp. 15–16.
211 Feve and Elshimi, "Planning for Prevention."
212 UK strategy; Danish action plan; French plan.
213 Maldivian strategy, p. 11.
214 Norwegian action plan, p. 7.
215 Finnish action plan, p. 30; Nigerian action plan, p. 6.
216 Swiss action plan, pp. 6, 25.
217 Montenegrin action plan.
218 Norwegian action plan, p. 7.
219 U.S. strategy, p. 3.
220 Somali strategy, p. 10.
221 Fiona Hamilton, "Most Programmes to Stop Radicalization Are Failing," *Times* (London), 6 June 2018, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/most-programmes-to-stop-radicalisation-are-failing-0bwh9pbtd.

understanding the impacts of their policies. One solution might include, for example, formalizing and investing in the methods and tools used to collect, store, and analyze evaluation data. In some cases, commitments to monitoring and evaluation appear to represent a future policy aspiration.[222] The desire to establish monitoring and evaluation systems is welcome, and it suggests that these systems were given consideration during the design and development of policies. Strategies that articulate policies without consideration of what, whether, how, and when one can actually learn from these efforts and measure their results risk being impractical, ineffectual, and possibly counterproductive.

Most countries provide no information regarding the accessibility and dissemination of the results of their monitoring and evaluation processes or whether the results will be disseminated at all. One country provides a website link where "the last updated version [of the strategy] will be digitally available," but it does not specify when this will occur.[223] Countries must improve the means through which they commit resources to monitoring and evaluation and present transparent commitments to establish these mechanisms before the implementation of policy measures. The specific objectives of the monitoring and evaluation systems established should be clearly described, and countries should prioritize impact evaluations of their policies, in addition to tracking implementation progress. Countries should make clear when strategy evaluation will take place, who will conduct it, and how the results of the evaluation processes will be made available and contribute to future strategy revisions.

DO NO HARM

Countries should avoid compromising human rights aims, and their policies must be grounded in the do-no-harm principle.[224] Among other considerations, it is important that strategies avoid "adversely

impacting the work of related Government Ministries and Departments, such as Education, … and services provided to the population, particularly people in vulnerable situations."[225] During implementation, programming may be at risk of "misplaced targeting [and] the use of misleading vulnerability and resilience criteria, or lead to exacerbating tensions amongst those who do not 'fit' the criteria and so cannot access the benefits of the programme."[226] It has also been suggested that "the stigmatisation that broad approaches are trying to avoid can achieve exactly the opposite and conversely stigmatise an entire community."[227]

The very process of developing and adopting a national strategy may exacerbate underlying tensions and conflicts, resulting in polarization and exclusion before implementation of programming has begun. The potential for negative effects may be minimized by employing human rights impact assessments, meaningfully engaging with communities at all stages of strategy development, and ensuring that adopted measures avoid discriminating, stigmatizing, or profiling specific groups or communities through robust monitoring and evaluation. When conflict sensitivity and do-no-harm principles are embedded from the beginning of the policymaking process and are systematically reflected in the adopted strategies, a more meaningful integration of these principles may be carried over into implementation by partners. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks should consider the impact of strategy implementation on the rights of citizens, ensuring that policies can be reviewed or revised when concerns are raised.

Promisingly, concepts of human rights and fundamental freedoms feature heavily in a number of strategies. These concepts are most often used by countries to describe the antidemocratic nature of violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, which "degrade fundamental human rights and civil liberties … and impinge negatively on the rule of law."[228] This assertion in turn justifies the importance and inclusion

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222 Albanian strategy, p. 15; French plan, p. 17.
223 Norwegian action plan, p. 7.
224 UNOCT, "Reference Guide," p. 12.
225 Ibid., p. 12.
226 Holdaway and Simpson, "Improving the Impact," p. 23.
227 Ibid.
228 Maldivian strategy, p. 3.

of democracy-promoting measures that are said to strengthen resilience to violent extremism.[229] These references are important and should not be discounted. Few countries, however, provide descriptions that reflect a genuine commitment to recognizing and responding to the potential, unintended negative outcomes of state policies on the same basic democratic principles and fundamental freedoms of their citizens. One country acknowledges that a need exists to "prevent the potential harmful consequences of even the best-intentioned programs,"[230] but countries provide limited reference to practical safeguards that would ensure that strategies minimize harmful outcomes.

Such considerations may have been considered implicitly, but some countries appear to cut policymaking corners, making their strategies prone to negative effects. Some strategies are adopted rapidly following insular policymaking processes involving a limited number of stakeholders, are based on thin or inconclusive empirical evidence, and are unclear on the problem being addressed, on what basis individuals and groups will be targeted, and for what objectives. Strategies may operationalize biases that, if the strategies are carried through to implementation, could not only waste precious national resources, but actively make the problem worse. Although it is important for governments to be seen as acting on a political hot potato, in a young policy field typified by an experimental "learning-by-doing" approach, countries should include tangible commitments to learn about, and actively respond to, the potential negative impacts of their policies.

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229 German strategy, pp. 17–19; Austrian strategy, pp. 30–33; Swiss action plan, p. 19.
230 Canadian strategy, p. 20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A one-size-fits-all approach to the development of national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism does not exist. However, countries should develop and adopt their strategies in line with some basic, universal standards of procedural practice that reflect a valid and inclusive approach. The recommendations presented in table 2 should enable countries to align themselves with existing normative guidance and develop, improve, and adapt their strategies in this policy domain.

Table 2. Recommendations for Countries Developing National Strategies

STAGE	COMPONENT	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	Establish	▶ Countries should systematically identify stakeholders to ensure that a wide range of interest groups are considered in shaping, informing, and legitimizing the development and adoption of a national strategy. ▶ Countries should consult with governmental stakeholders during the strategy development process, developing mechanisms to integrate the knowledge and experiences of subnational authorities in identifying the policy priorities that they will often be responsible for implementing. ▶ Countries should consult with nongovernmental stakeholders, including communities directly impacted by strategies and other nongovernmental interest groups identified as potential contributors to policy implementation, during the strategy development process. ▶ Countries should work to sustain the involvement of multisector stakeholders at all stages of the strategy development process, incorporating their perspectives, experiences, and recommendations in the prioritization of policy measures.
2	Gather	▶ Countries should ensure that a baseline of relevant research is assessed prior to strategy adoption. This baseline must be sufficient to justify the need for the strategy and the relevance of its policy measures and to identify knowledge gaps to target future research activities. ▶ Countries that have identified knowledge gaps or are unable to present evidence should identify research as the foremost policy priority, outlining the measures that will be implemented to improve the evidence base and how research will be made available for review. ▶ Countries should improve the transparency with which they present the research that informs their national strategy, including that which informed the adopted policy measures, and make policy evidence accessible by providing citations to the source material.

3	**Analyze**	▶ Countries should define the problems that the strategy seeks to address, distinguishing among key terms and describing their conceptual relationships. Definitions should be locally relevant, used consistently, and developed in line with international law.
		▶ Countries should move beyond political rhetoric to describe the actual threats that the strategy is intended to address, including at minimum the nature and scale of those threats, which should be consistent with terms previously defined.
		▶ Countries should describe the national drivers of violent extremism, explicitly referencing the available evidence and its relationship to the problems the strategy aims to address. When countries support local authorities and other subnational entities in the implementation of assessments of local drivers, this support should be described.
		▶ Countries should explain the meaning and application of any identification of segments of society as vulnerable to supporting or engaging with violent extremist groups, causes, and ideologies, evidencing assumptions underpinning national policy priorities.
4	**Develop**	▶ When evidence about problems identified at a national level is limited, the policy measures developed should be modest, prioritizing research on the problems and their causes to better inform the identification of future policy measures.
		▶ Countries should present the objectives of policy measures and outline how these measures are intended to contribute to strategy outcomes. When policymakers propose targeted policies to reduce support for violent extremist groups, causes, or ideologies, these policies should be connected to specific domestic drivers and a target group.
		▶ Countries should avoid counterterrorism practices and other measures in their national strategies that do not directly contribute to a preventative approach aimed at reducing support for violent extremism groups, causes, or ideologies.
5	**Implement**	▶ Countries should identify the roles of different stakeholders in the implementation of policy measures, describing their working relationships and the mechanisms established to share information and coordinate strategy implementation.
		▶ Countries should include an implementation road map that includes milestones and dates for the completion of specific policy measures and resources secured or required to implement each measure successfully.
6	**Monitor**	▶ Countries should identify mechanisms for monitoring strategy implementation and impact, including when evaluation will take place, who will conduct it, how and where the evaluation will be made available, and how the road map will contribute to future strategy revisions.
		▶ Countries should ensure that their strategies are the product of an evidence-based process that sets out the proportionality of identified interventions, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are sensitive to the impact of the strategy on human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens.

CONCLUSION

In his plan of action, the UN Secretary-General urges all countries to consider adopting a national strategy and provides guidance to realize this goal, but much work is still to be done to translate these aspirations into domestic policymaking realities. The surveyed strategies show an overreliance on jargon surrounding the nature, scope, and causes of violent extremism in the domestic context and lack evidence underpinning the issue being tackled and a logical design in the selection of policy responses, which are often justified with conventional wisdom. This imprecision and lack of evidence often obscures the rationale for the policies proposed and leaves unclear if, how, and by whom policies will be implemented and how the policies will contribute to strategic objectives.

In general, these strategies are difficult to understand, raising questions about their practical use in guiding domestic efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. They often reflect the range of biases that have typified academic, practitioner, and governmental discourses for more than a decade. Rather than illuminating or clarifying governmental approaches to violent extremism, these documents in some cases further confuse and obscure the government's intention in a highly sensitive area prone to manipulation and abuse. A number of the strategies reviewed do not closely adhere to UN guidance for many reasons, including the politicization of the policy field, a lack of time and resources dedicated to plan development, and an overreliance on inconclusive evidence driving national policy prioritization.

Some countries, particularly those that were quick to adopt a national strategy, have already revised or are updating their strategies to reflect a growing awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of initial versions. Other countries may improve and develop their domestic approaches as the life cycle of their strategies runs its course and important lessons are learned during implementation. In the meantime, the preliminary findings and recommendations in this report may support policymakers as they integrate the international community's guidance into their own policymaking processes, helping them design more effective national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism in line with international standards of good practice.

APPENDIX A. NATIONAL P/CVE STRATEGIES ANALYZED IN THIS REPORT

COUNTRY	DOCUMENT
ALBANIA	Albanian Council of Ministers, "Albanian National Strategy Countering Violent Extremism," 18 November 2015
	https://www.rcc.int/p-cve/download/docs/Albanian%20National%20Strategy%20on%20Countering%20Violent%20Extremism.pdf/eca873b0e6bd733938a73f957471a75c.pdf
AUSTRIA	Bundesweites Netzwerk Extremismusprävention und Deradikalisierung, "The Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation," n.d.
	http://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2241.pdf
BELGIUM	Belgian Ministry of the Interior and for the Equality of Opportunities, "Programme de prévention de la radicalisation violente" [Program to prevent violent radicalization], 16 April 2013
	https://www.counterextremism.org/download_file/68/134/316/
CANADA	Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, "National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence," 2018
	https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc/ntnl-strtg-cntrng-rdclztn-vlnc-en.pdf
DENMARK	Danish Ministry of Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs, "Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism: Action Plan," September 2014
	http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/sites/default/files/media/Pressemeddelelser/pdf/2015/SJ20150422125507430%20%5BDOR1545530%5D.PDF
FINLAND	Finnish Ministry of the Interior, "National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism," 2016
	http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/75040/Kansallinen_vakivalt_radikalisoituminen_eng_NETTI.pdf
FRANCE	French Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Crime and Radicalisation, "Prevent to Protect: National Plan for the Prevention of Radicalization," 23 February 2018
	https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/02/dossier_de_presse_-_comite_interministeriel_de_prevention_de_la_delinquance_et_de_la_radicalisation_-_23.02.2018.pdf
GERMANY	Federal Government of Germany, "Federal Government Strategy to Prevent Extremism and Promote Democracy," July 2016
	https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/115448/cc142d640b37b7dd76e48b8fd9178cc5/strategie-der-bundesregierung-zur-extremismuspraevention-und-demokratiefoerderung-englisch-data.pdf
LEBANON	Lebanese Presidency of the Council of Ministers, "National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism," 2017
	http://www.pvelebanon.org/Resources/PVE_English.pdf
MALDIVES	Maldivian National Counter Terrorism Centre, "National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," 2 November 2017
	https://nctc.gov.mv/publications/NSPCVE.pdf

MONTENEGRO	Montenegrin Ministry of Justice, "Action Plan for Implementation of the Countering Violent Extremism Strategy 2016-2018," April 2016
	http://www.mna.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=258031&rType=2&file=Action%20plan%20for%20implementation%20of%20the%20countering%20violent%20extremism%20strategy%202016-2018.docx
NIGERIA	Federal Republic of Nigeria, "Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," August 2017
	http://ctc.gov.ng/pcve-nsa-book/
NORWAY	Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security "Action Plan Against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism," 2014
	https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6d84d5d6c6df47b38f5e2b989347fc49/action-plan-against-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism_2014.pdf
PAKISTAN	Pakistani National Counter Terrorism Authority, "National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines," January 2018
	https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NCEP-Guidlines.pdf
SOMALIA	Federal Republic of Somalia, "National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," September 2016
	https://www.radiomuqdisho.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CVE-Strategy-26-August-English.pdf
SWEDEN	Swedish Ministry of Justice, "Action Plan to Safeguard Democracy Against Violence-Promoting Extremism," Skr. 2011/12:44, 8 December 2011
	https://www.government.se/contentassets/b94f163a3c5941aebaeb78174ea27a29/action-plan-to-safeguard-democracy-against-violence-promoting-extremism-skr.-20111244
SWITZERLAND	Swiss Security Network, "National Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Radicalisation and Violent Extremism," 4 December 2017
	https://www.newsd.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/50703.pdf
UNITED KINGDOM	UK Home Office, "Counter-Extremism Strategy," Cm 9148, October 2015
	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470094/51859_Cm9148_PRINT.PDF
UNITED STATES	U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism," 28 October 2016
	https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/16_1028_S1_CVE_strategy.pdf

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