

# Blue Sky III

Taking UN Counterterrorism Efforts in  
The Next Decade From Plans to Action



BY ALISTAIR MILLAR AND NAUREEN CHOWDHURY FINK

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September 2016

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**ALISTAIR MILLAR** is Founder and Executive Director of the Global Center. He is also President of the Fourth Freedom Forum and has written numerous chapters, articles, and reports on international security, human rights, and the rule of law, as well as on the nexus between security and development. He holds an MA from Leeds University and a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods from the University of Bradford.

**NAUREEN CHOWDHURY FINK** is Director of CVE and Multilateral Programs at the Global Center, providing oversight on substantive development and strategic engagement on these issues. Her portfolio includes projects relating to countering violent extremism, South and Southeast Asia, West Africa, and the United Nations. Naureen has published widely on these topics and is a frequent panelist and lecturer. She received her MA from King's College London and a BA from the University of Pennsylvania.

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The authors take full responsibility for the analyses presented here and for any errors of fact or interpretation that may exist in this report.

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## ACRONYMS

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CTC	Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN Security Council)
CTED	Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN Security Council)
CTITF	UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force
CVE	countering violent extremism
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (UN)
ICT	information and communications technology
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
NGO	nongovernmental organization
P/CVE	preventing and countering violent extremism
PVE	preventing violent extremism
UN	United Nations
UNCCT	UN Counter-Terrorism Centre
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## INTRODUCTION

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When the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006,<sup>1</sup> transnational terrorism in the form of al-Qaida and associated networks challenged the multilateral community to develop cooperative mechanisms to address the new dimensions of the threat. Efforts to diminish al-Qaida by targeting its leadership have been widely deemed successful, but recent attacks on hotels in Burkina Faso and Mali, for example, show that al-Qaida remains a threat. Furthermore, ongoing conflicts and political fragmentation have created a hospitable environment for the emergence of groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat al-Nusra and prompted the outflow of approximately 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and ISIL supporters from nearly 100 countries.<sup>2</sup> Al-Shabaab has moved beyond the borders of Somalia, carrying out atrocious attacks in Kenya and Uganda, and continues to threaten peace and stability in Somalia. From Pakistan to Nigeria, groups such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban and Boko Haram have killed or kidnapped children, destroyed local economies and communities, impeded development, and fueled sectarian tensions as part of their violent extremist campaigns. Groups associated with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb have killed UN personnel and peacekeepers. Across the globe, terrorist groups have claimed credit for attacks in Australia, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Tunisia, and Turkey, to name a few sites of horror among a mounting number of others, underscoring that no country is protected. The specter of independent, proactive, “self-starter” or “lone wolf” perpetrators also signifies that the threat has grown ever more complex and become intertwined with security, governance,

and development challenges. Against this backdrop, the impact of terrorism on the politics of many countries is now discernible, with worrying signs of increasing intolerance and prominent extreme-right movements attracting headlines.

The nature of these attacks and the recruitment methods used by terrorist organizations have forced counterterrorism experts and officials to reconsider their approach to a threat that is decentralized and becoming increasingly difficult to monitor and interdict. There is a growing realization that although kinetic military action and enhanced border security measures are still necessary, they are insufficient for addressing a threat that is often homegrown and does not require direct contact or training from members of a terrorist organization. Consequently, UN member states have conveyed a growing urgency regarding terrorism, FTFs, and violent extremism and their impact on broader development and security interests. As one member state representative noted at the high-level debate on peace and security hosted by the President of the UN General Assembly in May 2016, it appears that the terrorist-related crises confronting member states and the United Nations may be part of a “new normal” to which the multilateral community needs to adapt. The adoption of the Strategy and the consensus it represented played a critical role in shaping the normative platform for future multilateral and national counterterrorism efforts.

With generous support from the governments of Norway and Switzerland, the Global Center on Cooperative Security, building on its previous analyses of the UN counterterrorism architecture and programs,<sup>3</sup> has produced this independent report to

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1 UN General Assembly, *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*, A/RES/60/288, 20 September 2006 (adopted 8 September 2006).

2 The Soufan Group, “Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters Into Syria and Iraq,” December 2015, [http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG\\_ForeignFightersUpdate1.pdf](http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate1.pdf).

3 Naureen Chowdhury Fink et al., “Blue Sky II: Progress and Opportunities in Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy,” Global Center on Cooperative Security, April 2014, <http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Blue-Sky-II-Low-Res.pdf>; James Cockayne et al., “Reshaping United Nations Counterterrorism Efforts: Blue-Sky Thinking for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation 10 Years After 9/11,” Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 2012, [http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Reshaping\\_UNCTEfforts\\_Blue-Sky-Thinking.pdf](http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Reshaping_UNCTEfforts_Blue-Sky-Thinking.pdf).

take stock of a decade of multilateral activities implementing the Strategy, including past biennial reviews, and develop a set of findings and recommendations to support implementation efforts in the coming decade. Beyond the UN counterterrorism bodies, this report focuses on broader strategic engagement among entities focused on development, human rights, peace and security, education, and culture, including new actors that have emerged to fill gaps that the United Nations has been unable to adequately fill since the adoption of the Strategy, such as the Global Counterterrorism

Forum (GCTF) and the institutions it inspired.<sup>4</sup> This report includes a critical analysis of the outcomes of deliberations around the 2016 review of the Strategy and reflects on implementation efforts going forward. The study is informed by research on current threats and organizational responses; interviews and consultations with UN officials, member state representatives, academics, and practitioners through bilateral discussions; small-group events; and a tailored survey open to governments, UN officials, and civil society.

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<sup>4</sup> These institutions include Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, based in Abu Dhabi, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, based in Geneva.



## THE UN RESPONSE

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The first five to seven years of multilateral activity on counterterrorism after September 2001 were largely dominated by Security Council resolutions, anchored in the framework established by Resolution 1373.<sup>5</sup>

The adoption of the Strategy in 2006 signaled international efforts to advance a more comprehensive approach that included preventive and responsive measures and opened the discourse to a wider range of stakeholders focused on the conditions conducive to terrorism (Pillar I) and human rights (Pillar IV) alongside law enforcement, criminal justice, and military actors associated with implementation of Pillars II and III. Since that time, however, changes in the threat landscape and the development of research about the upstream factors that can contribute to violent extremism have prompted efforts to update UN counterterrorism efforts through briefings, debates, and thematic resolutions to reflect emerging challenges, such as the roles of women and youth in terrorism and counterterrorism, the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), counternarratives, countering the financing of terrorism, and enhancing the connection between research and policy, for example through the establishment of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) Research Network.

Within the UN system, more actors are engaged on terrorism and violent extremism than ever before. The proliferation of counterterrorism bodies and activities reflects the UN impulse to try to react to member state concerns and operational needs on the ground. Because

the UN architecture comprises multiple agencies and bodies, each with a mandated responsibility for a particular dimension of the counterterrorism response, such as assessment, monitoring, capacity building, or coordination, effectively there is no “captain of the ship.” This is in part by design, with the Security Council and the General Assembly each establishing a counterterrorism architecture and challenging efforts that appear to enhance either of these bodies at the expense of the other. Widespread frustration with competition, duplication, and a lack of coordination between various entities has led to calls for consolidation, rationalization, and the appointment of a senior coordinator empowered to foster cooperation across entities. The latter effort failed in 2012 due to a range of concerns, including a lack of a transparent plan to operationalize the idea, disagreement within the Security Council on the merits of the new proposal, and concerns about the added budgetary and administrative burden placed on the system.

Attempts to resurrect the concept of a senior coordinator position also failed to take root at the fifth review of the Strategy on 1 July 2016. Yet, at the normative level, the United Nations has consistently shown the ability to respond to emerging challenges and issues that shape the discourse on multilateral counterterrorism activities. Among these is the increasing focus on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE),<sup>6</sup> as reflected in the Secretary-General’s report titled “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism,” which was only half-heartedly “noted” rather than “welcomed” by the General Assembly at the July 2016 Strategy review;<sup>7</sup> addressing the challenge of FTFs

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5 UN Security Council, S/RES/1373, 28 September 2001.

6 Much of the work focused on preventing terrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) has been conducted under the rubric of CVE, which has broadly referenced preventive, noncoercive, and nonkinetic means of addressing terrorism. Since the release of the report by the Secretary-General titled “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism,” the term “preventing violent extremism” has been used to connote further upstream interventions aligned more with long-term efforts to address development, governance, and socioeconomic challenges associated with creating conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. To reconcile past and ongoing interventions broadly within the prevention spectrum, this report uses P/CVE.

7 UN General Assembly, A/RES/70/291, 1 July 2016 (copy on file with authors); UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/674, 24 December 2015.

(e.g., through Resolution 2178);<sup>8</sup> and three systemic reviews of the UN peace and security architecture.<sup>9</sup>

## Preventing Violent Extremism

The Secretary-General’s plan of action underscores the need to advance efforts to implement Pillars I and IV of the Strategy and makes a candid assessment about the negative impact of militarized responses that have neglected a focus on longer-term preventive efforts. The Secretary-General observed that, “[o]ver the past two decades, the international community has sought to address violent extremism primarily within the context of security-based counter-terrorism measures adopted in response to the threat posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliated groups. However, with the emergence of a new generation of groups, there is a growing international consensus that such counter-terrorism measures have not been sufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism.”<sup>10</sup>

The Secretary-General’s plan received broad support within the UN system and among member states, with strong supporters arguing that there will be no way to balance a militarized, law enforcement–centric response to terrorism without institutionalizing a preventive approach and that the plan offers a road map for each state to follow as is suitable. Realists add that this nuanced and flexible approach is critical to ensuring consensus—seeking agreement for a universal definition of violent extremism is likely to go the same way as efforts to define terrorism—and they point out that the lack of a definition has not impeded international counterterrorism efforts over the past decade.

On the other hand, vocal critics have shared concerns that the analysis presented in the plan of action does not offer any conceptual clarity about what kinds of programs constitute “preventing violent extremism” (PVE) and consequently blurs the distinction between different realms of work, such as development, human rights, and security. Although the Secretary-General criticized a siloed approach that inhibits more flexible and dynamic responses to peace and security challenges that integrate development, peace-building, conflict prevention, and peacekeeping, for example, some practitioners have found the differentiation between the areas of work to be useful in defining the scope and objectives of policies and programs and in insulating each from negative dynamics that are associated with the other. At the same time, it is increasingly clear that the complexity of today’s conflicts requires a more integrated and multidimensional approach that is centered on advancing political solutions and flexible, tailor-made responses, as called for in the report by the high-level panel on peace operations.<sup>11</sup>

Some member states and experts have expressed concern that the plan of action securitizes such efforts and that, without a common approach for defining violent extremism, states are free to demonize their opponents with the title or impose harsh counterterrorism measures.<sup>12</sup> Some member states claim that the plan of action represents an unwelcome intrusion into national affairs, with its focus on governance and human rights, with some arguing that it diverts attention from urgent counterterrorism priorities. Discussions with representatives of member states and UN entities reflected broad concern that the process

8 UN Security Council, S/RES/2178, 24 September 2014.

9 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, “Identical Letters Dated 29 June 2015 From the Chair of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture Addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council,” A/69/968-S/2015/490, 30 June 2015 (containing the report titled *Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture*); UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, “Identical Letters Dated 17 June 2015 From the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council,” A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015 (containing the report titled *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People*) (hereinafter June 2015 HIPPO report); UN Security Council, S/RES/2242, 13 October 2015.

10 UN Security Council, S/RES/2178, 24 September 2014, para. 4.

11 June 2015 HIPPO report. The International Crisis Group also emphasized this point, arguing that violent extremism is a consequence, not cause, of conflict. International Crisis Group, “Exploiting Disorder: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State,” *Crisis Group Special Report*, 14 March 2016.

12 See Richard Atwood, “The Dangers Lurking in the U.N.’s New Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism,” Reuters, 28 February 2016, <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2016/02/07/why-is-the-wolf-so-big-and-bad/>.

undertaken by the Secretary-General and others who championed the plan of action did not sufficiently consult with member states, UN entities, or civil society. Moreover, the analysis of the drivers of extremism within the plan of action has elicited criticisms that the impact of policies and interventions is neglected, with many ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, the flow of small arms and light weapons, and perceived double standards in the treatment of conflicts highlighted by some as contributing to violent extremism. A number of states, including some permanent members of the Security Council, reiterated that they would have liked to see the plan of action adopted as a whole as part of the Strategy in the review, while others suggested that some of the ideas and recommendations can be integrated instead of a wholesale adoption.

The critical need to enhance preventive efforts was underscored at a Geneva conference on PVE held in April 2016, where the Secretary-General and numerous high-level officials from the United Nations, member states, and civil society highlighted their experiences, contributions, and priorities relating to PVE. The cochairs' nonbinding conclusions advanced ideas to further the Secretary-General's recommendations in the plan of action and reflected a need to support multi-stakeholder approaches to respond to the many conditions conducive to terrorism.<sup>13</sup> As the Secretary-General noted in his address to the conference, "There is no single pathway, and no complex algorithm that can unlock the secrets of who turns to violent extremism. But we know that violent extremism flourishes when aspirations for inclusion are frustrated, marginalized groups linger on the sidelines of societies, political space shrinks, human rights are abused and when too many people—especially young people—lack prospects and meaning in their lives."<sup>14</sup>

Additional initiatives have also highlighted the need for a greater multilateral focus on prevention. For example, the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and CTED have organized a number of initiatives that include a P/CVE dimension, such as a special meeting in Madrid in July 2015 and briefings on ICTs and gender. Member states have been active in this space, with Egypt, as CTC chair, hosting a ministerial-level briefing on counternarratives and ideologies of terrorism.<sup>15</sup> In the resultant presidential statement, Security Council members recalled that CVE, "which can be conducive to terrorism, including preventing radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization of individuals into terrorist groups and becoming [FTFs,] is an essential element of addressing the threat to international peace and security posed by [FTFs]," as underlined in Resolution 2178. In this regard, the Security Council members took note of the Secretary-General's plan of action to prevent violent extremism.<sup>16</sup>

In December 2015, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2250, the first resolution to focus on youth, peace, and security. Spearheaded by Jordan during its tenure in the council and adopted following a ministerial-level debate, it reflects the Amman Youth Declaration,<sup>17</sup> which was adopted during a global forum of several hundred youth representatives, experts, and the United Nations. This seminal resolution positions youth and youth-led organizations as important partners in global efforts to counter violent extremism. Moreover, it calls for their participation and representation in peace negotiations and peace-building efforts. Following the adoption of the resolution, Ahmad Alhendawi, the Secretary-General's envoy on youth, asserted, "This is a major breakthrough in our collective efforts to change the predominantly negative narrative on youth

13 Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism—The Way Forward, "Joint Co-Chairs Conclusions," 7–8 April 2016, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/GVAPVEConfJointCoChairsConclusions.pdf>.

14 "At Geneva Conference, Ban Calls for Global Partnership to Prevent Violent Extremism," UN News Centre, 6 April 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53638>.

15 UN Department of Public Information (DPI), "Security Council Presidential Statement Seeks Counter-Terrorism Committee Proposal for 'International Framework' to Curb Incitement, Recruitment," SC/12355, 11 May 2016.

16 UN Security Council, S/PRST/2016/6, 11 May 2016.

17 Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, "Amman Youth Declaration Adopted at Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security," 25 August 2015, <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2015/08/amman-youth-declaration-adopted-global-forum-youth-peace-security>.

and recognize the significant role of young people in peacebuilding. Youth have for too long been cast away as either the perpetrators of violence or its victims. With Resolution 2250 the Security Council formally recognizes the important contributions that young people make in countering violent extremism and supporting peacebuilding efforts around the world.”<sup>18</sup>

Also in December 2015, the General Assembly adopted a resolution titled “A World Against Violence and Violent Extremism,” proposed by Iran and updating the original 2013 resolution, which calls on member states to, among other things, (1) promote community engagement in countering violent extremism (CVE); (2) advocate for and disseminate information on tolerance and mutual respect; (3) use communication technologies to promote respect for all human rights; (4) place greater emphasis on condemning all forms of violence against women by refraining to invoke any custom, tradition, or religious consideration; and (5) increase understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, particularly for women and youth, so as to develop targeted and comprehensive solutions.<sup>19</sup>

## Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The threat of FTFs and supporters leaving home countries for conflicts abroad, most notably in Syria and Iraq, has raised concerns among governments not only because they tend to increase the brutality of the conflict given their lack of ties to local communities and traditions, but also because of their potentially violent actions after returning home. The number of cosponsors—104—for Resolution 2178, adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and with mandatory compliance by all member states, is testament to the broad-based consensus regarding the need for

international cooperation on this issue and a common approach by the General Assembly and Security Council.

Following Resolution 2178, efforts were undertaken to tighten financial flows and enforce sanctions regimes through a May 2015 presidential statement<sup>20</sup> and Resolutions 2199 and 2253, for example. The UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) was requested to present a capacity-building plan of more than 30 projects focusing on FTFs. CTED was asked to develop detailed implementation assessments of approximately 65 priority countries over three reports in 2015. Further to the adoption of Resolution 2253, the Secretary-General was requested to produce a strategic-level report that reflects the gravity of the threat posed by ISIL, including FTFs, and its sources of financing, including through illicit trade in oil, antiquities, and other resources; its planning and facilitation of attacks; and the range of UN efforts to support states in their responses to ISIL.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly there is broad-based international agreement on Resolution 2178 and the need for follow-up. The concern regarding FTFs and returnees is apparent across the board in discussions with member state officials. Several rehabilitation and reintegration efforts are being undertaken with a view to addressing this challenge. Canada, Denmark, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and others are implementing rehabilitation and reintegration processes in line with individual contexts. The Aarhus model in Denmark, for example, is premised on voluntary social services provided by local education, public health, and other agencies.<sup>22</sup> In Montreal, the Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence offers a mix of training, resources, and interventions.<sup>23</sup> Saudi Arabia houses beneficiaries

18 Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, “UN Security Council Adopts Historic Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security,” 9 December 2015, <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2015/12/un-security-council-adopts-historic-resolution-on-youth-peace-and-security/>.

19 UN General Assembly, *A World Against Violence and Violent Extremism*, A/RES/70/109, 17 December 2015.

20 UN Security Council, S/PRST/2015/11, 29 May 2015.

21 See UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Threat Posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to International Peace and Security and the Range of United Nations Efforts in Support of Member States in Countering the Threat*, S/2016/92, 29 January 2016.

22 “For Jihadists, Denmark Tries Rehabilitation,” *New York Times*, 13 December 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/world/for-jihadists-denmark-tries-rehabilitation.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/world/for-jihadists-denmark-tries-rehabilitation.html?_r=0).

23 For more information, see Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence, <https://info-radical.org/en>.

of its deradicalization program in special centers offering a range of psychosocial services, and families and kinship networks are engaged to offer some postrelease support and guarantees.<sup>24</sup> The Somali government is working with international partners to further develop and increase the geographic reach of programs to attract defectors from al-Shabaab and offer rehabilitation and reintegration programs to assist them while trying to enhance human rights protection.<sup>25</sup>

With its emphasis on the need for criminal justice and security responses, Resolution 2178 leveraged the concerns of the unprecedented number of countries affected by the outflow of FTFs and the consequences—social, economic, and security—of their return. Notably, this resolution is the first to include a reference to CVE in a Chapter VII resolution, albeit in a nonbinding paragraph, underscoring that CVE “is an essential element of addressing the threat to international peace and security posed” by FTFs and calling on member states “to enhance efforts to counter this kind of violent extremism.” Initial surveys of compliance efforts, however, suggest that this component has received little if any attention by key states affected by the FTF phenomenon.

Although UN entities have been responsive to member state concerns on this issue, some delegates have expressed concern about a proliferation of disconnected efforts throughout the system. One member state representative noted, for example, that the efforts of the council via CTED and the sanctions monitoring team do not appear to sync with the efforts of CTITF through its plan to address the challenge of FTFs with a range of projects and interventions. This echoes a broader concern regarding the interaction between the two bodies, with several interlocutors welcoming greater connectivity between the assessments produced by CTED and the capacity-building initiatives

proposed by CTITF and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT).

## Reviews of the Peace and Security Architecture

Developments within the UN system attest to the broadening discourse on counterterrorism across its various pillars of activity. During 2015, three important systemic reviews took place at the United Nations, focusing on peacekeeping, peace-building, and women, peace, and security. Taken together, particularly when the review of the Strategy is added to the list, they constitute a wholesale review of the UN peace and security architecture and raise important questions about the roles and capacities of the United Nations and member states to address contemporary challenges. These reviews underscored another key set of issues that has shaped the counterterrorism discourse for some time: the relationship between UN headquarters and the field, whether it be UN country teams and peace operations or civil society actors, including humanitarian organizations and community-based groups. The United Nations’ ability to impact national and local counterterrorism efforts will be shaped by the perceptions of these stakeholders and their role in translating normative frameworks into operational realities. The preventive, nonkinetic components of counterterrorism, including P/CVE programs, are widely recognized as aligning with UN activities; but tension remains across different entities and actors about the labeling of activities traditionally associated with development, education, mediation, and conflict prevention, for example, as P/CVE. Cited concerns include the possible securitization of development and peace-building efforts, the security of personnel and partners, and a lack of clarity regarding the nature of P/CVE programming.<sup>26</sup>

24 Angel Rabasa et al., “Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists,” Rand Corp., 2010, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND\\_MG1053.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf); Matthew Schwartz et al., “Strengthening the Case: Good Criminal Justice Practices to Counter Terrorism,” Global Center on Cooperative Security, September 2015, pp. 16–17, <http://www.globalcenter.org/publications/strengthening-the-case-good-criminal-justice-practices-to-counter-terrorism/>.

25 James Cockayne and Siobhan O’Neil, eds., “UN DDR in an Era of Violent Extremism: Is It Fit for Purpose?” United Nations University, 2015, <https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:5532/UNDDR.pdf>; “No Easy Way Forward for Al-Shabab Defectors,” IRIN, 12 June 2014, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100197/no-easy-way-forward-al-shabab-defectors>.

26 For more information, see forthcoming report by Arthur Boutellis and Naureen Chowdhury Fink on peace operations, terrorism, and violent extremism, produced by the International Peace Institute and the Global Center and scheduled to be issued in the fall of 2016.

Consequently, to date, the discussion on peacekeeping and counterterrorism has predominantly focused on kinetic, offensive counterterrorism operations.<sup>27</sup> There is widespread agreement among numerous troop-contributing countries, experts, and UN officials that peacekeeping missions are neither resourced nor well placed for offensive counterterrorism operations. Yet, there has been less discussion about the roles of missions in nonkinetic, preventive measures in P/CVE, despite the fact that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is a member of the CTITF and the 2014 report of the Secretary-General explicitly referenced the need to consider the roles and needs of missions in addressing terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>28</sup> As peace operations—special political missions as well as peacekeeping missions—are increasingly challenged by a conflict landscape that includes a violent extremist dimension, it is critical to consider if and how missions might engage in P/CVE efforts.

Since the review of the Strategy in 2014, another issue that has received notable attention is the question of gender and counterterrorism and P/CVE efforts. The year 2015 marked the 15th anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 1325, a seminal document formally recognizing the important role of women in fostering peace and urging their representation and participation at decision-making levels in conflict resolution

and peace processes. Terrorism, however, was first mentioned only in Resolution 2122 in 2013, following the review of Resolution 1325 that year. The adoption of Resolution 2242 in October 2015 marked greater recognition of the need to understand the impact of terrorism and counterterrorism efforts on women and to apply the principles established by Resolution 1325 to these efforts.

Nonetheless, Resolution 2242 also signaled concerns within the women, peace, and security community regarding the dangers of instrumentalization and securitization; and there has been widespread affirmation of the need to ensure that counterterrorism and P/CVE efforts do no harm to efforts to empower, protect, and support women. Despite these tensions, a vocal group of civil society actors and experts has highlighted the ongoing work done by women and women-led civil society groups in conflict and nonconflict areas, from mediating ceasefires to protections for humanitarian space and support and advocating for the prevention and cessation of violence.<sup>29</sup> This work is ongoing irrespective of the labels applied to their efforts, and policymakers and practitioners have underscored the need to recognize, support, and protect these efforts while learning from and drawing on the expertise and experience they offer for more effective and sustainable counterterrorism and P/CVE initiatives.<sup>30</sup>

27 John Karlsrud, "UN Peace Operations and Counter-Terrorism—A Bridge Too Far?" *Global Peace Operations*, 29 October 2015, <http://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/un-peace-operations-and-counter-terrorism-a-bridge-too-far>; Richard Gowan, "Can U.N. Peacekeepers Fight Terrorists?" *Brookings Institution*, 30 June 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/order-from-chaos/posts/2015/06/30-un-peacekeepers-gowan>.

28 UN General Assembly, A/68/841, 14 April 2014, para. 116.

29 Sanam Naraghi Anderlini et al., "Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms: Women's Perspectives on Violent Extremism and Security Interventions," *Women's Alliance for Security Leadership*, March 2016, <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/56706b861c121098acf6e2e8/t/56f1c3a786db43ca1c9b6cb1/1458684919130/WASL+Brief+No.1+Full.pdf>.

30 Global Center on Cooperative Security and the Institute for Inclusive Security, "Strengthening Rule of Law Responses to Counter Violent Extremism: What Role for Civil Society in South Asia?" May 2015, [http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/May-2015\\_Strengthening-Rule-of-Law-Responses-to-Counter-Violent-Extremism3.pdf](http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/May-2015_Strengthening-Rule-of-Law-Responses-to-Counter-Violent-Extremism3.pdf).

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

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As part of the consultations and interviews undertaken for this project, the Global Center conducted an online survey open to the public, including UN and government officials and civil society. The survey sought the views of multiple stakeholders, and approximately 55 percent of the respondents were from civil society, followed by multilateral organizations (26 percent) and governments (17 percent). The responses and additional feedback were largely reinforced in consultations with governmental and civil society actors.

There was overwhelming agreement that the United Nations had made a positive contribution to global efforts in responding to terrorism and violent extremism. Fifty-five percent of respondents felt that the United Nations is best placed to play a normative role, while 39 percent believe it should play an operational role. Thirty-seven percent of respondents felt that the United Nations was most effective as a convener, while 39 percent felt that the United Nations was least effective in capacity-building efforts. Relatedly, 70 percent of respondents felt that UN member states had not made effective use of the United Nations in counterterrorism and CVE efforts. Almost two-thirds of the respondents felt that UN efforts did not sufficiently reflect inputs from the wider UN system, including funds, agencies, and programs. About half felt the United Nations was appropriately resourced to carry out its mandated responsibilities.

These results are reflective of conversations with stakeholders in New York and abroad, which underscored that the United Nations has an unparalleled comparative advantage in norm development. The emphasis of the Strategy on a comprehensive approach outlined in the four pillars has been broadly welcomed. Yet, these results mirror the concerns that have been voiced in terms of the United Nations' record on capacity building and strategic communications. Many state and nonstate partners have found the United Nations to be

too slow, bureaucratic, and dependent on cookie-cutter responses that cannot be sufficiently tailored to respond to member states' capacity-building needs.

There is some disagreement about the degree of concern and the nature of the response needed to address concerns. Two distinct views of the United Nations' achievements and roles to date were voiced.

On one hand was what may be described as a status quo reaction, with a relatively upbeat assessment of the United Nations' performance on counterterrorism over the past decade. Proponents of this view cited numerous normative achievements in the past few years, including firmer commitments on sanctions against ISIL and the highlighting of issues such as ICTs, gender, and prevention in shaping the response to terrorism. A number of member states welcomed efforts to ensure a balanced implementation of the Strategy, seeing it as a counterweight to what they perceived as a disproportionate emphasis on prevention, human rights, and governance. Alternatively, others considered the emphasis on PVE as a potential means of constraining the range of options available in the counterterrorism tool kit. Few expressed satisfaction with the counterterrorism architecture, but this group was more optimistic that minor adaptations to the architecture or working methods could address some of the systemic shortfalls they cited.

On the other hand were those with a more revolutionary instinct based on a rather negative view of the United Nations' record and capacity to deliver on contemporary counterterrorism needs and a desire for a structural overhaul of the current counterterrorism architecture. There were persistent concerns about coordination and related issues, such as bureaucratic turf battles and a lack of transparency and information sharing. Despite UN briefings held in Turtle Bay, several member state officials expressed that this was insufficient in allowing them a closer understanding

of current and potential activities, impact, and opportunities. At the same time, many acknowledged that member states need to be more proactive in seeking information, investing resources to engage the United Nations on counterterrorism, and resourcing activities aligned with their priorities.

Several member state representatives, experts, and civil society actors noted that although an increasing number of UN entities undertook a proliferation of activity and outreach, there was no “captain of the ship.” There was no “maestro” to “make the various parts work in harmony” and no focal point for governments or other partners through which to engage the system. The lack of a strong focal point inhibits the United Nations from playing a strong role in informing multilateral responses to a range of conflicts in the Middle East, West Africa, and the Horn of Africa, for example, which are complicated by violent extremist groups and ideologies.

Respondents indicated that this challenge is not only external but also internal. Beyond the roles of norm development and capacity building, the United Nations is engaged in a range of activities through its peace operations, country teams, and humanitarian activities where there appears to be a need for dedicated senior leadership to support coordination, mobilize resources, and spearhead strategic analysis to shape UN

responses and actions in these environments. Member states frustrated with the United Nations’ pace and response have expressed their concerns by investing in alternative platforms such as the GCTF, via bilateral support, or by providing resources to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) unhampered by the bureaucratic inertia that often accompanies UN implementation efforts. Although this had given rise to discussions about the prospect of a senior coordinator, notably during the 2012 review of the Strategy, there appears to be a greater urgency about the question due to the nature of the threat, the greater number of countries impacted, the engagement of a broader range of UN entities on this issue, and increasingly limited resources due to financial crises and competing needs, even among traditional donors.

Beyond the “status quo” and “revolutionary” viewpoints, some interlocutors expressed frustration about whether there is any scope for the United Nations to play more than a normative role if 10 years after the adoption of the Strategy these persistent concerns cannot be resolved. Concerns about the limited UN ability to change state behaviors that may contribute to creating conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, engage subnational and nongovernmental partners who are increasingly critical to prevention efforts, or implement large-scale programming give rise to this view.



## REFLECTING ON PREVIOUS REVIEWS OF THE STRATEGY

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The Global Center's past reports have advanced one central argument: the United Nations and its partners should take steps to optimize the comparative advantages of the organization in the field of counterterrorism. The United Nations has a unique role as a strategic leader, including as a norm-setter; as a convener; as a provider and facilitator of capacity-building assistance; and as a global monitor assessing priorities, trends, and needs. To leverage these attributes, the Global Center reports have made 61 recommendations, which can be grouped in three broad categories.

- The substance of the UN response, i.e., the normative content or coverage of counterterrorism measures advanced through the United Nations—the “ends” of UN engagement in the field.
- The process through which the United Nations has proposed to deliver its substantive mandates, i.e., the internal administrative and organizational arrangements necessary to put into practice the UN counterterrorism program—the means to the aforementioned ends.
- Outreach, i.e., efforts to communicate with and engage external stakeholders to position the United Nations as a strategic leader in the field.

Regarding substance, the Global Center's 2014 assessment noted that the “signature achievement of the United Nations has been to elaborate principles and norms to inform counterterrorism measures at the international, regional, and national levels.”<sup>31</sup> That statement reflected prior assessments that generally argued that actors across the UN system have gotten the substance of counterterrorism about right. For example, the Strategy was an explicit attempt to broaden the scope of multilateral counterterrorism to put human rights, the rule of law, and measures to address conditions conducive to terrorism on an equal footing with more conventional counterterrorism

responses. In this regard, it was a document ahead of its time. Although it is cliché to say that the threat of violent extremism and terrorism has continued to evolve, UN norm-setters have proven responsive to such dynamics.

In each of the Global Center's past assessments, there have been far more recommendations about the process of delivering mandates—the means to agreed-on ends—than about anything else. The internal administration and organization of the UN counterterrorism program have been perceived to face persistent challenges, yielding repeated calls for greater integration. Several specific themes have appeared consistently, including (1) the need to clarify the mandates and roles of the various UN counterterrorism bodies in general (e.g., the UNCCT) and regarding certain issues, such as CTED's role on prevention and monitoring; (2) the relevance of the UN field presences (e.g., peacekeeping and political missions and field offices of the specialized agencies) to the UN counterterrorism program as sources of information about threats, sites for liaison officers or secondees from the counterterrorism bodies, and partners in implementation; and (3) the importance of clarifying the relationship between UN counterterrorism actors, including the UNCCT, and others that have entered the field, especially the GCTF.

On the issue of outreach, past assessments suggested that there is untapped potential for the United Nations to position itself as a leader in the field through strategic communications, as well as more straightforward information dissemination, for internal and external audiences.

Many of these recommendations have informed multilateral and national initiatives, and a number of them remain relevant today and can be adapted to strengthening UN counterterrorism efforts in the contemporary environment.

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31 Fink et al., “Blue Sky II,” p. v.



## THE 2016 REVIEW

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The 10th anniversary of the Strategy in the early summer of 2016 provided an important opportunity to review and take stock of a decade of activity in which counterterrorism-focused entities and activities have proliferated and to reflect on some difficult choices that may be necessary to sharpen and enhance the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations in the next decade. To that end, there are four key thematic areas for member state attention, and this report offers a number of recommendations to help realize them.

### Substance

**Adopt realistic expectations about how and where the United Nations can contribute to international counterterrorism efforts, and identify and resource comparative advantages.** The United Nations will not have a comparative advantage in all aspects of counterterrorism work. It will be critical to identify key areas in which it has an advantage. As many member states and UN officials have underscored, these advantages are in norm development, in the undertaking of assessments and the identification of national and regional capacity-building needs, and in awareness raising regarding emerging issues related to terrorism, including the role of issues and constituencies that are central to the success of P/CVE. For example, the United Nations has been positively regarded in ICTs, the roles of women in terrorism and counterterrorism, and the roles of judges and criminal justice officials in advancing rule of law–based counterterrorism efforts. The Strategy review provides an important opportunity to reaffirm the comprehensive UN approach to terrorism and identify a selection of priority areas of work.

**Preserve and strengthen the consensus around the Strategy.** Retaining the consensus around the Strategy is important to maintaining the normative platform for much international action. As a statement of core

principles and values, it can continue to be the normative keystone of UN counterterrorism efforts even as implementation plans and related activities adapt to face new and evolving circumstances. Emerging issues such as FTFs, gender, and ICTs can be integrated into the resolution adopted following the review.

**Mandate evaluations of UN counterterrorism activities, adopt an honest lessons-learned approach, and invest in scaling up programs where suitable.** UN counterterrorism activities have provided important openings for targeted pilot activities and context-specific contributions, rather than large-scale programming. Although evaluating prevention measures can be challenging, the CTITF could undertake an evaluation of its past activities and ensure that the findings and lessons learned shape future initiatives. Such an undertaking will increase understanding about where and how the United Nations might optimize its impact and which activities may be scaled up.

### Resources

**Resource the United Nations to follow through on priority issues.** Member states and the United Nations itself need to invest more in the policy priorities they advocate, for example through increased investment in P/CVE. In any field, be it security, development, or somewhere in the middle as P/CVE often is, the amount of resources allocated to policy development and implementation provides a strong indication of political commitment. Whether it is on a voluntary basis, urged via self-assessment, or more rigidly mandated, tracking resource allocation is the most tangible metric for gauging the extent to which aspirational support for P/CVE is leading to practical results on the ground.

Moreover, the amount of money dedicated to traditional counterterrorism is much greater than the

funds dedicated to P/CVE programming.<sup>32</sup> It is difficult to determine how many resources are dedicated to P/CVE efforts, but it is not impossible and could be done within the United Nations and by member states. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, for example, collects statistics on resource flows to developing countries and their financial investments.<sup>33</sup> In addition, it is critically important to assess the cost of allocating much larger amounts of money for kinetic counterterrorism, especially if it continues to raise legitimate questions about human rights abuses and stokes the grievances that spur terrorist recruitment.

**Adopt a common approach to P/CVE that promotes interoperability across UN entities.** Several UN entities are developing P/CVE work streams within their mandated areas of focus, with others exploring how to integrate P/CVE into their current and future work. To that end, the United Nations should encourage a common approach to counterterrorism and prevention efforts across its various entities to ensure some interoperability and foster a more collaborative and consistent approach to funding, programming, and assessment. An assessment template may be developed to offer some initial insights about the impact of P/CVE interventions.

**Invest in personnel and strategic planning.** Resourcing the United Nations on counterterrorism can take the form of staff secondments, personnel allocation, and political investment. Member states should consider secondments of technical experts to support

implementation of capacity-building efforts, whether as experts placed within the counterterrorism bodies or for specific projects. A dedicated cell for strategic planning, engaging with CTITF members in developing policies and approaches for addressing violent extremism, is critical for ensuring some systemic cohesion and supporting UN entities in developing their responses.

## Strategic Communication and Synergies

### **Engage with civil society and subnational partners.**

As the number of actors and organizations involved in counterterrorism and P/CVE continues to grow, it is important to develop partnerships and regularized interaction with other intergovernmental, regional and subregional, and civil society partners to try to promote information sharing and an exchange of good practices and to avoid duplication. The CTITF working group structure is one way of incorporating external partners as observers. Another idea raised that may be relevant to the contemporary environment is the creation of a civil society advisory board and the solicitation of civil society inputs during the Strategy review process.

### **Develop a more cohesive narrative about the United Nations and its work.**

An investment in strategic communication efforts regarding the United Nations is important for resourcing UN personnel and partners with important information and tools to help share and amplify the many positive and critical initiatives undertaken. Although member states may request support in this area as part of the development of national

32 For example, national security budget expert Gordon Adams estimates that the United States spends \$100 billion annually on counterterrorism efforts. See Jeanne Sahadi, "The Cost of Fighting Terrorism," CNN Money, 16 November 2015, <http://money.cnn.com/2015/11/16/news/economy/cost-of-fighting-terrorism/>. A bill in the U.S. House of Representatives authorized \$10 million annually for the Office for Countering Violent Extremism in the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal years 2016–2020. Committee on Homeland Security, Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015, H.R. Rep. No. 114-344, p. 13. The U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development "are supporting a wide range of programs and other initiatives to advance the themes of the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism . . . The United States will continue to advance ongoing and planned CVE efforts through robust programming and coordinated implementation described herein totaling approximately \$188 million." Office of the Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State, "U.S. State Department and USAID Supported Initiatives to Counter Violent Extremism," 19 February 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237647.htm>. U.S. officials stated that this money will be allocated over several years and that the overall P/CVE funds allocated per annum is considerably smaller. They suggested that it is more instructive to look at the spending by the State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, which limits its capacity-building assistance to civilian counterterrorism activities. The United States still spends a much larger amount on supporting traditional counterterrorism efforts than it does on P/CVE. U.S. officials, interviews with authors, Washington and New York, Spring 2016.

33 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Statistics on Resource Flows to Developing Countries," 22 December 2015, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/statisticsonresourceflowstodevelopingcountries.htm>.

counterterrorism or P/CVE strategies, it is important for the United Nations to enhance internal communications to support greater consistency in messaging and practice between headquarters and the field.

**Align counterterrorism actions with UN principles and norms.** Strategic communication is premised not only on deliberate messaging initiatives, but also on narratives that are developed through action. To this end, UN work in terms of peacekeeping, peace operations, conflict resolution, and peace-building plays a critical role in shaping the UN narrative in relation to P/CVE. The contributions of CTITF members in developing strategic communication will be important in presenting a whole-of-UN voice to internal and external stakeholders.

## Structure

**Enhance the counterterrorism structure to meet institutional and member state needs.** Research and interviews conducted for this report revealed the need for a single senior official empowered through the direct authority of the Secretary-General to work with the Security Council, the General Assembly, CTITF members, and UNCCT that focuses on capacity building and technical assistance. The next chapter details some more options, offering a range of perspectives on how to enhance the architecture to deliver on member states' expectations and support implementation of the Strategy, which could be considered in developing the May 2017 report for the General Assembly to consider.



## REGARDING THE COUNTERTERRORISM STRUCTURE

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The question of if or how to adapt the UN counterterrorism architecture has been repeatedly raised throughout past processes. In 2016, although some calls for changes to the architecture were put forward and encouraged, the urgency of the terrorism threat and the multiple reviews of international development, peace and security, and humanitarian approaches has contributed greater interest among member states and partners in ensuring that the incoming Secretary-General is presented with an institutional arrangement that optimizes the resources of the world body. Consequently, the Secretary-General's 2016 report on the activities of the UN system on implementation of the Strategy noted that the Secretary-General "is considering how the United Nations system could be better organized to support a more comprehensive approach" to countering terrorism and PVE. Consequently, the call for a report by May 2017 in the resultant resolution provides a critical opportunity for the UN Secretariat to present a number of concrete options to the membership and enhance the effectiveness of the UN counterterrorism architecture.<sup>34</sup>

The Global Center's 2012 report that followed the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks noted that "10 years of organic growth may require a little pruning to ensure the United Nations is best exploiting its comparative advantages."<sup>35</sup> On the issue of architectural adjustments, three options were presented regarding the establishment of a single UN counterterrorism coordinator. These options were considered before the 2012 Strategy review, but ultimately support for the position of a coordinator failed to materialize. Now, after years of piecemeal attempts

to address the challenges, pruning is not going to be enough. Some replanting will be needed. The United States, for example, noted in the debate surrounding the fifth review of the Strategy that Washington called for "the appointment of a high-ranking official who would help implement the Strategy and lead an 'all-of-United Nations' approach. In the absence of such a position, the international community's efforts would be less than the sum of its parts and Member States would face uncoordinated development of their priorities."<sup>36</sup> Canada expressed disappointment with "the lack of agreement on such areas as the role of women and youth and the way forward on reforming the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture."<sup>37</sup> India's statement also underscored that "[i]t would also be useful to have a senior official and entity to bring more focus to counterterrorism efforts, which would demonstrate a united approach to eliminating that threat."<sup>38</sup> Switzerland hoped that, "[d]uring the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, it would be important to ensure that the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture and efforts to prevent violent extremism truly addressed the needs of Member States."<sup>39</sup>

As more countries confront the challenge of terrorism and the underlying violent extremist ideologies, the task of prevention is gaining greater traction at the United Nations than ever before. The need for coordination and political engagement is even more necessary to enhance the organization's relevance and credibility and the effectiveness of its efforts to support member states and their citizens in advancing balanced implementation of the Strategy, with a greater focus on

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34 UN General Assembly, *Activities of the United Nations System in Implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/826, 12 April 2016, para. 54.

35 Cockayne et al., "Reshaping United Nations Counterterrorism Efforts," p. 36.

36 DPI, "General Assembly Adopts Resolution Affirming Importance of Balanced, Integrated Implementation of Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy," GA/11800, 1 July 2016.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

Pillars I and IV, which have often received less attention. The challenge is to ensure that any changes to the UN architecture reflect an increasingly recognized need to position prevention efforts so they get the attention and resources they deserve while reaffirming the sustainability of existing counterterrorism-focused efforts. For example, the United Kingdom noted at the Geneva conference in April 2016 that the upcoming review of the Strategy “is our opportunity to reform existing UN architecture to ensure successful PVE delivery across the whole UN system.”<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, other states have expressed concerns about the focus on PVE diluting counterterrorism activities. This does not have to be an either-or proposition. PVE is an essential element of a comprehensive strategic UN approach that must encourage and support consistent emphasis across the entire Strategy. Based on the research and interviews conducted for this report, a focal point with the direct authority of the Secretary-General, empowered to work with the Security Council and the General Assembly, CTITF members, and the UNCCT on the delivery of a more cohesive and collaborative response to terrorism that incorporates elements of all four pillars of the Strategy, including PVE, clearly would advance the effectiveness of the United Nations in supporting member states.

A key issue is addressing the challenge the United Nations and member states face in balancing the need to respond to near-term crises while maintaining the longer-term focus and investment required to prevent violent extremism and terrorism. This is a challenge that the United Nations faces across its peace and security work and that was highlighted during the high-level debate organized by the President of the General Assembly in May 2016. Thus, the ideal candidate should have experience in development and security. In addition, a commitment to human rights will be key to advancing implementation across all four pillars.

Below are two core options for consideration, followed by recommendations that could inform the discussions in the spring of 2017.

### **Option 1: Appoint a coordinator for Strategic Counter-Terrorism at the Under-Secretary-General level, mandated to enhance balanced implementation across all four pillars of the Strategy.**

The establishment of such a position would create the post of a single senior official with a dedicated mandate to chair, coordinate, and serve as a spokesperson for the entire United Nations and give direction to a strategic planning cell to foster cohesion across UN counterterrorism efforts. As Chair of the CTITF and supported by the CTITF Office, this Under-Secretary-General would provide clearer strategic leadership for the UN system on countering terrorism and PVE, particularly regarding internal cross-agency coordination and field-headquarters cooperation, with a dedicated, full-time focus; a mandated authority to engage principals and senior government representatives; and an ability to mobilize resources. An appointment at the level of Under-Secretary-General would ensure parity with heads of UN agencies and senior political partners in member states and position the coordinator to lead on strategic policy planning, outreach, and communications, as well as resource mobilization. Although some suggestions have been made for such a post at an Assistant Secretary-General level, that poses a risk of perpetuating some of the systemic challenges and would not achieve the benefits listed above. This could be done in one of two ways.

#### **1A. An independent coordinator at the level of Under-Secretary-General could be appointed**

40 UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, “UK Statement at the UN Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism,” 8 April 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/uk-statement-at-the-un-conference-on-the-prevention-of-violent-extremism-8-april-2016>.



**as a stand-alone entity or a satellite to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.**

Both the UNCCT and CTITF Office could be moved into the new entity, with the CTITF Office headed by a Director and a Managing Director of the UNCCT appointed at the Director level. The Working Group on Preventing Violent Extremism could support the coordinator in advancing the recommendations in the plan of action and for linking key UN entities engaged in the field, as well as offer inputs for strategic policy guidance. This option would also likely require the appointment of additional administrative staff and political affairs officers. **Estimated cost: \$2 million.**<sup>41</sup>

**1B. An Under-Secretary-General could be appointed within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.** The CTITF Office, with its regular budget staff, could move with a coordinator and serve as a secretariat, managed by a Director at the D1 level and responsible for the management and oversight of the CTITF Office and the working groups and supporting coordination efforts.

The UNCCT could remain in the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) or become its own entity, managed by a Director at the D2 level and mandated to focus on resource mobilization. If the UNCCT remains within the DPA, no additional costs or personnel will likely be required.

Under this option, the changes will draw primarily on existing posts, requiring only the salary for the coordinator and possibly one or two small additions to the existing personnel budget. **Estimated cost: \$0.9–1.1 million.**<sup>42</sup>

Regardless of the location of the Under-Secretary-General within UN headquarters, the position would need to be responsible for the following critical tasks: chairing the CTITF; streamlining capacity building; briefing member states, the United Nations, and external partners; handling strategic communications; and coordinating resource mobilization.

**WORKING WITH CTED**

The CTED Executive Director would maintain existing responsibilities and assume the responsibility of becoming CTITF Vice Chair. Drawing on the work that CTED is already doing to compile its global survey of the implementation by member states of Resolution 1373,<sup>43</sup> the executive director would work with the Under-Secretary-General to develop specific recommendations and capacity-building priorities for the UNCCT Advisory Board to consider twice a year, drawn from the country assessments and visits conducted by CTED.

CTED should also continue to assist the CTC in responding to recently emerging issues, such as the phenomenon of FTFs, gender, youth, and P/CVE in Resolutions 2178, 2242, 2250, and 2253, respectively. CTED could present a plan to adapt its staffing in order to continue assisting the CTC, as mandated under Resolution 1535, and incorporate more flexible analytical capacities in 2016. Furthermore, the shift to a broader strategic view of counterterrorism by the United Nations in 2016 will make it critical to ensure a strong partnership between CTED and the coordinator's office, for example, through a dedicated liaison officer to inform strategic planning and coordination.

41 This estimate is for the first full year and is based on adding an Under-Secretary-General salary with an upgrade for one Director at the D2 level to Assistant Secretary-General (approximately \$320,000) and \$1.5–1.7 million for the Under-Secretary-General and three to five special assistants or political affairs staff.

42 The costs of this option would entail the new Under-Secretary-General role with cost savings realized by having two Director positions at the D1 level instead of a single Director at the D2 level, for a total of approximately \$1.4 million.

43 UN Security Council, "Letter Dated 18 January 2016 From the Chair of the Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1373 (2001) Concerning Counter-Terrorism Addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2016/49, 20 January 2016.

#### *WORKING WITH THE CTITF OFFICE DIRECTOR*

The coordinator would work with the Director of the CTITF Office to advance coordination among task force members and advance implementation of the Strategy. As part of this role, the coordinator could encourage members to provide recommendations on capacity-building priorities that are balanced and comprehensive, covering all four pillars of the Strategy, which could be shared with the UNCCT Advisory Board.

#### *WORKING WITH A UNCCT DIRECTOR*

Currently, the CTITF and UNCCT are directed by a single person within the DPA. Several people indicated in interviews that they are confused about the roles of the CTITF and UNCCT. Having a separate director would ensure the necessary attention to the work of the UNCCT and that UNCCT work is streamlined. This would allow the CTITF Office to focus on its coordination function and support the new Under-Secretary-General in his or her role as the chair of the CTITF. The new Director of the UNCCT would focus on the stated core UNCCT objectives to buttress Strategy implementation through the development of national and regional Strategy implementation plans; foster cooperation with and between other centers at the national, regional, and international levels; and focus on building capacity of member states. The latter would benefit from information that the UNCCT would receive on capacity-building priorities that would be submitted for approval by the UNCCT Advisory Board.

Guided by the coordinator, the CTITF would be tasked with developing prioritized recommendations for capacity-building projects to help ensure that Strategy implementation is balanced across all four pillars. The CTITF should also provide information to partners such as the GCTF, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and individual member states, as

well as regional and subregional bodies supporting capacity-building efforts, to help identify funding for priorities that the UNCCT may not be able to support in any given grant cycle.

#### **Option 2: Appoint an Under-Secretary-General for the Preventing and Countering of Transnational Threats, with a supporting office.**

Given the cross-cutting nature of prevention and the links that exist between threats ranging from drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime to terrorism, insurgency, and other forms of instability, this recommendation is carried over from the Global Center's 2012 report. This option would focus on the complex challenge of addressing the threats of the next 10 years, not the last 10 years. It would likely require new resources to create a larger office able to (1) service the CTITF and the new Task Force on Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime; (2) mainstream analysis of PVE and counterterrorism efforts, as well as how these relate to responses to other transnational threats, into integrated mission planning processes and conflict reporting to the Security Council; and (3) drive integration of transnational threat analysis, including prevention of violent extremism, into UN operations in the field. This would require substantial new resources or the pooling of existing resources from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, DPA, DPKO, and UN counterterrorism bodies, but it would help to provide for a more holistic approach. **No cost estimated.**

In the event that no agreement can be reached on these options in the short term, the Secretary-General could appoint an independent expert (individual or team) or member state facilitators to lead the development of a plan for the institutional arrangements to be presented to member states for their consideration in September 2017. The Secretary-General should work

with one or two Permanent Representatives to cochair this process with the aim of providing guidance for the creation of a single coordinator at the Under-Secretary-General level that would be put in place by the General Assembly in 2017 and fully operational by the 2018 review at the latest.<sup>44</sup>

This would allow for a new appointment under the incoming Secretary-General that is informed by the deliberation and findings of key stakeholders. At

the same time, however, there is a risk that the more sequenced approach fails to deliver an effective multi-lateral response to member state concerns regarding terrorism and violent extremism. Leaving the post vacant also means there will be no dedicated senior leadership in place to inform and contribute to broader discussions about the UN peace and security architecture and ensure that the world body is capacitated to respond effectively to the challenge.

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44 This was done in the area of humanitarian assistance in 2006 and 2007. For the findings of that work, see "Mandate Review: 'Effective Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance,'" n.d., <http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/issues/resolutions/PreliminaryAnalysis.pdf>.



## REFLECTING ON THE 2016 STRATEGY REVIEW OUTCOME

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As member states gathered to negotiate the resolution marking the outcome of the 2016 review, the complexity and range of perceptions and priorities became clearer. Some suggested that procedural issues, such as the late appointment of cofacilitators and the relatively short negotiation period that followed, alongside unresolved differences regarding the plan of action and perceptions that it was not developed through a consultative process, contributed to an outcome that was less than optimal. Moreover, the negotiations underscored the complexities that exist in translating a notional strategy into practice.

Some states championed prevention and intensely advocated for a more articulated approach that included architectural changes, but others were wary of the PVE agenda and its potential to shine a light on sensitive national issues relating to governance, security, rule of law, and human rights. Some raised concerns that a focus on prevention could dilute counterterrorism efforts. There was debate on the scope of the analysis of drivers in the plan of action, with some states arguing that it lacked sufficient emphasis on the impact of external dynamics and foreign policy decisions on grievances that can contribute to radicalization to violence.<sup>45</sup> As one member state representative explained, many delegations felt the development of the PVE agenda was not inclusive and that their perspectives on the drivers, as well as the solutions, were not reflected in the plan of action or the Secretary-General's report, contributing to their concerns about the review. Moreover, it was underscored,

unresolved concerns regarding PVE were also a factor in their resistance to the appointment of a senior coordinator mandated to advance an agenda with which they continued to have differences.<sup>46</sup> These debates were notably out of sync with the emphasis placed on strengthening prevention capacities and responses, sustaining peace, seeking political resolutions, and forging people-centric responses underscored in the three systemic reviews undertaken in 2015.<sup>47</sup> The heightened sensitivities in discussions on PVE and preventive approaches to terrorism served to highlight the intensely politicized nature of the multilateral counterterrorism debate, where high sovereign walls and the emphasis on security-centric responses continue to define many national preferences.<sup>48</sup>

Member states, however, are not the only ones concerned about the lack of clarity regarding P/CVE, and the proliferation of activity being undertaken without this clarification has boosted skepticism among a number of civil society actors. Richard Atwood of the International Crisis Group voiced concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the terminology and causal drivers of violent extremism and cautioned that the Secretary-General's plan of action "muddles the underlying causes of those wars with the dynamics that enable extremists to gain force within them. This makes for a confusing mix in which almost any source of instability can lead to extremism. Indirectly, of course, this might be true: Fragility leads to conflict that opens doors for extremists. But it makes for an agenda so expansive that it risks offering everything

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45 Notably, the final outcome text included reference to these issues, for example, when "[r]eaffirming Member States' determination to continue to do all they can to resolve conflict, end foreign occupation, confront oppression, eradicate poverty, promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development, global prosperity, good governance, human rights for all and the rule of law, improve intercultural understanding and ensure respect for all religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures" and urging "Member States to ensure that any measures taken or means employed to counter terrorism, including the use of remotely piloted aircraft, comply with their obligations under international law, including the Charter, human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction and proportionality." UN General Assembly, A/RES/70/291, 1 July 2016.

46 UN Member state representative, discussions with authors, New York, August 2016.

47 June 2015 HIPPO report; UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*, 2015, <http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf>; UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/70/674, 24 December 2015.

48 This is underscored in the HIPPO, peace-building, and Resolution 1325 reports, but also notably integrated into the UN Secretariat's work, as noted in the DPA's strategic planning for the coming years.

but nothing.<sup>49</sup> Naz Modirzadeh, founding director of the Harvard Law School Program on International Law and Armed Conflict, similarly cautions that the plan risks diverting resources toward prescriptions based on a weak diagnosis and generating responses that could stigmatize communities and further exacerbate grievances.<sup>50</sup>

Nonetheless, the increased emphasis on prevention in the outcome document, which welcomed the plan of action and recognized the Geneva conference in April 2016, creates an important opportunity to enhance preventive approaches across various entities, many of which have been initiating their own programmatic and policy responses. For example, in January 2016, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) finalized its strategy on PVE, which focuses on a development response for addressing radicalization and violent extremism. Following on that, UNDP is developing and implementing a global program on PVE, which includes a grants mechanism targeting a group of 25–30 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Examples of specific country-level interventions include social cohesion programming in Pakistan and reintegration of prisoners and former combatants in Somalia. The newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 16, provide further opportunities for UNDP and other development actors to strengthen and expand development-focused efforts to prevent violent extremism. In November 2015, member states of the UN Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted a landmark decision to enhance its capacity to provide assistance to states as they develop and improve their strategies to prevent violent extremism. UNESCO also produced “A Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism” with a second guidance document to be released in September 2016.<sup>51</sup> The teacher’s guide constitutes UNESCO’s first contribution to the implementation of the Secretary-General’s plan of action as it relates to the education sector. UN Women, having spearheaded the study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 and building on the adoption of Resolution 2242, is an increasingly active member of the CTITF, co-chairing the new working group on gender and developing a global program of research and interventions that complement ongoing country-level initiatives. In addition, CTED is increasingly focusing on CVE and preventive efforts, for example by advancing implementation of Resolution 1624 and relevant portions of Resolutions 2178 and 2242.<sup>52</sup>

Within the DPKO, which has now developed an overarching departmental policy and is initiating research into its application on programming, the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions has been proactive in integrating the Strategy into its field-based activities.<sup>53</sup> The office’s focus has been on serving as a counterterrorism capacity-building provider in areas of police; justice; corrections; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; security sector reform; border management; and mine action, where it deems that host government requests for such assistance falls within its mandate.

49 Atwood, “Dangers Lurking in the U.N.’s New Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism.”

50 Naz Modirzadeh, “If It’s Broke, Don’t Make It Worse: A Critique of the U.N. Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism,” *Lawfare*, 23 January 2016, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/if-its-broke-dont-make-it-worse-critique-un-secretary-generals-plan-action-prevent-violent-extremism>.

51 “UNESCO Launches Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism,” 4 May 2016, <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-launches-teachers-guide-prevention-violent-extremism>.

52 For example, paragraphs 15 through 19 of Resolution 2178 focus on CVE to prevent terrorism. Additionally, paragraph 11 of Resolution 2242 “encourages the CTC and CTED to hold further consultations with women and women’s organizations to help inform their work” and further encourages the CTITF “to take the same approach in activities within its mandate,” while paragraph 12 requests CTED to work with UN Women to, *inter alia*, “conduct and gather gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women’s human rights and women’s organizations.”

53 This followed the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2195, which “[c]alls on relevant entities of the United Nations and other relevant international and regional organizations to support the development and strengthening of the capacities of national and regional institutions to address terrorism benefitting from transnational organized crime, in particular law enforcement and counter-terrorism agencies, and in this regard notes the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, in accordance with its mandate.” UN Security Council, S/RES/2195, 19 December 2014, para. 16.

The 2016 review incorporates a number of new issues introduced by member states to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant to current priorities and the evolving counterterrorism landscape. This is particularly notable when comparing specific areas of the 2016 outcome resolution to those of 2012 and 2014.

- **FTFs:** The 2014 review was the first to reflect the growing concern regarding this issue, encapsulated in the adoption of Resolution 2178 in September of that year. The 2016 review continues to highlight the issue, with references made to the importance of using technology and social media to prevent young people from joining a terrorist group.
- **The role of women:** In 2012 the topics of gender and the role of women were not mentioned, and the 2014 review sparsely incorporated the role of women by suggesting the participation of women and their active role in prevention and counterterrorism efforts. The 2016 review reflects through its precise language the greater sentiment of the importance of women's equal participation in counterterrorism efforts. The implementation study on Resolution 1325, published in 2015, underscored the impact of terrorism and violent extremism on women and the importance of gender equality and female involvement in these efforts.<sup>54</sup>
- **Children and youth:** Young people and children are a key focus of the 2016 review, even though they were not mentioned in 2012 or 2014. This reflects a focus of UN activities in recent years as seen in the adoption of Resolution 2250 on youth, security, and peace in December 2015 and the High-Level Thematic Conversation on Children and Youth Affected by Violent Extremism in June this year.<sup>55</sup>
- **Human rights:** The new outcome resolution has more than 20 references to human rights, with a notable emphasis placed on inclusive partnerships with civil society, stressing the need to respond to

emerging threats without compromising human rights and while protecting civil society from abuse by terrorist actors.

- **Protection of humanitarian space:** The 2012 and 2014 reviews make no mention of humanitarian space, but this year's outcome resolution asks member states to ensure that counterterrorism legislation and measures do not impede humanitarian and medical activities. This has been a key concern among those who have advocated consideration of terrorist groups as parties to a conflict in order to promote a common responsibility to abide by international humanitarian law by states and nonstate actors and also to make sure that humanitarian organizations can reach all victims, including those in areas controlled by terrorist groups. This is a key aspect for effective prevention of terrorism and violent extremism.

Additionally, the review included references to the prosecution of terrorists, financing of terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction in the context of Resolution 1540 and a first reference to small arms and improvised explosive devices, which some member states noted also bolstered the focus on Pillars II and III. From this perspective, the outcome resolution represents progress and is reflective of the broader emphasis on prevention highlighted in other systemic reviews, but these added details made it more difficult to reach consensus between member states. Moreover, the sheer magnitude of recommendations reflects the importance and efforts made to detail-oriented and inclusive approaches. The representation of the pillars as opposed to earlier years reflects that sentiment as well.<sup>56</sup> The 2016 review stands out with its precise language and multilateral approaches to prevention of violent extremism and counterterrorism efforts, sharpening the internal UN counterterrorism discourse since 2006.

<sup>54</sup> UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*.

<sup>55</sup> UN Security Council, S/RES/2250, 9 December 2015. See UN General Assembly, "High-Level Thematic Conversation on Children and Youth Affected by Violent Extremism," 3 June 2016, <http://www.un.org/pga/70/events/high-level-thematic-conversation-on-children-and-youth-affected-by-violent-extremism/>.

<sup>56</sup> See appendix.

Although recognizing many of the positive outcomes of the resolution, several states expressed disappointment that the review did not advance any architectural changes to enhance coordination, impact, and outreach, although at least five states had put forward concrete proposals for inclusion in the resolution. There was also some frustration expressed that no changes were made to the review process itself to enable a more meaningful exchange among states on experiences, good practices, and assessments. Although there was widespread consensus among many member states on the need for architectural changes, the Secretary-General made clear in a letter to the President of the General Assembly his intention to leave any structural decisions to his successor.<sup>57</sup>

The adoption of the resolution by consensus was by no means a foregone conclusion, with the Secretary-General appealing to the membership to “show the world your resolve by acting in unison and adopting a resolution by consensus.”<sup>58</sup> Following the resolution’s adoption, a number of states opted for cautious optimism, welcoming the consensus and looking to May 2017, when the membership expects a report on UN capacities to implement the resolution. Yet, others emphasized their disappointment in the process and the inability to effect architectural change, cautioning that a number of key capitals could pull back from closer engagement with the United Nations on counterterrorism in favor of bilateral relationships. Citing skepticism at the United Nations’ capacity to deliver more coordinated, cohesive, and responsive counterterrorism assistance, a number of states warned they may favor other platforms for mobilizing counterterrorism cooperation and assistance, including national partners, regional and subregional bodies, or organizations such as the GCTF.<sup>59</sup>

Yet, the anticipated May 2017 report can offer an important opportunity to revisit this critical issue and ensure that the next Secretary-General starts with a

strong, coherent, and effective counterterrorism architecture or at least puts in place a clear process toward its establishment.<sup>60</sup> Although the resolution does not explicitly discuss architectural changes, it does invite a report on UN capacities to implement the Strategy; some member states are hopeful this provides an opportunity to discuss architectural changes in that context, given the close linkage to enhancing capacities and delivery of assistance to member states. It also provides an important opportunity to consider how various elements of the United Nations can contribute to enhancing UN capacities to implement the Strategy given that so many entities are undertaking their own work in the P/CVE realm, making coordination and leadership even more critical on these issues.

Looking ahead to the period until the next review in 2018 and to the May 2017 report before that, in order for the UN “brand” to remain a critical part of international counterterrorism cooperation and prevention efforts, it will be critical to

- ensure a transparent and inclusive coordination process with key entities, which could be achieved through the Senior Action Group being developed;
- develop greater clarity and policy guidance on P/CVE programming to foster “interoperability” and a common understanding, if not definition, to align activities across silos;
- ensure that new and more P/CVE-specific programs are initiated, rather than focus on P/CVE-relevant programs that represent ongoing activities that address some conditions that may be conducive to terrorism but are not intentionally designed and implemented to focus on this issue;
- consider how the recommendations of this report might inform the May 2017 report and the 2018 review, as well as the broader UN peace and security architecture;
- make the review process more meaningful in terms of assessing implementation efforts and

57 Letter from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to President of the UN General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft, 9 June 2016 (copy on file with authors).

58 Remarks by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the General Assembly, 30 June 2016 (copy on file with authors).

59 UN member state representative, roundtable discussions at the Global Center, New York, June 2016.

60 UN member state representatives, discussions with authors, New York, June 2016.



impacts, promoting an inclusive process that can include civil society contributions and informing more strategic communication efforts to highlight UN and national counterterrorism efforts; and

- evaluate honestly UN strengths (convening power, universality, and normative contributions) and weaknesses (coordination, transparency, and capacity building) so that money can be invested with a clearer understanding of the rate of return.



## CONCLUSION

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Throughout its 70-year history, the United Nations has been working on development, education, conflict prevention, and other fields that are now acknowledged as essential ingredients for P/CVE. The need for a broader whole-of-UN approach on prevention that also addresses the structural issues that would need to be in place to provide system-wide coordination has been highlighted by government and UN officials, as well as external partners. This approach is briefly offered in the second option above, but it would be costly and would require some wholesale changes that would be difficult and very unlikely to materialize in the short term.

The key to implementing impactful and sustainable preventive efforts will be to understand that such measures take time to develop in national capitals and at the community level. This will require leadership that has the credibility to work with member states, as well as UN colleagues and external partners, effectively. It will need the discipline to resist political pressure to get involved in near-term crisis situations that distract from attaining longer-term goals. This approach is at the heart of the comprehensive approach outlined in the Strategy and reflected in the ideas set out in the PVE plan of action.

It is not only essential to the success of multilateral counterterrorism and P/CVE efforts, but also to ensuring the relevance and credibility of the world body as

states and citizens grapple with the need to preserve international peace and security, promote inclusive and tolerant societies, and reaffirm their commitment to the norms outlined in the UN Charter. The failure of the United Nations to adapt its institutional structures to deal with the growing scale and importance of the threat of terrorism and violent extremism has caused states to seek alternatives for pursuing cooperative action to address the threat. The 2011 establishment of the GCTF as a platform for developing good practices that inform targeted capacity building is a case in point. Another is the support of more than 100 leaders attending the U.S. White House CVE summit process, where strong, unqualified support was offered for an agenda almost identical to the Secretary-General's plan of action. Furthermore, NGOs are providing analysis and delivering capacity that is more incisive and timely and adds more value than the United Nations on many counterterrorism and CVE issues. The benefits of the United Nations remain clear when it can help to garner consensus around issues and develop useful norms, but the lack of coherence, internal turf battles, opacity of process, and inability to translate words into action is making it difficult for a growing number of member states to invest their time and effort into the United Nations' counterterrorism program. Simply put, more viable options are emerging outside the United Nations and proving themselves at a time when patience is wearing thin with the United Nations in the face of a mounting threat to peace and security.



## APPENDIX

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**A**s part of the data collection to inform the analysis of this report, the Global Center developed a brief, informal survey to gain perspectives from international and national stakeholders, UN officials, and civil society representatives on how they perceive the United Nations in efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

The survey, comprised of 10 questions, was anonymous except for respondents' affiliation: international or intergovernmental organizations, national governments, or civil society. We collected approximately 70 responses. More than 50 percent of the respondents were from civil society, followed by multilateral organizations (26 percent) and governments (17 percent).

The results offer an initial snapshot of some key perceptions and some useful trends.

1. There was overwhelming agreement (more than 65 percent) that the United Nations has made a positive contribution to global efforts in responding to terrorism and violent extremism.
2. Sixty percent, however, felt that UN efforts do not sufficiently reflect inputs from the rest of the UN system, including funds, agencies, and programs, indicating a continuing challenge that the world body faces in engaging civil society and external partners.
3. Interestingly, when asked if the United Nations has the necessary analytical, normative, and political resources to respond to contemporary security challenges, responses were almost evenly split—52 percent felt the United Nations is appropriately resourced, while 48 percent disagreed.
4. More than 70 percent felt that UN member states have not made effective use of the United Nations in counterterrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts. This is a critical point for consideration over the next decade as member states confront complex security threats with more limited resources.
5. Asked what primary role they saw for the United Nations in counterterrorism and CVE in the coming decade, more than 55 percent felt that the United Nations is best placed to play a normative role, while 39 percent believe it should play an operational role.
6. Relatedly, 37 percent felt that the United Nations is most effective as a convener, while 39 percent felt that the United Nations was least effective in capacity-building efforts.
7. Sixty-three percent felt that the United Nations is not sufficiently engaging with civil society or encouraging its member states to do so as a part of its counterterrorism and CVE efforts.





The Global Center works with governments, international organizations, and civil society to develop and implement comprehensive and sustainable responses to complex international security challenges through collaborative policy research, context-sensitive programming, and capacity development. In collaboration with a global network of expert practitioners and partner organizations, the Global Center fosters stronger multilateral partnerships and convenes key stakeholders to support integrated and inclusive security policies across national, regional, and global levels.

The Global Center focuses on four thematic areas of programming and engagement:

- multilateral security policy
- countering violent extremism
- criminal justice and the rule of law
- financial integrity and inclusion

Across these areas, the Global Center prioritizes partnerships with national and regional stakeholders and works to ensure respect for human rights and empower those affected by transnational violence and criminality to inform international action.