



# **Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Counteracting Violent Extremism**

**May 2016**

# MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY KERRY

Threats from violent extremism increasingly undermine security and development around the globe. From Afghanistan to Nigeria, terrorists seek to expand their reach and resonance by exploiting ongoing conflicts and insurgency, joining forces with criminal networks, establishing safe havens in weak and repressive states, and propagating hatred via social media. Even as we work to defeat and degrade the most virulent terrorist group—Da’esh—and restrain the wanton murder, slavery, and violence it spreads, we know that its defeat on the battlefield is not enough.



*John Kerry*  
*United States Secretary of State*

At the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, President Obama called upon all nations to do more to counter violent extremism. At the World Economic Forum last year, I called on the international community, including the public and private sectors, to pursue more local solutions to this global challenge. We hosted a White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) which brought together government, private sector, and civil society leaders, sparking a range of new initiatives and regional meetings from Astana to Oslo, from Nairobi to Nouakchott. We brought this movement back to the United Nations in September at the 70th General Assembly and presented a broad-based action agenda. Building on this momentum, the UN Secretary General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, embracing the “whole of society” approach that must underpin our common effort.

Today we take another step forward. The Department of State and USAID have produced a proactive international strategy recognizing immediate needs, utilizing our strengths, and demonstrating our will to comprehensively address the challenge of violent extremism, including the root causes. Together, we are building organizational structures needed to pursue a more aggressive and integrated approach to this challenge. This is a generational struggle, but we must begin now.

Carrying forth the work of the White House CVE Summit agenda, this strategy recognizes the need to foster and empower a broad-based coalition of government and non-governmental actors to address this scourge and project a positive vision. Our strategic CVE approach positions the United States to work with partners around the globe to address an evolving threat and prevent new violent extremists from emerging. We will prevail by working together; indeed, there are roles for everyone, from religious leaders to government staff to academics, civil society, NGOs, and the private sector.

With our CVE strategy, we will deepen our understanding of the underlying dynamics feeding violent extremism and integrate a variety of efforts to blunt the spread and erode the appeal of violent extremism. We will mobilize the full range of America’s diplomatic and development tools and power to meet this challenge. We will seek additional resources from Congress to expand these efforts. And we will approach our task in a measurable and accountable way—through effective stewardship of American tax dollars to strengthen our national security, while promoting our values.

Our challenge is dynamic, but we know the power of the international community to make progress when we come together. We also know that while violent extremist ideology may be appealing to a small subset of the global population, it is an unsustainable and irreconcilable worldview that the overwhelming majority of the world rejects. By marshalling our values, our partnerships, and our resources, we will expose the lies of violent extremist ideology and provide a positive vision forward. Together, we can, and we must, send a clear signal that our future will not be defined by the agenda of terrorists.

"Building on the February 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), we will enhance U.S. counterterrorism and CVE efforts by focusing more on prevention and tackling the drivers of violent extremism, addressing what President Obama called the 'ideologies, the infrastructure of extremists — the propagandists, the recruiters, the funders who radicalize and recruit or incite people to violence."

— 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)

## INTRODUCTION

The spread of violent extremism and terrorism pose significant challenges for U.S. national security. Violent extremists speaking a variety of languages, born of many races and ethnic groups, and belonging to diverse religions continue to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize people — especially young people — to engage in terrorist acts. Their actions not only increase threats against the United States and our allies, but also undermine our efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, foster sustainable development, protect human rights, promote the rule of law and expand prosperity.

While the drivers of violent extremism vary across individuals, communities, and regions, there is commonality in the ideology and narratives employed by terrorist groups. Of particular concern, over the past two years, Da'esh has attracted tens of thousands of individuals from around the world to travel to Syria and Iraq to join their fight; while some have died or become disillusioned, others have become hardened in their commitment to violence. Terrorist groups such as al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Shabaab, and Boko Haram have also propagated violent extremism

amidst regional conflicts and state collapse. Meanwhile, individuals have been inspired by violent extremist messages and ideology to establish affiliated cells and plot violent acts within their home countries.

The United States National Security Strategy (2015) calls for a sustainable approach to combat the persistent threat of terrorism. The United States will continue to take measures and engage in collective action with responsible partners to disrupt threats against the United States and our allies. At the same time, effectively addressing these threats requires simultaneous and complementary efforts to counter and prevent the spread of violent extremism. This includes efforts to address the specific societal dynamics and drivers of radicalization to violence and counter the ideology, messaging, and recruitment methods that extremist groups and propagandists employ to attract new recruits and foment violence. It also requires proactive efforts to prevent support for violent extremism in areas where the threat is more nascent.

In February 2015, President Obama hosted a summit of government and non-governmental leaders from over 60 countries to mobilize a global effort to coun-



Leaders from around the world participate in the White House CVE Summit in February 2015.

ter and prevent the spread of violent extremism; it is an approach involving governments (national and local), multilateral bodies (international and regional), and non-government partners (civil society and the private sector). The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and the subsequent process, which included a series of regional CVE summits, generated a broad-based, multi-stakeholder CVE action agenda and new initiatives that were presented at the September 2015 Leaders' Summit to Counter Da'esh and Violent Extremism. Subsequently, the Secretary General of the United Nations presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to the UN General Assembly in January 2016, which reaffirmed and expanded upon the CVE Summit's agenda.

**Undermining our common humanity, violent extremism is inherently global. It is driven by a mixture of personal, societal, and ideational factors whose manifestations vary from one individual to the next. Violent extremism has affected different societies during different eras and in different regions of the world. The present plan of action does not provide a single solution to this challenge — there is no one tool or approach that will put it to rest forever. Instead, we need to broaden the way we think about this threat and take measures to prevent it from proliferating."**

**- UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism**

A comprehensive approach to address the drivers of violent extremism is critical to advancing the United States' national security and overall foreign policy goals. Reflecting this realization, the 2015 QDDR states that the Department of State (State) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will work to enhance, refine, and elevate ongoing CVE efforts, particularly those focused on prevention. State and USAID have different tools, approaches, and expertise to contribute to these efforts. USAID's policy, *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*, will continue to provide a broad framework for using development tools to prevent violent extremism. This strategy, which is consistent with USAID's policy, provides a more explicit guide for how State and USAID will work jointly and will leverage the range of available diplomatic and development resources to have a demonstrable impact to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremism.

## **DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING CVE**

For the purposes of this strategy, CVE refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence. This includes both disrupting the tactics used by violent extremists to attract new recruits to violence and building specific alternatives, narratives, capabilities, and resiliencies in targeted communities and populations to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violence. CVE can be a targeted component of larger efforts to promote good governance and the rule of law, respect for human rights, and sustainable, inclusive development.

Violent extremism is not necessarily tied to a particular religion, ideology, or set of political beliefs, although there is consistency in the extreme ideology propagated and exploited by various terrorist organizations including Da'esh over recent years to justify their violence. In line with the U.S. National Strategy on Counterterrorism (2011), this strategy is principally concerned with countering strands of violent extremism that fuel overseas threats against U.S. persons, allies, and interests.

To be effective, CVE efforts must be guided by ongoing research and analysis of the context, drivers, and most effective interventions against violent extremism. The nature and range of possible drivers of violent extremism can vary significantly from individual psychological factors to community and sectarian divisions and conflicts. Actions by states can serve as drivers of violent extremism, including state-sanctioned violence and heavy-handed tactics by security actors, corruption, systematic denial of fair trial guarantees, discriminatory governance practices, state propagation of religious and/or ethnic intolerance. State repression of cultural and religious expression, especially when seen as targeting a specific religion or sect, or when perceived as so entrenched that only extreme responses could make change a real possibility, can also serve as a driver of violent extremism. As evidenced in Libya, Iraq, and elsewhere, violent conflicts and the breakdown of the rule of law can fuel and enable the spread of violent extremism.

In many environments where the risk of violent extremism is high, development has failed to take root, governance is weak, access to education and training is limited, economic opportunities are few, and unemployment is high. USAID will partner with State to bring to bear its development knowledge, the analytic tools to diagnose state fragility and economic vulnerability, and insights borne of over 55 years of work in the developing world.



Kellman-Yett/USAID Photo

*Children in Chad react to a participatory theater performance as part of a USAID program to counter violent extremism.*

USAID's 2011 policy on *The Development Response to Violent Extremism*, which is informed by years of programming and analysis, and continually refined based on additional research, categorized drivers of violent extremism generally as "push" factors and "pull" factors to better tailor interventions. Push factors create the opportunities for violent extremists to gain traction. For example, they can emanate from institutional and societal failures, such as systematic and gross human rights violations, ungoverned or poorly governed spaces, political, economic or social marginalization, or endemic corruption and impunity. Such deficits —whether real or perceived, and whether experienced directly or witnessed from afar — can make individuals or entire communities vulnerable to adopting violent extremist ideology or aligning with violent extremist groups. Pull factors, in contrast, help explain how adherents to violent extremism are able to attract recruits, for example by perverting religious ideology. Pull factors appeal to people's individual aspirations, such as those for material resources, economic and/or social status, spiritual guidance and purpose, adventure, friendship, or ideology, including through the use of the Internet and social media.

2. Governments, multilateral organizations, and communities have the collective capacity to prevent and counter individuals and groups from becoming radicalized to violence.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Expand international political will, partnerships, and expertise to better understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions.** The White House CVE Summit process highlighted the need to deepen international understanding of violent extremism and mobilize global, regional, national, and local action involving governments and non-governmental actors to counter it. Building on that momentum, State will continue to promote international efforts to elevate the importance of CVE, alongside security-based counterterrorism measures, refine our understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, and expand the tools for effective CVE interventions, particularly at the local level. State and USAID will support efforts by multilateral bodies and networks — including the United Nations, Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), Hedayah, the Strong Cities Network (SCN), and the RESOLVE Network — to strengthen international CVE co-operation, understanding, and practice. USAID will also work to deepen CVE cooperation with multilateral and bilateral development partners.

## **DESIRED END STATES OF JOINT STRATEGY**

1. Violent extremist groups and individuals who would threaten U.S. citizens, our allies, and our interests are unable to attract new recruits or garner support for their operations in specific communities; and

ners, including the UN Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

2. **Encourage and assist partner governments to adopt more effective policies and approaches to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremism, including changing unhelpful practices where necessary.** Through enhanced diplomatic engagement and targeted technical support — using research to shape these efforts where possible — State and USAID will work with partner governments (both national and local) to develop strategies, policies, and programs to reduce the appeal and spread of violent extremism. The UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism calls for member states to develop national plans of action to address local drivers of violent extremism, involving a wide range of government and non-governmental actors. State will work with multilateral bodies and other relevant partners to leverage existing and develop new guidance for the implementation of effective national plans. As governments increase their understanding and commitment to CVE, they may determine that changes need to be made to some of their specific policies and approaches to security, human rights, gender, education, and development to reduce potential drivers of violent extremism. Multilateral organizations, such as UN Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNDP, the International Organization on Migration and others, are also important avenues through which we can assist governments in developing effective plans of action. In addition to encouraging and assisting governments in this area, State will also encourage countries to address the influence of individuals and institutions in their countries that are involved in propagating violent extremist ideology abroad.
3. **Employ foreign assistance tools and approaches, including development, to reduce specific political or social and economic factors that contribute to community support for violent extremism in identifiable areas or put particular segments of populations at high risk of violent extremist radicalization and recruitment to violence.** Violent extremists mobilize people by capitalizing on the grievances of those who feel underrepresented,

marginalized, and left behind or who are seeking a larger purpose as well as on structural dynamics that deny them equal participation in society, fair economic opportunity, and/or equal justice. Indeed, in today's terrorist landscape, terrorist groups often thrive in areas with limited or abusive governance, weak rule of law, high degrees of violence and corruption, and limited economic opportunity, and where civil society has limited agency or space to operate. While these structural problems often require broad and long-term solutions, intermediary and targeted steps can be taken to counter the appeal and spread of violent extremism. Working closely together, State and USAID will use foreign assistance tools, to include development programs, that target identified drivers of violent extremism in specific geographic areas or for particular segments of a population and build local capacity and strengthen community resilience to counter violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. USAID will design and implement programs aimed at increasing access to opportunity, improving local and national governance, promoting cooperation and dialogue, expanding the positive opportunities for youth in society, and mitigating conflict so as to improve the conditions and reduce the vulnerability of local communities to violent extremists. At the same time, State and USAID will work together to ensure that U.S. security assistance programming does not inadvertently exacerbate drivers of violent extremism by enabling or giving the appearance of endorsing weak or abusive governance practices.

4. **Empower and amplify locally credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideology among key demographic segments.** Violent extremists, especially Da'esh, have adopted effective on-and off-line propaganda strategies to radicalize and recruit individuals to violence. Employing public diplomacy and development tools, State and USAID will work to identify, create the space for, and build the capacity of locally influential voices across a range of engagement platforms to promote alternate visions, challenge violent extremist propaganda and dissuade individuals from traveling to conflict zones. A mix of short- and long-term strategies will be required, depending on target audience and desired outcomes. The interagency Global Engagement

Center (GEC), based at State, will lead efforts to coordinate, synchronize, empower, and enable partners' efforts, both government and non-governmental, to conduct effective communications campaigns to counter violent extremist groups, including Da'esh and al-Qa'ida. The GEC will also coordinate, with other agencies, as appropriate, the U.S. government's work with the private sector to counter the communications-related radicalization to violence and recruitment activities of international terrorist organizations and other violent extremists abroad.

5. **Strengthen the capabilities of government and non-governmental actors to isolate, intervene with, and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence.** Violent extremist radicalization can be cyclical in that individuals become radicalized, undertake violent acts, and then proceed to radicalize and entice new recruits within their communities and/or networks to violence. The cycle of violent extremist radicalization can be self-perpetuating if societies do not put in place "off-ramp" mechanisms to address it. In collaboration with relevant multilateral and bilateral partners, State will expand programs to help governments and civil society develop effective strategies and build community-based structures to (1) identify and prevent susceptible individuals from being drawn further into the cycle, and (2) assess and monitor the risk posed by violent extremist offenders, including in prisons, and support their

rehabilitation and reintegration back into society, as appropriate. This includes specialized programs to build the capacity of police, gendarmerie, prosecutors, judges, prison officials, and other criminal justice sector officials to address the life cycle of radicalization to violence in their work.

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## WAYS AND MEANS TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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State and USAID will seek to advance all five of the above strategic objectives by utilizing and integrating the U.S. government's various diplomacy, strategic communications, rule of law, and development resources and tools. Specifically, State and USAID will pursue the following:

1. **Enhancing CVE Diplomacy:** State and USAID will focus and expand diplomatic efforts with governmental, multilateral, and non-governmental actors to promote CVE cooperation and advance this strategy.
  - o **Bilateral Diplomacy:** State will expand and elevate CVE within our counterterrorism and broader diplomatic engagement with relevant partners, including key ones in the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and Africa. State will also utilize regular diplomatic engagement with traditional allies, such as G7 countries, Australia, and European partners, to promote joint efforts to advance this strategy. USAID will use its strategic dialogues with key donors, and multi-donor platforms to elevate CVE in development.



Department of State Photo

Students from Lahore University of Management Sciences are awarded the winners of the Peer-2-Peer (P2P) Challenging Violent Extremism competition, sponsored by the Department of State and Facebook, in January 2016.



*Mayors and local government leaders from around the world participate in the launch of the Strong Cities Network in New York in September 2015.*

**o Regional and Multilateral Diplomacy:**

State and USAID will continue to shape efforts by the UN, GCTF, GCERF, Hedayah, and other multilateral as well as regional fora to promote good practices, tools, and cooperation on CVE. State and USAID will promote and support implementation of the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, including through engagement with UNDP, UNESCO, and other UN agencies. State and USAID will also engage with the various multilateral development banks, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and other multilateral development partners to enhance cooperation on CVE assistance.

**o People-to-People and Public Diplomacy:**

Using people-to-people programs (e.g., the International Visitor Leadership Program and the Peer2Peer: Challenging Extremism Program) and other public diplomacy tools, State and USAID will expand engagement with sub-national authorities, especially cities, nongovernment organizations, faith leaders, the private sector, and civil society to promote CVE partnerships and initiatives. State will also support the SCN to bring together municipal and other sub-national officials to share CVE good practices and launch joint efforts. State and USAID will support regional civil society CVE platforms and other

initiatives aimed at building the capacity of women, youth, religious, and other community leaders to advance CVE objectives.

**2. Focusing CVE Strategic Communications:**

Under the leadership of the interagency GEC, State will undertake a range of strategic communications efforts to counter violent extremism. Working with other international partners, State will support efforts by the Sawab Center in the United Arab Emirates and other national and regional hubs to counter online messaging by Da'esh and other violent extremist actors. State will also work through its public affairs networks and engagement overseas to promote CVE communications and partnerships.

Specifically, the GEC will coordinate, integrate and synchronize U.S. government public communications, directed toward foreign audiences abroad, for the purposes of countering violent extremism. The GEC will identify and engage the best available talent and capabilities from the U.S. and global private sectors and elsewhere, including through public-private partnerships, to counter violent extremist narratives. The GEC will develop and guide U.S. strategic counterterrorism narratives directed at foreign audiences abroad by using rigorous research and data analysis.

**3. Expanding Rule of Law and Development Programs to Advance CVE:**

In coordination with our diplomatic efforts and working closely with international partners, State and USAID will expand and target rule of law and

development programs to address specific drivers of violent extremism and enhance CVE partnerships. Starting in FY 2017, State and USAID will request additional resources from Congress for these programs. Resources will be focused on areas where they will have the greatest sustained impact, and programming will be guided by rigorous analysis of violent extremism drivers, but also seek to innovate and learn in order to ensure our toolkit is strong. Specifically, State and USAID will focus programs on building capacity in the following areas:

#### Criminal Justice

- o **Law Enforcement:** State and USAID will enhance programs to help law enforcement officials develop positive relationships, trust, improved administration of and access to justice, and effective communications with the communities most susceptible to violent extremism. State will assist law enforcement to implement new initiatives to advance CVE, especially to disrupt the life cycle of radicalization to violence and to bridge the governance gap between police and communities. This includes developing effective tools and strategies for police-community engagement, including the identification and engagement with at risk groups.
- o **Justice Sector:** State and USAID will develop and enhance programs that utilize the full range of criminal justice tools to counter violent extremism and promote rehabilitation and reintegration where appropriate. State will increase awareness and use of alternatives to detention and incarceration that would be appropriate for low-level, first-time, non-violent offenders, including juvenile justice programs. These types of programs provide opportunities for rehabilitation, reintegration, and disengagement from radicalization. State and USAID will also continue to pursue justice sector programs that help countries establish effective legislative frameworks that can protect civil and political rights and counter violent extremism.
- o **Prisons:** State will enhance programs to help countries identify and address prison settings where active recruitment is taking place and to establish opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration. Specifically, State will design programs to help

corrections officials recognize and counter recruitment of other prisoners to violent extremism in their facilities, and to implement evidence-based prison management practices that mitigate the risk posed by imprisoned violent extremists. State will assist prison officials to develop programs and partnerships with religious, legal, and community actors aimed at providing opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration as part of the strategy to counter violent extremism.

#### *Development and Civil Society Strengthening*

- o **Local Governance and Community Resilience:** USAID will elevate efforts to build positive alternative paths and community resilience to counter violent extremism through improved local governance. USAID will promote peaceful solutions to grievances and frustrations that fuel violent extremism, such as supporting better dialogue between governments and citizens, non-violent approaches to problem-solving and expanding avenues for engagement in community decision-making. USAID will work with communities to be proactive, and create bridges between groups and amplify community characteristics that guard against infiltration by violent extremists.
- o **Educational Institutions and Service Providers:** State and USAID will work with partner organizations and multilateral institutions to enhance programs that provide educational and social service providers in key countries with tools to address drivers of violent extremism. Specifically, USAID will seek to expand education and other social service interventions to address critical gaps and advance reforms that can counter violent extremism.
- o **Civil Society and Private Sector:** State and USAID will enhance programs to empower civil society, promote broad community engagement, and expand private sector involvement for CVE. As vital partners in countering violent extremism, State and USAID will elevate their role with government partners and support their leadership and capacity development. State and USAID will emphasize work on youth, women, community and faith leaders, and the vic-



Youth leaders from around the world present a "Youth Action Agenda to Prevent Violence and Promote Peace" at the Global Youth Summit Against Violent Extremism in September 2015.

tims of violent extremism. In addition, State and USAID will support efforts to network, train, and build the capacity of civil society actors to engage in CVE efforts, including partnering with national and local governments and promoting rehabilitation and reintegration. State and USAID will also facilitate innovative initiatives with the private sector and communities to break down drivers and build viable alternatives to violence.

- o **Youth Engagement:** State and USAID will expand and enhance programs targeting youth who are identified to be at high risk of radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism. State and USAID will support programs that build a sense of belonging, community and purpose. USAID will design programs to support youth empowerment, nurture networks, skills development, and civic and economic opportunities. State and USAID also will support programs that train and mobilize youth to serve as leaders in their communities and globally in the work of CVE.
- o **Women and Gender:** State and USAID will expand programs that engage women as key stakeholders in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities. Women's groups and individual women can play a critical role in identifying and addressing drivers of violent extremism in their families, communities, and broader society. State and USAID will ensure that these programs

are informed by rigorous analysis of existing gender dynamics in communities and take into account the fact that women's perceptions of violence and security may be different than those of men in the community.

4. **Promoting Research and Learning:** State and USAID will increase support for efforts to understand overall trends of violent extremism and to identify and analyze the local geography, demography, and drivers of recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism: where the hotspots are; where and with whom terrorists are focusing their efforts; who is most susceptible; and why they may be motivated to join. State and USAID have developed assessment frameworks and programming guides related to conflict management and mitigation and political transition that are designed to identify and analyze issues related to violent extremism and radicalization to violence. Building on field presence, State and USAID will promote research and learning as part of programs. State and USAID will focus inquiries on what types of CVE interventions are most effective and on linkages with other development programming. State and USAID will support the new RESOLVE Network in its efforts to promote and enhance local research on both drivers and effective interventions. State and USAID will also coordinate with efforts by the domestic CVE Task Force, currently chaired by the Department of Homeland Security, to increase research

and learning on CVE in the domestic context.

5. **Elevating CVE within Broader U.S. Foreign Policy:** The United States will elevate CVE within U.S. counterterrorism and broader U.S. foreign policy decision-making and priority-setting. State and USAID will ensure that CVE considerations are taken into account as the United States determines measures to address immediate terrorism threats and pursues broader foreign policy challenges, including preventing conflict, promoting stability and peace in the Middle East, North Africa, and South and Central Asia, fostering sustainable development, and strengthening alliances and security cooperation with key states.

## **CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZATION**

To maximize these diplomatic, policy, and programmatic efforts and finite resources, State and USAID will set clear priorities for CVE engagement and assistance. Specifically, State and USAID will seek to focus engagement and assistance based on the following factors:

- **Extent of Threat and Risk to U.S. Interests:** We will prioritize CVE efforts to address radicalization and recruitment to violence by terrorist organizations that pose the highest level of threat and risk to the United States, U.S. persons, our allies, and other U.S. interests;
- **Potential for Emergence and Expansion of Violent Extremism:** In an effort to prevent the

emergence of violent extremism, CVE programs will prioritize areas with evidence of a high risk of deepening or expanding support for violent extremism. This will especially include areas on the periphery of current terrorist safe havens, and outside those areas in the midst of conflict;

- **Ability to Reinforce Political Will:** CVE efforts will be prioritized where governments and/or sub-national and non-governmental leaders have demonstrated strong political will to address drivers of violent extremism in a responsible manner, or where political will is lacking, but can be cultivated, and is determined to be essential to effectively counter violent extremism; and
- **Prospects for CVE Results, Impact and Innovation:** CVE efforts will be directed to countries and regions that can yield results, as well as be expanded, scaled up and/or made sustainable. We will also coordinate with and, when possible, leverage ongoing assistance by other donors.

## **MEASURING RESULTS AND EFFECTS**

State and USAID will measure progress toward achieving this strategy's objectives, developing a results framework for measuring progress. CVE programs will be measured against clearly stated objectives that are linked to the strategic objectives described above and



The "Mothers School" program brings together women in South and Central Asia to develop strategies for detecting warning signs of radicalization to violence in their communities and taking preventative measures.



Search for Common Ground Photo

*As part of a U.S.-supported early warning and early response program, community leaders from northeastern Nigeria meet to address threats from Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria.*

accompanied by clear, well-developed and resourced monitoring and evaluation plans. To the extent possible, State and USAID will develop a set of common indicators to measure outputs and outcomes across CVE assistance programs, and will evaluate the longer-term effects of CVE programming. State and USAID will continue to learn from these efforts and ensure that future efforts are guided by both qualitative and quantitative monitoring information, evidence of results and effects, and where appropriate, innovation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Secretary of State has directed the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism to guide and coordinate CVE policy, programs, and assistance for the Department. To reflect this expanded role, the Department is renaming the bureau and allocating additional staffing resources. Designating one bureau to lead these efforts will promote a more strategic, and ultimately accountable, approach to the U.S. government's efforts to counter violent extremism abroad, as well as to facilitate coordination with the GEC and the new domestic CVE Task Force. USAID, as outlined in the 2015 QDDR, is also establishing a CVE Secretariat staffed to coordinate and synchronize its efforts.

A working group of core State, USAID, and interagency stakeholders will oversee and coordinate implementation of this strategy. Based on the above criteria on

prioritization, the working group will agree upon a set of focus regions and countries for expanded, integrated CVE diplomatic engagement and programming by State and USAID. The working group will encourage and work with interested embassies and USAID missions to develop integrated CVE plans for focus regions and countries, especially to promote coordinated efforts. This will include ensuring programming is tied into the Integrated Country Strategies and the Country Development and Cooperation Strategies, as appropriate.

For example, with approximately \$19 million in anticipated Fiscal Year 2015 resources, State and USAID are pursuing a new initiative to design and implement CVE programming in East Africa through an integrated analysis and program design process. A joint State and USAID team will design programs focused on the most vulnerable communities and key drivers of radicalization through field-based assessments and carefully tailored, evidence-based approaches. State and USAID will utilize lessons learned from this approach for other regions.

Finally, in line with the above section on measuring results and effects, the working group will routinely assess progress toward implementation of this strategy, including assessing resource allocations. State and USAID will adapt implementation and make adjustments as required as the threat landscape and nature of violent extremism evolves. The working group will review this strategy every two years, and update as necessary.