

**UNDP Crisis Bureau**

## **Annual Report on Prevention of Violent Extremism**

### **Areas of PVE programming**



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## About the UNDP Crisis Bureau and PVE

The UNDP Crisis Bureau (CB) is responsible for UNDP's corporate crisis-related work and drives UNDP's vision and priorities for peacebuilding and crisis prevention, response, and recovery. Together with the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), the CB anchors the Global Policy Network (GPN), a network of global experts and practitioners providing timely development advice, delivering support to Country Offices and programme countries in a coherent manner – to connect countries to the world of knowledge, resources and networks of best practice they need to achieve development breakthroughs. In 2020, UNDP launched its new Global Programme '*Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions 2020-2022*' with four interconnected thematic work streams, 1) Conflict prevention and Peacebuilding; 2) Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE); 3) Core government functions, including local governance; and 4) Climate Security.

UNDP designs and implements risk informed, conflict sensitive and analysis-based development solutions for prevention of violent extremism at the global, regional and country levels, to meet the priorities set out in the [Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism](#), [UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy](#), UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and through participation in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

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## Introduction

UNDP contributes to the implementation of the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (pillars 1 and 4), as well as other UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions by supporting development solutions that target the root causes and structural drivers of violent extremism. The focus of UNDP's preventive approach is to look at the relationship between peaceful societies and inclusive development, rule of law and human rights, anti-corruption, good governance, civic engagement and political participation, and to address the horizontal inequalities that fuel radicalisation that can lead to violent extremism. In doing so, UNDP supports national state and not-state actors, including women, youth, religious leaders and their organizations as champions in Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) and helps create the opportunities for their active participation in PVE through building social cohesion at the community level.

This *2020 Annual Report on Prevention of Violent Extremism* covers the key results of UNDP's Crisis Bureau and initiatives supported through the Bureau. It presents an overview of the new frontiers, the partnerships through which results are achieved and the efforts to enhance approaches through learning. With this focus on Crisis Bureau-led and supported initiatives, the report does not attempt to encompass the results achieved through UNDP's regional, cross-border and national projects on prevention of violent extremism implemented across 40 countries in 2020. The report does make references to specific projects and highlight initiatives across UNDP's portfolio that showcase the experiences on the ground.

2020 was a year out of the ordinary and the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges for development and peacebuilding work across the world. Governments introduced restrictive measures to handle the pandemic with deteriorative effects on democracy and human rights in 80 countries according to an October 2020 Freedom House report.<sup>1</sup> The long-term effects of lockdown, curfews and disruptions on personal and professional life are yet to be seen but people across the world have been impacted by challenges in service delivery, experienced increasing stress and restrictions on livelihoods, mental health, economics, leisure time and education, whilst being subject to hate speech and misinformation.

In this shifting context, UNDP's work in PVE has continued with thorough consideration of new risk factors and implementation of mitigation measures. In some ways, these new challenges have presented an avenue for testing the use of online platforms and technologies in PVE programming on a different scale than before. Despite the underlying sensitivities of PVE programming, the experience so far suggests that shifting face-to-face activities to virtual spaces is possible and does allow for some positive opportunities such as increasing the number of people reached compared to offline activities. On the other hand, the use of the internet by extremist groups continues to grow and spread into new corners of the web, increasing the demand for UNDP to assess and address the online threat through social media monitoring and sentiment analysis. To this aim, an important priority for UNDP in 2020 was

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom House (2020). Democracy under Lockdown - The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Freedom. 2 October. <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-democracy-under-lockdown-impact-covid-19-global-freedom>

to expand our partnerships, knowledge exchange and available tools to foster capacities on analysis, early warning and application of these in PVE programming.

Promoting and pioneering new frontiers was one of the headlines of UNDP's work on PVE in 2020. On Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), UNDP initiated a mapping of components related to PVE, whilst also becoming a strong advocate for MHPSS integration in peacebuilding more broadly. In promoting risk-sensitive approaches and evidence-based programming, UNDP has substantially expanded capacities to apply behavioural sciences in PVE programming at global, regional and local level through capacity building, establishment of partnerships and through conducting country specific experiments. This work contributes to the ongoing efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, measurable impacts and risk management for PVE to ensure that our programmes are rooted in and uphold human rights principles.

Consolidating UNDP's Community of Practice on PVE has been another important priority supporting the establishment of programmatic objectives through enhanced knowledge exchange, communication and collaboration across the global, regional and country levels. In particular, UNDP hosted 14 PVE Practitioner Sessions on a range of topics, including behavioural science, MHPSS and Covid-19, related to thematic priorities, engaging a total of 1100 people from across the world.

A 2020 Stocktaking report outlined the PVE landscape in UNDP in both qualitative and quantitative terms and coupled with an enhanced knowledge management system, the PVE portfolio is well defined in qualitative and quantitative terms. UNDP implements PVE programming in 40 countries<sup>2</sup> through a portfolio consisting of a global programme, regional programmes covering Asia Pacific, Central Asia, Africa and Arab States, cross-border and country projects.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2020, UNDP implemented PVE programming in 40 countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan.



*Figure 1. Percentage of UNDP's PVE projects covering different thematic areas.  
Source: 2020 PVE Stocktaking report.*

National PVE projects continued to support national and local stakeholders to develop and implement PVE National Action Plans (NAPs) and programmes aimed to prevent violent extremism, hate speech and promote respect for diversity. These are efforts towards implementing the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy Pillars 1 on 'addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and Pillar 4 on 'ensuring human rights and the rule of law', and to avoid the risk of using only securitized approaches which are not enough to prevent terrorism and extremism in all its forms, including violent extremism.

In 2020, the UNDP Crisis Bureau provided platforms for demonstrating the work of the Country Offices (COs), convened knowledge sharing discussions, and provided both technical and financial support. Through overall coordination efforts, both technical and financial support was provided to five countries in Central Asia through the implementation of the joint UNOCT-UNODC-UNDP EU-funded STRIVE Asia project.

At the end of 2020, we look back at a year which in many ways was marked by isolation and distance, but which really brought together the global PVE practice as a community for driving the agenda forward at policy and programme level. This report demonstrates the key results that were achieved.

## Pioneering New Frontiers for PVE

### Integrating Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in PVE and Peacebuilding

Mental health and psychosocial wellbeing play a key role throughout radicalisation processes to prevent engagement with violent extremist groups, and during reintegration and rehabilitation of individuals and families back into their communities. However, the causal relationship between mental health and engagement in violent extremist activities remains underdeveloped and furthermore, processes by which mental health problems combine or interact with other factors during radicalisation continue to be poorly understood. To that aim, the UNDP CB PVE conducted a qualitative mapping which outlines key approaches on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). The mapping, which will be finalized in 2021, demonstrates the integration of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in pioneering PVE programming in 11 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Niger, Nigeria, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Philippines, and Yemen) in efforts to prevent radicalisation and to reintegrate former fighters. For example, in UNDP Philippines, PVE programming was restructured entirely to integrate MHPSS and through this initiative, the CO found that many indicators of violent extremism were impacted by psychosocial factors. Further, UNDP Philippines have changed programming language to shift paradigms towards emphasis on positive transformation and used this opportunity to involve faith-based, women and traditional leaders and civic groups to accompany and strengthen programming initiatives due to the positive psychosocial impact on recipients they have been shown to have. The mapping will form the foundation of future capacity building and partnership for MHPSS in PVE programming.

#### Assessing psychological needs of returnees in Morocco

UNDP Morocco collaborated with the Fondation Mohammed VI and ICRC, to assess the psychological needs of returnees and their families carried out by a Clinical Psychologists upon return from detention centres. The MHPSS assessment concluded with a series of

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