



New Approaches To Counter Violent Extremism In Uzbekistan Through Capacity-Building And Soft Approach

Dr. Behzod Muminov

PhD In Law, Assistant Professor Supreme School Of Judges Of Uzbekistan

Copyright: Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 licence.

ABSTRACT

Why some people become terrorists whilst others do not. It is easy enough to show how radical ideas are internalised by terrorists. But this does not explain why some people exposed to radical ideas are not radicalised. In fact, the majority of people exposed to radical ideas are not radicalised.

Violent extremism and radicalization are complex multifaceted phenomenon that need an integrated approach in its programming. Most counterterrorism efforts have focused on short-term security and law enforcement measures (the hard approaches).

KEYWORDS

Capacity-Building, Violent extremism, Terrorist

INTRODUCTION

Responding to the ‘root causes’ of violent extremism means that approaches to countering need to be embedded in consideration of the social, economic, political and historical contexts in which violence arises and the applicability and transferability of

strategies between nations. The literature has demonstrated over the years that root causes are not static rather they are dynamic, fluid and constantly changing.

Wilkinson (2001: 210) argues that “Above all, governments should

try and avoid over-reaction and repression by their security forces”. The literature suggests that to do so hard power strategies for countering violent extremism must be carefully calibrated to be firm but never excessive, non-discriminatory, apolitical (Aly, 2008; Crelinsten, 2007).

Violent extremism is a sensitive subject with complex security implications. There are different legal, policy and academic definitions of radicalization and violent extremism. These definitions serve different purposes and are not always aligned, which sometimes challenges efforts to advance good practices and build international co-operation. In general, violent extremism refers to acts of violence that are justified by, or associated with, an extreme religious, social or political ideology.

“Radicalization that leads to terrorism” refers to “the dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or to engage in, terrorism”¹. This term highlights the importance of distinguishing between criminal and lawful activity

Violent extremism and terrorism in today’s world are complex challenges that are not confined to borders. Terrorist groups and violent extremist movements are less cohesive, and the threat is harder to understand and predict.

The goals, motives and justification for the violence are diverse.

Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism refers to a spectrum of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and countering extremism related to terrorist radicalization.

Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization must be focused on: preventing and countering processes of radicalization that may lead to terrorism; addressing and reducing grievances and structural social, economic and political conditions that may be conducive to violent extremism; assisting those already radicalized to terrorism to disengage or de-radicalize, and reintegrate into society and building community resilience.

Another definition of countering violent extremism “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”².

The term “counter radicalization” also puts the emphasis on prevention, and according to one definition, “seeks to prevent non-radicalized populations from being radicalized. The objective is to create individual and communal resilience against cognitive and/or violent

¹ Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and radicalization that lead to Terrorism: A Community-policing approach (OSCE TNTD and ODIHR, 2014)

² Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (U.S. Department of State and USAID, 2016)

radicalization through a variety of non-coercive means”³.

Violent extremism has always been a complex issue with overarching security implications for state and society across the world⁴. The United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism asserts that “violent extremism encompasses a wider category of manifestations and there is a risk that a conflation of the two terms (*of terrorism and violent extremism*) may lead to the justification of an overly broad application of counterterrorism measures, including against forms of conduct that should not qualify as terrorist acts”⁵.

These statements acquire even more importance and relevance when we consider the case of Uzbekistan. Terrorism and radical extremism have always been at the center of domestic politics. Both state and society have witnessed ultimate threats and destructive consequences of terrorism and violent extremism in past decades in Uzbekistan.

Conscious of shortcomings of the past decades, government of Uzbekistan under new leadership is undertaking efforts to evolve its regulations and policies on the matter. The law "On combating extremism" adopted in summer 2018 is an example of these efforts. The law defines extremism as an "expression of extreme forms of action aimed at destabilizing the socio-political situation, at violently changing the constitutional structure

of the Republic of Uzbekistan, at violently taking power and assuming powers associated with it and at inciting national, racial, ethnic or religious enmity. The act authorizes the government to stop the activity of extremist organizations if it recognizes them as such. Under the new law, an organization is considered extremist if even one of its components conducts extremist activity”. Another example of new approach was recent creation of Center for Islamic Civilization in Tashkent to promote true values of Islam.

These measures intend to update Uzbek approach to counter violent extremism for it be in par with reformist efforts in other fields of socio-economic and political life of Uzbekistan. President Mirziyoyev’s political agenda has been to modernize the country and to open it to the world. Meanwhile, there is a need to adopt a spectrum of new policies and programs aimed at preventing and countering extremism related to terrorist radicalization, expertise to better understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions. This can be done by acknowledging the need to address and reduce grievances and structural social, economic and political conditions that may be conducive to violent extremism as well as to assist those already radicalized to terrorism to disengage or de-radicalize and reintegrate into society and building community resilience.

Adoption of new approaches in preventing and countering violent extremism by capacity-

³ Preventing Violent radicalization in America (National Security Preparedness Group, Bipartisan Policy Center, 2011)

⁴ See Countering Violent Extremism literature review by Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino and Caluya (2011); Violent Extremism by Glazzard and Zeuthen

(2016); CVErIT: Ideas, recommendations, and Good Practices from the OSCE region, Neumann (2017)

⁵ Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: report of the Secretary-General (United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/A/70/674)

building and innovation will help respond to 'new' and complex forms of contemporary terrorism and violent extremism. Use of phenomenological and ethnographic approaches to study radicalized people would also enable us to capture the complexity of these phenomena and develop in-depth understandings of the experiences of those that participate in terrorist or violent extremist groups. Hard power strategies for countering violent extremism must be carefully calibrated to be firm but never excessive, non-discriminatory and apolitical.

In-depth understanding and critical evaluation of contemporary conceptions and applications must precede comparative analysis and elaboration of new approaches for Uzbek policy-making and law enforcement audiences.

This effort must start with questions like what are the drivers of violent extremism in Uzbekistan; what are the real roots of grievances; how inclusive are counter-extremism mechanisms and practices implemented by law enforcement; how state organs can rely on civil society and community actors to implement new approaches. This initial set of questions must guide the comparative study of foreign experience so that we try to answer the substantial question of what aspects of experience in building inclusive and innovative approach to counter violent extremism could be incorporated to reform efforts of Uzbek counter-extremism policy.

In sum, these terms all have proactive and preventive efforts at their core.

1. Expand international political will, partnerships, and expertise to better

understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions.

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.
3. Employ foreign assistance tools and approaches, including development assistance, 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 a population at high risk of violent extremist radicalization and recruitment to violence.
4. Empower and amplify locally credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups among key demographic segments.
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.

REFERENCES

1. Countering Violent Extremism literature review by Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino and Caluya (2011); Violent Extremism by Glazzard and Zeuthen (2016); CVErIT: Ideas, recommendations, and Good Practices from the OSCE region, Neumann (2017)
2. Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: report of the Secretary-General

-
- (United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/A/70/674)
3. Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and radicalization that lead to Terrorism: A Community-policing approach (OSCE TNTD and ODIHR, 2014)
 4. Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (U.S. Department of State and USAID, 2016)
 5. Preventing Violent radicalization in America (National Security Preparedness Group, Bipartisan Policy Center, 2011)
 6. Wilkinson, P. (2001, 22-24 September). Responses to Terrorism from the Toolbox of Liberal Democracies: Their Applicability to Other Types of Regimes. Paper presented at the Countering Terrorism through International Cooperation, Courmayeur Mont Blanc, Italy.
 7. Aly, W. (2008). Axioms of Aggression: Counter-terrorism and counter-productivity in Australia. *Alternative Law Journal*, 33(1), 20-26.
 8. Crelinsten, R. (2007). Counterterrorism as Global Governance:
 9. Research Inventory. In M. Ranstorp (Ed.), *Mapping Terrorism Research: state of the art, gaps and future direction* (pp.210-235). Abingdon, OX: Routledge.