



Chairmanship's Perception Paper

Outcomes and Recommendations from the 2015 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Expert Conference on “Countering the Incitement and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters”

30 June – 1 July 2015, Hofburg, Vienna

This non-binding document reflects the Serbian Chairmanship's perception of the discussions during the conference.

Outcomes

This conference was convened by the Serbian Chairmanship with a view to contribute to the high-level discussions on Countering Violent Extremism expected to take place at the UN General Assembly in September 2015. The conference was the continuation of an initiative started under the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship in 2014, leading to the adoption of a Declaration by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel in December 2014 on the *OSCE Role in Countering the Phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the Context of the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014)*.

The conference was organized with the support of the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department and Switzerland, and brought together some 350 participants from over 50 participating States, all 11 OSCE Partners for Co-operation, 20 international and regional organizations, and over fifty participants from civil society, academia and the private sector.

Participants had rich and intense discussions which emphasized the complexity our societies face in trying to address the incitement and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), while upholding our values and shared commitments to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Serbian Chairmanship has identified a number of recommendations listed in the second part of this document. Primary findings from the conference include:

- International co-operation should be strengthened against FTF recruitment and the spread of violent extremism, under the co-ordinating role of the United Nations;
- Participating States should uphold the rule of law, promote and protect human rights in responding to the threat of FTFs. Living up to the principles, commitments, and goals of the OSCE, enshrined 40 years ago in the Helsinki Final Act, is the best antidote to terrorism and violent extremism;
- State authorities should develop public-private partnerships with civil society, media, industry and the business community, to prevent the radicalization, incitement and recruitment of FTFs;
- Counter-measures can only be effective if they are based on evidence and if they are grounded in an accurate understanding of the FTF phenomenon and the local drivers underpinning violent extremism;
- Strategic communications and counter-messaging are a key part of the solution in countering the appeal of terrorism and violent extremism, in particular for primary preventive work;

- It is critical to actively consult, involve and support young people in countering violent extremism among their peers and communities. They should be involved inside and outside the classroom, at the level of their city, country and internationally.

The conference highlighted and further encouraged the many ways in which the OSCE already contributes to countering the FTF phenomenon and violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT), following a multi-dimensional approach. This notably includes supporting community-policing approaches to preventing terrorism; advancing the role of women and mainstreaming gender in efforts to counter VERLT; facilitating dialogue and building bridges to promote inclusiveness, tolerance, and acceptance.

One of several side-events organized during the conference showcased on-going activities of OSCE field operations to counter FTF and VERLT, including field research, grassroots awareness-raising, public-private roundtables, and support to the development and implementation of action plans. Other side events were organized by Austria, Spain, the United States and the Netherlands, as well as a German non-governmental organization.

In this spirit, an organization-wide campaign was rolled out during the conference to send a unified message from the OSCE, reinforcing a global consensus against violent extremism. Launched by the Secretary General together with the Chairmanship-in-Office, the campaign highlights the OSCE's comprehensive approach to preventing terrorism by branding all relevant activities across the Organization with a common slogan: "[OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism](#)". OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, as well as academic institutions, civil society organizations and religious institutions throughout the OSCE area, were invited to rally under the umbrella of this campaign.

A number of initiatives were announced during the conference, which will also support the OSCE #UnitedCVE campaign:

- The Serbian Chairmanship will host an event on youth and radicalization in September 2015 in Belgrade;
- The OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media will jointly organize an OSCE-wide regional expert workshop on "Media Freedom and Responsibilities in the Context of Counter Terrorist Policies" on 7-8 October 2015 in Bucharest, Romania;
- The OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights will develop awareness raising courses based on their joint guidebook on "[Preventing Terrorism and Countering VERLT: A Community-Policing Approach](#)";
- The OSCE will develop a training programme "Leaders Against Intolerance and Violent Extremism" (LIVE) to empower civil society leaders, including youth, women and religious figures, to speak out, mobilize others and launch initiatives against intolerance and violent extremism.

Furthermore, in the view of the Serbian Chairmanship, discussions during the conference provide a solid basis towards the adoption of an OSCE Ministerial Council Statement on Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism, which would emphasize the common vision of participating States, based on various existing OSCE commitments. The timely adoption of such a Statement would raise the profile of, and support more resources for the OSCE and the work of its executive structures in advance of the high-level discussions on Countering Violent Extremism in the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2015 and the adoption of a UN Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism.

Recommendations

First Session: Trends and Dynamics in the Incitement and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

In order to effectively counter the incitement and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), it is crucial to understand the appeal that joining terrorist groups abroad can have, and identify factors increasing the risk of individual susceptibility to FTF radicalization and recruitment. This session discussed the multi-layered messaging of violent extremism leading to terrorism; the channels used to spread these narratives, including the impact of social media and the Internet; intended audience(s), especially youth; possible patterns in the recruitment of FTFs, including women and girls.

Recommendations of the Chairmanship

To OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation:

1. To assume primary responsibility for countering terrorism and countering violent extremism, in accordance with international law, while developing public-private partnerships, especially with civil society, for preventive purposes;
2. To base their approaches to preventing and countering FTF radicalization and recruitment on an accurate and comprehensive understanding and assessment of the phenomenon, taking into consideration contextual and personal factors, as a pre-condition to develop and implement targeted, proportionate, effective and human rights-compliant counter-measures;
3. To establish effective inter-agency co-ordination among a broad range of public authorities, at both national and local levels, as well as inclusive consultations with civil society, to deepen and share their understanding of FTF radicalization and recruitment;
4. To examine and take into account the gender roles, dynamics, and other aspects at play in the FTF radicalization and recruitment of both men and women; to this effect, ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the policies, practices and training of law enforcement and security bodies involved in preventing and countering terrorism, and increase women's presence among counter-terrorism professionals, at all levels and in all functions;
5. To actively encourage and support field research, at the national and sub-regional levels, on FTF radicalization and recruitment, including on the role of ideology and communication strategies of various terrorist groups and their actual impact;
6. To identify and address the specific needs, concerns and grievances – both real and perceived – of those vulnerable to FTF radicalization and targeted for recruitment as FTFs, including issues of marginalization, discrimination and exclusion, lack of opportunities, search for meaning, belonging and/or adventure, that can fuel violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT);
7. To explore the possible similarities between FTF recruitment patterns and tactics on the one hand, and the recruitment for organized crime and/or grooming for trafficking in human beings on the other hand;
8. To further analyse the radicalization of terrorist acting alone or in small cells, the role of the Internet and social media in this regard, and the challenges associated with early detection and timely intervention by law enforcement to counter home-grown terrorism;
9. To ensure that any legislation and policy criminalizing the incitement and recruitment of FTF, as well as FTF travel and training, is narrowly defined, clear, accessible and introduces

adequate legal and procedural safeguards in accordance with the principle of legality and international human rights standards;

10. To put in place strategies and measures to effectively detect and manage the return of suspected FTFs in compliance with human rights and the rule of law, whether to bring them to justice when evidentiary requirements are met, or otherwise assess and monitor the threat they may pose to society, and facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration in society;
11. To uphold all their international obligations and OSCE commitments to effectively prevent and counter FTF incitement, recruitment, travel, and training, and to inform each other about the specific efforts to counter the threat of FTF by state and non-state actors;
12. To strengthen international co-operation against terrorism, FTF, and violent extremism under the co-ordinating role of the United Nations, based on the United Nations Charter and all relevant provisions of international law;
13. To strengthen mutual assistance mechanisms and enhance the timely exchange of operational information to prevent and disrupt FTF travel, in accordance with all relevant provisions of international law.

To OSCE executive structures, within their respective mandate and upon request:

14. To further facilitate dialogue at the national and local levels among stakeholders from the public sector, civil society, the media, and businesses, to promote multi-dimensional understanding of, and responses to the threat of VERLT, its underlying drivers, as well as evolving trends and tactics in the incitement and recruitment of FTFs;
15. To promote action-oriented and gender-sensitive research into the spread and local manifestations of VERLT, especially the drivers and narratives underlying FTF radicalization and recruitment;
16. To support the establishment of network(s) of researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners to facilitate the exchange of views, experiences and good practices in responding to the threat of VERLT, FTF incitement and recruitment, following a multi-dimensional approach;
17. To facilitate the exchange of research on, and experiences in addressing the threat of terrorists acting alone or in small cells.

Second Session: Good Practices and Lessons Learned for Strategic Messaging to Counter Incitement and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Both governments and civil society are undertaking efforts to counter, through their own communication strategies, the violent extremist narratives underlying radicalization and recruitment of young men and women as FTFs. This session discussed the impact and limitations of these efforts and identified good practices and lessons learned to maximize effectiveness, including in terms of messengers, message contents, audiences and channels, while ensuring respect of human rights and the rule of law, in particular freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Recommendations of the Chairmanship

To OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation:

18. To ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of religion or belief, the right to privacy, the freedoms of expression and of the media as well as the principle of non-discrimination, are upheld at all times while countering FTF radicalization, incitement and recruitment;

19. To ensure that strategic communication efforts are based on a sophisticated understanding of violent extremist messaging and the level of threat it actually poses; the vulnerability of men and women towards violent extremism, and their attitudes towards public authorities; as well as the use of social media and its impact on different groups;
20. To promote strategic communication efforts tailored to a variety of male and female audiences in terms of message, audio-visual content, and use of traditional and new media to enhance impact; there is a need for counter-messages which, *inter alia*, de-romanticize terrorist groups, highlight the social costs of terrorist radicalization and recruitment for affected communities, emphasize common values and references, and offer credible, normative challenges to violent extremist narratives;
21. To conduct regular evaluation of strategic communication efforts undertaken to counter VERLT, including their impact on human rights;
22. To ensure that strategic communication and counter-narratives are not discriminating against particular individuals and communities, or otherwise stigmatizing or reinforcing misperceptions about particular groups, based on religious, ethnic, racial, nationality and/or gender characteristics; careful use of terminology should be made to avoid validating violent extremist narratives and to promote social inclusion;
23. To promote freedom of expression, which is protected under international law and enshrined in OSCE commitments, and refrain from criminalizing or otherwise repressing the peaceful expression of non-violent views, in accordance with international human rights standards;
24. To ensure that strategic communication efforts, especially those online through social media, are mutually reinforcing with offline efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism;
25. To support the formulation and development of counter-messages to violent extremist narratives through inclusive intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, at the local, national and regional levels, involving men and women, of all generations;
26. To identify and support credible voices within communities and civil society, while respecting their independence, safeguarding their reputation, and protecting them from reprisals, who are willing and best placed to develop and impart relevant counter-messages that build local resilience and resonate with vulnerable groups as well as dispel stereotypes and misconceptions; this requires also creating and maintaining an enabling environment, which does not impede on civil society organizations' ability to carry out their activities;
27. To carefully include victims of extremist violence and terrorism, who are willing to contribute to the formulation and delivery of counter-messages that will appeal to different audiences; protect them from reprisals; likewise, explore how former violent extremists and former terrorists may be, on a voluntary basis, carefully involved in such counter-messaging efforts;
28. To enable religious leaders, scholars and institutions to take the lead in denouncing the misuse of religious tenets as a justification for violent extremism, and to further promote within their communities the messages of peace and tolerance promulgated by their respective beliefs and traditions;
29. To refrain from suppressing online content and, if monitor the Internet, then in full compliance with domestic legislation and international standards on the protection of the right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of the media and free access to information;
30. To facilitate the sharing of experience between government, civil society, media and private sector stakeholders, including ICT industry and marketing experts, on effective counter-narrative work, and disseminate this expertise through capacity-building for credible voices within communities and civil society;

31. To forge and sustain dialogue and public-private partnerships with the ICT industry and civil society organizations on countering the use of the Internet and social media for FTF radicalization, incitement, and recruitment, including highlighting counter-narratives and alternative messages.

To OSCE executive structures, within their respective mandate and upon request:

32. To further support the exchange of good practices and lessons learned on government strategic communication to counter violent extremist narratives underlying FTF radicalization, incitement and recruitment;
33. To encourage dialogue and the development of public-private partnerships with the media, ICT industry, marketing experts, and civil society stakeholders, to promote pluralism, dispel stereotypes, and highlight credible voices against violent extremism, as well as positive alternatives;
34. To facilitate capacity-building for credible voices from civil society on effectively using traditional and new media, especially the Internet and social media, for getting across counter-narratives to violent extremism that appeal to different target audiences;
35. To support the establishment of fora or other consultative platforms at the sub-regional, national and/or local levels, on preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorist radicalization, bringing together stakeholders from public authorities, civil society and the private sector;
36. To facilitate an international exchange of good practices on effective interactions between a secular State and religious institutions in line with international human rights standards, in particular freedom of religion or belief.

Third Session: Good Practices and Lessons Learned to Empower Young People to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism

Young people are considered particularly vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment as FTFs. At the same time, they can make crucial contributions to preventing this phenomenon among their peers, families and communities. This session discussed good practices and lessons learned in engaging youth to counter VERLT, including in the development and dissemination of positive counter-narratives to the violent extremist agenda.

Recommendations of the Chairmanship

To OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation:

37. To take into consideration the local context, culture, languages, as well as challenges, grievances and possible feelings of isolation, deprivation and lack of prospect, including gender aspects, faced by young people when developing and implementing targeted initiatives;
38. To develop and implement educational initiatives and curricula to equip young women and men, boys and girls, with the knowledge and skills, including critical thinking and Internet safety, to recognize and reject violent extremist narratives and terrorist recruitment tactics;
39. To raise awareness and build the capacity of parents, teachers, social workers, sports coaches, youth workers, local police, and other frontline actors, to play a more proactive role in protecting children and young people from VERLT and responding early and adequately to possible concerns;

40. To support the provision of safe spaces for young men and women to express their grievances and needs, to raise their concerns in relation to VERLT among their peers or communities, to discuss their fears in relation to mobilizing against VERLT, as well as to access relevant support;
41. To seek to offer and support credible alternatives to violent extremism by, addressing issues of concerns to youth, fostering feelings of belonging to society, providing access to health and social services as well as employment opportunities to young people, and enabling their active participation in public life including through civic and democratic engagement;
42. To encourage the use of sports, the arts, and peer-to-peer approaches as particularly effective ways of engaging vulnerable youth, providing them with positive opportunities, building their self-confidence, and promoting dialogue and common ground at the grassroots level across beliefs, cultures, gender and other lines;
43. To proactively include young women and men in the development, implementation, and assessment of measures to prevent and counter VERLT;
44. To recognize and support, including financially, the variety of ways in which youth-led and youth-focused civil society initiatives are already building resilience to violent extremism and intolerance among young women and men, and within communities and societies;
45. To encourage creative ideas and build the capacity of young people to promote among their peers and within their communities alternative narratives and initiatives based on human rights, tolerance, and democracy;
46. To encourage youth initiatives to counter VERLT through the traditional and new media by building the media literacy and communication skills of young women and men;
47. To raise awareness of, and protect young people from reprisals as they speak out and stand up against violent extremism.

To OSCE executive structures, within their respective mandate and upon request:

48. To further support the exchange of good practices and lessons learned on engaging and empowering youth to prevent and counter VERLT, for instance by organizing practitioners' workshops, or by supporting (sub)regional youth platforms and networks;
49. To facilitate capacity-building for youth-led and youth-focused civil society organizations, as well as youth leaders, to undertake online and offline activities to stand up against violent extremism, intolerance, and discrimination, and/or to offer positive alternatives for young people to address their concerns, channel their energy, and find a sense of belonging and purpose;
50. To facilitate the inclusion and consultation of young people in regional, national and local dialogues on countering VERLT.

Fourth Session: Good Practices and Lessons Learned to Identify and Engage with Individuals at Risk of Radicalization and Recruitment as FTFs

Governments are faced with a diffuse challenge of detecting and intervening in a timely and human rights-compliant fashion to divert from a path of VERLT those individuals at risk of terrorist radicalization and recruitment. This session discussed good practices and lessons learned in raising public awareness and mobilizing frontline workers to recognize, address or report risk behaviours, including referral mechanisms for appropriate interventions, while upholding human rights and the rule of law. The session also focused on additional intervention mechanisms, such as prison rehabilitation programmes, and bilateral or multilateral exchanges of operational information.

Recommendations of the Chairmanship

To OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation:

51. To ensure that efforts to identify and respond timely to suspected cases of VERLT protect and respect the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in particular that they are not discriminating against certain individuals based on religious, racial, ethnic, nationality and/or gender characteristics;
52. To develop local-level approaches to increase trust, consultation, and co-operation between public authorities across sectors and civil society to facilitate the timely identification, reporting and/or response to complex situations involving VERLT in all its manifestations;
53. To allocate more resources to, and build the capacity of front-line stakeholders from both public authorities and civil society to recognize, report and/or respond to complex situations involving VERLT in all its manifestations;
54. To work with civil society to raise broad grassroots awareness among parents, community leaders and religious figures about the threat of VERLT and FTF recruitment, and to provide them with safe spaces and opportunities to raise concerns and access support in order to effectively disrupt terrorist radicalization and recruitment;
55. To establish programmes for the diversion and/or rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals involved with VERLT; ensure that these programmes are gender sensitive and operate in strict compliance with international human rights standards, while at the same time allow for the effective enforcement of the law;
56. To make better use of existing information sharing platforms, both nationally and internationally, in order to aid in the identification of those considered particularly at risk of FTF radicalization and recruitment;
57. To strengthen border management and security in order to prevent and disrupt the travel of FTFs, in line with international standards and freedom of movement, including through international, regional and bilateral mechanisms for co-operation and timely exchange of information and intelligence.

To OSCE executive structures, within their respective mandate and upon request:

58. To further support the exchange of good practices and lessons learned in identifying, engaging, and diverting individuals considered particularly at risk of terrorist radicalization;
59. To support the development of community-policing/police-public partnerships approaches to counter VERLT;
60. To support grassroots campaigns to raise public awareness, especially at the level of communities and families about the threat of VERLT, ways to raise concerns and access relevant support;
61. To facilitate the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt on rehabilitation and reintegration of convicted FTFs, or suspected FTFs who could not be successfully prosecuted.