In September 2017, the European Union joined forces with Egypt to Co-Chair the newly renamed GCTF Capacity-Building in the East Africa Region Working Group (EAWG). The 1st Plenary meeting of the EAWG will take place in Cairo on 18 April and will be preceded by two important side-events, also in Cairo. On 15–16 April the Government of Egypt will sponsor a workshop on countering extremist narratives, while on 16–17 April the EU will sponsor a workshop on countering the financing of terrorism.

During last year’s Horn of Africa Working Group Plenary session in Addis Ababa, we identified six priority issues for the EAWG – border security, CT legislation and related training, P/CVE Action Plans, countering terrorist financing, strategic communications, and interfaith dialogue. Based on this, the Co-Chairs developed a draft Work Plan for 2018–2019 that we look forward to presenting during the upcoming EAWG Plenary meeting.

We are also working to build linkages between the EAWG and the work taking place across the GCTF community and beyond. The recent Lifecycle Toolkit Workshop held in Kenya (see article below) was well-received. We now want to ensure that the perspectives of EAWG members feed into the three ongoing GCTF initiatives: the Initiative on Addressing the Challenge of Returning Families of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, the Initiative to Address Homegrown Terrorism and the Nexus Between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism Initiative. Representatives from the (Co) Leads of these Initiatives will participate in the EAWG Plenary meeting.

Egypt and the EU would like to express our sincere gratitude to the GCTF Local Coordinators based in the countries of the region for their support to the work of this group. We look forward to ensuring the EAWG remains a relevant and dynamic Working Group for advancing counterterrorism work throughout the East Africa region.
International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ), Malta

From September 1, 2017 through March 30, 2018, (7 months) the IIJ implemented 21 programs – eight in Malta and 13 in the region. Many of these 21 programs included practitioner participants from the East Africa region and several focused on East Africa. IIJ’s Central Authorities Workshop for the Horn of Africa region was held in Malta in December 2017. Prosecutors from Tanzania, Kenya, Djibouti, and Ethiopia worked on refining a list of Good Practices for Central Authorities, to be published in 2018.


Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), Geneva

In 2017, GCERF launched the process in Kenya to fund community-level initiatives to strengthen community resilience to violent extremism. Following a Call for Expressions of Interest, three Kenyan civil society organisations were identified as potential grantees; they are developing proposals to form the Kenya National Application (total: U.S. $5 million) for GCERF Governing Board approval in May 2018. The proposals are expected to cover five counties; and focus on youth, women, and religious leaders. GCERF is also piloting a funding stream with private sector engagement in Kenya. Proposals for small-scale community-level initiatives were received in late 2017. GCERF has been working closely with the government, civil society, private sector, and the international community in Kenya, to contribute to the implementation of Kenya’s National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism.

Hedayah

From 23–25 January 2018, Hedayah, UNESCO, supported by the U.S. Department of State, facilitated a capacity-building workshop in Kampala, to support PVE and education programs for teacher-tutors. The workshop was conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sport of Uganda.

Hedayah and the IGAD Center of Excellence for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (CEPCVE), supported by the U.S. Department of State, hosted a workshop on “East and Horn of Africa Collection of Counter-Narratives for Countering Violent Extremism
(CVE) in Kigali, from 5–7 February 2018. The workshop supported the development of a collection of counter-narratives for East Africa, part of Hedayah’s Counter-Narrative Library (www.cn-library.com). The workshop and broader collection seek to identify relevant and resonant counter-narratives and alternative narratives to be used by practitioners in the region seeking to better counter the messages of violent extremist groups. The collection for East Africa and an accompanying “How-To Guide” is expected to be online and available by June 2018.

3 Spotlight on East Africa/Special Feature

The GCTF EAWG convened a workshop on the GCTF’s Lifecycle Toolkit from 22–24 January 2018 in Nairobi. The workshop sought to strengthen understanding of the Lifecycle Toolkit and its key instruments. The discussions focused on the Good Practice instruments in the Lifecycle Toolkit which serve to strengthen prevention, detection and intervention, and rehabilitation and reintegration practices. The workshop was attended by participants from Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda. The workshop was organised by the ISS with funding from the Government of the United States (US).

The event was opened by His Excellency, Amb. Stefano Dejak of the European Union (EU) on behalf of the Co-Chairs of the EAWG, Egypt and the European Union. A group of international specialists facilitated discussions on the Lifecycle Toolkit.

Prevention

In discussions on prevention, there was agreement on the overall need to strengthen social service agencies’ engagement in the prevention of violent extremism, including improving relevant policies. Strengthening the role of parents and families in prevention was emphasised, with a focus on parenting. A theme throughout the discussion was the changing form of families, and particularly of single women-headed households. The disconnect in relationships and trust between security agencies and the communities was also noted as an issue that needs to be addressed. Participants agreed that the police can play a key role in building trust with community members. They noted that much can be achieved through building stronger relations with community members, leaders and youth. Both religious and secular schools were noted as being good starting points for increasing awareness on violent extremism.

Detection and Intervention

Discussions on detection highlighted the need for early recognition of those at risk of radicalisation, and to provide interventions to prevent further radicalisation or recruitment into extremist groups. Communities, families and schools were identified as important in identifying behaviour changes and intervening early. The identification of recruiters in communities and schools was similarly noted as being important. Online recruitment was noted as an issue in need of greater vigilance in Africa.

Discussions on intervention focused on strengthening law enforcement and justice mechanisms, including informal measures. The protection of justice sector officials was considered paramount. The special needs of children and young people in conflict with the law in relation to terrorism offences was specifically discussed. Vulnerability to abuse in criminal justice systems was recognised, as was the opportunity for early intervention as juveniles are amenable to rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. Participants noted the need to strengthen policy and practices to protect the rights of child suspects.
Rehabilitation and Reintegration

The specific situations of detention facilities and prisons, and the release of offenders from these facilities, were the focus of discussions. There was significant concern for the fact that there are limitations in professional services provided by trained social workers, psychologists, and medical professionals. However, it was agreed that many services do exist that may provide the basis for what is needed, e.g. pastoral care and counselling from religious teachers and community organisations. Vocational skills were noted as an important element of the solution. The stigmatisation of ex-prisoners was noted as a key challenge to be addressed. The nature of the detention experience was noted as a key factor, with greater attention to be paid to the humane treatment of detainees by prison officials and protection against victimisation. The role of families in supporting rehabilitation and reintegration was highlighted as a factor that was important to successes. Religious and political motivations for committing terrorism were noted as requiring appropriately designed interventions, as was the situation where these offenses occurred for financial reasons.

4 Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 15–16</td>
<td>GCTF Capacity-Building in the East Africa Region Working Group and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) workshop on “Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Countering Extremist Narratives Conducive to Terrorism in East Africa”, Cairo, Egypt</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16–17</td>
<td>Workshop on “Countering the financing of terrorism.” Organised by the European Commission, Cairo, Egypt</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>Plenary meeting of the GCTF Capacity-Building in the East Africa Region Working Group, Cairo, Egypt</td>
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<td>May 8–9</td>
<td>GCTF Initiative on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism Workshop with a focus on the East Africa Region, organized by Initiative Lead the Netherlands in coordination with the GCTF Capacity-Building in the East Africa Region Working Group, Nairobi, Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>GCTF Fourteenth Coordinating Committee Meeting, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>GCTF Ninth Ministerial Plenary Meeting, New York</td>
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About the Global Counterterrorism Forum

The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) is an informal, multilateral counterterrorism (CT) platform that identifies areas of civilian counterterrorism where national capabilities can be strengthened. It provides a dedicated platform for sharing expertise, strategies, and capacity-building programmes. The GCTF has five Working Groups. Three are thematic (Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law; Countering Violent Extremism; and Foreign Terrorist Fighters) and two which are geographic (West Africa and East Africa). The Working Groups identify challenges and mobilize political will, financial resources, and expertise to implement those activities.

Morocco and the Netherlands Co-Chair the GCTF. The 30 members of the GCTF are: Algeria, Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

For more information, contact the GCTF Admin Unit. Email: adminunit@thegctf.org or visit the website: www.thegctf.org