

International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism



Fact Sheet

December 2012

Background: On 14 December 2012, ministers and other senior officials from the 30 members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) will inaugurate the first-ever international center of excellence for countering violent extremism (CVE), with its headquarters in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. At the September 2011 ministerial-level launch of the GCTF in New York, the United Arab Emirates offered to host this center in response to the growing desire from GCTF members and the wider international community for the establishment of an independent, multilateral center devoted to training, dialogue, collaboration, and research to counter violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations, one that can bring together the experts, expertise, and experience that exist in countries around the globe.

“It is only through our collective efforts and sustained commitment that we, as a global community, will be able to address one of the most pressing issues in the context of counterterrorism, namely countering violent extremism.” H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

This initiative could not be more timely. There is widespread agreement on the need to prevent individuals from starting down the path toward radicalization, the embrace of violence, and support for terrorism, as well as to divert those already on that path before they are fully committed and mobilized. With the opening of the International Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi there will now be an international institution dedicated to addressing this challenge.

Mandate: The Center’s mandate will focus on three core areas:

- 1) **Training:** Providing government and non-governmental stakeholders with the necessary training and practical tools to design and implement

- effective programs and policies to counter violent extremism in all of its forms;
- 2) **Dialogue:** Providing a dedicated platform to facilitate dialogue among community leaders, teachers and other educators as well as relevant national and local actors involved in CVE; and
 - 3) **Research:** Conducting and commissioning research to gain a deeper understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, and which approaches are effective in countering it.

Relationship between the Center and the GCTF: Preventing individuals from starting down the path towards radicalization, the embrace of violence, and support for terrorism, is a priority for the GCTF. Although the Center will be independent from the GCTF and all of its members, a close partnership between the two bodies will be critical to their success. GCTF members have been engaged in the development of the Center and will be supportive of the Center's governance and operation.



GCTF members are encouraged to support the Center in a number of ways. This includes:

- providing voluntary financial contributions to the Center
- sponsoring and delivering courses
- seconding staff (e.g., trainers or dialogue facilitators)
- sponsoring resident and non-resident research fellows and other visiting instructors
- identifying appropriate participants for the relevant Center activities.

With support from GCTF members and other countries, the Center will respond to and further develop efforts flowing from the GCTF CVE Working Group's priorities. For example, the Center expects to develop a robust independent capability to evaluate CVE initiatives sponsored by GCTF members and other Center partners. Through its own sponsored initiatives and by providing support to those of others, the Center expects to advance work in the fields of CVE communications and messaging, as well as to play a key role in deepening understanding of how institutions – ranging from education through health and social services to law enforcement and prisons – can build resilience against

violent extremism and to provide a reference point and training for officials in how to craft policies, programs and activities that minimize the risk of individuals being radicalized into violent extremism. Throughout its work, the Center will place a premium on collaboration and dialogue and will take practical steps to develop, expand and strengthen the emerging international CVE community of practice. Already, the Center has published the first issue of its *Newsletter*, and work is underway to create a web-portal for virtual collaboration.

Partnerships: Building and leveraging partnerships with existing international and regional training centers and academies, relevant academic and research institutions, and UN counterterrorism programs, including the newly-established UN Centre on Counter-Terrorism, as well as relevant private sector and non-governmental organizations from around the world will be a priority for the Center.

Multinational Governance and Staff:

A multinational International Steering Board will provide the Center with the necessary policy and strategic guidance. It will initially be comprised of the ten co-chairs of the five GCTF Working Groups. The Center's multinational staff, which will grow gradually over time, will be led by a Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer and include a mix of seconded CVE experts and direct-hires. The CEO will lead the Center and serve as the primary interface between the Center and the ISB and other senior external officials. The COO will help lead the Center, run regular meetings with Center staff, cooperate with the CFO on budget issues, oversee the performance of the central department management, as well as develop and submit the Center's annual operational plan.

The Initial 12-18 Months: During its initial 12-18 months the Center intends to focus its efforts in a few key areas:

- convening CVE expert brainstorming sessions that support the GCTF's CVE Working Group's priorities;

“We have to continue working together to defeat extremist ideology, blunt the spread of radicalization, and slow the flow of recruits to terrorist networks. The UAE took an important step when it announced it would host the first-ever international center developed to combat extremism and develop those best practices that will do so.”

*Secretary of State Hillary
Rodham Clinton*

- developing and piloting initial CVE training curricula, while seeking to integrate and leverage the efforts of GCTF CVE Working Group activities; and
- developing an international CVE community of practice, including by creating a Network of CVE Professionals from around the globe.

In addition, the Center intends to host a lecture and film series, as well as topical CVE workshops and conferences organized by international partners.

Curriculum Development: Among the initial subject matter areas where the Center will develop curricula and host workshops could include:

- media and messaging
- the role the security sector plays in CVE
- capacity-building aimed at strengthening state institutions entrusted with the CVE mission
- empowering local actors
- empowering educators
- empowering knowledge and innovation
- the role of and empowering victims of terrorism
- the role of cultural and sports diplomacy in CVE
- the role of and engaging non-traditional CVE actors and initiatives.

CVE Center of Excellence Launch Schedule:

12 December	UNODC half-day workshop on victims of terrorism
12 December	UNICRI half-day workshop on prison de-radicalization
13 December	GCTF Coordinating Committee to discuss Center and future programs
14 December	Center Launch and GCTF Ministerial