Policy Brief
A Gender-Informed Approach to the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Arab Region

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Policy Brief
A Gender-Informed Approach to the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Arab Region

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Key Messages

- *Five of the 10 worst performing countries in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index are in the Arab region – Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Sudan.*

- *Early efforts in the Arab region to address violent extremism focused on securitized measures and lacked a gender-sensitive perspective. However, over time, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of both addressing the root causes of violent extremism and incorporating a gender perspective into policies and programmes.*

- *Countering/prevention of violent extremism (C/PVE) strategies in Morocco and Lebanon provide good examples of regional efforts to mainstream gender concerns. Jordan and Tunisia mitigated shortfalls in C/PVE strategies by producing national action plans that address violent extremism.*

- *Still, efforts need augmentation. Countries are advised to acknowledge and address the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism and the fact that both phenomena are highly gendered and exploit harmful gender (both female and male) stereotypes.*

Contents

Introduction

In recent decades, the Arab region has witnessed waves of violent extremism and terrorism.[1] The recent proliferation of violent extremism and terrorism has disproportionately affected women and girls, resulting in sexual and gender-based violence such as rape, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, forced and early marriage, human trafficking and disruptions to education and livelihoods. While many women have been victimized by violent extremism, others have actively engaged as adherents. Scores of women from across the Arab region were recruited to join the Islamic State, where they took on roles ranging from recruitment and fundraising to spreading violent extremist ideologies in their networks, and in some cases active participation in violent acts.

Conversely, women have also played crucial roles in countering and preventing the spread of violent extremism. Women's rights organizations and human rights defenders have been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism as peace activists. Despite this, many women in the Arab region are not engaged in formal efforts for preventing and countering violent extremism and their roles continue to be invisible, unrecognized or constrained to the informal sphere.

Recognizing the broad roles that women play as preventers, supporters and victims of violent extremism in the Arab region, and within the framework of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, this Policy Brief highlights key arguments for policymakers and practitioners for mainstreaming gender in the PVE strategy at the national level, as well as challenges to be mindful of when mainstreaming gender equality. It addresses four key elements of mainstreaming gender in PVE, namely (a) recognizing the gendered nature of violent extremism; (b) recognizing women as potential agents of violent extremism; (c) identifying the myriad roles women can play in preventing violent extremism; and (d) ensuring PVE strategies do not infringe on women's rights.

Under each of these four elements, this Policy Brief examines the status of gender mainstreaming in PVE programmes and strategies in four countries in the Arab region: Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia. These four countries were chosen for case studies as they represent different approaches to both developing PVE policies and strategies, and to incorporating gender into PVE activities. The Brief identifies good practices and potential gaps in order to offer policy recommendations for Arab States to meet their international commitments.

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[1] Swiss Peace. *Women, Peace and Security and the Prevention of Violence: Reflections from Civil Society in the Context of the Fourth Swiss National Action Plan 1325* (September 2019). p. 9.

1. The Integration of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the Preventing Violent Extremism Agenda

While the Countering Terrorism (CT) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) agendas were initially absent of any mention of the WPS agenda – with the early CT Strategy not even referencing women – the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was heavily influenced by the WPS Agenda.

The 2015 United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (the Plan of Action) recognizes that terrorism and violent extremism are highly gendered activities, in that violent extremists systematically exploit gender stereotypes and target women's rights. The Plan of Action also identifies that societies with higher gender equality indicators are less vulnerable to violent extremism, pointing to the importance of promoting women's participation, leadership and empowerment across society. It calls upon States to ensure that strategies devised to address terrorism and violent extremism place the protection and empowerment of women at the centre of such efforts, and that these efforts do not adversely affect women's rights. It is noted, however, that the Plan of Action emphasizes the role of women as "peacemakers" and only includes passing reference to women's participation in violent extremism and terrorist organizations themselves.

The inclusion of the role of women and the recognition of the gendered nature of violent extremism in the Plan of Action aligns the Plan of Action with UNSCR 1325, the landmark resolution of the WPS agenda, which emphasizes that women should be systematically included in peacebuilding efforts. It also aligns the Plan of Action with a number of UN Security Council resolutions, such as UNSCR 2178 (2014), which encourages Member States to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in CVE, including by empowering women's civil society groups, and UNSCR 2242, which underscored the importance of ensuring the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. UNSCR 2242 emphasizes that policies and programmes must include gender-sensitive research and data on the impacts of CT strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations.

Since the adoption of UNSCR 2242, there has been a surge in P/CVE policy and programming incorporating a "gender perspective" and increased calls to link the WPS and P/CVE agendas.[2] These calls to integrate the WPS and P/CVE agendas have been promoted as necessary to prevent the harms caused by CT and other "gender-blind security strategies", which fail to take gender and

[2] Swiss Peace. *Women, Peace and Security and the Prevention of Violence: Reflections from Civil Society in the Context of the Fourth Swiss National Action Plan 1325* (September 2019). p. 9.

women's rights into account,[3] as well as to ensure that the development and implementation of security measures are in line with principles of peacebuilding and human rights.

Nevertheless, at its core, the overarching purpose of the PVE agenda is to achieve national security goals. Therefore, PVE interventions are prone to taking a narrow approach to women's rights and empowerment. In this regard, States have tended to view the WPS Agenda as a *way of doing* PVE, rather than as an important framework in its own right.[4] As such, there remains a concern that subsuming the WPS agenda under PVE will result in the securitization of gender equality and women's empowerment, meaning they will only become a means to achieve state security, and not legitimate ends in and of themselves. It is therefore important that the relationship between the WPS agenda and PVE agenda are not seen as reciprocal – the WPS agenda should influence and inform the PVE agenda and not the other way around.

In addition, as the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism as well as many women human rights activists and researchers have highlighted, many of the policies and strategies to P/CVE may have an adverse impact on gender equality and women's rights. In her recent report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur flags a serious concern that "[t]he distinct focus on using women as a means of improving counter-terrorism efforts runs the risk of agenda-hijacking, whereby a narrow emphasis on "women" distracts attention from the wider structural realities that produce gender inequality, exclusion and violence".[5] Similar messages were raised by other commentators who emphasize that causes of gender inequality should not be separated from the wider human rights perspective that address structural inequalities, either when developing programmes or when analysing the harm that may be caused by such programmes on achieving gender equality.[6]

Notwithstanding the above cautionary approach, this policy brief adopts the approach that incorporation over time of prevention of violent extremism into the WPS Agenda recognizes that violent extremism has a disproportionate impact on women and women's fundamental rights and acknowledges that women are fundamental actors in preventing the threat of terrorism.

Introducing four case studies from the region

Efforts in some Arab States to address violent extremism and responding to UNSCR 1325 can be traced back to the early 2000s. Early efforts to address violent extremism in the region were primarily focused on securitized measures and lacked a gender-sensitive perspective. However,

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3 Ibid.

4 Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS). *Prioritise Peace: Challenging Approaches to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism from a Women, Peace and Security Perspective*. (2018) p. 2.

5 A/HRC/43/46, para. 40.

6 Jayne C. Huckerby, In Harm's Way: Gender and Human Rights in National Security, 27 Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy 179-202 (2020). Available at https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/djglp/vol27/iss1/11Huckerby, J. 2020. In Harm's Way: Gender and Human Rights in National Security.

over time, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of both addressing the root causes of violent extremism and incorporating a gender perspective into policies and programmes. Similarly, while implementation of the WPS agenda across the region has been uneven, and in some cases limited, the overarching trend has been a steady advancement of the WPS agenda. In this context, several countries in the region have shown demonstrable efforts to engage in gender mainstreaming in PVE programmes, with some clearly aligning the PVE agenda with the WPS agenda. This Brief draws on four such case studies, from Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia.

Morocco passed its first counter-terrorism legislation in 2003, ten days after the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (*Groupe islamique combattant marocain* or GICM) orchestrated synchronized suicide bombings in Casablanca, killing 44 people and injuring many more. While initially the response to the bombings centred on coercive measures and did not engage women, the government soon became aware of the limitations of relying on a purely security-based strategy, and, from 2004, a multi-pronged counter-terrorism strategy began to take shape. The new strategy was based on a three-pillar system: strengthening internal security, fighting poverty and undertaking religious reforms. In 2015, Morocco's multidimensional and integrated approach to PVE was outlined in *L'expérience du Royaume du Maroc dans la Prévention et la Lutte contre l'Extrémisme Violent*.[7] The approach is based on five pillars: (a) religious; (b) security and legal; (c) socioeconomic; (d) strengthening human rights and the rule of law; and (e) international cooperation.

Morocco is currently working on developing a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. However, it is clear that PVE actions taken by the Moroccan government to date, including engaging women in peacebuilding efforts; responding to the demands of women activists to provide them with a greater role; working with civil society and women's organizations; and empowering women through legal and societal reforms, are in line with the calls for women's engagement in PVE, as advanced by the WPS agenda.

In 2018, *Lebanon* launched a national strategy to prevent violent extremism. The national strategy was formulated in the aftermath of the entry into Lebanon of large numbers of violent extremists seeking to join Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). From the first days of the Syrian conflict, Lebanon faced the threat of the conflict spilling over its borders. The effort to design the national strategy was led by the Lebanese Cabinet and was the outcome of cooperation with the United Nations, represented by the Office of the Resident Representative of the Secretary-General, the Swiss Government, the National Initiative for the Centennial of Greater Lebanon and other international entities.

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[7] Morocco, (2015). *L'expérience du Royaume du Maroc dans la Prévention et la Lutte contre l'Extrémisme Violent.* Mission Permanente du Royaume du Maroc Genève. Available at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/PCVE/Morocco.pdf. Accessed on 24 July 2020.

The National Strategy rests on nine pillars: (a) Dialogue and Conflict Prevention; (b) Promotion of Good Governance; (c) Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of Law; (d) Urban/Rural Development and Engaging Local Communities; (e) Gender Equality and Empowering Women; (f) Education, Training and Skills Development; (g) Economic Development and Job Creation; (h) Strategic Communications, Informatics and Social Media; and (i) Empowering Youth.

Pillar 5: Gender Equality and Empowering Women

1. Raise women's awareness of their constitutional and legal rights and the risks of violent extremism at the individual and family levels.
2. Amend legislation relating to women so as to achieve justice and eliminate all forms of discrimination against them.
3. Encourage women's participation in social, cultural and development activities.
4. Encourage women's participation in decision-making and policymaking processes.

The Lebanon National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2022) includes five strategic priorities under the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, including: (a) participation in decision-making at all levels; (b) prevention of conflict; (c) prevention of and protection of women and girls from gender-based violence; (d) relief and recovery; and (e) normative framework. There are clear synergies between the two documents. In particular, the WPS action plan acknowledges the role of women in decision-making in relation to and prevention of violent extremism. Similarly, both plans call for actions to address gender-based violence, as well as the amendment and extension of Lebanese laws to address violations of women's rights.

Jordan developed its counter-terrorism plan in 2014, which was later complemented by the King's "Amman Message on Tolerance".[8] The two combined documents guide Jordan's efforts in PVE. The combined guideline is mainly focused on the role of religious leaders and institutions, and there is a clear emphasis on the security approach. The document fails to examine the underlying social structures, including issues of equality, let alone gender discrimination. The role of women in the plan is only mentioned once, regarding enhancing the role of women preachers and making them more active in influencing society.

In 2018, Jordan issued its Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (JONAP). The Jordanian National Commission for Women led the design of the plan in coordination with various bodies in the public sector, security sector and civil society. The JONAP was developed to respond to the country's security and military challenges, namely its efforts to maintain stability and security in the wake of influxes of refugees fleeing conflicts in neighbouring countries. Simultaneously, the region saw the rise of ISIL and other extremist groups and Jordan witnessed an escalation of cross-border radicalization conducive to violent extremism. As such, the JONAP seeks to specifically respond to UNSCR 2242 (2015), which highlights the role of women as key partners in preventing and combating violent extremism.

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[8] Published in Alghad newspaper on 15 June 2016. Available at https://alghad.com/الغد-تنشر-الخطة-الوطنية-لمواجهة-التطر/. Accessed on 22 July 2020.

The JONAP identifies four key pillars: (a) Participation; (b) Prevention of Extremism and Protection Against Gender-Based Violence; (c) Relief and Recovery in Response to the Refugee Crisis; and (d) Capacity-Building, Awareness-Raising and Participation of Civil Society and Youth. Under each pillar a set of separate strategic goals is identified, although all pillars are strongly interlinked and interrelated. In addressing the issue of violent extremism, the JONAP focuses on two main areas – recognizing the disproportionate impact that terrorism and violent extremism have on women and girls and recognizing the role of women in preventing violent extremism.

The *Tunisian* National Strategy against Extremism and Terrorism[9] was formulated in 2016, following a series of terrorist acts against the military and civilians. The responsibility for the implementation of the strategy is under the overall guidance of the National Committee to Counter Terrorism, which was established pursuant to Article 66 of Law 26 (2015) on combating terrorism and money laundering. The document identifies broad targets to address violent extremism and terrorism, which are clustered under four main pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and response.

The prevention pillar aims to address the root causes of extremism through enacting legislation to prosecute incitement to terrorism acts and developing policy to address socioeconomic conditions and marginalization. The protection pillar highlights the role of the security and intelligence service in countering terrorism and violent extremism. The protection pillar also aims to consolidate measures and enhance communication among the various stakeholders to monitor borders and protect victims. The third pillar focuses on security, aiming to stop the planning and execution of terrorist acts and bolstering the prosecution of perpetrators. The final pillar resonates with previous pillars and focuses again on enhancing the State's response through establishing an early warning system, enhanced national and international collaboration and strengthened security measures.

Closely linked to the above is the National Action Plan (2018-2022) to Implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Security and Peace" and complementary resolutions.[10] The NAP, which was adopted in 2018, pays particular attention to issues of preventing extremism and terrorism. The document recognizes the various roles women can play in extremism and terrorism: as perpetrators, victims or partners in finding solutions to mitigate the threat of terrorism. To this extent, the NAP focuses on mainstreaming gender in transitional justice processes and the role of women in preventing violent extremism and the reintegration of returnees.

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9 The Tunisian National Strategy against Extremism and Terrorism (2016). Available at http://www.cnlct.tn//wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie.pdf.

10 Tunisia National Action Plan (2018-2022) to Implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" and Complementary Resolutions. Available at https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Tunisia%20NAP%20(2018-2022)%20-%20Arabic.pdf.

2. Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Arab Region: Approaches on Gender Mainstreaming

Terrorism and violent extremism have placed a heavy burden on a number of Arab countries. According to the Global Terrorism Index, between 2002 and 2018, the MENA region recorded the largest number of fatalities, with more than 93,700 deaths, accounting for 42 per cent of total global fatalities.[11] Of the top 10 countries most impacted by terrorism in 2018 (ranked by the number of deaths), four were in the Arab region – Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Yemen (ranked 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th respectively). Violent extremists have increasingly targeted women and women's rights, utilizing rape as a weapon of terror. Women have been sexually enslaved to furnish fighters with women, thereby boosting recruitment and retention, as well as to raise funds through the sale of women in slave markets or from ransom paid by their families. For example, thousands of Yazidi women were sexually enslaved in Syria and Iraq by the Islamic State.[12]

A. The importance of mainstreaming gender in PVE strategies in the Arab region

The Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism identifies that societies with higher gender equality indicators are less vulnerable to violent extremism. Systematic gender inequality and discrimination provide fertile ground for radicalization to violence, and the use of gender-based violence is a common tactic of violent extremist groups. The 2019 Women, Peace and Security Index ranked 167 countries on three basic dimensions of women's well-being – inclusion, justice and security – and found that the MENA region performs relatively poorly overall, which can be traced largely to high levels of organized violence and discriminatory laws that disempower women, often coupled with low rates of inclusion.[13] Five of the 10 worst performing countries in the Index are in the Arab region – Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Sudan. Three of these countries (Yemen, Syria and Iraq) were among those most impacted by terrorism in the Global Terrorism Index, demonstrating a notable correlation between the oppression of women and terrorism.

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[11] Institute for Economics and Peace. *Global Terrorism Index. Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism*. (2019).

[12] Strasser, Fred, "Women and Violent Extremism: A Growing Threat Demands Concerted Action". *United Institute of Peace* (2015).

[13] Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. *Women, Peace and Security Index 2019/20.* (2020), p. 13.

Attacks on women and women's rights, the relationship between gender equality indicators and violent extremism and the manipulation of gender dynamics by extremists speak to the importance of mainstreaming gender in PVE initiatives. In addition, PVE initiatives must acknowledge and address the fact that women are increasingly taking on roles as perpetrators or preventers of violent extremism.

However, terrorism and violent extremism, as well as efforts to counter them, have long been considered male domains. While there has been a clear paradigm shift in international frameworks to address violent extremism, with women's empowerment identified as critical for sustainable peace, the gendered dimensions of violent extremism are often overlooked in both research and practice. Within the Arab region, efforts made to address the issues have primarily focused on securitized measures to counter terrorism and have lacked a gender-sensitive perspective. For example, in the Arab region there are currently no comprehensive gender-sensitive policies for tackling the return of individuals who have been involved in violent extremist or terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State. Many women in the Arab region are not involved in formal efforts to prevent violent extremism, while male religious and community leaders tend to monopolize key roles in PVE programmes. As many PVE initiatives are insufficiently grounded in a gender- and human rights-based framework, they can exacerbate adverse gender dynamics, including gendered inequalities and forms of discrimination.

B. Gender-informed priorities for preventing violent extremism

Arab States' engagement in PVE is varied and uneven. Approaches include: (a) a continued focus on securitized measures at the expense of preventative programmes; (b) strategies spearheaded by grassroots activism; (c) government engagement in discrete PVE programmes; (d) incorporation of PVE concepts in national counter-terrorism strategies; and (e) the development of standalone national PVE strategies. For example, Saudi Arabia has a three-pronged strategy that focuses on "the men, the money and the mindset". The strategy includes actions ranging from military strategies to combat terrorists, to media and online initiatives to promote moderation and prevent the spread of propaganda.[14] In Iraq, the Ministry of Education has worked with UNESCO and other partners to implement a pilot project on prevention of violent extremism through education in government primary schools in Mosul.[15] In terms of standalone PVE strategies, there is no central database for National Action Plans on PVE. Morocco and Lebanon have publicly available plans, while Algeria, which drafted a NAP on PVE in 2016, did not make it publicly available.

According to the UN Women Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE, gender mainstreaming, grounded in international human rights obligations in

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[14] The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Washington D.C. (2019). *Saudi Arabia and Counterterrorism.* Available at https://www.saudiembassy.net/sites/default/files/SAUDI%20ARABIA%20AND%20COUNTERTERRORISM.pdf Accessed on 24 July 2020.

[15] UNESCO. *Prevention of Violent Extremism Through Education.* Available at https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/baghdad/PVE-E. Accessed on 24 July 2020.

PVE, is needed in order to: prevent adverse gendered impacts, and to counter those effects that do occur; accurately identify root causes, potential recruits, targets and victims of violent extremism; and leverage diverse actors as part of a comprehensive and holistic approach to PVE. Efforts to include a gender-perspective in PVE have thus far been *ad hoc* and siloed. Many of these efforts are often seen as "women-centred", one-off, discrete activities and commitments that are secondary to, and separate from, mainstream PVE efforts.[16] While still a work in progress with varying levels of commitment across the region, the emergence of NAPs on WPS and gender-sensitive CVE plans from Arab States over the past three decades demonstrates an increased commitment to integrating gender into their CVE agendas.

1. Mitigating Harmful Impacts on Women's Rights

It has been argued that while extremist groups have been somewhat successful at co-opting and exploiting women, gender norms and gender dynamics, PVE programmes have not significantly addressed these issues, often instead finding their grounding in gender assumptions. As such, some argue that programmes are often limited in their engagement with women, and therefore in their effectiveness.[17] Furthermore, because many PVE initiatives are insufficiently grounded in a gender and human rights-based framework, they can exacerbate adverse gender dynamics, including gendered inequalities and forms of discrimination.[18]

Areas where PVE may impact women include: (a) women being directly targeted by policies that fail to appreciate their vulnerabilities and experiences; (b) women experiencing collateral consequences of policies directed at male family members; (c) the impacts on and burdens of women of the increasing securitization of social services; (d) the gendered impact of surveillance policies; and (e) women's lack of representation in decision-making roles.[19]

The instrumentalization and securitization of women and their rights – meaning when women's empowerment is portrayed as a means to an end – is a potentially damaging trend. If women's empowerment is seen as primarily important for security, it may not be seen as important outside of that context, raising concerns that governments may barter away women's rights when negotiating with political or militant groups. Similarly, if women are selectively empowered to speak out or act against certain extremist groups, but are not empowered to address structural powers within society, then they have not achieved true empowerment. Further, if not treated sensitively, efforts to associate women's rights with counter-terrorism and PVE can invite violent backlash against women from violent extremists.[20]

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16 UN Women. *Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE.* (2019) p. 7.

17 UN Women. *Meeting of Experts of the North Africa Regional Platform.* (April 2019), p. 3.

18 UN Women. *Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE.* (2019) p. 8.

19 UN Women. *Meeting of Experts of the North Africa Regional Platform.* (April 2019), p. 3.

20 UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women. *Women and Violent Radicalisation in Jordan.* (2016) p. 16.

In Morocco, women's rights activists played a positive role in ensuring that women are not neglected when plans are made to prevent violent extremism. The revised strategy in Morocco not only gave rise to the incorporation of CVE, and later PVE activities, but also to the steadily increased integration of a gender perspective and the engagement of women. A key driver of this change was the work of both secular and Islamist women to position themselves as appropriate agents to address the rise of extremism. While secular feminist groups focused on discourses of democracy, pushing for a reform of family law, Islamist women campaigned for women to be admitted to positions of religious leadership and be recognized for their ability to preach in State-controlled mosques.

However, and in both cases, while religious training has opened up to Moroccan women, and there is evidence that women's civil society organizations have worked with the Moroccan Government in implementing PVE programmes, this did not trickle down to consulting with women on security measures. The security and legal pillar of the Moroccan strategy on PVE does not reference engagement with or participation of women. Similarly, women's political participation (in terms of parliamentary representation) continues to fall below the global average.[21] As such, women's leadership and participation in government and security – both crucial for ensuring PVE planning does not infringe on women's rights – leave room for improvement.

In Lebanon, the plan calls for gender equality to be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and procedures related to PVE. This, along with calls for women's participation at all levels, is tacit acknowledgement that women's rights can be encroached upon in the fight against violent extremism unless measures are undertaken to mitigate against such harmful impacts.

The shortfalls of the Jordanian counter-terrorism plan in mitigating harmful impacts on women were addressed later through the JONAP, which, from its inception, recognized that violent extremism hinders the ability of women and girls to protect themselves and their human rights, including in respect to their health, education and participation in public life. The JONAP is consistent with Jordan's international commitment to respect and promote human rights and is in line with the Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights (2016-2025),[22] which includes a specific goal on enhancing and protecting women's rights, as well as the National Strategy for Women (2020-2025). The JONAP also includes plans for a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system of actions, including those in pursuit of preventing violent extremism. While these moves are undoubtedly positive steps towards mitigating the harmful effects of PVE strategies on women's rights, the fact that the majority of PVE actions involving or relating to women are only included in the WPS JONAP and not the broader counter-terrorism plan may lead to the instrumentalization and securitization of women's rights. The JONAP does include the goal of

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21 Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, "Women, Peace and Security Index 2019".

22 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. *Comprehensive National Plan for Human Rights (2016-2025)*. Available at http://jordanembassy.or.id/_2file_obj/pdf/Comprehensive-National-Plan-for-Human-Rights.pdf. Accessed on 24 July 2020.

integrating women into the National Strategy and Action Plan on PVE, which would diminish this risk.

Similarly, the NAP in Tunisia recognizes the importance of gender equality. Its main goal is to empower women and girls and enhance their participation in building a lasting peace, to contribute to the stability of the country, to combat gender-based violence and to protect society from conflicts, extremism and terrorism. Through the five areas of the NAP (prevention, protection, participation, peacebuilding and reconstruction and communication and advocacy), the document focuses on presenting a balanced combination of addressing the root causes of gender-based violence and the root causes of extremism. Hence, the NAP acknowledges the importance of advancing women's human rights and aligning national legislation with international standards on women's rights.

2. Gendered Drivers of Violent Extremism

The relationship between gender inequality and violence against women on the one hand and violent extremism on the other is not simple or one way – gender inequality and violence against women are warning signs of violent extremism, mobilizing factors for engagement in violent extremism and also the outcomes of violent extremism.[23] Understanding this relationship is crucial for effective PVE interventions. In the Secretary-General's 2015 Plan of Action to Counter Violent Extremism, he highlighted that societies with higher gender equality indicators were less vulnerable to violent extremism.[24] The Secretary-General draws attention to the role of structural inequality, gendered drivers of armed conflict and violent, hegemonic masculinities in fostering violent extremism.[25] High rates of discrimination and gender-based violence provide settings where radicalization can flourish. Tellingly, Yemen, Syria and Iraq were both some of the worst performing countries in the 2019 Women, Peace and Security Index, as well as among those most impacted by terrorism in the Global Terrorism Index.[26] Yemen is ranked last in the WPS Index,[27] with no domestic violence legislation and without the criminalization of rape; official and social biases prevent much of women's participation in the economy or politics. Similarly, Syria lacks robust legislation addressing sexual and gender-based violence, and women have been excluded from full participation in society largely due to the ongoing conflict and legal and social restrictions.[28]

Regarding the radicalization of women, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OCSE) points to potential root sources such as gender-based inequality and discrimination: violence against women, lack of educational and economic opportunities

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23 Johnston, Melissa., True, Jacqui and Benall, Zineb. "Gender Equality and Violent Extremism: A Research Agenda for Libya". *UN Women and Monash University*. (November 2019), p. 11.

24 A/70/674, para. 53.

25 A/HRC/43/46, para. 39.

26 Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Women, Peace and Security Index 2019/20. (2020), p. 13.

27 Ibid., p. 22.

28 Ibid., p. 4.

for women to exercise their civil and political rights and engage in the political process.[29] The World Bank found that the factors most strongly associated with foreign individuals joining the Islamic State have to do with a lack of social and economic inclusion in their countries of residence.[30] The Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism 2009 report to the General Assembly calls on governments to remedy the gender inequality that makes women the targets of terrorism.[31]

Research also suggests that misogyny is an integral part of the ideology, political identity, political economy and recruitment strategies of violent extremist groups. These groups seek to stigmatize changing gender roles and use threats of gender-based violence and female dishonour because they see empowered women as a threat[32] and they seek to mobilize recruits around concepts of limiting the influence and presence of women in society. For example, in Libya and Tunisia, extremist groups have promoted gender-regressive aims such as gender segregation, policing women's dress, limiting women in public spaces and promoting 'traditional' marriage.[33] Attacks on women's rights actors in particular is seen as an early warning sign of violence.[34] Beyond the use of sexual violence as a tactic of extremism, a global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 found that, across regions, every advance made by violent extremist groups involved attacks on the rights of women and girls, including their rights to education, public life and decision-making over their bodies.[35] Hence, misogynistic attitudes and support for violence against women are both drivers and outcomes of violent extremism.

However, gendered drivers of violent extremism are not limited to promoting traditional ideas of femininity and limited societal roles for women. In addition, appealing to socially constructed masculinities has been integral to the recruitment strategies and propaganda of extremist groups. The Islamic State, for example, has emphasized men's sense of masculine dominance and force over women, and their roles as protectors, patriarchs and breadwinners.[36] In short, men are enticed

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29 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Women and Terror Radicalisation Final Report. (2013), p. 3.

30 World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region, "Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism," *MENA Economic Monitor.* (2016), p. 9.

31 Scheinin, Martin. "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism." (2009), para. 32-33.

32 Johnston and others, "Gender Equality and Violent Extremism: A Research Agenda for Libya", p. 8.

33 Kallel, Salim. "The Relationship Between Violence Against Women and Violent Extremism". *UN Women and Monash University.* (2020), p. 6 and Johnston and others, "Gender Equality and Violent Extremism: A Research Agenda for Libya", p. 40.

34 Johnston and others, "Gender Equality and Violent Extremism: A Research Agenda for Libya", p. 8.

35 United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). *Reference Guide: Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism*. p. 34.

36 Van Leuven, Dallin, Mazurana, Dyan, and Gordon, Rachel. "Analysing the Recruitment and Use of Foreign Men and Women in ISIL through a Gender Perspective." Foreign Fighters Under International Law and Beyond. (2016), p. 112.

into joining extremist groups as a means to assert traditional masculinities and to protect "their" women against violations.

In the case of Morocco, one element of its CVE strategy focuses on socioeconomic reforms, based on the idea that initiatives to improve the livelihoods and conditions of Moroccans will reduce the appeal of violent extremism. Under this pillar, a number of legal reforms and programmes to empower women socially, politically and economically have been implemented.[37] In particular, in 2004, King Mohammed VI passed progressive revisions to the *Moudawana* (Moroccan Family Code) that were instrumental in empowering women socioeconomically. The reforms afforded women equal status in the household, the power to initiate divorce and the right to inherit property equally to men.[38] Implemented soon after the 2003 attacks in Casablanca, the reforms were said to demonstrate a strategy and commitment to female empowerment in fighting terrorism because providing women with a more robust standing in the family would allow them to address issues that have the potential to materialize into catalysts for radicalization.[39]

In the Lebanon National Strategy to Prevent Violent Extremism, various national institutions and machineries are tasked with countering gender stereotypes, as well as studying how violent extremist organizations manipulate gender equality standards, demonstrating an awareness that entrenched gender norms and gender inequality can contribute to the proliferation of violent extremism. In addition, emphasis is placed on the economic empowerment of women, including through entrepreneurship among other economic related activities. The Lebanese Strategy also references the gendered tactics of violent extremist groups, calling on the former Ministry of State for Women's Affairs to "address gender-based violence practiced by violent extremist organizations".

Similarly, the background to the Tunisian NAP highlights the underlying structural factors that heighten the threats of terrorism. It further identifies the link between structural social norms that provide the base for violence against women and girls with norms that foster extremism. Hence, in the area of prevention, the plan highlights the importance of education as a means to create a culture of tolerance and peace, including the prevalence of violence against women and girls as an indicator within early warning systems. The document further positions itself as a continuation of State efforts to advance the vision for the country's development through enhancing the role of women in shaping the country to reject extremism and foster dialogue and tolerance.

The JONAP also clearly identifies the gendered impacts of violent extremism, including how regressive gender stereotypes and violence against women are factors that both contribute to and are exacerbated by violent extremism. It also highlights the gendered tactics of violent extremists, whereby sexual violence is not limited to criminal acts, but is "utilized to impose an ideology that permits the oppression of women and control over their lives, means, sexual and productive rights"

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37 Couture, "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism", p. 26.

38 Ibid., p. 29.

39 Ibid.

as well as a means "to generate income in the shadow economy […] through sexual slavery, human trafficking, forced prostitution, blackmailing families through ransoms, etc." To combat the gendered roots and tactics of violent extremism, the JONAP includes proposed initiatives to counter gender stereotypes and oppose the hyper-masculine messaging of radicalized groups. For example, it calls for a campaign with religious leaders, intellectual leaders and community leaders to address misconceptions and stereotypes related to women, men, religion and traditions. It also proposes broadened religious discourse through the design of religious speeches and media messages. These messages target local communities, question the hyper-masculine messaging of radicalized groups and emphasize women's role in preventing violent extremism.

3. Women as Agents of Violent Extremism

Much of the literature on women and violent extremism has focused on narrow assumptions of the role women play – painting them as either victims suffering at the hands of radical groups, or as peacemakers. However, women can play active roles in violence as sympathisers, mobilisers, enablers and perpetrators. Women's roles may also not be confined to one category. For example, women and girls can simultaneously be victims of sexual or gender-based violence as well as recruiters, fundraisers and perpetrators of violent extremism.[40]

The rise and fall of the Islamic State has illustrated the extent to which women are active members of violent extremist groups. Women assumed active roles in recruitment, logistics and finance, intelligence collection, reconnaissance and enforcement of morality laws, as well as fighting and suicide bombings.[41] In 2016, an all-female extremist cell was disrupted in Morocco; they had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and were obtaining chemicals to make explosives.[42] The Islamic State also created spaces for women to contribute to the caliphate and support its radical ideology outside of participation in direct hostilities.[43] Women were recruited to the Islamic State within the parameters of traditional gender roles, as wives, mothers, teachers and nurses so as to build families and cultivate a more complete society rooted in the Islamic State's idealized notions of hyper-masculinity and traditional femininity.[44] Women have also facilitated the radicalization process of children.[45]

Once enlisted, women have also proven to be effective recruiters. One study of online pro-Islamic State groups found that female recruiters had higher network connectivity than men, making them

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40 Johnston and True, "Gender Equality and Violent Extremism: Libya, Tunisia and Morocco", p. 7.

41 Johnston and True, "Misogyny and Violent Extremism: Implications for Preventing Violent Extremism", p. 2.

42 Deutsche Welle. "All-Female 'Islamic State' Cell Arrested in Morocco". (3 October 2016). Available at https://www.dw.com/en/all-female-islamic-state-cell-arrested-in-morocco/a-35948566.

43 Van Leuven, Dallin, Mazurana, Dyan, and Gordon, Rachel. "Analysing the Recruitment and Use of Foreign Men and Women in ISIL through a Gender Perspective." Foreign Fighters Under International Law and Beyond. (2016), p. 103.

44 Ibid.

45 Cited in UN Women, "Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE", p. 42.

more effective at spreading the Islamic State's message than their male counterparts.[46] Terrorist groups have harnessed the stereotype of women as "peaceful", claiming that the involvement of women in their organizations demonstrates their benign and non-violent character.[47]

In the Arab region, there is still only nascent recognition of the range of roles women play as agents of violent extremism. For example, although Moroccan women were heavily represented among female migrants to the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant, little attention has been paid to female radicalization and migration to Islamic State-held territories compared to their male counterparts.[48] The "Musalaha" programme initiated in Morocco was geared towards Jihadi-Salafi prisoners to teach moderate interpretations of religious texts and support reintegration into society. Despite representing five per cent of prisoners convicted of terrorism charges, women were not included in the initiative.[49] This indicates that the gendered drivers of extremism, and the broad range of roles women play in extremist activities, have not been fully taken into consideration.

Similarly, in Jordan, the JONAP pays scant attention to women as voluntary members of violent extremist organizations or the conditions conducive to their radicalization. Notably, in discussing the impact of violent extremism on women, the JONAP states that "enslaved women and girls have been used as human shields and suicide bombers", however there is no mention of women who have joined violent extremist organizations or participated in violent acts of their own volition.

In Tunisia, the NAP notes that the increased radical discourse among non-governmental organizations and mosques, as well as the problem of female and male terrorist returnees from conflict areas without available rehabilitation solutions, were key drivers for developing a NAP. It emphasizes the need to provide adequate services to protect women victims of violence and calls for early warning systems based on the role of women and children in terrorist groups. Similarly, the Lebanese Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism calls for research into what makes some women prone to radicalization and the methods used by violent extremist groups to recruit women.

4. Women as "Preventers" and "Peacemakers"

Given the profound impact that violent extremism has on women's rights and security, women are key stakeholders in efforts to prevent and counter the threat. In any PVE strategy there is a need to capitalize on women's "understanding of culturally specific issues and on-the-ground gender

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46 Bigio, Jamille, and Vogelstein, Rachel. "Women and Terrorism. Hidden Threats, Forgotten Partners". *Council on Foreign Relations.* (2019), p. 5.

47 Couture, K.L. "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism. Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco". *Foreign Policy at Brookings.* (2014), p. 10.

48 DGAP Report, "Socio-Economic Development and Violent Extremism in Morocco", p. 11.

49 Ibid., p. 22.

dynamics, influence in families and communities and skill at mobilizing social capital to act as interlocutors for peace".[50]

In the Arab region, many women are on the frontlines of the fight against violent extremism as peace activists and human rights defenders, including through women's organizations. For example, in Tunisia, women intellectuals were instrumental in the organization of a congress to think through and protest aspects of extremist thought and practice.[51] In Algeria, female novelists and writers have written extensively to deconstruct the narrative of terrorism and build their own narratives.[52] In Libya, local women warned of rising radicalism after experiencing increasing attacks on their own rights, as well as observing an increased flow of Western female recruits, signalling a growing market for wives as the Islamic State expanded its stronghold.[53] Despite these varied efforts, women have often been shut out from formal efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism, and they continue to be overlooked and constrained to informal community roles. For example, in the case of Libya, the warnings of local women were reportedly ignored, giving the Islamic State additional time to establish a headquarters.[54]

In the various PVE strategies reviewed, it is clear that where the role and influence of women has often been recognized – and relegated – is as wives and mothers. Approaches to PVE often suggest that given their societal roles as mothers, wives and sisters, women have a unique capability to detect extremist thinking and behaviours within their personal environment and this provides them with a significant role to play in 'early warning' and 'early response'. However, focusing on women's role within the family not only ignores their potential in designing, implementing, monitoring and leading a range of PVE policies and programmes, but can also put them in a difficult situation, and even at risk, if they are expected to report on their children and families to authorities. The focus on mothers also opens women up to blame for the potential radicalization of their children. Therefore, in programmes targeting women as mothers, wives and community leaders, it is critical to include women as agents, not subjects and vehicles of programme implementation.

A cornerstone of the Moroccan Government's PVE strategy is the programme to train women religious guides (*mourchidates*), established in 2005 by the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs.[55] The mourchidates are charged with promoting religious moderation and tolerance to "counter extremist ideology within Qur'anic schools and mosques".[56] As a result of this program, the number

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50 UNDP, *Assessing Progress Made, and the Future Development Approaches to Preventing Violent Extremism*. (2018), p. 14.

51 Jeblaoui, Emna. "Women's Roles in Preventing Violent Extremism in Tunisia". *UN Women and Monash University.* (2020), p. 8.

52 Daoudi, A. "Algerian Women and the Traumatic Decade: Literary Interventions". *Journal of Literature and Trauma Studies*, vol. 5, No. 1. (Spring 2016).

53 Bigio and Vogelstein, "Women and Terrorism. Hidden Threats, Forgotten Partners", p. 8.

54 Ibid.

55 UN Women, "Meeting of Experts of the North Africa Regional Platform", p. 6.

56 Cited in Couture, "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism", p. 30.

of female mourchidates increased from 50 to 500 between 2005 and 2014 and the mourchidates have become religious authorities and community leaders, working in prisons, hospitals, orphanages, schools and nursing homes.[57] The mourchidate programme has widely been hailed as a success, not only in the fight against terrorism, but also as a way to transform the status of women by giving them non-traditional roles.

While a prominent example from the region of the potential for women to engage in new roles, the programme is not without its pitfalls. Women mourchidates do not receive as rigorous training in the Qur'an as men and are prohibited from leading prayers and giving sermons. Critics argue that the programme appears to be premised on the gender stereotype that women's femininity, specifically their image as emotional, sentimental and motherly, will cultivate a positive and soft image of Islam that invalidates beliefs affiliated with extremist tendencies. When speaking in mosques, the mourchidates are limited to voicing the State's religious discourse, particularly with regard to the identity of women. These limitations risk strengthening, rather than breaking down, gendered stereotypes and dualisms.[58]

The prevention pillar in the Tunisian strategy on PVE is the only pillar that references the role of women, by setting a target to enhance the role of women in preventing extremism. Reference to respecting and protecting human rights principles is also presented on an ad-hoc basis throughout the Strategy. However, this gap was addressed by the Tunisian authorities through the National Action Plan on WPS. Under the participation pillar, the Tunisian NAP highlights the importance of equal representation of women and men in political, judicial, law enforcement and military ranks. It includes a set of procedures to advance women's role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

In Lebanon, emphasis is placed on promoting women's participation in decision and policymaking at all levels, and strengthening the role of civil society organizations in peacebuilding and policy development. These actions demonstrate some awareness of the importance of women's participation at all levels of PVE planning and implementation. However, while the strategy does call for the creation of social dialogue and the strengthening of the role of civil society, it does not directly address the varied ways in which women can engage in prevention activities. The only specific acknowledgement of the role of women is through the tasking the former Ministry of State for Women's Affairs to raise awareness of women – "especially housewives" – of the dangers of violent extremism for their family members and provide them with the knowledge and skills to detect early signs of violent extremism.

The JONAP section on the role of women in PVE discusses the importance of building the capacities of local civil society organizations, especially women's organizations, to promote the role of women in peacebuilding and countering violent extremism in local communities. It emphasizes that women are influencers, given their roles as mothers and educators who can raise awareness among family and children, teach correct religious concepts and values and detect early warning signs of

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[57] DGAP Report, "Socio-Economic Development and Violent Extremism in Morocco", p. 17.

[58] Ibid., p. 18.

radicalization and extremism in their children. While there is a proposed initiative through the Ministry of Interior in Jordan to train women leaders to undertake efforts to prevent violent extremism, much of the focus is on using women's existing roles in the community as mothers, teachers and community leaders to detect and prevent radicalization.

That being said, numerous proposals are put forth elsewhere in the JONAP to increase women's participation and training in all aspects of the security sector. While the proposals are outlined with the aim of increasing women's participation in peacekeeping and peace operations, and no explicit link is made to prevention of violent extremism, these initiatives are critical for successful PVE. Hence, reforms to the security sector to make it more inclusive and responsive can be crucial to mitigating these potential pitfalls.[59]

[59] UN Women, "Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE", p. 49.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

Gender mainstreaming in PVE requires considering the gendered drivers of violence; understanding the roles women play in supporting and participating in violent extremism and their pathways to violent extremism; identifying the vital role women can play as preventers and peacemakers at all levels of society and decision-making; and mitigating against potential harmful impacts of PVE on women's rights. An increasing recognition of the gendered nature of violent extremism is evident in the Arab region, where several countries have taken steps to incorporate gender considerations into PVE planning. Nevertheless, there continues to be more of an emphasis on traditional understandings of women's links to violent extremism, namely as victims or as mothers in preventing violent extremism. These narrow perspectives can limit the full potential of women as preventers and can hamper reaching an understanding of their roles in perpetuating extremism.

Failing to account for the potential effects of PVE strategies on women, as well as securitizing women's roles in society as a means to counter and prevent violent extremism, risks both ignoring and reinforcing the wider structural realities that produce gender inequality, exclusion and violence. Therefore, a key priority of mainstreaming gender in PVE strategies is to mitigate these harmful impacts, and to ensure that any interventions adhere to international human rights obligations.

In the above case studies, CT and PVE measures often disproportionately target men based on age, class, ethno-racial, political and religious profiling, while assuming that women were either forcibly conscripted or coerced into joining violent extremist groups. This not only discriminates against and stigmatizes men as falling under particular profiles, but also stereotypes women as either passive or brainwashed and exposes a serious underlying bias: that men are responsible for their violent actions while women are only unwilling participants. Radicalization to violent extremism is often the culmination of economic, social and political factors; as such, so is the pathway to deradicalization and disengagement from violent extremism.[60] Adopting a gendered approach to PVE, therefore, is critical to assess the conditions conducive to women and girls' involvement in violent extremism and to identify how ideas of manhood and womanhood influence radicalization.[61]

While women, like all people, strongly identify with some of their societal roles, particularly motherhood, and while these identities can be a powerful peace discourse, an excessive focus on these identities can reinforce traditional gender roles and prevent seeing women's contributions in other ways. Empowering women as leaders – at all levels of society – is critical for decreasing the risks that violent extremism poses to both women and society. Women must be involved in all

[60] Praxl-Tabuchi, Franziska. "Gendered Pathways to Radicalisation and Desistance from Violent Extremism". *UN Women and Global Centre on Cooperative Security*. (April 2019), p. 4.

[61] UN Women, "Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE", p. 42.

elements of PVE programming, including the design, delivery and review. It is crucial that relevant women are consulted on, and are active participants in, policies and programmes that directly affect them.

The gaps in women's formal engagement in PVE highlight the opportunity for States to mainstream gender throughout their PVE activities and policies, thus increasing their effectiveness. In order to address these gaps, Arab States need a concerted effort, both nationally and regionally, to develop more holistic gender-informed approaches to the prevention of violent extremism.

Systematic gender inequality and support for violence against women – both at the societal and individual level – are very much part and parcel of the development and proliferation of violent extremism. These factors are exploited to mobilize recruits and are perpetuated by violent extremist groups. When developing PVE strategies, it is crucial that risk assessment tools for violent extremism routinely consider gender norms, including attitudes such as hostile misogyny, benevolent sexism and perceptions regarding violence against women.[62] Addressing regressive gender norms should not only focus on women, but also address the hyper-masculine messaging of violent extremist groups and traditional, yet harmful, notions of masculinity that are common in society. Therefore, policymakers in the Arab region are invited to consider the following recommendations:

- Acknowledge and raise awareness of the need to address the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism and the fact that both phenomena are highly gendered and exploit harmful gender stereotypes (both female and male);
- Expand research on the variety of roles women can play in preventative strategies, including on how women at all levels can become active and willing participants in systematically providing early warning, deradicalizing former extremists and hindering the recruitment of newcomers;
- Expand research on women's roles as supporters and perpetrators of violent extremism and their pathways to radicalization;
- Develop a gender mainstreamed National Action Plan on Prevention of Violent Extremism, in line with the recommendation of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on the Prevention of Violent Extremism. When developing National Action Plans, draw on the following resources for guidance, particularly regarding gender mainstreaming:
    - The UNOCT Reference Guide on Developing National and Regional Action Plans to Prevent Violent Extremism;
    - The UN Women Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for Prevention of Violent Extremism.
- Strengthen synergies between the WPS agenda and the PVE agenda at the national level, by exploring common priorities, tools and strategies, without compromising the rights of women;

[62] Johnston and True, "Misogyny and Violent Extremism: Implications for Preventing Violent Extremism", p. 6.

- Exchange experiences among countries on ways to develop National Action Plans on PVE, particularly with regard to successful models that are perceived positively, for example, the strengthened engagement of female religious leaders in Morocco in building resilience and reducing risk to violent extremism in local communities;
- Engage women across the spectrum of society, including community leaders and members of women's organizations, human rights groups and the security sector, in designing, monitoring and evaluating PVE policy and programmatic interventions.

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