Assessing Violent Extremism

Phyllis Dininio, Ph.D.
CVE Guides and Frameworks

8. International Alert and UNDP. “Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming: A toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation,” 2018
Elements of a CVE Assessment

- Nature and scope of the threat
- Key actors
- At-risk populations
- Drivers
- Resiliencies
- Government and civil society responses
- Synthesis and programming recommendations
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
- State support for, or complicity in, violent extremist activities
- Domination, intimidation and coercion by violent extremist groups
- State fragility and weakness, ungoverned spaces
- Large scale corruption
- Inability of indigenous religious institutions to manage the redefinition of religion

DOMESTIC

PUSH FACTORS
- Desire for ordered lives
- Search for meaning
- Yearning for identity and belonging
- Desire for influence, adventure
- Inclination to think in black/white
- Frustration with society

VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION PULL FACTORS
- Material rewards and immediate gratification

DOMESTIC & TRANSNATIONAL

PUSH FACTORS
- Imprisonment
- Peer influence

VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION PULL FACTORS
- Active recruitment
- Bonds of loyalty and brotherhood
- Us vs. Them mentality
- Vicious cycle of rising social hostility

PUSH FACTORS
- Local conflicts
- Social Exclusion and marginality
- Systemic socioeconomic discrimination
- Perception that religion threatened
- Perceived inequalities of the international system
- Cultural dislocation and rapid social change

VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION PULL FACTORS
- VE service provision
- Role of VE social media
- Criminality-VE nexus
- Religious ideology

SOCIAL

GROUP

INDIVIDUAL
**Individual factors:** Motivations, incentives, grievances, attitudes, perceptions and psychological factors, response to societal and structural factors. These include sense of agency, belonging and identity factors.

**Structural/institutional factors:** Causes of conflict and sources of resilience embedded within social, cultural and political systems. These include institutions’ role in VE/PVE, such as the role of mandated bodies in PVE or the role corruption plays within state institutions.

**Social factors:** Relationships with families, peers and communities (incl. inter-generational, relationships between men and women) and engagement in decision-making. This includes relationships between people and groups at local and national levels.

**Key – understanding the nexus between personal/social/structural**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerability factors</th>
<th>Resilience factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural/institutional</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• High unemployment of young graduates (VE groups use financial incentives to recruit)</td>
<td>• Adaptation to Arab spring – reforms happening despite being slow</td>
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<td>• Lack of political representation of the suburbs</td>
<td>• Burgeoning civil society and active youth role in this dynamic</td>
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<td>• Lack of public and cultural spaces</td>
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<td>• Abuses by security forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of transparency in policy-making</td>
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<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Stigmatisation of specific groups (e.g. based on gender)</td>
<td>• Solidarity amongst community – source of strength</td>
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<td>• Exclusion of groups in decision-making processes (formal and informal)</td>
<td>• Equal and inclusive gender relations (e.g. between men and women, different generations)</td>
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Data Collection Methods

Literature Review
Key Informant Interviews
Focus Group Discussions
Surveys
Social Media Analysis
Personal Narratives
Assessment Findings

Low Activity
- no discernable/low VRE activity
- no or few VRE actors
- low penetration of VRE ideas
- significant sources of resiliency
- drivers are not powerful enough to create a sizable VRE threat.

Moderate Activity
- VRE activity confined to certain areas
- active VRE actors with limited support
- some penetration of VRE ideas
- some sources of resiliency may have diminished or eroded
- VRE problem may be spreading unevenly or at a manageable pace

High Activity
- visible and prevalent VRE activity
- VRE actors with significant societal support
- significant penetration of VRE ideas
- no or few VRE actors
- VRE threat rapidly escalating
From Assessment to Programming

Activity Prioritization Map

- HIGH
- LOW

Significance of VE Driver (Effect on Morale & Performance)

Ease of Implementation (Based on Effort & Resources Required)
Writing the Report

• Include executive summary
• Aim for a shareable document
• Incorporate tables and graphics
• Plan for updating the assessment

Map 1: Bosnia and Herzegovina VE Sympathy by Subregion

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<td>• Islamophobia</td>
<td>• Political identity</td>
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<td>• Hate speech</td>
<td>• Cultural and religious identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of democratization</td>
<td>• Influence of media</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lack of education and critical thinking</td>
<td>• Feelings of victimhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ethnic and religious marginalization and intolerance</td>
<td>• Monetary incentives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poverty</td>
<td>• Idealization of former fighters from Afghanistan and other conflicts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Military operations by Western governments in Afghanistan and Iraq</td>
<td>• Idea of achieving a “pure Islam”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Feelings of victimhood and secondary trauma related to suffering of Muslims outside the region (Palestinians, refugees from Syria)</td>
<td>• Sense of adventure</td>
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<td>• Poor justice system</td>
<td>• Feelings of power</td>
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<td>• Violence in the community</td>
<td>• Opportunity of transformation and change for their communities</td>
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