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Editorial Note

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) / Deradicalisation and Counter-ideology

We are pleased to release Volume 7, Issue 9 (October 2015) of the Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) at www.rsis.edu.sg/research/icpvtr/ctta (ISSN 2382-6444) by the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.

As the threats of violent extremism become more diffused, impacting economies and societies globally, there is a greater need for an effective response to address it holistically. The articles in this issue discuss the significance of rehabilitation programmes in the context of countering violent extremism (CVE) and provide an overview of rehabilitation efforts in various regional contexts, including in Europe, South Asia and Africa.

In light of growing concerns about the risks of radical extremist ideology in the European context, **Marcin Styszynski** argues that countries in the region need to rethink their rehabilitation programmes by taking lessons from some of the Arab countries that have dealt with the threat with varying degrees of success. Additionally, these measures and initiatives need to be contextualised, given the differences in scale and nature of the threat of jihadism, terrorism and radicalisation in the concerned countries in Europe.

Abdul Basit explores Pakistan's militant rehabilitation programme in the context of its efficacy and limitations. He observes that, unless there is an overarching counter-radicalisation strategy to supplement the de-radicalisation and militant rehabilitation efforts of detainees, Pakistan's fight against terrorism and extremism will not be completely effective.

Jane Ekayu considers the plight of the former child soldiers in Northern Uganda following the end of the civil war involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government. In her article, she discusses how peacebuilding initiatives by non-governmental organisations like the Children of Peace Uganda play an important role at the community level to minimise the risk of violent extremism.

Detainee Rehabilitation Programmes in Europe

Marcin Styszynski

European countries need to review their existing rehabilitation programmes for detained militants, in light of the growing threat of radical extremist ideology in the region. The article explores rehabilitation programmes in both the Arab countries and in Europe, and provides some recommendations for the European countries to consider.

Introduction

The flow of fighters to the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) has been an ongoing source for concern for several countries, especially those in the European Union (EU). The unrest and instability caused by the 2011 Arab spring, the Syrian conflict and a large influx of refugees into European borders in recent times, have also posed huge security risks for Europe.

At present, an estimated 20,000 foreign fighters have joined ISIS from various countries across the world, with at least 2,500 from France, Germany, Sweden, Belgium and the United Kingdom (Cordesman 2015). European countries are also seeing a growth in the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by persons linked to or inspired by ISIS. ISIS has encouraged those who are unable to join the group in Iraq and Syria to carry out attacks against various targets in their respective home countries (Smith-Spark and Robertson 2015; Borger 2015).

Al Qaeda has also inspired attacks against Western targets, as evidenced by the January 2015 terrorist attack on the headquarters of the Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris. The perpetrators, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, also known as the Kouachi brothers, were a part of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (Joscelyn 2015). AQAP also claimed responsibility for the attack.

Considering the growing threat of violent extremism in Europe in recent times, along with the rise in ISIS-linked activity, European countries are beginning to recognise the importance of de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes as military interventions against ISIS have so far not been entirely effective.

Moreover, Europe needs to deal with the threat of returning fighters in the coming years, especially those that are apprehended. In this context, the rehabilitation initiatives of a number of countries in the Arab world could be useful lessons for Europe to de-radicalise the returnees and reintegrate them in to the mainstream. An additional benefit would be the intelligence that law enforcement agencies can get from the returnees, that will be helpful for identifying potential supporters of ISIS in their respective countries.

The personal accounts of the returnees about the real nature of the so-called "Islamic State" and living conditions there – with rampant abuses including slavery and rape – can also be useful to dissuade others to join the group as is being done in a number of countries, including the U.S. (New York Times 2015).

De-Radicalisation Initiatives in the Arab World

Although ISIS rose to prominence in 2014, the group's influence spread as early as 2011. The unrest and instability in many Middle Eastern countries during the Arab Spring swept across the region, leading to regime changes in countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya and deep civil unrest in Syria.

Instead of prosperity and change for the better, the post Arab Spring chaos soon led to frustrations among the activists and created areas with lack of government control in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen among others, which Islamist groups like ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) and AQAP exploited. In this respect, ISIS has

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been most successful not only with the declaration of the formation of the Islamic State, but also with its ability, by skillful use of media, especially the social media and money, to attract fighters and supporters from all over the world either to defend or to migrate to the Islamic State. The so-called foreign fighters have now become a source of immense concern especially with the possibility that on return these trained and battle-hardened individuals could carry out attacks in their respective countries. This creates the imperative for the affected governments not only to apprehend but also to de-radicalise and rehabilitate the returnees to reduce the threat to their respective homelands and to prevent others from joining the ranks of foreign fighters.

Counter-terrorism policy and rehabilitation programmes in the Arab world rely on three main components: administrative, forensic and re-socialisation programmes. The basic premise of these programmes is to change the extremist social and political views of the individual as well as to clarify misconceptions about the Quran through religious debate and negotiations with Islamists.

Religious rehabilitation serves the purpose of de-radicalising terrorist detainees from their extremist worldviews. These worldviews tend to be based on the narrative of the infidelity and immorality of local authorities (Abiad 2008) and perceived injustices perpetrated by the West, particularly, the U.S. military intervention in the 1991 Gulf war and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively (Styszynki 2011).

Confronting Islamist extremist propaganda, separating political and theological meanings of Islam, and correcting religious misunderstanding has been the main components of de-radicalisation programmes (Khalfan 2013, 127-152).

One of the notable rehabilitation initiatives was in Algeria where, after a decade of bloody civil war the militants were given a chance to surrender and lay down their arms (Moussaoui 2006, 391–419). Militants who renounced violence and extremism were pardoned and were reintegrated into society. Many of the militants had family and relationship problems or workplace and school conflicts. They also suffered from unemployment, housing or healthcare issues. The rehabilitation and reintegration processes, therefore, focused on providing the former militants with economic, social and education opportunities (Khalfan 2013, 127-152).

In a similar vein, Yemen engaged detained militants in religious dialogues to correct their extremist understanding of Islam and to stimulate positive values and behaviours (Gunaratna 2015, 70-71). These initiatives involved sermons by accredited imams with a view to correct misconceptions about jihad, infidelity and sins, which are frequently represented in extremist propaganda (Bin Hassan 2015, 15-20).

In Saudi Arabia, the rehabilitation initiatives involve psychological therapy, sport and art activities, as well as lessons on Islam. Muslim scholars spearhead theological discussions to negate false interpretation and manipulation of Quranic verses. Saudi institutions also help reintegrate former jihadists with their families, friends and local communities. Moreover, participants of the programmes share common living spaces, and assist in observance of religious ceremonies, including Ramadan (Macleod 2007).

Rehabilitation initiatives in the Arab world also involve criminal or legislative measures. For example, in 2011, Moroccan authorities released radical Sheikh Mohammad Fizazi who was convicted for the 2003 Casablanca suicide attack. After eight years in prison, Sheikh Fizazi's was freed with a royal pardon. Sheikh Fizazi renounced extremism and proclaimed the religious identity of the Moroccan monarchy under King Mohammad VI as *Amir al-mu'minin* (The emir of the believers) (Barrada 2014, 50-55).

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His denouncement of violence also served to erode the credibility of other jihadists among the local communities and even conservative scholars. Moreover, Sheikh Fizazi also championed the status of women rights from an Islamic perspective, thus demonstrating the success of theological rehabilitation (The Moroccan Times 2014). Furthermore, some Muslim countries have strengthened surveillance of political debate and empowered ministries of religious affairs for unification and standardisation of discourse in mosques. Religious institutions also provide feedback for framing the political context of sermons and recommended theological, conciliatory and moderate ideas for these religious debates.

Recently, such initiatives are being undertaken by the Egyptian President Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi who has called for a renewal of religious debate in order to confront extremist ideology and promote a moderate understanding of Islam. Egypt's Ministry of Religious Affairs has appointed 20,000 new imams who declared their loyalty to the government, and authorised al-Sisi's policy of moderate Islam. It was a strong response to Islamist groups and radical scholars that attempted to contaminate the mainstream religious discourse during the post-Arab spring political transitions in the country (Abdul Rahman 2015). These initiatives appear to be yielding positive outcomes, as for example, Salafi *Nour* (Light) party or conservative scholars like Yasser Borhami supporting al-Sisi's campaign (Bardisi 2014).

In Libya similarly, Abdelhakim Belhaj, the veteran of the Libyan resistance and an important member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) affiliated in the past with Al Qaeda renounced extremism, established a new party *Watan* (Nation) and opted for a state based on nationalist and patriotic values (Perrin 2011).

Rehabilitation Programmes in Europe

The returning fighters from Iraq and Syria are the main concern for European countries. This has compelled many European countries to review their existing rehabilitation programmes. Rehabilitation programmes are usually focused on cooperation between local authorities (police and court officers) and community institutions (social workers and representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs)). Many Islamist extremists who are detained are also subjected to the same rehabilitation programmes which members of criminal gangs undergo.

Social workers facilitate dialogue with young people who declare extremist ideas and their plans of joining terrorist organisations (Butt and Tuck 2014). They also assess their individual situation concerning family relations, cohabitation among local communities, as well as school and work conditions. Rehabilitation initiatives also include psychological care, medical care, and housing and work assistance. Sport and cultural activities are provided as well. It also involves debates and education programmes about radicalism, violence and promotion of tolerance and integration into multicultural and democratic society. Moreover, primary schools and youth are also educated in these matters in order to avoid future terrorist threats (Vidino and Brandon 2012).

However, the European penitentiary system has become potential incubators for radicalisation. A recent case in point is Amedy Coulibaly, the French national who led the attack against the kosher supermarket in Paris in January 2015, murdering four Jewish hostages, and holding fifteen other hostages during the siege. Coulibaly is believed to have been radicalised by an Islamic preacher in Paris, and had expressed a desire to fight either in Iraq or Syria.

While serving time in prison for other criminal offenses, Coulibaly had met with another Islamist extremist Djamel Beghal, who had been imprisoned on charges of plotting a terrorist attack against the American embassy in Paris in 2001 (Burgis 2015, 16-17). In prison, Beghal was said to have met and mentored Amedy Coulibaly, as well as other fellow prisoners, including Chérif Kouachi, one of the two brothers who committed the attack on the headquarters of the Charlie Hebdo magazine. Coulibaly, whom police killed when they stormed the siege in the kosher supermarket in Paris, had claimed that

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the attacks were coordinated with the Charlie Hebdo shooting.

The case highlighted the potential for prisons to serve as places for radicalised individuals to link up with similar like-minded individuals and to turn violent. The importance of de-radicalisation, specifically, religious rehabilitation programmes for terrorist detainees, would be crucial for detainees to ensure that they will not pose security risks to society upon their release.

Religious rehabilitation programmes are not an existing priority for the European penitentiary system. Instead, prisons undertake more preventive initiatives. These initiatives include intervention mechanisms such as the monitoring of detainees, interrogations, and profile descriptions of prisoners prone to radicalism (Burgis 2015, 16-17). Moreover, much of Europe's existing rehabilitation programmes in place also entail forensic measures like monitoring, investigation and constant surveillance of telephone communications, e-mails, personal contacts and travels (Braw 2015, 20-22).

Likewise, some European countries, like the UK, are planning to draw up new laws concerning seizure of passports of people who are suspected of having intentions of joining jihadist groups in Syria or Iraq. Restrictions on free movements and relocation of extremists, as well as control of airlines and passenger lists, are being implemented as well (Chorley 2014).

European authorities are also working with official Muslim associations and scholars, to come up with religious programmes teaching moderate and peaceful values of Islam. Unfortunately, collaboration tends to take place with Muslim associations that often represent the first generation of immigrants who have already been comfortably assimilated into Western population.

It remains a challenge for the authorities to try and engage with the younger generation of Muslims who, in the face of cultural or religious and identity problems, may find the radical ideas appealing. Traditional lessons in mosques based on mainstream interpretations of Islam are often replaced by radical discourse of activists, who combine religious messaging with politics in order to present seemingly simple solutions and goals. This was evident from the cases of radical scholar Farid Benyettou who inspired the Kouachi brothers responsible for Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris or controversial British imam Anjem Choudary and radical preacher Abu Hamsa from the Finsbury Park Mosque in London (Wardrop 2015). Some social workers in the UK experimented by cooperating with Salafi representatives to reduce terrorist motivations of radical preachers. However, British authorities have stopped funding such programmes (Butt and Tuck 2014).

Given the spread of new media technologies, the younger generation in Europe are also more vulnerable to being exposed to jihadist propaganda online (Russel and Theodosiou 2015). Security and forensic measures employed by European authorities appear to have had a counterproductive effect on the community as it has led to an increased suspicion and mistrust against concerned governments.

Thus, existing rehabilitation programmes in Europe include various psychological, social or economic initiatives, but have omitted religious or theological factors, which are the main inspiration and stimulation for many Islamist extremists. Cooperation between the state and

> " European rehabilitation programmes should create space for a deep theological debate, similar to the rehabilitation initiatives in the Arab world. "

Muslim associations usually involve the promotion of a moderate concept of Islam – important for public opinions and peaceful cohabitation of different religious communities. However, this might not work for Islamist extremists who focus on justifications of violence based on misinterpretations of jihad and sharia. In this regard, European rehabilitation programmes should create space for a deep theological debate, similar to the rehabilitation initiatives in the Arab world.

Conclusion

Evidently, there are different measures and initiatives regarding the rehabilitation and de-radicalisation process in the Arab and European countries. These measures and initiatives will need to be further contextualised, given the differences in scale and nature of the threat of jihadism, terrorism and radicalisation in the concerned regions.

Nonetheless, there is an increasing need for social activities and rehabilitation programmes that will serve to discourage individuals from joining jihadist groups. Investigation of individual cases, social backgrounds and personal motivations of jihadists as well as criminal and legislative actions play a crucial role in that context. As theological debates about jihadism and Islam feature more heavily in Arab countries, many Arab countries also started negotiations with Islamists who were ready to resign from terrorist activities in exchange for amnesty, economic or social support.

Militants who still support extremist ideas were punished, imprisoned, eliminated and blamed by their previous comrades. The carrot and stick idea is controversial, but it legitimises the state to discredit jihadi and *takfir* objectives in the Arab world.

Unfortunately, however, European countries are focused more on social services and forensic or penal codes rather than on religious discourse or reinterpretation of the Quran, including dialogue sessions with radical Islamists. Jihadism is considered a security concern in Europe and it is included in complex social rehabilitation initiatives. However, many terrorists who carried out terrorist attacks did not suffer from social or economic problems but were instead inspired by radical ideas presented in jihadist propaganda (Laville and Aslam 2005). In this regard, there is a need for reinforced cooperation between state and religious scholars. European de-radicalisation programmes must continue to adapt to the changing threat landscape, especially in the context of concerns about attacks by militants returning from conflict zones, especially from Iraq and Syria and those that are influenced by groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda.

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Pakistan's Militant Rehabilitation Programme: An Overview

Abdul Basit

The paper offers an overview of Pakistan's militant rehabilitation programme and outlines its efficacy and limitations. The paper posits that without a corresponding counter-radicalisation strategy, de-radicalisation and militant rehabilitation alone are insufficient in the fight to overcome religious extremism in Pakistan.

Introduction

Pakistan's militant rehabilitation programme was launched in September 2009 after the successful completion of a military operation (Rah-e-Rast) against the Pakistani Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's Swat district. Swat district had fallen in the hands of the Taliban in the summer of 2007. The Pakistani military took two years to regain the control of the area and restore the writ of the state. Many of the militants apprehended during the operation were teenagers trained as suicide bombers (Burke 2013).

The overwhelming presence of teenagers among the detainees exposed the limitations of hard approaches to countering the problems associated with terrorism in the country. So, the military decided to initiate a rehabilitation programme for the detained militants to provide them with a second chance to live a normal life. Later, the programme was expanded to Punjab and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Like the programme in Swat district, the militant rehabilitation initiative in FATA also focuses on the detained militants of different local Taliban groups.

Meanwhile, the programme in Punjab rehabilitates those militants who surrender to the government voluntarily and are ready to renounce militancy. Majority of the militants rehabilitated in Punjab belong to terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ).

This is the background against which Islamabad's militant/detainee rehabilitation programme is founded. It comprise of four phases; (i) psychological counselling; (ii) correction of their extremist views through religious education; (iii) imparting of formal education followed by vocational training; and (iv) re-integration to facilitate their transition back into the society.

Currently, there are at least 10 militant rehabilitation centres operating in different parts of the country (*See Table 1*).

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Rehabilitation Centres	Target Audience	Location
Sabaoon & Rastoon	Juveniles	Malakand Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Mishal	Adults	Mingora, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
FEAST	Females	Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
SPARLAY	Families of the Militants	Tank, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Navi Sahar	Adults	Bajaur Agency, FATA
Khyber Programme (3 centers)	Adults	Khyber Agency, FATA
Punjab Rehabilitation Programme	Adults	Punjab (Dysfunctional)

Table 1: Militant Rehabilitation Centres in Pakistan

Need for a Militant Rehabilitation Programme in Pakistan

The rationale for militant rehabilitation initiatives in Pakistan is based on the following;

First, militants who want to surrender by actively demobilising from violence, disassociating from their respective militant organisations and who also agree to follow the law of the state deserve a second chance to lead normal lives (Qazi 2011).

Second, research indicates that many especially the youth who have joined Islamist militant groups participate in violence for reasons that have very little to do with extremist ideology (Manzar 2013). They are either coerced by their families and communities, or driven by socio-economic factors. With proper guidance, they can be persuaded to adopt a more moderate worldview and can be weaned away from the path of violence (Holmer 2014).

Third, at its core, fighting terrorism today is fundamentally a war of ideas in which de-radicalisation and rehabilitation, together with kinetic means, are important components (Pervez 2011).

Last but not the least, in Pakistan, extremism and terrorism have a cause and effect relationship. Whereas extremist ideology has often been found to be the cause of terrorist violence in recent years, on its own, the extremist narratives stem from the widespread presence of diverse local and foreign militant organisations, sectarian fissures within the religion itself and illiteracy. Therefore, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation initiatives are necessary to counteract extremists' ideological appeal in the society (Sial 2013). It is in this context that this article examines militant rehabilitation programmes in different parts of Pakistan.

Militant Rehabilitation in Swat

In Swat district, the militant rehabilitation programmes, which are referred to as the 'De-Radicalisation and Emancipation Programmes' (DREPs), are comprised of three components based on the age of the beneficiaries. Sabaoon (First Ray of Dawn) and Rastoon (Place of Right Path) is for juveniles

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between 12 and 18 years of age; Mashal (Torch of Light) is for youths between 19 and 25 years of age, and Sparlay centre is for militants' family to create awareness about aftercare initiatives for rehabilitated individuals (Rana 2011).

These centres are run as learning places rather than as prisons. The programmes are run within a framework of public-private partnership, although the overall supervision is with the Pakistan Army. The Hum Pakistan Foundation (HPF), an umbrella body of local civil society and non-governmental organisations in Swat, assists the army in managing the programmes (Rafique and Ahmed 2013).

Moreover, the Swat programmes are supported by a dedicated team of doctors, psychologists, religious clerics and other professionals. The programmes have four components: psychological rehabilitation; religious counselling; formal and vocational training and social reintegration.

The programmes also include meeting with parents and engaging the beneficiaries to participate in sports, cultural events and festivals (Abbasi 2014).

Psychological Counselling

Psychological rehabilitation has always been the first stage in the rehabilitation process. In this stage, psychologists investigate an individual's emotional, psychological, and intellectual condition and the personal narratives of detained or surrendered militants to determine how they were recruited, what their roles were within the organisation and the nature of their relationship with other militants (e.g. community-based links or family ties) which forms the basis of assessing their continued inclination towards militancy (Hargon 2010).

Based on these findings, psychologists classify individuals according to four broad categories: very high risk, high risk, medium risk and low risk. For instance, a child who served in a terrorist group for a shorter time period and mostly carried out menial tasks like cleaning, cooking, fetching water etc. would be considered low-risk.

A medium-risk inmate would become responsible for providing logistical support, such as transport and access to food.

In contrast, high-risk individuals are those who have received training in using weapons and executed attacks, guarded Taliban check-posts or worked as spies.

Finally, those who were found to be inclined and were trained as suicide bombers would be considered as belonging to the very high risk category (Sohail 2010). From a psychological perspective, the rehabilitation process, which varies from six months to two or three years, is tailored according to the risk category in which the concerned individual falls under (Hargon 2013).

Religious Counselling

Religious counselling is the second stage of the militant rehabilitation programme. Religious counselling serves to moderate the militants' extremist religious views and is hence a slow process with a longer time frame. The need for religious counselling is based on the notion that the detainee must undergo a behavioural modification through changing his extremist religious views.

> " These centres are run as learning places rather than as prisons. The programmes are run within a framework of public-private partnership, although the overall supervision is with the Pakistan army. "

An important component of this counselling is the use of religious dialogue with clerics well versed with mainstream Islamic concepts. This is critical in challenging the extremist mind-set, which seeks to legitimise violent behaviour.

The goal of such initiatives is to ensure that the individual entertains more balanced and moderate views especially in respect of key Islamic concepts, including the fact that only the official authorities of a state can proclaim armed jihad. Moreover, as per the Islamic ruling in a Muslim majority country like Pakistan, only the state is authorised to declare jihad in strict conformity with international law (Hassan 2007).

Formal Education and Vocational Training

The Swat programme also offers formal education from grades 1 to 12 (or high school). The aim of such formal education is to promote critical thinking and equip these individuals with tools to pursue higher education after the rehabilitation process. The programme also helps them to have more informed views of the world. The curriculum attempts to teach students about religious pluralism and tolerance (Abbasi 2014).

The focus of providing vocational training is to equip individuals with the teaching skills to enhance his or her employability in fields like electronics, computing, carpentry, automobile mechanics, welding, appliance repair, basic electrician skills, masonry, and poultry farming.

Vocational training serves to furnish the former militants with the technical skills to enable them to gain some form of employment – formal or informal. It follows the basic philosophy that to dissuade extremist ideology and to discourage the militants from pursuing violence, these men need practical skills to allow them the ability to have some income for themselves and to support their families (Raston 2013).

Social Reintegration

In the social reintegration process, the detainees are prepared to return to their families and communities. This is done through participation in community-level activities. These activities include religious and cultural festivals as well as debate competitions (Hassan 2014) both at the local and national level. This is carried out through a three-month syllabus incorporating both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

During this period, individuals are assessed as to whether they are fit to return to the mainstream society and the community is taken on board in making such determinations (Abbasi 2014). Low risk children are reintegrated earlier if they and their families do not have militant connections and if there is no militant presence in their community. Monitoring teams visit villages and communities to ensure that this is so.

Furthermore, the teams also ensure that upon successful completion of the rehabilitation programme, individuals can either enrol in a school for further education or gain employment.

To counter the potential for these individuals to return to their old ways, the monitoring teams check in with reintegrated children on a weekly or monthly basis, depending on the risk level assessed at the beginning. This monitoring process, which is targeted at reducing recidivism rates, lasts for a minimum of two years.

" Like the Swat rehabilitation programme, the one in Punjab was also based on a three-pronged strategy of prevention, rehabilitation and after -care. "

Militant Rehabilitation Programme in Punjab

In 2011, a militant rehabilitation programme was inaugurated in the Punjab province. This programme was jointly run by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and Technical Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) of the Punjab government.

While the militant rehabilitation programmes in Swat rehabilitates Taliban militants, the programme in Punjab rehabilitated former militants of groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT or Army of the Pure), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM or Muhammad's Army) which were focused on the liberation of Kashmir from India and anti-Shi'ite militants group like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ or Army of the Jhangvi) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (Rafique and Ahmed 2013).

Like the Swat rehabilitation programme, the one in Punjab was also based on a three-pronged strategy of prevention, rehabilitation and after-care. The programme comprised of three modules: psychological rehabilitation, religious counselling and vocational training.

Approximately 311 former militants completed training in three batches. These trainings and rehabilitations were organised at various regional and district headquarters to make it convenient for participants to attend (Noor 2013).

However, due to the lack of funding, the Punjab government shelved the programme in 2012. As a result, about 1,300 militants who had been selected to undergo rehabilitation could not be taken on board due to the programme's closure (Ghuman 2015).

Militant Rehabilitation Centres in FATA

In 2012, Pakistan army established two new militant rehabilitation centres in the Bajaur and Khyber districts of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The programme in Bajaur Agency is set up in the Sikandaro and it is jointly run by the army and the paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC).

Like the Swat rehabilitation programme, it also focuses on psychological and religious counselling, along with formal education and vocational training. However, a distinguishing feature of this programme is that it operates as a learning centre, and not as a prison (Abbasi 2014).

The programme in Khyber Agency has three rehabilitation centres with approximately 400 former militants. Beneficiaries spend 18 hours a day under the supervision of instructors both from the army and from the civilian sector (Tribune 2015). Similar to the Swat programme, detainees receive corrective religious counselling. In addition, the inmates are taught employability skills like tailoring, welding furniture and repairing cell phones.

One unique feature of the Khyber rehabilitation programme is that it incorporates feedback from students on what they would like to learn (Wajahat 2015). The underlying motive of taking the feedback from students is to know what the students would like to learn that will make them a useful citizen and embraces more balanced views and not intended to force them to go through the modules devised by the government. The idea is to help these individuals with self-empowerment which is an important antidote to extremism.

Conclusion

Terrorism in Pakistan has been dynamic and constantly evolving. The terrorist groups in Pakistan keep changing their modes of recruitment, attack tactics and propaganda. Those involved in counter-terrorism have to be equally innovative with their preventive and pre-emptive policies in order to remain relevant and effective.

" **A comprehensive counter-radicalisation policy should also be introduced in conjunction with the militant rehabilitation programme to create an environment that is fertile for the spread of tolerant ideas and resistant to the growth of extremism.** "

Pakistan's de-radicalisation programme, with its focus on militant rehabilitation is a step in the right direction. However, it is still in its early stages. To strengthen its viability and effectiveness, the programme should be expanded at the national level since at present the initiatives are mostly local or ad-hoc and lack resources as was the case in the Punjab province.

A comprehensive counter-radicalisation policy should also be introduced in conjunction with the militant rehabilitation programme to create an environment that is fertile for the spread of tolerant ideas and resistant to the growth of extremism. Given the scale of extremism in Pakistan and in the absence of a counter-radicalisation policy, existing de-radicalisation interventions appear to be narrow, and run the risk of losing steam over time.

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Uganda: An NGO Perspective to Countering Violent Extremism

Jane Ekayu

After two decades of civil war, Northern Uganda is home to thousands of former child soldiers in search for their place in the world. Peacekeeping organisations in the region are assisting these former child soldiers and their communities to rebuild their lives. One such organisation is the Children of Peace Uganda, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working to minimise the risk of violent extremism in the society through peacebuilding efforts.

Introduction

The civil war involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government in the 1980s ended in 2006, when peace talks between the government and the LRA resulted in a ceasefire. However, LRA's leader Joseph Kony was not inclined to sign the Final Peace Agreement. Hence, a permanent ceasefire and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) did not occur (IRRI 2011). Subsequently, the LRA was forced out of Uganda by the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF), and has since been isolated. The two decades of civil war saw LRA carrying out deadly attacks on civilians. Militants of the LRA terrorised Northern and North Eastern Uganda through its raids of villages and kidnappings, torture and killings of civilians (Paulicap 2015; War Child 2014). Although this has restored some measure of stability and security to the country, the LRA remains at large, and its militants are active across the borders of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, where they continue to carry out attacks mostly killing and abducting civilians

of the concerned countries. Moreover, Uganda has experienced sporadic but deadly attacks from Islamist militant groups, including the threat from groups like Al Shabaab. Notably, on 11 July 2010, Al Shabaab carried out suicide bombings during a screening of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Final match at two locations in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. The attacks left 74 dead and 70 injured.

Meanwhile, Uganda remains deeply scarred by the long civil war. The LRA abducted an estimated 66,000 to 96,000 children and young people (UN; Chris Blattman 2012). The organisation used child soldiers in combat, and as cooks, porters, messengers, spies, and sex slaves. Therefore, it is pertinent to rehabilitate and reintegrate the recovered children back into the society so as to prevent their relapse to violence. Many of the children who were kidnapped and used as child soldiers, and those born to females as a result of rape while under LRA's captivity, face challenges in reintegrating themselves back into the society (UNICEF 2015). Presently, there is a large number of aid organisations involved in reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives, such as water sanitation projects in the Lira district of Northern Uganda (Uganda National NGO Directory).

Peace building efforts by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and peace initiatives by the Ugandan government constitute an important part of the country's countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy. NGOs, like Children of Peace Uganda, focus on post LRA rehabilitation by concentrating on programmes like education, livelihood and trauma therapy. Moreover, steps are taken towards empowering the youth so that they can become self-reliant and do not seek violence.

CVE is preventive, and can be defined as the "realm of policy, programmes, and interventions designed to prevent individuals from engaging in violence associated with radical political, social, cultural, and religious ideologies and groups" (USIP 2013). In the on-going endeavour to defeat groups like the LRA, there is a need to supplement reactive and kinetic approaches to counter-terrorism with more proactive approaches, in order to prevent the rise of radicalisation and extremism in the country. NGOs that work closely with communities in peacebuilding initiatives supplement the country's overall CVE strategy (USIP 2013).

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Countering Violent Extremism through Peacebuilding

At present, community reintegration constitutes a work-in-progress for many former child soldiers. Many child soldiers who were demobilised, or who escaped from the LRA received basic counselling and medical care at an interim centre (WHO 2015). However, former child soldiers are often ostracised by their families and communities and experience stigmatisation throughout their lives (Ekayu 2015).

Peacebuilding serves to create the necessary conditions for sustainable peace and to minimise the risk of a relapse into violence (UNICEF 2011). In Uganda, peacebuilding includes civilian security, demining and DDR and provision of basic services such as access to water, sanitation, healthcare, education and employment (UN 2010), improving political rights and access to gender and racial equality (USIP 2013) as part of post-conflict rehabilitation and reintegration process.

As NGOs have direct access to communities, they can help to identify and nullify the factors that may make individuals vulnerable to recruitment into terrorist organisations like the LRA. These factors include growing economic inequality, the absence of an inclusive political system and other grievances (University of Notre

Dame 2012). During the conflict especially, the LRA was able to exploit children from poor and disadvantaged families who were seeking physical support and revenge for their losses because of the fighting. However, other children were forced to become child soldiers. Therefore, the path to violent extremism is unique in the case of every individual (Borum 2011, 8-9).

Peacebuilding Initiatives by Children of Peace Uganda

Civil society organisations have contributed immensely to proactively fighting the rise of violent extremism through peacebuilding initiatives. Based on a report by Insight on Conflict, some 100 organisations involved in local-level peacebuilding efforts have been established in Northern Uganda, in response to the threat of violent extremism (Insight on Conflict 2015).

These organisations range from religious and faith-based groups, traditional institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), human rights groups, and community-based self-help groups. Indeed, civil society groups in northern Uganda have provided alternative narratives of the conflict, exposed brutalities against civilians, and ideas of peacebuilding. Many of these organisations have lobbied, facilitated negotiations, and are engaged in building cultures of peace, promoting reconciliation efforts, sustaining livelihoods at the local level, and influencing and supporting peacebuilding interventions from international sources.

One such organisation, the Children of Peace Uganda (CPU), provides vital support and rehabilitation to vulnerable young people and former young combatants in Northern Uganda. The CPU is an NGO based in Lira and operates in the Lango, Acholi, and Teso sub-regions of Northern and North Eastern Uganda. CPU was founded in 2011, with the aim of providing support for the children who were abducted by LRA and were subject to torture, sex slavery and forced to become child soldiers. Therefore, these children experience psychological, physical, social, economic and educational challenges that need to be addressed (Ekayu 2015). Formerly abducted children are often rejected and excluded by their communities. This puts them at risk of being recruited again or drawn into crime. Promoting self-employment and educational opportunities has become vital to placing them on the right track and keeping them away from

> **" During the conflict especially, the LRA was able to exploit children from poor and disadvantaged families who were seeking physical support and revenge for their losses because of the fighting. "**

violence. As a peacebuilding organisation in Uganda, CPU provides a range of programmes for former child soldiers and children especially those born under the LRA's captivity (Children of Peace Uganda).

Scholarships for Education

Individuals who have access to education are able to develop critical and creative thinking skills, which are vital for sustainable peace. Educated communities are better equipped to understand their legal rights, realise the importance of addressing long-term health issues, and to recognise how they can develop successful and sustainable economic projects. They are also more likely to understand the origins and progression of conflict and their role in promoting or preventing it (UNICEF 2015).

In line with the importance of education in reintegrating and rehabilitating former child soldiers back into society, CPU currently sponsors students at the primary and the secondary level and for vocational training. Many former child soldiers have completed their vocational trainings in various fields, which have helped in their reintegration. The types of vocational training include tutoring in carpentry, building and garment-making. Training in agricultural activities is also being provided. The purpose of this is to make these former child soldiers economically self-reliant and avert them from committing violence. CPU has benefitted Ugandan community by supporting over 50

former child soldiers to get school education scholarship (Kagumu 2014). However, there are still thousands of formerly abducted children in need of educational support in Uganda. As the Ugandan government provides minimal aid for young people in terms of education, many are reliant on the work of NGOs like CPU to make their education possible (Ekayu 2015). CPU relies on the generous donations of other non-profit organisations, including Exile International and philanthropists, to fund these scholarships.

Psycho-social Programmes

Every former child soldier abducted by LRA has a unique experience of returning to civilian life and they have different ways of dealing with their trauma (Betancourt et al. 2010). Creating a safe space where they can discuss their emotions is an important step in sustainable reintegration. Trauma can result in upsetting emotions, and a sense of constant danger in the affected former child soldier. They can also feel numb, disconnected from their surrounding and unable to trust other people. Therefore, treatment for psychological and emotional trauma is crucial in rehabilitation of a former child soldier (Ekayu 2015; National Theatre 2015).

CPU creates tailored psychological support for former child soldiers with the aim of eliminating obstacles to their reintegration and rehabilitation. CPU conducts interviews with the former child soldiers and their families on the challenges they are facing. CPU has established 'Peace Clubs,' which bring together these former child soldiers in schools and communities. CPU also uses a wide range of strategies including creative and visual arts, emotional counselling, spiritual development, and encouraging the beneficiaries to be advocates for peace and reconciliation (Ekayu 2015).

Health Programmes

CPU has sponsored medical care for a number of former child soldiers who have physical injury during combat between the LRA and UPDF. This includes reconstruction surgery for injuries to limbs during the fight. Physical injury is a hindrance in the reintegration process because the former child soldier cannot become economically self-sufficient or acquire training to be one. Furthermore, this has enormous impact in helping to create an environment resistant to the radicalising influences of militant groups like

" **In line with the importance of education in reintegrating and rehabilitating former child soldiers back into society, CPU currently sponsors students at the primary and the secondary level and for vocational training.** "

LRA.

In line with efforts to provide healthcare to those former child soldiers CPU has funded measures for counselling to deal with the psychological trauma that these former child soldiers undergo from being part of violent organisations like the LRA (Ekayu 2015). Psychological treatment is used to help these children recover from trauma experienced due to them being former child soldier, and sex slaves. The psychological programme includes counselling, art therapy, drama therapy, music therapy and dance therapy. The programme is essential in the rehabilitation and reintegration process because it ensures the affected former child soldiers establish social ties by not being emotionally upset and distrustful towards people around them.

Livelihood Programmes

Economic security is vital and especially crucial for post-conflict resettlement and rehabilitation in the affected areas. Poverty affects access to fundamental human needs like food, shelter, education, healthcare, and clean water. A lack of access to these resources may bring about dissatisfaction, unrest and a possible relapse of the concerned individuals to militancy and violence (JRF).

CPU has put in place programmes to equip individuals from families living in poverty with the skills so that they are empowered to become self-sufficient in meaningful ways. In partnership with other organisations like Exile International (which works to groom former child soldiers in becoming leaders for peace advocacy) and Pilot Light Foundation (which works to assist communities in achieving self-sustainability), CPU has managed to provide 60 families with beehives and revolving funds as a sustainable source of income.

Advocacy Programmes

The success of former child soldier rehabilitation ultimately relies on the receptiveness of communities, effectiveness of advocacy efforts, and access to information on why and how the reintegration is important to both the communities and the former child soldiers.

As part of its advocacy programme on the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration of Uganda's former child soldiers, CPU educates families and communities about the importance of welcoming the formerly abducted children back into the society (Ekayu 2015). Members of CPU broadcast through local radio channels about the challenges facing former child soldiers and how partnering with other community-led NGOs have helped to support their rehabilitation and reintegration. CPU was involved in making the documentary - 'Children of War' (directed by Brian Single) which was screened at the UN General Assembly in New York in 2010 and at other international events, like one organised by the European Commission in celebration of Human Rights Day.

The Road Ahead

Conflict leaves deep scars on a country. Peacebuilding organisations with demonstrable impact on the communities are powerful examples of how grassroots initiatives can help to break the cycle of violence and generate positive dividends for the whole society. Access to education, healthcare, economic independence, and awareness of the community and human rights laws are essential for any society engaged in efforts to counter violent extremism.

In Uganda, kinetic and operational counter-terrorism responses should be supplemented with a long-term CVE strategy. Former child

> **" CPU has put in place programmes to equip individuals from families living in poverty with the skills so that they are empowered to become self-sufficient in meaningful ways."**

soldiers abducted by LRA and thousands others who have been granted amnesty by Ugandan government need to be rehabilitated and reintegrated back into the society. NGOs, like Children of Peace Uganda, have the potential to generate sustainable peace in support of a long-term CVE strategy. As local ownership and empowerment are critical for sustained peace and development, Uganda should not overlook the need to transition from quick-impact projects to comprehensive capacity-building initiatives as a long term CVE strategy.

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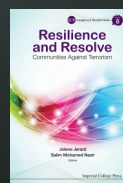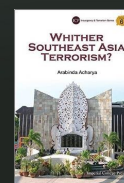
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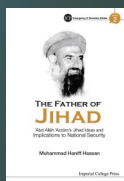(Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015)
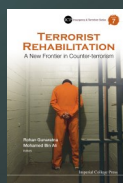
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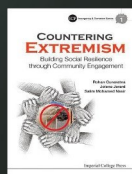Rohan Gunaratna and Mohamed Bin Ali
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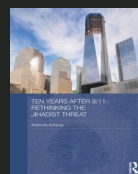(Imperial College Press, 2015)

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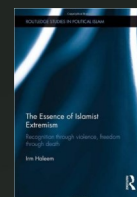Arabinda Acharya
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