



Concept Note

GSX Working Group on Security Interventions & Extremism

In February 2017, the first Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) working group pertaining to preventing and countering violent extremism will be convened. The discussions will focus on the nexus of security interventions and extremism and consider the role of national and international security interventions in aggravating or alleviating grievances that often serve as push factors and triggers in fomenting extremism and the radicalization of individuals and communities.

Drawing on the experiences of grassroots civil society practitioners engaged through the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) and others, the Working Group will tackle four key themes and address specific recommendations documented in the brief, [Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms: Women's Perspectives on Violent Extremism & Security Interventions](#) published by the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) in 2016.

The summary of Working Group actions and impact will inform other GSX activities and be reported to the annual high-level GSX convening in September 2017. We are grateful for the support of the governments of the UK and Norway for the GSX and the thematic working groups.

The Global Solutions Exchange

The need for systematic and structured civil society-government interaction was the impetus for the establishment of the Global Solutions Exchange (GSX), an initiative that the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), as coordinator of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL), [launched](#) in partnership with Royal Norwegian Government on the margins of the September 2016 UN General Assembly (UNGA). The need for such a platform was further underscored in the Prevention Project's recent report, [Communities First: A Blueprint for Organizing and Sustaining a Global Movement against Violent Extremism](#).

The GSX serves as a durable mechanism for systematic and structured interactions between governments, multilaterals and independent civil society organizations, such as members of WASL and others with a track record in programming, analysis and policy advocacy to address extremism and related militarism and help

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sustain a “communities-first,” “whole of society” approach to PVE. As noted during the UNGA launch, the purpose is to enable the exchange of effective solutions and recommendations for critical policy and programming reform.

Thematic Working Groups

GSX partners will lead thematic, cross-regional working groups to enable in-depth interactions between civil society, government and multilateral actors within sectors on specific issues as they intersect with the complex dynamics of violent extremism and in some cases contribute to drivers of radicalization (e.g. abusive security interventions or intolerance in educational systems). These working groups will provide a space for exchange of analysis and effective programmatic and policy solutions to inform and improve government and multilateral strategies (such as national action plans), as well as a mechanism for monitoring resulting developments. This meeting be the first of its kind and will serve as a pilot of the GSX thematic working group approach.

Working Group Meeting Agenda

The first meeting of the Working Group will include a review and discussion of the themes, and associated recommendations on the following 4 issues:

- **Security for Independent Civil Society** – A vibrant, independent civil society sector is a key bulwark against rising extremism, as it provides space and opportunity for citizens to engage across communities, enabling coexistence to flourish, and offers space for moderate and constructive critique and engagement with the state. But civil society space is shrinking due to a combination of attacks from extremist movements and regressive state policies. This session will analyze emerging trends and review recommendations from the WASL brief to outline priority actions that stakeholders (state, multilateral and non-state) can take to alleviate the pressures on civil society and foster an enabling environment for them to operate effectively.
- **Promoting Effective Policing** – Policing and law enforcement is pivotal to addressing extremism. The session will examine experiences and engagement with local police, with attention to successful that have fostered greater trust towards law enforcement as well as harmful police training programs and policing policies that have fomented sympathy for radicalized groups.
- **Addressing Militias and Militarization** – Outreach to militias and experiences of prevention, as well as de-radicalization and rehabilitation work with homegrown and foreign fighters is a key pillar of P/CVE work. The session will assess the experiences of grassroots communities and their recommendations to state and international actors regarding best practices and lessons to be learnt.
- **Effective International Interventions** – This session will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of international security and peace operations in addressing the root causes and consequences of extremism and militarism within countries, and assess the lessons and recommendations to improve practices.

The 2-day meeting will provide space for in depth interactions between government defense and law enforcement actors from interested states, and civil society practitioners from communities and countries affected by extremism and security interventions. The discussions will include case studies, thematic break-out groups and focused attention on practical actions and steps towards improving existing practices and policies where needed and/or expanding and adapting successful approaches.

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Anticipated Outcome and Impact:

- Increased awareness and understanding among range of security and law enforcement actors regarding the ground realities of tackling extremism and P/CVE policies/programs
- Increased contact and trust between CSOs and state/multilateral stakeholders
- Agreed set of action points for participants to take forth into their institutions for implementation
- Agreed timeline to review progress on implementation of action points (3rd quarter 2017 review to inform 4th quarter high level GSX meeting)

Stakeholders for Inclusion in Working Group:

In keeping with the strategic and inclusive vision of the GSX, the Working Group will comprise participants from relevant government, multilateral, and civil society organizations. Individuals attending will be invited based on their sectoral expertise, and roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the thematic issues discussed to enable advancement of Working Group recommendations and outcomes in their institutions, upon their return. Participants could include representatives from the following:

1. The governments of the UK, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, US, Canada, South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kenya, each have different and valuable experience with policing for P/CVE and community policing and/or international interventions. For the purposes of this working group, actors from Ministries of the Interior and Defense and domestic policing agencies would be highly relevant participants, including community level police officers.
2. ICAN/WASL partners
3. EU, AU, ECOWAS
4. OECD, OSCE, UNCTIF, UNODC, UNDP, UNDPKO, NATO
5. RUSI (UK), Global Center on Cooperative Security, Geneva Center for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Inclusive Security
6. Representatives from the Youth, Peace and Security network
7. Others to be determined



Implementation Timeline: GSX Thematic Working Groups on Critical Issues Related to Extremism

GSX Annual High-Level Review and Convening	GSX Working Group on Security Interventions	GSX Working Group on Macroeconomic Policy	GSX Working Group on Education and Alternative Narratives	Projected Dates
	Planning Security Interventions WG meeting: draft agenda, invitation, participants, logistics	Publish working paper on Economic Policy and Extremism		January 2017
	Security Interventions Working Group meeting at RUSI in London		Publish brief on Education and Extremism	February 2017
	Outreach event at IPI in New York in parallel to CSW	Economic Policy Working Group meeting		March 2017
		Event parallel World Bank meetings in Washington D.C.	Education Working Group meeting	April 2017
	Workshop with CSOs, UN and government representatives in MENA region around Arabic translation of <i>Uncomfortable Truths, Unconventional Wisdoms</i> brief			May 2017
Review of progress made following Working Group meetings and other GSX activities				June 2017
				July 2017
				August 2017
Input to high-level GSX				September 2017

