

The role of good Security Sector Governance in countering violent extremism in the MENA region

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Countering violent extremism by reducing state fragility

Individuals and groups who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further political goals tend to prosper in communities or states with a higher degree of fragility. In general, fragility is higher in states with reduced legitimacy, poor levels of public services, and weak rule of law.

A comprehensive strategy to build capacities to counter violent extremism can therefore not be limited to military counter-terrorism assistance, but must address important governance deficits. Respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, is complementary and mutually reinforcing with strategies to counter radicalization and violent extremism; they are an essential part of effective counter-efforts. For most societies, establishing good security sector governance is one of the bigger challenges in countering radicalization and violent extremism. A security sector that fails to respect fundamental freedoms and citizens' rights lacks public support and legitimacy, and risks to fuel violent extremism rather than decreasing it.

Security sector governance challenges for countering violent extremism

In order to effectively counter radicalization and violent extremism, a national security sector needs

- Broad based societal legitimacy at the local, national, and international levels
- Effective protection of the population from violence
- A proper understanding of the reasons behind radicalization, and of how radical networks operate at the local, national, and international levels
- Appropriate national strategies and policies to prevent and combat radicalization
- A clearly defined legal framework that outlines the responsibilities, rights, and duties of security providers
- Accountable security sector institutions
- Technical skills and material equipment to confront radical armed groups challenging the rule of law
- A functioning criminal justice system
- A reliable crisis and emergency response system
- An integrated border control system

DCAF assistance and international cooperation in countering violent extremism

DCAF assists its 62 member states, other states in the MENA region, and local communities in developing the governance capacity that provides public legitimacy and support for countering radicalization and violent extremism. DCAF assists partner states in addressing the entire spectrum of security sector governance challenges without which countering strategies cannot succeed.

DCAF will enhance its dialogue and cooperation with relevant UN organisations, the European Union, and other relevant international bodies, on countering radicalisation and violent extremism through improved Security Sector Governance.