

Journey to Extremism in Africa

From a securitised approach to development solutions

Palais des Nations, Geneva. 24 May - Activation plan



Background

UNDP launched in 2022/2023 a series of studies to shed new light on the rising phenomenon and proliferation of violent extremism in Africa. The study series offers new development and policy responses to address and prevent the spread of extremism.

The series includes three different reports:

- The new edition of the flagship *Journey to Extremism* report entitled [Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement](#). The study builds on UNDP's 2017 "*Journey to Extremism in Africa*" report, and comprises more than 2,000 interviewees across eight countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan). This study further explores the drivers, the tipping points and trajectories of recruitment, and disengagement. It includes a larger cohort of female interviewees, allowing a better understanding of gendered nuances related to recruitment and disengagement.
- [Dynamics of Violent Extremism in Africa: Conflict Ecosystems, Political Ecology, and the Spread of the Proto-State](#). The study details the modus operandi and the evolution of violent extremist groups over time. It examines how these groups have increased their influence as ideological affiliates of global terrorist organizations such as ISIL and Al-Qaeda and penetrated new areas by exploiting localized grievances, positioning themselves as alternative service providers to the formal state.
- [Perceptions, Vulnerabilities, and Prevention Violent Extremism](#), A Threat Assessment in Selected Regions of the Southern Libyan Borderlands and North-Western Nigeria. The study offers policy and programmatic recommendations for strategic coordination, early action, and responses to address structural issues and pull factors of violent extremism and to build resilience across communities in cross-border areas in Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, and Sudan.

The two first reports within the series were launched on 17th February 2023 in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of the 35th African Union summit. The third report was launched in November 2022 and presented in Geneva on 4th November 2022 during the Geneva Peace Week.

Key messages and call to action

The main call to action is to call for a paradigm shift in current approaches towards ending violent extremism and contribute to shift the fundings, currently mostly invested in securitized approaches, towards prevention. Additionally, calling for governments affected by extremist violence to implement prevention programmes as a priority versus militarized approaches.

Target groups

There are three groups the activation will aim to target:

- Donors that currently fund militarized approaches and/or prevention approaches, including current UNDP donors, private foundations and philanthropists;
- Governments affected by violent extremism; and
- Development practitioners and civil society who implement prevention on the ground and advocate in donor's capitals for the adoption of prevention approaches, including bilateral and multilateral development agencies; Local NGOs and community-based organizations, Youth and women's groups, academics and researchers

Activities

Following the launch of the series, the engagement plan is designed to mobilize support from donors, governments partners in Africa and development practitioners, at country level and in donor’s capitals. To this purpose, UNDP will have a travelling exhibition and organizes policy dialogues to promote the key messages of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) study series.

Geneva as the second main UN hub is strategic and will be the second city to officially host the exhibition after Addis Ababa. Activities will include the exhibition and a policy dialogue, both held at the Palais des Nations to prioritize member states and UN development agencies as the key audience. The date for the Policy dialogue is May 24th (10:00 – 11:00) with the Exhibition tentative date set up on 24th May till June 6th.

- The pull-up banner exhibition is designed as a user-journey map and transcribing visually the key messages of ***The Journey to Extremism, including background on the report***, key findings and policy recommendations. The exhibition will be displayed for two weeks.
- The policy dialogue will:
 - a. Unpack the mainstream narratives in violent extremism and identify drivers of it, and highlighting the importance of development solutions to prevent violent extremism;
 - b. Highlight findings of UNDP's two latest studies and discuss policy recommendations to further address drivers of violence extremism in Africa;
 - c. Aim to rethink dominant securitized interventions through a preventative, evidence-focused and development-based approach.

Speakers:

- Nirina Kiplagat, Governance and Peacebuilding Coordinator, OIC and Regional Peacebuilding Advisor, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa
- Giordano Segneri, Governance and Peacebuilding Team Leader, UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States
- Natascha Hryckow, Fellow, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, former Coordinator of the United Nations Panel of Experts on Somalia

Policy Dialogue - Agenda	
This event aims to continue the policy dialogue and conversation from Addis Ababa to Geneva by highlighting the spread of violent extremism in Africa, its drivers, tipping points and pathways out of extremism. The conversation includes the lessons learned from preventing violent extremism interventions and how the term “security” has shaped a policy narrative to implement PVE approaches across the national, sub-national and regional context.	
Format	60-minute Policy Dialogue
Agenda	Opening - Agi Veres as Master of Ceremony (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the panel • Brief on the exhibition • Introductory video on Violent Extremism in Africa Key findings from Journey to Extremism report – Nirina Kiplagat (10 minutes)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patterns and trends of extremism in Africa: What drives people into and out of violent extremism? <p>Key policy recommendations from UNDP Series – Giordano Segneri (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avenues to address Violent Extremism and transition from securitised approaches to development solutions <p>Reflection and way forward - Natascha Hryckow (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The phenomenon of Violent Extremism and the way forward to address it <p>Q&A with the audience (20 min)</p> <p>Concluding remarks (3 min)</p>