



PREVENT THE SPREAD
of violent extremism
in the prison context

Achievements Report 2018-2022

Supporting the Management of
Violent Extremist Prisoners and
the Prevention of Radicalisation
to Violence in Prison



Government of the Netherlands



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**



**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE (CTED)**

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Preventing violent extremism and managing violent extremist prisoners is an important priority for the European Commission since we know the potential risks these persons may pose, especially upon release. The EU/UN joint global initiative promoted a multi-agency approach between prison and probation administrations, judicial authorities, police forces, local governments, civil society organizations and other actors, including local communities.

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Mr Peter M. Wagner,
Director, Service for
Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI),
European Commission

Introduction from the Programme Team

Across the world, there are around 12 million people behind bars – a highly concerning number that continues to grow. The main purposes of imprisonment are to protect society from crime and to prevent reoffending. Yet prison systems around the globe face fundamental challenges that undermine their ability to fulfil those purposes: systemic neglect and limited resources, a lack of political will, and barriers to accessing knowledge and good practices. When it comes to violent extremist prisoners, the need for change is urgent.



Prisons are meant to be places of justice and rehabilitation. Inhumane and dysfunctional prisons do not leave our societies any safer from violence and crime. In contrast, rehabilitative prison environments help social cohesion and reduce reoffending.



Ms Ghada Waly, Executive Director,
United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

Terrorism is a significant threat to public safety in communities worldwide. Prisons play a vital role in addressing that threat – not only in ensuring safe and secure custody but also preparing those convicted of terrorism and violent extremism-related offences for their safe re-entry into society, dissuading them from violence and allowing them to become full, law-abiding members of their communities. Prisons are also places of vulnerability, where prisoners with no history of terrorism or violent extremism may be radicalized to violence. Prison authorities must actively manage this risk to avoid further harm.

All these challenges have given rise to this global initiative, a joint endeavour between the European Union and the United Nations System. Over the past five years the Programme Team have worked closely with national counterparts in Kazakhstan, Tunisia, and Uganda to build the capacity of prisons to address the challenges posed by terrorism and violent extremism; to bring together and share expertise and good practices; and to ensure that essential resources, processes and relationships are in place to allow prison services to move from strength to strength.

While the initiative has targeted the issue of terrorism and violent extremism, interventions also encompass broader prison reform. This is not only desirable but essential, as effective and humane prison management provides the foundation for all other interventions. With this in mind, the initiative has taken place in full compliance with international human rights standards,

including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (known as the Nelson Mandela Rules), with due attention given to age and gender considerations.

The problem of violent extremism does not stop at a country's borders and cannot be tackled by nations working alone. This initiative has involved the coordinated effort of Member States, the European Union and the United Nations System, demonstrating the significant value of this approach. Together progress has been made towards Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions; and the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017), which acknowledged that though prisons can become potential incubators for terrorist recruitment, they can also serve to rehabilitate and reintegrate prisoners.

We express our gratitude to those who have made this programme possible: our national counterparts in Kazakhstan, Tunisia and Uganda; our donors, the European Union, the Netherlands and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; and implementing partners, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

Areas of impact



Safety and security



Risk and needs
assessment



Prison-based
rehabilitation



Social reintegration

Programme background

Terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalization to violence in prisons is of increasing concern to the international community. Prison administrations must not only ensure the secure and safe custody of violent extremist prisoners but also prevent radicalization to violence within prisons, disengage prisoners from future violence, and prepare those being released for their reintegration into the community.

This European Union / United Nations joint global initiative has supported Kazakhstan, Tunisia, and Uganda in strengthening the resilience of societies against terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalization to violence in prisons, in full compliance with international standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), with due attention given to age and gender considerations.

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006) is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional, and international counter-terrorism efforts. It is composed of four pillars, namely: addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; measures to prevent and combat terrorism; measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations System in that regard; and measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)

A strong focus of the programme has been on the promotion of the Nelson Mandela Rules. The rules, for which UNODC is custodian, provide the universally-recognized blueprint for good prison management and the treatment of all prisoners. When complied with they offer powerful barriers against violent extremism taking root in prisons, and provide a strong foundation on which effective interventions can be built.

UN Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017)

In 2017 UN Security Council Resolution 2396 acknowledged that prisons could serve as potential incubators for radicalization to terrorism and terrorist recruitment, and encouraged Member States to: take all appropriate actions to maintain a safe and humane environment in prisons; develop tools to address radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment; develop risk assessments to prevent terrorist recruitment and radicalization to violence; develop tailored and gender-sensitive strategies to address and counter terrorist narratives within the prison system; and rehabilitate and reintegrate prisoners and engage with offenders after release from prison to avoid recidivism.

The UN Common Position on Incarceration (2021)

In 2021 the United Nations system issued a common position on incarceration. This document lays the groundwork for a 'all-of-UN' approach under three thematic areas:

- Shifting policies towards crime prevention and alternatives to incarceration
- Strengthening prison management and improving prison conditions
- Advancing the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders

Definitions

Violent extremist: A person who promotes, supports, facilitates, or commits acts of violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals or social change. In some cases, a violent extremist prisoner may not be in prison for an offence (or alleged offence) related to violent extremism but has been assessed as a violent extremist according to the definition set out above.

Radicalization to violence: The process by which people acquire radical or extremist beliefs and attitudes that involve the use of violent measures to achieve objectives.

Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons, UNODC 2016



Kazakhstan

Joined the programme:

2018

Number of prisoners:

35,228

Number of female prisoners:

2,465

Number of prisons:

80

Number of violent extremist prisoners:

685



Tunisia

Joined the programme:

2018

Number of prisoners:

23,484

Number of female prisoners:

775

Number of prisons:

32

Number of violent extremist prisoners:

around **1,000**



Uganda

Joined the programme:

2019

Number of prisoners:

70,119

Number of female prisoners:

3,225

Number of prisons:

254

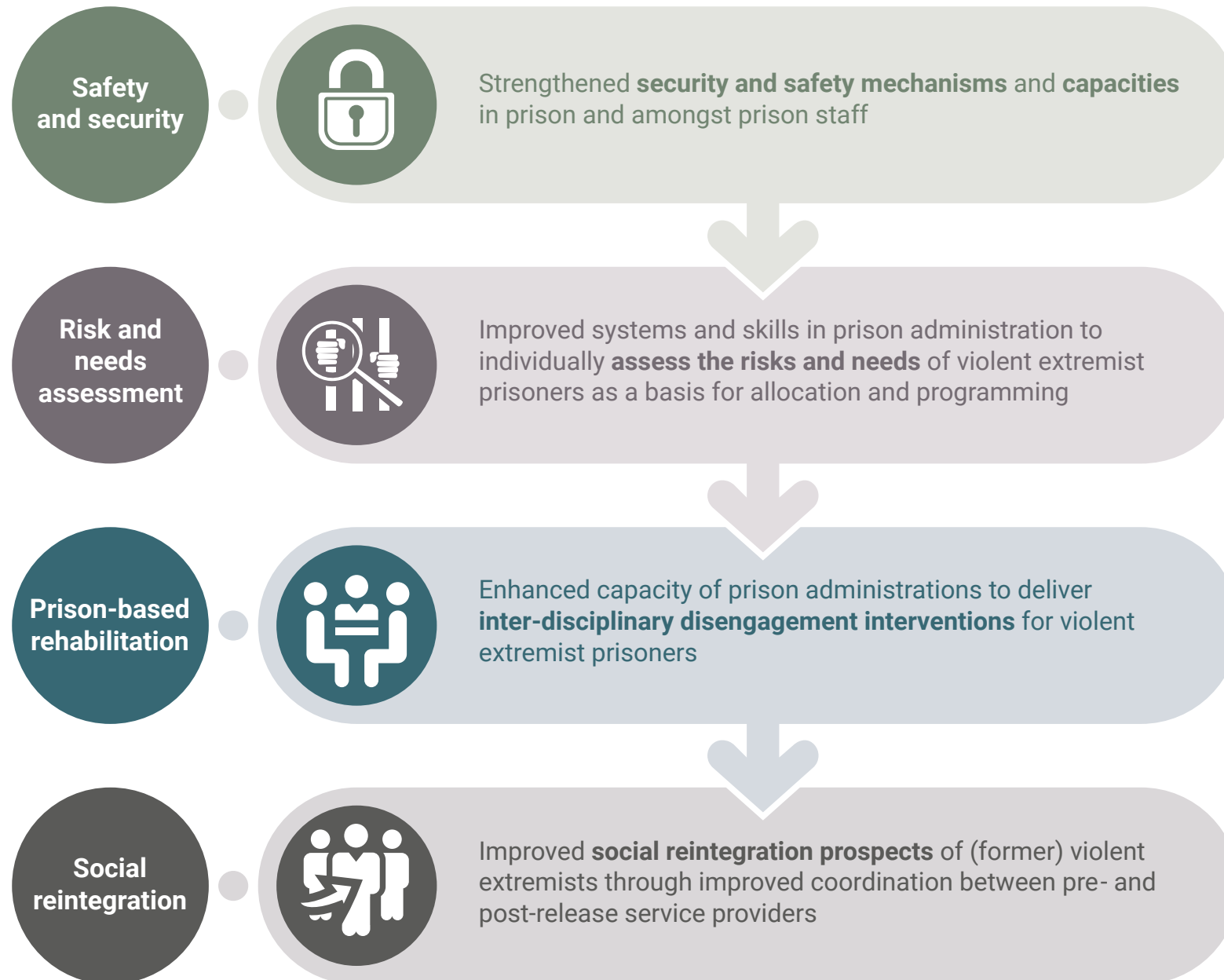
Number of violent extremist prisoners:

189

Key challenges

- **Security and political sensitivities** around the topic of violent extremism and terrorism in prisons
- Persistent **prison overcrowding** and a limited range of alternatives to imprisonment
- Inadequate **prison conditions, infrastructure** and **staff capacity** for advanced interventions for violent extremist prisoners
- **Punitive national legislation** related to the management of violent extremist prisoners and post-release supervision and support
- Limited access to relevant **data and evidence** and tailored **age- and gender-responsive** tools
- No systematic approach to assessing violent extremist prisoners' **risks and needs**
- The impact of **COVID-19** on prison management

Key achievements



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I am very proud of the partnership we have built with UNODC and CTED, which illustrates the true value of an 'all-of-UN' approach to preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Globally, it is of critical importance that we strengthen our united efforts in this field and reinforce resilience against radicalization to violence.

”

Mr Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General of the
United Nations Office
of Counter-Terrorism



Safety and security

- Improved **coordination and information-sharing** between prison administrations and other criminal justice agencies, developing new cross-agency information-sharing policies
- Enhanced **capacity of training institutions** to design and deliver courses on preventing violent extremism in prisons, including training more than **50 national trainers** in Uganda and Kazakhstan, and establishing a **Prison Staff Training Centre** on preventing violent extremism in prisons in Kazakhstan
- **Trained more than 6,500 prison officers** across three countries on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)
- Worked with national authorities to incorporate training modules on the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence into **national training curricula** in Kazakhstan and Uganda
- Developed and piloted **Prison Security Audit, Checklist and Guidelines**, helping to maintain a proper balance between **physical, procedural and dynamic** security
- Revised the **Prison Intelligence Framework** of the Uganda Prison Service



Risk and needs assessment

- Developed **Prisoner Classification Frameworks and Risk Assessment Tools** for violent extremist prisoners
- Improved **systems and skills** to conduct individual assessment of the risks and needs of violent extremist prisoners
- Increased the **IT capacity of prison services** in three beneficiary countries to allow them to effectively apply risk and needs assessment tools
- Increased **information-sharing** between prison administrations and other relevant criminal justice agencies
- Launched the **Research Centre on Preventing Violent Extremism in Prisons** in Tunisia, improving capacity to develop evidence-based policy



Prison-based rehabilitation

- Enhanced prison **administrations' capacity** to design and deliver inter-disciplinary age- and gender-responsive disengagement interventions
- Improved understanding of how **radicalization to violence** occurs and spreads within prisons, how to disrupt these processes and how to **support individuals vulnerable to recruitment**
- Increased **confidence among staff** to manage violent extremist prisoners in a safe, secure and humane manner, as evidenced by pre- and post-surveys
- Facilitated **tailored rehabilitation and reintegration programmes** for prisoners in all three beneficiary countries
- Improved **coordination between pre- and post-release service providers** through cooperation interventions to enhance the continuity of care



Social reintegration

- Fostered political commitment to engage **civil society organizations** in rehabilitation and post-release support for violent extremist prisoners
- Improved social reintegration prospects of (former) violent extremists through the implementation of **post-release services**
- Strengthened **coordination** between pre- and post-release service providers through project-supported cooperation interventions. This has enhanced the continuity of care
- Improved understanding of best practices to ensure **adequate supervision** of violent extremist prisoners upon release
- Supported prisons' responses to the **COVID-19 pandemic** by sharing guidance documents, providing medical equipment, and supporting the vaccination of prisoners and prison staff
- Enhanced the capacity of prison officers to communicate about the management and prevention of violent extremism in prisons, **promoting public understanding** of the positive impact of disengagement interventions on public safety



Safety and security

A safe, secure, and humane prison environment provides the foundation for all other interventions. The global initiative enhanced security and safety mechanisms and capacity in prisons across the three beneficiary countries by supporting increased information sharing among criminal justice and other public agencies, improving prison intelligence functions, and promoting greater involvement of civil society organizations in preventing violent extremism in prisons.

In addition, prison officers across the beneficiary countries improved their knowledge about the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, as well as fundamental principles and recommendations on the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons.



The thematic focus of the EU/UN global initiative on good prison management, prison intelligence and dynamic security enabled Uganda prisons to respond more effectively to the challenge of violent extremism in prisons and contributed to creating a safe and secure environment for staff and prisoners.



Dr Johnson Byabashaija,
Commissioner General,
Uganda Prisons Service

Kazakhstan

- Trained over 4,000 prison officers in prison safety and security
- Developed and launched a Prison Security Audit Framework
- Opened a new Prison Staff Training Centre on preventing violent extremism in prisons
- Enhanced coordination and information-sharing between prisons and other criminal justice agencies



Roundtable on violent extremism in prisons. Astana, Kazakhstan (December 2018)

Tunisia

- Trained more than 200 prison officers who improved their knowledge on the management of violent extremist prisoners and prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons
- Enhanced the capacity of prison officers to communicate about the management and prevention of violent extremism in prisons, promoting public understanding of the positive impact of

disengagement interventions on public safety

- Developed and piloted a new Prison Security Audit Framework, including checklist and reporting guidelines

Uganda

- Trained 36 instructors of the Prison Academy and Training School (PATS) of Uganda on the prevention and countering of violent extremism in prisons
- Trained over 2,000 new recruits on preventing and countering violent extremism in prison settings
- Completed a review of the Uganda Prisons Service policy framework on prison intelligence and developed new policy and operational frameworks and supporting tools
- Built partnerships between prison administrations and other criminal justice actors, supporting them to develop an action plan on security and safety mechanisms in prisons, including on dynamic security and prison intelligence



Training for staff at all levels in Kazakhstan

A new centre dedicated to training prison officers in the management of violent extremist prisoners was launched at the Kostanay Training Academy in Kazakhstan. Training delivered at the academy includes the training of trainers; three modules for all prison officers which are now included in the national curriculum; and in-service professional training for prison psychologists, inspectors working with violent extremist prisoners and prison security officers.

Outside the centre, more than 800 (27% female) prison and law enforcement officers have been trained in prison security auditing, risk and needs assessments, prison-based rehabilitation programmes, and post-release supervision and support. A new training module has been developed on interagency cooperation between prison and law enforcement bodies on the management of violent extremist prisoners to support the training curricula of the Law Enforcement Academy under the Prosecutor General's Office.

A new UNODC e-learning course on the Nelson Mandela Rules has been completed by 3,000 (32% female) prison and probation officers.



Risk and needs assessment

To run efficiently and effectively, prisons must assess and respond to the individual needs and risks of violent extremist prisoners. This maximizes available resources, reduces risk and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes.

The global initiative has improved prison administrations' risk and needs assessment systems and skills in all three countries. Increased confidence among staff in managing violent extremist prisoners in a safe, secure and humane manner has been evidenced by pre and post-surveys of capacity-building activities and by independent evaluations.



The EU/UN joint global initiative supported us to train more than 3,000 prison and probation officers in Kazakhstan. A key focus has been on the risk assessment and classification of violent extremist prisoners, strengthening safety and security mechanisms, and building the institutional capacity to prevent radicalization to violence in prisons in order to facilitate the successful rehabilitation of prisoners and contribute to the safety of the community.



Mr Zhanat Eshmagambetov,
Chairperson of the Committee of
Criminal-Executive System, Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan

- Developed and piloted a new risk and needs assessment tool in eight prisons, including a women's prison
- Conducted individualized risk and needs assessment of over 600 prisoners, including 85 violent extremist prisoners in seven prisons, including a women's prison
- Improved systems and skills in prison administration to individually assess the risks and needs of violent extremist prisoners as a basis for allocation and programming
- Trained prison inspectors and representatives of religious organizations to deliver faith-based interventions based on the results of prisoner risk and needs assessments

Tunisia

- Enhanced analytical capacity to develop evidence-based policies on preventing violent extremism in prisons through launching the Tunisian Centre for Research and Studies of Violent Extremism in Prisons
- Improved knowledge about key issues and challenges in assessing violent extremist prisoners, including the heterogeneity of this group, the need for accurate and verified information and human rights considerations
- Developed a risk and needs assessment tool and accompanying user guide to improve the assessment of those convicted of violent extremism and terrorism-related offences or where there is a concern about the radicalization of vulnerable prisoners



Opening of CRIMINO-TN, the Tunisian Centre for Research and Studies of Violent Extremism in Prisons (March 2022)

Uganda

- Developed a prisoner classification framework and piloted it in six prisons
- Trained nine senior prison staff as trainers on the application of risk and needs assessment tools
- Trained 95 key staff across the six pilot facilities on the application of prisoner classification tools, including the risk and needs assessment framework



Prisoner classification in Uganda

The Programme Team worked with the Uganda Prison Service to develop a prisoner classification framework and supporting tools, piloting these in six prisons, including a women's prison.

To support the introduction of the framework, the programme enhanced prison IT capacity, providing new technology and establishing an uninterrupted power supply.

The programme also trained prison staff, including training of trainers, embedding knowledge across staff, prisons and regions.

The result is that the prison service is better able to allocate resources to meet risks and needs, positive intervention outcomes are more likely, and the safety and security of prisons and the wider community are improved.



Prison-based rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a key function of prisons. Most prisoners convicted of violent extremism and terrorism-related offences will rejoin their communities. It is vital that time spent in prison is used productively so that on release, people can become full members of society and do so safely.

The programme has strengthened the capacity of prison administrations to deliver inter-disciplinary disengagement interventions for violent extremist prisoners and promoted human-rights-based, gender- and age-sensitive approaches. In addition, strategic advocacy has taken place at the global, regional, and national levels to promote the vital role of civil society, both in addressing violent extremism in prisons and monitoring and evaluating these efforts to provide feedback into policy planning and implementation.



We worked in close collaboration with our international partners on embedding interventions to prevent violent extremism in prisons into the broader prison reform agenda by improving prison conditions, enhancing institutional capacities, and designing social rehabilitation programmes.



Mr Sami Ennar,
General Director of Security,
General Committee of Prisons and
Rehabilitation, Tunisia

Kazakhstan

- Improved knowledge of national counterparts on disengagement programmes for violent extremist prisoners, including faith-based interventions, psychological counselling and support, cognitive-behavioural programmes, vocational training, and creating employment opportunities in prisons
- Improved inter-agency cooperation to cater for complex risks and needs of violent extremist prisoners, as well as to deliver tailored and gender-responsive prison-based rehabilitation interventions
- Identified the main reasons for radicalization to violence in prisons in Kazakhstan, supporting the ongoing development of evidence-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for vulnerable prisoners
- Engaged 'regular' prisoners in rehabilitation programs in order not to confer any special group status to violent extremist prisoners, which may result in hostility or other prisoners aspiring to be violent extremists

Tunisia

- Strengthened the capacity of prison officers to develop age- and gender-responsive prison-based disengagement and social reintegration interventions for violent extremist prisoners
- Increased awareness about multidisciplinary approaches for the social rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners
- Strengthened dialogue between state counterparts and civil society organizations in the development of programmes for prison-based rehabilitation and the social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners

Uganda



Prisoner rehabilitation programme, Uganda

- Supported the Uganda Prisons Service to identify best practices in the rehabilitation and social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners, engaging key stakeholders, including civil society

- Trained 22 (45% female) members of the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Technical Working Group in the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist prisoners
- Developed broad support among the Uganda Prisons Service, state bodies and civil society for an all-of-society approach to addressing the existing and emerging risks of radicalization to violence in prisons
- Influenced national counterparts to include social rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners as an essential component of the National Strategy on Countering Terrorism in Uganda



Civil society and local engagement in Tunisia

In November 2021, the Programme Team worked with national counterparts to hold Tunisia's first-ever national retreat for civil society organizations on rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist prisoners.

This retreat was part of broader efforts to promote the critical role that faith leaders, social workers, teachers, civil society organizations, and members of the community play in the successful delivery of disengagement interventions in prisons and upon release.

Strengthening the dialogue between the state and civil society organizations has allowed the development of interventions better tailored to local needs.

Nurlan's story

The global initiative has made significant achievements nationally and internationally. But it has also had a real impact on the lives of individual prisoners – and as a result, on the lives of their families and wider communities. This is one prisoner's story.

Five years ago, Nurlan was sent to a prison in the northern part of Kazakhstan. "From that moment, my life was divided into before and after. I asked myself, how am I going to get through my sentence? What am I going to do?"

Nurlan decided to make use of the prison's vocational programme, setting up a furniture manufacturing workshop and working with three other prisoners.

"At first, we took small orders. We didn't have any modern equipment, so we made furniture as best we could. But in 2019, UN representatives came to our prison and visited the workshop. These people understood our needs, and helped us with the procurement of the necessary equipment. From that point on, I started taking more prisoners to work."

The number of employees working in the furniture workshop run by Nurlan increased from three to 35 prisoners, including 17 violent extremist prisoners.

Prison Governor Kuanysh Koichubaev cannot overstate the impact of the prison's vocational programme. "It's difficult for prisoners to integrate into society after years of isolation. That's why family support, the acquisition of professional skills and the opportunity to work give a powerful platform to prisoners not only to become full members of society but also to prevent repeat offending and make communities safer. When we work together, we can positively influence the fate of the person and show him that we care about his life."

Nurlan is hopeful for the future. "I've got big plans ahead of me. I've got a family and a son waiting for me at home, and I think it's only a matter of time before I get home and see them."

“

I've got big plans ahead of me. I've got a family and a son waiting for me at home, and I think it's only a matter of time before I get home and see them.

”

Nurlan





Social reintegration

Putting in place measures to facilitate the smooth reintegration of prisoners into society is particularly important for violent extremist prisoners, who face stigma, community rejection, and other unique challenges.

The joint initiative increased awareness about the role of the community in preventing violent extremism and facilitating the reintegration of released violent extremist prisoners. In addition, the programme team established partnerships with stakeholders from different sectors. Their active participation was encouraged in policy discussions around the diverse and ever-changing threat of violent extremism.

The programme team also identified stakeholders who could ensure the continuity of interventions started in prisons and contribute to the successful reintegration of released prisoners into the community, establishing connections between them and prison administrations.



Roundtable on the vital role of civil society organizations in the rehabilitation and social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners in Tunisia (November 2021)

Kazakhstan

- Engaged communities in conversation on practical approaches to reduce the threat of violent extremism in prisons, raising awareness and capturing local knowledge
- Successfully advocated for revised legislation on the administrative supervision of former violent extremist prisoners to ensure compliance with international standards and good practices
- Strengthened the capacity of local municipalities to develop and implement programmes on the social reintegration of former violent extremist prisoners, with the support of state education and employment departments, the private sector and community-based organizations
- Strengthened coordination between pre- and post-release service providers
- Facilitated national stakeholders' ownership of and continued political commitment to programme results
- Contributed to the international evidence base on best practices for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners and preventing radicalization to violence in prisons

Tunisia

- Advocated for the important role of civil society organizations in strengthening prisoners' family contacts and developing prison-based interventions to prepare violent extremist prisoners for release
- Improved knowledge of prison officers on the need to have strong coordination among different stakeholders, including civil society organizations, public institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, families and communities

Uganda

- Launched a decongestion project enabling 112 prisoners to have their day in court within four months of launch and supporting 750 prisoners with legal aid
- Provided an orientation to the Commissioners of the Uganda Human Rights Commission to enhance their oversight of human rights standards in the management of violent extremist prisoners
- Supported the development of the strategy on reintegration, including helping establish a network of counter-terrorism stakeholders to coordinate and collaborate on research, training of law enforcement agencies, community engagement, and the development of

prison-based interventions to prepare prisoners for their re-entry into the community

- Supported the launch of the Five-Year Strategic Plan (2021/2022 – 2025/2026) for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which includes concrete steps to decongest prisons, which currently operate at 320% capacity



Decongesting prisons in Uganda

In partnership with the Uganda Law Society (ULS) and Uganda Prisons Service, the Prisons Decongestion and Access to Justice Project was launched to address the case backlog in prisoners awaiting trial, including those accused of terrorism and violent extremism.

Decongestion is essential, as prisons that operate beyond official capacity are more likely to face poor conditions, understaffing, and a lack of investment in prison reform programming. All of this heavily affects their capacity to manage violent extremist prisoners effectively. At the same time, such shortcomings, which can contribute to a sense of despair and frustration among the general prison population, provide dangerous entry points for attempts to radicalize prisoners to violence.

The project engaged justice actors with the need for change and reached prisoners directly by increasing their awareness of their legal options and offering legal aid services.



Representatives from the United Nations and programme donors visit a woodwork workshop in a prison in Kazakhstan

“

Only our multi-party efforts will be able to provide a solution to violent extremism in prisons – a problem that cannot be stopped by national borders, nor by national interventions alone. I want to thank all partners for their collaboration over the years. I am convinced that what has been achieved is not a one-hit-wonder but an important step in making and keeping prisons safer.

”

Mr Huib Mijnen, Netherlands Special Envoy for Counter-Terrorism

What next?

This programme has seen significant improvements in the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence across all three beneficiary countries. Now we must ensure that these achievements are sustained, learned from and replicated.

Sustainability

The programme was developed based on the idea that sustainable change can be achieved by activating and reinforcing local capacities and awareness. Activities focused on building the capacities of institutions and society in Kazakhstan, Tunisia, and Uganda to ensure local ownership and create long-lasting impact.

The focus placed on capacity-building and training of trainers among prison officers aimed to ensure the long-term implementation of the competencies acquired even after the end of the project. Similarly, the emphasis on involving communities and civil society organizations has created the basis for sustainable and durable action.

This puts Kazakhstan, Tunisia, and Uganda in a strong position to address the challenges posed by violent extremist prisoners going forward, in compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

Yet more support is required. In all three countries, further work will help to embed and extend the changes seen over the course of the programme, leading to safer prisons and communities.

Project learning

At the end of the programme, delegates from the three beneficiary countries came together to share their experiences of the past five years, to learn from one another and to make lasting connections.

There are also learnings from this project which could be implemented in other countries facing similar challenges with violent extremist prisoners. This programme has contributed to an enhanced international evidence base on managing violent extremist prisoners and preventing radicalization to violence in prisons.

This programme has also demonstrated the value of collaborative work, including between the European Union and the United Nations System, taking an 'All-of-United Nations' approach, working closely with national counterparts, and involving other actors, including civil society and local communities. When it comes to countering violent extremism in prisons, this approach is not only desirable but essential, and the Programme Team hopes to see this continue.

Evaluation

The final independent evaluation of the global initiative will be conducted in 2023 and will focus on the criteria of (i) relevance; (ii) efficiency; (iii) effectiveness; (iv) impact; and (v) sustainability.



Presentation of a manual on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, in Tunisia (2020)



President Yoweri Museveni presides over commissioning new prison recruits at Kololo ceremonial grounds in Kampala. The 2,018 recruits received basic training on countering violent extremism in prison settings (March 2022)



Delegations from Kazakhstan, Tunisia and Uganda gather for the programme's final conference in Astana (September 2022)



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The professional and effective management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons is crucial to building and maintaining safe societies. From dialogue with Member States, we have learned that this is an area of great interest, and they would be interested in learning about best practices. There is much to be learned from this programme.

”

Mr Weixiong Chen,
Acting Executive Director,
United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee
Executive Directorate

Thank you

The Programme Team expresses sincere gratitude to the donors, beneficiary countries and implementing partners, without whom this global initiative would not have been possible.

Donors



Funded by the
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