



## PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE PRISON CONTEXT

### Supporting the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons (2018-2021)

Supporting the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons is a four year (2018-2021) joint initiative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office (UNCCT) implemented in coordination with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED). It is co-funded by the European Union, the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre and the Government of the Netherlands.

This programme responds to the emerging and significant challenge of potential radicalization to violence in various prison settings. It aims at addressing it as part of broader prison reform efforts and in full compliance with international human rights standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and from a gender perspective.

Good prison management and necessary reforms constitute a fundamental basis for the effective management of all prisoners, including violent extremist prisoners. Stand-alone interventions

for violent extremist prisoners which are implemented in isolation of the broader prison context are unlikely to yield positive results.

**Key objective:** the programme aims to increase capacity of selected beneficiary countries (1) to prevent the progression to violent extremism (focus on those prisoners who may be vulnerable); and (2) to effectively manage violent extremist prisoners (focus on those prisoners who have embraced violent extremism), while respecting human rights standards.

This programme is expected to be delivered in three countries - Kazakhstan, Tunisia and Uganda.

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## PRIORITY AREAS

### Security and safety mechanisms



The ability of prison administrations to ensure safety and security in their facilities constitutes a pre-condition for any effective intervention strategy related not only to violent extremist prisoners, but also to efforts to minimise the risk of continuous engagement in criminal activity; recruitment; manipulation or intimidation of other prisoners / prison staff; and radicalization to violence taking place inside prisons.

*The programme will strengthen security and safety mechanisms and capacities in prisons and among prison staff to reflect crucial importance of front-line prison officials' interaction with prisoners and further foster coordination and information-sharing amongst criminal justice agencies, and with other public agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in preventing or countering violent extremism.*

### Risks and needs assessment



Violent extremist prisoners do not represent a homogeneous group but may comprise individuals with very different levels of ideological commitment, including charismatic leaders, facilitators, followers and those at the very margins who may seek companionship in the group for other personal reasons.

*The programme aims to improve systems and skills of prison administration to individually assess the risks and needs of violent extremist prisoners as a basis for allocation and programming.*

### Disengagement interventions



In line with international standards and norms, dissuading extremists from violence and assisting former violent extremist prisoners to reintegrate into society will constitute a core component of this programme. Prisons can play a positive role in tackling problems of radicalisation to violence.

*The programme will enhance capacity of prison administrations to deliver inter-disciplinary disengagement interventions for violent extremist prisoners.*

### Social reintegration



Prison-based interventions should be put in place to prepare prisoners for their release and re-entry into the community. This is particularly important for violent extremist prisoners who may have spent a considerable period in detention.

*The programme will suggest approaches to prevent violent extremist offenders from returning to violent extremist groups after release, and will emphasize education, vocational training, counselling, and family and community engagement as core elements of the social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners into society. It will also, subject to the national context, explore opportunities for alternatives to imprisonment for violent extremists in suitable cases.*

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