



النهضة العربية للديمقراطية والتنمية
Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development

**Talking Points on
The Implementation of Women, Peace, and Security Resolutions in
the Context of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and CT/PVE
Responses**

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1. Jordanian Civil Society Perspectives on Women's Role in PVE and International Frameworks

In 2006, the United Nations (UN) released its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UN GCTS), which addresses the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, provides measures to build states' capacities to prevent and combat terrorism and presents methods to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/288, 2006). During the sixth biennial review of the strategy, which was undertaken in 2018, the strategy advocated for the increased inclusion of women and civil society organizations in policymaking and programming in this area. This commitment upholds the importance of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), whose agenda is best demonstrated in the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security of 2000, which "reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security" (UN Women, 2000).

ARDD stresses the critical role that women play in preventing violent extremism. Often, women are seen as either victim of extremist ideologies or as contributors to them. However, it should be noted that when women are active agents in extremist thinking, more often than not it is because they are victims too — of an environment that politically, socially, and economically marginalizes them. At ARDD, we have focused on strengthening the role in preventing violent extremism in Jordan, particularly, and in the region. There is increasing recognition among civil society actors that women's participation in preventing violent extremism should not be part of counter-terrorism strategies but part of the civilian peace agenda. Women are already on the frontline of countering extremist violence in Jordan in their capacities as mothers, police officers, and more.

While the WPS agenda and the UN GCTS are complementary in nature — the UN GCTS presents approaches to preventing violent extremism (PVE) as well as terrorism and the WPS agenda emphasizes the role that women have in this approach — the UN GCTS advocates for women's participation in the military sector. This method falls under the "nation-building" approach, a top-down model that supplements a military or securitized counter-terrorism strategy (UN Women, 2015).

ARDD, like other civil society organizations, has reservations about this approach, as it has been shown in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, that these strategies do not effectively take local context into consideration and have not been successful. Specifically, it is ARDD's experience that it is very difficult to engage civil society organizations in PVE work whose measures are delineated in the UN GCTS. Ironically, while there is no clear distinction between the PVE agenda and WPS, it has been easier for civil society organizations to engage in WPS work, as participation remains at the grassroots level and does not involve participation in peace building and political conflict management.

2. PVE and Jordan's Case

2.1. The Government of Jordan's Multipronged Approach to PVE

A document by the Ministry of Interior, which was leaked to the press in 2016, explains Jordan's approach to PVE as three-pronged: at domestic level, at regional level, and at international level (ARDD, 2018). According to the document, Jordan has taken measures to protect its borders against international and regional infiltration and has participated in international coalitions against terrorism. Domestically, Jordan has imposed preventive measures at the security, intellectual, and educational levels. The Government of Jordan (GoJ) has passed several laws related to PVE, including the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 55 of the Year 2006, the Cybercrime Law No. 27 of 2015, and the National Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism of the Year 2014, among others. To enact the National Strategy for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, a counter-extremism committee and department were developed on three axes: culture/religion, democracy, and human rights.

According to a study conducted by Mason Springfield Inc. on PVE, public opinion is positive regarding the efficiency of the Jordanian government in combating PVE through security forces, including "efforts to monitor imams and mosques, securing the border with Syria, swift and successful action against sleeper cells, a rehabilitation program that respects the rights of former violent extremists that have returned, discussions and other engagement activities at schools and universities, and direct and indirect CVE messaging across the media" (Madison Springfield Inc., 2016).

2.2. Jordanian National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security of 2018-2021 (JONAP)

Jordan is one of many countries that adopted national action plans that address women, peace, and security. Led by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and the Jordan office of UN Women, JONAP "aims to integrate a gender-based approach towards women's participation in prevention and protection processes during conflicts, as well as in peace building, and maintaining stability and sustainable security" and "highlights the importance of cooperation with civil society and the role of women as key partners in preventing and combating violent extremism" (UN Women and JNCW, 2018).

JONAP has been lauded for its inclusion of a dedicated goal on gender and PVE and allocation of dedicated funds for its implementation in its NAP (UN Women, 2020). ARDD believes that JONAP is an excellent starting point for increasing Jordanian women's participation in peace and security in their country and commends the drafters for including over 40 women-led NGOs in the consultation phase. Indeed, some positive results have been achieved in meeting one of the strategic goals of NAP, which involves reforms in the military sector to ensure gender sensitivity and build the capacities of women involved in peacemaking. While clear and productive outcomes have been accomplished in this area,

civil society generally does not view positively the NAP, as JONAP encompasses a “nation-building” militarized approach to PVE.

ARDD, along with other civil society organizations, believes that the NAP needs to be implemented in a way that every woman in Jordan feels its impact in her daily life. To do so, women-led civil society organizations that have the knowledge of women’s realities and challenges in their respective localities to shape the NAP must effectively participate in the implementation of JONAP not in the securitization of PVE but in other aspects through the work of the civil society.

3. Civil Society Efforts

Civil society organizations have been organizing for integrated action by the civil society and official national institutions, such as JONAP, to address all forms of violent extremism through a PVE approach that complements the securitization approach of state actors. ARDD has already partnered with UN Women and worked with women-led NGOs throughout the country to deepen their understanding of the social, economic, and political drivers of violent extremism in their respective communities so that they can “own” JONAP.

One particular effort from Jordanian civil society actors with a PVE agenda deserves attention: the Observatory to Prevent Extremist Violence (OPEV).

3.1 OPEV

Since 2018, Jordan’s civil society’s efforts to prevent violent extremism have been coordinated by OPEV, a body founded in early 2017 as an outcome of the Barcelona Conference held in January 2017 that convened more than 320 representatives of 172 civil society organizations and social movements from the Euro-Med region. The objectives of OPEV include spreading awareness of the drivers of violent extremism through education and community resilience, the provision of legal awareness training to improve knowledge of people’s rights among populations who are more susceptible to joining terrorist organizations, reinforcing the role of youth as agents of change, and using alternative narratives in social media and traditional media, among others.

These objectives fall under the jurisdiction of the Jordanian OPEV members who are best equipped to meet the objective. Jordan OPEV members include ARDD, the Jordan National Commission for Women (JNCW), East-West Centre, Leaders of Tomorrow, and NOVACT Institute for Nonviolent Action, in addition to individuals representing different sectors of civil society.

4. Way Forward

Jordan has made significant strides in studying the drivers of violent extremism, its impact on women and girls, and the important roles women and girls play in PVE. JONAP is a critical component of addressing PVE and empowering women to be builders of social cohesion, but there are still improvements that need to be made in order for the WPS and the UN GCTS agendas to be realized.

First, more awareness about the PVE agenda should be raised among civil society groups. Local media lack the required expertise to address violent extremism, and outlets typically cannot access information. Capacity building must target local media outlets, to train media professionals on this topic and how to sensitively advocate for PVE in the news.

Local academics and think tanks should also disseminate information about PVE and WPS efforts, as the current approaches are international top-down; they do not take into consideration the nuances of the Jordanian society.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, civil society does not have the funds to translate PVE and WPS obligations and commitments. Most funding in this agenda is allocated to military groups and governments, and this has been observed in Jordan as well, where the most significant achievements under the NAP have been in the military sector reform. ARDD considers this approach as reactionary, as the military uses force and security measures primarily to respond to violent extremism. Civil society should be targeted for prevention and interventions. The imbalance of attention towards the military in comparison to civil society has been in the objectives of OPEV, and the organizations implementing these actions should be prioritized by donors.

5. References

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