



**European Committee
of the Regions**

**The Role of the Sub-National
Authorities from the Mediterranean
Region in Addressing Radicalisation
and Violent Extremism of
Young People**

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Scope	1
1.2. Objectives	2
1.3. Methodology.....	3
2. Conceptual Base	5
2.1. Definitions	5
3. Root Causes of Radicalisation and Vulnerable Groups	9
3.1. Pathways to Radicalisation and Violent Extremism	9
3.2. Vulnerable Groups.....	11
3.3. Socioeconomic Factors.....	13
3.4. Cultural Desertification	14
3.5. Religious Influences	15
3.6. Political Influences	17
4. Examples/Case Studies and Analyses of Integrated Policies and Programmes for Tackling Violent Radicalisation	19
4.1. Preventative Strategies	19
4.1.1. <i>Youth and Community Initiatives</i>	19
4.1.2. <i>Religious Initiatives</i>	22
4.1.3. <i>Economic Initiatives</i>	25
4.1.4. <i>Research Initiatives</i>	26
4.1.5. <i>Local Authority (LA) Initiatives</i>	27
4.1.6. <i>Best Practice</i>	29
4.2. Interventions	30
4.3. Punishment	33
5. Analysis of Emerging Trends	35
6. The Specific Needs of LRAs from the Mediterranean Area to Improve/Develop Programmes in Tackling Youth Radicalisation	37
6.1. Conceptual Issues	37
6.2. Enhancing the Role of LAs	37
6.3. Youth Involvement.....	37
6.4. Enhancing Women’s Role in Tackling Radicalisation	38
6.5. Socio-Economic Investment.....	38
6.6. Cultural and Sport Investment.....	39
6.7. Empowerment of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).....	39

6.8.	Social Harmony	39
6.9.	Interventions	39
6.10.	Human Rights Abuses	40
7.	Recommendations for LRAs	41
7.1.	Conceptual Basis of Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism	41
7.2.	Preventative Measures	42
7.3.	Interventions	45
Annexes	47

1. Introduction

1.1. Scope

The report will focus on the situation in five countries that are members of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), and that have been and are affected to varying degrees by radicalisation and violent extremism:

Egypt, which has seen a surge in terrorist attacks (as many as 100 per month in 2015¹ and at least a 3,000% increase since 2011²), by an increasing range of terrorist groups and in more and more locations (extending beyond their original focus in North Sinai), particularly since the removal from power of President Morsi.

Jordan, where violent attacks have been rare but where there has been increased concern with violent extremism since the Amman bombings in 2005, and because of conflicts in neighbouring states which have led to an influx of refugees, as well as to 3-4,000 Jordanians leaving to join terrorist groups in 2011-2015, while an estimated 6-7,000 Salafist Jihadists live in Jordan³.

Morocco, where in 2016 at least 19 terrorist cells were dismantled, most of them ISIS affiliated. In 2015, reports indicated that up to 300 Moroccans were training in Libya. Thus, there is concern that ISIS Moroccan fighters from Libya, Syria, and Iraq will one day come back home and plan attacks in Morocco. Nevertheless, Morocco has been the country least affected by terrorism in the region over the last fifteen years. In addition to fears concerning ISIS fighters' return, Morocco has also faced a threat of illegal trafficking that plays an important role in terrorists' recruitment.⁴

Tunisia, where at least 17 terrorist acts took place in 2015, and which has the largest number of foreign fighters per capita in the world (around 6,000 to 7,000).⁵

Algeria, in which al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Murabitoun and

¹ The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (2015). *Egypt's Rising Security Threat*.

² Pauwels, A. (2017). Preventing terrorism in the south. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 6, 1-4.

³ Al Sharif, O. (2016). Jordan and the Challenge of Salafi Jihadists. *Middle East Institute*, March 21. <http://www.mei.edu/content/article/jordan-and-challenge-salafi-jihadists>.

⁴ Global Risk Insights (2016). Morocco's war on terror and the threat of ISIS, available at <http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/04/morocco-war-on-terror-threat-of-isis/>, accessed 19/06/2017

⁵ Pauwels, A. (2017). Preventing terrorism in the south. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 6, 1-4, available at <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/preventing-terrorism-in-the-south>, accessed 19/06/2017

Jund al-Khilafa fi Ard al-Jazayer (JAK, Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria) are active terrorist groups. AQIM has not only carried out deadly attacks in Algeria (e.g., against a gas plant in 2016) but also in Mali in 2015 and Burkina Faso in 2016.⁶ However, compared for example to Tunisia, Algeria has produced a much lower number of fighters (around 170) who joined Jihadi groups in Syria and Iraq⁷. Algeria faces a threat of kidnapping, primarily in the mountainous areas east of Algiers and in the southern border of the desert regions.

Although terrorist attacks in the region have intensified, particularly those undertaken by ISIS since 2014, several surveys conducted in 2016 show a significant decline in the popularity of ISIS and its violent extremist ideology. For example, the Doha Institute's Arab Opinion Index shows that the overwhelming majority (89%) of respondents opposed ISIS, and only 2% expressed having 'very positive' views of ISIS while another 3% expressed views which were 'positive to some extent'⁸. Interestingly, the survey shows no correlation between respondents' religiosity and the popularity of ISIS: only around 20% of ISIS supporters attribute its popularity to religious factors and the rest attribute it to political factors.

1.2. Objectives

The report will consider definitions concerning radicalisation and violent extremism, root causes of radicalisation, and prevention and intervention programmes relating to violent radicalisation and deradicalisation in each country. It will also consider the specific needs of stakeholders, particularly Local Authorities (LAs), to improve their approaches and strategies, as well as their institutional and human capacities to tackle youth radicalisation and violent extremism; and will draw upon local perspectives to develop general recommendations concerning prevention and intervention programmes.

⁶ *Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*, In Counter-Extremism Project, available online at https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/threat_pdf/Al-Qaeda%20in%20the%20Islamic%20Maghreb%20%28AQIM%29-03072017.pdf

⁷ Trofimov, Y. (2016) How Tunisia became a top source of ISIS recruits, *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 25. available online at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-tunisia-became-a-top-source-of-isis-recruits-1456396203>, accessed 15/06/2017.

⁸ The Doha Institute's Arab Opinion Index (2016). Main findings of the 2016 Arab Opinion Index available now. The 2016 Arab Opinion Index is based on face-to-face interviews conducted with 18,310 individual respondents in 12 separate Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. Available online at <http://english.dohainstitute.org/release/5cbeed44-ec34-4eb2-a507-195d5e86099a>, accessed 18/06/2017.

1.3. Methodology

The report draws upon field research conducted by a team of four local consultants from Egypt (Dr Ahmed Tohamy), Jordan (NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solution, a consulting firm), Morocco (Dr Mohammed Musbah), and Tunisia (Dr Mohammed Haj Salem).⁹ Information about Algeria was collected from secondary sources, as well as Skype interviews with Tunisian and Moroccan experts who have had some work experience with Algerian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Professor David Winter and Dr. Aitemad Muhanna-Matar have compiled and analysed the data collected from the five countries and produced the final report.

The research team was unable to conduct a sufficient number of interviews with different stakeholders in the studied countries, and thus there is heavy reliance on secondary sources, particularly recent empirical studies on countering extremism conducted in the studied countries. The number of interviewees differs from one country to another due to security and technical constraints.¹⁰ Primary data in this report were collected through the use of several methods:

Algeria

Data about Algeria relies on secondary sources (official documents and online reports and articles) and Skype interviews with Dr Mohammed Musbah, who has had experience of work with Algerian CSOs and researchers; and Dr Imed Abdeljaoued, a Tunisian expert on youth radicalisation and the Director of the Civil Society Support Program (PASC).

Egypt

The local consultant conducted 14 interviews through telephone conversation and direct contact with: 3 government figures; 2 postgraduate students; 2 Islamist leaders; 4 youth activists; 1 teacher in a secondary school; 1 preacher from Azhar University; and 1 academic expert on radicalisation. The interviewees came from three governorates: Cairo, Beni Suef, and Alexandria. Participants wanted to remain anonymous.

Jordan

Primary data on Jordan came from an exclusive survey conducted by NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solution's Polling Centre. NAMA retains an expansive

⁹ See the team members' biographies in Annex 2.

¹⁰ See a list of research participants in Annex 1.

database that includes information about respondents of the survey. The data used in this report were collected in August 2016. A total of 840 interviews were completed in Zarqa Central District, 335 in Central Irbid, and 168 in Central Tafileh. In addition to the survey data, NAMA referred to the knowledge of its Jordanian experts on violent extremism, in addition to one face to face interview conducted with Mr. Amer Bani Amer, the Director of Al Hayat, one of the well-established youth and development CSOs that is largely involved in government and international programmes to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) in Jordan.

Morocco

The local consultant conducted five face-to-face interviews: with the head of the youth section in the Development and Justice Party (PJD) and a member of Rabat City Council; a postgraduate student and youth activist; a PhD Student in Cultural Studies; a member of *Rabita Mohammedia* (Mohammedia Association) for Religious Scholars and a former senior security official.

Tunisia

The local consultant conducted 10 face-to-face interviews with: 2 participants from the Ministry of Religious Affairs; 1 from the Ministry of Youth and Sport; 2 academics; and 5 from CSOs.

2. Conceptual Base

2.1. Definitions

In *Egypt*, there have been ‘ever-broadening legal definitions of terrorism’^{11,12}, seemingly encompassing anyone who is antagonistic to the government. This is reflected in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹³ that ‘Egypt’s approach to counter-terrorism bypasses the false dichotomy of “violent vs. non-violent” extremism, recognizing that extremism by its very nature is a stepping stone towards violence and subsequently refusing to allow radicals to operate under different guises in service of the same goals’. The approach also ‘relies on comprehensively and categorically refuting and countering all forms of extremism and radicalism, rather than making distinctions and categorizations which may lead to acceptance of and leniency towards radicals and extremists whose actions are less headline-grabbing but just as dangerous as any others’.

Regarding a definition of violent radicalisation, interviews with a range of *Egyptian* stakeholders found that regime supporters and officials considered that the definition should not, as in some current definitions, refer to undermining of a democratic system but rather of the sovereign and legal state, whereas academics, youth activists, and a journalist tended to express contrasting views, including that the concept of violent extremism should be expanded to include institutional and state violence, and that an authoritarian regime may generate violent extremism, from which it may benefit by gaining wider support. An academic noted that there is a distinction between violent extremism and popular revolutions that may include violence, and that ‘the concepts of violence, extremism, and terrorism are fluid and relative’.

Confusion regarding the definition of terrorism is also evident in *Tunisia*, where there are differences between The National Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the Government in January, 2015 and The National Strategy of Countering Extremism and Terrorism adopted by the Presidency of the Republic in November, 2016. The former document considers terrorism to be ‘an intricate and complex phenomenon at all levels, based on a multiplicity of dimensions, titles, facades and influences’, and states that ‘The dangers facing Tunisia exceed local violence groups guided by national “social, political, educational and cultural...” circumstances to a comprehensive global strategy that seeks

¹¹ The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (2015). *Egypt’s Rising Security Threat*.

¹² Suto, R.J. (2014). *Egypt’s New Terrorism Law*, December 12, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-s-new-terrorism-law>

¹³ Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016). *Egypt’s Real Theory on Terrorism*, July 3, <https://mfaegypt.org/2016/07/03/egypts-real-theory-on-terrorism/>

Tunisia's involvement in the project of the "expected Caliphate" for which people are mobilized from all parts of the world'. It also notes that 'the terrorist agenda does not recognize borders and its main objective is to undermine and dismantle the state, change the societal model and impose a new project'. This definition of terrorism focuses on its political dimension, and does not directly relate it to religious extremism. Yet the strategy does note 'the dangers of coalescence between terrorism and other spaces such as the religious space, smuggling, organized crime, Algerian experience and the social and regional gap, in addition to the effective presence in the virtual space and social networks'. It also notes 'the spread of extremist religious discourse in the Tunisian arena... which opens the door to calls for violence, hatred, clash with state and terrorism', and develops an 'aptitude for sliding towards extremism'. The National Strategy of Countering Extremism and Terrorism, as its name suggests, *does* link extremism with terrorism, but provides no rationale for this.

It seems as if in *Tunisia* the state adopts two strategies. According to the Constitutional terms of reference, the Head of the Government manages the internal affairs of the country, including the judiciary and the security establishments, and the Presidency of the Republic supervises military affairs and forges foreign policy. This may explain the two documents' different approaches to the issue of terrorism and extremism, as well as the existence of two national committees to combat terrorism: the first in the Presidency of the Government ('National Committee for Combating Terrorism') in accordance with the law on Combating Terrorism and Preventing Money Laundering (Section VI, 66 - 70) and the second in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('National Committee to Combat Extremism and Terrorism').

The linkage between extremism and terrorism in the *Tunisian* Presidency's national strategy has been regarded by the interviewed civil society activists as 'a methodological error that indicates a kind of confusion in dealing with the phenomenon, and an expansion of the circle of the targets', since the extremist 'cannot be equated with the terrorist if he does not use violence, there is a difference between extremism and violent extremism'. Similarly a study on violent extremism in *Jordan*¹⁴ has noted the importance, in relation to violent extremism, of distinguishing between mindset and behaviour as holding similar views to an extremist organisation does not necessarily lead to violent extremist behaviour.

In *Jordan*, the Armed Forces' 'Iftaa' Department, in a report published in

¹⁴ Confidential study, reported in NAMA – Strategic Intelligence Solutions (2017). *Drivers of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Jordan – Preventive Measures*. Unpublished research paper drawn upon NAMA's youth database (2016).

2016,¹⁵ defined radicalisation in relation to religious ideology as ‘moving away from moderation and the exhaustive commitment to a notion of some sort to reach a level of extremity’. The Iftaa’ Department also made connections between radicalisation and terrorism, and identified a number of signs associated with radicalism in Jordan, namely intolerance of different opinions; misconceptions of people; radical interpretations of texts; lack of leniency; and overemphasis and tightness in religious matters.

Another definition of violent radicalisation based on a case study of youth deradicalisation in *Jordan*¹⁶ is that it is a process in which a disenfranchised person is approached by a recruiter who targets the person’s conditions that led him/her to feeling disenfranchised.

In *Algeria*, violent extremism is defined according to law (amended in 1992) as synonymous with ‘subversive activities’. It is regarded as ‘any offence targeting state security, territorial integrity or the stability or normal functioning of institutions... [by] spreading panic or creating a climate of insecurity... [and by] impeding the activities of public authorities’. The Algerian Penal Code was amended again in 1995 to prohibit the ‘justification, encouragement, and financing’ of terrorist (i.e. ‘subversive’) activities. According to Mr. Sabri Boukadoum, the permanent representative of Algeria to the UN, Algeria defines violent extremism, or terrorism, in a way that is in line with the UN Charter and international laws. Implicitly referring to the Algerian-Moroccan conflict concerning the Western Sahara, Mr. Boukadoum stresses the need to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate struggle against foreign occupation to achieve self-determination and also warns against ‘the tendentious association of terrorism with a religion, a civilization, or a geographical area’¹⁷.

In *Morocco*, according to the interviews conducted with Said, a political activist and head of a district in Rabat, ‘violent extremism constitutes an active ideology constructed around utopian orthodoxy that is used by radical groups, which succeeded to recruit a number of youth for their political and religious project’. Ilyas, a religious scholar at *Rabita Mohammedia*, focused in his definition of violent religious extremism on psychological aspects. He noted:

violent extremists build the utopian image based on four concepts: dignity, unity, purity and salvation. They also seek unification of the global Muslim community

¹⁵ Al-Iftaa’ Department (2016). *Radicalization- its Nature, Drivers, Signs and Cure*. Amman: Army Press.

¹⁶ Abu Dalhoum, M. (2017). *Youth Deradicalization: Strengthening the Bonds- Case Study: Jordanian Youth*. GRIN, January.

¹⁷ A Statement presented by H.E. Mr. Sabri Boukadoum in the UN General Assembly meeting on 16 Feb. 2016. Mr Boukadom was elected Chair of the First UN Committee (Disarmament and International Security) on 13 June 2016, available at

https://www.un.int/algeria/sites/www.un.int/files/Algeria/Documents/satatement_on_the_plan_of_action_to_pve-16_february_2016.pdf, accessed 16/06/2017

(the Ummah) under one banner, the caliphate. They seek also to purify themselves from sins and to achieve inner serenity and eternal salvation, which explains embarking on suicide bombings as a desire in the liberation of the soul and the body.

In the five studied countries there is no singular definition of violent radicalisation, or a comprehensive multifaceted approach to define it. According to the points of view of several interviewees from the different studied countries, the way in which violent radicalisation is defined by governments reflects the state's geopolitics, as well as the state's interests to shape and guide its anti-radicalisation strategies, whether to focus on security and punishment measures, religious rehabilitation, or socio-economic and political reforms in order to maintain its legitimacy. In an interview with Dr Imed Abdeljaoued, the Director of the Civil Society Support Program (PASC) funded by the EU, he notes: 'for counter-radicalisation strategies to be effective, an inclusive approach needs to be used to discuss the definition of violent extremism and radicalisation from the perspectives of different stakeholders, including religious scholars, academics, security officers and local communities'.

3. Root Causes of Radicalisation and Vulnerable Groups

3.1. Pathways to Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

In *Jordan*, a study of influence pathways towards violent extremism used the categories of the opportunist, motivated by remuneration, boredom, and purposelessness; the avenger, driven by desire to redress injustice, take revenge, cause political change, and achieve personal redemption; and the ideologue, motivated by a sense of salvation, and the duty to restore the true nature of Islam and achieve an Islamic government. The study identified the multiple processes involved as polarisation of views; identity radicalization; lineages with likeminded people; and encounters with enabling structure¹⁸¹⁹. The last two, which require a group setting, are regarded as most likely to result in violent extremism. The relevance of exposure to social media websites, particularly in view of the use of these for propaganda by groups such as ISIS, was indicated by the finding, in a sample of young people aged 16 to 26 years, that the greater their connectivity on social media, the more they express their disapproval for the direction in which the country is moving.

Interestingly, a study in *Jordan* indicates that individuals with weak social bonds, e.g., single people with no family or children or with no connection to a particular tribe structure, and who may experience depression and seek protection and belonging, are more likely to be triggered to violent radicalisation²⁰. It is concluded from the NAMA database collected from focus groups with youth in the governorates of Zarqa, Irbid and Tafileh in August 2016 that the very low level of violent extremism in Jordan is due to tribal laws and customs that protect individuals; the government's counter violent extremism programmes; acts of moderate Islamist groups; and Jordan's culture in general.²¹

In *Tunisia*, the Centre for Research and Studies on Terrorism, affiliated to the Tunisian Forum on Economic and Social Rights, conducted a study of 'Terrorism in Tunisia through Judicial Files' in 2016 on a sample of 1,000

¹⁸ Confidential study, reported in NAMA, see note 15 above

¹⁹ Chin, M., Gharaibeh, S., Woodham, J., & Deeb, G. (2016), A national strategic framework for countering extremism in Jordan. *Journal of International Affairs*, 69, 115-xiii.

²⁰ Abu Dalhoum, M. (2017), *Youth Deradicalization: Strengthening the Bonds- Case Study: Jordanian Youth. GRIN*, January.

²¹ In 2016, NAMA conducted a survey comprised of a sample of 840 respondents from Zarqa Central District, 335 in Central Irbid, and 168 in Central Tafileh. A questionnaire was used in addition to a number of focus groups. NAMA owns this database and used some of it for the purpose of this report

people (965 males and 35 females)²² who either confessed or were proven to be members of terrorist organisations. The study highlighted the importance of distinguishing between two stages:

- The stage of influence: by persons, provocative sermons in mosques, communication tools, books and media. This is an intellectual, psychological, theoretical and ideological individual stage that did not involve a material act or a social project. At this level, it is only a personal conviction, and therefore there is no need to punish the person for extremism.
- The stage of belonging: in which these beliefs are transformed into material acts (joining terrorist organisations, allegiance, choosing a nickname, training in use of weapons, joining camps, joining the hotbeds of tension). This is the stage in which the person becomes a terrorist figure who can be traced and questioned for his/her acts.

Dr Abdeljaoued, the PASC Director in *Tunisia*, stressed that according to the large number of workshops conducted in local communities in remote regions of Tunisia aiming to generate a local perspective on violent radicalisation and its causes, it appears that ‘factors of violent radicalisation differ from one region to another and within each region’. He also emphasised that radical youth who get engaged in violence have no singular profile – ‘they come from different socio-economic backgrounds and have different personalities, some criminal and some not’²³. Dr Abdeljaoued asserted that lack of cultural and sport activities for youth in remote rural areas in the south and west of Tunisia is a pushing factor of violent radicalisation. For Dr Abdeljaoued, ‘preventative measures of countering radicalisation should not be standardized, but more responsive to the particular factors that cause violent radicalisation not only in each region, but according to different individual cases’.

In *Egypt*, the pathways to violent radicalisation vary. Although most national documents understand the process of radicalisation as starting with religious brainwashing that leads to an act of violence, interviews with academics and civil society activists confirmed that moderate Islamists affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, and some non-Islamist political activists who are arrested and tortured by the Egyptian security forces have embraced violence as a revenge against the regime, and later become radicalised in their attitudes in prison.

As is stated in several reports, the geopolitics of *Algeria* is a significant factor that triggers youth to violent extremism. The continuing conflict with Morocco on the Western Sahara, the continuing instability in Libya, terrorist groups

²² A similar study focusing solely on females is currently in preparation.

²³ A Skype interview was conducted with Dr Imed Abdeljaoued in 18th June 2017 at 12 pm.

operating in Tunisia, the fragile peace accord implementation in Mali, as well as human and narco-trafficking that intensively occur on all borders of Algeria are all significant external factors that make Algeria a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment. Thus, coordination between Algeria and its neighbouring countries to secure borders has to go in parallel with other measures related to internal factors of violent radicalisation - socio-economic, political and cultural aspects²⁴.

Both primary and secondary data collected for this report indicate that there is no singular pathway to radicalisation and violent extremism. Rather, there exists a diverse range of political, economic, psychosocial, cultural, and ideological factors that contribute to different degrees at different stages in the process of violent radicalisation.

3.2. Vulnerable Groups

In *Tunisia*, the study of judicial files²⁵ indicated that people aged 18-34 years were most affected by influence and recruitment factors. In *Jordan*, it has also been found that those who show radical tendencies are generally males aged 18-24, and that there is twice as much support for terrorist organisations from those aged 16-19 than from those aged 24-26²⁶.

The Bedouins of North Sinai, who may feel discriminated against, and people of Palestinian origin in *Jordan*, are reported to be particularly prone to radical views and involvement in terrorism.^{27,28} In *Egypt*, interviewees considered that vulnerable groups include those who are socially and economically vulnerable and politically oppressed by the regime, particularly those who are prosecuted with no evidence of their involvement in terror attacks.

In an interview with Mr Amer Bani Amer, the head of Al Hayat Centre for Civil

²⁴ *Algeria and Deradicalisation : An Experience to Share*, a study conducted in cooperation between the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Maghreb Affairs and the African Union and the League of Arab States, September 2015, <https://algerianembassy.ug/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Algeria-and-deradicalization.pdf>, accessed 19/06/2017.

²⁵ The Tunisian Forum for the Socio-Economic Rights (2016). *Terrorism in Tunisia: A Study of Judicial Files*. October. <https://inkyfada.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/etude-secret.pdf> (accessed 28/05/2017)

²⁶ NAMA – Strategic Intelligence Solutions (2017). *Drivers of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Jordan – Preventive Measures*.

²⁷ Weymouth, L. (2017). King Abdullah: Compromise with Russia on Crimea to get its help in Syria, *The Washington Post*, April 6th. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/king-abdullah-compromise-with-russia-on-crimea-to-get-its-help-in-syria/2017/04/06/b985b894-1a61-11e7-bcc2-7d1a0973e7b2_story.html?utm_term=.aff8139ebbf9

²⁸ NAMA – Strategic Intelligence Solutions (2017). *Drivers of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Jordan – Preventive Measures*.

Society Development²⁹, a youth NGO established in *Jordan* in 2006³⁰, he noted that youth who are not treated fairly and also have no skills of critical thinking are more vulnerable to violent extremism. He added that uneducated and male youth are more likely to be triggered to violent extremism than those who are more educated and females, but that when educated males become radicalised, they are more persuasive towards others.

According to interviews conducted in *Morocco*, the most vulnerable group for violent radicalisation (in addition to people in poor neighbourhoods of Casablanca) consists of those who live in a mountainous region, called the Rif, in northern Morocco. Compared to the national average, this area has a high rate of poverty, maternal death, and female illiteracy, and people living in this region have access to criminal networks and drug traffickers. Similarly, in *Algeria*, it is the poor youth living in the mountainous southern and western borders of Algeria with Mali and Morocco who are a primary subject of recruitment by drug traffickers who work with terrorist groups³¹.

The relationship between vulnerability and violent extremism is not sufficiently investigated in the different studied countries. An interesting study on this relationship that seems to be relevant to different countries in the region is Erica Harper's investigation of the psychological drivers of radicalisation in *Jordan*. She argues that a vulnerable individual moves through three stages before he or she engages in acts of violence extremism. First, radicalisation starts with individual vulnerability (threats, incitements, revenge, etc.); second, vulnerability usually 'combines with psychological factors, such as fragmented social identity, indoctrination into a religious ideology, frustration with social injustice, mental health conditions, and desire for material rewards'; and third, a vulnerable individual becomes a radical only when a group is available to offer material or non-material opportunity. Harper's concluding argument is that these three stages from individual vulnerability to violent extremism require an enabling political and cultural environment to operate – individual vulnerability does not lead to violent extremism on its own³².

In general, as illustrated in a study of Salafists in *Tunisia*, people who are feeling invalidated or alienated may be particularly susceptible to the development of

²⁹ A link to Al Hayat Centre <http://www.hayatcenter.org/about/history>.

³⁰ An interview conducted in 20/06/2017 at 11 am in Amman.

³¹ Zaghلامي, L. (2016). Algeria in the throes of residual terrorism and drugs trafficking. *Africa Review*. <http://www.africareview.com/news/Algeria-battling-residual-terrorism-and-drugs-trafficking/979180-3462956-oskjpw/index.html> (accessed 18/06/2017).

³² Harper, E. (2017). *Examining Psychological Drivers of Radicalisation in Jordan*. The WANA Institute, Royal Scientific Society in Amman, Jordan in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands (p. 3). The WANA Institute conducted FGDs and semi-structured interviews with Jordanians in Irbid, Ma'an, Salt, and Rusayfeh in the period between June and September 2016 for the project 'Religion for Peace and Development in WANA Region'.

radical beliefs, including support for violent extremism, as these may offer them some certainty.³³ It follows that such beliefs are unlikely to be discarded unless an alternative view of the world, offering at least as much certainty and a clear identity, is available.

3.3. Socioeconomic Factors

In *Jordan*, it has been reported that people who show radical tendencies tend to live in rural areas, belong to the middle class with an average monthly household income of 800 JOD, and hold a university degree³⁴. However, it is also emphasised that ‘rich and poor alike are at risk, the educated and non-educated, the young and the middle aged, and those who live in cities and those who live in rural villages’.

Despite the lack of any clear connection between involvement in violent extremism and an individual’s economic circumstances amongst Muslims in Western societies³⁵, economic deprivation in some areas of the region has been regarded as a factor in such involvement, coupled with dissatisfaction by young people with those, such as tribal elders, who are perceived as unable to improve the economic situation. This has, for example, been suggested to be the case in physically and socially marginalised or border areas, which may have been deprived of an income from smuggling by government crackdowns. Such areas include North Sinai in *Egypt* and *Tunisian* border communities^{36,37}. Interviewees in *Morocco* considered that radicalised youth mostly belong to fragile social and economic categories: ‘they live in an environment characterized by marginalization and a sense of inferiority and loss of identity’, making them psychologically susceptible to the idea of change, albeit in extreme form. In the view of the interviewees, radicalisation is a form of refuge from the difficult reality.

As one *Egyptian* interviewee put it, ‘without social and economic crises, violence and extremism would not exist’, while similarly an Egyptian Muslim

³³ Muhanna-Matar, A. & Winter, D.A. (2017). Radicalisation and deradicalisation as elaborative choices: explorations of the construing of Salafists. In D.A. Winter, P. Cummins, Procter, H.G., and Reed, N. (eds.), *Personal Construct Psychology at 60: Papers from the 21st. International Congress*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press.

³⁴ NAMA – Strategic Intelligence Solutions (2017). *Drivers of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Jordan – Preventive Measures*.

³⁵ McGilloyay, A., Ghosh, P., & Bhui, K. (2015). A systematic review of pathways to and processes associated with radicalization and extremism amongst Muslims in Western societies. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 27, 39-50.

³⁶ The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (2015). *Egypt’s Rising Security Threat*.

³⁷ Pauwels, A. (2017). Preventing terrorism in the south. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 6, 1-4, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_6_Terrorism_in_the_MENA.pdf, accessed 20/06/2017.

Brotherhood activist stated that radicalization would fade ‘even if the ruling regime is purely secular as long as it provides freedoms and a decent living for citizens’. Another interviewee stated that ‘the religious passion of young people interacts with the poverty and oppression, which together lead some young people to adopt extremist ideas, even if they represent upper and upper middle classes’. By contrast, the government rejects the argument that the roots of terrorism are economic grievances and sociopolitical factors such as lack of political freedom, noting that this ‘notion is increasingly being proven fallacious by global developments, in particular the widening of the socioeconomic and geographical spectrum of radicalization, and the rising phenomenon of foreign fighters’³⁸.

3.4. Cultural Desertification

Studies in *Jordan* indicate that disenfranchisement, with consequent vulnerability to recruitment for violent extremism, may be exacerbated in a situation of ‘cultural desertification’, where, in the absence of social public spaces and projects, there may be nowhere to turn to except for the mosque and/or highly organised and well-funded extremist religious groups³⁹. Specifically such desertification is considered to involve lack of recreational activities, particularly for young people; poverty of the necessary infrastructure to create an alternative culture; lack of environmental beauty; unsatisfactory management of public parks; and lack of cultural institutions that build a culture of discourse and openness⁴⁰. It has been concluded that ‘it is quite evident that cultural desertification, public disengagement, particularly amongst youth, absence of necessary human capital and managerial administration for cultural facilities, all intensify radicalization in Jordan. In essence, the people suffer from a lack of an alternative culture or outlet, and wherever they turn, they find yet another mosque’⁴¹. This report also considers that the mosques are being ‘hijacked’ by radical groups.

There is evidence of an increasing level of extremism in some rural areas which suffered from cultural desertification. A pilot study in late 2016 surveying young people aged 16-26 years from Zarqa, Irbid, and Tafileh found that 5% of respondents thought that ISIS or Al-Nusra Front or Al-Qaeda represented their thoughts. Moreover, support for ISIS in Zarqa was much higher than in Irbid

³⁸ Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt's Real Theory on Terrorism, July 3, 2016, <https://mfaegypt.org/2016/07/03/egypts-real-theory-on-terrorism/>

³⁹ Abu Dalhoum, M. (2017). Youth deradicalization: Strengthening the bonds- case study: Jordanian youth. *GRIN*, January 2017.

⁴⁰ NAMA – Strategic Intelligence Solutions (2017). *Drivers of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Jordan – Preventive Measures*.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

and Tafiheh, with 4.7% compared to 1.5% and 0% respectively.⁴²

Cultural desertification is also an influencing factor in *Algeria*, particularly in rural and remote areas. Despite the high level of literacy in the country (98.4% in 2014), there is a small segment of the population who are still illiterate and they are subject to influence by the terrorist groups' propaganda. Until late 1990s, Algerian local communities lacked cultural community centres and libraries, and schools lacked art activities.⁴³

Although tribal structure and culture in the region can be a preventative measure against violent extremism, as it provides individuals with a feeling of belonging as in the case of Jordan, it can also be a facilitating factor of recruitment in violent extremist groups through strong family ties and social networks. According to interviews in the studied countries, network ties of kinship and friendship play a motivating role in the recruitment of terrorist groups.

3.5. Religious Influences

Interviews conducted in *Egypt* indicated that supporters of the government view the basis of extremism as the political Islam groups and their religious discourse, which exploits social, economic and political problems to broaden the extremism. As one interviewee stated, 'the violence organizations have a political project to reach power, and exploit the atmosphere of freedom, democracy, and religious slogans to grab power and impose Sharia law....they use religion symbols for political goals', adding that 'Jihadist groups' have 'full religious' programs to brainwash and allow them to practise violence. Another interviewee, a Salafist leader from the Nour party, who has strong ties with the regime, stated that 'There is a predisposition from religious and Islamic groups within the community to enter the arena of violence or to be dragged into it. Some even built their plans for violent solutions while peaceful means could be used to resolve certain situations'.

In the view of an Egyptian interviewee who is an expert on ISIS, violent extremism is a 'historical inevitability that has its roots among Muslims', although he stressed that violence is 'a result of political conflict rather than a religious conflict'. In the view of an academic, 'failure of modernity has been linked to the return of religious ideas. We are talking about the jihad and the Islamic caliphate and Christian extremism and Jewish state'. He believed that linking Islam, Islamic movements and violence 'is an opportunity to exclude and

⁴² NAMA – Strategic Intelligence Solutions (2016). *Youth Radicalization Survey*.

⁴³ *Algeria and Deradicalisation: An Experience to Share*, a study conducted in cooperation between the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Maghreb Affairs and the African Union and the League of Arab States, September 2015.

eliminate Islamic opposition by calling them violent extremists, radicals and terrorists, but this exclusion may itself provoke violence'. By contrast, 'the existence of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis prevents this violent radicalisation from spreading', because of 'the presence of leadership and organization that does not resort to violence as a permanent policy'.

A Muslim Brotherhood activist considered that 'the prevailing religious discourse is completely compatible with the state, and this may be one of the causes of extremism as young people are looking for a more free religious discourse and only get this in the speeches of extremists'. It was also stated that 'The Islamists are waiting for the political openness to peacefully participate. Otherwise, the long period of exclusion and marginalisation will lead to the disappearance of the traditional political Islam and open the door for the violent extremism to spread across Egypt which is still limited in Sinai'.

In *Tunisia*, the link between religion and violent extremism has been a controversial topic, and several research projects and religious scholars have been investigating whether violent extremist youth are basically motivated by a religious discourse. For example, a programme on 'The Religious Status and Freedom of Conscience in Tunisia' was implemented in partnership between the National Observatory for Youth, the Applied Social Sciences Forum, and the Arab Institute for Human Rights. The programme included regional community dialogues and focus groups that culminated in presenting the results of the final report at a national symposium. There was also a survey of a sample of 1,200 interviewees from various social groups completed in 2015, which produced preliminary results concerning the degree of tolerance and respect within Tunisian society⁴⁴. The most important result of the field research conducted by the program on the spread of the Salafi trend in Tunisia is that 'religious radicalism is a form of marginalization and violence, which took the form of religiosity; it is not a radicalised "religiosity"'. On the other hand, Dr Abdeljaoued, the director of PASC in Tunisia, stated that 'religion does not appear as an important factor of radicalisation among youth, particularly in southern borders of Tunisia compared to socio-economic and cultural factors'. He added: 'many youth, especially those recruited through friends and family members, adopt radical Islamic attitudes after they get engaged in terrorist groups'.

⁴⁴ *Report on the Religious Status and Freedom of Conscience in Tunisia* » (2015), see (in Arabic): <http://mugtama.com/intellectual/item/20440.html>, accessed 28/06/2017.

3.6. Political Influences

Interviews with young activists in *Egypt* indicated that they considered authoritarian rule to be the main reason for violent extremism. An interviewee who is an expert on Islamic militancy stated that ‘It is possible that the closure of the political sphere and eliminating all legitimate and peaceful means of change is the main cause for the spread of despair and anger which produces armed tendencies’. He added that ‘in my opinion, the reason behind the emergence of violent religious movements is the blocking of peaceful participation in the political process.’ Other interviewees pointed to a ‘particular pattern of socialization that perpetuates violence among younger generations by inculcating words and values that emphasise the use of force to obtain their rights or to deal with others’. ‘Tyranny’ was considered to be ‘more dangerous’ than radical religious discourse because the latter ‘is easy to be confronted and rejected by the right discourse’, but ‘hardline religious discourse introduces itself as the only power able to confront the authoritarian, secular discourse’.

In the view of one academic who was interviewed, ‘the spread of violence and radicalisation was only after the failure of Arab Spring and the victory of the counter-revolution’. It does indeed seem evident that in *Egypt* the lack of fulfilment of promises by the government, and delays in elections, coupled with human rights abuses and perceived state brutality, following the revolution of 2011 have been prominent in the rallying calls for groups that advocate violence against the state. Escalation in security operations has mirrored escalation in terrorist attacks⁴⁵, inviting speculation on the direction of any causal connection between these variables. A lawyer who was interviewed noted ‘the transformation of prisons and detention centres into incubators for radicalism and violent ideology because of the severe security crackdown’, and considered that ‘the security apparatus sponsored and encouraged the advocates of violent extremism to marginalise the influence of political Islam and create more divisions among the prisoners’.

Similarly, research on Salafists in *Tunisia*⁴⁶ has indicated that government repression of their beliefs may be a principal factor in their radicalisation. Although they are a heterogeneous group, some of whom (‘*Salafiyya elmiyya*’) reject the use of violence, oppressive measures based on equating radical views with violent extremism may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy of inciting violence in those with radical beliefs who were previously non-violent. The research suggests that radicalised individuals may achieve self-deradicalisation if they are given the freedom to experiment with different ideas, and that,

⁴⁵ The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (2015). *Egypt’s Rising Security Threat*.

⁴⁶ Muhanna-Matar, A. (2017). The limit-experience and self-deradicalisation: the example of radical Salafi youth in Tunisia. *Critical Studies in Terrorism*, in press.

although their help is rarely sought by the state and indeed they may experience continuing persecution, those who are deradicalised may play a valuable role in the deradicalisation of others.

In all the studied countries, states consider religious extremist ideology as the underlying factor that motivates individuals to join terrorist groups, while some civil society activists and academics, who are critical of the state's anti-terror policies, think that it is political factors related to state corruption, nepotism, violation of human rights, and torture that are the underlying factors in violent radicalisation.

4. Examples/Case Studies and Analyses of Integrated Policies and Programmes for Tackling Violent Radicalisation

4.1. Preventative Strategies

4.1.1. Youth and Community Initiatives

In *Tunisia*, the National Youth Observatory (NYO), a subsidiary body of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, is the only government body to adopt a structured programme to combat and prevent violent extremism, the ‘Contact’ programme, which addresses the factors considered to lead to extremism among young people. As described by the former director of the NYO, Dr Mohammed Jouaili, the ‘Contact’ programme is carried out by the University of Tunis I and the Faculty of Shari'a of the University of Zaytuna, and funded by an American NGO (‘Creative’). The programme was launched in February 2017 in three areas (Douar Hicher, Mornagia, and Kasserine), and identified the scope of its interventions in a sample of 600 young men and women (aged 13 to 23) with social integration difficulties which made them an easy target for recruitment by extremists. It uses psychologists and youth counsellors, and seeks to integrate young people into the labour market through agreements with industrial establishments or public vocational training centres, and to provide them with micro loans to start small projects. Despite the importance of this programme, it assumes that the factors leading to extremism are the same as those leading to delinquency (according to the standards adopted by the programme in the United States in work with youth gangs). This simplifies the issue of violent extremism and isolates it from its Tunisian specificities, including connections with religion.

Also in *Tunisia*, the Association for the Advancement of Civic Education (APEC) organises awareness courses and discussion sessions on issues of education and civic citizenship in 60 youth centres in remote areas (in 19 districts), targeting young people aged 15 to 19 years. This EU-funded programme includes some lectures at youth centres (affiliated to the Ministry of Youth and Sports) on ways to prevent religious extremism. According to the coordinator of the programme, Dr Nadia Jamal, the effect of this programme is limited because the management of the programme refused to get engaged with people who have developed extremist ideas, and refuses to involve religious actors in its activities.

Mr Arabi Al Nafathi, a psychologist working with ‘Creative’ CSO points out to a pioneering youth project started in early 2017 by this organisation. The project is implemented in one of the local communities, the Western Kram area (northern suburb of Tunis), and funded by the American organization ‘I Can’. It aims to empower youth in popular neighbourhoods through cultural activity. The project seeks to spread culture in the ranks of adolescents with the aim of good integration into their surroundings. It has included a study on ‘The Everyday Life of Teenagers in the Western Kram Area’ dealing with: marginality and socio-economic life conditions (family life, school life, gender issues), practices, and the relation with official institutions and extremism. Mr Nafathi considers this project as ‘...an effective approach to counter youth radicalisation in local communities’.

In *Jordan*, although the problem of ‘cultural desertification’ and its effect on youth has been noted, little attention has been paid to it, partly because of limited funding for the Ministry of Youth and Sports and inadequate coordination between this Ministry and the Higher Council for Youth. Jordan has recently, nonetheless, led and championed the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security⁴⁷, which seeks to increase the involvement of young people in the decision making atmosphere by treating youth as equal stakeholders. In addition to the Resolution, Jordan drafted the ‘Amman Youth Declaration’⁴⁸. Despite Jordan’s leading role in advocating for the resolution, youth representation in national parliament is nonexistent, yet their role at the local level is more prevalent. They participate more in municipal bodies and councils, and universities’ legislatures provide a stepping stone for representation and ideological discussions.

A pioneering preventative initiative in Jordan is a youth programme, ‘Countering Radicalization and Enhancing the Culture of Tolerance’, that is implemented by Al Hayat Centre for Civil Society Development and funded by the American Embassy and The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme aims to build the capacity of religious and community leaders in how to use social media in fighting against extremism; provide preventative solutions for violent extremism; work in partnership with government and other CSOs to combat violent extremism; conduct research; and promote cultural and interfaith dialogue. Mr Bani Amer, the director of Al-Hayat, described the methods used in the programme and its successful outcomes, saying:

We work with school students in 9th and 10th grades and we learnt from our work that there is a serious issue with school teachers who demonstrated high

⁴⁷ Abu Dalhoum, M. *Youth Deradicalization: Strengthening the Bonds- Case Study: Jordanian Youth*. GRIN, January 2017.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

radicalisation trends. We also bring university students to work together in what we call 'The Interactive Theatre'. The idea is to design plays that interact with the audience to raise awareness. We learned that this age group is incredibly well aware of their surrounding issues and challenges, and they must be treated as such. They mostly get their information through social media, and they would try to engage with radicals and members of extremist groups online to change their attitudes, or in some cases report them to authorities if they cause danger.

We also conduct periodic training sessions with Imams and religious preachers both males and females. We engage them with activists at the local level and facilitate discussions and dialogues. The main idea is to raise awareness, and demonstrate real exposure. One Imam said 'I thought everyone in the world was like me. Now I can treat the 90% who is unlike me normally and engage with them and talk to them'.

Mr Bani Amer emphasised the importance of cooperation and coordination between government programmes and civil society actors and the necessity of expanding programmes countering extremism to rural areas, as most activities are centred in Amman.

In *Egypt*, young activists who were interviewed for this report considered that youth and civil society organisations have been marginalized since 2013, and that the state uses young people only as decorative figures in conferences controlled by the security services. One area in which university students have been used is in efforts to eradicate illiteracy by the Egyptian Centre for Combating Terrorism.

In *Algeria*, according to interviews with Tunisian and Moroccan experts who have had work experience with Algerian CSOs, there is a consensus that the Algerian government does not adopt an inclusive participatory approach to counter violent extremism, but that youth CSOs are excluded, particularly in rural and poor urban communities. Nevertheless, the government has taken a few steps to include local communities. It combines security-centred interventions with preventative cultural improvements, particularly in local communities. For example, public festivals with generous government funding have increased from 28 in 1998 to 176 in 2015; in 2015, the Ministry of Culture supported 507 clubs with a substantial increase in the budget; and the government has also promoted art activities in schools and increased the construction of elements of local cultural infrastructure, particularly for young people. Through cultural promotion, the government tries to counter the anti-culture extremist narrative⁴⁹.

In *Morocco*, among non-government preventative initiatives, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) developed a youth mobilisation programme called

⁴⁹ *Algeria and Deradicalisation*, see note 44.

'*aljamia attarbawiya*' (the educational university). It aims to bring young activists from all over the country to work together to persuade youth with moderate and critical religious interpretations, as well as criticize the narrative of radical groups. Said, the head of the youth section in the PJD, notes that *aljamia attarbawiya* has succeeded to conduct several youth fora in different governorates. These fora aim to build the capacities of youth to think critically about their lives and enhance their volunteering spirit towards their local communities.

4.1.2. Religious Initiatives

In *Jordan*, following the Amman hotel bombings in 2005, His Majesty King Abdullah II sought to tackle the ideology behind these attacks in the Amman Message,⁵⁰ a document aimed at highlighting the true nature of Islam. This Message was followed by the 'Kalema Sawaa'⁵¹ and establishment of an 'Inter-Faith Forum' to enhance the discourse amongst different religions to highlight their commonality, and to emphasise that violent extremism is an enemy of all faiths, including Islam. His Majesty highlighted that violent extremist groups have been, historically, and will always be, 'Khawarej (the outlaws) of Islam'.⁵² The Amman Message and the Inter-faith Forum operate at the regional level with surrounding countries.

Governmental measures in *Jordan* have also aimed at enhancing resistance to radical speech by emphasising moderate speech, similarly to the emphasis of the National Strategy of Countering Extremism and Terrorism in *Tunisia* on 'the need to establish a moderate religious and societal discourse as an alternative to radical discourse'. Perhaps the most notable of the efforts in *Jordan* was the preparation in 2015 of a National Strategy for Counter Radicalization coupled with an action plan.⁵³ This calls for a collective effort from all stakeholders to demonstrate a holistic approach to tackle all sides of violent radicalisation, focusing on mindset before behaviour. The approach involves building a religious culture based on the original message of Islam, highlighting the tolerance Islam had historically been known for; building a civic and sociopolitical democratic culture since it is considered the antithesis of radicalisation; and highlighting notions such as religious tolerance, diversity, and respect for human rights.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ The Official Website of the Amman Message (2017), www.ammanmessage.com

⁵¹ Al-Rawashdeh, H. "Jordan's Approach for counter-radicalization", in *Methods of Preventing and Combatting Terrorism in the MENA Region and the West*, by Mohammad Abu Rumman et al, translated by Banan Fathi Malkawi, Amman: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2016.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ The National Strategy for Counter-Radicalization, *Alghad*, June 15th, 2016, <http://www.alghad.com/articles/953502-الغد-تنشر-الخطة-الوطنية-لمواجهة-التطرف>.

Furthermore, the strategy calls on all stakeholders (including the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Iftaa' Department) to champion their roles in tackling radicalisation to formulate a sense of collective ownership and to coordinate with the newly established Countering Extremism Unit at the Ministry of Culture to oversee the implementation process. However, it merely lists roles for each stakeholder, without any apparent basis in consultation or research, or any analysis of why specific roles are allocated and how it will add to the overall effort of fighting radicalisation.

The national plan does not live up to expectations, and it is rumoured to have been discarded. These rumours seem reliable, especially since UNDP has been working on a new strategy. According to a confidential source, this strategy is based on '7 pillars: religious, political, social, economic, youth-related, cultural, educational, and security related'. UNDP is believed to have conducted 18 focus groups and approximately 60 meetings with various stakeholders whether governmental, sectoral, or NGOs'.

One particular focus in Jordan has been on the problem that, with insufficient qualified applicants for posts of Imams⁵⁵, coupled with indiscriminate building of new mosques, there are now a large number of unqualified Imams, with the danger that mosques could easily be turned into hubs for radicalised and hate speech. In order to tackle this issue, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islam Affairs initiated a programme called the 'collective mosque project,' which picks certain mosques in different areas as the site for Friday prayers to 'ensure the quality of Friday prayers, and to make sure that they are given by trusted and qualified Imams to reduce random hate and radicalized speech that is not based on any intellectual merit'⁵⁶. Various programmes have also been set up for Imams.

In a similar initiative in *Egypt*, following a call by the President for a 'religious revolution', the Ministry of Religious Endowments has closed small mosques, and attempted to unify Friday prayers and address the issue of unlicensed preachers, although such efforts have met with some resistance. In *Tunisia*, the Hand-in-Hand project, as was described in an interview with its coordinator, Waleed Hadouq, seeks to 'rehabilitate' Imams by organising educational days for supervisors of mosques. The project is carried out by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Democracy in partnership with Canadian parties and in

⁵⁵ Abu Dalhoum, M. (2017). Youth Deradicalization: Strengthening the Bonds- Case Study: Jordanian Youth. *GRIN*, January.

⁵⁶ The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs enact the Collective Mosque Project. *Awqaf*, http://www.awqaf.gov.jo/DetailsPage/MOA_AR/NewsDetailsAr.aspx?ID=177 (Arabic), accessed 20/06/2017.

cooperation with the University of Zaytouna, the Imams' Union, and some religious NGOs.

Morocco has taken a lead in countering radical religious discourse, as a preventative measure to counter violent extremism. In August 2016, King Mohammed VI delivered a speech strongly condemning radical Islam, in which he stressed, 'Those who engage in terrorism, in the name of Islam, are not Muslims. Their only link to Islam is the pretexts they use to justify their crimes and their folly. They have strayed from the right path, and their fate is to dwell forever in hell'⁵⁷. The Moroccan government has also developed a strategy to counter the extremist narrative through upgrading mosques; publishing an official bulletin of Imams; creating a Directorate of Religious Education within the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and decentralizing the ministry's operations; reviewing laws governing Muslim places of worship; establishing a religious council in Europe for the Moroccan diaspora; using radio and television to promote moderate teachings; reviewing textbooks to eliminate radical appeals to violence; and promoting scholarly research on the nation's Islamic values through the Mohammedan League of Ulema. Morocco has also expanded its regional counter-radicalization efforts to train Malian Imams, which commenced in 2013, to include Imams from France, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, and Tunisia.⁵⁸

At a civil society level, *Rabita Mohammedia*, for example, launched several initiatives that aim to counter violent extremism, particularly in marginalised urban and rural areas. Among them is a website called *arraid* (Leader), which is a platform for religious enlightenment and dismantling of the religious narrative of extremist groups in Morocco. Another online initiative belonging to the Unit of Behavioural Change in *Rabita*, www.chababe.ma, aims to combat risky behaviours and education through peers. The website focuses on how youth fight against the religious narrative of violent extremist groups.

Like other countries in the region, *Algeria* has taken several preventative measures through religious rehabilitation, including providing religious education programmes that include the training of Imams, controlling content of prayers, and credentialing Imams to promote a tolerant Islamic discourse; imposing fines and legal charges against anyone who preaches in mosques except government designated Imams; monitoring mosques for possible

⁵⁷ Text of King Mohammed VI's Speech on King and People's Revolution Day, by *Morocco World News* - August 20, 2016 , 4:39 pm, available at <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2016/08/194754/text-king-mohammed-vis-speech-king-peoples-revolution-day/> accessed 20/06/2017.

⁵⁸ State Department Terrorism Report Lauds Moroccan Counterterrorism Strategy, US-Morocco Security Cooperation. *Morocco on the Move*, June 23, 2015, <http://moroccoonthemove.com/2015/06/23/state-department-terrorism-report-lauds-moroccan-counterterrorism-strategy-us-morocco-security-cooperation/#sthash.OQaJS8NI.dpbs>, accessed 19/06/2017.

security-related offences; and prohibiting the use of mosques as public meeting places outside of regular prayer hours. In addition, there has been the establishment of an *Academy of fatwa*, including university teachers and Ulema in different fields, which has the authority to take legal action against unfounded fatwas and the responsibility to inform society of the criteria for issuing fatwas.
5960

4.1.3. Economic Initiatives

In *Jordan*, His Majesty King Abdullah II has implemented a few measures to achieve a bilateral goal of reducing poverty and tackling a factor that may lead to violent extremism. He prioritised that families in need receive occasional aid packages as well as cash assistance⁶¹, and worked to improve Jordan's economy to be able to withstand the influx of refugees and create more job opportunities.

In *Tunisia*, in the period 2012-2016, the European Commission implemented the 'Taysir microfinance Greenfield' programme that aimed at improving living conditions and access to loans for active micro-entrepreneurs in Tunisia. The program was implemented in four areas: Le Kef, Siliana, Beni Khaled and Tunis. It provided financial and technical services to 40,000 clients, of whom 24,000 are in marginalised zones, and particularly targeted unemployed youth in rural areas⁶².

In *Egypt*, economic development projects have been set up to raise living standards in Sinai. However, this government initiative has been poorly funded and has limited scope. Bedouin tribal leaders have not been engaged in shaping the intervention, and on the rare occasions when Egyptian officials have invited local residents to discuss their grievances, their recommendations have been disregarded. The seriousness of government commitments to improve infrastructure, deliver clean water, provide proper medical treatment, and improve education in Sinai has therefore been questioned⁶³.

⁵⁹ 'Counter-terrorism strategies in Indonesia, Algeria and Saudi Arabia', Institute of International Relations, Netherlands, available online at <https://english.wodc.nl/onderzoeksdatabase/internationale-ervaringen-met-deradicalisering.aspx>, accessed 16/06/2017.

⁶⁰ See the Algerian Ministry of Religious Affairs' new law regarding the functions of mosques in Algeria (published in January 2014 and still implemented with no amendment since then), <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2014/01/05/480872.html> (Arabic), accessed 19/06/2017.

⁶¹ Al-Iftaa' Department (2016). *Radicalization- its Nature, Drivers, Signs and Cure*. Amman: Army Press.

⁶² 'Strive for Development: Resilience to Violence and Extremism', European Commission (2015), https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/strive-brochure-20150617_en.pdf, accessed 20/06/2017.

⁶³ Baroud R. (2014). Fighting for survival in the Sinai: Egypt's convenient war. *The Palestine Chronicle*, October 29., <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/fighting-for-survival-in-the-sinai-egypts-convenient-war/>; Youssef, A. (2015). Wounds and medicines of Sinai. *Daily News Egypt*, May 12. <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/05/12/wounds-and-medicines-of-sinai/>, Accessed 19/06/2017.

Algeria's national development plan of 2015-2019 gave priority to economic growth, with social transfer payments that improve the socio-economic conditions of more socially and economically disenfranchised people in poor urban slums and rural areas, particularly youth⁶⁴. In order to tackle youth unemployment, considered one of the 'pushing factors' of violent radicalisation, the government created a number of public job support programmes, whether through salaried jobs or through the development of entrepreneurial spirit and the creation of micro-businesses. The Algerian government also established specialised organisations and agencies that aim to provide technical support to university graduates to integrate them into the marketplace.⁶⁵

In *Morocco*, recognizing the role of economic marginalisation in the attraction of terrorism, the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) was launched in 2005 to fight poverty and generally improve economic conditions in the poorest neighbourhoods. Efforts have also been made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and advance the standard of living for all Moroccans, especially women and children. According to a report released by the World Bank in 2015, four million Moroccans have benefited from the INDH since it was launched. This programme has enabled Morocco to have the world's fourth largest social safety net. This initiative was accompanied by an unprecedented number of projects across the country whose aim is to foster job creation and create a certain balance between the different regions of the kingdom.⁶⁶

4.1.4. Research Initiatives

In *Tunisia*, several research initiatives were developed to study the link between religion and violent extremism. They include the establishment by the Presidency of the Republic of a research unit on Salafism within the Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies. The unit conducted theoretical and field research between 2012 and 2014, culminating in the publication of a book⁶⁷, as well as scientific symposia. The unit was dissolved at the end of 2014, but the Institute is currently conducting studies on 'The features of the Tunisian terrorist and the dangers of returning from hotbeds of tension', funded by the Dutch Foreign Ministry; and on 'convicted prisoners in terrorism-related cases'. In 2015, a

⁶⁴ *Algeria and Deradicalisation: An Experience to Share*, a study conducted in cooperation between the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Maghreb Affairs and the African Union and the League of Arab States, September 2015.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ How Morocco became a world leader in combatting terrorism, Morocco World News. link: <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2015/11/173579/how-morocco-became-a-world-leader-in-combatting-terrorism/>, accessed 20/06/2017.

⁶⁷ Haj Salem, M. (ed.) (2014). *The Salafi Jihadi Movement in Tunisia: the Present and the Future*. Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies.

research unit dealing with the religious phenomenon in Tunisia was established at the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities of Manouba University. A further initiative, conducted by a partnership between the National Observatory for Youth, the Applied Social Sciences Forum, and the Arab Institute for Human Rights, has been a *Report on the Religious Status and Freedom of Conscience in Tunisia*, completed in 2015 and based on regional community dialogues and focus groups, and a survey of 1,200 interviewees from various social groups.⁶⁸ The report, planned to be published annually, contains findings on the degree of tolerance and respect within Tunisian society, and is intended to monitor public opinion on religious issues, especially the question of religious policies, religious opinion and radical religiosity among Salafi youth.

In *Egypt*, there are various initiatives, mostly with links with the government, concerned with study of the causes of, and ways of combating, terrorism and violent radicalisation. For example, the Egyptian Centre for Combating Terrorism aims to contribute to the development of national policies and strategies in this area⁶⁹. There have also been several conferences⁷⁰.

In *Morocco*, interviewees noted that a group of Moroccan academics established the Observatory on Extremism and Violence in 2016. The Observatory aims at filling a gap in terms of specialized centres dedicated to the scientific study of extremism and developing scientific research that contributes to countering extremism.

4.1.5. Local Authority (LA) Initiatives

When asked about the role of municipalities in the studied countries, most interviewees confirmed that LAs or municipalities have no role in countering extremism. Secondary sources and official documents on countering violent extremism also lack information about the role of municipalities. In almost all of the studied countries, preventative initiatives and programmes are designed and implemented by central ministries such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture and Sport and Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowment, in addition to a few fragmented programmes and projects implemented by CSOs and funded by international organisations. The reasons for this as stated in the interviews are: the postponing of local elections, as in the case of *Tunisia*; the centralised structure of the governance system; and the lack of institutional and financial capacities of Local Governorate Units (LGUs) to provide social, cultural and sport infrastructures for youth in local communities. LAs in the

⁶⁸ *Report on the Religious Status and Freedom of Conscience in Tunisia*, see note 45 above.

⁶⁹ See the centre's link (Arabic), <http://www.egyccct.net>

⁷⁰ A conference held in Alexandria Library in Partnership with University of Birmingham in January 2017, <http://www.wataninet.com/>

region as a whole do not operate autonomously and their programmes and services are designed and implemented top-down.

In a recent study about youth radicalisation in *Jordan*, participants stated that recruiters use sporting activities as a means of targeting youth, and that there are no alternative sporting opportunities for youth in local communities. The report asserted that both the Ministries of Culture and Youth do not activate their governorate-level offices, or cooperate with municipalities, to develop work plans for regular, free activities targeting youth in more vulnerable communities⁷¹. Trust between local communities and local representatives is very weak, and this does not encourage people and their CSOs to cooperate with municipalities. Mr Bani Amer, the director of Al-Hayat CSO in Jordan, for instance, disagreed that municipalities have to take a leading role or to implement projects independently because he considered that they are incapable of doing so. He believes that municipalities ‘should be facilitated through the central government’.

In a recent study on *Jordan’s* strategic framework for countering extremism⁷², there is a warning that targeting local communities vulnerable to radicalisation may be counterproductive if other local communities in need are left excluded. It is explained that some local communities may feel stigmatised and more alienated by being identified as ‘radical’, while other communities that are in need but not targeted may be angered. Thus, government needs to ensure a comprehensive support to local communities, not just those that are more vulnerable to violent extremism.

Responding to the weak role of LAs in countering extremism in *Jordan*, in May 2016, UNDP signed an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior. The agreement aims at launching a joint partnership to counter violent extremism and to enhance community stability. The project *Support to Counter-terrorism, Stabilization, and Counter-Radicalization in Jordan* has as one of its objectives the empowerment of local communities and strengthening of their capacities to fight youth radicalisation. The project follows a multi-agency cooperation approach, involving the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.⁷³

⁷¹Trapped between destructive choices: Radicalisation Drivers Affecting Youth in Jordan. A research conducted by West Asia-North Africa Institute, January 2017 and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands, <http://wanainstitute.org/en/publication/trapped-between-destructive-choices-radicalisation-drivers-affecting-youth-jordan>, accessed 15/06/2017.

⁷²Chin, M., Gharaibeh, S., Woodham, J., & Deeb, G. (2016), A national strategic framework for countering extremism in Jordan. *Journal of International Affairs*, 69, 115-xiii.I, <https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/national-strategic-framework-countering-violent-extremism-jordan>, accessed 19/06/2017.

⁷³See UNDP Jordan website, <http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/05/17/national-strategy-on-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism-in-jordan-p-cve-.html>, accessed 20/06/2017.

When asked about the role of LAs in countering extremism in *Morocco*, the interviewees stated that LAs are excluded because almost all tasks of fighting terrorism and religious extremism are under the auspices of central governmental departments such as the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowment. However, the interviewees considered that without enhancing the role of LAs, counter extremism initiatives will remain centralised and it will be impossible to reach out to vulnerable communities.

4.1.6. Best Practice

There are encouraging indications that *Tunisia* is going in the direction of adopting a comprehensive and multi-agency cooperation approach to countering violent radicalisation. One of the best practices is illustrated in the EU funded Civil Society Support Program (PASC), implemented in partnership between the National School of Administration, the Tunisian Forum on Social and Economic Rights, the Tunisian Society for Studies and Research in Democracy and Local Affairs, and the Centre for Training and Support for Decentralisation.

The programme has lasted for three years and it has aimed to create spaces for dialogue, trust, cooperation, and strategic partnerships between actors in the public sector and civil society organisations. It has opened six regional centres (in the governorates of Tunis, Gafsa, Tozeur, Medenine, Kef, and Sousse), as well as 16 local offices in small cities. It has benefited about 3,500 civic associations and 600 public sector actors and contributed to the completion of 32 national networks and 12 field projects involving 13 junior high schools and 27 universities, including the establishment of dialogue clubs in nine secondary schools and two primary schools, and supervision of 98 local community dialogues. The programme contributed to the first international symposium of the Research Unit ‘The Religious Phenomenon in Tunisia’, affiliated to the University of Manouba, on ‘Religious Phenomena: Concepts and Approaches’, which included some theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of terrorism. The symposium papers are to be published in a book funded by the Civil Society Support Program in 2017.

PASC conducted several local brainstorming workshops in various governorates, including interior and socially marginalised governorates, where local government units and youth and women CSOs were involved. These workshops aimed to discuss the causes of violent extremism in Tunisia and how these causes vary within and between different governorates. They also aimed to incorporate the local perspectives on radicalisation and deradicalisation into a national strategy to counter violent extremism. The PASC project ended with a national workshop in which 50 civil society stakeholders participated, and a

statement of recommendations signed by all participants has recently been released. Dr Abdeljaoued, the director of PASC, notes:

PASC is a successful model of a bottom-up multi-agency cooperative approach to countering violent extremism and it needs to keep working to achieve its long term impact in local communities. Central government has to rely on the outcome of such community-based programs to localise its national strategy responding to the actual causes of radicalisation in each region.

4.2. Interventions

According to secondary sources, governments in all studied countries declare that they adopt a comprehensive multifaceted approach to countering extremism, of which multiple strategies and measures operate simultaneously: security measures; regional cooperation and intelligence sharing; promotion of moderate Islam; democratic reform; and inclusive development and legal measures. However, interviewees in all studied countries confirm that governments still focus on security-centred interventions at the expense of preventative measures, which proves to be counterproductive, particularly in Egypt. Interviewees also confirm that national strategies still lack coherence and are decontextualized.

In *Tunisia*, the National Strategy of Countering Extremism and Terrorism states that ‘the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism cannot be confronted without the rehabilitation of the religious field’. A programme of religious rehabilitation aiming at the ideological reform and rehabilitation of suspects arrested in terrorism-related cases is managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which gained control over almost all mosques in Tunisia by late 2015. The Ministry appointed authorised clerics and Imams to be responsible for religious rehabilitation, including provision of recorded sermons and religious seminars for the programme’s website and regular supervision of classes and sermons in mosques⁷⁴.

The Tunisian Centre for Research and Studies on Terrorism is currently endeavouring to create a unit to listen to and communicate with the largest possible number of people affected by terrorism in order to understand the phenomenon and dismantle the mechanisms of recruitment and extremism based on multidisciplinary expertise. The unit is dedicated to give legal, psychological, and social help to those affected by terrorism, and to provide support to families that are concerned with the extremism of their children. The Centre is also working on a project to establish centres for returnees from hotbeds of conflict,

⁷⁴ Reidy, E. (2015). Tunisia cracks down on radicalisation, *Al Monitor*, available online at <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/tunisia-government-counter-extremism-anti-terrorist-bill.html>, accessed 22/06/2017.

but information on this project is unavailable, probably because of negative publicity concerning the return of ‘terrorists’ to Tunisia.

Amongst the tasks of the several security services affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior in Tunisia, and organised in teams operating at the level of each governorate, is collection of information about extremist youth. This information is then forwarded to a central security agency, the General Directorate of Counter-Terrorism in the Ministry of the Interior that operates under the orders of the Public Prosecutor, is concerned with the follow-up of terrorism and extremism issues, and exchanges information with the military intelligence of the Ministry of Defence, and with some external security parties.

In Tunisia, there is a major debate about how to deal with returnees: should the government allow them to return, and if so, how should the government treat them? Concerning this topic, Dr Abdeljaoued noted: ‘...the public opinion in Tunisia supports intolerance towards returnees by putting them in prisons. However, imprisoning them with other prisoners entails a risk of further radicalisation of other prisoners. Prisons in Tunisia are already overloaded’. Dr Abdeljaoued supports the idea of providing economic and religious rehabilitation to returnees to deradicalise them.

In *Egypt*, where there is no clearly articulated security strategy, intervention programmes are primarily of a military nature. For example, North Sinai has been described as ‘under constant military lockdown’⁷⁵, including curfews, checkpoints, security buffer zones, and destruction of homes, agricultural land, and economic opportunities provided by smuggling. Reactive measures tend to be taken following terrorist attacks, for example the formation of a National Council to Fight Extremism and Terrorism, and the amendment of four laws concerning the prosecution of terrorists following attacks on Coptic churches in 2017⁷⁶. In general, these and related laws facilitate the suppression of any group without reason. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood has been designated a terrorist organisation, the state has been given regulatory authority over NGO funding and activities, and prior notification is required of all demonstrations.

In *Jordan*, the government has recently established a Directorate for Countering Extremism and Violence (DCVE) under the umbrella of the Ministry of the Interior. The Public Security Directorate also launched a mobile app in March 2016 to report any incidents or suspicious activities related to violent extremism and radicalisation. A number of rehabilitation programmes have also been set up

⁷⁵ The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy. *Egypt’s Rising Security Threat*.

⁷⁶ Cairo takes urgent measures to combat terrorism after church bombings. *al-monitor*, April 11, 2017 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/04/egypt-church-bombings-parliament-sisi-amendments-terrorism.html#ixzz4iLX1WEJP>

for ‘returnees’ to ease their assimilation into society but they remain limited and almost exclusive to correction centres. Government intervention programs are perceived by youth and women’s CSOs as ineffective. Mr Bani Amer, the director of the Hayat organisation in Amman said:

The directorate does not have a clear vision and strategy, authority, or job description, which makes its role not so effective....There is nothing implemented on the ground. The government has also been cracking down on Civil Society Organizations, which worsens the issue. The government needs to believe that this issue {CVE} is a priority in Jordan and that they (the government) need to cooperate with all affected entities and stakeholders.

Morocco has gone further than other countries in interventions aiming to rehabilitate prisoners and former prisoners to avoid recidivism. Detained extremists represent about 1 per cent of Morocco's prison population, or 600 out of 74,000 total prisoners in 2014⁷⁷. The Mohammed VI Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Prisoners is a key player in this domain. The foundation’s latest project launched by the King in 2015 is a support programme for micro-projects and self-employment. More than 300 former prisoners are expected to benefit from the 5-million-dirham (~\$512,000) programme. The Foundation strategy also focuses on social reintegration as part of its larger mission that aims at reinforcing societal security, fighting delinquency, reducing recidivism, and creating income-generating activities through improving the quality of life of former prisoners. The government of Morocco has also offered opportunities for prisoners to study in university or to have vocational training. The government partners with private companies to provide work, training, and employment for former prisoners.⁷⁸ The government strategy of deradicalisation in prison seems effective as Morocco's rate of recidivism is on the decline, dropping from 3% to 2.3% between 2014 and 2015 according to the records of the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Reintegration of Detainees⁷⁹.

Moreover, governments in all studied countries emphasise the importance of intervention to enhance international and regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing in addressing the threat of extremism and terrorism. *Jordan*, for example, has been working closely with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on keeping the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas in check. Jordan also participates in every bilateral and multilateral regional meeting concerned with countering violent extremism. In 2015, *Algeria* hosted the UN International

⁷⁷ United States Department of State (2015), *Country Reports on Terrorism 2014 - Morocco*, 19 June, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5587c74734.html>, accessed 19/06/2017.

⁷⁸ A report published by the Moroccan American Centre for Policy on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco. www.moroccoonthemove.com, available online at http://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/FS_MoroccoCVE2August2016.pdf accessed 22/06/2017.

⁷⁹ Scott, C.D. (2015). Morocco: recidivism is down in Morocco - a look at the likely causes. AllAfrica website, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201507090544.html> accessed 19/06/2017.

Conference on the fight against extremism and de-radicalization and became engaged in several mechanisms of cooperation at the African level⁸⁰. Algeria also provided training for Tunisian Special Forces on border security pursuant to a bilateral agreement⁸¹. *Morocco* has also enhanced its security and intelligence cooperation with its neighbouring countries and Europe, particularly Spain and France⁸². Yet its cooperation with Algeria is still constrained by the two countries' political conflict concerning the Sahara.

Since the EU adopted its Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005, it has been working intensively on enhancing regional cooperation with the studied countries to improve their institutional capacity to counter violent extremism. However, the effectiveness of these regional cooperation intervention remains dependent on the political will of the region's governments to develop comprehensive approaches. *Egypt* is a clear example in which EU cooperation in that regard has been particularly challenging because Egypt insists to go on with its military-centred model of countering violent extremism⁸³.

4.3. Punishment

In *Egypt*, between 2014 and 2015, at least 34,000 people were arrested on terrorism charges, with punishments, some collective, including the death penalty. Since January 2011, 19 new prison facilities have been built, increasing the total number by a third to 62 with an increase in number of prisoners from 80,000 to 110,000. Prisoners are denied contact with their families, food and even medical supplies. In a report published in June, 2015, Egyptian human rights organisations documented at least 124 deaths in custody since August 2013 as a result of medical negligence, torture, or ill-treatment⁸⁴. According to the EU, its work in countering terrorism in Egypt is not so much hindered by a lack of capacity – what its programmes are designed for – but rather the government's political unwillingness.⁸⁵ The Egyptian government's view is that

⁸⁰ Statement presented by H.E. Mr. Sabri Boukadoum, see note 18.

⁸¹ 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 – Algeria', United State Department of State (June 2016), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57518de1a.html>, accessed 25/06/2017.

⁸² 'How Morocco Leads the Fight Against Terrorism', Morocco World News (May 18, 2017), <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/05/216898/morocco-leads-fight-against-terrorism/>, accessed 25/06/2017.

⁸³ 'Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with Southern Neighborhood', Directorate General for External Policies, Policy Department, European Parliament (2017), [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/578013/EXPO_IDA\(2017\)578013_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/578013/EXPO_IDA(2017)578013_EN.pdf), accessed 23/06/2017.

⁸⁴ 'Egypt: Year of Abuses Under al-Sisi: President Gets Western Support While Erasing Human Rights Gains,' Human Rights Watch report (June 2015), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/08/egypt-year-abuses-under-al-sisi>, accessed 23/06/2017.

⁸⁵ 'Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with Southern Neighborhood', see note 84 above.

‘Egypt is fighting its war against terrorism on its own on behalf of the world’⁸⁶. In *Tunisia*, the situation is not dissimilar in that a ‘national security state’ model, with an associated politics of fear, has become the dominant political discourse of the government since 2014. In its anti-terrorism law in 2015, the new government effectively went back to the 2003 anti-terror law used by Ben-Ali and developed it further to restrict the freedom of Salafists, including violent and non-violent groups. This led to the imprisonment of thousands of individuals (1,500 in the year 2014 alone) alleged to be involved in terrorism. The government also suspended, without due process, 157 non-governmental religious associations as well as several mosques for alleged links to terrorism. The detention of terror suspects for up to 15 days without access to a lawyer is allowed, and there have been restrictions on public protests and press reporting, and new powers for the police. Use of violence, and displays of weapons and force, in such interventions have been a cause of public discontent.⁸⁷

86 "السياسي: مصر تخوض حربا ضد الإرهاب بالنيابة عن العالم" 7th Day, 26/05/2017, <http://www.youm7.com/story>, accessed 3/06/2017.

87 Muhanna-Matar, A. (2017). ‘The limit-experience and self-deradicalisation’, see note 47 above.

5. Analysis of Emerging Trends

Efforts at combating terrorism and violent extremism are still fragmented and do not operate within a common ground in terms of definitions, causes of violent radicalisation, and deradicalisation measures. The multi-agency cooperation approach is still in an experimental phase in Tunisia and Morocco but it has not yet concretely developed in Jordan and has done so to an even lesser extent in Egypt. Challenges that face efforts to tackle violent radicalisation and extremism in the region include:

- The broad definition of violent extremism may result in indiscriminate repressive measures being taken against all those who are considered to hold extremist views, and to a self-fulfilling prophecy of inciting violence in those who had previously rejected it. There is evidence in at least some government strategies in Egypt and Tunisia that radicalisation is equated with terrorism. For example, in Tunisia, all Salafists may be treated by the security forces as potential Jihadists, despite the fact that a large number of them reject the use of violence.
- The dominant approach to tackling violent extremism in the region, at least in Egypt and Tunisia, seems to be indiscriminately punitive, with mass arrests, rather than preventative. There are indications that this may lead to a spiral of violence, which at one level may seem counter-productive but at another level may be used to justify policies of oppression of groups considered to hold extreme views.
- The collection of information about radicalised people or individuals involved in terrorist groups is centralised and controlled by security and intelligence forces with no involvement of civil society actors. This leads to collection of inaccurate information, which causes discontent among citizens due to use of violence and the officious display of weapons and force.
- Preventative programmes are relatively few, and not particularly well developed or tailored to local circumstances. Some programmes are targeted at young people, and there are some attempts to address economic deprivation, but the principal focus has been on standardising religious discourse, and ensuring that this is provided by Imams trusted by the government. The latter initiatives, and those aimed at ‘religious rehabilitation’, appear to be based on a view that individuals have no right to consider their religious identity and codes of conduct outside the control of religious authority.

- There is lack of coordination between the official bodies in implementing their strategies and putting them into practice in the absence of involvement of local governing bodies. For example, municipalities in *Tunisia* were dissolved pending the local elections in December 2017, which are unlikely to take place because of problems in the National Independent Electoral Commission and the resignation of its president and some of its assembly members. The absence of coordination between the state and civil society organisations in combating the phenomenon does not allow for a unified and integrated work strategy, and the development of a reliable network for sharing of information and expertise and mutual learning from best practices.
- There is a lack of academic research efforts in universities and research centres, due mainly to weak funding allocated to them by the state. For example, the budget allocated to the Research Unit on the religious phenomenon in *Tunisia* was only \$6,000 in 2016, and the budget of the national strategy to combat violent extremism did not exceed \$300,000 for the same year, which makes researchers resort to non-state research institutions.
- State and civil society bodies have to rely on external funding, most of which is used in the implementation of programmes prepared in advance by the donors and without the actual participation of local people and experts working in the field.
- Regional cooperation still focuses on security and intelligence measures with no emphasis on regional cooperation at civil society and local government levels for the purpose of sharing experiences and best practices. For example, Morocco has no forms of security or non-security cooperation with Algeria despite the common threats they face.

6. The Specific Needs of LRAs from the Mediterranean Area to Improve/Develop Programmes in Tackling Youth Radicalisation

6.1. Conceptual Issues

It would be helpful to work towards a clear and agreed distinction between extreme views and terrorist acts and between the issues of ‘influence’ and ‘belonging’. This distinction may increase transparency of the actions of enforcement organs, reduce abuses, and guide counter-radicalisation strategies. Such strategies should be evidence-based rather than top-down. Research centres need to be established in each country to study, and establish programmes to counter, violent extremism.

6.2. Enhancing the Role of LAs

The localisation of strategies of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in the region requires an enhancement of LAs, such as municipalities and local/village councils. Interviewees, as well as recent studies, indicate that to prevent violent extremism, local people have to be given the priority and municipalities have to play a key role in designing and implementing programmes responsive to the actual needs of youth in different local communities. LAs in the region need to develop educational, social integration, and participatory community development programmes focusing on CVE and to enhance youth sense of belonging to their own community and the development of trust between people and their local representatives.

6.3. Youth Involvement

Youth initiatives in communities, such as in border areas, with high susceptibility to recruitment to violent extremism would be particularly appropriate for financial support. Independent local youth preventative initiatives need to be encouraged and supported since youth in local communities are more familiar with their peers’ grievances and motives and with how to raise their awareness and prevent them from adopting radical views. One of the major constraints to effective involvement of youth in countering

violent radicalisation is the security forces' attempt to contain their efforts and lack of free space for them to act. A young activist from *Egypt* stated that the groups that claim to represent the local and civil society now are mostly linked to the security apparatus and do not enjoy the confidence of society and youth. They are often accused of corruption and support for the regime.

6.4. Enhancing Women's Role in Tackling Radicalisation

As is noted in the statement of PASC reflecting the views of 50 stakeholders in Tunisia, deradicalisation efforts need to integrate women at all levels, treating them as equal partners to men in tackling violent radicalisation. Preventative programs targeting female teachers in schools, particularly in socially marginalised areas, and training them in deradicalisation measures, may lead to awareness raising and provision of psycho-social support to female students at risk. Teachers can also develop connections with mothers in local communities to raise their awareness and skills in preventing their children developing radical attitudes.

According to a recent study conducted on women and violent radicalisation in *Jordan*, women are the primary influencers of their families; thus, they are targeted by violent extremist groups as a first step to influencing the entire family. The report also showed women's interest in deradicalisation programmes 'as long as such programmes are legal and conducted in a transparent manner, do not challenge religious norms, and focus on more than just research and interviews'.⁸⁸

6.5. Socio-Economic Investment

Research suggests that the level of correlation between radicalisation and poverty varies from one country to another. For example, socioeconomic factors play a more decisive role in Egypt than in Tunisia and Jordan, while cultural desertification is a more prevalent factor in Jordan and Algeria. Nevertheless, youth socio-economic grievances, particularly those related to youth employment, remain an important pushing and pulling factor that needs to be addressed by governments. Economic growth and job creation may enhance youth integration into local communities, but job creation needs to be coupled with education reform, particularly regarding vocational training.

⁸⁸ 'Women and Violent Radicalisation in Jordan', UN Women and the Jordanian National Commission for Women (March 2016), p.8, <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/women-violent-radicalization-jordan-en.pdf?vs=3843>, accessed 20/06/2017.

6.6. Cultural and Sport Investment

Alternative cultural and sport spaces need to be created for young people to counter the issue of cultural desertification. There need to be numerous places to which the young can go to spend their free time; recreational activities which are affordable; and overall an outlet for youth to express their thoughts. Central governments need to increase the budget of LAs to enable them to contribute to developing social, cultural and sport infrastructure.

6.7. Empowerment of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Also mentioned in the PASC statement, there needs to be support of grass roots civil society organisations to design programmes of dialogue and knowledge exchange with marginalised youth and their families in order to help protect the security of their communities and prevent children from joining terrorist groups. Governments have to ease their surveillance of CSOs and charity organisations and stop interference in their operations in order for trust to be created between them and local communities.

6.8. Social Harmony

Particularly in countries with increasing numbers of refugees, there needs to be development of programmes aimed at enhancing social harmony and equality between host communities and refugees. This requires targeting of disenfranchised vulnerable social groups, including poor people, street children, and Bedouins in social development programmes, and easing governments' rules and regulations for these groups to integrate economically, socially, and politically into their local communities.

6.9. Interventions

There needs to be further development of two main types of intervention: the first aimed at preventing the radicalisation of young people who are being influenced, for example by religious extremism, to turn to violence; and the second aimed at the deradicalisation of individuals convicted of terrorism to disaffiliate them from terrorist organisations and reintegrate them in society after leaving prison. Interventions should not be simply transported from other (e.g., Western) settings but should be tailored to local circumstances.

Localisation of intervention programmes requires a multi—agency cooperation approach where all stakeholders contribute to their design and implementation and invest in each other’s technical and human capacities and expertise. Intervention programmes also need to build upon evidence of the success and failure of ongoing programmes and to modify their measures of deradicalisation accordingly.

6.10.Human Rights Abuses

Governments need to ensure that efficient and effective counter-radicalisation measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals. Thus, there needs to be international condemnation of human rights abuse by the state, not least because such abuse may be a principal factor in perpetuating violent extremism. Local people also need safe channels to report radicalisation without being abused by security forces. Governments need to develop their preventative and prevention programmes based on their national constitutions and international principles of human rights.

7. Recommendations for LRAs

7.1. Conceptual Basis of Strategies to Counter Violent Extremism

- Extremist beliefs should be distinguished from terrorist actions, with an acknowledgement that the former do not necessarily lead to the latter.
- Counter-radicalisation strategies need always to be contextualised to respond to the actual causes of radicalisation in each country and its legal, political and cultural system. Efforts to counter radicalisation should also focus on the use of complementary approaches that respond to different aspects of radicalisation – ideological, social, economic, psychological, and legal.
- Tackling the issue of youth radicalisation requires a multifaceted and a multi-agency cooperation approach, which helps to change the misconception that youth are perpetrators or victims or that they are a burden on society into a perception that they are equal partners who provide opportunities. Thus, the true essence of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 should be realised by enhancing youth participation in decision making.
- Governments in the region should also enhance the role of research centres and think tanks to explore further the complexity of the phenomenon of violent extremism from a local perspective and disseminate research findings to regional and international stakeholders to improve their strategies. The network of research institutes on politics and security in the Mediterranean (EuroMeSCo) (106 Centres from 32 Euro-Mediterranean countries) and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)⁸⁹ could contribute to supporting new research initiatives on violent extremism and radicalisation in the region and facilitate knowledge sharing between the countries of the region.

⁸⁹ See the link to EuroMeSCo annual conference statement, June 2017, <http://www.iemed.org/recursos-compartits/pdfs/EuroMeSCo%20statement%20CVE.pdf>, accessed 24/06/2017.

7.2. Preventative Measures

- Efforts should be made to address factors that may make individuals more vulnerable to radicalisation, including economic deprivation, lack of vocational training and employment opportunities, discrimination (e.g. against Bedouins), and educational curricula that emphasise the spread of Islam through war rather than, for example, the contributions of Muslim scientists and philosophers.
- Governments should work on establishing an inclusive national strategy to counter violent extremism in response to the actual causes of radicalisation in each country and in each region. Such a strategy needs to incorporate different stakeholders, including youth (male and female), women activists, community members, CSOs, religious leaders, tribal leaders, and LAs. This strategy should draw upon findings of empirical research conducted on violent radicalisation in each country.
- LRAs should go beyond the one-dimensional approach to counter extremism, focusing only on security measures, and should realize that ‘It is easier, less costly, and more effective to prevent radicalisation than it is to try to de-radicalise an individual’⁹⁰.
- LAs or municipalities in the region should form partnerships with municipalities in Europe and beyond that have developed a successful model of CVE to learn from their experiences and best practices, such as the municipality of Mechelen in Belgium⁹¹.
- There should be improvement in the technical, human, and financial capacities of elected municipalities and village councils, particularly in remote marginalised governorates, to tackle violent radicalisation. This requires donors to provide direct funds to municipalities and local councils to design and implement programmes that target vulnerable groups in each community.
- There should be enhancement of inter-regional networking and

⁹⁰ See the article written by Bart Somers, the Mayor of Mechelen, Belgium (and President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Committee of the Regions (CoR)), explaining his approach to countering youth radicalisation, “Countering radicalisation: ‘Tell people if you work hard, you can have a better future’”, available at http://www.thejournal.ie/readme/countering-radicalisation-tell-people-if-you-work-hard-you-can-have-a-better-future-3445702-Jun2017/?utm_source=shortlink, accessed 21/06/2017.

⁹¹ Ibid.

coordination between different governorates, local councils and municipalities, through which local representatives and practitioners and community workers can meet regularly to exchange knowledge and experiences of best practices and develop localised measures of deradicalisation.

- LAs should give a priority to establishment of community centres in marginalised rural and urban neighbourhoods and encourage dialogue and volunteering. These community centres should be connected with local schools and community-based organisations to share experience and knowledge and to encourage dialogue. Priority should be given to dialogue between teachers and parents and students.
- LAs should provide professional training to youth (men and women) in local communities and professionals working in local authority organisations and enhance cooperation between the two groups to implement effective preventive programs.
- Reform of the education system should include putting the student at its core; building and enhancing vocational training opportunities; enhancing students' critical thinking skills; and training teachers to be aware of signals of radicalisation and how to seek support to address these signals, whilst maintaining a positive relationship with students.
- The Ministry of Education also needs to develop the spaces at large schools to become regional social and communal hubs where students, families, and community members can spend their free time.
- LRAs in cooperation with CSOs should give priority to the inclusion of women (mothers, students, professionals, and community activists) in all programs of CVE, as agents for countering extremism. Programmes should give priority to raising mothers' awareness of how to prevent their children's radicalisation through the use of social media and TV shows. Female preachers need to be trained to provide lectures to mothers in mosques and schools in rural and poor urban areas.
- Ministries of Education, Culture and Religious Affairs in cooperation with LAs should engage with moderate Islamic preachers. Preachers who have a credible name in local

communities need to be encouraged to play a crucial role in fighting the extremist narrative, particularly in areas that are more vulnerable to it. Engagement of former extremists in counter-radicalisation programs is also an effective tool, as they have deeper understanding of the challenges individuals face to engage and disengage with terrorist groups.

- Tribal leaders should be incorporated into all community centres' programmes in order to use their societal networks, knowledge, and influence to provide protection and security for the population and to enhance social cohesion, albeit with a caution not to enhance the discriminatory tribal norms related to gender and patriarchy.
- Societies should be encouraged to demonstrate openness and acceptance of their youth (for example, in Jordan allowing entrance to all spaces, such as malls and boulevards, which currently ban young males from entering on certain nights of the week), who should be empowered to be involved in decision-making. Independent youth initiatives based in local communities should be supported by the provision of training to youth activists.
- There should be investment in cultural, sporting, and other activities, particularly focused on youth, with a view to providing an alternative structure to that which may be offered by violent extremism.
- There should be improvements in mental health facilities, training of mental health staff, and raising of public awareness of mental health issues, taking note of WHO recommendations in this area.
- By contrast, one area in which there should be a reduction in new resources is the indiscriminate building of new mosques, particularly when there is a shortage of Imams.
- There should be development of an Internet Safety Toolkit that includes a series of engaging films and animations for young people, including advice for parents and teachers. There should also be new channels of communication with young people, bypassing traditional channels, through the use of new technologies, such as Social Media, YouTube and others.
- All such efforts should be particularly focused on communities

which feel disenfranchised and/or are in border areas.

- To ensure the success of the recommended measures, plans and activities should be guided by a monitoring and evaluation body, agreed upon by all stakeholders. One of the functions of the monitoring body can be to handle financial aspects such as attracting funds both internationally and locally.

7.3. Interventions

- It should be acknowledged, and reflected in a change in policies, that indiscriminate interventions, including collective punishments; brutal suppression of groups considered to hold extreme views; restrictions on political debate and on media reporting; and lack of perceived transparency and accountability in the security services are likely to foster, rather than reduce, violent extremism. By contrast, the coexistence of multiple identities and a pluralistic political society should be acknowledged to be the situation most conducive to elimination of violent extremism.
- Deradicalised terrorists, ‘returnees’, and youth who committed, but have disengaged from, violence should be recruited to contribute to programmes for youth who may be vulnerable to radicalisation since this may be more effective than input from mainstream preachers, as well as providing the individuals concerned with a viable alternative to returning to terrorist activity and a means of restoring self-esteem. The police and the municipalities should also cooperate to implement programs aiming to re-establish former terrorists’ ties to their communities and to raise awareness amongst local communities against stigmatising them.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of Research Participants

Egypt:

- Mostafa, PhD candidate and expert in Da'esh and security affairs, Cairo
- Hani, academic and Executive Director at an independent research centre in Cairo
- A leading figure in Nour Salafi party, Cairo
- Sara, a female journalist and activist
- Huda, postgraduate student at Alexandria University
- Atef, Al Ahram newspaper
- Mohamed, an employee in local government, Beni Suef Governorate
- Abdulla, teacher in public school, Cairo
- Mohamed, a young Salafi activist, Cairo.
- Sayed, preacher in Azhar University .
- Mahmoud, National Centre for Sociological and Criminological Research (governmental institution)
- Judge, Ministry of Justice.
- Muslim brotherhood activist, Cairo
- Helal, secular youth activist, working in a private company in Alexandria

Tunisia

- Arabi Al Nafathi, psychologist working with CREATIVE, Tunis
- Nadia Jamal, female medical doctor and the chairperson of the Association for the Advancement of Civic Education (APEC), Tunis
- Ghufran Hassainna, representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs
- Mohammed Jouaili, sociologist and former director of the National Observatory for Youth, Ministry of Youth and Sports (2012-2017)
- Ala Talbi, the head of the programme of ‘Terrorism in Tunisia through Judicial Files’, the Centre for Research and Studies on Terrorism, affiliated to the Tunisian Forum on Economic and Social Rights
- Abdeljaleil Salem, the Minister of Religious Affairs
- Raowda Burji, the head of the Civil Society Support Programme (PASC)
- Mohammed Ben Tayeb, the head of the research unit of Religious Phenomenon in Tunisia, University of Manouba
- Mhriz Idrisi, education specialist, the head of the educational program at Al-Jahiz Think Tank, Tunis
- Waleed Hadouq, the coordinator of the ‘Hand-in-Hand’ project, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Tunis

Jordan:

- Amer Bani Amer- the founder and Director of Al Hayat Centre for Civil Society Development, Amman
- Anonymous, from the Ministry of Culture

Morocco:

- Mohammed Guenfoudi, Research Assistant, MA Student in Sociology and a youth activist, Mohammed V University
- Said Moumen, member of the Justice and Development Party (PJD), youth section and member of Rabat City Council
- Ilyas Bouziagha, PhD Student in Cultural Studies, Member of Rabita Mohammedia for Religious Scholars
- A.B., former senior security official (did not want to reveal his name)

Annex 2. Research Team Biography

Professor David Winter, University of Hertfordshire, UK

David Winter is Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, U.K. He was previously Programme Director of the University's Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, and spent most of his working life practising as a clinical psychologist and personal construct psychotherapist in the National Health Service. He has held visiting positions at various universities, including Visiting Professor at the University of Padua, Brotherton Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and Visiting Scholar at the University of Wollongong. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, and is Associate Editor of the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* and Research Editor of the *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*. He has over 170 publications, mostly on applications of personal construct psychology, and one of his most recent books (with Rachel Brown, Stephanie Goins, and Clare Mason), *Trauma, Survival and Resilience in War Zones: The Psychological Impact of War in Sierra Leone and Beyond* (Routledge, 2016), is based on work carried out following the civil war in Sierra Leone. He has also developed a personal construct method for the investigation of radicalisation and deradicalisation, which was presented at a NATO Symposium on Immigration and Terrorism.

Dr Aitemad Muhanna-Matar, LSE, Middle East Centre

Aitemad Muhanna-Matar is Assistant Professorial Research Fellow at the LSE's Middle East Centre. She is currently working on a comparative research project investigating the link between Syrian refugees' displacement, gender identity crisis and radicalisation in Jordan and Lebanon. In 2014-2016, she conducted research on Tunisian Salafi youth and the driving factors of their radicalisation. In 2013, she managed a regional research project in five Arab countries on women's political participation across the Arab region. In 2010-2013, she studied the historical trajectory of Gazan women's religiosity, agency and subjectivity, drawing on different discourses of religion and secularism. Her PhD thesis in 2010 examines the effects of the Palestinian Second Intifada on women's agency. Her thesis was published in a book *Agency and Gender in Gaza: Masculinity, Femininity and Family during the Second Intifada* (Routledge, 2013). In the period 1996 to 2008, she worked as a consultant with the World Bank, UNDP and SIDA in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

Dr Mohammed Haj Salem, Tunisia

Mohammed Haj Salem is an anthropologist and a senior researcher in the Centre for the Study of Religious Phenomenon in Tunisia, at the Faculty of Art and Humanities, Manouba University. He is an editor of the journal of *Tawasin for mysticism* (Arabic) and a member of the judging panel of the magazine, *the Algeria Anthropology*, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Al-Jahiz Think Tank, and a lecturer at the Centre of masarat 'Pathways' for Philosophical and Humanitarian Studies, and he presented a dialoguer on issues of religious thoughts in the Tunis cultural broadcast. In the period 2012-2014, he was the head of the research unit on the Study of Jihadim in Tunisia, at the Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies.

Dr Mohammed Musbah, Morocco

Mohammed Musbah is an Associate Fellow at the MENA Programme of Chatham House as well as a junior research fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies in the United States. Previously, he was a non-resident scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center and a fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Dr. Masbah's research interests are in the area of Salafism, political Islam, authoritarianism, and youth movements in North Africa. He earned his PhD in Sociology from Mohammad V University in Rabat in 2015.

Dr Ahmed Tohamy, Egypt

Ahmed Tohamy is a Lecturer of Political Sciences at Alexandria University. His research Interests include social movements, youth activism, and violence. In 2016, he published his book *Youth Activism in Egypt, Islamism, Political Protest and Revolution*, I.B.TAURIS. Through his previous work with the National Centre for Social and Criminal Research for 15 years, he garnered his expertise on the topics of activism and militancy among young people. He published a chapter entitled 'The Development of Security Approach toward the Islamic Militancy from 1980-2011' in the Comprehensive Social Survey, the National Centre for Social and Criminological Research, 2016. He also published an article 'Human Cost of the Arab-Arab Conflicts' by the Institute for Human Rights and presented his publications in several regional and international academic and non-academic forums.

NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solutions, Jordan

NAMA was established in 2016. It is a technology driven strategic intelligence solutions provider to key stakeholders in the public and private sector. NAMA's ambition is to significantly advance social and economic development in the MENA region and more specifically in Jordan. NAMA is in the process of building the first private-sector driven research centre dedicated to knowledge creation for political, social, and economic development in Jordan. NAMA retains a highly experienced and agile team of researchers, consultants, experts, economists and analysts, who enrich and drive a multi-disciplinary approach to transforming raw and big data into actionable intelligence that enables strategic decision making with NAMA clients, who share the same mission of enabling an environment that facilitates socio-economic development and policy making. NAMA's senior researchers who are involved in this study include: Dr. Fares Braizat - Chairman and director of the Research and Polling Unit; Dr. Amer Sabaileh - Political Security Analyst; Ali Obeidat - Senior Analyst; and Mohammed Abu Dalhoum - Researcher and Analyst.