ICAN International Civil Society Action Network

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INVISIBLE WOMEN

Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation and Reintegration from Violent Extremism

PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

Figure 8: The seven elements of a holistic and gendered approach to disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration.

This research finds that a holistic multisectoral approach is essential for successful disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women and girls associated with violent extremism. This is demonstrated by the approaches of women peacebuilders who are on the front lines of responding to the gendered dimensions of return. Each of the examples of good practice profiled in Part II of this report address several of the critical themes and areas of intervention identified and elaborated in Part I. Policymakers and practitioners can ensure disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration programming is holistic by:

- Assessing the relevance of and designing interventions that target all applicable sectors including: policy, legal, justice, security, media, religion, education, economic, health (medical, psychological, and emotional);
- Engaging on all levels: individual, family, community, and society; and,
- Identifying and collaborating with diverse stakeholders: civil society organizations, government agencies, security actors, religious and traditional leaders, businesses, journalists, etc.

1. The Policy Gaps and Challenges

Recommendations	Guiding Questions
1.1 Take a Holistic Approach Widen the focus of disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts beyond the individual terrorism offender to include all those affected by violent extremism, including children who were kidnapped by violent extremists or conceived in captivity, female abductees, internally displaced persons, and vigilante groups that fight violent extremists. **1.2 Conduct Gender Analysis** Conduct gendered reviews and analyses of policy and practice across all relevant sectors, recognizing that women and men, boys and girls may face different circumstances and have different needs in the processes of return and reintegration. **1.3 Consider Lessons Learned** Ensure that initiatives draw on the best practices and lessons learned from the failures of previous relevant initiatives, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, and rehabilitation programs developed for general prisoners and gang members. ■ Include a literature and best practices review in the program design or inception phase. ■ Conduct a mapping of past and existing initiatives in the program context. **1.4 Coordinate with women-led organizations and other non-governmental stakeholders** Design and implement programmes in coordination with a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders, and articulate clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder group. Women-led organizations are key partners based on their topical knowledge and local access. ■ Consult UN and local partners to identify women's organizations active in your country setting. ■ Involve women CSOs from the outset based on their comparative strengths. ■ Enable safe interactions between CSOs and security actors. ■ Build trust through regular round tables among national/local governments, CSOs, youth organizations, religious institutions, traditional leaders, and communities.	» Do the existing policy and programming efforts recognize and address women and men's different experiences? » Does the state have procedures for dealing with women and girls (and boys) associated with violent extremists, to assess their engagement in violence and to ensure that victims are not further abused or subject to violations such as sexual assault? » Does the State have sufficient numbers of women who can conduct assessments, verification and registration of women and girls associated with violent extremists? » Where are the women-led organizations already active in the area of DR&R, and what are opportunities for coordination ?

2. Law, Redress and Reconciliation

Recommendations	Guiding Questions
2.1 Establish legal frameworks Ensure that coherent, transparent legal frameworks and guidelines are in place.	» How do national laws governing returning violent extremists account for gender differences, including recognizing the diverse roles of associated women and girls? » What responsibility does the state have to repatriate and bring to justice its citizens who may have perpetrated crimes abroad? » Does possessing dual nationality allow for revocation of a returnee's citizenship? » How is citizenship passed to a child when the conferring parent is missing or deceased? » In cases of international marriage, are women and men equally eligible to pass their citizenship to their child? » How can a child born outside of the parents' country be conferred citizenship? » How can a child's identity and right to citizenship be established without valid documents?
2.2 Evaluate current legal approaches Assess how courts, prisons, and other state institutions are currently addressing issues of the returnees, particularly with regard to the treatment of women and children.	
2.3 Articulate clear policies for returnees Articulate a clear policy, including zero tolerance for sexual abuse and other misconduct, regarding the treatment of returnees and those associated with them (e.g. family members) with a gendered/child-appropriate approach.	» What evidence informs prosecution and determines sentencing? » What are the range of sentences for those convicted? » Are there restorative justice mechanisms which complement or serve as alternatives to the criminal justice system? » Have amnesty and other transitional justice mechanisms been discussed or implemented?
2.4 Ensure legal clarity on returnee status Ensure legal clarity on the status of returnees and those associated with them, and implement human rights-compliant monitoring frameworks and support services.	» What legal aid support programs exist for returnees, and women and girls specifically? » How do counter-terrorism laws affect CSO's ability to receive funding and respond to the needs of returnees, especially women and girls, and receiving communities? » Do these laws disproportionally affect women's organizations, youth associations or other civic groups?
2.5 Broaden legal space for civil society Provide CSOs with the legal protections and policy guidance to engage in rehabilitation and reintegration interventions.	

3. Security for and from Women and Girl Returnees

Recommendations	Guiding Questions
3.1 Implement guidelines for security actors Develop, implement, and monitor stringent guidelines for the front-line security actors (including border guards and correctional officers) in their treatment of returnees and their families. Promote adherence to human rights protections and accountability for violations as essential for effective PVE efforts, as abuse by security actors can be a catalyst for radicalization.	» What is the security process for returnees, especially women and girls? Are they placed in detention centers, camps, or directly reintegrated into local communities? » Are returnees held separately by gender and age within prisons, detention rehabilitation centers? » If not detained, or held in separate facilities, do women and girls have equal access to services, resources and rehabilitation and reintegration programming? » If held in the same facilities, how are women and girls protected from violence by male inmates? » Are their women security officers and staff working in detention and rehabilitation centers, and other points of contact with women and girl returnees? » What policies, trainings, and protection mechanisms exist to prevent abuse of detainees by security actors, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)? » Do detained women and girls have access to justice in cases of abuse and human rights violations? » How can the public access information about their relatives who are in custody of security agencies or are missing? » What policies exist to ensure the human rights compliance of security actors?
3.2 Develop gender-responsive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) Support collaborative development, implementation and monitoring of gendered Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all actors involved in the disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration process, including zero tolerance for sexual and other forms of violence.	
3.3 Build relationships between civil society and security actors Develop information sharing and joint research protocols, in combination with relevant safety training, between civil society and the security sector.	» What is the relationship between the police and local communities? » What programs exist to build trust and transparency between security actors, the public, and returnees? » What mechanisms exist to identify the security needs of local communities? » How is information shared between security actors and civil society?

4. Addressing Public Attitudes of Stigma and Fear

Recommendations	Guiding Questions
4.1 Build public engagement and dialogue mechanisms Initiate public dialogue through the media and education sectors, including on religious and other relevant ideologies. Because the issues are sensitive, there is a need for responsible public engagement on the rationale for policies and approaches being developed. **4.2 Strengthen balanced reporting** Engage the media directly to encourage balanced reporting so that public fear, anger, and potential violence are not fueled through inaccurate reporting. **4.3 Encourage CSO-led media campaigns** Encourage CSO-led media campaigns to engage religious scholars to convey accurate non-violent narratives and to debunk violent ones. **4.4 Address rehabilitation and reintegration/PVE issues in the education system** Develop teacher training and support mechanisms and curricula to address rehabilitation and reintegration and broader PVE issues in schools. **4.5 Engage local communities in stigma reduction** Engage local communities including the CSOs already active in PVE, and work with these CSOs to determine the most relevant means of socializing local communities to the need to reintegrate successfully and reduce the stigma of those associated with and affected by violent extremism, in particular women and girls. ■ Consult with all community sectors to determine the specific challenges they face and solutions they offer for addressing reintegration, as well as to identify their needs and ensure that no inadvertent harm is done by state and international actors. ■ Encourage male community leaders to be role models and engage in public discussions about accepting returning women and girls—particularly survivors of rape or sex trafficking—which can help reduce the stigma they face and foster their acceptance within the community at large. ■ Ensure direct engagement with and support for the families of those who are detained, incarcerated, or participating in a disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration program, to provide their family members with support and facilitate their eventual successful reintegration.	» What are the attitudes and behavior of receiving communities and the public towards returnees, and women and girls in particular? » How does media coverage treat the issue of returnees and issues related to perpetrators and others associated with violent extremism? » Does media analysis and portrayal of the issue vary with gender and age of returnees? » Does coverage balance between perpetual one-off "extraordinary" success stories, and those of injustice and struggles of the "ordinary" that bear results, so that people are inspired to become agents of their own future? » Are innovative media formats being used to convey these complex issues and promote peace, rights, and pluralism? » Are artists and other cultural producers engaged as messengers? » What training materials and resources are available to practitioners and the media? » What are the cultural, religious, and social norms regarding treatment of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)? » What attitudes and positions do community leaders—men and women—hold regarding returning women and girls? » Which community leaders have a media platform to speak about these issues? Do they address gendered dimensions? » Which media formats and messages reach whom? Is this information disaggregated by gender, age, socioeconomic status, etc.? » What indicators are used by practitioners and the media to measure stigma and public attitudes towards reintegration?

5. Transforming Ideology and Restoring Identity

Recommendations	Guiding Questions
5.1 Implement PVE programming that restores identity and belonging Encourage programming to help women and girl returnees rediscover different and positive aspects of their identity. Facilitate opportunities for women and girl returnees to pursue pro-social activities and discover alternative ways to fulfill their sense of purpose. ■ Ensure elements that target identity, aspirations and belonging are part of PVE programming, avoiding a simplistic focus on socioeconomic methods. ■ Embed alternative narratives (of peace, tolerance, respect for pluralism) in PVE programming to guide interventions and communication strategies. ■ Support spiritual identity as a much bigger universe than any individual's affiliations with a particular religious persuasion. **5.2 Uplift women mentors and role models** Highlight and engage women role models and mentors with diverse beliefs and roles in society. **5.3 Engage female religious authorities** Engage women religious scholars and counselors to provide education and mentoring of women and girl returnees when necessary.	» What factors contributed to the radicalization of or reasons for women and girls joining violent extremist groups? » How are these drivers gendered? » How does gender does play a role in marginalization, disempowerment and frustration that may have contributed to women and girls' vulnerability to violent extremist recruitment? » What do returning women and girls need to feel a sense of belonging and purpose in their lives? » How are women religious leaders and other women mentors engaged in rehabilitation and reintegration interventions? » How can programming involve socioeconomic status, trauma, or sense of belonging and purpose to facilitate ideological transformation? » What do rehabilitation and reintegration practitioners use as indicators to measure the progress of ideological disengagement?

6. Socioeconomic Empowerment and Sense of Purpose

Recommendations

6.1 Implement sustainable development solutions

Initiate sustainable economic and employment development, including by working with the private sector, to determine critical needs and potentials for new sectoral development and vocational training for men and women.

This should include, where appropriate, offering remedial education programs and schools to enable those returnees who require it to enter the education system.

6.2 Initiate multi-stakeholder reintegration programs

Engage all stakeholders, including employers, educators, and communities, to facilitate successful reintegration through programs to enhance access to education, job placement, and entrepreneurship.

6.3 Ensure context-sensitivity of livelihood programs

Tailor livelihoods programs to the context and individual interests.

- Take into consideration the average income and affluence of the receiving community and seek to provide comparable services and support, to avoid fostering resentment.
- Avoid gendered or cultural assumptions about what kind of work women (and men) can or should do.
- Conduct labor market assessments to inform job training and skills development.

6.4 Address workplace stigma

Assess and address attitudes about returnees with attention to hiring and workplace safety, including to prevent discrimination that could run counter to rehabilitation.

Guiding Questions

- Do socioeconomic support and livelihoods initiatives for the general population, including education and training programs, exclude returning women and girls?
- Does economic disempowerment of women, including hiring and workplace discrimination, contribute to the motivations of women and girls to join violent extremist groups?
- Are returning women and girls heads of household and/or breadwinners for their families?
- What subjects, skills, and professions are returning women and girls interested in pursuing?
- What economic and livelihood opportunities are there for women and girls in receiving communities?
- What is the average level of affluence of women and girls in the community?
- Do existing rehabilitation and reintegration programs include women and girls in socioeconomic support and livelihoods interventions?
- How do programs account for gendered obstacles (i.e. conflicting domestic and caretaking obligations, inability to pay school fees, and insecurity at and on the way to schools including sexual harassment and assault)?
- How do public attitudes about returnees shape the views and behavior of potential employers and co-workers with regard to fair hiring and workplace safety, including to prevent discrimination that could run counter to rehabilitation?
- Are educators and school administrators trained to understand, support and manage the children of returnees who face stigma in the classroom, in ways that contribute to long term reintegration?
- Do socioeconomic interventions foster self-dignity, meaning and sense of purpose for returning women and girls?

7. Coping with Trauma

Recommendations	Guiding Questions
7.1 Provide comprehensive, confidential psychosocial support Address the full range of returnees' experience through psychosocial support, which may include symptoms of trauma, coping with difficult family relationships, dealing with community stigma, past abuse by security actors, and caring for children affected by violent extremism. Ensure safe space for, access to and confidentiality in psychosocial therapy. **7.2 Build on local practices and customs** Build upon healthy traditional and indigenous practices to create stronger mechanisms for psychosocial support. **7.3 Engage psychosocial service providers in case work** Engage trusted service providers with relevant expertise and knowledge of the context and of the nature of returnees' cases. **7.4 Connect psychosocial support to reproductive health and socioeconomic support** Integrate reproductive health and family planning, as well as vocational training, with psychosocial support to enable recovery and overall health.	» What mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) exist within the community, including referral mechanisms, and do returning women and girls have access? » Do MHPSS providers have capacity and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure gender-responsive intervention, including in addressing trauma from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)? » Do MHPSS providers have knowledge and understanding of the local context and the situation of returning women and girls? » Have MHPSS interventions been tailored to the context by considering healthy indigenous practices for trauma healing? » How are returning women and girls informed of the MHPSS services available to them? » How is privacy and confidentiality guaranteed for returning women and girls seeking treatment? » Do front-line responders, including civil society, humanitarian, and security actors, have access to MHPSS care? » What MHPSS services and public education have been provided to communities with regard to addressing stigma against and fears about returning women and girls? » What do rehabilitation and reintegration practitioners and MHPSS providers use as indicators to measure progress of healing from trauma and mental health in general?