



2021-2022 United Nations Multi-Year Appeal for Counter-Terrorism



Strengthening capacities of Niger to prevent and counter violent extremism in prisons

UNICRI and CTED seek to improve the capacity of national authorities in Niger in preventing and countering violent extremism in prison settings by improving the good management of persons detained on terrorism charges and developing targeted activities for the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders (VEOs).

Description of the Project

The aim of the project is to improve the capacity of national authorities in Niger in preventing and countering violent extremism in prisons settings specifically, but not limited to prisons in Niamey, Koutoukale and Kollo. As the main prisons for the incarceration of male offenders on terrorism charges, prisons in Koutoukale and Kollo will be specifically targeted for the purposes of the project, but other prisons may also be engaged throughout implementation, including Niamey prison, in which women and minors are detained. The project will help national authorities in developing targeted activities for the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders (VEOs) in prison settings. The project will seek to complement this work by additionally seeking to strengthen the collaboration and cooperation of key stakeholders in the field of VEOs rehabilitation and reintegration within local communities. A series of three phases, focusing on assessment, the management of VEOs and rehabilitation and reintegration, have been defined. Depending on the availability of funds, implementation of the project may be approached as single, complete, package or on a phase-by-phase basis.

This project will be coordinated with the UN Global PRR Programme. In this regard, UNICRI and CTED will ensure coordination and alignment between this project and the UNODC/UNOCT-UNCCT/CTED project designed to support Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria implement comprehensive, coherent and tailored approaches to screen, prosecute, rehabilitate and reintegrate (PRR) persons associated with Boko Haram.. The project will also take into account ongoing training by UNODC to new prison staff and seek to be complementary to the work of other stakeholders such as the French Embassy which provides assistance to magistrates and the Delegation of the European Union that intends to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice in 2021.

Rationale

In paragraph 40 of its resolution 2396 (2017), the United Nations Security Council “encourages Member States to take all appropriate actions to maintain a safe and humane environment in prisons, develop tools that can help address radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment, and to develop risk assessments to assess the risks of prison inmates’ susceptibility to terrorist recruitment and radicalization to violence, and develop tailored and gender-sensitive strategies to address and counter terrorist narratives within the prison system”.

During 2018, in its engagement with some West African Member States, CTED identified challenges relating to the lack of capacity to address the spread of terrorist ideology in prisons and to support rehabilitation efforts. Most prisons and prison personnel are insufficiently equipped and trained to conduct individual risk and needs assessments upon admission (taking into account the specific needs of women and young offenders), use dynamic security, detect early signs of radicalization to violence, manage high-risk terrorist detainees and ensure effective measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of these detainees, further undermining prison security and safety. With ongoing counter-terrorism military operations, the number of detainees is rapidly increasing and is expected to continue growing with the increasing operations of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel, while no policy is in place for preventing further radicalization in prison or ensuring rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorist offenders.

Many detention facilities are overcrowded and don’t have computerized prison registry systems. Programs for the rehabilitation and social reinsertion of those detained for acts of terrorism are rare. The lack of economic opportunities post-release and strained family and community ties during detention jeopardize the successful social reintegration of these detainees. Some Member States have instituted special procedures for extended pretrial detention in terrorism related cases. As people detained over prolonged periods are vulnerable to radicalization and violence, ensuring that pre-trial detention periods remain legal and reasonable is a key challenge for governments of the region. Partners on the ground have confirmed that the needs identified in 2018 remain outstanding.

During CTED’s visit to Niger, prison authorities requested assistance to put in place measures to prevent and counter violent extremism in prisons. Following intense efforts to deal with terrorist cases, Niger prisons host a growing number of terrorist convicts, representing a share of the 500 or so terrorist suspects who have been through the criminal justice system in the previous two years. A significant number of individuals are on pretrial detention on terrorism charges and would also benefit from P/CVE efforts in prisons. Male individuals incarcerated on terrorism charges and those convicted for terrorism are detained in two prisons (with no strict separation with other inmates). Women and minors are detained in the Niamey prison under the same conditions. There are limited targeted rehabilitation programmes within prisons, and no after-release programmes to facilitate reintegration of released prisoners back into society. Partners on the ground in Niger have confirmed that the needs identified in 2018 remain relevant to date.

Outcomes

This project seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1:Improved management of persons detained for terrorism, both for security reasons and in order to prepare the reinsertion of such prisoners and prevent the radicalization of others;

Outcome 2: A rehabilitation and reintegration programme established for all former members of terrorist groups, based on the efforts to organize the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram made by the authorities of the Lake Chad basin countries with the support of the United Nations, the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission;

Outcome 3: Expertise of management, rehabilitation and reintegration of persons detained for terrorism built in a country that other Sahel countries pay attention to in light of its position as a champion of a criminal justice approach to preventing and countering violent extremism, that can be used to promote effective approaches throughout the region.

Outputs/Indicative Activities

The project seeks to implement the following indicative activities:

Phase1 Assessment:This phase will include

- Assessment of the current challenges, gaps and needs with respect to management of VEOs in prison;
- Mapping of existing activities and actors in the Niger rehabilitation and reintegration domain.

Phase2 Management of VEOs:This phase will focus on capacity building for prison staff and on the development of a risk assessment and classification tool for VEOs. The capacity building component envisages:

- General trainings for prison officials and prison staff on the risk of violent extremism and radicalisation in prison, on dynamic security, detecting early signs of radicalization, personal safety, security, and defense against extremist ideologies when dealing with VEOs in prison settings;
- Specific trainings are then envisaged for psychologists, social workers, religious counsellors / Imams on diverse methods for tailored VEO rehabilitation;
- The risk assessment component will include the development of a tool for the classification of VEOs; the training for prison staff on the tool, its usage; the pilot test of the tool; the finalization of the tool; and a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) on the tool and its usage.

Phase3 Rehabilitation and Reintegration(R&R): This phase will focus on three main activities:

- Capacity building for prison staff on the development and implementation of R&R programmes for VEOs, including on how to design effective R&R programmes tailored to individual’s specific needs, bridge the gaps between prison and community, monitor and evaluate inmate progress, develop individual release plans based on the results of accurate risk and need assessments;
- Deliver education vocational trainings for VEOs based on the R&R plans;
- Community-based reintegration of VEOs, including the assessment of community’s capacities to support and facilitate the social reintegration of VEOs; training for relevant local actors (probation workers, social and health services, civil society organizations) to facilitate the reintegration of VEOs in the community by ensuring continuity of support, access to adequate services (responding as much as possible to the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys) and effective monitoring and supervision; and providing support to community-based programmes for reintegration through sub-grants to civil society organizations.

Human Rights Mainstreaming

The design and implementation of the project is in line with recommendations and guidelines provided by international tools and good practices that promote the protection of human rights, gender equality and the rule of law, as fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners, the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders and the GCTF’s Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders, are examples of the tools that will be further promoted and to which the capacity building component, the context analysis and the grants-based activity intend to adhere.

Gender Mainstreaming

The project will promote gender equality and seek to address women-specific needs. In this regard, the project will pay special attention to the gender dimensions of the problem, ensuring the participation of women and using sex disaggregated data where possible. As noted above, women and minors are detained in the Niamey prison, which is a prison that will be involved in the project. UN Women’s gender mainstreaming principles, dimensions and priorities for PVE will be used for the purposes of this project.

Budget

\$1,500,000.00

Pillar

Pillar IV -Ensuring Human Rights and the Rule of Law

Project Status

Concept

Implementation Period

2021-2023

UN Org

UNICRI, CTED

UN Global CT Compact Partners

CTED

Countries

Niger

Current Donors

This project is currently unfunded.