



**GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

**COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM STRATEGY
2016 - 2018**

Podgorica, December 2015

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism in Europe finds its inspiration in a greater variety of ideologies (nationalist and separatist ideologies, inspired by Al Qaeda, ISIS, violent left-wing, anarchist and right-wing ideologies...) However, the terrorist and violent extremist activities are not carried out solely by centralized and hierarchically structured organizations, but include also smaller groups and individuals acting alone and plotting attacks under limited or no authority of the parent organization, thus making the efforts to prevent them even harder. Besides, the former rule that terrorism and violent extremism are committed by individuals and groups outside Europe is no longer valid. Present experiences and events show quite the opposite. Many terrorists who are planning terrorist attacks within Europe - live in Europe.

Such attacks cause more than the loss of life and economic damage: they endanger the safe life of the population, create uncertainty and discord among communities in Europe, causing an increase of reactionary and extremist views in other parts of the society. This helps to create a fertile ground for extremism, continuous vicious cycle of radicalization, aggression and violent responses. Radicalization of the population of European countries, through the extremist propaganda, is becoming increasingly common, and in the recruitment process modern technological and communication achievements and social networks are used to the maximum extent. Terrorist organizations and extremists exploit technological progress in order to find new ways to engage the dissatisfied, using social networks, video channels on the Internet and radical chat rooms on the Internet.

As a result of this aggressive process of attracting new supporters, the phenomenon of "foreign fighters" was created and they travel abroad, to conflict and war-affected areas, in order to join the paramilitary and terrorist formations and get ready and fight in conflict areas, thus becoming more radical and dangerous to society. Armed with newly acquired combat skills, after returning from the conflict areas, many of the "foreign fighters" become a security threat and potential perpetrators of terrorist attacks. The phenomenon of foreign fighters became more notable with the conflict in Syria, and become a problem for the whole world, Europe and the Balkan region. The number of extremists who are traveling to take part in conflicts is constantly increasing in the last few years. Increase in the number of foreign fighters increases at the same time the threat to security. Traditional methods to combat this phenomenon proved to be inefficient in addressing new trends in radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism. For that reason, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to prevent and combat radicalization. This comprehensive approach means involving the whole society, and taking the whole range of measures to prevent and combat radicalization and violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

In accordance with the current situation in Europe and the region, Montenegro has recognized the need to give appropriate response to the growing problem of radicalism and violent terrorism, which in accordance with its definition, may spill over to Montenegro at any moment, through terrorist acts of individuals and/or groups, already identified in our immediate surroundings. For that reason the Government of Montenegro recognized the need to develop a strategic document that will contain a set of planned activities for the prevention of this phenomenon, its suppression

if it occurs, and mitigation of consequences to the security of society and the state should they occur.

The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Strategy has been developed as part of the Government of Montenegro's effort to effectively address the problems of radicalization and violent extremism. It represents an integral part of the Government of Montenegro's multifaceted contribution to the global fight against terrorism in all forms and manifestations. It builds on and complements the national Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism, Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. It represents a response to the threat of radicalization to violence, violent extremism and in particular the problem of foreign terrorist fighters.

A security threat that recently became very frequent is the participation of foreign fighters in armed conflicts. The most common form of participation of foreign fighters in international conflicts takes the form of mercenaries. With regard to mercenaries, international humanitarian law does not recognize their status as legal soldiers, because their participation in the armed conflict is motivated by personal interest/benefit, in the form of financial compensation significantly higher than the one promised or paid to the fighters of a similar rank or duty in the armed forces of that given side. For that reason, they are not granted the status of war prisoners either. The International Convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries obliges the state parties not to stand behind any action incriminated by the Convention and obliges them to prohibit such actions in their national legislation.

The Government of Montenegro recently proposed introduction of a new criminal offense "Participation in foreign armed formations", and the Parliament supported this initiative through the adoption of the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of Montenegro, in March 2015.

Violent extremism, in the broadest sense, represents denial of democracy and human rights and is one of the most severe forms of violation of human rights guaranteed by the international conventions. Radicalization, if not connected with violence or other illicit actions, such as inciting hate, does not represent a threat to the society. However, radicalization often leads to the use of violence, terrorism or other actions prohibited by the law, as means to achieve the objectives, and which represent a serious threat to society and that must be prevented and adequately sanctioned.

Suppression of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism requires a comprehensive and well coordinated reaction of the state, which includes efficient reaction of the criminal justice, while observing human rights, and against those persons who encourage others to engage in violent extremism and preventive action through continuous assessment and monitoring of circumstances conducive to violent extremism, thus to terrorism.

Earlier UN strategic documents equate efforts that are presently referred to as countering violent extremism (CVE) with Pillar I of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UN GCTS), Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, which means that national CVE policies contribute to the wider effort to implement Pillar I.

Besides, in the European Union counter-terrorism framework, CVE is a part of the first strand of the European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy (EU CTS), and is dedicated to preventing

people from turning to terrorism by tackling factors or root causes, which can lead to radicalization and recruitment of persons in Europe and internationally to commit terrorist acts or violent extremism.

UN Resolution 2178 calls for enhanced efforts to prevent and suppress violent extremism, by preventing radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization of individuals into terrorist groups and becoming foreign terrorist fighters. In addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, emphasis is put on regional and international cooperation and exchange of information, strengthening of border control aimed at preventing foreign terrorist fighters' travel, ensuring efficient use of INTERPOL resources, disrupting financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, countering incitement to terrorist acts motivated by extremism or intolerance, promoting political and religious tolerance, economic development and social cohesion and inclusiveness, ending and resolving armed conflicts and facilitating reintegration and rehabilitation, and elsewhere in the document, prosecution of such FTFs and those who recruit them, finance and facilitate their travel.

To that end, this strategic document is developed, following the strategic guidance of the United Nations, the European Union and regional priorities under the South-East Europe Cooperation Process, best practices developed under the umbrella of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the EU Radicalization Awareness Network (EU RAN). The task of the Strategy is to determine priorities based on the need to develop efficient and functional mechanisms and improve the capacity for prevention and suppression of radicalism, violent extremism and terrorism.

In terms of prevention, the Strategy focuses on those most at risk and/or already in early stages of radicalization, in order to prevent further radicalization and recruitment by violent extremist groups, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration of returning foreign terrorist fighters - as a new challenge and area of involvement unique to FTF phenomenon.

In terms of suppression, the Strategy is focused on strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies in the direction of identifying persons who are planning to participate, participate or participated in the commission of the offense of violent extremism or terrorism, collection of evidence and their prosecutions for the committed criminal offenses, with the aim of eliminating social danger and preserving conditions for life in a safe environment.

The CVE Strategy is structured in three parts. Part One describes priority areas and goals for counter-extremism in Montenegro, Part Two discusses cross-cutting issues related to countering extremism, and Part Three presents steps to be taken in the future, as a basis for the development of the Action Plan for implementation of this Strategy.

The following **VISION** served as a basis for the development of this strategy Life of the citizens of Montenegro in a safe environment.

This vision will be achieved through the implementation of the **MISSION**: Reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of the Montenegrin community against radicalism, violent extremism and terrorism. In order to fulfill the aforementioned vision and mission, the following strategic goals are set in this Strategy:

1. *Adequate understanding of the drivers of radicalization in order to prevent radicalization;*
2. *Establishment of effective coordination mechanisms among relevant institutions at the national and international level;*
3. *Implementation of activities in response to the drivers of radicalization - combating radicalism and violent extremism;*
4. *Implementation of monitoring and evaluation in order to eliminate the consequences of violent extremism and terrorism and to plan for future activities.*

I. GOALS FOR COUNTERING EXTREMISM IN MONTENEGRO

1. ADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF DRIVERS OF RADICALIZATION IN ORDER TO PREVENT RADICALIZATION

The activities under this objective will lead to an increase in understanding of conditions, factors, drivers of radicalization leading to violence and strengthening of existing levels of community resilience against violent extremism; a shared understanding among the multiple actors involved in countering violent extremism as a precondition to developing appropriate and effective responses; and the development of a unified approach to countering violent extremism. In this context, it is necessary to build trust within the society and between communities, and ensure their better understanding. Involvement of different parts of society and unification of these different aspects reduce the risk of radicalization and increase the possibility of stopping the processes that lead to extremism and violence.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE COORDINATION MECHANISMS AMONG RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

It is necessary to establish effective coordination mechanisms by involving partners from various sectors and various levels in the counter-extremism work. Within this framework, it is necessary to establish efficient cooperation of law enforcement agencies with other government bodies and non-governmental organizations, with precise division of responsibilities and coordinated and planned activities at the national level.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES AS A RESPONSE TO DRIVERS OF RADICALIZATION – SUPPRESSION OF RADICALISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Increased understanding of drivers and the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms will enable Montenegro to effectively intervene to address these drivers by developing tailor-made and targeted solutions, and community based, creative and innovative approaches that demonstrably strengthen resilience against violent extremist agendas.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM AND PLAN FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

It is necessary to introduce a practical framework for performance monitoring and evaluation to regularly collect, collate and share data from a wide variety of sources to ensure timely and effective counter-extremism response and prevention efforts and to support learning in order to further improve understanding of radicalization, adjust responses and measure impact.

II. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES OF COUNTERING EXTREMISM

Across the objectives/priority areas of the CVE strategic framework, there are four cross-cutting issues that must be addressed. Rather than treating them as separate activities or projects, attention is paid to all four cross-cutting issues in all priority areas.

1. Communication

In order to suppress violent extremism it is necessary to improve communication among CVE actors, as well as between CVE actors and at-risk communities and vulnerable individuals. It includes also increasing awareness of threats, of needs, and of solutions in order to improve effectiveness and in order to build trust and reduce vulnerability.

2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The effort to ensure adequate and innovative use of ICT, technology companies and ICT experts at all stages, and through successful CVE activities must include, but should not be limited to, the removal of content or blocking the contents on social media and internet portals that promote violent extremism. ICT should also be utilized to improve the effectiveness of direct responses to extremism, collaboration and coordination amongst CVE actors, as well as the collection of data on extremism and the impact of CVE activities.

3. Capacity building

Capacity building of the government, non-governmental and private sector to respond to the threat of violent extremism in a timely and quality way; Capacity building, in areas such as the ability to recognize signs of radicalization and understand contemporary CVE techniques and methods is key to ensuring progress in all priority areas.

4. International cooperation

Efficient and sustained regional and international cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the efficient use of available international databases and resources of the International Criminal Police - INTERPOL in accordance with the UN Resolution no. 2178 and the European Police Office - Europol, in accordance with the best practices of the EU .At the regional level, this is echoed by the Budva Joint Statement, which states that national and local measures should be complemented with concerted regional efforts.

III. ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN IN THE FUTURE THAT WILL SERVE AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY

The CVE Strategy charts the proposed course of action of the Government of Montenegro in tackling radicalization and countering violent extremism, following the aforementioned structure, and UN, EU, and national documents, existing recommendations and best practices and models found in those documents, and proposes a set of activities based on them. The strategy emphasizes the synergy with the Strategy for the prevention and suppression of terrorism, money laundering and terrorism financing and the measures of the Action Plan for the period 2015-2016 for implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism, Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing from 2015 to 2018.

The strategy is the basis for development of an action plan which will define in detail the activities for the realization of the strategic goals, in line with the vision and mission defined in this document.

1. Adequate understanding of drivers of radicalization in order to prevent radicalization

Activities for the achievement of this goal:

- Integration of professional knowledge in order to prevent radicalization - Develop methodology, in consultation with local and international experts, for baseline assessments needed to enable evidence-based counter-extremism policy planning, including information on: geographic and demographic profiles of at risk-communities, capacity of community stakeholders to address drivers of radicalization, threat assessment, etc. **(MN CTS AP 2015-2016, Measures 6.1, 7.1)**;
- Establishment of a team / working group to develop a coordination network, with the task of identifying and tracking potential violent extremists;
- Close cooperation with civil society and the private sector in order to identify threats from the Internet;
- Participation in the Awareness Raising Network on radicalization;
- Establishment of "exit strategies" to help individuals when leaving violent extremism;
- Provision of adequate assistance to victims when preventing radicalization;
- Training of specialists for the prevention of radicalization - Establish a coordinating body that serves as a platform for discussion, and aimed at providing a unique understanding of the conditions that are conducive to violent extremism and its drivers, and leading to the development of an integrated/common vision and an integrated approach to action in combating extremism in Montenegro;
- Continuously raise awareness among frontline workers, government agencies, civil society on all of the above and of the roles and importance of contribution of all sectors;
- Designing a course with the aim of raising awareness among youth about CVE and the consequences of extremist violence in the society;
- Providing media training for relevant religious schools and related educational institutions.

2. Establishment of effective coordination mechanisms among relevant institutions at the national and international level

Activities for the achievement of this goal:

- Establish national-local partnerships: further coordinate involvement of municipalities in counter-extremism work – through signing a MoU with Union of Municipalities of Montenegro. Establish or designate an Internet Referral Unit: a) coordinate and share the identification tasks (flagging) of terrorist and violent extremist online content with relevant partners, b) carry out and support referrals quickly, efficiently and effectively, in close cooperation with the industry and c) support competent authorities, by providing strategic analysis and operational analysis;
- Establishment of partnerships between government agencies and scientific institutions and NGOs - mapping the existing civil society initiatives that have a positive impact on increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability to radicalization and recruitment for the purpose of violent extremism;
- Conduct an analysis of development strategies, policies and action plans currently implemented by the Government of Montenegro in order to identify activities that could be used and where there is a synergy with CVE and CT strategy;
- Training of officers who work directly on radicalization issues;
- Ensure technology companies and ICT experts are included in the network and set up a working group in this area to develop innovative approaches to the use of technology, internet and social media in tackling violent extremism;
- Establishment of relevant cooperation at the regional and international levels – development of the appropriate platforms for exchange of information and best practice;
- Establishment of efficient cooperation with international organizations dealing with the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism.

3. Implementation of activities in response to the drivers of radicalization - combating radicalism and violent extremism

Activities for the achievement of this goal:

- Establishment of an efficient coordination among law enforcement agencies, the State Prosecution and the courts in ongoing activities (at the national and international level);
- Joint use of existing resources at the national level in combating violent extremism and radicalism;
- Creating conditions for implementation of the continuous, timely and comprehensive information exchange (at the national and international level);
- Disabling the use of existing information infrastructure at the national level to spread extremist propaganda towards recruiting new members and funding violent extremist and terrorist groups and individuals;
- Appropriate processing - identification and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes related to violent extremism and terrorism, and persons involved as foreign fighters in foreign

war zones, as well as persons and criminal groups that assist in the financing of violent extremism and terrorism, and the recruitment and training of foreign fighters.

4. Implementation of monitoring and evaluation in order to eliminate the consequences of violent extremism and terrorism and to plan for future activities

Activities for the achievement of this goal:

- Implementation of the risk assessment process - Creating a plan for data collection, analysis, forecasting, threat assessment and decision-making regarding future activities;
- Development of a plan of work with returnees inside and outside the criminal justice system;
- Development of a plan of work with returnees - foreign terrorist fighters - Creating a program of reintegration and rehabilitation;
- Regular data exchange, useful as a basis for prioritization regarding areas in group I, when designing interventions and evaluating their effectiveness;
- Building a framework, based on the protocols on the exchange of information and monitoring systems, using data from open sources, data from social media and information originating from employees who work directly with these issues, in order to detect recruitment and support, draw attention to the tensions in the community, update the level of threat, and generally act as an early warning system.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions used in the strategy have the meanings as defined by the UN Working Group on Radicalization and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism and the Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience, as well as the meanings defined in the UN Resolution 2178.

- **Radicalization to violence:** a decision to forgo political processes or nonviolent methods of fostering change in favor of adopting violent methods to bring about change;
- fostering change in favor of adopting violent methods to bring about change
- **Violent extremism:** use of violence to pursue political goals
- **Counter-radicalization:** a package of social, political, legal, educational and economic programs specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalized) individuals from crossing the line and becoming a terrorist;
- **De-radicalization:** programs that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of re-integrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence
- **Resilience:** factors, ideas, institutions, issues, trends or values that enable individuals and communities to resist or prevent violence;
- **Foreign terrorist fighters:** Persons who, contrary to the law, other regulations or rules of international law, solicit, recruit, prepare, organize, manage, transport or organize transportation or train an individual or a group of persons for the purpose of their joining or participation in foreign armed formations outside of Montenegro.

DOCUMENTS AND GUIDELINES THAT THE STRATEGY IS BASED UPON

1. MONTENEGRO

- Strategy for prevention and suppression of terrorism, money laundering and terrorist financing, Government of Montenegro, 2015-2018
- National plan for the implementation of the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) Program, Government of Montenegro, 2009
- National Strategy of Employment and Development of Human Resources, Government of Montenegro, 2012–2015
- Strategy of Development of Social and Child Care System in Montenegro, Government of Montenegro, 2013–2017
- Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality, Government of Montenegro, 2013- 2017
- National Youth Strategy, Government of Montenegro

2. REGIONAL LEVEL

- Budva Joint Statement, Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Conference Brdo Process and South-East European Cooperation Process, 2015
- Vienna Declaration, Tackling Violent Extremism, 2015
- Recommendations from Regional Countering Violent Extremism Summit in Tirana, 2015

3. UN and EU

- Resolution of the UN Security Council 2178 (2014)
- United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2006
- European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2005
- Revised European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism, 2008
- Charter of principles governing the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network
- EU Internet Referral Unit at EUROPOL – concept note, 2015

4. BEST PRACTICES/ GUIDELINES

- Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism, Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2013
- Hague-Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the FTF Phenomenon, Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2014
- Comparative evaluation framework for counter radicalization, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2010
- Needs Assessment Toolkit, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, 2015