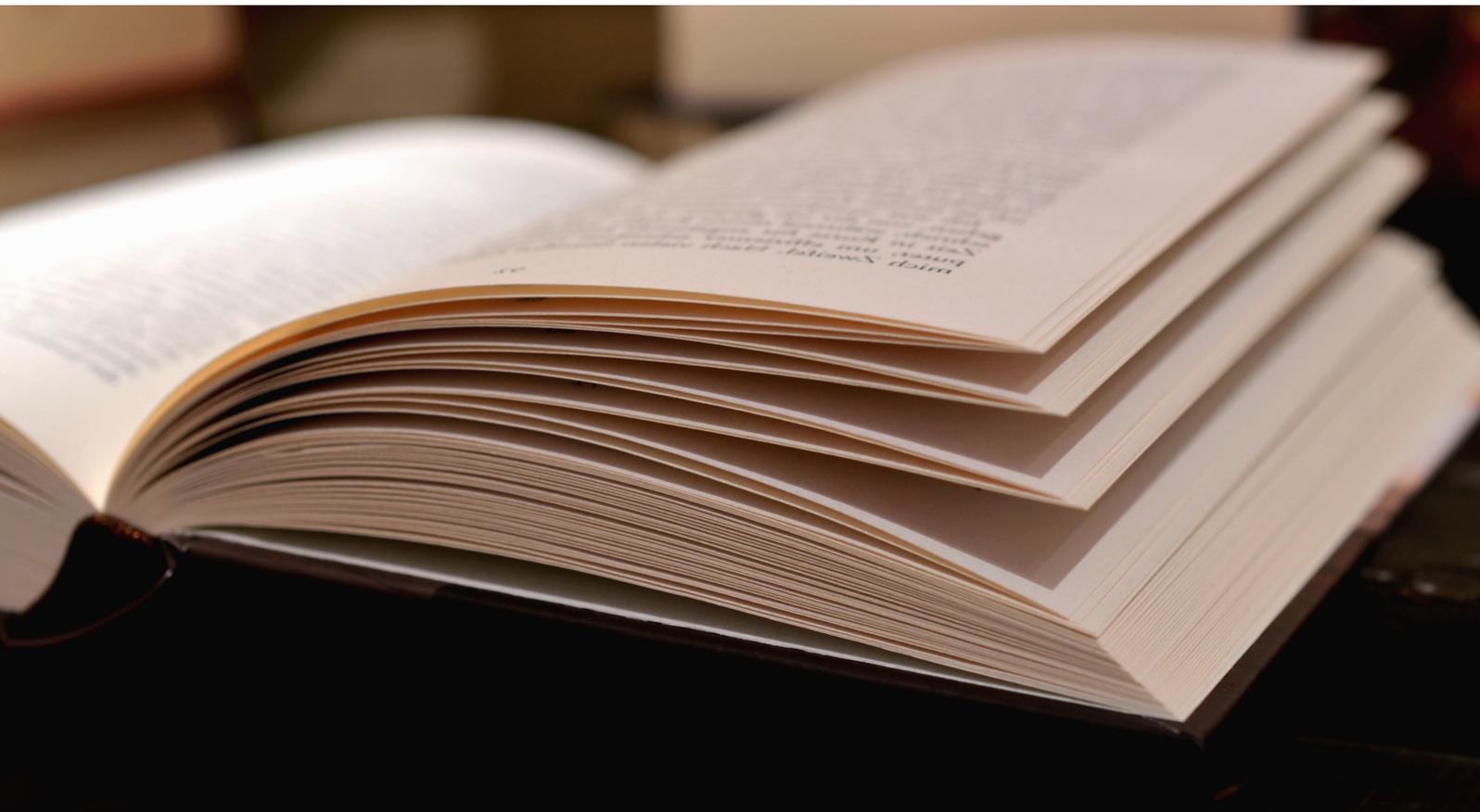




Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



CHARTER ON PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM



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What is the P-CVE Charter?

This Charter presents a grounding document for policy makers, donors, and implementing partners working on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P-CVE) in Jordan. Various stakeholders are already undertaking valuable P-CVE work in Jordan and this Charter acknowledges the importance of that work and does not wish to disparage or criticise current efforts, but instead serve as a guide for future efforts.

As part of the project ‘Religion for Peace and Development in the WANA Region’, the West Asia - North Africa Institute undertook research which analysed radicalisation drivers in Jordan, the relation between human security programming and P-CVE policies, and selected radicalisation counter-narratives. Policy recommendations throughout this project were designed in a participatory approach with input from youth, civil society, development sector practitioners, religious leaders, and government representatives. The Charter presented here also draws heavily on the input of youth and religious leaders in workshops designed for this purpose in late 2017.

While the project is generously funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the research findings and this Charter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of the Netherlands on P-CVE policies.

The Charter presents thematic points on policy changes required to manage radicalisation and provide effective P-CVE programmes. It codifies and presents priority areas of work. Keeping in mind that contextual drivers of radicalisation in Jordan also represent shortfalls in human security indicators, the guiding principles of this Charter address P-CVE needs from this broader lens.

Jordanian Context

Ongoing changes in the geo-political context of the WANA region, including Daesh’s loss of territory, have inevitably caused a change in the climate of radicalisation in neighbouring states. This Charter considers these changes and their effects on Jordan when guiding P-CVE stakeholders.

Firstly, as the socio-economic context in Jordan has not changed dramatically, the drivers of radicalisation remain present and may manifest in different forms. It is due to this that P-CVE measures implemented in the coming years must address the structural issues that cause radicalisation and violent extremism. Second, emphasis should shift on to those now returning from groups such as Daesh. Finally, should the groups’ ideological framework remain present in communities of the WANA region, it is likely that Daesh, and other groups, will rethink recruitment tactics and potentially opt for more innovative military tactics.

The P-CVE Charter for Jordan

This Charter presents agreed fundamental principles which P-CVE efforts and programmes should use to enhance their efficacy in Jordan, within the broader umbrella of human security. The following guiding principles are categorised thematically and according to the most cited needs for the country.

1. Governance

- The Charter calls on the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) to establish a joint working committee with representatives from CBOs, UN agencies, INGOs, and donors. The committee is charged with developing a vision for integrated P-CVE and human security efforts, as well as coordinating actors and assessing impact.
- The Charter calls on the Government of Jordan to speed up the legal processes of existing corruption cases, and create new responses to complaints of corruption that ensure concerns are addressed transparently and swiftly. Corruption is the most cited radicalisation driver by youth, and measures like this will contribute positively to building trust between the citizens and the government.
- The Charter urges the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior to standardise legal processes and ensure the equal enforcement of law to all Jordanians regardless of power networks or tribal affiliation. The widespread sense of social injustice and powerlessness among youth has influenced their search for alternate socio-political settings.
- The Charter calls on the Government to implement democratic principles of representative governance. Political parties are systematically weakened leaving youth without voices to represent their concerns. The Charter asks the Government to support smaller political parties through funding that is made available to parties with over 500 individuals. In addition, said political parties should be available in all governorates; alternatively, one could be able to vote for parties outside the governorate.
- This Charter urges the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice to develop and clarify to P-CVE stakeholders policies concerning returnee rehabilitation and reintegration. This process would benefit from the input of inter-disciplinary experts, along with research and evaluation which can assist authorities in improving the success rate of such programmes.

2. Social Challenges

- The Charter recommends P-CVE stakeholders to work closely with local NGOs and CBOs to raise awareness on radicalisation processes, forms, and typologies of radical individuals. Local actors are best equipped to build the capacities of local leaders and youth on managing radicalisation. This is achieved through targeted awareness raising activities and local support networks including religious and tribal leaders, local police, and youth and women activists.

- The Charter calls upon the Ministry of Social Development, UN agencies, donors, and international NGOs to establish family support centres that address the concerns of dysfunctional families and domestic violence, and offer guidance on parenting skills. In particular, outreach should be offered to mothers who hold a particular influence and position in the family and community. Services should also include expert guidance on managing radical family members and mentoring services.
- The Charter encourages local actors and donors to promote success stories of potential role models for children and youth that inspire positive engagement in local communities and active citizenship.
- The Charter calls INGOs, donors, and relevant government bodies to raise awareness and start a public discussion on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees who are currently ostracised in their communities. This is necessary to prevent their re-entry to radicalisation, and to manage potential risks of having military experienced returnees back in communities.
- The Charter highlights the need and the importance of contextualising projects and social services to be demand-driven. Projects must be re-prioritised and informed by local needs over those of international actors and the international donor community.

3. Economic Empowerment

- This Charter calls on the Ministry of Labour to work alongside trade unions to reform the labour market and employ a nationalisation project which can increase the number of local employees in both local and international organisations. Relevant deprivation resulting from the unemployment of educated Jordanians, along with its social costs, have proved determinant factors in the radicalisation process.
- International actors, the government, and donors should work together to promote vocational employment as a source of achievement and pride in Jordan, in a way that can reduce the unemployment and under-employment of Jordanians and their potential impact on the radicalisation of individuals.
- The Charter calls on the government, donors, and the private sector to work together to reduce the development gap between Amman and other governorates which contributes to a sense of marginalisation and relative deprivation among some Jordanians.

4. Media

- The Charter calls on media professionals, donors, INGOs, and P-CVE stakeholders to create an informal commission to generate unified terminology pertaining to the matter of radicalisation and violent extremism. Language must be consistent and well-understood to shape and inform a critical public, and to prevent miscomprehension.
- This informal commission can also work with youth activists to provide alternative narratives building on lessons learnt from local similar initiatives.

- The Charter recommends that stakeholders develop a comprehensive strategy with a multitude of both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to promote a societal discourse based on values of participation, cooperation, and acceptance.
- The Charter recommends that media and digital literacy should be included in educational programmes. Young people in particular should be taught to critically assess and understand the messages presented to them on social media.
- The Charter also urges stakeholders to cooperate with individuals who have high social currency as effective P-CVE role models. Relevant stakeholders may utilise people with many followers on social media, for example, and use these to encourage alternative narratives.

5. Youth

- The Charter urges the Ministry of Youth, with the assistance of young people themselves, to revitalise the under-utilised and un-operational youth centres across Jordan. This would allow youth to productively contribute to their communities, and feel directly involved in cultivating and enjoying the benefits of such activities. The abundance of idle time among youth is found to be a major factor in how and why they get introduced to recruiters online, and face to face.
- The Charter advises stakeholders to incorporate stipulations in the private sector that require Corporate Social Responsibility obligations which potentially provide micro-funds and training for young entrepreneurs.
- The Charter emphasises the importance of coordination between the Youth and Labour ministries. In order to alleviate Jordan's large youth unemployment problem, the Ministry of Youth should be in active conversation with civil societies, factories, etc. Ministry of Labour can agree with companies to offer training opportunities and internships which provide experience and a productive use of time. Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation could also play an important role in the coordination of such exercises.
- The Charter wishes to emphasise the need for creating safe channels for youth to discuss their radicalisation concerns or opinions pertaining to religious and political questions. Investing in local support networks is imperative for offering safe spaces and advice from religious leaders, psycho-social support counsellors, and local role models.
- The Charter urges universities to take responsibility for their role in supporting P-CVE efforts. This can include the monitoring of campus groups and their potential encouragement of hate speech and/or radical behaviour, but should also centre around providing young people with safe and constructive spaces in which to discuss religion and radicalisation.

6. Education

- The Charter urges the Ministry of Education to re-emphasise extra-curricular activities like theatre and art that can encourage concepts such as tolerance of the other from an early-age. Debate, chess competitions, summer camps, and simulations of ministerial councils, municipal councils, and parliaments are some examples of such activities.
- The Charter calls on the Ministry of Education to reprioritise and further specialise the current curricula with a focus on critical thinking skills. Subjects such as ethics and philosophy ought to be widely introduced as well.
- The Charter calls on educational establishments to reemphasise the role of school counsellors. It is imperative that a qualified psycho-social specialist is available to support young people and provide understanding of mental health issues. This can potentially curb the radicalisation process by giving young people the correct tools to channel their grievances.
- The Charter wishes to emphasise the need for a shift in attitudes towards vocational education. Entrepreneurship should be supported, along with peer to peer learning, and a valuing of non-traditional career paths which often focus on soft skills.
- The Charter also calls on educational institutions to raise awareness in secondary schools on corruption and social injustice and how one can address these two problems without resorting to radicalisation as a response.
- The Charter also acknowledges the need to include political parties in education – specifically secondary education – to raise awareness on what the purpose of these parties are in politics and society at large.

7. Religious Institutions

- The Charter calls on the Ministry of *Anqaf* and Religious Affairs to facilitate channels of communication between the public and qualified imams. This should include specialised training for preachers to be able to communicate with young people. A lack of religious authority for young people to turn to with concerns and questions can sometimes push them towards more extreme options for answers.
- The Charter urges the Ministry of *Anqaf* and Religious Affairs to provide safe training and debate spaces for imams to discuss their preaching roles and challenges. Imams often feel uncomfortable reaching out to ministries for guidance on how to approach conversations regarding radicalisation, which can lead to dangerous misunderstandings.
- The Charter encourages the Ministry of *Anqaf* and Religious Affairs to initiate a process of dialogue with local stakeholders to reconceptualise the role of mosques in society, and how the social and religious role of the mosque can be transformed positively to contribute to P-CVE efforts.

The Way Forward

Whilst each of the Charter's points are focused towards a particular stakeholder it is important to remember that P-CVE will only be effective as a collective effort. As a result, it is crucial that there is open cooperation between groups and that all work under the collective umbrella of human security acts as the basis for effective and appropriate P-CVE policy. The government, international agencies, donors, local NGOs, and local communities are urged to cooperate closely in these efforts starting with regular dialogues and interactive multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder implementation plans on the recommendations detailed above.



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