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PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Preventing violent extremism, North Africa and the Sahel

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Introduction

What is the European Union (EU) doing to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) in north-western Africa, specifically in the Maghreb and Sahel region? Building upon the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy (EU Council 2005), the EU Strategy for combating radicalization and recruitment to terrorism has increasingly emphasized the 'internal-external security nexus' and the need to strengthen co-operation with key third countries in the fields of counter-terrorism, anti-radicalization, prevention, and countering of violent extremism (EU Parliament 2015; EU Parliament and EU Council 2017). The fight against violent extremism has thus become one of the most prominent objectives in EU external action, especially as far as the (enlarged) neighbourhood is concerned (Durac 2017). Yet scientific inquiry into the EU's role in this domain has so far been limited (for a partial exception, see Herlin-Karnell and Matera 2014).

Aiming to fill this gap, this Policy Brief investigates the strategies, policies, and actions, as well as the underlying concepts and narratives, through which the EU substantiates its engagement to prevent and counter violent extremism abroad. It focuses on key countries in North Africa (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia) and in the central Sahel (Mali, Niger): the significance of this selection is highlighted by the fact that along with the Western Balkans, the Middle East, and the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb and the Sahel are two of the target regions where the EU has set out to concentrate its efforts in this domain (EU Parliament and EU Council 2017; EU Council 2020).

In looking into the P/CVE policies, actions, and projects that are deployed in the Maghreb and the Sahel, this Policy Brief examines how the EU's endeavour to prevent and counter violent extremism is substantiated *in practice*. The well-known uncertainties and fluctuations about the notions of radicalization (Sedgwick 2010) and violent extremism (Harris-Hogan and Barrelle 2016), in fact, suggest that P/CVE is not akin to a universal recipe that can be easily formalized in procedures and principles: on the contrary, it amounts to a 'field of practices' (Heydemann 2014). It forms a repertoire that, as commonly observed in the diplomatic realm, is pragmatically adjusted on a case-by-case basis in response to challenges and opportunities, trying to match the objectives of the EU and those of third countries. The proposed shift of analytical focus from policy discourses and institutions to practices and programmes that are implemented on the ground echoes recent scholarship that argues EU foreign and security policy is best understood by looking at day-to-day interactions rather than at formalized rules and institutional apparatuses (Adler-Nissen 2016; Bicchi and Bremberg 2016).

In keeping with this approach, this Brief provides a bottom-up, comprehensive mapping of all those initiatives carried out by the European Union in Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, and Tunisia that are labelled, or intended, as part of a broader P/CVE effort. While the first part of the Brief reviews the EU approach in each of the country cases, the second part offers a cross-country regional analysis, teasing out general observations and emerging trends through the study of the predominant narratives underpinning EU P/CVE actions and projects

in the Sahel and Maghreb. In the last section, the Brief highlights lessons learned and puts forward some actionable policy recommendations that may help international stakeholders, and the EU in particular, develop a more sensitive, evidence-based, and effective approach to P/CVE.

Methodology and data sources

This Policy Brief is based on information retrieved from a variety of sources, with triangulation leveraged to increase accuracy and nuance, as well as to minimize possible interpretation biases.[1]

The research was carried out in 2020 in the context of the Working Package 6 of the collaborative project Preventing Violent Extremism in the Balkans and the MENA: Strengthening Resilience in Enabling Environments (PREVEX), and draws on an extensive literature review and the preliminary analysis of P/CVE policies as viewed from Brussels and other European capitals (Blockmans et al. 2020). Our research has been affected by restrictions adopted in different countries to limit the spread of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Between September and November 2020 our research team carried out 31 semi-structured online interviews with practitioners and experts of P/CVE, including: EU officers posted in EU Delegations or Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) missions in all the country cases herein studied; officers of United Nations (UN) agencies working on P/CVE in the Maghreb and the Sahel; third-countries' focal points in charge of counter-terrorism and P/CVE national strategies and/or commissions; third-countries' national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dealing with P/CVE-related matters (peace-building, human rights, victims of terrorism, etc.); local journalists and security experts.

Our analysis also relies on a database compiled on purpose with a comprehensive list of the P/CVE projects funded by the EU in the Maghreb and the Sahel that have been active in 2020 (see Annex 1). The database includes 46 entries: these have been retrieved from EU-sponsored online repositories selected out of their relevance, including the Counter-Terrorism Monitoring, Reporting and Support Mechanism (CT-MORSE),[2] the EU Trust Fund (EUTF),[3] and the EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace[4] (IcSP). When needed, additional information coming from interviews and the implementers' websites has helped complete, rectify, and interpret the open-source data, so as to obtain a clearer picture of each project's objective(s), implementer(s), beneficiaries, budget, geographic spread, and duration.

The database also links each project/programme to one (or, in a few cases, more) P/CVE narrative(s). By narrative, we understand the cognitive frame that helps conceptualize violent

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[2] CT-MORSE; selection rationale: all the projects targeting one or a group of the country cases herein studied, with the exception of projects labelled as 'global' with less than EUR 1 million of budget.
[3] The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa; selection rationale: only the projects targeting one or a group of the country cases that explicitly mention P/CVE.
[4] The EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace; selection rationale: only the projects targeting one or a group of the country-cases that explicitly mention P/CVE.

extremism, its root causes, and the theory of change justifying P/CVE interventions and goals (see Ciută 2007). The Brief considers five possible categories of P/CVE narratives:

- Securitization: P/CVE is framed as a strategy to secure stability (both local and international) with projects and policies largely relying on a security toolbox. Within this narrative, the emphasis on repression usually trumps interrogations about the root causes of violent extremism, and law enforcement apparatuses are the main partners of co-operation.
- Good governance: P/CVE policies stem from the view that liberal values and institutions (democracy, human rights, independent judiciary, etc.) provide a bulwark against the root causes of violent extremism. P/CVE initiatives thus aim to tackle abuses and normative deviance by state actors in order to foster resilience at structural level.
- Social cohesion: builds on the idea that existing conflicts fuel violent extremism, and that individuals at risk often belong to a specific community (defined by religion, age, social status, ethnicity, etc). The aim of P/CVE is then to reinforce the overall cohesion of the society, including through peacebuilding and development initiatives, and to have fragile communities acting as gatekeepers against extremism.
- Cognitive radicalization: the main driver and manifestation of violent extremism is identified in individuals' vulnerability to cognitive radical propaganda. P/CVE interventions thus focus on educational, psychological, and informational factors, with less emphasis on socio-political aspects at structural level.
- Gender: narratives that stress the gender component of P/CVE highlight that values, norms, laws, and relations that promote gender equality provide a unique entry point to tackle violent extremism and promote community resilience, including by leveraging the role of women as gatekeepers of their communities.

These narratives are akin to ideal-types – abstract constructs that help the observer categorize a messy reality and make disorderly practices analytically tractable. As such, they are not extrapolated from collected data, but are obtained deductively on the basis of distinctions that are identified in the relevant literature (Martini et al. 2020). While narratives may be left implicit in the project design, their practical repercussions are usually remarkable. The PREVEX analytical framework helps recast the empirical manifestations of existing P/CVE projects (objectives, beneficiaries, implementers, institutional partnerships, etc.) within the five categories of P/CVE narratives herein considered. The categorization of concrete projects within specific P/CVE narratives has been intersubjectively validated so as to minimize the degree of arbitrariness and possible interpretation biases. However, in the few cases where existing projects could only uneasily fit into one specific P/CVE narrative, these were tagged as belonging to more than one category in the database.

Country cases

Algeria

Violent extremism in and from Algeria has a long history, dating back to the political crisis, the Salafist insurgency and civil war that swept the country throughout the 1990s, and the

subsequent transnational spread of jihadist formations originated (and directed) from Algeria (Chelin 2018). While several national actors tend to portray terrorism as a residual phenomenon in Algeria, and locate jihadist and counter-terror activities with a normalization process that is underway, international observers are often sceptical about this linear narrative and stress the complex ways in which violent cycles may become manifest: in examining the situation in Algeria, many fear that widespread social frustration may fuel radicalization among marginalized groups, leading to the rekindling of a new cycle of violence. However, in spite of a major double political and economic crisis, there has been no upsurge in jihadi violence at the time of writing. Two interlinked dynamics may contribute to explaining this outcome: the recent experience of violent extremism and its response, which have costed Algeria a decade of brutality leaving traumatic memories and open wounds (Kalyvas 1999; Boserup 2016); and the extreme weakness of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), whose leadership is ageing while the organization struggles to attract new recruits (Ghanem and Lounnas 2020).

Compared to neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia, EU co-operation with Algeria is limited (Zardo and Loschi 2020). This appears to be more so in the domain of counter-terrorism and P/CVE, where the sovereign prerogatives of the Algerian regime are more strongly asserted, and even access to information is often problematic. Sustained bilateral co-operation in the security sector has been ongoing with EU member states, however; this is particularly so in Italy during the 1990s (providing tactical support to the special forces on combating terrorism) and France in recent years (focusing on the training of police and gendarmerie), especially since the election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 1999. Starting from 1999, in fact, Algeria entered into a process of National Reconciliation in order to end the civil strife, which facilitated this process of security co-operation. The National Reconciliation policy has since represented the main P/CVE strategy followed by the Algerian authorities. It combines judiciary incentives (total amnesty) with socio-economic ones (financial benefits) to jihadists and their families to surrender and cease violence. This strategy admittedly played a pivotal role in ending jihadi violence in the country: not only does it remain in place, but it has also been extended to address the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. Algerian policymakers, however, stress that the National Reconciliation is 'a pure' Algerian policy involving a matter of national sovereignty. They note that no external actor was involved in its design nor implementation, because this would have been perceived as an undue interference in domestic affairs and sovereignty.

This contributes to explaining why the contribution of external actors, including the EU, in P/CVE policies in Algeria has remained generally quite limited. EU co-operation in the security sector has been more frequently channelled through regional platforms targeting the entire southern neighbourhood, or Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. Within these frameworks, the EU engagement broadly speaking has been more focused on capacity building in repressing/interdicting than on preventative aspects. The EU has supported programmes of information exchange and judicial cooperation on law enforcement and counter-terrorism matters. Focusing on Algeria only, the EU has contributed to the Algerian penitentiary reform with programmes in and on prisons, with EUR 18.5 million out of a total 20 million. Considered a major achievement by local stakeholders, the programme has reportedly helped upgrade Algerian prisons in line with modern standards, trained penitentiary guards including

on human rights, and offered social reintegration packages, including education and professional training, to incarcerated convicts for terrorism.

Yet the cautious attitude of Algerian authorities and the uncertain institutional framework linked to political transition in the country make longer-term and more impactful engagement by the EU hardly sustainable.

Libya

In Libya, the concept of violent extremism is captured in a thick network of manipulation, politicization, and polarization fuelled by both national and international stakeholders. Within Libya, it is hard to single out extreme and radical views, as social and religious conservatism are widespread, while the prolonged crisis has somewhat normalized the use of violence. The case of the Salafist Madkhalists (Collombier and Barsoum 2019) lends itself as a good illustration of these ambiguities: the resort to violence enables armed Madkhalist groups to enforce rigorous religious norms; but although these factions' integration within the state security apparatus is hybrid at best, they enjoy a relative degree of social legitimacy and political protection that makes the use of the 'violent extremist' label hardly meaningful, if not fiercely resisted. The same label, however, is eagerly resorted to by competing armed factions in order to delegitimize one's adversaries along the numerous lines of fracture of the kaleidoscopic Libyan conflict. This politicized use is echoed (if not entirely manufactured) by the international sponsors of the Libyan factions who have been found to interfere in the country and serve their interests (also) by promoting cognitive frames through hybrid warfare techniques and (dis-)information campaigns (Lacher 2020).

At the same time, political pressures have made European policymakers accustomed to reducing the complexity of the Libyan security predicament and looking at the country through the lenses of a migration crisis only. The overemphasis on migration, however, has reportedly made of P/CVE policies, concepts, and frames a currency with limited value in Brussels. EU officers in Libya complain that it is only by raising fears, albeit ill-founded, of a link between migration and terrorism – be it framed in terms of foreign terrorist fighters or crime-terror nexus – that one manages to attract the attention (and funds) of EU institutions on the issue of preventing and countering violent extremism in Libya. And even then, securitized approaches, inspired by counter-terrorism doctrines, are reportedly the standard recipe recommended by Brussels, while the demand for guidance and sharing of best practices on P/CVE often goes unmet.

While EU-sponsored projects and initiatives specifically targeting violent extremism in Libya remain limited, the EU, spearheaded by the CSDP-mission the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM), has nevertheless played a prominent role in stimulating and supporting Libyan authorities' strategic thinking in various security domains. International pressures may have contributed to prioritizing the release of Libya's border security strategy and security sector reform agenda. But it is worth noticing that the same effort has led to the recent adoption of a Libyan counter-terrorism strategy. Within this process, the EU has reportedly encouraged Libyan authorities to temper a security-heavy repressive approach with preventative measures and institutional reforms enabling pursuits and judicialization. This emphasis transparently echoes the EU's own counter-terrorism strategy (EU Council 2005).

Yet given the limited buy-in from Brussels, EU officers in Libya admit to eagerly follow more experienced actors in the field, such as the UK and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who appear equipped and determined to push a P/CVE agenda in Libya that promotes good governance and inclusion.

Mali

While the EU has dramatically increased its footprint in Mali since the multi-faceted crisis that started in 2012 (Lebovich 2020), the P/CVE component of EU action in the country has remained relatively under-developed. Two interlinked factors may contribute to explaining this: lack of conceptual clarity, and lack of political determination by local counterparts.

With insecurity rising sharply across the country, there is no shortage of candidates to which the label of violent extremists could theoretically apply: not only the local franchises of international jihadist formations, but also armed bandits and communal militias including those formally engaged in the peace process. Many of these groups justify their resort to weapons through an inflammatory rhetoric inspired by extreme and exclusionary views on religion, ethnicity, and patriotism (Bøäs et al. 2020; ICG 2020b). Yet, in practice, the designation of violent extremist groups typically serves stigmatization and othering purposes, by suggesting – often inaccurately – that one's opponents can be ranked alongside terrorists linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. In Mali, then, the notion of violent extremism is often mobilized regardless of identifiable dogmatic references or behavioural manifestations. It is therefore inherently political, just like the concept of terrorism that it was designed to replace.

Malian state authorities, too, show limited appetite and unsteady support for framings and policies inspired by the concept of violent extremism. On the one hand, the military retains a considerable influence in shaping the response to the jihadist threat. As a result, security-heavy approaches are often privileged, while alternative policy options such as prevention, dialogue, and accountability can be fiercely opposed by influential actors in Bamako. The military coup d'état of August 2020 has only magnified this tendency, although the October 2020 exchange of prisoner with JNIM (Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin', or Support Group for Islam and Muslims, one of the main jihadist franchises in the Sahel) may be indicative of the new Malian leadership's pragmatism in dealing with jihadist groups.

On the other hand, several segments of the Malian society have repeatedly voiced their eagerness to explore alternative approaches to fight violent extremism. Since 2017, a variety of attempts to engage a dialogue with terrorist leaders have been made by different Malian actors, with unclear backing from their national hierarchies and international partners (ICG 2019). These ambiguities have paved the way to a cacophony of initiatives sponsored by humanitarian actors, traditional authorities, religious leaders, and a variety of state institutions, often unbeknownst to or in competition with one another, leading to overlaps and contradictions. As an illustration of this, the former leader of the High Islamic Council of Mali, an influential Salafist himself, was reportedly tasked by the then-Prime Minister with attempting a dialogue with jihadist leaders in 2017. Yet the initiative eventually failed because of the change of government in Bamako, the unclear backing of the Malian President, and the strong opposition of France (Bouhlel 2020). Tensions, hesitations, and erratic political traction thus appear to undermine the emergence of a shared approach to violent extremism in Mali.

Since 2018, however, Mali has adopted a National Policy to Combat Violent Extremism and Terrorism. This is reportedly inspired by the G5 Sahel strategy in this domain. Even though security-heavy approaches still prevail in the National Policy, one can observe that preventative measures are also envisioned. These appear to focus especially on the surveillance and disciplining of religious discourses and teaching through committing the Ministry of Religious and Cult Affairs. The strategy endorses the co-operation with third countries, and especially Morocco, on the training of imams into Maliki and Sufi traditional worshiping practices, considered more moderate and tolerant. Similarly, the strategy has led to the drafting of a Guide for the Adaptation of Religious Sermons through the support of experts from different religious denominations sponsored by the UN Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Overall, however, lack of resources remains a major handicap to implement the action plan evenly.

The EU, for its part, has largely diluted its focus on P/CVE, which is now recast within (and subordinated to) other policy domains. In practice, EU P/CVE initiatives in Mali have been often adopting (but hardly adapting) the assumptions and concepts borrowed from the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (EEAS 2011), the overall framework guiding the EU's action in the region. A strong emphasis on the security-development nexus by the latter drives the (untested) expectation that by enhancing the provision of security and development opportunities state authority can be upheld and violent extremism eroded. This belief underpins the extensive aid supplied by the EU to help Mali strengthen its security apparatus (including via international CSDP missions, regional co-operation framework such as the G5 Sahel, and localized initiatives such as the *police de proximité*) and rehabilitate its infrastructures (road networks, power generation, water and sanitation) with large-scale development allocations. These initiatives focus particularly on the central regions of Mopti, Ségou, Timbuktu, and Gao, while programmes of social cohesion and community resilience target border areas close to Burkina Faso. These initiatives are designed to pursue stabilization and the return of the state in contested areas, but they are also assumed to have positive externalities on the fight against violent extremism.

Since 2019, the development of the *Poles de Sécurité, Développement et Gouvernance* (Security, Development and Governance Hubs, PSDGs in the French acronym) is one of the EU flagship initiatives that substantiate this approach on the ground. PSDGs are highly protected camps where freshly trained national security forces are deployed to materialize the presence of the state in areas vulnerable to instability, insurgency, and violent extremism. While being military strongholds, PSDGs help secure a safe place for the deployment of key institutions, such as prefectures, the judiciary, and local markets. They are also the launching platform of small-scale but quick-impact development projects funded by the EU, which target surrounding communities in order to win local people's trust.

While such an approach is clearly indebted to the tradition of (mainly French) counter-insurgency (Shurkin 2020) and EU counter-terrorism (EU Council 2005), it is less clear how it integrates concepts and tools of prevention, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding. As a result, international observers, including NGOs and UN agencies working on P/CVE in Mali, tend to disqualify the EU's approach as overly securitized. Questioning the (implicit) theory of change underpinning EU action, these actors point at influential studies on the drivers of violent

extremism in Africa and the Sahel (UNDP 2017) – which emerging evidence from Mali appears to corroborate (FIDH 2018) – to highlight that the mere 'return of state' may fuel, rather than appease, violent extremism, unless a profound process of socio-political inclusion and confidence building is undertaken. Nevertheless, the need to uphold the 'return of the state' is strongly supported by large sectors of Mali's policymaking elite and public opinion in Bamako, without much questioning the model of state intervention that could avoid fueling frustrations and radicalization further.

While the EU has tended to blame the lack of co-ordination among international donors for the poor results achieved in Mali, including in terms of P/CVE (Osland and Erstad 2020), discussions on the new EU Sahel Strategy (ongoing at the time of writing) have reportedly acknowledged the need to devote greater political focus and economic resources to governance, human rights, and civil society participation. This renewed emphasis echoes the perceptions of security and P/CVE experts in Mali from both the military and the civil society sectors, prompting the suggestion to renew and scale-up EU support to the Malian civil society in order to foster local ownership and tackle marginalization. In the meantime, however, other international actors have stepped in to ensure the traction of the P/CVE agenda in Mali, that the EU has left at the margins: first and foremost, the UN, through various agencies co-ordinated by MINUSMA. The US and the UK, too, are sponsoring programmes to better identify the drivers of violent extremism, support community engagement, and provide strategic guidance to state authorities on P/CVE.

Morocco

Since the terrorist attacks that killed 45 people in Casablanca in 2003, Morocco has developed an ambitious P/CVE agenda, which has set the standard for much of the region. Morocco's approach is based on two pillars: security and ideology.

On the security side, Morocco has updated and expanded its counter-terrorism legislation, tightened border controls, improved the legal and technological tools to counter terrorist financing, and stepped up its intelligence apparatus, with a particular emphasis on human intelligence (Rezrazi 2018). The efforts have led to the arrest of over 3,000 (alleged) jihadists and the dismantling of 186 terrorist cells since 2003 (yet critics contend that such legislation has also enabled a clamp down on political dissent; see Durac 2017).

Moroccan authorities, however, have reportedly developed an acute awareness of the risks inherent to a security-only approach, particularly regarding the danger of radical indoctrination in prisons. As a result, they have considerably invested in the ideological battleground. The Moroccan approach tends to classify movements and groups in terms of their propensity to violence and opposition to the state, and ensures their ideological compatibility with the established form of Sunni Islam in Morocco – the Maliki-Ashari school. Maliki Islam is linked to the King's dynasty, and the various Sufi brotherhoods, whose main visiting sites are in Morocco. On the other hand, 'dissident' or 'nonconformist' movements include the various strands of Salafism originating from the Gulf, although the label 'violent extremists' is generally reserved for (and used as synonymous of) jihadist terrorists. Moroccan authorities have thus mobilized national religious institutions in an effort to regain control over religious discourses and ensure the hegemony of the authorized versions of Islam.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the Ulama Councils and the Mohammadian Rabita of Religious Scholars contribute to promoting a tolerant Islam through scientific research and public education, overviewing religious textbooks, removing hate speech and inflammatory contents from media and other publications, providing alternative narratives that challenge extremists' propaganda, developing awareness raising campaigns to spot early-warning signs of radicalization, and debunking 'fake' (i.e. extremist and simplistic) interpretations of Islam. They also offer religious training, including to female religious leaders (*murshidat*) and talented scholars from neighbouring countries in West Africa through a generous package of scholarships (Werenfels 2020). The tight surveillance and disciplining of religious discourses, practices, and beliefs thus combines with educational programmes that are meant to prevent violent extremism, especially by targeting at-risk communities such as marginalized youths and convicted individuals.

As part of this focus on the cognitive and ideological aspects of violent extremism embodied in religious discourses, the Moroccan approach to P/CVE lays a special emphasis on the curtailment of relapse and recidivism. This namely includes a 'de-radicalization' programme of dialogue and training with convicted violent extremists that are deemed capable of reintegrating into society (a target that generally excludes those who have travelled abroad as foreign terrorist fighters). A team of religious scholars, social workers, and psychologists help participants discover and navigate the rich complexity of Islam in order to dispel simplistic ideas and identify the eudemonistic goal inherent to the religious doctrine. Within this context, jihad is reframed as a struggle against one's own ignorance in first place, so as to discourage violent acts based on lack of contextualization and understanding.

The EU reportedly considers the support to this P/CVE agenda a top priority of its engagement with Morocco. Yet political and cultural sensitivities have led the EU to shy away from publicity, and favour instead a softer, lower-profile approach. Different standards on data protection have undermined police and judicial co-operation (Durac 2017), leading to favour more informal frameworks of interaction such as a platform for exchange of ideas among security experts. At the same time, the EU provides a discrete but substantial support to Moroccan-led programmes that are meant to tackle the root causes of violent extremism, especially through development and educational opportunities targeting at-risk communities. EU preference for discretion and informality often leverages personal relations and trust-building among diplomats, making of the high turn-over a challenge to EU action's effectiveness and steadiness.

EU P/CVE action in Morocco can be paralleled to that of UNDP, in terms of both size and strategic orientation, while bilateral partners, first and foremost the US and France, privilege smaller-scale co-operation focusing on security.

Niger

In Niger, the notion of violent extremism is seen as problematic. Not only it is poorly understood by the local communities that are targeted by P/CVE initiatives, but also, and most importantly, it is often perceived as stigmatizing and therefore counterproductive vis-à-vis conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Many observers consider that non-state armed actors in Niger, including those labeled by foreign interveners as 'violent extremists', are in

fact more akin to large and loose insurgent fronts than to secretive terrorist cells (Pellerin 2019; Berlingozzi and Stoddard 2020). Although some of them may end up adopting a radical religious ideology, they all originate and intervene in a context of communal tensions and widespread violence, where the selective deployment of the 'violent extremist' category only ends up reinforcing polarizations and feelings of marginalization. The mobilization of the Kanouri people in the region of Diffa, and of the Fulani in the region of Tillabéry, are cases in point that illustrate this dynamic.

At the same time, radically conservative religious beliefs and extremist rigorous views inspired to Salafism are on the rise in Niger. Even if their link to violence remains poorly substantiated, they generate disquiet among national and international observers. Conservative customs, gender segregation, and inflammatory religious discourses have acquired an unprecedented prominence in Niger's public space, not only among the marginal fringes of the population but also within the establishment (Idrissa 2018). There are currently nine private Islamic universities in Niamey, which reportedly receive financial and ideological support from Gulf countries. The content of their teaching is not known to public authorities, yet prominent figures among their ranks serve as advisers to the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister.

Within this context, the broader EU intervention in Niger is articulated in the framework of the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (EEAS 2011), including in the field of P/CVE. Building on this blueprint, the EU has encouraged, assisted, and guided Nigerien authorities in adopting a number of strategies in the domains of security and development, including Niger's Security and Development Strategy, Internal Security Strategy, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy, and National Border Policy and Comprehensive National Migration Policy.

The EU has also sponsored a variety of programmes aimed at promoting the following: development and jobs absorption, particularly targeting the youth and people in the borderlands; confidence-building and co-operation between border communities and security forces; stability and institutional resilience at national and local level, including the creation of security committees within regional councils. Many of these initiatives have been active since the early 2010s, often through the support of the EU IcSP. The EU – alongside the UN Peacebuilding Fund – also supports actions initiated by the Nigerien government to 'de-radicalize' former Boko Haram combatants and ensure their social reintegration. Many of these projects are put in place by Nigerien state agencies, civil society organizations, or local peace-building entities with a reputation of effectiveness and mastery of local contexts (Guichaoua and Pellerin 2017). This approach has prompted the recognition by national stakeholders that the EU is more concerned with the promotion of national ownership and local capacity building than other international actors intervening in P/CVE in Niger. However, critical observers – including those close to the EU – contend that the EU's security-development strategy in Niger tends to subordinate the latter to the former.

As an illustration of this, one of the EU's most well-funded and impactful programmes in Niger is a CSPD mission, the European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) Sahel Niger, which features a mandate of security co-operation and counter-terrorism. Yet the aim to achieve stability quickly often leads to overlook conflict-sensitivity, political-economy

analysis, and peacebuilding tools. It is also worth stressing that only few of the EU-sponsored strategies and programmes to promote security and development in Niger explicitly mention P/CVE goals and/or tools. The EU thus appears to assume that economic development and state security can, somehow automatically, help prevent and counter violent extremism. Yet there are few indications that the EU has developed an explicit theory of change or conflict analysis to support this belief. The overall picture of EU P/CVE action in Niger is therefore mixed: on paper, P/CVE remains a top priority, and there is no shortage of funding to this end; in practice, though, conceptual tools, best practices, and expertise remain poorly developed, and P/CVE is only perfunctorily integrated in EU strategies, programmes, and priorities in Niger.

As the EU forbears to play a leading role in P/CVE in Niger, other actors have stepped in. Regional organizations actively involved in the Sahel – the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), G5 Sahel, Authority of Liptako-Gourma – have reportedly developed a variety of P/CVE strategies focusing on the region: goals and objectives are not always compatible, though, and multiplication is feared to dilute efforts, undermine co-ordination, and enable free-riding. National observers tend to say, however, that the EU P/CVE is generally in line with Niger's national strategy as well as with the priorities of the G5 Sahel. Yet the EU's coherent approach vis-à-vis local ownership is questioned from a different angle: key local actors spoke about the omnipresence of the French in EU action in Niger and their strong interference in the design of P/CVE programmes. The strong influence of France has also reportedly interfered with Niger's early attempts to engage in a dialogue with violent extremist leaders so as to reduce violence (ICG 2020a).

In the meantime, the US seems to have also gained an important role in shaping P/CVE policies in Niger, most likely as a result of the strong American military footprint in Niger and co-operation with Nigerien authorities on counter-terrorism. The US is seen by local actors as more concerned with P/CVE than the EU. The American co-operation agency United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has sponsored researches on the drivers of radicalization in Niger by local and international NGOs as well as the National Council on Security and Strategic Studies (CNESS); it has also supported the adoption of Niger's first National Strategy to Prevent Radicalisation and Counter Violent Extremism in 2020. Feeding into the latter, a National Strategy on Cult has been developed by CNESS in order to regulate the organization of the religious field, including the creation of mosques, the establishment of religious associations, and the surveillance over religious discourses and preaching with the support of the Ministry of Interior. Within this framework, American organizations support Nigerien authorities to monitor religious discourses and institutions and develop counter-narratives to fight violent extremist propaganda. Overall, the influence of the US in the domain of P/CVE in Niger has led to a greater emphasis on the ideological battleground, and on the underpinning idea that processes of cognitive radicalization are a major driver of violent extremism.

Tunisia

Violent extremism is a major issue in Tunisia. Although the country is often presented as a model of achieved democratic transition after the Arab Spring, observers notice that Tunisia has the highest rate of 'foreign terrorist fighters' (compared to the overall population) in the

region (Consigli 2018). Tunisia itself has suffered major terrorist attacks in 2013–2015, and its security forces have continued to be targeted by violent extremist groups. Religious extremism is also reportedly on the rise, just as much as everyday manifestations of violence which increasingly seek legitimation in the name of religion.

Tunisian authorities have been often quick at labelling these various phenomena as more or less direct expressions of terrorism, but have also proved eager to seek international assistance on how to best respond to such challenges. Initially, strongly securitized approaches emerged and prevailed at the meeting point between supply and demand of counter-terrorism co-operation. International co-operation efforts usually targeted the Tunisian Ministry of Interior as a local counterpart, a choice that incidentally undermined the hopes for change that had animated the 2011 revolution. EU member states, first and foremost the UK and France, as well as the US, were at the forefront in helping Tunisian authorities design counter-terrorism tools and policies (with non-Western partners such as Turkey and Algeria reportedly engaged in parallel counter-terrorism co-operation, which however remains poorly legible to foreign observers). The EU has followed suit, with a generous package of approximately EUR 30 million to support Tunisia's security sector with equipment and training, targeting more specifically Tunisia's counter-terrorism law enforcement apparatus.

These efforts have led to the adoption of a comprehensive anti-terrorism law in 2015, of a Tunisian counter-terrorism strategy in 2017, and of a national Commission to Fight Terrorism. This institution, which reports directly to the President, the Tunisian Security Council, and the Parliament, is in charge of the implementation and monitoring of the counter-terrorism strategy, and is considered the main body oversighting the P/CVE agenda in Tunisia.

At the same time, the rise of irregular migration flows from Tunisia to Europe, and the fear (evoked in interviews, albeit poorly substantiated empirically) that this may increase the EU's vulnerability to terrorism, has led the EU to increasingly focus its security co-operation with Tunisia on land and sea borders. Today, the EU and its member states help train and equip the Tunisian Coast Guard and provide technologies of border surveillance. And while Tunisian authorities consider the EU as their main partner and sponsor, including in the security domain, international observers however fear that the progressive militarization of border areas may fuel the grievances and frustration of marginalized communities, among whom violent extremism is suspected to arise. The growing emphasis of EU co-operation with Tunisia on countering irregular migration raises concern among Tunisian stakeholders. It is seen as prioritizing the EU agenda to the detriment of local ownership. Furthermore, the clampdown on irregular cross-border flows exhibits a limited context-sensitivity: extralegal economies are crucial to the resilience of borderland communities, and help reduce the vulnerability to violent extremism (Meddeb 2020).

In recent years, however, as the (perceived) reduction of imminent terrorist threats on Tunisia has softened the sense of emergency, Tunisian authorities and their international partners have increasingly focused on longer-term approaches to fight violent extremism. These include framings and concepts, programmes and tools, inspired by P/CVE approaches, that involve not only the ministries of security and defence as Tunisian partners, but also those of social affairs, justice, and youth. The EU and the UN (with some overlapping between the two) are providing guidance and funding to support the update of the national counter-terrorism

strategy, trying to inject a human rights-based and whole-of-society approach. Within this framework, a specific emphasis is laid on the judicialization of counter-terrorism response, on preventative measures, and on the inclusion of civil society, the private sector, and academia. The EU is also sponsoring small-scale pilot projects on the social rehabilitation of incarcerated convicts for terrorism, and on youth engagement. Several NGOs, both local and international, have proved eager to launch P/CVE initiatives, although critics contend that in some cases this is an adjustment or mere re-hatting of previously existing projects to intercept the new funding made available by Western donors. Most importantly, the EU is providing a substantial support to the Tunisian educational sector, which is considered – even if not explicitly earmarked – as contributing to preventing violent extremism. Yet EU efforts to curb migration from Tunisia raises question of policy coherence, given the limited prospects of skilled labour to find fulfilling job opportunities in the country.

EU officers on the ground suggest that the impact of EU P/CVE actions could considerably benefit from a greater engagement with actors in the Tunisian religious field, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs and religious leaders. Training focusing on communication skills is seen as a valuable tool to spread counter-narratives and support moderate voices. Yet the fragmentation of Tunisia's religious field makes it hard to identify valuable partners without fuelling feelings of exclusion, stigmatization, and polarizations, suggesting that the EU should pay a special attention to context and conflict sensitivity in case it decided to increase its footprint in this domain.

Overall, the EU claims to attach a considerable importance to P/CVE action and goals in Tunisia. On paper, P/CVE features alongside the EU's cross-cutting priorities in the country, alongside gender mainstreaming and human rights. In practice, though, the EU appears to lack the conceptual and financial resources to bridge the intention–implementation gap. Most EU resources in Tunisia are invested in traditional security co-operation and counter-terrorism. And while the EU's considerable investments in other more 'social' domains, such as youth, education, and development, are considered as supportive of the EU's P/CVE agenda, there is a lack of a convincing theory of change and assessment tools to back up this claim.

Cross-case regional analysis

The place of P/CVE in EU strategies towards the Maghreb and the Sahel

The concept of violent extremism is exposed to a significant degree of politicization and ambiguity. In both the Maghreb and the Sahel, its use tends to express more the connotative (e.g. denigratory, dismissive, stigmatizing) intentions of the speaker rather than denotative characteristics that would allow to easily identify common markers of the designated object. De facto, however, both local actors and international interveners in the Maghreb and the Sahel employ the notion of 'violent extremist' to implicitly designate the members and sympathizers of non-state armed actors that are or (are) claim(ed) to be affiliated to transnational terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, whose franchises in the region are not in short supply.

For the EU, resorting to the lexicon of violent extremism can be seen as a case of constructive ambiguity (Byers 2020) that serves the purpose of intervening in a sensitive

domain without taking sides in the intricacies of complex domestic matters that more cumbersome designations entail. This very ambiguity grants considerable room for manoeuvre to EU actors in the field: it enables EU Delegations and CSDP missions to adapt to local contexts and tailor responses that are more attuned to local needs and demands. This flexibility, however, may end up leaving a disproportionate responsibility on the shoulders of individual officers' proactiveness, while the high institutional turn-over hampers the sustainability of the initiatives and partnerships undertaken. As a result, with limited political and technical guidance reportedly coming from Brussels, EU officers in the Maghreb and the Sahel with a P/CVE responsibility are often eager to follow more experienced actors in this domain: first and foremost, the UN (UNDP and UN Missions in first place), but also EU member states (and former member states) such as France and, chiefly, the UK, which first adopted the terminology of violent extremism and the relevant policy and preventative tools (Kundnani and Hayes 2018).

The reluctance of the EU to take a driving seat in designing and co-ordinating P/CVE efforts in the region may also be connected to EU's endeavour to respect and uphold local ownership. The EU seems more preoccupied than other international P/CVE partners with the risk of being seen as imposing its own templates, priorities, and policies. The uneasy coexistence between the promotion of a P/CVE agenda in foreign policy and the scrupulous respect of local ownership has contributed to generating problematic outcomes. Policymakers in the Maghreb and the Sahel generally demonstrate a limited buy-in for P/CVE approaches, while more traditional and security-heavy counter-terrorism tools and doctrines are often preferred and therefore in high demand.

This type of co-operation, though, has often led the EU to disproportionately rely on unpalatable partners that leverage the role of gatekeepers of security-related policies in third countries. In particular, the EU has considerably stepped up its co-operation with key stakeholders in the security sectors in the Maghreb and the Sahel, including most notably the local ministries of interior and defence. These institutions were widely considered in need of radical reforms in the aftermath of the institutional crises that swept both the Maghreb and the Sahel in 2011–2012. Yet the prioritization of a P/CVE agenda has led the EU to reconsider its preferences, and to give precedence to co-operation over transformation. As a result, the law enforcement and repressive apparatuses of countries in the Maghreb and the Sahel have been progressively shielded from the ambitious plans of liberal reforms that were originally envisioned.

This outcome is hardly fortuitous. Rather, it can be seen as part of the broader EU shift towards prioritizing stability more than institutional change in the (enlarged) neighbourhood. With the increasing volatility of the EU's strategic environment and the rise of transnational flows perceived as threatening, including violent extremism, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was revised in 2015 to single out 'stabilisation as its main political priority' (EU Commission and HRVP 2015, 2). One year later, the European Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy highlighted stabilization among the goals of its comprehensive approach to security (EEAS 2016). In parallel, many observers have pointed out a significant scale down of the EU's normative commitment to promote and export liberal values, norms, and institutions.

The Maghreb and the Sahel are no exception to this trend (Raineri and Strazzari 2019). While the ENP is especially relevant in the case of the Maghreb, in the Sahel stabilization is

portrayed as the strategy to bridge the gap between security and development, the dimensions that frame the EU Sahel Strategy (EEAS 2011). Accordingly, EU officers in these regions eagerly recognize that the EU P/CVE action should be viewed in the framework of, and concurring to, the broader strategic objective of promoting the stabilization of the target country (and of harmonizing security and development in the case of the Sahel). Yet it remains questionable whether the prioritization of stability at all costs is actually consistent with the overall goal of tackling violent extremism, including its long-term and structural drivers.

The EU has arguably tried to navigate these tensions by adopting a posture that belongs to its already tested foreign policy repertoire. It has offered third countries in the Maghreb and the Sahel to help shepherd, accompany, shape, and fund the drafting and adoption of national security strategies addressing the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism. The EU has considerably invested in such processes in Tunisia, Niger, Mali, and Libya (the EU footprint has been less pronounced in Morocco and Algeria, where sovereign authority has undergone distinct domestic trajectories, and already possessed national counter-terrorism strategies as a legacy of their own domestic trajectories).

As a general rule, such strategies are conceptualized and labelled as counter-terrorism strategies, rather than P/CVE strategies. Mali and Niger, however, have also adopted national P/CVE strategies, which run alongside counter-terrorism; yet the influence of the EU over the processes that have led to the adoption of P/CVE strategies in Mali and Niger has been reportedly lower than that of other international stakeholders, namely the G5 Sahel in the case of Mali, and the US in the case of Niger. While stimulating and supporting the adoption (or update) of national counter-terrorism strategies in Tunisia, Niger, Mali, and Libya, the EU has especially encouraged its partners to uphold some common principles. The substantial uniformity of the latter across the cases herein explored is indicative of a consistent EU approach to the matter. These principles include:

1. The judicialization of the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. This implies a special emphasis on the need to adopt the legal instruments and procedures to effectively investigate, prosecute, sanction, and deter terrorism and violent extremism. Such instruments are both domestic and linked to regional and international co-operation frameworks. Interestingly, by anchoring law enforcement to a legal and institutional framework, this approach casts a bridge between securitization and good governance, and stabilization and state-building;

2. The involvement of civil society. Often labelled 'whole-of-society', this approach stems from the assumptions that marginalization is one of the key drivers of violent extremism, and that civil society actors may be better placed than state institution to tackle these phenomena. The involvement of civil society is encouraged, at least, in the design phase of counter-terrorism and P/CVE strategies, by fostering social participation and outreach so as to generate inputs and maximize buy-in. In a more ambitious version, civil society organizations are also invited to contribute to the implementation phase of national counter-terrorism strategies, for instance by propagating alternative narratives, engaging in dialogues, and helping spot early warning signals of radicalization. In these cases, however, critics contend that civil society actors contributing to counter-terrorism

activities may end up being seen as (indirect) state agents, or intermediaries, thereby eroding part of their legitimacy;

3. The focus on 'root causes'. In the discussions leading to the adoption of national counter-terrorism strategies in the region, the EU has reportedly stressed that repressive measures alone are unlikely to succeed, unless they are accompanied by preventative measures to tackle the root causes of terrorism. In practice, however, the EU equates prevention to the provision of job opportunities (and education, in the Maghreb), targeting in particular marginalized milieus.

These are the principles that EU partner countries in the Maghreb and the Sahel are encouraged to endorse in their respective counter-terrorism strategies. They are broadly inspired by the EU's own counter-terrorism strategy (EU Council 2005). In spite of their common blueprint, though, they point in different directions and implicitly put forward different underlying narratives of violent extremism, its causes, and its responses.
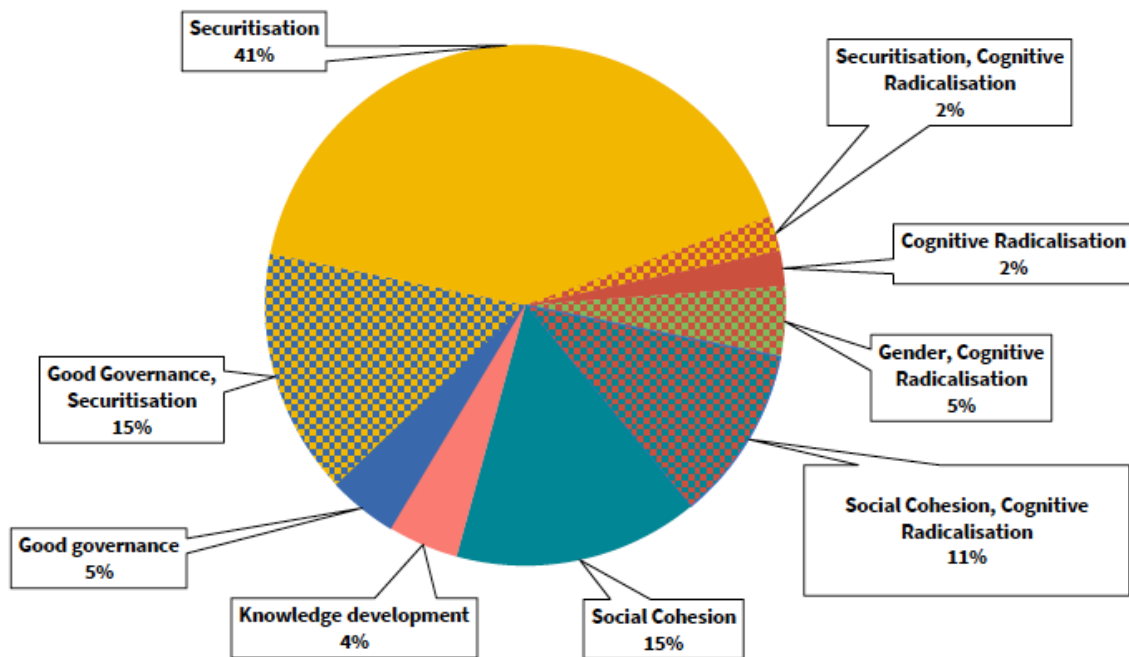
As security concerns are privileged, the EU appears to privilege a counter-terrorism policy model inspired by a template of criminal justice, yet militaristic tones inspired by the American model of the war on terror also transpire. The hesitations between repressive, reparative, and preventative approaches suggest that the EU lacks a comprehensive and coherent theory of change with regard to violent extremism. Other international P/CVE stakeholders, and chiefly the UN, have invested considerable resources in large-scale research programmes and fine-grained conflict analyses to explain the rise of violent extremism, identify its key drivers, and design well calibrated responses. EU investment in this domain appears instead limited, fragmented, and ultimately patchy. This makes it hard to translate the EU-sponsored national counter-terrorism strategies of Maghrebi and Sahelian countries into concrete policies, programmes, and projects to tackle violent extremism in an effective and measurable way.

Overall, then, the EU approach to P/CVE policies, programmes, and actions in the Maghreb and the Sahel is seen as one that combines, albeit somewhat haphazardly, a high degree of political prioritization, in theory, with limited tools (blueprints, strategies, best practices, theory of change, expertise, etc.) to put them in practice. In the background, cumbersome normative commitments push the EU to try and differentiate its approach from that of other international actors intervening in P/CVE, and most notably from the American approach to the war on terror, yet the lack of clear definitions and policy templates makes this endeavour challenging. These observations highlight a considerable intention–implementation gap – a finding that links P/CVE to other domains of EU foreign action where security is at stake (Bøås and Rieker 2019).

P/CVE narratives in EU programmes and projects targeting the Maghreb and the Sahel

The analysis of the specific programmes and projects sponsored by the EU contributes to identifying the main narratives that permeate EU P/CVE action in the Maghreb and the Sahel. It clearly shows that securitization is the predominant framework through which the EU interprets and addresses violent extremism in these regions: almost 60% of the EU-sponsored P/CVE programmes and projects implemented in the Maghreb and the Sahel are underpinned by a strong securitization narrative.

NARRATIVE PREVALENCE

Securitisation 41%

Securitisation, Cognitive Radicalisation 2%

Cognitive Radicalisation 2%

Gender, Cognitive Radicalisation 5%

Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation 11%

Good Governance, Securitisation 15%

Good governance 5%

Knowledge development 4%

Social Cohesion 15%

NARRATIVES – GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Algeria · Libya · Mali · Morocco · Niger · Tunisia · Nord Africa · Sahel · Cross-regional: Maghreb + Sahel · Global
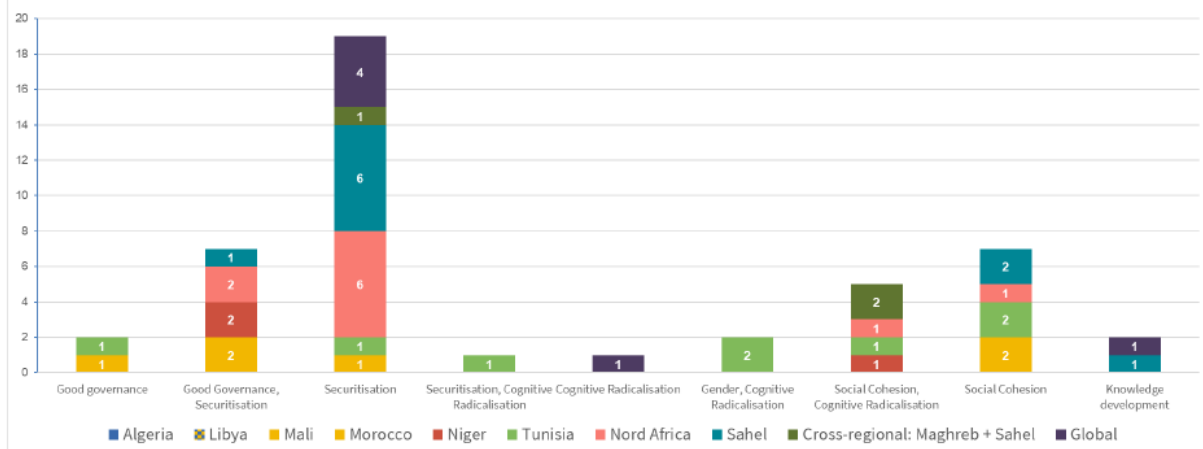
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION – NARRATIVES

Good governance · Good Governance, Securitisation · Securitisation · Securitisation, Cognitive Radicalisation · Cognitive Radicalisation · Gender, Cognitive Radicalisation · Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation · Social Cohesion · Knowledge development
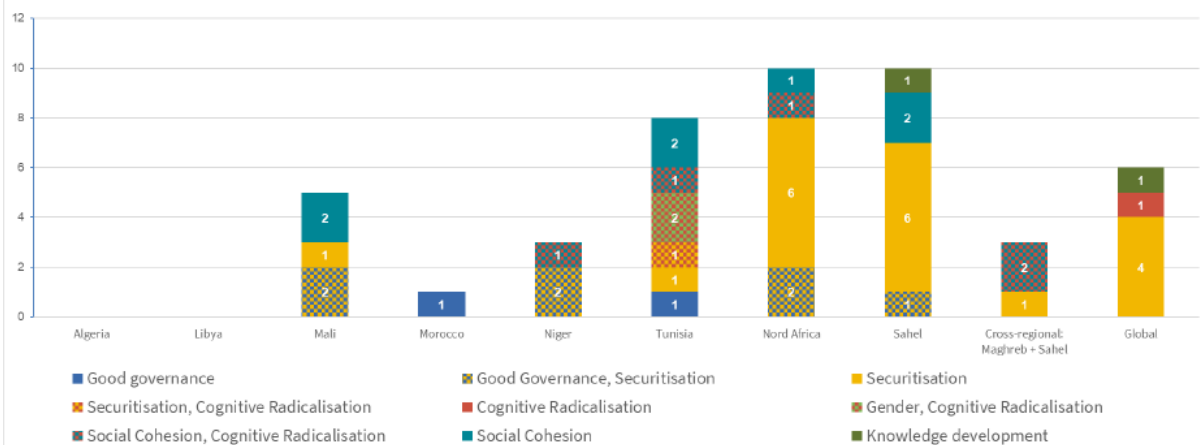
One could question whether these results are influenced by sampling choices. It is true that the sample is based on information retrieved from EU databases and funding tools – CT-Morse, IcSP, and EUTF – in which security and stability objectives are predominant, while programmes and projects sponsored through more traditional development instruments – such as the European Development Fund (EDF) – are not included. However, this choice mirrors the views of EU officers themselves, who confirm that IcSP and EUTF, alongside security-oriented partnerships, are the most important instruments that channel EU-sponsored P/CVE co-operation in the Maghreb and the Sahel. And the results herein exposed, which show a clear preponderance of security-related programmes and projects, are largely consistent with findings from interviews: many of the international P/CVE experts interviewed for this research, including some EU officers, share the view that the EU is de facto contributing a great deal to the securitization of the fight against violent extremism in the Maghreb and the Sahel. This is after all in line with EU overall strategies in these regions, in which stabilization stands out, as well as with the demands coming from local state partners.

In a few cases (seven programmes and projects – i.e. 15% of the sample), the securitization narrative coexists with (and is arguably tempered by) a parallel emphasis on good governance. This intersection includes the programmes and projects through which the EU seeks to implement its normative and strategic commitment to the judicialization and institutional anchoring of the counter-terrorism strategies of partner countries. Concretely, such an endeavour is put in practice through, for instance, human rights training targeting the security sector and/or dialogue sessions to build the confidence between law enforcement apparatuses and vulnerable populations.

In the majority of cases, however, securitization is the *only* narrative that transpires from EU-sponsored P/CVE initiatives in the region, with no additional or alternative narratives that could reasonably be detected – 19 of the programmes and projects in the sample fall in this category, representing 41% of the overall sample. Even more strikingly, programmes and projects with a clear and exclusive focus on securitization are the absolute majority in almost the totality of the country cases herein explored (with the significant exception of Tunisia).[5]

Some interesting commonalities emerge from the analysis of the EU-sponsored P/CVE programmes and projects with an emphasis on security. The overall consistency of the EU approach across the country cases and sub-regions suggests an emerging EU policy model: supporting (and shaping) the response to violent extremism by local criminal justice systems. To achieve this, the EU-sponsored P/CVE programmes and projects in the Maghreb and the Sahel typically consist of capacity building and information sharing initiatives, as the focus on practices makes clear (Bueger and Tholens 2021). Interestingly, the largest majority of the programmes and projects underpinned by a securitization narrative have a regional or global scope. Furthermore, many of them focus on border regions, particularly in the cases of Libya, Mali, Niger, and Tunisia. In some noteworthy cases, the involvement of CSPD missions in such projects – whether in terms of conceptualization or implementation – is also remarkable.

These observations highlight the overall coherence of the EU approach to P/CVE with the broader strategic framework of pursuing a regionalization of crises responses in the Sahara–

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[5] This result is obtained by counting regional and global projects in each country in which they are deployed.

Sahel (Lopez-Lucia 2019). At the same time, they may be indicative of a more problematic overlap in EU responses vis-à-vis a variety of cross-border flows perceived as threatening, including violent extremist (ideas and foreign fighters), but also irregular migration and smuggling. The conflation of these phenomena may contribute to attracting the attention, and funds, of European leaders, but it is unlikely to help devise responses that are nuanced and context-sensitive (Coolsaet 2016).

Social cohesion is second most common narrative underpinning EU P/CVE action in northwest Africa, with 12 programmes and projects overall, accounting for 26% of the sample. These programmes and projects highlight the need to tackle the marginalization of groups perceived as vulnerable to violent extremism. Measures to this end include the promotion of professional training and jobs absorption, democratic participation, and civil society engagement, so as to enhance social recognition and integration. Other projects instead lay a special emphasis on enhancing social cohesion by strengthening individuals' resilience to extremist propaganda, through the promotion of dialogue sessions and alternative narratives. In this case, lack of social cohesion and processes of cognitive radicalization are seen as equally important in explaining the rise of, and devising appropriate responses to, violent extremism. Both narratives coexist and support one another. Interestingly, some of the projects falling in this latter category target incarcerated convicts of violent extremism or defectors of violent extremist groups.

The prevalence of a narrative of social cohesion in EU-sponsored programmes and projects of P/CVE is not unexpected. In keeping with the EU's self-image of a 'force for good', it expresses the ambition to tackle the root causes of violent extremism by fostering development and social inclusion. The harmonization of security and development is part, after all, of the long-term goals of the EU Neighbourhood Policy and Sahel Strategy. Interestingly, however, many of the programmes and projects falling in this category are single country-focused, rather than regional or global. In particular, social cohesion narratives permeate a significant share of EU-sponsored P/CVE programmes and projects in Tunisia and Mali.
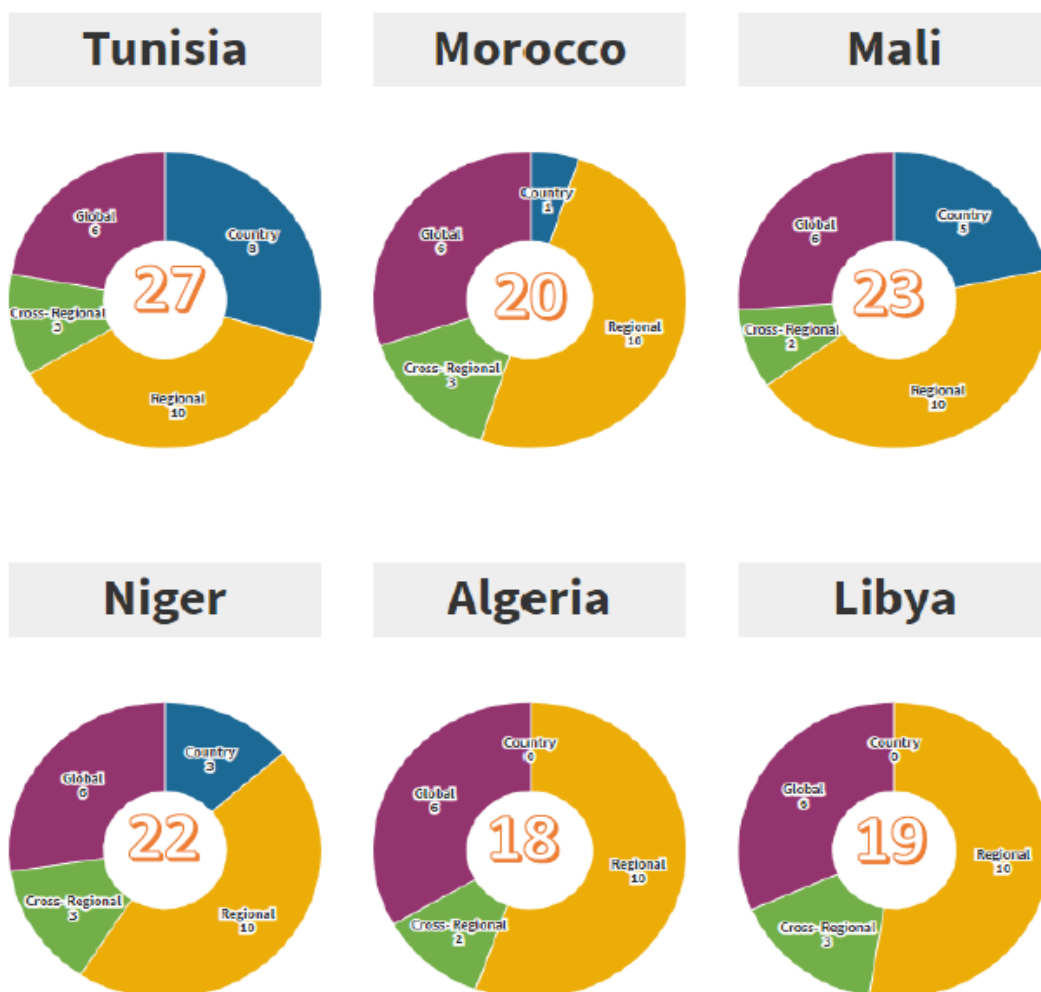
At the same time, the uneasy cohabitation of social cohesion and cognitive radicalization narratives within 11% of EU-sponsored programmes and projects of P/CVE suggests a hesitation in understanding the role and the interaction of structural-economic and individual-cognitive drivers of violent extremism. One the one hand, this appears to further highlight that the EU lacks a clear theory of change to understand, prevent, and counter violent extremism. On the other hand, it may underscore the reluctance of the EU to resolutely invest in a field that is perceived as politically sensitive. Cognitive radicalization is in fact among the most important narratives transpiring from P/CVE doctrines and strategies of Maghreb and Sahel countries. Religious training, surveillance, and disciplining of religious discourses are part of the P/CVE repertoire favoured by national authorities in Mali, Morocco, Niger, and Tunisia. EU support to these initiatives, however, has remained limited, and is generally not advertised. EU officers in the field concede that strengthening EU engagement with religious leaders, organizations, and discourses may be potentially impactful, but also perceived as inappropriate given the (self-?)perception of the EU as a non-Muslim organization. It is true that 20% of EU-sponsored P/CVE programmes and projects in the Maghreb and the Sahel contemplate cognitive radicalization, making of this framing the third most prevalent narrative of EU action in this
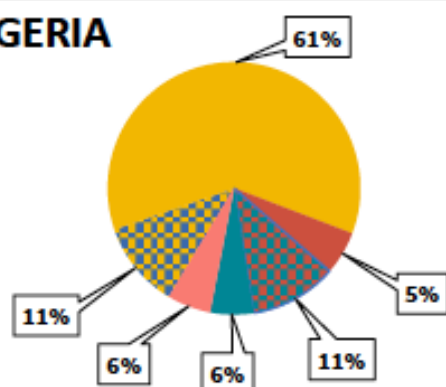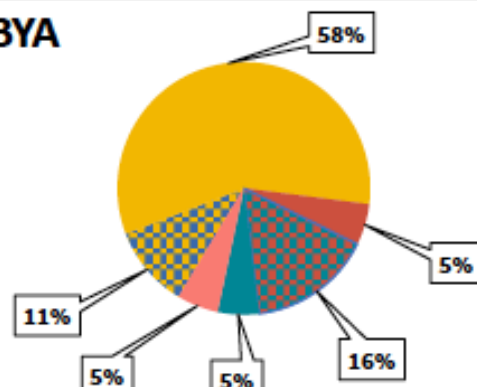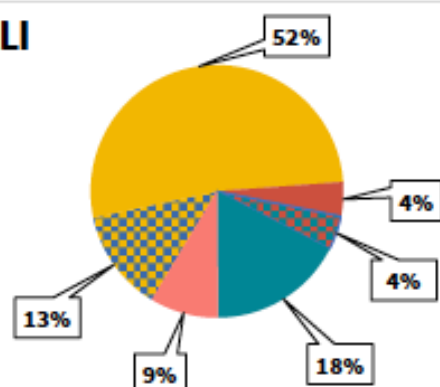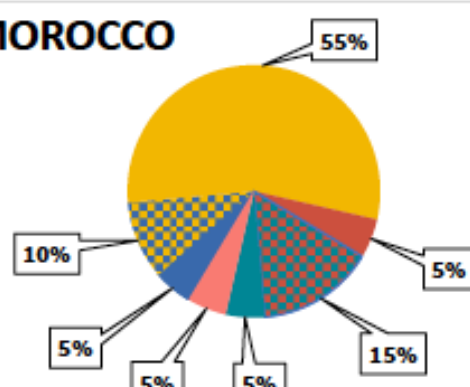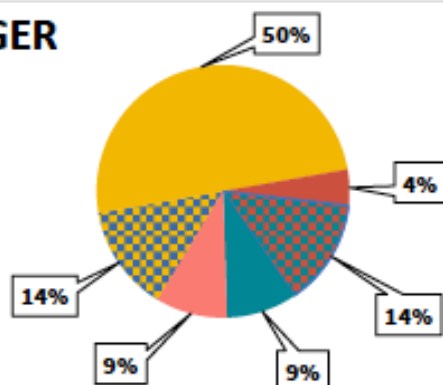
domain. Yet in the largest majority of the cases (all but one), cognitive radicalization is combined with (and arguably diluted into) other narratives, including social cohesion (11%), gender (5%), and securitization (2%).

Lastly, it is worth noting that a narrative stressing the gender component of P/CVE is hardly ever present in EU-sponsored programmes and projects in the Maghreb and the Sahel. While women are specifically mentioned in a handful of projects, only two initiatives can be reasonably seen as falling in this category: both take place in Tunisia, and in both cases gender is only one component of such projects, alongside cognitive radicalization. As the EU claims an ambition to mainstream gender across all its foreign action, this finding is particularly striking. It suggests that EU P/CVE initiatives in the Maghreb and the Sahel tend to overlook not only emerging evidence about the key role of women and gender policies in explaining and fighting violent extremism (El Taraboulsi-McCarthy and George 2020; Raineri 2020), but also explicit calls by the UN-sponsored (and EU-endorsed) Women Peace and Security Agenda (UN 2019) and Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (UN 2015) to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses tackling the drivers that lead women to join violent extremist groups, and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on their lives.

Ongoing Projects per Country
Geographic Spread Visualization

ALGERIA

- 61%
- 11%
- 6%
- 6%
- 11%
- 5%

LIBYA

- 58%
- 11%
- 5%
- 5%
- 16%
- 5%

MALI

- 52%
- 13%
- 9%
- 18%
- 4%
- 4%

MOROCCO

- 55%
- 10%
- 5%
- 5%
- 5%
- 15%
- 5%

NIGER

- 50%
- 14%
- 9%
- 9%
- 14%
- 4%

TUNISIA

- 44%
- 4%
- 4%
- 7%
- 7%
- 15
- 11%
- 4%
- 4%
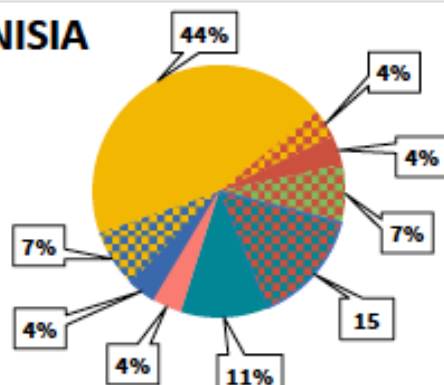
■ Knowledge development

■ Social Cohesion

■ Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation

■ Gender, Cognitive Radicalisation

■ Cognitive Radicalisation

■ Securitisation, Cognitive Radicalisation

■ Securitisation

■ Good Governance, Securitisation

■ Good governance

Conclusion: mind the (intention–implementation) gap

The EU claims that preventing and countering violent extremism is one of its main foreign action priorities in the Maghreb and the Sahel. Yet the analysis of EU P/CVE practices in these regions suggests that translating this priority into concrete – let alone effective – policies, programmes, and projects is more easily said than done. This tension prompts the observation that a considerable intention–implementation gap characterizes EU P/CVE action in the Maghreb and the Sahel.

Such an assessment corroborates the findings of previous studies on EU common foreign and security policy. In the specific case of P/CVE in north-western Africa, however, our analysis highlights at least two interlinked factors that can contribute to explaining this outcome. On the one hand, the EU appears to lack the necessary policy tools to transform high-flown strategic ambitions into actionable P/CVE initiatives on the ground. Best practices, guidelines, lessons learned, and theories of change to support EU actors in the field are in short supply, and often poorly designed. On the other hand, P/CVE has to coexist, and arguably compete, with a number of other priorities that EU foreign action pursues. EU delegations and CSDP missions in the Maghreb and the Sahel are hard-pressed by European audiences and policymakers to promote stabilization, foster development, inhibit irregular migration, counter terrorism, fight climate change, uphold human rights, mainstream gender, and ensure local ownership, to mention but a few. The EU appears to assume that these strategic and normative goals concur harmoniously with the objective of preventing and countering violent extremism. Yet this expectation is arguably influenced by reasons of political convenience and remains unconvincing. De facto, competing priorities may lead EU P/CVE action to be subordinated to, or diluted within, other strategic objectives.

The results of this approach to P/CVE are mixed, though. The lack of rigid top-down blueprints dictated from Brussels have made room for greater flexibility in the implementation of the EU P/CVE agenda in the Maghreb and the Sahel, with an overall favourable impact in terms of constructive engagement with local authorities, context sensitivity, and local ownership. At the same time, the reluctance of the EU to take the lead has enabled other stakeholders in the Maghreb and the Sahel, including both national authorities and international partners, to shape the P/CVE agenda in accordance with their own interests and views. Security-heavy approaches have thus tended to prevail.

The EU has significantly contributed to these dynamics. The examination of EU-sponsored P/CVE programmes and projects in the Maghreb and the Sahel suggests that the securitization narrative, with its emphasis on assistance that builds local capacities to repress violent extremism, disrupt its networks, and neutralize militants, is by far the predominant frame through which P/CVE initiatives are conceived of. By conflating counter-terrorism and P/CVE, the diagnostic and prevention dimensions of the latter tend to be obfuscated, to the advantage of short-term repressive measures. Within this narrative, however, one can discern a clear effort by the EU to avoid the 'global war on terror' policy model – that sees violent extremism mainly if not only as the enemy to be militarily defeated in war, possibly across borders – and embrace instead a 'criminal justice' model that sees a problem of law enforcement and judicial system effectiveness.

Our analysis has highlighted the relative weakness of other narratives, whose deployment may compensate and complement the dominant repressive frame and dispel the perception that much of what falls under P/CVE is not much more than a cosmetic variant of counter-terrorism.

Policy recommendations

While the comparative and national assessment of the effectiveness of P/CVE action remains problematic, some recommendations may contribute to devising a P/CVE agenda in the Maghreb and the Sahel that is evidence-based and coherent with the EU integrated approach to security. To this end, the EU should:

1) Secure the design, adoption, and sharing of mid-level policy tools on P/CVE (concepts, guidelines, best practices) that help translate broad strategic orientations into actionable initiatives on the ground in order to tackle the intention–implementation gap.

2) Enhance the institutionalization of P/CVE expertise within the EU, and facilitate the interactions among P/CVE experts based in Brussels, EU Delegations, and third countries in order to limit the impact of the frequent rotation of EU diplomats.

3) Develop a coherent and solid theory of change of violent extremism and prevention thereof, by investing in large-scale research programmes on the drivers of violent extremism and fine-grained conflict analyses of the contexts of P/CVE interventions.

4) Avoid the undue coalescence of P/CVE and other EU common foreign and security policy priorities: it may help raise attention and funds, but it is unlikely to help devise responses that are appropriate and nuanced.

5) Uphold the commitment to (and narrative of) good governance in P/CVE co-operation vis-à-vis the Maghreb and the Sahel in order to temper the emphasis on stabilization and short-term security that permeates EU strategies towards these regions.

6) Sharpen the focus on the gender dimension of violent extremism and prevention thereof to ensure a better alignment with the EU mainstreaming of gender and the UN framework under the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

7) Avoid embarking in P/CVE programmes that may be seen as interfering with religious discourses, practices, and organizations in the Maghreb and the Sahel, unless a scrupulous context- and conflict-sensitivity analysis is undertaken.

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Annex 1: P/CVE projects funded by the EU in the Maghreb and the Sahel, active in 2020.

Project name	Geographic Spread	Description	Starting date	End date	EU contribution	Duration (months)	Implementer	Beneficiaries	Narrative	Link
TUNISIA										
Ebni	Tunisia, regions of Beja, Bizerte, Sousse, Tunis	Prévenir la radicalisation par la réinsertion sociale et professionnelle des jeunes tunisiens sortant de prison ou de maison de rééducation. En accompagnant les jeunes pendant leur détention et à leur sortie, le projet leur ouvre de nouvelles perspectives et leur redonne confiance en eux.	01.03.2018	01.08.2021		42	L'association Agir Contre l'Exclusion (Face Tunisie)	Ministère des Affaires Sociales (CDIS), Ministère de la Justice (DGPR), Ministère de la Santé, Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports, Ministère de la Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi, Ministère de l'Éducation, ATFP : Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle	Social Cohesion	https://www.fondationface.org/projet/ebni- prevenir-la-radicalisation-par-linsertion/
Femmes et Jeunes pour la Paix	Tunisia	Promotion de l'idée de relier les femmes et les jeunes à la sécurité et à la paix dans le débat public sur la question de la prévention de l'extrémisme violent en Tunisie et du risque de radicalisation. Augmenter les capacités des femmes et des jeunes d'être vecteur, pour le changement positif, dans leurs communautés pour en être des acteurs de consolidation de la paix et de la stabilité en Tunisie.	01.02.2018	01.01.2021	€ 320 000	36	Helpcode and DH (Institut du Développement Humain)	Les réseaux et les groupes existants des femmes au niveau local; les élèves, le staff scolaire de 12 lycées et collèges et les professeurs des universités bénéficient d'échanges avec les universités italiennes.	Gender, Cognitive Radicalisation	https://helpcode.ch/fr_ch/en-tunisie-la-paix-passe- par-leducation-des-jeunes
TAWASSOL	Tunisia	Focus on incarcerated convicts, people who have been convicted for crimes of terrorism or violent extremism. The idea is to rehabilitate those convicts of category 3 (the least dangerous) and reinsert them into society.			€ 2 000 000			The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Social Affairs, the Ministry for Youth, ex-combattants étrangers détenus	Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation	
Programme d'appui à la réforme du secteur de la sécurité (PARSS)	Tunisia	To reform and modernise the internal security forces in accordance with international standards and human rights;To support the technical and operational restructuring and strengthening of State services whose mandate is to secure land borders in view of fighting transnational organised crime, including terrorism; To strengthen and modernise the intelligence services' research, management and informational analysis capacities of the MoI and other national institutions tackling terrorism to enhance the effectiveness of internal security.	2017		€ 23 000 000	38	Tunisian MoI, Human Dynamics		Securitisation	https://www.humandynamics.org/en/project/parms s
Promouvoir la participation sociale, économique et politique des jeunes marginalisés dans les zones les plus touchées par le phénomène de l'extrémisme violent en Tunisie.	Tunisia, regions Kasserine, Tataouine, Manouba	L'action vise à promouvoir la participation et l'inclusion sociale, économique et politique des jeunes marginalisés issus des trois zones les plus touchées par le phénomène de la radicalisation et de lextrémisme violent en Tunisie, à savoir : Douar Hicher, Kasserine et Médenine-Tataouine.	2018	2021	€ 800 000	36	International Alert	La société civile locale et en particulier les associations de jeunes et de femmes; Les médias locaux et nationaux : radios, presse écrite et correspondants nationaux ; Des ONG nationales et internationales travaillant sur ces thématiques ; Les autorités locales civiles et	Social Cohesion	http://d-portal.org/q.html?aid=XI-IATI-EC_FPI-2017/393-255
MEDIATE	Tunisia	1. Diagnostiquer les signaux faibles et les signaux forts du radicalisme violent parmi les jeunes; mieux comprendre les indicateurs de l'engagement et les indicateurs du désengagement dans l'extrémisme violent. 2. Aider les parents et les mères au foyer à l'usage des systèmes d'alerte pour prévenir les dérives violentes ou sectaires des enfants. 3. Préparer les acteurs de la société civile au rôle de « médiateurs civiques » et exercer la médiation civique pour prévenir et réduire les noyaux	01.02.2018	01.01.2020			Applied Social Sciences Forum, The Tunisian Scout Organization, TUNARUZ, Tunisia Plus Association, The Center for Digital Research in Sfax, The Tunisian League for Citizenship, Youth and	Les praticiens du ministère de l'éducation, Ministère de la Femme, de la famille et de l'enfance et le ministère des affaires sociales. Prédicatrices et imams	Cognitive Radicalisation, Securitisation	http://mediate.tn/2018/?lang=en
Programme d'appui à la réforme de la justice 2 (PARJ 2)	Tunisia	Appui à la mise en œuvre effective des principes constitutionnels et des priorités nationales relatifs à l'indépendance de la	2015	2020	€ 15 000 000	N/A	SOFRECO	Magistrats, avocats et auxiliaires de la justice	Good governance	http://www.parj.gov.tn/?fbclid=IwAR2WdeXt0wNox

Project	Country	Description	Start	End	Budget	Months	Implementer	Beneficiaries	Theme	Link
		justice, au procès équitable et traitement des détenus. Le project continue avec la troisième phase (PARJ 3, 60 millions, 2020-2023).								DpwjuYdlVrcjTjMHKBO0 Vl6KhFYRx22UyFHWxwk O2 wbRGY
SALAM prévenir l'extrémisme violent en Tunisie : une approche basée sur les droits humains et la consolidation de la paix	Tunisia	SALAM s'article également sur 5 principaux axes à savoir : Le renforcement l'OPEV-Tunisie comme plateforme de dialogue et de propositions pour la SC tunisienne en matière de politiques publiques visant l'extrémisme violent (EV) ; La contribution au développement des connaissances sur les causes profondes de l'EV ; La promotion de la participation des femmes et des jeunes dans la formulation des politiques publiques en PEV, selon les principes de la recevabilité et de la bonne gouvernance ; La contribution au renforcement de la résilience des jeunes aux récits extrémistes violents ; La mise en place d'une stratégie pour la PEV dans le milieu carcéral.	2017	2020	€ 3 200 000		Associacion NOVACT	Les organisations de la société civile; Femmes et jeunes	Cognitive Radicalisation, Gender	https://novact.org/2018/ 05/tunopev-aas-etudediagnostique/?lang =en
MOROCCO										
Programme d'appui sectoriel a la réforme de la justice	Morocco	Amélioration du fonctionnement de la justice au Maroc sur la base des outils développés par la Commission européenne pour l'efficacité de la justice	2018	2020	€ 10 000 000	24	Sofreco	Le Ministère de la Justice, le Conseil Supérieur du Pouvoir Judiciaire, les tribunaux marocains	Good Governance	http://www.sofreco.com /FR/formSelectReferenc e.a wp?P1=FR_D024_ZXXX_ PXXXXX_BXXX_L001&P2 =pro
REGIONAL: NORTH AFRICA										
Battlefield evidence/Stability policing	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	The overall objective of the project is to improve the collection of Foreign Terrorist Fighter evidence from the battlefield environment in the conflict zones where military forces play an active role in the collection of actionable information and evidence of terrorism and criminal violations, including war crimes.	22.12.20 17	21.12.20 20	€ 686 809	36			Securitisation	
Counter-Terrorism Training and Strengthening Community Resilience Against Violent Extremism	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	This programmes aims to help address drivers and threats from terrorism in several countries in the Middle East and North Africa by strengthening the CT capacity of state actors and by strengthening community resilience against violent extremism.		01.12.20 20	€ 17 000 000	36			Securitisation	
CT MENA	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	The project concerns capacity building of League of Arab States, CT Technical Assistance Facility, Pilot Projects in selected countries. It aims to build effective, rule-of-law compliant criminal justice systems against terrorism in MENA region and cut off terrorist funding.	19.10.20 16	18.10.20 20	€ 13 000 000	48	Expertise France (Partner: Civipol)	Police officers and judges; professionals from the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of the Interior; Arab Center for Joint Analysis of Threats	Good Governance, Securitisation	https://www.expertisefr ance.fr/fiche-projet?id=402280
EU MENA Law Enforcement Partnership on Countering Terrorism	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	This project provisionally aims to strengthen capacity of CT officials who will benefit from residential and European-based courses, exchanges, study visits and networking.	2015		€ 2 500 000	24	CEPOL		Securitisation	
Euromed Police IV	WP6 conutries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	The overall objective of the Euromed Police IV project is to increase citizens' security across the Euro-Mediterranean area through the strengthening of cooperation on security issues between the Southern Mediterranean partner countries, as well as between these countries and the EU Member States.	01.02.20 16	01.01.20 20	€ 4 800 000	48	Euromed Police Mobility Scheme, Cepol + Relevant partners: The mandated Body of the French Ministry of Interior; DCI, the	Police, Intelligence, Security Forces, ENI SPC, EU MS	Securitisation	https://www.britishcoun cil.org/partner/internatio nal -development/news-and-events/march-2018/Strengthening-Resilience-in-MENA +

						Directorate for International Cooperation of			https://www.britishcouncil.tn/en/about/jobs/research
Strengthening Resilience - MENA II	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	Strengthening resilience of young people and communities against violent extremist. As well as providing clarity around approaches that deliver resilience, the programme is expected to increase the resilience of young people in susceptible communities and increase the number of positive social, political and economic pathways. It will also provide: -a better understanding of susceptibility to violent extremism -effective communication strategies that provide an alternative to violent extremism -transformative impact through dissemination and influencing of governments, think tanks and multilateral institutions.	01.01.2018	01.01.2021	€ 11 000 000	36	British Council	Young people	Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation	https://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/international-development/news-and-events/march-2018/Strengthening-Resilience-in-MENA
Global project on strengthening the legal regime against Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) in Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	The overall objectives are firstly to strengthen the capacity of MENA and Balkan countries to prevent and fight terrorism, particularly taking into account the increasing flow of international recruits to terrorist organisations, including FTF. This phenomenon poses global and regional risks, and this proposal aims to address it through the provision of specialised training to enhance the national counter-terrorism legal frameworks of beneficiary countries to counter the FTF phenomenon in compliance with the rule of law. Secondly, to develop the capacity of criminal justice officials in MENA and Balkan countries to deal with specific legal aspects related to countering FTF at the national and regional levels. Thirdly, to enhance inter-institutional cooperation in encouraging a comprehensive whole-of-government approach, including at the policy-making level and with national parliaments. Finally, to enhance international, regional and sub-regional cooperation concerning specialised counter-terrorism aspects related to the FTF, between MENA, the Balkans	01.10.2016	01.10.2020	€ 5 000 000	48	UNODC	Criminal justice and law enforcement officials involved in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of terrorism cases. It will also reach to executive officials and legislators, legislators and policy makers, criminal justice officials, judicial police, judges and prosecutors.	Securitisation, Good governance	https://www.unodc.org/brussels/en/mena_ftf.html
EU/MENA Counter-Terrorism Training Partnership 2 (CEPOL CT 2)	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	Build and sustain institutional capacity in the partner countries' law enforcement services to prevent and prosecute terrorism offences. The aim is building substantive cooperation in law enforcement training in order to contribute to the international prevention of, and fight against, terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa.	01.12.2017	01.12.2020	€ 6 500 000	36	CEPOL	Police and other law enforcement specialists	Securitisation	http://inm-lex.ro/fisiere/d_2200/User%20Guide%20for%20Exchange%20Porgramme%20-%20CEPOL%20CT%202.docx
Interpol South "Sharaka"	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia	1. Prevent the travel of terrorists by increasing information exchange and data collection on issues related to organised crime, terrorism, human smuggling and trafficking of small arms and human beings using Interpol systems (including databases, the encrypted network and the specialised task forces). 2. Improve the the quality of analytical reports, for the beneficiary countries but also for Interpol, Europol, Eurojust and Frontex. 3. Make sure the target countries have the counter- terrorism expertise, equipment and skills they need.	01.05.2017	01.05.2020	€ 3 000 000	36	INTERPOL	Frontline officers at airports, seaports and national borders	Securitisation	https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Terrorism/Counter-terrorism-projects/Project-Sharaka

Young Mediterranean Voices	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Marocco, Tunisia	Democratic participation and civil society. The programme aimed to promote the culture of dialogue amongst youth and creates a shared understanding with their peers across the Mediterranean.	01.01.2018	01.06.2022	€ 3 290 000	42	Coordinated by the Anna Lindh Foundation, co-founded by the British Council, and developed in partnership with the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI), Friends of	Young people	Social Cohesion	https://youngmedvoices .org/ / https://www.britishcoun cil.jo/en/programmes/s ocie ty/young-mediterranean-voices#:~:text=What%20 is%20the%20%E2%80%9 CYo
MALI									
Programme d'Appui à la Normalisation et à la Résilience au Mali (PANORAMA)	Mali	Un programme à deux composantes: mettre en place un dispositif de gestion de crises et restaurer le lien de confiance avec la population civile. Il s'agit, en clair, de coordonner la transmission d'informations et l'action des forces de sécurité sous l'autorité du ministère de la Sécurité. A terme, le programme devra permettre d'instaurer un climat de confiance entre population et forces de sécurité.	2017		€ 12 000 000	36	CIVIPOL	Police nationale, Protection Civile, Gendarmerie nationale et Garde nationale.	Securitisation, Good Governance	https://www.maliweb.n et/insecurite/securite-panorama-corsec-gestion-crises-2175252.htmll https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/sites/eu etfa /files/t05-eutf-sah-ml-11-rev.pdf
Programme d'Appui au Renforcement de la Sécurité dans les régions de Mopti et de Gao et à la gestion des zones frontalières (PARSEC Mopti-Gao)	Mali, regions Mopti, Gao	Contribuer au renforcement de l'état de droit dans cette zone en permettant une présence accrue et effective des Forces des Sécurité maliennes.	01.08.2017	01.09.2020	€ 28 313 245		Expertise France	Police, gendarmerie, garde nationale, douanes, protection civile	Securitisation	https://rsr.akvo.org/en/ project/5897/
Programme d'actions à impact rapide pour la stabilisation des régions du Centre Mali	Mali, regions Ségou, Mopti	1. L'amélioration de la sécurité des populations et du contrôle du territoire, dans le respect de l'état de droit, par le biais de la sécurisation rapide des installations des forces de sécurité intérieure maliennes déployées ou en phase de déploiement. 2. Faciliter la bonne intégration de ses forces au sein de la population, en renforçant notamment le lien de confiance entre les populations et les forces de sécurité par le biais d'actions en faveur de la population locale.	2018	2021	€ 10 000 000	36	EUTF Gestion directe, PAGODA Convention de délégation	Autorités chargées de l'application des lois, autorités judiciaires et autorités en charge de la gestion des frontières. Gendarmerie, police, protection civile et garde nationale.	Securitisation, Good governance	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/sites/eue tfa /files/t05-eutf-sah-ml-11-rev.pdf
Appui au Développement Economique Local et à la prévention des conflits dans les régions de Tombouctou et Gao (ADEL)	Mali, régions Gao, Timbukt u	Cet objectif vise d'une part à contribuer au développement économique local des 42 communes cibles (23 dans la région de Tombouctou et 19 dans la région de Gao) par le financement de projets économiques locaux dans les domaines de l'agriculture, de l'élevage, de la pêche, de l'artisanat et de l'environnement.	01.04.2019		€ 13 000 000	36	LuxDev	Les élus, agents communaux et comités de gestion des services sociaux de	Social Cohesion	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/sites/eue tfa /files/final_t05-eutf-sah-ml-12_adel.pdf
Quick impact actions programme for the stabilization of the central regions of Mali	Mali, regions égou, Mopti	The overall objective of the Action is to contribute to the stabilisation of the area through the rapid support of Mali's efforts to strengthen its internal law enforcement.	01.06.2016	01.06.2022	€ 10 000 000	72			Social Cohesion	
NIGER									
Contrat relatif à la Reconstruction de l'Etat au Niger en complément du SBC II en préparation / Appui à la Justice, Sécurité et à la Gestion des Frontières au Niger	Niger, regions of Zinder, Agadez, Tahoua.	Objectif général: Aider à éradiquer la pauvreté, de promouvoir une croissance durable et inclusive et de consolider la gouvernance démocratique et économique, en ligne avec les axes 1 et 3 de la Stratégie Sahel de l'UE et l'Objectif de Développement Durable 16 "Paix, justice et institutions efficaces" qui a pour but de promouvoir l'avènement de sociétés pacifiques, l'accès de tous à la justice et des institutions	01.01.2017		€ 90 000 000		Appui Budgétaire + Appui Complémentaire (Gestion indirecte: Convention de Coopération Déléguée avec l'Agence Française de Développement – AFD et Gestion directe: Contrat de services avec Civipol)	Administrations régaliennes nigériennes	Good Governance, Securitisation	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/region/s ahe l-lake-chad/niger/contrat-relatif-la-reconstruction-de-letat-au-niger-en-complement-du_en

Mesure d'Aide Exceptionnelle en faveur d'un "Programme d'appui au traitement judiciaire et au processus de réintégration des ex-combattants de Boko Haram, ainsi qu'au dialogue communautaire dans les régions périphériques du Niger"	Niger	₁ Appui au traitement judiciaire et réintégration des ex-combattants de Boko Haram, ayant fait défection ou ayant été incarcérés. Il s'agit de contribuer à une réinsertion apaisée et durable des repentis et ex-détenus de Boko Haram dans les communautés locales par un dialogue entre l'Etat du Niger, les populations affectées et ces anciens membres de Boko Haram. ₂ Apaisement des tensions entre les communautés locales et en leur sein, dans les régions périphériques du nord-est du Niger, par la promotion du dialogue et la médiation. Il s'agit de prévenir les risques d'escalade violente au niveau intra et/ou intercommunautaire, en soutenant le dialogue entre les différents groupes dans les régions concernées, tout en favorisant l'intégration socio-économique des communautés vivant dans les zones isolées.	2018		€ 7 500 000	18	Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix (HACP)	èlus locaux, chefs traditionnels, organisations de la société civile locale, services techniques de base.	Cognitive radicalisation, Social Cohesion.	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/niger/43963/no de/43963_en
Contribuer à la stabilisation des communes frontalières des régions de Tillabéri et Tahoua au Niger	Niger	Objective: poser les bases d'une stabilisation à long terme des communes frontalières du Nord- Tillabéri et de Tahoua: 1. Renforcer la confiance entre forces de défense et de sécurité, autorités et populations, 2. Renforcer la cohésion verticale entre autorités civiles, coutumières et populations 3. Renforcer la cohésion horizontale inter et intra-communautaire pour minimiser certains éléments de vulnérabilité des populations ciblées à l'extrémisme violent et jetant les bases d'un processus de stabilisation de long terme dans les zones frontalières des régions de Tillabéri et Tahoua.				18	Search for Common Ground (Search) en concertation avec la Délégation de l'Union Européenne au Niger, Expertise France, Enabel et la Haute autorité pour la Consolidation de la Paix (HACP)	société civile, les autorités locales formelles et informelles, les forces de défense et de sécurité	Securitisation, Good governance	https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:9G11T0ANT58J:https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/hr/20201113/TDR%2520Baseline%2520IsCP_HRSM%2520Niger%2520Version%2520fran c%25CC%25A7aise.docx+&cd=1&hl=fr&ct=clnk&gl=it
REGIONAL: SAHEL										
Projet d'appui à la coordination régionale de la mise en œuvre de la Composante Police de la Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel (CRPG5 POLICE)	G5 countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	Renforcer les capacités opérationnelles de la Composante Police de la Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel en lui permettant de mener des actions contre le terrorisme et les crimes transnationaux dans le respect des concepts d'Etat de Droit ainsi que des droits de l'Homme	01.12.2020	01.05.2021	€ 2 000 000	18	Expertise France	CRPG5 POLICE, Expert Défense et Sécurité du SPG5	Securitisation, Good Governance.	https://rimtic.com/storage/app/public/documents/CRPG5%20TDR%20Charg%C3%A9%20de%20mission%20Composante%20Police_pub_1580572199.docx
Appui à la coopération régionale des pays du G5 Sahel et au Collège Sahélien de Sécurité	G5 countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	Ce programme contribuera à renforcer la sécurité dans le Sahel en appuyant la coopération régionale dans le cadre du G5 (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger et Tchad). Il permettra la poursuite des activités de formation du Collège Sahélien de Sécurité tout en offrant un forum de réflexion commun dans le cadre de la lutte contre le terrorisme, la grande criminalité et le trafic humain dans la région.	01.10.2016		€ 7 000 000	24	Civipol	G5 Sahel, et en particulier son Secrétariat Permanent; les Etats Membres du G5 Sahel et leur représentants (notamment les services d'application de la loi); la CEDEAO.	Securitisation	https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/t05-eutf-sah-reg-01_-_af_-_g5_sahel.pdf
Soutien à l'opérationnalisation de la Composante police de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel	G5 countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	L'objectif du projet CPG5 Mali est de consolider l'intégralité de la chaine pénale malienne en matière de terrorisme, de crime organisé transfrontalier, de crimes de guerre et de crimes contre l'humanité afin de renforcer la Composante police de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel et de permettre la construction de dossiers judiciaires solides aboutissant à des procès et des condamnations. Parallèlement, la judiciarisation des procédures et leur homogénéisation permettra de faire	01.12.2019	01.06.2021	€ 18 000 000	18	CIVIPOL	Police and other law enforcement specialists; Strategic criminal intelligence; Judicial police, judges and prosecutors.	Securitisation	https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2019/FR/C-2019-6032-1-FR-ANNEX-1-PART-1.PDF /

			Start	End	Budget (€)	Months	Implementing partner	Beneficiaries	Category	Links
		une distinction plus rapide entre des personnes présumées coupables et des personnes innocentées.								
GAR-SI SAHEL (Groupes d'Action Rapides – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel)	G5 countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	Le programme contribuera au renforcement des capacités opérationnelles des autorités nationales pour permettre un contrôle effectif du territoire et élargir l´action de l´État de droit à l´ensemble du Sahel en créant des unités policières robustes, flexibles, mobiles, multidisciplinaires et autosuffisantes qui permettent un contrôle adéquat du territoire.	15.01.20 18	13.11.20 21	€ 66 600 000	18	PAGODA avec Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP, Espagne) en tant que chef de file d'un Consortium d'Etats Membres (France,	Bénéficiaires directes: Gendarmeries nationales des paysbénéficiaires. Bénéficiaires finaux: les populations locales des zones de déploiement des Unités GAR-SI, notamment celles des zones plus isolées/reculées et transfrontalières; les groupes en situation de vulnérabilité à l'action des	Securitisation	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/region/s ahe l-lake-chad/regional/gar-si-sahel-groupes-daction-rapides-surveillance-et_en https://eutf.akvoapp.org /en/project/7372/#repo rt
Programme d'urgence pour la stabilisation des espaces frontaliers du G5 Sahel (PDU)	G5 countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	Améliorer les conditions de vie, la résilience et la cohésion sociale des populations vulnérables à travers notamment l'amélioration de l'accès à l'eau dans les régions les plus fragiles des pays du G5 Sahel.	2020	2022	€ 144 479 592,00	48	LUXDEV	- Les ménages vulnérables, économiquement affaiblis y compris les réfugiés et les déplacés - Les jeunes et la société civile de la jeunesse - Les femmes et jeunes filles	Social Cohesion	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/region/s ahe l-lake-chad/regional/program me-durgence-pour-la-stabilisation-des-espaces-frontaliers-du-g5_en / https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/sites/eue tfa
Programme d'Appui au G5 pour la Sécurité au Sahel (PAGS) Phase II	G5 countries: Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad	L'objectif global de l'action est de de contribuer à renforcer la sécurité des cinq Etats membres du G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger et Tchad), d'identifier les défis communs auxquels ils doivent faire face et les moyens d'y répondre dans une optique de coopération régionale	04.04.20 19	04.04.20 22	€ 10 000 000	36	CIVIPOL	Secrétariat Permanent du G5 SAHEL et autres organes du G5 SAHEL Forces de Sécurité Intérieure des 5 pays du G5 SAHEL Population du G5 SAHEL	Securitisation	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/region/s ahe l-lake-chad/regional/program me-dappui-au-g5-pour-la-securite-au-sahel-pags-phase-ii_en
Support to the strengthening of police information systems in the broader West Africa region (WAPIS)	West Africa	This programme aims to increase the ability of G5 countries to combat organised crime, trafficking and terrorism, by building or strengthening the ability of national administrations to collect, centralise, manage and share data provided by the police	30.10.20 16		€ 5 000 000	24	PAGODA Grant with INTERPOL, ECOWAS	Law enforcement authorities and officers (police, gendarmerie, customs, etc)	Securitisation	https://ec.europa.eu/tru stfundforafrica/sites/eue tfa /files/t05-eutf-sah-reg-03.pdf
Mesure d'aide exceptionnelle «Programme de l'Union européenne de Prévention de l'Extrémisme Violent en Afrique de l'Ouest et dans la région du Lac Tchad, 2ème phase (PPREV-UE 2)»	West Africa	The proposed action consists of two components: on the one hand, the effective dissemination of existing knowledge about radicalisation and violent extremism to relevant stakeholders remains a priority. The focus will be less on producing more research and more on fostering a joint understanding between practitioners, policy and decision-makers on how best to address the phenomenon in specific local contexts. Thus activities may include early warning, mapping, analysis as well as studies training	2018	2020	€ 4 000 000	18	FPI 2	Organismes décideurs à tous les niveaux – dont les délégations de l'UE, gouvernements, autorités locales et bailleurs de fonds	Knowledge development	https://ec.europa.eu/tra nsparency/regdoc/rep/3 /20 17/FR/C-2017-7282-F1-FR-ANNEX-1-PART-1.PDF + http://europeanmemora nda.cabinetoffice.gov.uk /fil es/2019/01/Staff_Worki ng_Document.pdf
Organised Crime: West African Response to Money laundering and the financing of terrorism (OCWAR– M)	West Africa	1. The overall objective is the reduction of money laundering (ML) and the financing of terrorism (TF) in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) The specific objective of the project is for the ''Groupe Intergouvernemental d'Action contre le Blanchiment d'Argent'' (GIABA) and ECOWAS member states to adopt and implement effectively AML/CFT measures of acceptable international standards in order to improve the regional operational capacity. 2. European Union finances technical cooperation projects to help	01.02.20 19	01.01.20 23	€ 6 750 000	35	EXPERTISE FRANCE and GIABA	Prosecution authorities, financial institutions, civil society, banks and NGOs which have a role to play in detecting and reporting illicit financial flows.	Securitisation	https://www.expertisefr ance.fr/fiche-projet?id=774453

		countries improve their tools to fight against illicit financial flows							
PROGRAMME GESTION ET Sécurité aux frontières dans le liptako-gourma	Liptako-Gourma (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger)	Renforcer la résilience des communautés frontalières face aux conflits, à la violence armée et à l'extrémisme violent dans le Liptako-Gourma: La facilitation de processus endogènes d'identification des besoins et priorités de sécurité de la communauté, par ses membres ; L'appui à la mise en œuvre des éléments de réponses définis localement dans le cadre de cette vision endogène de la sécurité humaine au niveau communautaire ; Le renforcement des capacités locales de prévention, gestion pacifique et médiation des conflits, notamment en travaillant avec les mécanismes locaux existants, mais aussi avec les radios locales et communautaires, les organisations féminines et les associations de jeunes ; L'éducation aux risques liés aux armes légères et de petit calibre et aux	01.12.2018			18	Danish Demining Group (Groupe Danois de Déminage) DDG avec l'Autorité de Développement intégré des Etats du Liptako- Gourma (ALG), l'ONG Danoise International Media Support, la Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel.	Commissions et Direction Nationales des Frontières, Commissions nationales chargées de la lutte contre la prolifération des armes légères et de petit calibre (CNLPAL Burkina Faso, CNLPAL Mali, CNCCAI Niger), ainsi que par les autorités déconcentrées aux niveaux régional et local (Gouvernorats, Hauts Commissariats, Préfectures et Mairies).	Social Cohesion	https://danishdemining group.dk/media/530791 4/ra pport-annuel-2018-ddg-sahel.pdf
CROSS-REGIONAL (Maghreb+Sahel)									
CT INFLOW	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	To support partner countries in Africa and the Middle East (and possibly other countries and international organisations, such as AFRIPOL, League of Arab States if funding allows), in line with the EU political dialogues, to improve the best practices for the exchange of information, cross-border investigations and prosecutions, in particular of foreign terrorist fighters and individuals suspected of planning or carrying out terrorist offences.	01.04.2020	01.03.2024	€ 7 500 000	48	CEPOL	Countries and international organisations	Securitisation	https://www.cepol.euro pa.eu/projects/ctinflow
(Pilot Project on) Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism in the Sahel- Maghreb Region	WP6 countries concerned: Libya, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	The project runs for four years and promotes inclusive and credible deradicalisation activities in the Sahel-Maghreb region through the development of more responsive and inclusive societies.	01.07.2015	01.07.2020	€ 5 000 000	60	UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) together with 83 civil society associations and non-profit organisations	20-25 civil society actors (young leaders, schools, art, theatre, music, culture, social media channels, journalist unions, local radios, religious groups, networks of associations and CSOs)/Targets: NGOs, victims of terrorism, media, cultural associations, women and youth organisations	Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation	https://www.euneigh bours.eu/en/south/st ay-informed/projects/pil ot-project-countering-radicalization-and-violent-extremism-sahel

Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism in the Sahel-Maghreb Region	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia.	1 Contribute to strengthening the capacities of local civil society actors (including youth, media, religious groups, former slaves) to build resilience within society to withstand radicalisation to violence. 2 Test and evaluate the actions implemented by civil society actors in order to identify good practices and lessons learned in conflict mitigation and counter violent extremism that trigger	01.07.20 15	01.07.20 20	€ 5 000 000	60	UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) together with 83 civil society associations and non-profit organisations	Direct financial support to 20-25 civil society actors through actions for conflict mitigation and counter violent extremism (young leaders, schools, art, theatre, music, culture, social media channels, journalist unions, local radios, religious groups, networks of associations and CSOs)	Social Cohesion, Cognitive Radicalisation	http://www.unicri.it/topics/counter_terrorism/count ering_violent_extremism _sahel_maghreb
GLOBAL										
CFT Global	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	The purpose of this intervention is to counter the finance of Terrorism-Anti Money Laundering in the MENA+Asia region.	25.09.20 17	25.09.20 21	€ 16 000 000	48			Securitisation	
Counter-Terrorism Monitoring, Reporting and Support Mechanism phase II (CT MORSE II)	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	Support national capacities to combat terrorism and organised crime and reinforce regional cooperation	01.06.20 19	01.11.20 24	€ 3 490 000	N/A	Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)	-	Securitisation	http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CT-Sahel-Final-review-EN- Dec-2015.pdf + https://www firstlinepractitioners com/cve-
CT Travel	WP6 countries concered: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	1. Assist States building their detection capabilities to counter terrorist offences and other serious crimes by using advance passenger information (API), passenger name record (PNR), and other passenger data, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019). 2. Assist Member States in legislative, operational, transport industry engagement, and technical areas. This includes the donation and deployment of the UN goTravel software system. 3. Establish Regional Informal Working Groups designed to promote information exchange and sharing of good practices and lessons learned, thereby significantly enhancing the national implementation and capability.	01.01.20 20	01.01.20 23	€ 5 000 000	36	'All-of-UN' approach, in partnership with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the United Nations Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) and UNODC. Also IOM, INTERPOL, OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in	Frontline officers at airports, national law enforcers	Securitisation	http://webtv.un.org/watch/player/6033766775 001
VEP - The joint global programme on supporting the management of violent extremism prisoners and the prevention of radicalisation to violence in prisons	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	1. Address challenges posed by violent extremist prisoners (focusing on those prisoners who may be vulnerable) in full compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treat of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and other relevant international standards and norms, including from a gender perspective. 2. Prevent violent	01.12.20 18	30.12.20 21	€ 4 000 000	48	UNODC, UNCCT, CTED	Prison staff, especially front-line prison officials; criminal justice agencies, and other public agencies and non-governmental organisations involved in preventing or countering violent extremism.	Cognitive radicalisation	https://www.unodc.org/brussels/en/vep--- radicalisation---violence---prisons.html

		extremist offenders from returning to violent extremist groups after release, and emphasise education, vocational training, counselling, and family and community engagements as core elements of the social reintegration of violent extremist prisoners into society							
CASE II	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	To disrupt terrorist networks and the activities of recruiters to terrorism, cut off terrorist funding and bring terrorists to justice while continuing to respect human rights and international law.	01.12.20 19	01.01.20 23	€ 8 000 000		36	ECAC	Civil aviation	Securitisation	https://www.ecac-ceac.org/ec-ecac-case-ii-project
STRIVE GCERF	WP6 countries concerned: Algeria: Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia	To build the capacity of state and non-state actors to effectively challenge radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism while continuing to respect human rights and international law.	24.10.20 19	23.10.20 23	€ 4 000 000	N/A		UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	Prisons and prisoners in the Middle East and Gulf, North Africa and Asia	Knowledge development	http://d-portal.org/q.html?aid= XI-IATI-EC_DEVCO-2019/409-565 / https://rusi.org/sites/def ault/files/20160906_stri ve_ 2016 en proof combined.pdf