

VIOLENT EXTREMISM

IN UGANDA'S GREATER
MASAKA SUB-REGION;

A SUMMARY

REPORT



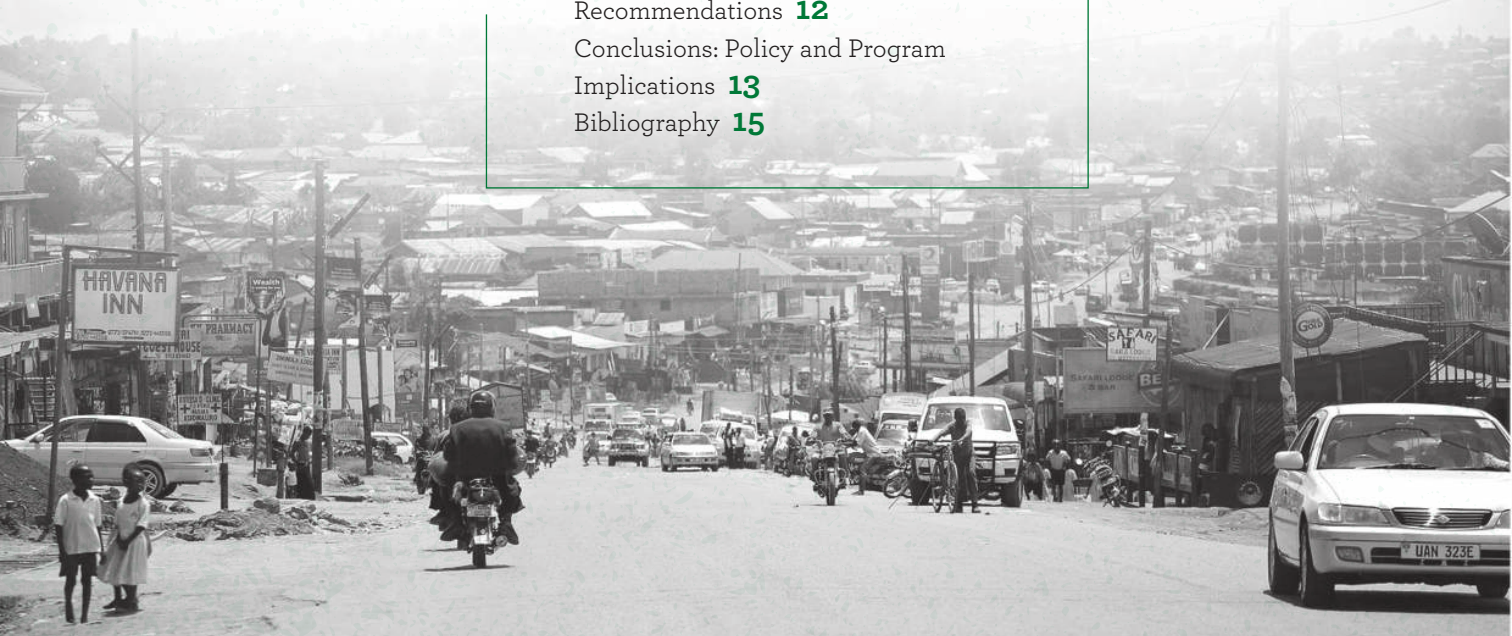
A map of Uganda's Great Masaka Sub-Region, showing various districts and towns. The map is light green and white, with a vertical green line running through the center. Labels include Dzemlyaga, Bukomansimbi, Bugege, Kabula, Bukoto, and others.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN UGANDA'S GREAT MASAKA SUB-REGION;

A SUMMARY REPORT:

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VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN UGANDA'S GREAT MASAKA SUB-REGION; *A Summary Report:*

Violent extremism (VE) has been present in the greater Masaka sub-region in Uganda's Lake Victoria basin since the 1980s. Importantly, this study found that VEOs are resurfacing and active in Masaka ¹. Based on CL's global experience and expertise working on VEs issues, the research from this study, and findings from complementary work on VE leads us to conclude that the spread of VE in Uganda is likely to increase. Based on a series of assessments carried out by Creative Associates between 2017-2020 for USAID as part of its Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa project with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ^{2,3} VE vulnerability factors in Uganda are like those from several countries in the West Africa, and sub-Saharan region. They include economics and resources, politics and governance, rule of law, and security.⁴

The use of Niger as a 'rear operating base' for the VEOs Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province ⁵, for instance, is akin to findings in this study regarding the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) having bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), that are partially living off the fishing trade from Uganda's Lake Victoria. Like some regions in West and sub-Saharan Africa, VEO elements in Uganda are adept at sowing divisions within communities and increasing their attacks.^{6,7} Likewise, the residual security challenges in Côte d'Ivoire, that directly relate to demobilized soldiers from prior DDR processes are not dissimilar to grievances identified in this study related to ADF returnees ⁸. The November 2021 attacks in Kampala claimed by the VEO ISIS and its affiliate, ADF⁹ reinforce our conclusion that VE in Uganda in the future is likely to worsen.

¹ S/2017/1091, paras. 29 and 30. A 2017 Report of the UN Group of Experts on the DRC confirmed ADF continues to recruit, primarily youth from Uganda. For the purposes of this report an 'active' VEO is not limited to overt acts of violence e.g., harassment, bombs, shootings etc. Active includes efforts to recruit.

² In 2016 ECOWAS developed an early warning scoping paper to inform the CRVA process, with the human security pillars identified based on best practice approaches such as ECOWARN guidelines and the New Zealand Agency for International Development framework.

³ USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Conflict Assessment. 2020.

⁴ Nigeria, Niger, and Burkina Faso face challenges in their areas where VEOs tend to thrive and operate.

⁵ Ibid. Page 4. 2020.

⁶ USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Conflict Assessment Report for Burkina Faso and Niger. Page 15-17. 2020.

⁷ Ibid. Pages 10-11. 2020.

⁸ Ibid. Pages 30-32.

⁹ CNN, March 17, 2021.

The ADF are among the alleged perpetrators of VE in the region, and have transformed themselves from a disarmed and demobilized armed group to a VEO. This was the result of a DDR process that did not properly reintegrate ADF members into the larger society ¹⁰.

Until now, there has been no in-depth research of VE in the region. The paucity of information meant that stakeholders had little understanding of the causes of VE and how to counter it. This study examines VE in the Masaka region, identifies VE drivers,

“There is no ADF anymore. Allah willing, ADF ceased to exist a long time ago. [...] Currently, we are a province, the Central Africa Province which is one province among the numerous provinces that make up the Islamic State that is under the Caliph and Leader of all Muslims...Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi.”

Musa Baluku, September 2020 ¹¹

resiliencies, and makes recommendations for policy and program initiatives.

To gain an evidence-based understanding of VE dynamics in the region, Creative Learning (CL), and its partner, Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF), carried out research in Masaka, Lwengo, Kalungu and Mpigi districts to better understand the Masaka sub-region’s VE Landscape.

INTRODUCTION

In its 2017 report on VE, UNDP categorizes the threat of VE in much of East Africa as moderate, describing Uganda as an ‘at-risk’ country due to poor governance and socio-economic issues with no active VEOs.

However, since the UNDP classification of Uganda as a country ‘at risk’ of VE in 2017, the landscape has changed. Currently, several vulnerabilities put the sub-region at a higher risk of VE than reported by UNDP. ¹² Uganda continues to face threats of terrorist attacks from Al-Shabab, which bombed the country in 2010, and from the DRC-based ADF, designated as a terrorist group by the Government of Uganda (GoU), and by the U.S. on March 10, 2021. A 2018 Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on the DRC confirming ADF recruitment; primarily youth, was validated with research conducted between June-July 2020 in Masaka, Lwengo, Mpigi and Kalungu districts. The ADF continues to recruit, with the former ADF commander Jamil Mukulu maintaining connections in the Greater Masaka region. The study also revealed there are many frustrated ADF members, who resent the unfulfilled amnesty and reintegration promises of the GoU.

¹⁰ The WB-TDRP, 2012. The DDR process was undertaken between August 2008 and June 2011 under the Uganda Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project established to build upon previous support to the Amnesty Commission through the Multi-Country Demobilization Program. In 2008 a multi-donor trust fund managed by the World Bank was established to implement the program.

¹¹ GWU, March 2021.

¹² UNDP, 2017. “At-risk’ countries: Countries at risk of violent extremism exhibit some of the same socio-economic and governance-related factors as epicenter and spillover countries but have no violent extremist groups actively present in the country. However, some at-risk countries have small populations exhibiting some signs of radicalization and isolated attacks or incidents. Such countries are at risk due to national contextual factors, but also as a result of porous borders and the activities of trans-national criminal networks, and other ongoing crises and conflicts. In such countries, the focus will be solely on prevention related activities. Engagements in at-risk countries will focus on CAR, Morocco, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda”.

Socioeconomics and Violent Extremism in Context

Based on information provided by key informants (KIs), the researchers conclude that VEOs are active in Masaka, with several VE vulnerabilities. Masaka is now at a higher risk of VE than when studied by UNDP two years ago. Poverty and unemployment were cited as the most pressing economic challenge, especially among the youth and, to a lesser extent, women and elderly. Poverty was attributed to lack of markets and general low (fluctuating) prices for subsistence agricultural produce, which is the main economic activity in the region.

Through middlemen, some ADF affiliates buy significant quantities of fish caught in Greater Masaka, as well as maize flour, beans, and other goods cultivated in the region, and deliver them to their ADF associates in the DRC. This indicates that the ADF affiliates have the financing to purchase fish in bulk and they, at least partially, support the local economy. While GoU security forces cut off some ADF supply routes, it is believed trade continues at a smaller scale. At the same time, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) operations and excessive use of force while implementing fishing guidelines restricts access to the lake, putting pressure on civilian, and serve as a driver toward VE.

Civil-Security Issues

Reports of corruption, prolonged detention, torture, beating up of fishermen, and aiding land grabbers to steal people's land, are eroding trust and widening the rift between civilians and security actors. Election periods present an example of how security forces have committed violence against civilians. Enforcement of Covid-19 lockdowns has also eroded trust. Despite allegations of security force abuse against civilians, some respondents

reported good relations between civilians and security forces, citing examples of security agencies partnering with local people to fight crime, and jointly engaging in community outreach projects.

Justice and Governance

Access to public services and jobs is characterized by nepotism, corruption, and tribalism, as reported by several respondents. Failure by the police and the judiciary to solve land conflicts in a just manner has eroded trust and confidence in government institutions. Other governance challenges include poor implementation of laws and policies, lack of access to judicial services, limited budget allocated to the health sector, and poor local government administration, which has affected quality service delivery.

Demographics of Respondents

Ninety-five (95) respondents were sampled from several hot-spot sub-localities in Masaka, Lwengo, Kalungu, and Mpigi districts. Seventy-three percent (73%) were male, and 23% female, with an age range of 22-80 years. Respondent types included:

- at-risk i.e. those who admitted to having a family member or friend who was connected to VE, returnees, and those who had been exposed to VE propaganda but refused to join, or were from a neighbourhood connected to VE;
- political leaders in local government, including Local Councils, religious leaders, including clerics, priests, Kadhis, Catechists, and Imams;
- respected leaders or opinion leaders -- most of whom were elders and had several other roles in the community;
- business leaders in trades like farming, animal rearing, fishing, and transport;
- security actors (Uganda Police, Internal Security Organization, UPDF), and;
- local influencers in the health, legal and cultural fraternities.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Violent Extremism Prevalence and Risk of Recruitment



Respondents shared their understanding of VE based on their own lives. While most did not have a clear understanding of VE, a sizable number of respondents in Masaka district defined VE as an ideologically motivated drive to violent behaviour inspired by religious, political, economic, and ethnic elements, and gave examples of Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Al-Shabab as VE groups. Most respondents were of the view that while VE was a threat at one time, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, the threat has subsided over the years, due to an aggressive CVE effort by security agencies. Some respondents noted that radicalization and recruitment was still happening at a smaller scale, compared to the past.

Young Muslim men from 15-35 years were cited as vulnerable to VE radicalization and recruitment. Radicalization towards violence is particularly likely when they are members of Mosques that espouse radical ideologies. The educated, women, Muslim scholars, and Sheikhs, were also mentioned as at-risk groups for VEO influence, especially when it came to mobilization of potential recruits. Most key informant (KI) respondents were not aware of reintegratees (from VEOs) in their communities and those who were remain uncertain of their numbers or registration status with the Amnesty Commission. However, at-risk respondents were aware of reintegratees in

communities and noted many were situated in Masaka, Lwengo, and Sembabule, and continue to face challenges such as isolation, discrimination, and marginalization. As a result, they often migrate to areas like Kampala.

KIs with knowledge of VE issues cited various sub-localities as VE hotspots:

- In Lwengo district -- Kyazanga Town Council, Malongo Sub-County, Kinoni Town Council and Lwengo Town Council;
- In Mpigi district -- Kituntu Sub-County, Buwama Sub-County, Muduuma Sub-County, Kammengo Sub-County;
- In Kalungu district -- Lwabenge Sub-County, Kalungu Sub-County, and;
- In Masaka district -- Nyendo-Senyange Sub-County, Katwe-Butego Sub-County, Bukakata Sub-County, Kyabakuza Sub-County, and Kyanamukaaka Sub-County.

How Radicalization Happens

Predominantly cited agents of radicalization towards VE were Muslim religious leaders, who engage in Jihadist propaganda. This takes place in certain mosques with messaging allegedly coming most often from Sheikhs visiting from Kampala. Critically, several respondents also

mentioned that radicalization along religious lines may not be restricted to Muslim communities. Political differences among several ethnic groups, perceptions of the government's shortcomings in delivering promises, and heightened tensions around the 2021 elections, are hardening certain ethnic group tensions. As some local communities are religiously plural, there is a risk that VEOs, and religious leaders, can exploit these tensions and use religion as a basis to advance VE narratives. Several others cited politicians as compelling voices promoting radicalization and VE, mainly targeting youth in slums. Individual psychological motivations mainly take the form of an increasing identification based on religious ideologies that foment and justify using violence to achieve justice. Examples include prolonged and unresolved intra-Muslim disputes, especially cited in Kyazanga, as contributing to VEO recruitment.

For Key Informants - Lack of employment opportunities were the most often cited driver for VE. Economic factors like poverty and unemployment make the extremists' promise of jobs and wealth very convincing to those recruited. One respondent added that extremists' narrative includes: the government deliberately keeping people poor, and that their situation will only improve if they overthrow the regime and establish a just one.

The lack of access to education was cited as a cause of poverty that left many with no option but to follow the promises of jobs wherever they are. This has caused many to work abroad which some feel is a source of vulnerability. While the GoU has made education more accessible through universal primary and secondary education, some respondents argued that radicalization and recruitment were higher in communities that rejected formal education AND lacked a meaningful religious education.

Respondents observed that marginalization and discrimination of Muslims by government, real and perceived, make extremist ideas attractive to some. Marginalization includes the inequitable

allocation of economic opportunities, government, political, and public service jobs. Other areas are human rights abuses and the justice system, including targeting of various religious sects, regular and unjustified arrests, detention, and imprisonment of Muslims, sometimes without trial, over false terrorism charges. Respondents noted some Muslims are coerced to confess even when innocent, and there is a lack of compensation for Muslims who are falsely accused.

For At-risk Respondents - Government injustices and abuses committed, especially against Muslims, was the foremost driver of VEO recruitment. Respondents mentioned that government killing, and torturing Muslims was used by recruiters to justify their participation in a VEO. Prospective recruits were admonished to love their religion, which sometimes requires them to engage in Jihad and fight against the injustices against the Muslim community. The promise of paradise for holy warriors who die in combat is attractive.

Limited access to economic activities was the other factor cited by many at-risk participants. Promises of economic liberation from their poverty-stricken communities make VEO narratives appealing. All at-risk individuals agreed that the reasons that pushed them to commit VE have not been addressed, e.g., the injustices, discrimination, exclusion, and limited access to opportunities in Muslim communities.

It was learned from stories of reintegratees and other at-risk individuals that there are two pathways to radicalization: - voluntary and involuntary pathways.

The voluntary pathway occurs for people whose first exposure to VE propaganda takes place at mosques, through peers at markets, or in neighbourhoods at places like gambling parlours. When a young person takes a voluntary decision to join a VEO, parents tend to notice or get information of this rather late in the process. This was illustrated by a respondent, whose son disappeared following a conversation about holy wars. The son remains missing.

For the involuntary pathway children were mentioned as the primary target by VEOs. They are often given away by their parents, who are told that their children will be given access to education. Some respondents cited being framed as terrorists and tortured by security operatives, and being forced to confess publicly when they have no VEO connections at all. In these cases, their names are never cleared, and the community forever views them and their families with suspicion, which leaves them no option other than joining a VEO.



VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Muslim male youth from 15-35 years were cited as the most vulnerable to VE radicalization and recruitment; especially those linked to mosques that espouse radical ideologies. Women, Muslim scholars, and Sheikhs were also mentioned as at-risk groups for VEO influence, especially when it came to identifying (female) recruits. There are varying degrees of risk and vulnerability as VE does not follow a straight line. Even so, there appear to be groups and demographics at higher risk than others.

Another group at-risk of recruitment are reintegratees (from VEOs) situated in Masaka, Lwengo, and Sembabule. These carry a potential risk for furthering VE in communities of reintegration because they are indoctrinated with VE ideologies and are trained in the use of violent tactics. The quality of psychosocial support and

reintegration programs offered to them is critical to lessen the likelihood of recidivism, or radicalizing community members. Except for a few activities of the Amnesty Commission, most respondents were not aware of any P/CVE programs that targeted returning reintegratees in their communities. Further, reintegratees mentioned that their amnesty promises had not been met.

Women serve as VEO fighters/combatants, advisors, recruiters, and agents -- particularly to mobilize other women. Women are well placed at the community level to serve as spies and intelligence gatherers for their husbands, who have already been radicalized towards VE. Due to surveillance by GoU security services operatives, recruiting older males from the community has become difficult. In a change of tactics, VEO recruiters now focus mostly on women and children. Women are allegedly being called upon to bear children who will form the next generation of VE fighters.

Children's involvement with VE is primarily involuntary, with many recruited under the guise of offering them opportunities for further religious studies. This seems to be more common among poor families which saw this as a relief from having to pay school fees. Quite often, returning husbands have no proper means of livelihood, which stresses the family and provides leverage to VEOs.

Youth participation in VE was both voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary joining occurs as youth

become radicalized towards violence through exposure to VE propaganda. Sometimes, youth choose to join VE without parental opposition. Conversely, deception is used in the form of promising jobs for youth, who later find that no job exists once they reach VEO camps. Some respondents shared that some youths were taken to join VEOs involuntarily by their parents and subsequently become radicalized towards VE.

RESILIENCY FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

While the threat of VE exists in the Masaka sub-region, to date, only a small number of individuals have joined VEOs. The most frequently cited resilience factors for individuals were economic empowerment, and knowledge and understanding of religion, each at **23.9%**. These were followed by emotional intelligence (**18.3%**), and social support (**11.3%**).

At-risk respondents report knowledge and understanding of religion is the most impactful resilience factor, followed by positive social support. Economic agency, emotional intelligence, insights on VE dangers, and experience and perceptions of justice, were the only other factors cited by at least one at-risk respondent.

For community resilience -- community organization and activism were most frequently mentioned by KI and at-risk respondents (**almost a third--32.6%**), followed by **community connectedness towards religion (19.6%)**.

We found that individuals often leave a VEO when the organization's (religious) values clash with their own. Three respondents, who were exposed to VE propaganda but did not join, shared that having a deeper knowledge of religious teachings enabled them to see that there was a clash of values between the VE propaganda that was being preached to them and what they knew to be the truth.



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P/CVE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

The National P/CVE Strategy is the official national framework for P/CVE activities in Uganda. It is a whole-of-society approach to dealing with VE, and includes ten priority areas encompassing stakeholders in government, civil society, and communities. Now that the policy is formally endorsed by the national government, a forward-facing approach to policy advocacy and dissemination in Uganda to promote the National Strategy may prove instrumental in P/CVE efforts, as just over 6% of KIs have heard of it. Many know about the strategy from participating in consultative meetings convened by the government, while another respondent learned about it from the news. None of the respondents, who know about or have heard of the strategy, used it to inform their work.

Knowledge of P/CVE policies and programs was scarce among interviewees. Community and individual resilience to VE are not informed by The National P/CVE Strategy. Further, dedicated P/CVE programs in the sub-region are limited. Even so, there are P/CVE on-going activities that could benefit from policy commitments by the GoU and international community. The GoU could strengthen policies that seek lessons learned and best practices from other countries, increase Civil-Military relations with security actors engaged in CVE activities, and increase the presence and capacity of non-government and civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs), in line with the P/CVE National Strategy.

A few with knowledge of peace and security issues cited examples of formal and informal government

initiatives they credit for strengthening resilience to VE. These include community policing to integrate traditional/formal police duties and functions into the life and activities of communities in the fight against crime. Also, the Amnesty Commission programs established to facilitate the 2000 Amnesty Act lets anti-government fighters who defect or disengage be pardoned after denouncing violence.

The GoU should make a concerted effort to strengthen Tarehe Sita celebrations where the army engages with communities, by supporting local development activities like community work to build trust and friendship between the army and civilians, which is necessary to detect signs of radicalization towards VE. A need was expressed for capacity development, sensitizations, and training in the use of 'soft approaches' to P/CVE, as security actors were inclined towards using force to address VE. Further, local government leaders need to build their capacity to fundraise for P/CVE projects and programs, as well as leverage existing community resources.

For programs to be effective, there is a need to align government and NGO/CSO programs with national P/CVE priorities. During the research, it became clear that CSOs, Community Development Officers, Local Council leaders, hospital mental health workers and psychiatrists, could contribute to strengthening community resilience to VE. These skill sets and capacities align with those cited by the P/CVE National Strategy. However, persons with these skills are not empowered to mainstream P/CVE in their work.



TRANS-REGIONAL LINKS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

THE ROLE OF LAKE VICTORIA

Most respondents interviewed were not aware of trans-regional VE links. However, two respondents had heard of VE recruits moving through Masaka from the eastern Uganda districts of Bugiri and Mayuge, and Lwebitakuli in Sembabule district. Another reported hearing of a link between Masaka-Kalungu-Mubende-Mityana districts. Two (2) respondents cited Kasese District in western Uganda, along the border with DRC, as an area where VEO activities take place. Another reported that individuals recruited in the Masaka sub-region were being gathered in Kampala before being moved to their ultimate destination.

most respondents interviewed were not aware of trans-regional VE... links.

Five (5) respondents reported that the size of Lake Victoria makes effective surveillance difficult, adding that unguarded parts of the lake make it easy to move recruits. Some reintegratees shed additional light on the lake's role in VE recruitment by confirming that they had gone to ADF camps in the DRC via Lake Victoria. Others noted that the lake was also used by traffickers illegally moving Rwandese into Uganda via Masaka - a key issue of concern cited across Masaka, Lwengo, and Kalungu districts.

The socio-economic significance of the lake cannot be overlooked. As noted above, fishing communities are negatively affected by UPDF operations and excessive force in enforcing fishing guidelines, ultimately restricting access to the lake. This plays into VEO hands because illicit fish dealers are forced into organized crime, increasing their probability of joining VEOs. Another consequence is VEO ability to exploit grievances of locals to align with VE narratives or tacitly support VEOs by not cooperating with security forces. Lastly, the ADF buying considerable quantities of fish to supply its members in the DRC means the lake's economic activity is indirectly supporting the ADF and surrounding communities.

This plays into VEO hands because illicit fish dealers are forced into organized crime, increasing their probability of joining VEOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Popularize the National P/CVE Strategy, CSO/NGO work, and P/CVE programming through public awareness initiatives to address the limited awareness and knowledge in the communities. The lack of knowledge about The National P/CVE Strategy, and limited awareness of the work of local CSOs/NGOs and P/CVE programs, could be addressed through a public information and awareness initiative.

Develop a comprehensive policy and set of programs for psychosocial reintegration. Community leaders and local government officials can improve their ability to receive back reintegratees from VEOs. Mechanisms for psychosocial support of at-risk individuals could be a central element for reintegration planning.

Undertake a study exploring armed group and actor reintegration, starting with government re-examining the effectiveness of reintegration for ADF members. Based on current ADF realities, this should translate into a policy directive in favor of a contemporary Disengagement and Reintegration (D&R) effort. To increase the chances of success, a study of the shortcomings of the DDR process should be done with recommendations for reintegration.

Increase cooperation and engagement between communities and security sector actors, with emphasis on GoU's support to human rights by law enforcement while carrying out CVE and counterterrorism operations.

Undertake research and develop programs that increase social cohesion to mitigate VE drivers. Efforts to address the perceived marginalization of the Muslim community and ethnic tensions within communities should be a priority. This may require greater understanding of grievances expressed among intra-Islamic groups. Gaining a deeper understanding of gender and youth issues is also critical to understanding P/CVE issues.

Empower CSOs, NGOs and community-based organizations to work on P/CVE issues, since communities generally have good relations with these organizations and appreciate their activities. This should include activities related to facilitating inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and intra-Muslim dialogue.



CONCLUSIONS: POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

While the prevalence of VE in Masaka's sub-region is relatively low, the two attacks in Kampala attributed to ADF as an ISIS affiliate on November 16th are the latest of several VEO attacks,¹³ and supports CL's analysis of the growing threat of VE activity by VEOs in the country. In our surveys, several respondents were confident that radicalization towards VE and recruitment occur, but is apparently rare. Some thought there was no VEO activity. Most respondents do not have a clear idea of what VE is and what constitutes a VEO. This makes it difficult for people in Masaka to recognize VE activity, and provides VEOs space to operate discretely, pursue economic gain, and recruit in vulnerable communities.

There is increased attention on the international stage to ADF presence and operations in Uganda. Prior to the recent attacks, it was reported in mid-June that ISIS is working in the Congo with the ADF¹⁴. The transnational nature of the evolving VE situation should be taken into consideration by national and regional actors in Africa, as well as the international community and USG when developing policies to mitigate the VE threat in the region.

It remains to be seen if extreme political ideologies that advocate violence will grow along with rising political violence as was the case in Uganda's recent election. At the same time, Muslim clerics, especially from sections of the Salafi community, are cited as active agents of radicalization and recruitment. There is a concern that VEOs and religious leaders from more than one faith will use religious narratives to further heighten tensions between certain ethnic groups, and increase radicalization towards VE. Additionally, some political leaders were widely cited as contributing to political extremism. Widening the VE aperture, the dynamics identified in Uganda may well expand thinking of VE as a governance issue with regional implications across ethnic, sectarian, and religious lines. ISIS is not just a Middle East problem; it is also in Africa. The U.S.-backed coalition to fight VE and ISIS in West Africa is looking for new partners to join the 78 countries and 5 organizations involved in the coalition¹⁵. Given the growing ISIS problems in Africa, Uganda may wish to join these countries and organizations in their effort to combat VE.

Notwithstanding operations undertaken by the military forces and other security actors, the drivers highlighted in this report are nested in PVE, suggesting a peace-building approach to

¹³ NYT, 16 November 2021. October 23rd one person was killed and seven wounded in a bombing outside Kampala, and on the 25th another blast occurred by a suicide bomber of a passenger bus. Prior to these attacks the British government issued travel advisory citing the probability and VEOs are 'very likely' to carry out attacks in Uganda.

¹⁴ BBC News, 2021.

¹⁵ Al-Jazeera, 2021.

inform policies and programs to address the root causes that lead to VE. An overly securitized approach runs the risk that VE will further take hold. Efforts addressing VE should include ethnic relations, corruption, and conflict over land tenure, public health issues like Covid-19, rule of law, and issues that include civil-security relations.

The Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017 established the U.S. as the first country globally to promulgate legislation promoting women's full participation on P/CVE issues. Such participation includes conflict resolution, counterterrorism, peace-building, and promotion of stability. These are excellent entry points for Ugandan authorities to engage their U.S. partner since part of Uganda's VE context includes women targeted for recruitment for purposes like bearing children to become the next generation of VE fighters.

Violent Extremism in the Greater Masaka sub-region presents a humanitarian and legal imperative with a practical motivation to address P/CVE. The trans-regional VE links and the role of Lake Victoria -- some respondents attest to having been transported to DRC across the lake

by ADF (despite the confidence of security actors that VEOs do not use the lake as a transit route) -- shows that VEOs like the ADF and ISIS have a presence and an economic stake in the region. This threatens national, regional, and global stability, undermines markets, and presents a security risk. Addressing the nascent rise of VE in Uganda at the policy and program level is arguably the best P/CVE response available for Uganda.

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