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DEFENCE AND SECURITY FORCES IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) IN AFRICA: TOWARDS POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS TO MEET THE CHALLENGES

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FINAL REPORT

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SUMMARY

Following the first edition of the regional seminar entitled “**Defence and Security Forces in the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Africa**”, held in Dakar in October 2017 and which revealed that the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) calls to action and encourages the Defence and Security Forces (DSF), particularly within the framework of the renewal of the civil-military cooperation, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the army/nation link, the Centre des Hautes Etudes de Défense et de Sécurité (CHEDS) of Senegal and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland have pursued the effort on October 2nd and 3rd, 2018. For the second successive year, a high-level meeting entitled: “**Defence and Security Forces in the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) in Africa: Towards Policy and Institutional Frameworks to Meet the Challenges**” took place in the capital of Senegal.

The objective of this second edition was to strengthen the involvement of the DSF in the PVE in West Africa and the Sahel region. The main purpose was to recognize the importance of policy and institutional frameworks in the structuring of the effectiveness of the actions and interactions of the DSF with regards to the PVE.

Bringing together around 60 participants coming from a dozen West and Central African countries, this meeting was an opportunity for senior officers, heads of cabinets of Ministries of Defence or Interior, or intelligence coordinators to interact with parliamentarians, senior executives of central and regional administrations, representatives of civil society and researchers.

For two (02) days, these participants exchanged views, interrogations and experiences around several key issues: 1) issues relating to the consistency between the concepts of defence and security and the challenges of prevention; 2) issues that require to introduce relevant adjustments where required by the existing context and frameworks; 3) issues which refer to the overall framework offered by the public policies for the relationship between the DSF and the other stakeholders on the ground; 4) finally issues relating to the ongoing assessment of the match between the decision-making and execution spheres.

This meeting revealed that the efforts that must be made in order to build the policy and institutional frameworks to meet the prevention challenges must not be perceived as blocking or inhibiting factors but as opportunities to find and implement innovative solutions likely to increase the involvement of the DSF, political authorities and other stakeholders in the construction of peace through the PVE.

OBSERVATIONS

Exchanges revealed the following:

- **violent extremism is not a phenomenon that came out of nowhere, but the result of a state of the world and of socio-political and economical specific contexts which depend directly on the governing conditions and the decision of inadequate policies. It has deep causes frequently mentioned such as** political exclusion, social or identity-related stigmatization, poverty, lack of education, unemployment, inadequate security policies, corruption, absence of State authorities (or the negative impact of a poorly governed State), criminality. In June 2018, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) recalled that “Despite successful electoral cycles in several countries of the region, West Africa and the Sahel region are still living under the triple threat of terrorism, climatic changes and poor governance”¹;

- **solutions provided reflect a policy of fight against violent extremism, so far essentially oriented towards the security measures that now show their limits. The fact that violent extremism is expanding and gaining ground spared until now** shows that the current solutions do not bring the expected results and raises other questions. For example, in the basin of the Lake Chad, despite the gains made by the National Army Forces and the Multinational Mixed Force, various factions continue to undermine with several attacks against the DSF but also against the civilian populations. We could also cite the Sahel region with Mali and Burkina Faso;

- **the DSF have a real role to play in the prevention of violent extremism. They can** perform for example, with the active participation of all stakeholders, a diagnosis of problems linked with violent extremism, by defending the idea that human safety is at the heart of security and by looking with the people they defend (citizens and populations) for the solutions to this problem;

- **the DSF are subordinated to political authority** and their actions are rooted in concepts and strategies that will promote or not their role in violent extremism prevention. For example, in the Council of the Entente space, the regional organization and its State members have developed policies promoting the dialogue between the populations and the DSF, especially in cross-border areas. These are achievements that deserve to be preserved and consolidated;

¹ S/2018/649 report dated June 29th, 2018 of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

- **without an appropriate policy and legal framework, the role of DSF**, both in violence prevention and in their combat when legal violence is the only answer suggested to illegal violence, **will not be enough. The absence of a clear framework, a vision and a political will** from **policy-makers** often puts the DSF in a “front” position but also in a “mission impossible” situation. **Parliamentarians also do not play their part towards the DSF, particularly concerning the definition of security strategies (in this case violent extremism prevention strategies)**;

- often, **the DSF feel the need to engage politicians on these challenges. However**, there is in fact an **almost total lack of interfaces between DSF and politicians** similar to this cycle of seminars which the participants are calling for sustainability;

- **beyond the national level, an international momentum is useful** to help the States facing a multitude of priorities to take into consideration the PVE. Thus, the UN was able to foster a dynamics in favor of the PVE with, among others, the Plan of Action of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Prevention of Violent Extremism of December 2015, followed by the June 25th, 2018² resolution. The latter “reaffirms the importance of the global strategy for the fight against terrorism and its four pillars”. The first one is calling for a strengthening of the preventive dimension and the last one highlights the necessary compliance with international commitments (in particular Human Rights and Humanitarian Law) in the framework of the fight and prevention of violent extremism. The text also calls for “the involvement of local communities and non-governmental stakeholders involved in the development of appropriate strategies to counteract violent extremism”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants made recommendations to both the administrative and political decision makers and the DSF.

In general, these recommendations, aimed to make conditions more conducive to a preventive role for DSF, focus on:

The need for a dialogue at all levels.

This dialogue relies on a personal commitment, because it doesn't automatically apply; it's an exercise that can be difficult for constituted and disciplined elements of corps such as the DSF or civil administrations.

However, the dialogue they aspire to and to which this

cycle of seminars brings them can take numerous forms and be established between different actors such as:

- the DSF and the policy-makers, through formal (national defence councils, defence and security parliamentary committees, mixed local committees) or informal and ad hoc entities;

- the military and security apparatus;

- the populations, the local, traditional and religious authorities, in order to have a shared governance of security;

- the veterans in order to understand their history and consider their prevention role;

- the violent extremists, where possible;

- the partners, for a greater respect of sovereignty and an encouragement to “win-win” partnerships.

The urgent necessity to get the DSF out of their isolation, let them reflect on their prevention role and link them to politicians, and vice versa.

This is a slow and difficult process that must start at all levels; both the DSF officials and policy-makers need to show willingness to move in that direction and work together to strengthen the policy and institutional frameworks promoting a commitment of the DSF in violent extremism prevention.

In a more specific manner, various recommendations were made to the DSF and political actors:

Recommendations to administrative and political authorities

- Ensure, with the participation of other stakeholders, the appropriation of “human security” and “prevention of violent extremism” concepts by the DSF.

- Initiate a construction process of PVE public policies.

- Reform the concepts, doctrines and defence and security policies in order to align them with the objectives of the PVE and clarify the involvements of the DSF in the PVE.

- Take ownership of all international instruments with regards to PVE by taking into consideration the necessary re-contextualization in order to adapt them to the national and local realities.

- Give clear guidelines on the synergies that have to be established between the DSF and other stakeholders in the field (administrative, traditional and local authorities, communities, vigilance committees, armed groups, etc.).

² Resolution A/72/L.62 of June 26th, 2018.

- Be complementary to the DSF in order to allow the efficient management of the relations with communities, militias and violent extremists from a prevention perspective.

- Mobilize the parliamentary action in favor of the establishment of legislative and policy frameworks conducive to engage the DSF in a prevention action of EV.

- Create within the Parliament control mechanisms of the implementation of PVE policies and promote at the regional level the experience sharing between parliaments in order to harmonize the rules and procedures that are essential to the implementation of PVE policies and to the DSF action in this area.

- Emphasize the decentralization process (knowledge and budget transfers at the regional and municipal levels) which will allow to ensure a presence of State authorities and an efficient control on the entire national territory.

- Set up initiatives for a dialogue with extremist groups in order to avoid their proliferation, mutation and perpetuation.

Recommendations to the DSF

- Reinforce their capacities regarding human security and understanding of terrorism, violent extremism, and what is expected from them in the prevention and fight against these forms of violence.

- Continuously work towards professionalization of the army in order to adapt it to the constraints required by this new form of violence (asymmetric and unconventional warfare) but also to the role of the republican army in a shared security governance.

- Reinforce the relationship between the DSF and the political authority for an inclusive approach in the research of multidimensional solutions.

- Multiply the initiatives designed to reinforce the scope of the “social role of DSF” in order to maintain a climate of confidence and mutual agreement between the population and the DSF.

Dissemination strategy for these recommendations beyond the seminar

In order to promote the dissemination and ownership of this seminar results, the Centre des Hautes Etudes de Défense et de Sécurité (CHEDS) will be responsible for the following:

- make this report public through different visual materials such as the PVE Online Platform, launched in January

2017 by the FDFA of Switzerland and the GCSP (<https://pveplatform.forumbee.com>), and the CHEDS website (www.cheds.gouv.sn);

- make the document accessible to public decisionmakers and members of the DSF at the local, national and regional levels;

- continue and sustain this cycle of seminars with the DSF and politicians under the lead of the CHEDS and the Swiss partner, and continue to lead the DSF community that has emerged from this cycle of encounters in order to support them in their engagement in favor of the PVE.

The seminar participants are also expected to escalate the content and results of the work and bring out the debate within their institution.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts deployed by Governments and the international community to this day have not been able to end the escalation of violent extremism, due the complexity of the phenomenon and its capacity to merge with other forms of violence, and probably because of the lack of attention to the reasons why this violence is arising and sustaining. In view of the continuing violent extremism, it is important to combine the current reactive dimension (management logic) with a proactive dimension (prevention logic) that anticipates the threat. The United Nations Secretary-General doesn't mean anything else when he strongly highlights that it is important to assign a key role to prevention: “The military and security actions against terrorism are important and essential, but we also need to tackle the underlying conditions that lead young men and women to be attracted by terrorism and violent extremism” he said in April 2018, during an advisory board meeting of the United-Nations Anti-Terrorist Center in Ryad³, and he added: “Nobody was born a terrorist, and nothing justifies terrorism, but there are factors like unresolved conflicts, absence of the rule of law and socio-economical marginalization that can play a role in transforming claims into destructive actions”.

It is in this prevention logic that the first three editions of **the Regional Conversations for the Prevention of Violent Extremism** were held in Dakar in June 2016, in N'Djamena in June 2017 and in Algiers in June 2018⁴;

³ Advisory board meeting of the United Nations Anti-Terrorist Center in Ryad, Saudi Arabia, <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2018/04/1011312>.

⁴ “Investing in Peace and Prevention of Violence in West Africa and the Sahel: Regional Conversations on the Action Plan of the United Nations Secretary-General for Prevention of Violent Extremism” organized by the International Peace Institute (IPI), the United Nations Regional Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

both editions of the Dakar International Forum for Peace and Security in Africa (December 2016 and November 2017), and the regional seminar entitled “Defence and Security Forces in the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Africa” that took place in Dakar in October 2017 also contributed to reinforce this preventative approach.

Targeting specifically the Defence and Security Forces (DSF), this last meeting has, through its conclusions⁵, marked a clear evolution in the understanding of prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and the specific role of the DSF in order to tackle this phenomenon which is threatening all African States and more globally the world. Four major key lessons have emerged from it:

- violent extremism (VE) is not happening by chance, but it is the result of a hopeless socio-political and economical state of the world, which demonstrates its limitations;
- the deep causes are diverse and varied. Their understanding and treatment require a better understanding of the situations and actions aimed at transforming the causes of violence;
- the role of the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) is essential provided that they remain republican, take ownership for the prevention approach and are resolutely open to new types of collaboration with the population that they are tasked to protect. Indeed, the misbehavior of DSF, their sense of impunity and excesses may constitute a fertile ground generating frustrations and justifying involvement in violent extremist groups;
- finally, without an appropriate policy and legal framework, the role of DSF in violence prevention – and even their role in combat when legal violence is the only available response to illegal violence – will not be enough. We can then legitimately question the meaning and the intensity of political will at a national level, as well as the effectiveness and the level of appropriation of public policies and legal instruments promoted by the States as well as the national and regional institutions to prevent violent extremism in Africa.

Thus, it is for implementing this last lesson that the second edition of the regional seminar “Defence and Security

Forces and Prevention of Violent Extremism” was held on October 2nd and 3rd 2018 in Dakar, Senegal, on the theme “Defence and Security Forces in the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) in Africa: Towards Policy and Institutional Frameworks to Meet the Challenges”.

Organized by the Centre des Hautes Etudes de Défense et de Sécurité (CHEDS) of Senegal, and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of Switzerland, the seminar gathered about 60 English and French-speaking participants (DSF representatives, parliamentarians and local actors, women, youth, international and regional organizations, research centers) from West African countries and the Lake Chad Basin.

This Dakar Regional Seminar edition aimed to contribute to the ongoing initiatives for a better involvement of the DSF in the prevention of violent extremism in West Africa, the Sahel and Central Africa, by opening an interactive dialogue with policy-makers who are responsible with providing the policy and institutional framework promoting such a role.

Specifically, the purpose was to:

- contribute to the understanding of the situations, i.e. make an assessment of the current expressions of VE;
- better understand the concepts, perceptions and roles of the DSF and political actors, as well as their interaction in the PVE;
- identify the problems faced by the DSF in the fulfillment of their prevention mission;
- open a dialogue between politicians, the DSF and the population, and build bridges to prevent VE and associated threats;
- bring about real changes that will encourage the involvement of DSF in the PVE alongside political actors, communities and civil society organizations.

I. VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA: UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATIONS AND CONCEPTS OF PREVENTION

Violent extremism calls to action all African countries in which many questions arise: **How to assess the current situation? What can we do, what should we do to limit this violence? How to make our societies less vulnerable? How to share our concerns and successes? In one word, how to spread and embed this certainty that drives us and according to which “prevention is better than cure”?**

(FDFA) of Switzerland:

- Dakar, June 2016: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/1609-Investing-in-Peace-FRENCH.pdf> / English: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/1609-Investing-in-Peace-ENGLISH.pdf>

- N'Djamena, June 2017: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IPI-E-RPT-Chad-Meeting-NoteFrench.pdf> / English: <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IPI-E-RPT-Chad-Meeting-NoteEnglish.pdf>

- Algiers, June 2018: English, French and Arabic: <https://www.ipinst.org/2018/09/peace-and-prevention-of-violence-sahel-sahara-third-regional-conversations>

⁵ See the report of this first seminar: <http://www.cheds.gouv.sn/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RAPPORT-SÉMINAIRE-RÉGIONAL-2017.pdf>

In order to answer, we must first examine the causes and manifestations of violence extremism.

Looking back on the causes, i.e. on the **emergence and existence conditions of extreme violence** enables to highlight the multi-causal nature of violent extremism which is the result of the sum of many factors: exclusion, unresolved conflicts, unemployment of women and young people, lack of education, lack of the rule of law, governance deficit, discrimination, intangible and material poverty, spread of speeches calling for exclusion or violence, etc.

In fact, where the relationships between the **Government and citizens** have deteriorated, when the presence of the State authority is weak, when the coordination of governmental solutions, particularly on both sides of the borders, is difficult, extremist groups find a fertile ground to develop their actions. It is in this context that the AQIM terrorist group has established in the North of Mali and perpetrated terrorist attacks that caused a movement of populations (around 412 401 people in 2012, including 208 558 refugees in neighboring countries and 203 843 displaced inside the country). This situation is creating an increasing pressure on the resources and infrastructure of the basic social services of host communities.

No State in the region is safe from extremist attacks. In Burkina Faso, entrepreneurs of violence have taken advantage of their proximity with political and religious leaders to gradually settle in some villages and forests in the areas of Foutouri, Nassougou and Pama (East side of the country). In the coastal countries of West Africa, the “yambros”, the “non-integrated and non-paid demobilized soldiers” and the “microbes” are considered as potential recruits of violent extremist groups. Most “microbes” are not indoctrinated but are all in an open conflict with the law. They “are between 10 and 16 years old, maximum 18, they dropped out of their families and communities, they committed multiple violent assaults, including murders”. Living most of the time in shanty-towns, they are organized to take from the society “what they consider being the share they don’t receive”. Two major reasons can explain their exposure to radicalization: impatience towards the *statu quo* and the desire for change in the political system, with violence if needed. For these youngsters, violence is not an end in itself but a means to press the governing authorities to be concerned about their problems.

The modus operandi of violent extremist groups has changed. In the Eastern region of Burkina Faso, they went from using small arms to using home-made explosive devices. Their main targets are the DSF, people

suspected of being DSF information officers, and government buildings (prefectures, schools, city halls, etc...). Established in bases installed in the forests, they move in groups, with the help of two-wheeled vehicles, “go-fast”, or tricycles (three-wheeled utility vehicles).

This adds to the capacity of extremists to transnationalize the violence. Indeed, they use the security vulnerabilities linked to borders porosity to export violence from one country to another. The Grand Bassam attack in March 2016 in Ivory Coast and again recently in Burkina Faso shows this momentum.

The questions that arise are the following: **What can we do to transform the causes of violence? How to make the repressive and security act more efficient, without creating any further frustrations that can lead, in turn, to violence? What position should be given to prevention?**

Prevention asks for courage and serenity. It is the same for the culture of peace. **“Peace is not a word, it is a behavior”**, said President Houphouët-Boigny. Peace, we all know it, will not come about by itself. Peace is not spontaneous! Violent extremism took years to settle down and get organized. It is then unrealistic to think that it will be different for its disappearance.

Hence the idea to constantly build new bridges between the different components of the concerned population, work on their material and political inclusion and give priority to dialogue, including cross-community with violent groups (if possible). This is how prevention is understood today. The best way to reduce violence is to multiply opening, welcoming, teaching actions and to give the youth hope for their future. Because, according to testimonies of the ones who left extremist armed groups, it appears that **the strongest resistance to violent extremism is largely moral, then political, and calls to strong and clear societal values reference.**

In this prevention dynamics, the defence and security forces are expected to play an essential role through various channels:

- by maintaining an ongoing dialogue with local populations who deeply understand the forms of violence in their immediate environment; they will strongly participate to threat prevention;

- by conceiving defence and security as public goods for which they have responsibility but not exclusivity.

- however, as indicated in the introduction, policy and legal frameworks defining their missions and governing their duties need to be aligned with the requirements of

the preventive approach.

II. POLICIES AND CONCEPTS OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY AND PVE: NEED FOR ADAPTATION IN MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Although involvement of DSF in the PVE is necessary, to date, many policies and concepts that govern their actions are not consistent with the needs of the preventive approach. These include, without limitation:

- national security and defence policies;
- DSF use concepts;
- regulatory procedures (rules of engagement on the field of operations, rules of behavior), etc.

To this must be added the gap that exists in terms of adequacy in most countries of the region, between the possible role of the **Police and Gendarmerie Forces** in terms of prevention and the one assigned to the **Armed Forces**. **As things stand, the functions of the police and gendarmerie forces seem to make them more aligned with the objectives of the PVE than the functions of the military forces.**

This observation led the participants to explore - thanks to the feedbacks from the countries of the region - some tools (still in a testing phase) that can be perceived as opportunities to shape the policies and concepts of defence and security to the requirements of the PVE approach. However, under the condition of facing some challenges.

A. A few innovative experiences of PVE in the region

1) The community police

The State police in Nigeria uses the concept of “community police” to carry out various actions in the framework of PVE. These include precisely the **collection and processing of information related to the prevention of violent extremism, and the prevention of violence between young people in urban environments.**

The first action is carried out in cult places, Koranic schools, and through the analysis of preaching materials, sermons and weekly prayers etc., whereas the second one is focused on awareness actions (conducted with the involvement of the youth, the NGOs, the media and the opinion leaders) and on synergies between the police forces and the young people (common actions undertaken by patrol teams and youth groups gathered into “fadas”). However, in order for this encouraging initiative to be

successful, it is important to take into consideration the fact that beyond being an instrument to gather information, the community police is a tool that allows to (re) engage a dialogue - between members of the police forces and the populations - intended to provide effective responses to the root causes of violent extremism.

It is in this context that a special emphasis should be placed on two (02) basic principles:

The establishment of a real bond of trust between the police and the population. This implies that:

- the police institution is organized so that the citizens can be associated to the decision-making process concerning their communities;
- information transmitted by the populations to the police are used appropriately;
- the police informs the populations about the initiatives taken to ensure their safety and the results obtained that builds a reassuring police presence.

The reconciliation process between civilians and DSF members applied in Ivory Coast was cited as an example. In this country, the Ministry of Defence places particular emphasis on a greater civil-military relationship to establish and maintain a climate of confidence and mutual agreement between the population and the DSF. In this regard, the DSF are implied in social activities such as the participation of the army to the urban sanitation through the hygiene operation called the “clean up”, equipment donations to the hospital and nursery of the city of Adiaké carried out by the Special Forces, etc.

The prevention of violent extremism through the transformation of its causes. By collecting – with the cooperation of the concerned population – information on the causes of extremist violence, by analyzing all collected information in order to be able to produce relevant information to make decisions, the police will be able to take appropriate steps, which will prevent the reproduction and persistence of violence extremism by acting on the conditions that lead the population of a specific town to sink into violent extremism.

2) The “Educational Package”

Implemented by the National Intelligence Community of Ivory Coast, the “Educational Package” is a tool that helps detect signs of radicalization linked to Islam. It has been developed with the cooperation of the Muslim community who has made available to the intelligence community some religious guides in order to make sure

that the contents of the “Educational Package” is in compliance with the teachings of Islam. This precaution was necessary to give this tool an impartial, consensual and inclusive nature. Its objective is to allow the Defence and Security Forces of Ivory Coast to detect signs of radicalization linked to Islam.

Even if we still are in an outreach phase, this instrument of prevention of radicalization linked to Islam has already achieved at least one result. Indeed, it has aroused a real interest among the Defence and Security Forces of Ivory Coast.

However, to date, the “Educational Package” does not allow to bring solutions to other forms of radicalization that are both religious (linked to Christianity for example) and non-ideological.

In addition, in order for this tool to fully reach its objective, its mobilization has to be linked to serious precautions of use in order to avoid that a tool expected to prevent violent extremism can be perceived by the populations as an instrument which purpose or result is to break the social link between the different communities.

3) The redeemed rehabilitation programs

Unlike the community policing and the “Educational Package” which are implemented upstream, before the threat takes place, the redeemed rehabilitation programs are executed downstream and their main objective is to **prevent “recidivism”, i.e., to avoid that people that decided to abandon an extremist group give in again to the temptation to reconnect with violence. The initiatives taken in this direction in Niger are** focused on the following:

- **Management of people who have been acquitted.** People arrested for different reasons, then acquitted are followed through a rehabilitation program that aims to bring the person concerned to have a new behavior based on values like tolerance and living together.

- **Management of the redeemed.** Those are people who voluntarily left Boko Haram. After being subjected to de-radicalization sessions, they benefit from the socio-professional rehabilitation program.

B. Establishing policies and concepts of defence and security aligned with the PVE approach: challenges to address.

These challenges are of two (02) kinds:

■ **The first one** consists in **defining new defence and security doctrines:** the current defence and security practices can be transformed and improved as long as the doctrines and concepts that govern them evolve and

adopt an approach aiming at transforming the causes of violent extremism. It’s not about promoting obsolescence of the use of legitimate violence by the DSF, but about associating to their classic role of “protection”, the role of “prevention” which enables to avoid getting stuck into the spiral of violence because, **responding to violence by violence results in producing violence, either lawfully and unlawfully.** For this purpose, the new doctrines in terms of defence and security have to incorporate prevention instruments, including:

- consider security as a common good which objective is limited neither to the lethal answer, nor to the containment of the phenomenon, but to help in finding the answers to the questions that are raised by this violence;

- develop a doctrine where peace and security are not exclusive to the government, or some of its corps, but where we are talking about just “shared governance”. This, of course, means full respect of the State prerogatives. But this also implies taking into consideration the needs and expressing the answers through dialogue and interaction with the main recipients of the Government services - citizens, communities;

- build a republican and representative army, to serve the interests of the nation. This has for immediate counterpart a perfectly clear separation between the army and the politics (depoliticization of the army);

- provide the DSF with robust theoretical principles that will enable them to adapt their strategy, tactics and operational art to the complexity of violent extremism but also to a new prevention approach which requires a different look on reality and on the objectives pursued;

- require the full respect of human rights in the conduct of the mandates;

- build synergies between on one hand, the different DSF corps and on the other hand, between the DSF and the populations through inclusive dialogue;

- take the necessary measures with regards to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of the violent extremist fighters;

- also take into account the prevention role that the veterans can play alongside the DSF;

- adopt regional violent extremism prevention policies.

■ **The second challenge** consists in **adopting a holistic security approach (human security) that addresses the non-military concerns of security. The exclusive or non-representative entities, injustice, corruption and everything that causes human insecurity are today as**

harmful to security as the traditional military threats or the ones linked to violent extremism. Both the gap that can exist between the solutions recommended by the politicians (the use of DSF under their classical mandate) and the need for the DSF to go from a State vision to a human vision of security, argue in favor of an expansion of the security scope known so far.

Indeed, failure to take into consideration the dimensions of human security has implications for the military side. However, these consequences cannot be resolved by the use of military force. Therefore, we must move from a restricted conception of the security provided by the DSF to a holistic conception of the security that incorporates a plurality of actors (DSF that can play their role, but alongside political, economic and social actors etc.) and civil or civil-military measures.

We now have to find the paths through which innovative solutions, adapted to the contexts and the specific local perceptions, based on **joint actions**, involving the institutions and populations, can emerge - to eventually, **recreate a social link, a link between the Government and its citizens, where it has often been damaged or is missing.**

There is a need for a deep “conceptual update” which is a resource that African public authorities can fully mobilize in order to bring solutions to the root causes of violent extremism by implementing efficient public policies in line with the citizens’ expectations.

III. Building public policies to meet the challenges of violent extremism prevention: the role of public authorities

If we agree that public policies refer to “**all decisions and actions undertaken by institutional and social actors for solving a collective problem**”⁶, we can conclude that there is a close link between public policies and PVE to the extent that violent extremism is a problem that affects all the components of the society and its resolution requires the interventions of the public and government authorities in all steps of the lifecycle of a PVE policy. These include five (05) main steps:

- The first step deals with the **addition to the agenda.**

It corresponds with the moment when the executive and legislative authorities take up a problem and include it to their agenda as a concern that needs their intervention. The international, continental and regional legal framework for prevention and fight against terrorism, the measures proposed by the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), and the intensity of the damage caused

by violent extremism offer a foundation that allows the public authorities to include the prevention approach in the political agenda.

- The second step corresponds to the **development of the vision and the action plan.**

After including the necessity of prevention in the political agenda, the public authorities, with the participation of other stakeholders - DSF, academia, civil society organizations, international organizations, etc. - are going to define a common vision (what is the ultimate goal?) and look for solutions designed to transform the causes of extreme violence (action plan).

- The third step refers to the **decision-making process:** it is the moment when the public authorities gather all the other stakeholders around the table in order to look for an agreement on the prevention measures to implement.

- The fourth step relates to the **implementation:** once the agreement has been found, comes the moment of determining the **implementation modes** of the prevention measures: through which public processes should the implementation be done? Are the political, institutional and legal frameworks adapted? If not, what are the measures to be introduced? Who are the different public, private and non-governmental stakeholders that should be mobilized?

Specifically, this step will change into laws, regulations, decrees on PVE and determine - from inclusive discussions led by the public authorities - the functions of all stakeholders responsible for the implementation of these normative instruments at the regional, national and local levels.

- The fifth step deals with the **evaluation.** Public authorities are also involved in the evaluation of the PVE policies, both in the evaluation of the ability of the government stakeholders to achieve the assigned objectives, the efficiency of the means deployed, and the analysis of the scope and consequences of the implementation of these policies. This step is intended to provide a synoptic overview of the gap existing between the expected results and the ones obtained, and to identify the appropriate actions to be taken in order to eliminate the gaps identified.

These different steps of the construction process of a public policy have allowed the participants to appreciate the central place of the politicians at different levels (local, national and regional) in the conception and implementation of a PVE policy.

⁶ Institute for Advanced Studies in Public Administration (IDHEAP)

However, in order for this irrefutable observation to go beyond the stage of awareness, **the political will of public authorities and their desire to engage in a dialogue process with the DSF are necessary.**

Indeed, it is important that the politicians, by their willingness to act, can gather and examine a set of relevant data on how to significantly involve the DSF in the PVE. This is particularly important as the civil-military regulatory framework puts the DSF under civilian command. Therefore, the army cannot change the paradigm without a real impulse of the political authority (executive and legislative) which is the authority in charge of defining the Government policy with regards to defence and security.

Thus, a support and an explicit involvement of the Head of State, of the ministers in charge of defence and security, of the Parliament, is necessary in the establishment process of public policies and the structuration of legal and institutional frameworks that meet the challenges of the PVE.

Due to their functions, they are responsible for including the DSF in this process by explaining to them the reasons of the emergency for a change of paradigm, the way this change is going to happen and the reasons why their active involvement is necessary and useful. Dialogue frameworks - permanent and ad hoc, national and local - between them and the DSF will allow them to describe the challenges for the prevention approach, the impacts on the traditional functions assigned to the DSF, to collect their needs in terms of PVE and establish an agreement between the public authorities (the President, the Prime Minister, the Parliamentarians) and the DSF authorities (the General Staff).

These types of encounters are also occasions offered to politicians to:

- provide clarifications on the “new” DSF mandate, in order to define the degree of their involvement in the PVE and the type of political support that they will need;
- define the type of relations they have to maintain with the local vigilance committees;
- allay the fears associated with the idea of an interference of the civil stakeholders in the areas of defence and security;
- develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the action of the DSF with regards to PVE;
- the Parliamentarians action is urgently requested at this level. The prerogative that they have to constitute parlia-

mentary inquiry committees could be validly mobilized in order to exercise control of the DSF action.

The above considerations have finally allowed the participants to make a set of recommendations both for the DSF and the politicians, with the aim of strengthening the commitment of the State in a violent extremism prevention approach.

The recommendations are as follows:

Recommendations to administrative and political authorities

- Take ownership of all international instruments with regards to PVE by taking into consideration the necessary re-contextualization in order to adapt them to the national and local realities.
- Give clear guidelines on the synergies that have to be established between the DSF and other stakeholders in the field (administrative, traditional and local authorities, communities, vigilance committees, armed groups, etc.).
- Reinforce their capacities with regards to understanding the role and the strategic and operational functions of the DSF and provide them with the necessary - human, intellectual, financial, logistical and material - resources to accomplish their tasks with regards to PVE.
- Commit to respect the law, serve the public interest and avoid corruption in order to gain the confidence of the population.
- Mobilize the parliamentary action in favor of the establishment of legislative and policy frameworks conducive to engage the DSF in a prevention action of EV.
- Create within the Parliament control mechanisms of the implementation of PVE policies and promote at the regional level the experience sharing between parliaments in order to harmonize the rules and procedures that are essential to the implementation of PVE policies and to the DSF action in this area.
- Recognize the essential role of the administrative officials or elected representatives at the sub-State level, and consolidate the links between them and the central policy-makers, so that the latter encourage a more efficient and responsible community outreach.
- Emphasize the decentralization process (knowledge and budget transfers at the regional and municipal levels) which will allow to ensure a presence of State authorities and an efficient control on the entire national territory.
- Fight against clientelism which is an obstacle to good

governance at all levels, including the community level: competence is the foundation upon which are built growth and the pursuit of common good.

- Reinforce the control policies of the sale of products that can be employed in the fabrication of improvised explosive devices.

- Set up initiatives for a dialogue with extremist groups in order to avoid their proliferation, mutation and perpetuation.

Recommendations to the DSF

- Continuously work towards professionalization of the army in order to adapt it to the constraints required by this new form of violence (asymmetric and unconventional warfare) but also the role of the republican army in a shared security governance.

- Multiply the initiatives designed to reinforce the scope of the “social role of DSF” in order to maintain a climate of confidence and mutual agreement between the population and the DSF.

- Establish joint security operations of common borders and reinforce the collaboration and sharing of information between the different DSF of the States of the region.

- Make transparent the criteria of promotion and change of grade within the different corps of the DSF.

- Establish mechanisms for managing crisis that may arise within the different corps of the DSF.

CONCLUSION

This regional Seminar has reminded the necessity to include the effort of prevention of the DSF in the framework of a holistic approach. Thus, the cooperation of the political stakeholders is urgently requested in the design and implementation of standards (public policies, laws, national and regional action plans) that will promote effective ownership of the PVE approach by the DSF. The unanimous recognition of the weakness of the initiatives taken in this direction has brought the participants to become aware of the emergency to immediately take the necessary steps. This meeting has therefore allowed to open a new way to be explored in order to build political and institutional frameworks to meet the challenges of the PVE. In order to make sure that this breakthrough made in Dakar can fully yield results, the participants have identified four main challenges to address.

Challenge 1: The necessity to adopt a human security vision in defence and security public policies. This im-

plies rethinking the objectives and execution methods of mandates in such a way that exceeds the lethal response aiming at containing or pushing back the threat, but rather aims peace-building, and are guided by an objective of protection that goes through the dialogue and the interaction between the different stakeholders of the nations.

Challenge 2: The necessary clarification of the role of the DSF in the PVE approach. With the humility of those who operate on the ground and who are fully aware of their limits, of the complexity of the situations and of the institutional architectures in which with limited means offered, the politicians and the citizens expect a lot from them, the DSF present at the seminar underlined the needs to clearly define what is really expected from them with regards to PVE.

To that end, it is important that the instruments (concepts, public policies) that govern in a structural and operational way the obligations of the DSF be in line with the requirements of the PVE. This essential normative orientation awaited from the political-administrative authorities will promote a bigger involvement of the DSF in the PVE, to the extent that the military authority is subordinate to civil power.

Challenge 3: Leveraging the resources of civil stakeholders in the development and implementation of public policies of defence and security in relation to the PVE approach. It appeared essential to recognize the role of “influencers” that the civil stakeholders (civil society, research centers, media, etc.) can have on the politicians in charge of the definition of the action frameworks of the DSF in the PVE. Indeed, an important advocacy work has to be conducted towards the political authorities in order for them to be able to strongly take ownership of the prevention concept. Because, despite of the intention declarations, the approaches based on the security and military responses are still largely predominating. This is reflected by the global and regional initiatives carried out in the African continent and elsewhere, all of them being focused on combat coalitions, where the same passion and willingness do not exist when it comes to implementing preventive measures.

In the perspective that “**security is everyone’s concern**”, and requires everyone’s involvement, civil society stakeholders have attributes that allow them for example to:

- seize all the opportunities to send strong signals to policy-makers and primarily to the Head of State (Supreme Chief of the Armies), as well as to the Parliament, which performs the democratic control and defines the legislative and budgetary framework of the DSF actions;

- be part of the political and security scope of the local authorities to be permanently in a trust and efficiency proximity with the populations, if possible upstream from any security emergency.

However, they constitute a resource still widely unexploited. It then becomes important to consider them as wealth by integrating them in the development and implementation processes of public policies of defence and security in relation with the PVE approach and by giving them the means that will allow them to get more involved in the prevention of this threat that is rapidly evolving.

Challenge 4: The essential strengthening of the relationships between civilians and the DSF. In order to achieve this, we have to be more creative in the civil-military actions, reinforce the DSF capacities with regards to obtaining information with the population, and establish close collaboration between the DSF and the citizens. It is in this context that the participants have suggested two lines of thought that can be considered as the beginning of a solution:

- reforming the laws against terrorism which are in most countries of the region still perceived by the populations as a weapon of the government, used to suppress the opposition, trample on Human Rights, suffocate the civil society and the media, or stigmatize certain ethnic and religious communities in the name of national security. It must be recognized - as it was the case during the seminar - that such a legislative or statutory provision and

its use do not promote the necessary synergy that has to exist between the population and DSF in the prevention and the fight against violent extremism;

- multiplying the civil-military operations. This will allow in the medium and long-term to reinforce the social dimension of the army and to further improve the security corridor of all the countries of the region at a time when the threats are more than ever pervasive, the urge of human security is felt everywhere and prevention becomes a permanent requirement in order to act on the causes of violent extremism.

Violent extremism reveals that societies are in conflict with themselves. Bringing efficient and sustainable solutions requires from the DSF the ability to change their actual conception of security to reflect on the non-military challenges of security. This implies that they be in a time of peace, an element of social cohesion, particularly by reinforcing the army-nation link.

Violent extremism finally reminds the governments that they need to coordinate and integrate their actions at the regional level in order to significantly reduce their root causes. This wake-up call was an aspiration clearly shared by the participants who invited the organizers to work in this direction at the sub-regional level.



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