

Integrating Human Rights into Countering Violent Extremism: A Comparative Analysis of Women Without Borders and Hedayah Initiatives

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Abstract : This paper examines the evolving landscape of preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) by delving into the growing importance of integrating human rights principles into violence prevention strategies on the local, community level. This study sheds light on the underlying theoretical frameworks of violent extremism and the influence of gender while investigating the intersection between human rights preservation and violent extremism prevention. To gain practical insight, the research focuses on two prominent international non-governmental organizations, Women without Borders (WwB) and Hedayah, and their distinct PCVE initiatives. WwB adopts a gender-sensitive approach, implementing parental education programs that empower mothers in at-risk communities to prevent the spread of violent extremism. In contrast, Hedayah takes an indirect route, employing capacity building programs that enhance the capabilities of educators, social workers, and psychologists in early intervention, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. Qualitative data for this comparative analysis was collected through an extensive four-month internship at WwB during the fall of 2020, a three-month internship at Hedayah in the spring of 2021, a thought-provoking semi-structured interview with the executive director of WwB, personal field notes, and a comprehensive discourse analysis of the prevailing literature on human rights considerations in PCVE practices. This study examines the merits and challenges of integrating human rights into PCVE programming through the lens of both organizations, WwB and Hedayah. The findings of this study will inform policymakers, practitioners, and researchers on the intricate relationship between human rights protection and effective PCVE strategies.

Keywords : preventing and countering violent extremism, human rights, counterterrorism, peacebuilding, capacity building programs, gender studies

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