



Commonwealth Secretariat Countering Violent Extremism Unit

Key Facts

1. The decision to create a dedicated Commonwealth Secretariat Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Unit was adopted at the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta.
2. The CVE Unit was established in 2017 to provide support to member countries in developing their national strategies to counter violent extremism (CVE) and to leverage the Secretariat's decades of experience supporting governments in key areas, such as strengthening the rule of law, human rights and youth empowerment – while drawing on the shared values, cultural and regional diversity of the Commonwealth.
3. The CVE Unit operates in five key areas:
 - i. In-depth technical assistance for countries with un-addressed vulnerability to violent extremism. Support is provided to understand national gaps and strengths, and to implement CVE policy and programming that assists the development of an intrinsic capacity for managing CVE threats effectively.
 - ii. Youth and CSO Training and support to strengthen their skills to counter violent extremism. CSO-Government collaboration is encouraged in order to build resilient communities.
 - iii. Capacity building and awareness raising activities to improve knowledge about CVE among Commonwealth member governments, networks and various sectors of the Commonwealth in order to integrate and mainstream CVE into broader cooperation and deal with violent extremism in all forms.
 - iv. Research, communication, and information to advance understanding of CVE through the mechanism of the Commonwealth CVE Cadre of Experts established in 2018 and endorsed by the 2018 CHOGM.
 - v. Advocacy for Small States that may not be able to support routine engagement with multilateral forums, such as the Global Counter Terrorism Forum or industry-led initiatives such as the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism.
4. The Commonwealth CVE Unit approach is to work with member countries to develop, define and understand the phenomenon of violent extremism as it relates to their specific context, and then to strategise, plan and act accordingly.
5. The Commonwealth approach to CVE involves responding to mutually identified gaps and mapping and drawing upon existing support mechanisms and resources, sharing best practice and harnessing the full family of Commonwealth governments, networks and organisations in a coordinated fashion.
6. The non-regional character of the Commonwealth helps it address the current trans-national threat of violent extremism. While violent extremism is of varying degrees of concern for different Commonwealth countries, violent extremism is a trans-national issue.