

ROLE OF WOMEN IN COUNTERING/PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Victims . Perpetrators . Disruptors



WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

A narrow understanding of women's roles in CVE limits policy options and **perpetuates strategic blind spots**, such as failing to recognize women's agency as potential mitigators and perpetrators of violence and 'securitizing' women's roles in CVE. (US National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security)



WHAT DO WE KNOW?

VICTIMS



As violent extremist groups increase their influence in a territory they simultaneously increase strategic attacks on women's rights and freedoms, leading to a notable decrease in women's ability to move freely, engage in public life, access education and employment, and enjoy health services



Girls are attacked in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, and many other places simply for going to school



Girls are sold into child marriage and sex slavery, and Yazidi women – at the hands of ISIS – have been targeted with the most barbaric acts of violence in a campaign of ethnic cleansing



PERPETRATORS

Planners &
Logistics Handlers



Soldiers



Recruiters

voluntary
coerced
duped



DISRUPTORS

We know that **IF WOMEN ARE EMPOWERED**

They can

- Recognize early signs of radicalization
- Build supportive communities
- Engage in effective and contextually appropriate actions to prevent radicalization from taking place



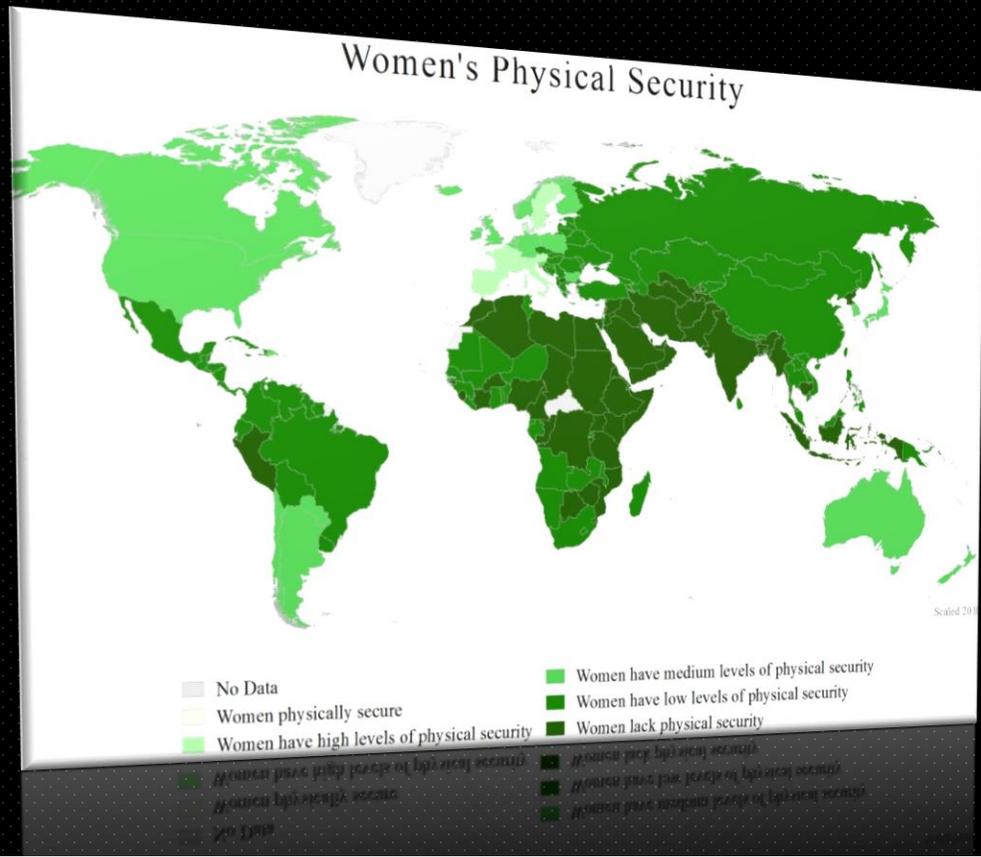
SO What is **missing** in our understanding, analysis, and policy discourse?



- **Study of situation of women** in the study of security
- **Gender Perspective** in understanding radicalization process
- **Support** for voices of women on the ground



STUDY OF WOMEN



Valerie Hudson's groundbreaking work in understanding the link between security of women and security of states:

- **Physical security of women** as the BEST indicator for determining which states would be the least peaceful or of the most concern to the international community or have the worst relations with their (NOT level of democracy, level of wealth, prevalence of Islamic culture)
- **Inequity in family law and practice** as the best predictor of state peacefulness
- **Indifference about enforcing laws that protect women**, as the best indicator of likelihood to be compliant with international norms to which it has committed.



IMPORTANCE OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

- Gender is the differential needs, experiences, and status of women and men, and boys and girls based on socio-cultural context. Consideration of these differences and their impact on women, men, boys, and girls is what is known as a gender perspective.
- Highlights how root causes affect women and men differently.
- Will allow policy makers to formulate strategies informed by understanding how terrorist violence may encourage women and girls to participate in CVE or become radicalized, or how gender discriminatory government policies, such as limited access to education can impede women's participation in CVE efforts.



A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE LOOK AT POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR WOMEN & GIRLS' RADICALIZATION

Ideology

- Feeling of social or cultural isolation &/or alienation
- Feeling that the international Muslim community is being violently persecuted
- Anger, sadness &/or frustration over a perceived lack of international action in response to this persecution
- Utopian ideas of building a Caliphate state
- Individual duty and identity building
- Romanticization of the experience; both in travel and in forming a union with a jihadist husband

Emancipation/Independence

- Economic & financial pressures
- Social & family problems (such as domestic violence)
- Limited access to rights and marginalization of women's roles
- Relationship with radicalized men/or desire for romance
- Being single, divorced or widowed and lacking social standing
- Gender biased discrimination in society



❖ What are we MISSING?

- Heavy emphasis on role of women as disruptors through their roles as **family members** but not as much awareness and support for their community based organized efforts.
- There may be deficiency in skills and necessary confidence since many of these women have limited access to education and lack the agency in the family to effectively disrupt.
- Our strict anti-terrorism financing rules exclude civil society groups, including women's organizations from financial support.

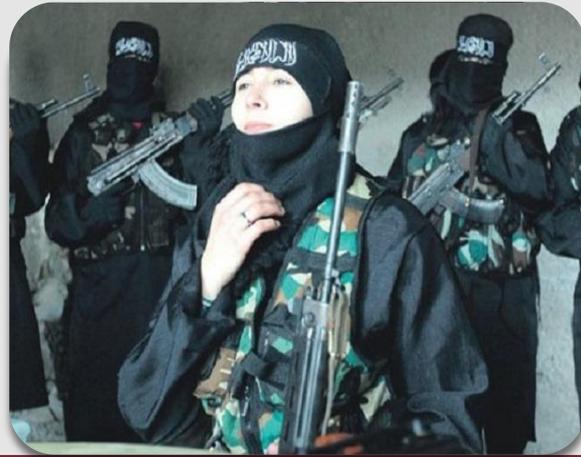


❖ Where should we focus?

- Often the focus on CVE/de-radicalization diverts resources and efforts away from DEVELOPMENT efforts in the community ... specially women ...
- Must incorporate development goals and initiatives into de-radicalization and CVE efforts
- Integrate peace education, human rights, and democratic laws into curricula
- Listen to and take guidance from women activist voices on the ground



US NAP Commitments:



Research & Case Studies

- What are the recruitment strategies for women/men, boys/girls
- What is the role gender plays in such strategies
- What are the key economic & social conditions that play a part in radicalization and violence?
- What are the approaches and activities women/girls, men/boys use in the prevention, mitigation & countering of radicalization and VE?



Integration of Women into Counterterrorism and CVE efforts

- Capacity building
- Participation
- Protection
- Engagement



Community-based Approach

- Address socioeconomic, political & cultural drivers of VE via **trainings & activities for both young men and women** on
- civic education
 - leadership
 - Fostering moderate voices
 - Vocational & entrepreneurial skills



WHAT WORKS



Global network of women committed to CVE

- Train other women to recognize signs of radicalization
- Mediate conflict within communities to reduce VE



Trainings

- Female civil society leaders and dialogues with law enforcement personnel with local women's networks to devise CVE strategies and pilot prevention activities



Messaging

- Raise awareness about religious interpretations and beliefs and open space for further discussion about Islam and faith.
- Work with media to promote respectful and pluralistic freedom of speech and religion.

