



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Delphi panel for exploring trends and policy actions regarding counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB)

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Preface

The Netherlands is committed to preventing and, where necessary, countering terrorism. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is one of the actors that implements Dutch counterterrorism (CT) policy. Because terrorism is not bound by borders, a global approach and international cooperation are essential.

The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is currently evaluating the MFA's counterterrorism policy. This Delphi study aims to contribute to this evaluation. The thrust of the present study is to explore the current state of affairs in the field of CT and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), using the Delphi method to gather insights of key experts.

A special word of thanks goes to all experts who participated in the Delphi panel. Without their valuable input and their endurance in the process, this study would not have been possible.

This report was written by an evaluation team consisting of IOB colleagues Paul Westerhof, Rens Willems and Arjan Schuthof. The internal IOB advisory group who provided valuable feedback consisted of Sabine de Jager, Paul de Nooijer, Sam Streefkerk and myself. Final responsibility of this report rests solely with IOB.

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1. Introduction and main findings

1.1. Background and objective

The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is currently evaluating the Dutch foreign policy on counterterrorism (CT) and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

Within the context of this evaluation, IOB set up a Delphi panel to explore CT and P/CVE policies and strategies. The objective of this panel was to help identify possible trends and priorities in the field of CT and P/CVE, and to identify important instruments and fora for policy development and implementation.

The Delphi method was developed in the 1960s by the RAND Corporation as a way to obtain the most reliable consensus of a group of experts (Dalkey and Helmer, 1962; Linstone and Turoff, 1975). It has since then been widely used as a technique for harnessing and organizing judgement, particularly on problems that are highly complex and require intuitive interpretation of evidence or informed guesswork. It also allows for the input of various experts who are spatially separated (Fefer et al, 2016).

1.2. Main findings and reading guide

Responding to three questions, the Delphi panel resulted in three extensive lists of what the individual panel members consider relevant threats, trends and policy instruments. The various items listed by the panel members were subsequently ranked in order of importance.

The results of this Delphi panel indicate the following:

- The field of CT and C/PVE is quite divided, and experts do not agree on what the most pressing issues were in recent years, and what the most pressing issues and most important policy instruments will be in the coming years.
- However, there was *moderate* agreement on a number of issues:
 - The most pressing issues in the past five years were ‘ISIS’, ‘foreign terrorist fighters’ and ‘home-grown terrorism’.
 - The most crucial issues in the next two to four years are expected to be ‘ongoing or increased geopolitical conflict in the Middle East’ and ‘increase of far-right extremism’.
 - The most important policy actions for the MFA in the next two to four years include ‘focus on human rights’, ‘focus on conflict resolution and stabilisation in fragile environments’, ‘focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters’, and promote knowledge exchange and fund research - investigate impact - promote M&E.

- Several issues overlap and reoccur in all three questions and are therefore important to note: 1) promoting an evidence-base for CT and C/PVE, 2) dealing with foreign terrorist fighters, 3) human rights, and 4) root causes and governance.

More in detail, the issues that are most relevant are:

1. Promoting an evidence-base for CT and C/PVE: A first trend that can be observed between the three lists is the aforementioned lack of substantive evidence underlying CT and C/PVE

programming, and a call for strengthening M&E and the promotion of research and knowledge exchange.

2. Dealing with foreign terrorist fighters: Thousands of individuals travelled to Iraq and Syria to join extremist groups. The flow and return or repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters and their families is considered a crucial policy issue. Linked to this is the issue of imprisoned terrorist fighters, the risk of (further) radicalisation in prisons, and efforts to reintegrate and de-radicalise persons affiliated with extremist groups.

3. Human rights: There is a dual relationship between human rights and CT and C/PVE. On the one hand, there is a risk that certain CT and C/PVE measures (or abuse thereof) result in violations of human rights. On the other hand, human rights violations may contribute to an enabling environment for recruitment by extremist groups. The protection of human rights are therefore also considered as a vital element for C/PVE policies and programming.

4. Root causes and governance: Structural problems related to (or hindering) security, governance and social-economic well-being are not directly causing radicalisation and violence, but are considered important drivers. Efforts to promote conflict resolution, stabilisation and development are therefore considered to be crucial elements for preventing violent extremism.

Based on the findings, IOB recommends that:

- To help overcome the lack of agreement and focus in the field, the MFA should promote dialogue and knowledge exchange with key stakeholders, particularly on the effectiveness of CT and PVE policies.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 gives a detailed description of the methodology used and the different steps that were taken during the Delphi panel.
- Chapter 3 presents the results. It first discusses a number of choices made during the process, and the extent to which this could have affected the results. Second, it discusses the relevance of the findings to draw conclusions and make recommendations.
- The annexes provide detailed lists of the responses to the three questions.

2. Research questions and methodology

The Delphi method was employed to explore the following three questions:

1. What were the most important international trends and issues (topics, problems, areas) in the last 5 years in the field of CT and C/PVE?
2. What will likely be the most important international trends and issues (topics, problems, areas) for the next 2-4 years in the field of CT and C/PVE?
3. What will likely be the most important instruments for a state actor like the Netherlands MFA¹ for the next 2-4 years in the field of CT and C/PVE (i.e. fora, mechanisms, tools, activities it can contribute to, support, participate in)?

There are various ways in which the Delphi method can be used: researchers have not followed a consistent method, and have not used uniform means to report results (Schmidt, 1997, 764). In this case we have drawn on the method described by Schmidt. The data collection consisted of three phases, described in more detail below:

- Phase 1: identification of key issues
- Phase 2: determine the most important issues
- Phase 3: rank the issues.

A key assumption of the Delphi method is that the combined answer of a group is more accurate than the answers of individuals. A group of experts was selected to form a 'Delphi panel', and to systematically identify and prioritize the answers to the questions above. The Delphi panel was asked to submit their responses in a total of six rounds. In each round, a questionnaire was sent via email to the panellist, who were given a week to respond (again via email). After each round, the IOB research team consolidated and analysed the responses, which was provided to the panel as feedback in the following round.

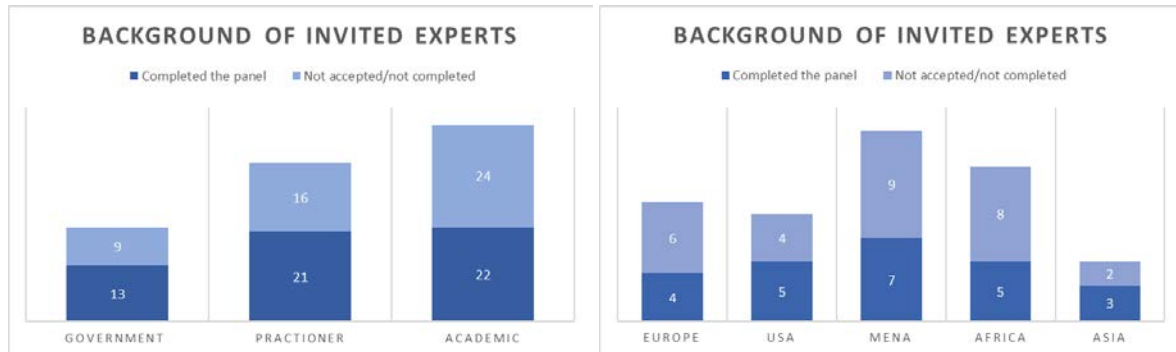
Another key element of the Delphi panel is anonymity of the panellists during the data collection process (Linstone and Turoff, 1975; 3). This anonymity ensures that all panellists get equal voice, the influence of status and personalities in the discussion are removed and that panellists feel free to express their opinions. Experts were therefore approached individually, and not informed about the identity of other panellists. They were also requested not to discuss their participation in the panel and their responses until the data collection was completed. Furthermore, during the data collection and analysis, the IOB-research team channelled all communication with the panellists through another IOB-staff member who anonymised the responses by the panellists, ensuring that the IOB-research team conducted the consolidation and analysis of responses solely based on their contents.

2.1. Selection of panellists

A Delphi study does not depend on a statistical sample that attempts to be representative of a population, but draws on qualified experts who have a deep understanding of the issues under investigation. The selection of experts is therefore a crucial aspect of the study. To ensure the quality of results, IOB targeted people with a high level of expertise in the field and aimed for a heterogeneous panel. As a first step, IOB made a short-list of experts both from the Netherlands and abroad, from various backgrounds (government, NGO, academic) and with different technical

¹ The Netherlands MFA is responsible for both foreign affairs and development cooperation.

expertise (e.g. CT, C/PVE, finance, crime, foreign terrorist fighters, etc.) and regional expertise (EU, USA, Africa, Middle East). See the figures below for a distribution of backgrounds and expertise of the invited experts.² The light colour indicates the number of experts that were invited but did not respond or dropped out the panel. The dark colour indicates the number of invited experts that completed the panel.



For this study, IOB aimed for the participation of at least 20 panellists. Panellists were expected to respond to multiple rounds of questions during a period of around three months. To limit attrition, participating experts received a fixed remuneration if they completed the data collection process.

Of the 60 invited experts, 34 accepted the invitation to participate in the study. Of the 34 participants, 5 dropped out and 29 completed the entire process, corresponding to a response level of 85%. Annex 1 provides a list of experts that completed the full panel.

2.2. Phase 1: identification of key issues

The first phase consisted of the collection of significant issues, or possible answers to the questions listed above.

1st phase, round 1: compiling the lists

The panellists received a form with the main questions, and were asked to submit at least 7 possible answers to each question in no particular order. They were encouraged to provide more than 7 answers if they considered more issues to be relevant. Furthermore, the panellists were encouraged to think unconventionally and creatively, and also include 'outside-the-box' answers. Each issue (as answer to the question) had to be clearly described, with a maximum of 75 words. Besides a description of the concept, the panellists needed to explain the relevance of the issue, i.e. a short description of why they considered this issue to be relevant.

For each question, a total of around 250 items were listed by the Delphi panel. IOB consolidated all the responses into a single list for each question, and amalgamated items with similar titles and descriptions. The consolidated lists had around 100 items for each question. IOB aimed to revise the answers as little as possible to do justice to the input of individual panellists, while at the same time making the lists as concise as possible.

1st phase, round 2: verification of the lists

² Background and expertise was determined by IOB based on information and CVs available online. Several experts had multiple backgrounds and expertise in different regions. Not all experts were listed as having specific regional expertise.

The three consolidated lists were shared with the panellists to verify that the issues they had listed were fairly represented. This step ensured that a valid consolidated list was produced (Schmidt, 1997: 769). At the request of a few panellists, a number of items and descriptions on the list were adjusted by IOB.

2.3. Phase 2: determining the most important issues

Once the consolidated lists were verified, the second phase aimed to bring down the number of items on the lists to a manageable number.

2nd phase, round 3: reducing the number of items

For each of the three lists, the panellists were asked to select 10 items they considered most important. The goal of this phase was to reduce the total number of items, by majority vote. Initially IOB had set the target at 10 items for each question, but the target was raised to approximately 15-20 items given the number and breadth of total items listed. For questions one and two this was achieved by selecting the items that were voted for by at least six panellists, and for question 3 by selecting the number of items voted for by at least seven panellists. This resulted in a list of 17 items for questions one and two, and a list of 19 items for question 3. See annex 2 for the lists of items and descriptions.

2.4. Phase 3: ranking the issues.

In the third and final phase, the panellists were asked to rank the items on the three lists in order of importance. The goal in this phase of a Delphi panel is to reach consensus on the ranking of the items, and the ranking of items can be repeated until an appropriate level of consensus and feasibility is reached.³ In other words, a balance needs to be struck between trying to reach a higher level of consensus in an additional round and losing the interest of the participating experts resulting in them dropping out of the panel. For this study, IOB determined a maximum of three rounds would be conducted in this phase. The level of consensus on the ranking was determined by the Kendall coefficient of concordance (Kendall's W, see box 1).

Box 1. Kendall's W

Kendall's W is a coefficient of concordance and is used here to determine the level of consensus between panellists on the ranking of items. Kendall's W is a value between 0 and 1, with 0 being complete disagreement and 1 being complete agreement. The table below provides a guideline for the interpretation of Kendall's W. However, figures to be interpreted on a scale and do not represent exact cut-off points.⁴

| Kendall's W | interpretation | Level of confidence in ranks |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 0.1 | Very weak agreement | None |
| 0.3 | Weak agreement | Low |
| 0.5 | Moderate agreement | fair |
| 0.7 | Strong agreement | High |
| 0.9 | Unusually strong agreement | Very high |

³ With feasibility being defined as indulgence of respondents and researcher's resources and additional time requirements (Kobus, J. and M. Westner, 2016: 5).

⁴ Schmidt, R. C. (1997) "Managing Delphi surveys using nonparametric statistical techniques." p767.

3rd phase, round 4: ranking the lists

The three lists resulting from the second phase were shared with the panellists, with items ranked in alphabetical order. Panellists were then asked to rank the issues in descending order, from the most important to the least important. Tied rankings were not allowed.⁵ For each item, the panellists were asked to provide a brief explanation of the importance and rank. The answers were subsequently aggregated by IOB, resulting in a mean ranking and a level of consensus (Kendall's W). For each question, the value of Kendall's W was under 0.1 which indicated there was almost complete disagreement on the ranking. IOB therefore decided to conduct the maximum of three rounds in this phase to see if the level of consensus would increase.

3rd phase, rounds 5 and 6: verification of the ranked lists

The ranked lists were shared with the panellists, and they were given the option to revise their individual ranking decision. For rounds six and seven, IOB provided the panellists with the following information, for each of the three questions:

- The mean ranking of the previous round (the combined average rank).
- The individual ranking decision of every panellist of the previous round.
- Kendall's W, indicating the level of consensus.
- For each item, the percentage of experts who ranked the respective item in their top 5.
- Relevant comments/justifications by the respondents (anonymised).

In rounds six and seven, the panellists were given the opportunity to revise their ranking based on this information, and were asked to provide a justification for any changes they made.

⁵ For example, two items cannot be ranked on a split first place.

3. Results

The tables below present a summary of the results of the Delphi panel, showing the level of consensus (table 1) and the final ranking of items for each question (tables 2, 3 and 4). Annex 3 provides more detailed tables, with the ranking in each round, and percentages of respondents listing each item in their top five.

On all three questions, there is a very weak agreement on the ranking of issues (see table 1). The level of agreement did increase in each round, but the values for Kendall’s W indicate that experts in the field of CT and C/PVE are quite divided. There is not only disagreement on what are the key issues and policy responses for the MFA in the two to four years to come, but also on what the most pressing issues have been in the last five years.

Table 1. Kendall’s W and level of confidence in each round⁶

| | Round 4 | Round 5 | Round 6 |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Question 1 | 0.069 (<i>complete disagreement</i>) | 0.185 (<i>very weak agreement</i>) | 0.214 (<i>very weak to weak agreement</i>) |
| Question 2 | 0.093 (<i>complete disagreement</i>) | 0.154 (<i>very weak agreement</i>) | 0.187 (<i>very weak agreement</i>) |
| Question 3 | 0.087 (<i>complete disagreement</i>) | 0.138 (<i>very weak agreement</i>) | 0.174 (<i>very weak agreement</i>) |

In order to move beyond the finding of weak agreement on the overall ranking, IOB considered there to be moderate agreement on the importance of an item when the majority (more than half) of the panel members ranked an item within their top five.

For the list of most important trends and issues in the last five years (question one), there is moderate agreement on the ranking of the top three items: ‘ISIS’, ‘foreign terrorist fighters’ and ‘home-grown terrorism’ (see box 2 for a description of these items as a result of phase 1 of the panel). More than half of the experts in the panel ranked these items in their top five. There is much less agreement on the lowest three ranking three of the total list of 17 items. Less than half of the panel ranked these in their bottom five, meaning that the majority of the panellists actually ranked the bottom three issues several places higher.

Table 2. Ranking results Q1

| Most important trends and issues in the field of CT and C/PVE in the last 5 years. | |
|---|--|
| 1. ISIS | 10. State violence - Human rights violations contributing to violent extremism |
| 2. Foreign terrorist fighters | 11. Increase in zero-tolerance policies, hardening of policies |
| 3. Home-grown terrorism | 12. Rise of nationalism/populism |
| 4. Foreign terrorist fighters returning | 13. Lack of M&E, lack of evidence |
| 5. Human rights deteriorating as a result of CT and C/PVE measures | 14. Imprisonment and radicalisation |
| 6. Root causes remaining unaddressed | 15. Polarisation |
| 7. Growth of far-right | 16. Bias towards Islam of CT and C/PVE measures |

⁶ See box 1 on page 5 for a detailed explanation of Kendall’s W.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 8. Increased use of social media / Internet by extremist and terrorist groups | 17. Proliferation of low-tech attacks |
| 9. Jihadist movement/ideology | |

Box 2. Items with moderate confidence for Q1. Descriptions as resulted from phase 1.

ISIS: The so-called Islamic State’s attempt to create a land-based neo-Caliphate, the shocking momentum of its early victories, and sophisticated media apparatus designed to attract foreign recruits and fighters. ISIS has capitalized on local insurgencies and aligned with terrorist groups in several countries, from West Africa to Southeast Asia.

Foreign terrorist fighters: The conflict in Iraq and Syria saw thousands of individuals from all over the world travel to these countries to join jihadist extremist groups, primarily Islamic State.

Home-grown terrorism: Terrorists radicalising and plotting attacks without direct assistance from a terrorist organisation have been a huge challenge over the last years, as became evident from the dozens of attacks they plotted either alone or in small groups.

For the list of most important trends and issues expected in the next two to four years (question two), there is moderate agreement on the ranking of the top two items: ‘ongoing or increased geopolitical conflict in the Middle East’ and ‘increase of far-right extremism’ (see box 3). More than half of the experts in the panel ranked these items in their top five. There is also moderate agreement on the bottom three items on the total list of 17 items. More than half of the panellists ranked ‘de-legitimisation of liberal democracy’, ‘climate change’ and ‘migration’ in their bottom five.

Table 3. Ranking results Q2

Most important trends and issues in the field of CT and C/PVE expected in the next 2-4 years.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Ongoing or increased geopolitical conflict (and international involvement) in the Middle East | 9. Rise of nationalism/populism |
| 2. Increase of far-right extremism | 10. Continued attraction of the jihadist ideology |
| 3. Home-grown extremism | 11. Increased polarisation |
| 4. Return and reintegration of Foreign Fighters | 12. Continued and increased use of social media / Internet by extremist and terrorist groups |
| 5. Addressing weak/failed governance as key driver of violent extremism | 13. Imprisonment and radicalisation/ rehabilitation |
| 6. Human rights deteriorating as a result of (use and abuse of) CT and C/PVE measures | 14. Lacking evidence base / M&E / What works/what doesn't |
| 7. ISIS re-emerging and adapting | 15. De-legitimisation of liberal democracy |
| 8. Formation of transnational terrorist networks / unification of groups | 16. Climate change |
| | 17. Migration |

Box 3. Items with moderate confidence for Q2. Descriptions as resulted from phase 1.

Ongoing or increased geopolitical conflict (and international involvement) in the Middle East:

Ongoing conflict in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Israel/Palestine, the potential for new instability in Algeria, Sudan, and particularly the possibility of US led regime change in Iran. Furthermore the deployment of special forces operations and drone strikes in this area. Finally, there is no indications that the economic or

political conditions in MENA will improve in the short or even medium term. This will keep a strong momentum for migration into the EU from the region, with economic, political and social consequences for both EU and MENA region.

Increase of far-right extremism: An emerging issue is the increase right-wing/far-right extremism. Far-right extremism is expected to become a key security issue in the near future.

For the list of most important CT and C/PVE instruments expected in the next two to four years for the MFA (question three), there is moderate agreement on the top three items: ‘focus on human rights’, ‘focus on conflict resolution and stabilisation in fragile environments’ and ‘focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters’ (see box 3). More than half of the experts in the panel ranked these items in their top five. There is also moderate agreement on the bottom four items on the total list of 19 items. More than half of the panellists ranked ‘rightsizing CVE’, ‘conduct risk assessment’ and ‘promote the integrated 'Dutch' approach’ in their bottom five, and three-quarter of the panellists ranked ‘focus on the link with migration’ in their bottom five.

Table 4. Ranking results Q3

Most important CT and C/PVE instruments expected in the next 2-4 years for the MFA.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Focus on human rights | 9. Focus on development-nexus |
| 2. Focus on conflict resolution and stabilisation in fragile environments | 10. Promote multi-dimensional cooperation / a 'whole of society' approach |
| 3. Focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters | 11. Focus on intelligence and law enforcement |
| 4. Promote knowledge exchange and fund research - investigate impact - promote M&E | 12. Mapping, tracking and coordination of CT and P/CVE activities |
| 5. Focus on political dialogue between polarising groups / promote negotiations | 13. Focus on resilience |
| 6. Support grassroots / CSOs - both in terms of finance, and by promoting an enabling environment | 14. Promote citizens' empowerment / social movement against terrorism |
| 7. Focus on reintegration and deradicalisation programmes | 15. Experimental projects |
| 8. Focus on Rule of Law programming (SSR, SSD) | 16. Rightsizing CVE |
| | 17. Conduct risk assessment |
| | 18. Promote the integrated 'Dutch' approach |
| | 19. Focus on the link with migration |

Box 4. Items with moderate confidence for Q3. Descriptions as resulted from phase 1.

Focus on human rights: The MFA should focus on the protection of human rights, including social, civil, political, cultural and economic rights. Human rights protection continues to be under pressure, and so a strong campaign to ensure that HR are upheld while implementing CT/CVE policies is very important. As terrorism is sometimes a response to government repression (although admittedly this differs from case to case), the MFA could urge the relevant authorities to exercise restraint in the use of repressive counterterrorism tools. The MFA can also provide financial and political support for the OHCHR, and for the Special Rapporteur for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism.

Focus on conflict resolution and stabilisation in fragile environments: With other forms of violence and weak/poor governance contributing to the emergence of Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs), it will

be helpful to relate improvements in SDG16 on reducing VE. The study of conflict and the study of terrorism have become distinct disciplines since the late 1970s but arguably one of the better ways of reducing terrorism is tackling the conflict that has given rise to terrorist attacks. Stabilisation efforts for weak and fragile states will be important to counteract the appeal of extremist movements. This also requires investing in cooperation between departments and actors working on conflict transformation and CT. It may also require taking a holistic approach (human security, rule of law and peacebuilding) and keeping CVE and CT separate.

Focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters: The MFA should focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters. States should continue to invest in technologies that aim to stem FTF flows by detecting and preventing attempted travel, investigating these individuals, and prosecuting accordingly. Software like the Netherlands' API & PNR-integrated TRIP system are necessary tools for states aiming to clamp down on foreign terrorist fighters. Bilateral cooperation on the issue of FTFs and their children in the MENA region. As the number of countries where foreign fighters flee to, increases, there is a need for a network to get and process information from those countries. European states currently all have their own policies with regard to bringing back FF and the children. There is a need for a European policy.

3.1. Discussion of the results

This section first discusses a number of choices made in throughout the process, and the extent to which this could have affected the results.

Broadness of the questions

The three questions that guided the Delphi panel were quite broad and used terms such as 'international trends' or 'international instruments' that could be interpreted in different ways. Furthermore, the questions asked for both trends and issues, which are quite different in nature. The objective of using broad questions was to promote a large spectrum of answers, including outside-the-box answers, and not end up with a small set of expected answers. The Delphi panel indeed resulted in a large spectrum of different answers on each of the questions. The upside of this is that it provides IOB with a very rich dataset, that can be of wider use for the evaluation that this Delphi research is part of. As a downside, it proved to be more difficult for panellists to compare the different issues, which undoubtedly had a negative effect on the level of agreement on the ranking.

Conciseness of the lists of items

The broadness of the questions resulted in a very large number of individual answers on each question. Because a ranking of items in a Delphi panel requires a limited number of issues to be ranked, the lists needed to be shortened. A first step was the consolidation of the responses into a single list for each question. Items with similar titles and descriptions were merged and edited into a single item. This brought back the number of items on each list from roughly 250 to 100 items. During the consolidation of the lists, IOB aimed to strike a balance between 1) keeping as much of the original inputs unrevised, as to reflect the words and views of individual panel members, and 2) merging similar answers by different panel members to keep the lists as concise as possible. Given the wealth of different answers, IOB decided to increase the target for the shortlist in round three. The resulting lists had 17 (question 1 and 2) and 19 (question 3) items, instead of the initial target of 10. Would the initial target have been maintained, this would possibly have made a higher level of agreement on the ranking more likely.

Number of rounds

A maximum number of rounds for phase three was determined before the start of the Delphi panel. As a result, the panel ended in round 6. The level of agreement on the rankings on each of the three

questions improved in each round. Additional rounds may possibly have increased the level of agreement even further. Yet, as the number of changes in the ranking and improvement in agreement were only limited each round, additional rounds would unlikely have resulted in significant changes. Furthermore, several panellists reported that their input required more time than anticipated and more rounds would have also likely resulted in a higher attrition rate.

Panel demographics

IOB aimed for the selection of a heterogeneous panel, and include experts with different backgrounds and from different regions. Nonetheless, the majority of the experts in the panel is primarily from and/or working in Europe and the United States. While this may to a certain extent also be representative for the field of CT and PVE, it nonetheless includes a bias in the results.

3.2. Relevance of the findings

The results of the Delphi panel show a very weak level of agreement on all three questions. The level of agreement is partially affected by the limitations described above, but the responses and comments by the panellists clearly indicate a strong divergence of opinion. The panel therefore confirms that the field of CT and C/PVE is quite divided, and that there is no agreement on the most pressing threats, the most important trends, and the best strategies for policy implementation.

The lack of agreement on strategies for policy can partly be attributed to the fact there is a lack of knowledge on what works and what does not work in the field of CT and PVE. While the experts in the panel did not rank the lack of M&E and knowledge within the top 10 most pressing issues, almost all the comments added on the issue did acknowledge the problem as such. Several panellists noted that many programmatic and policy decisions are driven by incomplete information, and based on assumptions that are not sufficiently empirically supported. In a field with little knowledge on what works and what doesn't work, it is difficult to reach consensus on courses of action.

The lack of agreement of the Delphi panel on what are the most important threats, trends and strategies for policy, constrains the formulation of clear policy recommendations based on the panel's results. One key recommendation that is based on the results of the panel, is that it is essential to invest in the promotion of policy dialogue and knowledge exchange. The decision of the MFA to co-chair the GCTF and to stimulate the exchange of experiences with CT and PVE policies is therefore very relevant. Given the fact that the field will likely continue to be divided in the years to come, it is recommended that the MFA continues to invest in the promotion of dialogue and knowledge exchange, particularly on the effectiveness of CT and PVE policies.

While there is a lack of agreement on the ranking of the lists, nonetheless a number of additional observations can be made. IOB considered that there was moderate agreement on the importance of an item when the majority (more than half) of the panel members ranked an item within their top five. Furthermore, the three lists represent a *selection* of the 17 to 19 items that the panel considered the most important from a list of around 100 items for each question. And when looking at the three lists side-by-side, several overlapping and reoccurring issues can be identified. This overlap can be considered as an indication of the relevance of these issues:

1. *Promoting an evidence-base for CT and C/PVE*: A first trend that can be observed between the three lists is the aforementioned lack of substantive evidence underlying CT and C/PVE programming, and a call for strengthening M&E and the promotion of research and knowledge exchange.

2. *Dealing with foreign terrorist fighters*: Thousands of individuals travelled to Iraq and Syria to join extremist groups. The flow and return or repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters and their families is considered a crucial policy issue. Linked to this is the issue of imprisoned terrorist fighters, the risk of (further) radicalisation in prisons, and efforts to reintegrate and de-radicalise persons affiliated with extremist groups.
3. *Human rights*: There is a dual relationship between human rights and CT and C/PVE. On the one hand, there is a risk that certain CT and C/PVE measures (or abuse thereof) result in violations of human rights. On the other hand, human rights violations may contribute to an enabling environment for recruitment by extremist groups. The protection of human rights are therefore also considered as a vital element for C/PVE policies and programming.
4. *Root causes and governance*: Structural problems related to (or hindering) security, governance and social-economic well-being are not directly causing radicalisation and violence, but are considered important drivers. Efforts to promote conflict resolution, stabilisation and development are therefore considered to be crucial elements for preventing violent extremism.

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Annex 1: List of panellists

| Name | Organization |
|---------------------|---|
| Fatima Akilu | Neem Foundation, Concord Consultants |
| Edwin Bakker | Universiteit Leiden, The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT), Hoofd Kennis en Onderzoek Politieacademie |
| Ben Baruch | RAND Europe |
| Rik Coolsaet | Egmont Institute, Ghent University |
| Fulco van Deventer | Human Security Collective, International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Teun van Dongen | Consultant |
| Julian Droogan | Macquarie University, Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counterterrorism |
| Christina Eckes | Universiteit van Amsterdam |
| Boaz Ganor | International Institute for Counterterrorism (ICT), Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel, International Academic Counterterrorism Community (ICTAC) |
| Bibi van Ginkel | Clingendael, International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Seamus Hughes | Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), George Washington University (Program on Extremism) |
| Michael Jones | The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) |
| Eelco Kessels | Global Center on Cooperative Security (New York) (GCCS) |
| Peter Knoope | Clingendael, International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Daniel Koehler | German Institute on Radicalization and Re-radicalisation Studies (GIRDS), International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Khalid Koser | Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), Chatham House, Brookings |
| Pieter Nanninga | Rijksuniversiteit Groningen(RUG) |
| Christina Nemr | Global Center on Cooperative Security (New York) (GCCS) |
| Peter R. Neumann | King's College, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism And Responses to Terrorism (START), Founder of International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR), Chairman's Special Representative on Countering Violent Radicalisation for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) |
| Eric Rosand | Brookings, The Prevention Project |
| Hamed el Said | Hedayah, United Nations Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (UN CTITF), Manchester Metropolitan University Business School |
| Marc Sageman | Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) |
| Alex P. Schmid | The Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Matthew Schwartz | Global Center on Cooperative Security (Washington DC) (GCCS) |
| Najib Tuzani | Nuance door Training en Advies (NTA) |
| Renske van der Veer | International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Daan Weggemans | Universiteit Leiden (UL), International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) |
| Emily Winterbotham | The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), UK Stabilisation Unit |
| Rebecca Wolfe | Mercy Corps |

Annex 2: Description of items

Description of items Q1⁷

| # | Issue | description | Relevance |
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| 1 | ISIS | The so-called Islamic State's attempt to create a land-based neo-Caliphate, the shocking momentum of its early victories, and sophisticated media apparatus designed to attract foreign recruits and fighters. ISIS has capitalized on local insurgencies and aligned with terrorist groups in several countries, from West Africa to Southeast Asia. | 1. Success of IS will likely resonate in global jihadist movement and might inspire other jihadi groups to do the same; 2. Flow of FTF's to IS and returnees. The pulling force it generated on generations of youth from over the whole world to join IS; 3. In the Muslim historical imagination the Caliphate is an ideal government reflecting past power and future utopia. This construct still manages to attract people and its destruction on the ground in Syria has not managed to neutralise the idea of a return to Muslim dominance; 4. Even though it has always been a common understanding that military approach/defeat was not the (only) way forward, the defeat of ISIS has created the impression that this collective wisdom may not be correct. This may change the way we will look at CT in the future. It may very well undermine political and public support for soft measures including P/CVE; 5. Need to avoid looking at every scenario where ISIS may have "expanded" its geographical reach through an "ISIS" lens, thus undermining the ability to appreciate the regional and local contexts and leverage existing, or build new, coalitions that can help reduce the threat; 6. Inspired and plotted numerous attacks around the world; 7. Impact on the direct region. |
| 2 | Foreign terrorist fighters | The conflict in Iraq and Syria saw thousands of individuals from all over the world travel to these countries to join jihadist extremist groups, primarily Islamic State. | 1. The FTFs will return to their home countries more radical than ever before, with battlefield experience, and with connections to other terrorist actors which can pose an unprecedented threat (cf. the use of FTF in the first Afghan War and the creation of al Qaeda and Islamist Home-grown Movements). In addition, some member of their families that return - with or without them - may pose a terrorist risk as they become radical by themselves; 2. FTFs acquired skills in terrorist attacks, firearms and explosives; 3. Underscored the varied path for radicalization/recruitment and how motivation for people to join violent extremist groups in Syria and Iraq was more personal than political and individual than ideological; 4. Highlighted how search for belonging, purpose, adventure, and friendship, appear to be main reasons for people to join ISIS just as they remain the least addressed CT issues; 5. One of the big questions is not only how to address the threat of radicalisation but how to reintegrate returning foreign fighters into society. |

⁷ Issues, description and relevance as described by the panellists. Several items on the list combine the input from multiple panellists, and have been edited by IOB. Items are listed in order of the final ranking.

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| 3 | Home-grown terrorism | Terrorists radicalising and plotting attacks without direct assistance from a terrorist organisation have been a huge challenge over the last years, as became evident from the dozens of attacks they plotted either alone or in small groups. | 1. National governments have been forced to increase their threat levels as a result of Daesh and the accompanying inspired attacks seen on European soil; 2. As the caliphate declined, there were concerns that these attacks could increase as people were unable to travel to the caliphate and so instead plotted attacks on their home soil; 3. Attacks have raised questions regarding issues of immigration and integration. It boosts polarisation and division within societies; 4. Home grown terrorists have been responsible for the majority of terrorist attacks in Europe over the last five years; 5. Plots by home-grown terrorists are a major challenge for authorities as they are typically harder to detect. |
| 4 | Foreign terrorist fighters returning | Returning foreign fighters from Syria and Iraq have become an increasing problem. They might be travelling to regional IS affiliates, exporting their experience, technical skills and potentially transferring financial assets; trying to return to their countries of origin, posing a security risk; or have been detained by anti-IS forces. There is a lack of clear policies and/or punitive policies in most countries regarding the FTF's. | 1. A risk is that those who return have intentions to commit acts of terrorism. A risk is that those who return have intentions to spread extremist ideologies. Individuals who return have experience and training above and beyond the average home-grown self-radicalised terrorist; 2. Legislative and judicial infrastructure of home countries may become under significant strain if governments move to prosecute mass returnees. Due process will be challenging given the constraints in collecting evidence from war zones; 3. It is difficult to delineate between extremists, combatants and coerced participants/family members. Processing IS non-combatants (e.g. doctors, bureaucrats, wives) goes beyond existing legal norms in many states, including those in Europe; 4. Many of the returnees need help. If they are treated as pariahs and persecuted by imprisoning them for no reason (from the returnees' perspective), some of them may get upset at the state and society and turn into domestic "terrorists", which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; 5. Abandoned FTFs children might become future terrorists if not de-radicalised and rehabilitated. |
| 5 | Human rights deteriorating as a result of CT and C/PVE measures | The basic underlying principle of all CT or CVE measures should be that they are legitimate and proportional. It seems that increasingly, CT and CVE measures are not proportional and sometimes even simply illegitimate. | 1. Despite the overwhelming relevance of this trend to the international community, very few actors have demonstrated any commitment to reversing it beyond lip service; 2. The goal of CT and CVE measures is not just to stop attacks, but it is to protect democratic rule of law and legal order; 3. If measures do not take this into account it will backfire: it will in the end be perceived as stigmatizing, unjust.; 4. With new insight and in time this will become a problem: what will this look like? 5. Illegitimate measures are problematic in the court of law, and anything coming from such measures is not admissible. |
| 6 | Root causes remaining unaddressed | Absence of collective goods & services such as security, basic infrastructure, health & education, economic/employment opportunities, political freedoms, etc.. Or even repression by the state. Livelihoods that are under threat. International resp. | Root causes are in itself no direct resp. sufficient cause of radicalisation, (violent) extremism and terrorism. It is an important driver for 85% of the members of violent extremist and terrorist groups, but vulnerability (decision to make use of violence or any other criminal act depends on triggers of an individual, personal or specific |

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| | | development cooperation efforts that actually support de political elite and ignore popular resentments, and i.e. make things worse. | group nature (personality, traumatic experiences, lack of stable environment etc.). That is why it is possible and important to focus on or at least take into account specific vulnerable groups. |
| 7 | Growth of far-right | Increase in (violent) far right extremism in the West, feeding from Islamic extremism and triggered by migration. | 1. The spread of right-wing extremist and ethno-nationalist violence has occurred rapidly in some cases and has been building steadily in others. Some overlap exists between the organizational structure, strategic communications, and recruitment strategies of these groups and those of jihadist groups, but the approaches to countering the two must be distinct. Although often perceived as a domestic problem, the rising prevalence of factors like foreign influence operations means this phenomenon is also necessarily a consideration for states' foreign affairs ministries, too; 2. There is a neglect of the significance of right-wing extremist violence and a tendency to conflate right-wing extremism with populism; 3. Islamist attacks and extremism get far more attention in the media and even in the policy sphere; 4. When current CT policies can be applied on right wing terrorism, PVE seems to have a misfit here; 5. The group who is reached and attracted by the extreme right had suddenly become gigantic. Also; due to most of it happening online (where there are few gatekeepers) most of the process happens invisible. |
| 8 | Increased use of social media / Internet by extremist and terrorist groups | A key issue is the increased use of social media for the propagation of extremist ideologies and recruitment of terrorist organizations. In addition, online radicalisation also refers to the self-radicalisation online of vulnerable individuals who access the material of extremists online. Furthermore political discourse has increasingly driven by social media and "logic of outrage" as well. Promotes extreme positions. Furthermore, social media are also used to issue commands and instructions to perpetrators of terrorist attacks. | 1. Hard to regulate/control; 2. Provides extremists with platforms; 3. Extremist and terrorist groups can reach a greater audience; 4. The internet is used by terrorist organizations to spread their propaganda and violent ideas. It is also utilized by individuals to come into contact with others who share the same radical ideologies; 5. digital innovation and technology makes attack planning more effective and more covert, increasing chances of success; 6. Forced increased cooperation between state governments and the private sector. |
| 9 | Jihadist movement / ideology | Over the last five years, jihadist ideology has inspired thousands of individuals to join terrorist groups and commit terrorist attacks, both in the Middle East and beyond, including the West. | 1. Jihadist ideology has motivated thousands of individuals to join groups such as Al Qa'ida, IS and JAN; 2. Jihadist ideology has inspired hundreds of people to commit terrorist attacks outside the muslim world; 3. Jihadist ideology has contributed to polarisation in Western societies, thereby fuelling extremism of different kinds. |
| 10 | State violence - Human rights violations contributing to violent extremism | There is a growing body of data and other evidence that shows support for terrorism and violent extremism is strongly correlated with human rights violations and other violence perpetrated by states against their own populations as part of, or in the name of, counterterrorism operations. | 1. How governments treat their citizens really matters when it comes to C/PVE. The broader aims of strengthening the relationship between the state and its citizens and building trust between all levels of government and local communities lie at the heart of the C/PVE agenda and should feature more prominently in C/PVE efforts; 2. Effective C/PVE requires addressing the marginalization and alienation, poor governance, and state-sponsored violence |

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| | | | that damage the government-citizen relationship and are among the most prevalent drivers of violent extremism; 3. All too often, national governments are reluctant to acknowledge that their behaviour matters when it comes to P/CVE, let alone change it so as to mitigate some of the drivers that can fuel violent extremism. |
| 11 | Increase in zero-tolerance policies, hardening of policies | With the argument that states are facing extremely exceptional security risk governments in various countries adopted a lot of new repressive counter terrorism measures/policies. | 1. The increased threat of terrorist attacks in Europe and the increasing support base for violent extremism under certain populations in our societies, have created a hard security response with very little margin. It has led to increased surveillance, profiling of identity groups and religion, risk based approaches based on big data and algorithms; 2.The securitization and increased investment in State security reinforces the public fear. Fear that induces more security measures, etc. The spiral of escalation also takes place at this level. Securitization leads to identity politics and stigmatisation, stigmatisation leads to victimhood, etc. A spiral from which it gets harder to escape every day. |
| 12 | Rise of nationalism / populism | Populism builds on strategies of emotionalizing politics, tapping into and creating a nationalist and sovereigntist discourse, and making an informed and reasonable exchanges, as well as international cooperation more difficult. The rise of nationalist movements in the West has led to a wave of Islamophobia and demands for hardening policies against what the electorate may believe is not essentially Western, i.e. foreign Muslim immigration to Europe | The general shift of political climate has many consequences. It is a source of disenchantment of politics for those who believe to distinguish themselves by their commitment to a value framework that disapproves of this discourse. It alienates those who are part of a society but are target of the 'othering' strategies of populism (Muslims, foreigners, etc). |
| 13 | Lack of M&E, lack of evidence | There is a persistent lack of substantive evidence for PCVE programming, beyond problematic or relatively superficial metrics. Concerted efforts have been made to improve M+E modalities but practitioners are often forced to rely on output rather than outcome level data, limiting our understanding of what works and, perhaps more importantly, what has failed and should not be repeated. Also, the scientific basis for understanding what motivates terrorists and violent extremists, and what are the most effective responses, remains weak, with a striking lack of consensus among experts. Finally, there has been an explosion of CVE programs in the West, but none has undergone any scientific evaluation for efficacy. What passes for evaluation is really "process evaluation" rather than evaluation of effectiveness of programs, which have to be evaluated through approximation of randomized controlled trials (RCT) as is now common in medicine and even policing. | 1. The continued difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of P/CVE has limited the ability to expand and innovate within the field. Policymakers and practitioners often do not take advantage of opportunities to learn from other fields to understand how they might measure small and incremental changes or understand how using non-traditional data or big data might be able to help them. 2. The limited quality of evaluations has meant that there has been limited evidence for states to base their investments in P/CVE M&E on. 3. C/PVE interventions appear to be too often dictated by political and other considerations (including a preference for short-term measures and an aversion to risk) or assumptions, rather than informed by the evidence. 4. Ill-designed programs are a waste of resources and create additional risks within violent extremism and terrorism. 5. The conceptual ambiguity surrounding violent extremism and its drivers accentuates the challenges. This raises difficulties when trying to design suitable indicators, exacerbating issues associated with ascribing attribution, measuring a negative and so on. Due to programme funding cycles, monitoring and evaluation also tend to have |

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| | | | relatively short-time horizons, restricting any assessment of impact beyond a fairly arbitrary measure, despite the fluidity of attitudinal and behavioural change. PCVE policy and programming therefore relies on assumption-based logics that are often ineffective or deleterious. |
| 14 | Imprisonment and radicalisation | While often conceptualized as “prison radicalization,” the terror-prison nexus really encompasses processes of radicalization that occur in custody both inside and outside of the prison system. These processes extend not only to individuals who have been radicalized outside custody, but also to those who were radicalized in custody after sustained contact with imprisoned radicals. Furthermore in many states of the MENA region thousands of people have been arrested/charged with terrorist related sentences. They are imprisoned in poor conditions and sometimes tortured so it is hard to facilitate rehabilitation towards society inside these places. | 1. risk of turning prisons into breeding places for terrorists; 2. reintegration into society is difficult; 3. Rise in number of terrorist detainees since 9/11. While imprisoned they can further radicalize, form new networks or make plans for future attacks. 4. Risk of exploiting repressive measures to stifle the voices of human rights defenders, journalist, minorities and civil society, further radicalizing affected parties. |
| 15 | Polarisation | The current climate, both societal, political and in the debate, is increasingly polarised. Different groups in society seem to be increasingly intolerant towards each other, and the debate in society is hardening. ISIS’ wave of global attacks, coupled with geopolitical disorder in the Middle East, refugees, and perceptions of fear among electorates appear to have had a positive effect on the rise of extreme-right violent extremism, which in turn effects and promotes Islamist VE and extreme-Left VE, which in turn contributes to the extreme-Right ad infinitum | Terrorism blossoms when there is a clear picture of the enemy. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy in the sense that violence creates the animosity that creates the narrative of exclusion. It looks like the world has reached the stage where terrorism creates islamophobia and islamophobia creates terrorism. |
| 16 | Bias towards Islam of CT and C/PVE measures | While many policymakers globally have insisted that focus was on countering all forms of violent extremism, resources and attention have primarily focused on Islam and Muslims. | 1. The constant focus on Salafist-Jihadist terrorism has meant that other forms of violent extremism have gone under-studied or ignored – such as white supremacy and neo-Nazism. This has also meant that certain communities have been unfairly stigmatized and placed under scrutiny; 2. While many scholars and practitioners have exposed the weaknesses and fallacies behind the P/CVE pseudoscience, the mainstream international community remains fully committed to expanding and deepening its reliance on P/CVE, casting aside lessons learned from decades of violence reduction, conflict and dispute resolution, and rights-based approaches to international peace, security and development. |
| 17 | Proliferation of low-tech attacks | Increasingly, terrorist attacks are small-scale, relatively small amount of victims, with the use of easy to acquire weapons, like a knife, a gun, a vehicle. This form of terrorist attacks is called for by terrorist organisations and easy to organise. | 1. Public fear; 2. Pressure on the authorities to take action; 3. Hard to intercept, pre-emp, or harden against with anti-terrorism strategies; 4. Knife, vehicle and arson attacks were adopted remotely, and copied. |

Description of items Q2⁸

| # | Issue | description | Relevance |
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| 1 | Ongoing or increased geopolitical conflict (and international involvement) in the Middle East | Ongoing conflict in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Israel/Palestine, the potential for new instability in Algeria, Sudan, and particularly the possibility of US led regime change in Iran. Furthermore the deployment of special forces operations and drone strikes in this area. Finally, there is no indications that the economic or political conditions in MENA will improve in the short or even medium term. This will keep a strong momentum for migration into the EU from the region, with economic, political and social consequences for both EU and MENA region. | 1. Overseas conflicts have been shown to be a key driver in the radicalisation of young Muslims in countries beyond the conflict zone - i.e. Western Europe; 2. Conflict in these regions can lead to state failure and the emergence/re-emergence of Jihadist groups; 3. Conflict with Iran would potentially mobilise Shia militias and terror groups, and their allies, internationally, as well as create a backlash by Sunni groups; 4. Risk of terrorist exploit immigration to radicalise, recruit or even conduct terrorist attacks; 5. The widening nature of authoritarianism against all sorts of activists will increase the likelihood of political violence |
| 2 | Increase of far-right extremism | An emerging issue is the increase right-wing/far-right extremism. Far-right extremism is expected to become a key security issue in the near future. | 1. Limited national political attention/interest; 2. Challenge of addressing these issues at the international level; 3. Most European far right movements are currently non-violent or engage in sporadic, decentralised, largely mob based rioting/hooliganism rather than terrorism, however extreme right ideologies and groups have already plotted several terrorist attacks over the last few years; 3. Limited national political attention/interest; 4. Much of the research on terrorism in the past few decades as focused on Salafist-Jihadist terrorism. As concern over right-wing extremism grows, it will be important to examine the similarities across the spectrum and assess what lessons can be learned or applied. |
| 3 | Home-grown extremism | In addition to terrorist groups, terrorists radicalising and plotting attacks without direct assistance from a terrorist organisation have been a huge challenge over the last years, as became evident from the dozens of attacks they plotted either alone or in small groups. This trend will arguably increase over the next years | |
| 4 | Return and reintegration of Foreign Fighters | Many Westerners - people from Arab world as well, such as Tunisia and Saudi Arabia - have gone to areas of conflict because they identified with victims. Some stayed there for humanitarian reasons and many participated in the fighting. Now that the foreign wars are almost over, they want to return home. There seems to be a strong rejection by Western state of these people, and this will continue in the near future. Despite the rise in re-integration, re-socialization or diversion programs over the past years, we still lack an answer to the | 1. A risk is that those who return have intentions to commit acts of terrorism; 2. A risk is that children grow radicalised against their countries, which abandoned them, and therefore we end up creating a new generation of future terrorists; 3. Abandoning women and children also risks radicalising their relatives back home or the countries where they used to reside; 4. European countries refusal to allow people associated with the Caliphate to return poses a challenge for Syria and Iraq but also to issues of statelessness and human rights; 5. Reintegration challenges, since there is no evidence-base yet for what works; 6. Returnees require much attention from authorities for |

⁸ Issues, description and relevance as described by the panellists. Several items on the list combine the input from multiple panellists, and have been edited by IOB. Items are listed in order of the final ranking.

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| | | overall question of how to reintegrate terrorists into society. | surveillance, reintegration programmes, legal prosecution etc., and, hence, resources - especially since the heterogeneous nature of the group and the tailor-made approach that is therefore required. |
| 5 | Addressing weak/failed governance as key driver of violent extremism | There is an ever-growing body of research that draws attention to linkages between deficits in local governance and violent extremism in certain contexts. Underlying factors conducive to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism are structural governance, rule of law, and human rights issues that require long-term investments, capacity development, and reform. Despite the growing evidence, however, local governance has yet to receive the attention it deserves in C/PVE policy and programming conversations | Many international C/PVE stakeholders have so far been reluctant to prioritize long-term, hard-to-measure—and often complex and politically sensitive—structural issues related governance. Instead they tend to prefer short-term, easier to measure engagements, at least at the output level, such as those focused on countering extremist narratives and propaganda, including by empowering individual youth, women, and religious leaders. Given the structural issues that are often the key drivers of violent extremism, long-term measures will need to be prioritized over short-term ones if we hope to achieve and sustain success. This requires donor governments to move from ad-hoc approach to long term funding mechanisms. |
| 6 | Human rights deteriorating as a result of (use and abuse of) CT and C/PVE measures | Under the umbrella of countering terrorism and violent extremism, some states have perpetrated human rights abuses in the form of detentions, imprisonments, mass surveillance, etc. | In the absence of convincing narrative or evidence that other approaches work, those who have always advocated a hard-handed military response to political violence will keep or take the upper hand. However, violence breeds violence and escalation may lead to destructive results. There is still little evidence that the military approach works in the long run. On the contrary. Most terrorist organisations do not end their violence through military CT-campaigns. Human rights standards are suffering as a result of the focus on hard approaches. |
| 7 | ISIS re-emerging and adapting | Despite the loss of its territories in Iraq and Syria, IS will remain one of the most prominent terrorist groups in the upcoming years. It is still highly active in Iraq and Syria, it has affiliates groups and organisations throughout the Muslim world and it still has tens of thousands of supporters across the world. It is still able to inspire its sympathisers to commit violence. Fighters can go underground, regroup, travel on to new black spots/ungoverned areas/new conflicts, or travel back. | 1. There is a concern over IS affiliates in the Sahel, Afghanistan and SE Asia; 2. There are indicators that IS has not been defeated in Iraq with pockets of IS re-emerging; 3. Failure to tackle the real grievances and structural issues in countries like Iraq will facilitate the return of IS or another similar group; 4. There is still a huge network of member and supporters of IS in both Iraq and Syria as well as in the wider region and the west; 5. It will remain linked to attacks whether commissioned or inspired by IS; 6. More difficult to fight an amorphous online presence with loose affiliations than structured organization with territory. |
| 8 | Formation of transnational terrorist networks / unification of groups | The military defeat of ISIS certainly has created some level of ‘bonding’ in Jihadi-circles. The conflict in Syria has attracted thousands of foreign fighters from all over the world. Based on historical experiences, for example in Afghanistan or Bosnia, it is safe to assume that this has generated transnational jihadist networks. | Unification of groups may pose a threat for obvious reasons. In the following years the transnational jihadists networks that originate in the Syrian conflict will pose a significant problem. For example, jihadist veterans will travel to various countries where they can play a role in the recruitment of new generations of jihadists in a similar way as was the case after the wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia. |
| 9 | Rise of nationalism / populism | The present wave of nationalism in the West will continue. With regard to the EU, the rapid expansion of the EU to 28 countries and the lack of good coordination and control mechanisms for handling cross-[external EU]border and | 1. If the current global political trends (increasing populism and authoritarianism) continue over the new few years, we can expect an ever more challenging environment for operationalizing lessons learned from past CT and C/PVE practice. Too many government may |

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| | | [intra-Schengen]cross-state movement of people/foreigners in Europe and the failure of returning asylum seekers who came to Europe but whose claims were false to their home countries have created considerable apprehension and a populist reaction against immigration in general. | prefer too emphasize military operations and repression (and not prevention) and fall back on the notion that ideology or religion is primary driver of terrorist recruitment, thus ignoring or obscuring their own failures such as prevailing governance inadequacies. They may prefer an overly aggressive security approach, which may be more responsible for violent extremism and the ability of these groups to recruit from the local population; 2. It is a source of disenchantment of politics for those who believe to distinguish themselves by their commitment to a value framework that disapproves of this discourse. It alienates those who are part of society but are target of the 'othering' strategies of populism (Muslims, foreigners, etc). |
| 10 | Continued attraction of the jihadist ideology | Despite the decline of IS in Syria and Iraq, jihadist ideology is still flourishing. Hence, jihadist ideology is still capable of inspiring foreign fighters and terrorists in different parts of the world in the years to come. The Syria-linked mobilisation however has involved individuals with an even wider array of personal motivations: a sense of non-belonging (pervasive sense of second-class citizen), the absence of perspectives (real and perceived), the feeling that by going to Syria, they have nothing to lose and everything to gain, but sometimes also motivated by a real sentiment of altruism (especially early in the Syrian conflict). | 1. Jihadist ideology can motivate thousands of individuals to join terrorist groups and commit terrorist attacks both in conflict regions as well as in the West; 2. Jihadist ideology and the action it inspires can further contribute to polarisation in Western societies, thereby fuelling extremism of different kinds; 3. If we collectively fail to adequately address this conducive environment (the structural drivers of radicalisation and extremism), that allowed ISIS – and jihadism in general – to mobilise and constantly reinvent itself, at some point in the future a new wave of jihadism (in whatever form) cannot be excluded in Europe if and when a new opportunity (offer, cause) for jihadi mobilisation arises. |
| 11 | Increased polarisation | The current climate, both societal, political and in the debate, is increasingly polarised. Different groups in society seem to be increasingly intolerant towards each other, and the debate in society is hardening, there is more tolerance of hate speech and incitement. Furthermore there is an increasing disconnect of opposing political positions; increasing levels of distrust towards established news outlets; emotionalizing politics, in which a genuine exchange of arguments becomes impossible. People seem increasingly uncomfortable seeing people from different background as the same as themselves, creating problematic conceptions of 'otherness'. | A polarised climate where different groups of people are increasingly intolerant towards each other can function as a root cause for radicalisation but can also incite violence. Furthermore it undermines democracy. |
| 12 | Continued and increased use of social media / Internet by extremist and terrorist groups | The dissemination of terrorist content via social media still poses a major challenge for authorities and tech companies. Individuals as well as groups such as IS have used social media to spread their ideology, draw recruits, plan attacks. Apart from social media right-wing extremist and jihadist groups will only increase their use the dark web as a forum for their leadership, operatives, and support bases as they are driven | - Social media usage by terrorist groups has increasingly professionalised over the last five years and has therefore become increasingly effective - Social media is used by terrorist groups to spread ideology, draw recruits and plan attacks - Countering extremism on social media requires huge resources by both authorities and tech companies - As with use of cryptocurrencies, we must expect terrorists and violent extremists to continue innovating in their use of the dark web. |

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| | | further off of public-facing social media and messaging platforms. | |
| 13 | Imprisonment and radicalisation / rehabilitation | As governments have gotten increasingly better at investigating and prosecuting terrorism crimes, the challenge of how to manage terrorism offenders in prison and prevent the radicalization and recruitment of others, as well as the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals that have gone through the prison system or as part of an alternative to imprisonment, presents itself. Furthermore, the next 2-4 years increasing numbers of inmates convicted for terrorist-related offences will leave prisons. Individual disengagement trajectories before leaving and local integration endeavours have been developed in the past few years and need to be maintained, which is a challenge for states. | 1. The prosecution and imprisonment of returning FTFs is not easy: evidence is difficult to collect; 2. Prisons can be a school for (further) radicalization. Individuals can built new networks, make new plans or further develop their (violent) ideologies. Moreover, after leaving prison former terrorist inmates can encounter all sorts of practical social problems (such stigmatization) that can increase the risk of recidivism and form a barrier to effective reintegration. This risk is not only limited to the country of re-entry; 3. The late realisation of this problem on a policy level means that we seem underprepared for the risks these people pose and the potential destabilizing effect on society these people, but also lack of containment of this issue of governments, can have. |
| 14 | Lacking evidence base / M&E / What works/what doesn't | A lack of evidence underpinning CT and P/CVE continues to be an issue, and there will/should be increased efforts to enhance evaluation and quality of CT/P/CVE. | Improving M&E will help the CT/P/CVE field by helping it to invest in effective/efficient interventions. Without testing policy, we cannot know whether such policy works or not to alleviate the problem it is designed to address. Without rigorously testing each intervention with a control group with random assignment, it is difficult to say whether the policy works. |
| 15 | De-legitimisation of liberal democracy | Political shocks that serve to reinforce perceptions that liberal democracies ('the West' in violent extremist's terminology) is either under threat or illegitimate. New social media technology has undermined state advantage in communication. Alternative versions of events may convincingly show that the state may have lied or undermine state arguments about the legitimacy of its policies. | 1. Shocks such as Brexit, the rise of far-right political parties in the EU, or of authoritarian-minded leadership in the US exacerbates calmativie extremism among Jihadi's as well as right and left wing extremists; 2. Perceptions of the weakness or illegitimate nature of liberal democracies serve to reinforce jihadi narratives and mobilise support; 3.Perceptions of the weakness and 'threatened' nature of liberal democracies can reinforce extreme right narratives and mobilise support; 4. Social media democratizes what people see and hear about events and often leads to "fake news."; 5. Effectively countering extremist discourse is one of the most difficult issues we are currently facing as it is not yet illegal (no clear line between wat is legal and illegal in terms of extremist discourse) but at the same time it can harden someone's mind-set and provide them with a reason to justify/legitimize or even take the step to use violence. |
| 16 | Climate change | The multiple consequences of climate change cannot fully be overseen today. It expected to lead to greater inequality between and within countries, increase migration, and put pressure on energy security. It has already played a significant role in the polarisation of politics in the Netherlands, with populist parties denying the need for climate change mitigation. | The reduction of political space that is not allowing for necessary action paralyzes politics in face of a serious issue. Centre parties feel that they cannot take stronger action because it would threaten popular support for them. As a result, the Netherlands, as most countries, is not taking sufficient measures to mitigate climate change, which makes the negative consequences of climate change a likely threat for economic well-being, social cohesion and the quality of life in the Netherlands. All this feeds into radicalisation, polarisation, and challenges of the political system. |

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| 17 | Migration | Migration flows into Europe and elsewhere, especially from Muslim majority countries, raise questions of dislocation and radicalisation. | Migrants with experiences of dislocation and lack of integration are vulnerable to be radicalised, and represent a source of potential recruits for jihadist groups. |
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Description of items Q3⁹

| # | Issue | description | Relevance |
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| 1 | Focus on human rights | The MFA should focus on the protection of human rights, including social, civil, political, cultural and economic rights. Human rights protection continues to be under pressure, and so a strong campaign to ensure that HR are upheld while implementing CT/CVE policies is very important. As terrorism is sometimes a response to government repression (although admittedly this differs from case to case), the MFA could urge the relevant authorities to exercise restraint in the use of repressive counterterrorism tools. The MFA can also provide financial and political support for the OHCHR, and for the Special Rapporteur for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights violations are a driving factor for conflicts and terrorism, and human rights abuses in CT can become part of the problem. • Terrorists win supporters by pitching themselves as an alternative for or a credible counterweight to a repressive government. Advocating human rights could keep governments from waking into this trap. The nexus between human rights and CT was, at one stage, a focus of the Dutch CT approach. It became less visible. There is good reason to revive the focus. |
| 2 | Focus on conflict resolution and stabilisation in fragile environments | With other forms of violence and weak/poor governance contributing to the emergence of VEOs, it will be helpful to relate improvements in SDG16 on reducing VE. The study of conflict and the study of terrorism have become distinct disciplines since the late 1970s but arguably one of the better ways of reducing terrorism is tackling the conflict that has given rise to terrorist attacks. Stabilisation efforts for weak and fragile states will be important to counteract the appeal of extremist movements. This also requires investing in cooperation between departments and actors working on conflict transformation and CT. It may also require taking a holistic approach (human security, rule of law and peacebuilding) and keeping CVE and CT separate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The costs of violent conflicts outside the national borders can become high: lost business opportunities, kidnapping of citizens abroad, increase in asylum seekers. While disputes and conflicts are unavoidable, violent and protracted armed conflicts are not. Efforts at conflict transformation, bringing about cease fires and initiating peace negotiations can greatly contribute to a reduction of terrorism and refugee flows. • Making a stronger connection between SDG16 and CT and C/PVE efforts may in fact increase the attention on SDG 16, and funds to make needed improvements in targeted countries. • There is the increased risk of radicalization of communities and terrorism in post-conflict situations where there is often a power vacuum in combination with anger and frustration. There is also the issue of weapons, which are often widely available and mines that can be found in many places. In order to prevent civil casualties, state actors should invest (e.g. time, knowledge and funds) in post-conflict areas. • A number of failed states now sit along the edge of Europe, in North Africa and the Levant. • Helping to stabilise those countries will counteract the likelihood of extremist messages. Evidence base for holistic, long term approaches growing this leads to logistically looking a structural reform, peacebuilding and other programmes – so rather than PVE. |
| 3 | Focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters | The MFA should focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters. States should continue to invest in technologies that aim to stem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flow of FTFs surged dramatically in 2014 and 2015, with tens of thousands of individuals traveling from all corners of the globe to join foreign terrorist organizations. Many are now |

⁹ Issues, description and relevance as described by the panellists. Several items on the list combine the input from multiple panellists, and have been edited by IOB. Items are listed in order of the final ranking.

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| | | <p>FTF flows by detecting and preventing attempted travel, investigating these individuals, and prosecuting accordingly. Software like the Netherlands' API & PNR-integrated TRIP system are necessary tools for states aiming to clamp down on foreign terrorist fighters. Bilateral cooperation on the issue of FTFs and their children in the MENA region. As the number of countries where foreign fighters flee to, increases, there is a need for a network to get and process information from those countries. European states currently all have their own policies with regard to bringing back FF and the children. There is a need for a European policy.</p> | <p>returning to their home countries or to new conflict theatres, and countries will need state-of-the-art technology to detect these flows and stay ahead of the threat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returnees often give socially desirable answers or show socially desirable behaviour. By using an ideological risk assessment, a better estimation can be made of the risk of violence that would otherwise not be visible. • Dangerous individuals affiliated with Islamic State need to be detained securely. They need to be removed from ad hoc facilities established by the SDF. • A common position will make it easier to sell the coordinated and controlled return of the foreign fighters to the public • Research shows that imprisonment may fuel radicalisation; it is expected that the circumstances of imprisonment of this group further reinforces this process and makes eventual incorporation into their host societies increasingly challenging. <p>Diplomatic efforts are key to solving this challenge in cooperation with international partners and the other European countries involved.</p> |
| <p>4</p> | <p>Promote knowledge exchange and fund research - investigate impact - promote M&E</p> | <p>The MFA should promote knowledge exchange and fund research, and particularly aim to investigate impact of C/PVE interventions and promote M&E. E.g. focus on evidence-based causes of radicalisation. E.g. approaches to help reduce isolation of vulnerable individuals, approaches to address vulnerable individuals' needs for group affiliation. The MFA can fund research (centres), experts, think tanks, academia. The MFA can leverage the role of the Knowledge Platform to develop evidence base. The MFA can promote the sharing of international experience between people working in CT and P/CVE, dealing with returning FTFs /persons returning from prison. Governments will want to invest in M&E efforts and research that focus on proving impact of P/CVE and CT programs, to ensure program efficiency and political/public support. Given the increasing focus on M&E, there is perhaps a need to create, perhaps through the GCTF (an international forum of 29 countries and the EU) the capacity to support M&E activities and a resource of lessons learned in the field of CT and P/CVE. Similarly, important to plan and try to anticipate different future scenarios in this area (the current Delphi being a case in point).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last decades, many new CT interventions and policies have been developed. However, evaluation studies into their effectiveness are still too often lacking. This makes that many policies are still based on assumptions rather than on facts. A stronger evidence-base is critical to promulgate (cost-) effective policy responses. • The evidence base on drivers and what works and doesn't in response remains thin, and it is critical to establish a firmer scientific basis • There are some high potential Think and do tanks working on CT and related fields. If any expertise or knowledge is lacking within the existing think tanks this could be developed. • Think tanks/researchers can, from evidence, do what policymakers cannot: take the time to think things through and research them, validate and advice and implement. Think tanks can for instance help prepare policymakers for the 'unknown threat', keeping them from preparing only for what they already know or have seen before. And they can help them check whether proposed measures are not based on assumptions, but indeed on reality. • It is important to be engaged on all relevant fora on CT and PCVE, at the very least to be aware of current threats and trends, but also for influence and opportunities to act in a coordinated manner. • Innovative technologies are developed every day but the P/CVE field does not keep up to date. States should ensure that their public/private partnerships prioritize understanding the landscape of technologies that can assist in their policies and programming. |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational practice within CT and CVE is often such specific work that practitioners can only learn from each other. Donors also need to scale back or moderate their expectations: impact will always be difficult to measure and setting funding conditions on the basis of unrealistic results will encourage poor monitoring, evaluation and make local partner organisations more reticent to engage in understanding or interrogating their shortcomings and failures. This may disrupt learning and weaken future programming. |
| 5 | Focus on political dialogue between polarising groups / promote negotiations | Acknowledging that one of the main causes of violent extremism is political marginalization, it is important to facilitate political processes that can bring not-like minded and parties-in-conflict around the table. The MFA should focus on establishing a real political discourse between polarising groups, including across borders. MFA can help to identify the necessary conditions for political dialogue and transformation and bring in expertise where needed. Diplomatic channels can be used to argue for caution in engaging in military intervention in the Islamic world, or call for an end to military missions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polarisation as a threat to reasonable political exchange endangers the legitimacy of state power. All emanations of the state must remain at the service of the entire population and open to a discourse that takes seriously all participants. Jihadism is to a considerable extent a response against Western military interventions / activities in the Islamic world. |
| 6 | Support grassroots / CSOs - both in terms of finance, and by promoting an enabling environment | The role of civil society in C/PVE is important. Unfortunately many governments have a different view on the role of CS and their societies lack trust and social cohesion to let CS play an effective role. Local organisations that have grass roots connections and that are aware of -and address- local realities and concerns should get a chance to organise and express themselves. The role of community formats in conflict resolution is often overlooked. However, communities resolve issues, tensions and conflicts on a continuous basis. Empowering these structures can be instrumental in many ways. Conflict resolution is an on-going community activity in many environments, that is not necessarily a 'formalised government' activity. Quite on the contrary. Local councils and community leaders often play a key role. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassroots C/PVE initiatives are more democratic in nature, allowing at-risk localities to draw on advisory resources from experienced international practitioners while crafting their own narratives and campaigns. Allowing for this level of autonomy is also cheaper for states offering these advisory services, allowing allocated funds to be used with maximum effect. MFA has a great track record in strengthening CS in ODA countries, in different areas like service delivery, accountability, good governance, HR, humanitarian action, etc. MFA could build further on its experience and help to enable the political, financial and operational space for CS, so that they can become an entrusted and protected partners in the CT/PVE arena The role of community formats in conflict resolution is often overlooked. However, communities resolve issues, tensions and conflicts on a continuous basis. Empowering these structures can be instrumental in many ways. Securitization has led to legal and political constraints for CSO's in many countries. Advocating and stimulating CSO's is an important way forward. |
| 7 | Focus on reintegration and de-radicalisation programmes | The MFA should focus on de-radicalisation and reintegration programmes, targeting at-risk groups and individuals already identified and/or in custody. These programs will | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returned foreign fighters and imprisoned terrorists need (tailor-made) programmes in order to facilitate successfully reintegrate in society Investing in programming will help in |

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| | | <p>need to consider both the demographic and environmental variation among at-risk populations, and the use of indicators in risk-assessment/disengagement evaluations. De-radicalisation and (even more so) reintegration programmes are highly significant to address the challenges of imprisoned extremists and returning foreign fighters. An example of de-radicalisation and reintegration programmes are mentorship schemes. Based on data harvested by pilot projects such as the EU's STRIVE Horn of Africa initiative, mentorship schemes seem to be one of the more effective intervention-types in the PCVE space. These programmes are time and resource intensive, and require greater investment for external donors, including the MFA.</p> | <p>developing our understanding of how to do de-radicalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dozens of extremists are at risk of recidivism as they leave state custody in the near and medium term. Nations will need to go beyond traditional measures like VOTP, which are used to assess all violent offenders' risk of recidivism, and use targeted and specific evaluations on this class of individuals. <p>Recruitment and radicalisation processes are usually non-linear, fluid and idiosyncratic, meaning interventions are likely to have greater traction if they are able to engage consistently at a personal level. Mentorship projects, using a diverse set of models and approaches, can help consolidate those relationships.</p> |
| 8 | Focus on Rule of Law programming (SSR, SSD) | <p>Security sector reform (SSR) or Security sector development (SSD) has since the end of the Cold War become a standard program for making security services in third countries more accountable and transparent. Training missions in conflict areas such as Mali, Afghanistan and Iraq will remain important to stabilise conflict areas and prevent or curb the rise of fertile grounds for terrorist groups. Since SSR/SSD started to be labelled 'CT', some security services have turned to abuses in their crackdown on extremist violence that has in turn boosted radicalisation and extremism.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netherlands has extensive SSR and SSD and RoL research, policy and programming experience which is directly relevant to issues relating to role of security actors and institutions in VE. • Security operations simply aiming at decapitating the leadership of extremist groups or killing as many terrorists as possible while doing as little as possible to adequately address underlying factors, is doomed either to fail or to become a never-ending endeavour. • Conflict regions such as Mali, Afghanistan and Iraq have provided fertile grounds for extremism and terrorism. Training missions can assist in stabilising regions like these. Military and/or police presence in conflict regions may increase the risk of terrorist attacks against the country sending the military/policemen |
| 9 | Focus on development-nexus | <p>The compartmentalization of the themes of development and security (terrorism in particular) makes it difficult for a state actor to act efficiently and accordingly to what is going on in reality. These themes are intertwined and need a (partially) cohesive approach. The MFA has just developed a toolbox to make ODA programmes PVE sensitive in areas where this is deemed necessary and feasible. When the nexus between development is understood and build, the effectiveness of development programmes in addressing root causes of violent extremism could increase highly. ODA programmes can be PVE relevant or even PVE specific, and in any case contribute to building resilience in societies against radicalisation and VE. Ensuring ODA programmes are PVE sensitive is therefore important to ensure</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCVE interventions are often criticised as short-term stopgaps that raise and frustrate expectations of participants. While linkages between unemployment and VE recruitment are ambiguous, jobs are often synonymous with dignity, belonging and self-respect across many societies, cultures and contexts, and are consistently referenced as the main demand for beneficiaries of PCVE programmes in East Africa, the Sahel and South Asia. PCVE projects can provide vocational training or small-scale employment but it is not comparable to the reach of wider developmental and entrepreneurial schemes. • Addressing causes of extremisms requires bigger, more sustained, multiyear grants (but difficult funding climate) • Making ODA programmes PVE sensitive will help increase resilience in vulnerable societies against radicalization, and possibly even in bringing down radicalization. It will also ensure resources are not lost due to sudden increase of VE |

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| | | <p>sustainability and effectiveness of ODA programmes. States will also want to move increasingly to funding P/CVE and some CT capacity building initiatives through ODA funds, to channel sufficient resources into PVE.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many countries rely heavily on foreign aid to bridge their fiscal & investment deficits. Aid is a strong instrument in many cases to bring about positive change. • Funding for PVE has become precarious, and in the future the most significant source is likely to be development. |
| 10 | Promote multi-dimensional cooperation / a 'whole of society approach' | <p>The MFA should promote multi-dimensional cooperation and a 'whole of society approach' to CT and P/CVE. Developing and implementing PVE policies demands a whole of society approach, and henceforth a cooperation between government actors and civil society, who are not always natural partners who speak the same 'language'. Bilateral cooperation and multilateral cooperation has increased dramatically since 9/11. There is however a need to create joint mechanism for the creation of multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholders cooperation. Contributing to this process and the setting up of a cooperation platform will contribute to sustainable and effective PVE policies and better state-society relationships. Assistance in this process can be necessary to create a safe environment for dialogue. This assistance should go beyond the mere assistance in the design face of the PVE policies but should also assist in setting up a cooperation platform.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the way terrorism and VE don't operate in vacuum, neither can discussions about them. Siloes should be broken down in order to develop thorough and multifaceted input. For example, discussions on climate change should include practitioners of conflict and violence and vice versa • These efforts, often involve diverse representatives including local agencies, such as education, health, social welfare, and youth, and civil society. These are increasingly common in Australia, Canada and Western Europe, but are also starting to emerge in less developed settings. |
| 11 | Focus on intelligence and law enforcement | <p>The MFA should focus on (promoting the work of and cooperation between) intelligence and law enforcement. Foster close cooperation between intelligence services, political actors, police and social services. Intelligence in the most important part of the CT approach. Only intelligence services are placed in a position where they can actually and effectively counter a CT threat. The Counterterrorism Group, particularly its operational forum, has created a practical and well functioning initiative where intelligence officials share operational information and work together to counter the transnational terrorist threat. The MFA could invest in awareness raising and capacity training to ensure better cooperation, and develop training manuals and development of SOPs (Standard operating procedures). MFA could therefore support UNODC in developing these activities. MFA could also contribute by ensuring that on an international policy level, when mandates for international military operations are given, clauses are included that open the possibility for</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These directly affect the efforts of terrorist organisations, by targeting their operations, disrupting activities and seeking sentences/ sanctions. • External and internal security issues are inextricably interlinked and addressing them requires close cooperation on different levels and of different authorities, including intelligence, police and social services. An example is the real threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters. • Investments in these sort of operational fora, particularly in intelligence, are a sure way to help actually having an impact on the threat. This is where attacks are successfully countered. Also an investment into how the CTG operational forum has managed to do what it does, within the legal frameworks of all the different countries, in order to export these lessons learned to other geographical areas where cooperation needs better shape. • Instead of focussing on the fruitless debate on the need for an international criminal tribunal to deal with crimes committed in Syria/Iraq, which is politically not attainable, and even if it was, would take a very long time before it could be operational. Time in which crucial evidence will be lost. Instead, intensifying the cooperation between the military and law enforcement |

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| | | this kind of investigative tasks and cooperation with law enforcement actors. | actors although not easy, is more promising, and will certainly contribute to ending impunity. |
| 12 | Mapping, tracking and coordination of CT and P/CVE activities | The MFA should invest in mapping, tracking and coordination of CT and P/CVE activities. Centralize and make accessible a global tracking of CT and P/CVE programs, activities, outcomes, etc. Mapping activities the Netherlands is currently contributing towards and sharing some sanitised version of this information across government and with international partners will be important for helping strengthen coordination mechanisms in the PCVE space. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the extent possible, it is important to track ongoing CT and P/CVE engagements to assess programming, identify gaps, track progress, identify failures and successes, and identify future opportunities. • PCVE programming remains uncoordinated and inefficient. Given the multiplicity of donors and lack of information sharing, stakeholders must consistently negotiate opportunity costs, from unnecessary, wasteful duplication to a lack of follow up, scaled or supplementary projects delivered in the same context. <p>The impact of these interventions, while difficult to measure in concrete terms, seems disappointing. Mapping what initiatives are funded by the Dutch state and distributing that information (securely and ethically) across government departments, and with international partners could contribute towards a much more robust, detailed understanding of on-going interventions and how they can be supported or supplemented to exploit comparative advantages and the benefits of economies of scale.</p> |
| 13 | Focus on resilience | The repositioning of CVE as societal resilience building in the wake of existing VE, rather than the prevention and countering of VE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CVE and PVE can fail and can backfire and promote marginalisation and extremism - Resilience building can be done with all segments of a community through enhancing social capital in interconnectivity between groups - It can be done outside of a CT/CVE agenda as a whole of government / whole of society program similar to emergency management |
| 14 | Promote citizens' empowerment / social movement against terrorism | Citizen's empowerment as a social movement to say stop to terrorism. Citizens are by definition the front of the battle of terrorism. By creating a global social movement to say stop to terrorism, it may not only delegitimize the action of terrorist actors but perhaps decrease the motivation of individual to join terrorist group or operate terrorism attacks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civilians are the main target of terrorism - By being part of a movement, you can become immune to the psychological warfare behind terrorism - Create an international alliance regardless of nationality, religion or sex |
| 15 | Experimental projects | Given how little we know about what works, specifically in the field of PVE – it is important for policymakers not to shy away from piloting novel / experimental approaches in CT/CVE/PVE projects and daring to fail to get ahead. Identifying successful fieldwork and applying it in new environments to test underlying assumptions, processes, and results to identify capacity for positive impact and scale. Support initiatives that can map out the evolving threat. Support civil society and partner governments in dealing with terrorism and radicalisation e.g. in prisons. Support early warning, early action (best | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States will need to be more tolerant of risk in order to test ideas and concepts that may provide solutions. They can do so by running small pilots in regions informed by relative successes in other contexts and allowing room for failure. • There is a tendency to re-invent the wheel and keep doing what is already happening and finding out new approaches do not work is just as valuable <p>The Netherlands has always been applauded as being on the forefront of our approaches to CT/PVE, community based – stakeholder – multi disciplinary approach etc. so I think this ties in nicely with that profile.</p> |

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| | | practices) and outreach/dialogue on the ground. | |
| 16 | Rightsizing CVE | Especially since the White House summit of 2015, 'CVE' has expanded exponentially. It now covers a confusing cluster of (non-)governmental activities, conflating security and non-security-related endeavours under an overall label. This has given a security related objective to tools that once were associated with inclusiveness as an objective (deprivation, gender, equal opportunities, capacity building, peacebuilding...). It has been argued that ameliorating underlying conditions that may be tied to violence, whether at home or abroad, has advantages in its own right, regardless of the effect on terrorism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insisting upon the conducive environment that allows terrorism to emerge, lessens the risk that countries with whom a CT cooperation is established, use CT measures to legitimize their policies towards their own opposition. • The same goes for calls to the West to help promote a 'moderate' Islam as counterweight to religious extremism. If seen as originating from the West, local efforts against extremists risk being discredited. • As long as underlying factors on which extremisms can emerge, are not addressed for their own sake, CT & CVE programs will at best result in limited and temporary success. • Economic, political, and social reforms should therefore not be framed as CVE at all. |
| 17 | Conduct risk assessment | Risk and threat assessment tools and prioritization systems should be continued to be evaluated and tested. The MFA should establish connections with authorities in regions where ISIS might pop up next, and investigate new modus operandi by terrorists. Operational parties wrestle with an enormous increase of the number of people and organisations they have to investigate. This creates a situation where they have to prioritize. This is difficult, as this has to be done systematically on such a large scale, but needs to take into account complex details. There is a lot know on effective prioritizing and systems to do so, also in other fields. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The empirical base of current risk assessment tools is still too weak. • Improved early detection of potential high risk individuals is needed. • There is no reason to think that a new opportunity or offer might not again prompt a new jihadi mobilisation, even if the scale and the characteristics will be different from the Syria-linked mobilisation. This eventuality asks for an in-depth knowledge of potential foreign theatres. The Sahel and South-East Asia come to mind. • In the past five years terrorists have managed to develop new skills and tactics that require a different approach in protecting the public and other potential targets from attackers using new weaponry and modus operandi. Think of the use of drones. This requires new training modules for those that have to protect us and new contingency plans that prepare the authorities to deal with new types of attacks. • In identifying emerging risks and risk zone, a delicate balance must be struck between precautionary analysis and overly alarmist assessments. A sober reminder: most of the 2016-2017 worst-case scenarios dealing with the collapse of ISIS, did not materialise. |
| 18 | Promote the integrated 'Dutch' approach | The MFA should promote the integrated 'Dutch' approach. The Netherlands has an interesting model of the NCTV, combining coercive and preventive approaches and facilitating and strengthening different layers of society to play their role in CT/PVE. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worldwide the NCTV model is seen as successful and a leading example of how to work on CT/PVE in an integrated and multidisciplinary manner. Of course each country and context requires a different national coordination, but the principles on which NCTV is build, the methods and practices as well as the lessons learned are fit for promotion abroad • Developing a unit that can bring know how about the Dutch approach to third countries has distinct advantages. It may improve policies and approaches elsewhere; it answers to a demand for know how about the Dutch approach and it raises the profile of the Netherlands as a knowledgeable player in this domain. |

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| 19 | Focus on the link with migration | Next to climate change (and partly linked to it), migration pressure is likely to be a major driver of international friction. Right-wing and populist politicians have exploited government failures to arrive at a better migration regime to their advantage. New and imaginative approaches are needed to show the benefits of (controlled and rule-based) migration. | The current migration regime based on the refugee convention and a number of other instruments (IOM) needs to be re-evaluated and improved, also with an eye on climate-induced migration pressures. A fair and balanced system would take some of the wind out of the sails of xenophobes and nativist nationalists while also creating new regulatory control systems against abuse. |
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Annex 3: Ranking results

Ranking results Q1

| Question 1: What were the most important international trends and issues (topics, problems, areas) in the last 5 years in the field of CT and C/PVE? | | | | | | | |
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| Issue | RANK Round 6 | <i>Rank Round 5</i> | <i>Rank Round 4</i> | Mean Rank – Round 6 | % of panellists listing item in top 5 – Round 6 | <i>% of panellists listing item in top 5 - Round 5</i> | <i>% of panellists listing item in top 5 - round 4</i> |
| ISIS | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4.72 | 66% | 66% | 47% |
| Foreign terrorist fighters | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4.93 | 69% | 66% | 47% |
| Home-grown terrorism | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6.48 | 62% | 52% | 30% |
| Foreign terrorist fighters returning | 4 | 5 | 3 | 6.97 | 38% | 41% | 33% |
| Human rights deteriorating as a result of CT and C/PVE measures | 5 | 4 | 5 | 7.17 | 41% | 45% | 37% |
| Root causes remaining unaddressed | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8.03 | 41% | 38% | 47% |
| Growth of far-right | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8.41 | 24% | 28% | 30% |
| Increased use of social media / Internet by extremist and terrorist groups | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9.31 | 10% | 14% | 17% |
| Jihadist movement/ideology | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9.34 | 31% | 28% | 30% |
| State violence - Human rights violations contributing to violent extremism | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9.38 | 28% | 28% | 37% |
| Increase in zero-tolerance policies, hardening of policies | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10.1 | 24% | 21% | 30% |
| Rise of nationalism/populism | 12 | 12 | 13 | 10.41 | 10% | 17% | 17% |
| Lack of M&E, lack of evidence | 13 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 10% | 10% | 23% |
| Imprisonment and radicalisation | 14 | 14 | 14 | 11.24 | 10% | 10% | 17% |
| Polarisation | 15 | 13 | 15 | 11.28 | 10% | 14% | 23% |
| Bias towards Islam of CT and C/PVE measures | 16 | 16 | 16 | 11.83 | 14% | 14% | 23% |
| Proliferation of low-tech attacks | 17 | 17 | 17 | 12.38 | 10% | 10% | 13% |

Ranking results Q2

| Question 2: What will likely be the most important international trends and issues (topics, problems, areas) for the next 2-4 years in the field of CT and C/PVE? | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Issue | RANK Round 6 | <i>Rank Round 5</i> | <i>Rank Round 4</i> | Mean Rank – Round 6 | % of panellists listing item in top 5 – Round 6 | <i>% of panellists listing item in top 5 - Round 5</i> | <i>% of panellists listing item in top 5 - round 4</i> |
| Ongoing or increased geopolitical conflict (and international involvement) in the Middle East | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5.55 | 59% | 59% | 43% |
| Increase of far-right extremism | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5.93 | 55% | 55% | 53% |
| Home-grown extremism | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6.86 | 45% | 45% | 27% |
| Return and reintegration of Foreign Fighters | 4 | 4 | 4 | 7.03 | 48% | 45% | 40% |
| Addressing weak/failed governance as key driver of violent extremism | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7.83 | 45% | 45% | 40% |
| Human rights deteriorating as a result of (use and abuse of) CT and C/PVE measures | 6 | 5 | 6 | 8.03 | 41% | 41% | 33% |
| ISIS re-emerging and adapting | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8.03 | 34% | 31% | 33% |
| Formation of transnational terrorist networks / unification of groups | 8 | 10 | 10 | 8.38 | 31% | 28% | 30% |
| Rise of nationalism/populism | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8.79 | 24% | 28% | 33% |
| Continued attraction of the jihadist ideology | 10 | 8 | 7 | 9.28 | 28% | 31% | 37% |
| Increased polarisation | 11 | 11 | 11 | 9.28 | 14% | 21% | 33% |
| Continued and increased use of social media / Internet by extremist and terrorist groups | 12 | 13 | 14 | 10 | 14% | 10% | 10% |
| Imprisonment and radicalisation/rehabilitation | 13 | 12 | 12 | 10.34 | 7% | 7% | 13% |
| Lacking evidence base / M&E / What works/what doesn't | 14 | 14 | 13 | 10.38 | 21% | 14% | 23% |
| De-legitimisation of liberal democracy | 15 | 15 | 15 | 11.14 | 17% | 21% | 20% |
| Climate change | 16 | 16 | 16 | 12.72 | 10% | 14% | 17% |
| Migration | 17 | 17 | 17 | 13.41 | 7% | 7% | 13% |

Ranking results Q3

| Question 3: What will likely be the most important instruments a state actor like the Netherlands MFA¹⁰ for the next 2-4 years in the field of CT and C/PVE (i.e. fora, mechanisms, tools, activities it can contribute to, support, participate in)? | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Issue | RANK Round 6 | Rank Round 5 | Rank Round 4 | Mean Rank – Round 6 | % of panellists listing item in top 5 – Round 6 | % of panellists listing item in top 5 - Round 5 | % of panellists listing item in top 5 - round 4 |
| Focus on human rights | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5.66 | 66% | 55% | 43% |
| Focus on conflict resolution and stabilisation in fragile environments | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6.1 | 59% | 62% | 50% |
| Focus on flow and return and/or repatriation of foreign fighters | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7.55 | 52% | 41% | 37% |
| Promote knowledge exchange and fund research - investigate impact - promote M&E | 4 | 3 | 3 | 8.03 | 38% | 34% | 17% |
| Focus on political dialogue between polarising groups / promote negotiations | 5 | 5 | 4 | 8.28 | 41% | 38% | 40% |
| Support grassroots / CSOs - both in terms of finance, and by promoting an enabling environment | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8.86 | 24% | 21% | 27% |
| Focus on reintegration and deradicalisation programmes | 7 | 7 | 7 | 9.21 | 24% | 24% | 30% |
| Focus on Rule of Law programming (SSR, SSD) | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9.38 | 21% | 21% | 23% |
| Focus on development-nexus | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9.41 | 24% | 28% | 33% |
| Promote multi-dimensional cooperation / a 'whole of society approach | 10 | 11 | 10 | 9.97 | 24% | 24% | 33% |
| Focus on intelligence and law enforcement | 11 | 10 | 11 | 10.28 | 28% | 31% | 40% |
| Mapping, tracking and coordination of CT and P/CVE activities | 12 | 13 | 14 | 10.9 | 3% | 7% | 3% |
| Focus on resilience | 13 | 12 | 12 | 11.03 | 10% | 14% | 17% |
| Promote citizens' empowerment / social movement against terrorism | 14 | 14 | 13 | 11.34 | 21% | 24% | 27% |
| Experimental projects | 15 | 15 | 16 | 11.66 | 14% | 17% | 17% |

¹⁰ The Netherlands MFA is responsible for both foreign affairs and development cooperation.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Rightsizing CVE | 16 | 17 | 18 | 11.93 | 21% | 21% | 20% |
| Conduct risk assessment | 17 | 16 | 15 | 12.55 | 10% | 14% | 20% |
| Promote the integrated 'Dutch' approach | 18 | 18 | 17 | 13 | 10% | 14% | 13% |
| Focus on the link with migration | 19 | 19 | 19 | 14.86 | 10% | 10% | 10% |