

Conference: Good Practices & Lessons Learned

From 6-9 December 2011, ICCT and UNICRI hosted the international conference titled “Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders: Good Practices & Lessons Learned”. This was the second event organised by UNICRI and ICCT on the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremists and the related issue of prison radicalisation. The [initial event](#) was convened by UNICRI in Lucca, Italy in May 2011. Approximately 20 countries, a number of multilateral organisations and 30 independent experts participated in the December meeting in The Hague.

At the outset, this initiative was focused on bringing together relevant policymakers, practitioners and experts to share information and best practices. There was a great interest among the participants in increasing dialogue; however participants from a number of states were also eager to receive assistance in improving existing rehabilitation-disengagement programmes for violent extremists or in creating new ones. Based on this response, a decision was made to expand this project to include a capacity building component.

The conference in The Hague can be seen a key step to transition from dialogue to capacity building. The primary purpose of this meeting was to identify good practices that could be used to shape the capacity building assistance that UNICRI would provide from early 2012. The session considered a [good practices document](#) prepared by ICCT, which incorporated the input of experts.

Divided into two sessions – a Roundtable Expert Meeting and a two-day broader session consisting of lectures and workshops – this [four day conference](#) addressed several issues including: how various professionals such as psychologists, social workers and religious scholars should be most effectively integrated into a rehabilitation programme; how law enforcement and intelligence agents can collect information from detainees without undermining the rehabilitation process; the importance of a robust aftercare programme; how to best involve other key stakeholders in this process, such as victims and former extremists; what good correctional practices should encompass; how to prevent inmates from continuing terrorist activities while incarcerated; and steps countries can take to prevent radicalisation from taking hold in prison.

GCTF Rome Memorandum on Good Practices

In response to the successful December 2011 conference in The Hague, a number of follow-up activities took place. In May 2012, members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum ([GCTF](#)) convened to discuss the ICCT/UNICRI [good practices document](#) that was produced after the conference in The Hague. Here, the GCTF members transformed the document into a GCTF product (the “[Rome Memorandum](#)”), which was formally adopted at the GCTF ministerial-level plenary session in Turkey from 7-8 June 2012, a meeting co-hosted by US Secretary of State Clinton and Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu. During the meeting it became clear there was widespread agreement about the need to increase the members’ collective focus on this subject, and the importance of these principles in moving efforts forward in this key area. For example, Italian Foreign Minister Terzi highlighted the Rome Memorandum in his speech, calling it “[the first international soft law compendium aimed at fostering and facilitating States’ efforts to counter violent extremism through de-radicalisation in prisons](#)”.

The good practices outlined in the Rome Memorandum are intended to inform and guide countries as they develop programmes designed to rehabilitate and disengage incarcerated violent extremists or to address more general issues relating to prison radicalisation. Endorsement of these good practices in rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent extremist offenders is an important milestone for the GCTF, but also a significant push for the UNICRI/ICCT international initiative, specifically in terms of support for the technical assistance component.

Review of the Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

On 28 and 29 June 2012, the UN General Assembly convened for the third biennial review of its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy at UN headquarters in New York. Preceding the actual Review, various side events took place in New York, among them a Seminar on Dialogue, Understanding and Countering the Appeal of Terrorism, organised by the President of the General Assembly in partnership with UNICRI and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force ([CTITF](#)). Following a keynote speech by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the morning session – chaired by UNICRI Director Jonathan Lucas – focused on rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and the efforts of UNICRI and ICCT on this front. Former ICCT Director Mr. Peter Knoope and UNICRI Senior Advisor Dr. Douglas Stone brought the programme, good practices document and technical assistance component [to the attention of the large audience of Member State representatives](#).

Expert Meeting on the Role of Psychology in Rehabilitation

In May 2013, ICCT convened an expert workshop on The Role of Psychology in Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders together with the [Hedayah](#) centre in Abu Dhabi. More than twenty practitioners and experts from around the world shared best practices and lessons learned for the role of psychology and psychologists in rehabilitation, and developed more detailed guidelines for the involvement of psychologists. The experts also suggested creative approaches to de-radicalisation for settings in which psychologists may not be available. Further, the need for risk assessment was discussed; these assessments are required to measure the potential of a convicted offender radicalising other individuals in prisons, and to evaluate the risk of an incarcerated offender re-committing a crime upon release. The focused discussions led to [additional guidance and concrete suggestions](#) of ways in which the Rome Memorandum can be implemented.

Prison De-Radicalisation and Reintegration GCTF Plenary Meeting in Abu Dhabi

In corporation with UNICRI and Hedayah, ICCT co-organised the [GCTF Plenary meeting](#) on Prison De-Radicalisation and Reintegration in Abu Dhabi from 3-5 June 2013. Participants included delegations from 15 countries as well as practitioners and experts in the field. The general aim of this plenary meeting was to further build on the Rome Memorandum, and to exchange experiences on the integration of the Rome principles in national programmes. The discussions revealed that there was a real need to coordinate efforts between different staff and stakeholders both in- and outside prisons. In implementing prison programmes, participants also highlighted the need to carefully balance prison security with various de-radicalisation/reintegration programmes as these two are not mutually exclusive. A further important issue that was discussed was the need to design effective risk assessment and classification systems, which allow programmes to be tailored to individuals offenders and their needs. The implementation of rehabilitation programmes in different environments, such as conflict zones, was also addressed, as was the need to properly assess – and not exaggerate – the threat stemming from prisons as potential breeding grounds for radicalisation.