

The Abuja Declaration on the Treatment of Violent Extremist Offenders

Nigeria's Countering Violent Extremism Programme

April 14th, 2016

Recalling the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2006 and the United Nations General Assembly (2015): Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism - Report of the Secretary-General, A/70/67, paragraph 50(f),

Noting the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, Ankara Memorandum on Good Practice for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism, the Rome Memorandum on Good Practice for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders and the Sydney Memorandum on Challenges and Strategies on the Management of Violent Extremist Detainees (2012),

Bearing in mind the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, revised as the Nelson Mandela Rules 2015, The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders ('the Bangkok Rules') 2010, United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measure (Tokyo Rules) 1990 and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) 1985,

Further noting Principles and Guidelines on Human and Peoples' Rights While Countering Terrorism in Africa, ACHPR 2015 and other regional instruments and guidance including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa, Lilongwe Declaration on Accessing Legal Aid in the Criminal Justice System in Africa; Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa (The Robben Island Guidelines), the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa, the Principles and Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-trial Detention in Africa, adopted by the African Commission in October 2014 in Luanda, Angola,

Respecting and upholding the Nigerian Constitution provisions that enshrine rights of Nigerian citizens to life, dignity, liberty, fair hearing, religion, freedom of expression and non-discrimination,

Observing the legal provisions in the Terrorism Prevention Act 2011, as amended in 2013, Administration of Criminal Justice (ACJ) Act 2015, Child Rights Act, 2003 and Prohibition of Violence Against Persons Act, 2015, Powers of the Nigerian Prisons Service CAP 366 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990,

Taking into account Nigeria's National Security Strategy of 2014 and Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST),

Recognising in Nigeria's Approach to Counter Terrorism that force alone will not be enough to combat violent extremist elements and it requires a multi-faceted approach through its Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy,

Mindful that the context in which terrorism emerges involves a complex mix of historical, political, ethnic, cultural, religious, social-economic, and various other factors, and no one-size-fits-all approach in Countering Violent Extremism and requires that each state needs to take its own capabilities, structure and needs into consideration when designing programmes and policies,

Further noting prisons are potential incubators of radicalisation with the possibility of consolidation of extremist ideology and terrorist networks but also that prisons offer the best option for engagement, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes but Prisons can do this most effectively when supported by and working in a coordinated way with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs),

Bearing in mind Nigeria's Countering Violent Extremism programme aims to stop members and supporters of violent extremist groups using violence as a means to achieve extremist aims (desist); break away from the insurgent groups (disengage); and change extremist ideological/political/religious views (de-radicalise),

The participants of the Seminar held in Abuja between 11 and 14 April 2016 commend the Countering Violent Extremism work of the Office of the National Security Adviser, the publication of the De-Radicalisation Programme Guide and recommend its dissemination and use throughout all appropriate MDAs in the implementation of Nigeria's CVE strategy,

The participants recommend

CVE programmes need to be developed and implemented within a strategic policy and legal framework that promotes an end to violence, accountability, justice, reintegration and reconciliation.

MDAs and other implementing stakeholders, including Civil Society Organisations, undertake their full role in the De-Radicalisation programme.

The activities of MDAs implementing the De-Radicalisation programme are organised through robust protocols and Memoranda of Understandings.

Federal Government establishes and implements a sector wide monitoring and evaluation framework for the De-Radicalisation programme through the Office of the National Security Adviser.

National and State Government plans and budgets should explicitly reflect the need for De-Radicalisation work throughout MDAs and Local Authorities.

The appropriate authorities develop and establish a mechanism for the transfer of those awaiting trial or convicted to the custody of the Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS).

Investigation and justice agencies establish a coordination mechanism to ensure prosecution and court hearings are conducted and concluded in a timely fashion and in accordance with national legislation.

The De-Radicalisation programme should be implemented by a multi-disciplinary team within each institution.

The recruitment, conditions of service and security of staff involved in the De-Radicalisation programme should be standardised to reflect the nature of their professional duties.

Staff working as part of the sensitive and specialised De-Radicalisation programme require capacity building and thorough and ongoing training to enable them to complete their duties to the highest possible standard.

Appropriate facilities and intervention resources are provided for the optimal implementation of De-Radicalisation programmes, *inter alia*, health facilities, counselling rooms, places for worship, recreational facilities, educational and vocational training spaces and learning tools.

All activities implemented as part of the De-Radicalisation programme adhere to ethical practice, in particular the principle of do no harm.

All MDAs that are involved in the De-Radicalisation programme recognise and adhere to the voluntary nature of individual participation.

The CVE and De-Radicalisation programme make the necessary distinction between those who are victims of violent extremism and are subsequently coerced into joining and those who have voluntarily joined violent extremist groups.

The De-Radicalisation programme recognises and responds appropriately to the different needs and categories of participants regarding level of risk.

There must be safe and detailed procedures for classification of all who may be deemed conflict affected.

Vulnerable groups such as women and children must have special and appropriate provision that recognises law, standards and needs.

Measures should be adopted that recognise reintegration is a process that is distinct for different groups.

For the reintegration of those who are released from prison, preliminary work needs to be undertaken by NPS including a wider range of interventions from the De-Radicalisation team that is augmented by family contact and close cooperation with authorities responsible for post release interventions and support.

That ongoing de-radicalisation programme is complemented by a comprehensive After Care Programme that ensures the involvement of Civil Society Organisations and relevant local authorities.

The role of research and academic institutions is popularised and integrated into all national CVE programming.

The National Human Rights Commission visits facilities where there is a De-Radicalisation programme and Federal Government enables these visits.

Federal Government with relevant academic and social institutions should research and document the De-Radicalisation programme as a key element for the learning and future policy, strategy and practice development.

Federal Government should work with international agencies and development partners in the implementation of the De-Radicalisation programme.

De-Radicalisation programmes should be implemented in a consistent manner, ensuring that resource allocation meets programme needs.

Lessons learnt and good practices derived from the NPS De-Radicalisation programme should guide operations of detention facilities where suspected violent extremists are held in order to build public confidence in the CVE programme.

Effective cooperation on De-Radicalisation programmes should take place with neighbouring countries in order to identify good practice.

The promotion and provision of technical assistance regarding CVE Strategies throughout the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).