

BACKGROUND

Tajikistan was among the first post-Soviet states to face violent extremism, initially emerging during the 1992–1997 civil war. While early threats were limited, including no suicide attacks until 2010, recent years have seen a marked escalation. Extremism has evolved in four phases: conflict and emergence of fundamentalist groups (1991–1997), peacebuilding and ideological spread (1998–2012), increased radicalisation and foreign fighter mobilisation (2013–2016), and reintegration efforts (2017 onwards). Current strategies prioritise the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, reflecting the government's shift from security-focused responses to more preventive and community-based approaches.

GCERF started its engagement with the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan (2023) to the United Nations in Geneva. The Tajikistan government invited GCERF for an introductory meeting in the capital city of Dushanbe in July 2024. Rounds of official meetings concluded with a formal partnership between GCERF and the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Tajikistan, as the leading body coordinating the activities of state bodies, civil society institutions and international organisations in implementing the Strategy for Countering Extremism and Terrorism in the Republic of Tajikistan. GCERF Governing Board approved Tajikistan to become a partner country in September 2024, requesting the GCERF Secretariat to manage the process of the Republic of Tajikistan joining the Board.

GCERF pioneers a unique model of investment designed to promote a whole-of-society approach and ensure the sustainability of our programmes. Under this model, in each partner country, we support national governments in establishing a steering committee called the Country Support Mechanism (CSM).

In Tajikistan, the CSM will be co-created and co-designed with the General Prosecutor's Office and will bring together relevant government agencies, civil society organisations, and donor representatives to provide strategic direction for the programmes, ensure results, and progressively inherit ownership of funding community-level efforts to prevent violent extremism.

GCERF'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY IN TAJIKISTAN

GCERF's four-year investment strategy in Tajikistan (2025–2028) aims to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict zones, with a particular focus on women, children, prisoners, and vulnerable youth. The strategy also targets labour migrants, religious leaders, teachers, social workers, and local authorities, in recognition of their vital roles in both preventing violent extremism and facilitating long-term reintegration.

*Partner countries are those in which GCERF funds civil society organisations to implement initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism.



WHAT

The programme focuses on two key directions to strengthen community resilience:

Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R):

To support the sustainable reintegration of women and children who have returned from Iraq and Northeast Syria.

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE):

- a) To reduce the risk of youth radicalisation;**
- b) To mitigate recidivism by implementing a comprehensive approach to help convicts in violent extremism/terrorism cases rehabilitate and reintegrate**

WHERE

- **Khatlon Region**
- **Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS), including Dushanbe**
- **Sughd Region**

WHO

- **Women and children repatriated from Iraq, Northeast Syria;**
- **Vulnerable women, children and youth in the immediate communities, where returnee women and children reside;**
- **Community and family members in targeted mahallas;**
- **Frontline workers (e.g., government social workers, educators, religious leaders, healthcare providers, parents, mahalla activists)**

The strategy sets out a series of interconnected objectives in R&R and PVE, developed through consultations with government stakeholders, international experts, civil society organisations, and donors. These **objectives** are also informed by the findings of the Country Needs Assessment and are aligned with Tajikistan's National Strategy for countering extremism and terrorism:

- Develop a secure digital data platform for coordinated case management and monitoring;
- Strengthen local capacity for case management, psychosocial support, and PVE programming;
- Support R&R of women and children returnees through stigma reduction, education, and economic empowerment;
- Enhance youth resilience to online radicalisation through digital literacy and alternative narratives;
- Implement PVE programmes in prisons, including pre-release planning and mental health support.

GCERF's investment strategy aims to make progress towards **six key outcomes**:

- improved mental health and psychosocial wellbeing;
- strengthened economic resilience;
- reintegration and acceptance of returnee pupils;
- enhanced community acceptance and social cohesion;

- functioning national R&R system;
- prevention of radicalisation in prisons and online spaces.

By the end of the investment period, GCERF aims to help establish a sustainable, nationally aligned system for R&R that reduces recidivism and strengthens communities' resilience to violent extremism.



GCERF'S VALUE PROPOSITION

GCERF'S UNIQUE MODEL OF INVESTMENT PRIORITISES:

Community-ownership and localisation: We invest in trusted grassroots civil society organisations that prioritise the needs and grievances of communities most affected by violent extremism. Many of these organisations have never received international funding before.

Sustainability: Our programmes involve all groups of society and strengthens trust between government, civil society and community members to build stronger, more resilient societies. This ensures that initiatives and structures continue to be relevant and effective.

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes: Our multi-layered monitoring and evaluation system, operating locally and globally, provides continuous feedback on programme effectiveness, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures objectives are consistently met.

Knowledge sharing: Our global network of civil society organisations working on PVE facilitates the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, fostering collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. We also share our experiences through our participation in various conferences, publishing of articles and research papers in reputed journals to advance the understanding of PVE.

Capacity strengthening: We strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to manage large-scale grants and implement effective initiatives, while also enhancing government capacity to develop comprehensive, holistic strategies to prevent violent extremism.