

# REMODELING PARTNER CAPACITY

## Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Counterterrorism Security Assistance

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## About the Middle East Security Program

The Middle East Security Program conducts cutting-edge research on the most pressing issues in this turbulent region. The program focuses on the sources of instability in the region, maintaining key U.S. strategic partnerships, and generating solutions that help policymakers respond to both fast-moving events and long-term trends. The Middle East Security Program draws on a team with deep government and nongovernment experience in regional studies, U.S. foreign policy, and international security. It analyzes trends and generates practical and implementable policy solutions that defend and advance U.S. interests.

### Cover Photo

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## Executive Summary

**S**ince the September 11, 2001, attacks, the U.S. government (USG) has used security assistance programs with partner nations to advance its counterterrorism (CT) objectives. These programs serve two main purposes: first, to build the capacity of partners, who are best positioned to address local security and governance challenges; and second, to incentivize actions in these areas and others that advance U.S. counterterrorism interests. The rationale underpinning this approach is that partners are not only best positioned to address certain security challenges, but also that burden sharing is essential if the United States is to avoid the type of overreach that can dilute its political and military power. Thus, these programs, although expensive, are intended to defray costs away from the United States, which learned from the Iraq and Afghanistan experiences that a counterterrorism strategy centered on a heavy American footprint is costly and politically unsustainable.

Despite the proliferation of security assistance authorities and programs, the U.S. government has only recently begun to mature the joint planning and evaluation processes that many agree should drive such programming. For example, security assistance implementing agencies have just begun to wrestle with developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of CT-related security assistance. There are no standard guidelines for determining the goals of CT security assistance programs, particularly partner capacity-building

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training programs, or for assessing how these programs fit into broader U.S. foreign policy objectives. And there are few metrics for measuring the effectiveness of these programs once they are being implemented.

Drawing upon field research in two recipient nations of U.S. CT security assistance – Jordan and Kenya – as well as interviews and workshops with U.S. government officials and nongovernmental experts, this study attempts to address some of these challenges. The research leads to three central conclusions:

- 1. U.S. CT security assistance should devote more programming, resources, time, and effort to improving the capacity of law enforcement and internal security instead of focusing almost exclusively on building military CT capabilities for partner nations.** In both Kenya and Jordan, the overwhelming preponderance of U.S. CT security assistance goes toward addressing external threats posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and al-Shabaab, respectively. The threats from these groups also manifest inside these countries as a result of the radicalization of vulnerable populations. Yet considerably less energy and fewer resources are focused on ensuring that the internal security services in Jordan and Kenya address such threats effectively, or protect and do not marginalize or alienate vulnerable populations. The United States' recent increased emphasis on countering violent extremism (CVE) at the local level is a welcome step, but it is critical that implementation of this strategy is paired with other programs intended to buttress partners' internal security and improve the behavior of their security services. Such efforts should include programs intended to build the institutional capacity of partners' ministries of the interior, professionalize personnel, and improve their ability to conduct planning and coordina-

tion. The United States does not need to reinvent the wheel. There is much to learn from other international donors and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are already working in this space.

- 2. The USG should develop a common standard for metrics throughout the interagency to ensure CT security assistance programs are monitored and evaluated based on outcomes,**

**not just inputs and outputs.** The State Department's (DoS) current protocol for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E) is overly decentralized, and other agencies have yet to develop robust AM&E programs. Efforts underway at the Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a systemic protocol for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of security assistance programs represent a step in the right direction, but it will be important to ensure this program is interoperable with others in the interagency. The first step is ensuring that every agency involved in CT security assistance has a functional AM&E program in place. As it institutes these systems, the USG should ensure that departments are sharing best practices and lessons learned with one another and also mining the knowledge of local nongovernmental project implementers, who often have the greatest experience dealing with the issue of measurement. To support this effort, a larger share of the security assistance budget should be dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. The internationally accepted best practice is to devote 3 percent to 5 percent of any program budget to AM&E.

- 3. Efforts to develop better AM&E protocols must recognize that this process is not something that begins once a program has been implemented or completed.** Effective AM&E starts during the planning process. All programs must be guided by clearly delineated objectives that are specific, measurable, and achievable within an identified time frame. Moreover, any program should illustrate how achieving these objectives will advance wider U.S. counterterrorism goals, how they align with other relevant USG programs, and how they may complement or conflict with broader USG policy objectives. Some problems may be insurmountable, and this makes being upfront about the theory of change even more important in order to avoid squandering limited resources, time, attention, and political capital. Articulating the theory of change at the outset and the time scale necessary to execute it, is also critical for overcoming the tendency to focus heavily on near-term objectives that are more easily measured than on long-term reforms that might be more consequential. In cases where it might take years to realize a major return on investment, identifying milestones along the way provides a mechanism for measuring progress and ensuring the program remains on track.

**Summary Recommendations for Improving U.S. Counterterrorism Security Assistance**

<p><b>PUT MORE FOCUS ON INTERNAL THREATS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devote more to improving the capacity, capabilities, and professionalism of domestic security services and internal security instead of focusing almost singularly on external threats.</li> <li>• Internal security assistance efforts should be led by the State Department with congressional support and coordination with relevant USG security agencies.</li> <li>• Leverage the lessons learned by local and international NGOs that have been the most effective implementers of this type of assistance.</li> <li>• Follow through on the new Countering Violent Extremism strategy’s call to “empower and amplify locally credible voices” while lowering the U.S. government’s profile and increasing transparency.</li> <li>• Assistance for border security should remain a focus as this is an area where the United States has been particularly effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INVEST IN AM&amp;E AND DEVELOP METRICS THAT MEASURE OUTPUTS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Security Council (NSC) should coordinate the development of a set of shared interagency metrics for measuring the success of CT security assistance programs.</li> <li>• Metrics should be designed to measure outcomes rather than simply verifying inputs and to look at usage rates, retention rates, exercises, and surveys as measurements.</li> <li>• Three percent to five percent of the cost of each program should be dedicated to assessment, monitoring, and evaluation, significantly increasing current investments.</li> <li>• Mine the knowledge of local private and nongovernmental project implementers when designing evaluation criteria.</li> <li>• Make programming more transparent by releasing details of objectives, recipient agencies, and funding levels to enable outside monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EFFECTIVE AM&amp;E MUST START WITH CLEAR OBJECTIVES UPFRONT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have clear and realistic objectives upfront and be prepared to invest the necessary resources in determining whether the program works.</li> <li>• Clearly distinguish between objectives designed to build capacity and promote reform, versus objectives such as relationship building or securing access.</li> <li>• In the planning phase, identify a realistic time frame in which the United States seeks to realize its objectives.</li> </ul>

# **01 CHAPTER**

## **Overview of U.S. Counterterrorism Security Assistance**

## Introduction and Background

International cooperation has always been a critical element of counterterrorism, but it became considerably more important after 9/11. Security assistance is a central component of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy to incentivize cooperation and build the capacity of partner nations to conduct their own operations against terrorist groups. Building partner capacity (BPC) became the catchall term for a wide array of security assistance programs developed for this purpose. The nucleus of the BPC effort began in Iraq, where the escalating insurgency led the Bush administration to devise a military plan that would train the Iraqi army to assume responsibility for security as quickly as possible. U.S. officials emphasized the mantra that as “Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.”<sup>1</sup> As al Qaeda expanded and the terrorist threat spread during the last decade, building the capacity of partners outside Iraq and Afghanistan became increasingly important. Congress created a spate of new authorities and funding streams to meet the growing demand for assistance to build up partner forces so they could counter security threats at home and contribute to international missions.

The Obama administration made working with and through partner nations a cornerstone of its counterterrorism strategy. This approach was informed by awareness that unilateral, large-footprint military operations were neither effective nor sustainable when it came to achieving U.S. counterterrorism objectives. These types of efforts have proved tremendously expensive, both in political and fiscal terms, and put considerable strain on the U.S. military. Large American deployments are also a potential recruiting tool for terrorist organizations and can act as a catalyst for opposing militant groups to unite. Burden sharing on counterterrorism reduces the costs and risks for the United States and bolsters international stability more generally.

### **The Obama administration made working with and through partner nations a cornerstone of its counterterrorism strategy.**

Moreover, while the consequences of terrorism are often global and have a direct effect on the United States, many of the sources of terrorist violence are driven by

local security and governance vacuums and social, political, and economic conditions that enable the creation of safe havens and lead to radicalization. In these instances, it is usually a local partner – not the United States – that will have the best understanding of the local landscape and can be most effective in addressing the problem, with the United States providing appropriate training, support, and enablers. The United States still has a critical role to play in this dynamic. Indeed, it is currently leading the international coalition against the Islamic State and working “by, with, and through” its regional and local partners.<sup>2</sup>

Congress and the executive branch worked together to create a number of different funding streams and authorities related to CT-oriented security assistance. Early in the post-9/11 period, the primary CT security assistance authority was Section 1206 of the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). By the 2015 NDAA, Section 1206 was codified as 10 U.S.C. 2282. Under this authority, the secretary of defense was authorized to implement security assistance programs that train and equip foreign military and maritime security forces. The purpose of the 1206/2282 authority was to support U.S. CT missions globally in military and stability missions by improving the capacity of foreign partner forces to support these missions.<sup>3</sup> Through 2014 a total of \$2.2 billion in 1206 spending has funded bilateral train-and-equip programs in at least 40 countries, providing operational assistance (surveillance and reconnaissance systems, small arms, rifles, night vision sights) and logistic support (vehicles, aircraft, and limited maintenance).<sup>4</sup> There is now a \$350 million a year authorization for 10 U.S.C. 2282 funding though additional monies can also be transferred for use under the authority.<sup>5</sup>

In 2012, Congress established the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) through Section 1207 of the NDAA. The GSCF was authorized through fiscal year (FY) 2017 as a pilot program for similar efforts as those under 2282, but with State Department in the lead and DoD authorized to transfer up to \$200 million a year into the fund.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, both 1206 (now 2282) and GSCF authorities were considered to be insufficient for unexpected crises, which led to the creation of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF).<sup>7</sup> The CTPF is designed to provide interagency funding to support emergency security assistance programs to partner country security forces and other groups fighting terrorism. The funding

## Challenges Associated with U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance

provided under the CTPF is to assist these state and non-state partners to conduct, support, or facilitate CT missions and crisis response, and includes the distribution of CTPF funds focused on U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility.<sup>8</sup> CTPF funds are disbursed under other authorities, and thus far all of the funds (\$1.1 billion in FY 2016 and a request for \$1 billion for FY 2017) have been distributed under 1206/2282.<sup>9</sup>

The proliferation of authorities has created confusion about the connective tissue between individual programs and how they should be deployed to achieve broader strategic effects. The Senate version of the 2017 NDAA that passed in spring 2016 sought to address this issue. It includes a number of new proposals to modify and expand several existing DoD authorities, including 2282, and to allow for potentially greater DoD engagement with foreign internal security forces.<sup>10</sup> Proponents argue that these reforms will make security assistance more efficient and effective, while opponents are concerned that it may marginalize the State Department's role and increasingly present the U.S. military as the face of U.S. security sector engagement overseas, including with non-military partners.

Having a meaningful impact through CT-related security assistance is no easy task. By definition, CT security assistance programs are frequently implemented in difficult environments in countries that are either unstable as a result of internal socio-political conflict or under threat due to the ability of a terrorist organization to find popular support among a subset of the local population.<sup>11</sup> In many contexts, the ability of U.S. CT security assistance programming to have a positive impact on the behavior of partner security forces engaged in CT operations is likely to be determined more by local socio-political, economic, and governance conditions than by the agency of U.S. implementers and by the interests of those partners.<sup>12</sup> Even understanding these caveats, several U.S. government-commissioned studies have criticized how the United States implements CT-related security assistance programs.<sup>13</sup>

### **By definition CT security assistance programs are frequently implemented in difficult environments.**

The first of these criticisms is that there is no standard guideline for determining the goals of CT security assistance programs, particularly partner capacity-building training, or how these programs fit into broader U.S. foreign policy objectives. Moreover, in many of these complex cases the United States has interests beyond purely counterterrorism, and those interests often impact decisions on aid and overall assessments of the situation. If specific objectives are not outlined at the start as part of a clearly delineated theory of change for the use of assistance, then these other interests tend to bias and confuse decisionmaking. It is precisely in these highly complex situations that the U.S. government needs to be clearer about the order of its priorities and ensure that its efforts will contribute to longer-term objectives. However, this often does not happen. Presidential Policy Directive 23 (PPD 23), issued by the Obama administration in 2013, was a first step toward providing implementers and policymakers with guidance on how



*U.S. Army Special Forces trainers brief a multinational group of special forces operators during the Fuerzas Comando training course in Colombia in 2012. The program is considered to be one of the most effective in U.S. history, helping to combat narcotics-funded insurgent groups and bring security and local development to conflict-scarred communities. (2nd Lt. Christopher Middleton/U.S. Army)*

to adjudicate among competing goals and timelines. But these efforts are still nascent and inconsistently applied.

Instead, there is often a heavy bias toward near-term policy objectives such as improving military interoperability, building tactical military capacity, or securing other forms of immediate counterterrorism assistance and increasing U.S. influence with the governments of partner countries. These seemingly more-urgent priorities come at the expense of important long-term issues such as the achievement of viable political outcomes in unstable countries, the professionalization of security forces, and respect for human rights, which are all key to the long-term success of counterterrorism strategies. In some cases these near-term interests may be judged more important than long-term professionalization and stabilization, but these tradeoffs are rarely analyzed or discussed before security assistance decisions are made.<sup>14</sup> Such analysis is essential, since in other cases near-term and long-term imperatives are compatible, but the planning process fails to connect the two or identify milestones for long-term goals that can help implementers stay on track.

The second criticism is that once a decision is made to provide support, there is little follow-up evaluation of whether programs are achieving the goals for which they were designed. Critically, there are no standard metrics for assessing the effectiveness and impact of CT security assistance programs. While some monitoring and evaluation is

conducted it is not applied or used consistently, and there is no routine evaluation stage in the policy process across departments. Many agencies implementing programs intended to realize PPD 23 objectives do not have sophisticated AM&E systems. The State Department's AM&E protocol is very decentralized and therefore implemented inconsistently across the agency. The Department of Defense, which had no program in place historically, is currently designing policy mechanisms and an organizational architecture to assess, monitor, and evaluate all security cooperation programs in a more centralized fashion. The current plan calls for delineating objectives for security cooperation at the outset, along with clear metrics for assessing both inputs and outcomes. It is too early to assess the efficacy of this effort, which has not yet been implemented. It is also unclear precisely how the DoD monitoring effort will align with programs at the State Department. The absence of a unified rubric could create complications and mismeasurement, especially if DoD efforts do not account for nondefense issues, such as addressing poor governance. A principal aim of this report is to provide insights from recipient countries to inform the efforts underway in the U.S. government and reinforce the importance of developing a comprehensive AM&E effort that pays attention to balance between short-term security issues and long-term goals.

## Addressing the Challenges

Given the challenges described above, this project set out to offer recommendations on how to more effectively implement, monitor, and assess U.S. counterterrorism security assistance, with a special focus on how to design relevant metrics for assessing CT security assistance programs both at the outset and throughout implementation. To do this, the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) addressed several key questions that are pertinent to the process of identifying, building out, and applying metrics for assessing U.S. CT security assistance programs.

**How should the United States develop clear objectives for its CT security assistance programs and then measure whether and to what degree those objectives are being met?** To what extent should broader foreign policy objectives for a specific partner country beyond CT drive how the United States allocates resources for CT security assistance programs? How can policymakers and practitioners more effectively balance the need to protect broader U.S. interests with the need to conduct and act on unbiased evaluations of security assistance? For example, some of America's most important counterterrorism partners are longtime allies (e.g., Saudi Arabia and Egypt) where interests other than counterterrorism are also critical. In those cases, how can or should the United States objectively measure the efficacy of its programming when there may be an overriding interest to pursue?

**Is the United States using the right mix of CT security assistance tools, including military support, law enforcement programs, and countering violent extremism programming?** Some of these tools, especially military support, are more effective for helping U.S. partners deal with external threats outside their

borders, while others are designed to help with internal extremism problems. The question is whether the USG has the balance right.

**How can the past experience of the U.S. government and its implementers working with critical counterterrorism partners inform current DoD efforts to develop an AM&E program?** As the State Department ramps up its CVE programming, how can it more effectively measure the outcomes of these efforts? The U.S. recognition of the need to measure outcomes, not inputs, is welcome, but this is a difficult endeavor. Moreover, the absence of common metrics can inadvertently skew what should be coordinated State and DoD efforts. Lessons learned from the field can help identify best practices and potential land mines.

**How can experiences in key partner countries inform the search for metrics that measure the impacts of CT security assistance programs beyond immediate operational outcomes and instead also relate to longer-term initiatives such as promoting good governance?** This question is particularly relevant given the recognized importance of professionalization of local forces and promoting respect for the rule of law and human rights.

**Are there effective metrics and practices for evaluation of CT security assistance programs that U.S. government implementers, private implementers, and NGOs are using that U.S. policymakers and program developers in Washington could adopt?** While policymakers are often focused on achieving broader policy objectives, implementers in the field have significantly more experience in monitoring and evaluation, which can then be fed back into the overall policy guidance.

**How should the United States develop clear objectives for its CT security assistance programs and then measure whether and to what degree those objectives are being met?**

## Methodology

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The authors conducted considerable desk-based research combined with in-depth examination of two case studies, Jordan and Kenya. Both are strategic partners of the United States and play important counterterrorism roles in their respective regions. They are also major recipients of U.S. CT security assistance funding.<sup>15</sup> Jordan is a key partner in the fight against ISIS. Kenya is central to combating al-Shabaab in Somalia. Both have also faced considerable terrorism challenges at home, due to instability in their regions and their own domestic policies. The authors conducted research trips to both Jordan and Kenya and engaged with U.S. government policymakers, implementers of U.S. government-funded security assistance programs, third-country government CT assistance program implementers, host country officials, and local NGOs.

The authors also conducted a series of workshops that brought together USG policymakers and implementers across the U.S. government to discuss their experiences administering CT security assistance programs with non-U.S. government subject matter experts. The remainder of this report describes the Kenya and Jordan case studies and then provides key lessons learned and recommendations for U.S. policymakers.

## **02 CHAPTER**

# **U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance to Jordan**



Lebanon

Syria

Iraq

Israel

GOLAN  
HEIGHTS

WEST  
BANK

● Amman

GAZA  
STRIP

**JORDAN**

Saudi  
Arabia

Egypt

## Introduction and Background

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been a U.S. security partner since 1951, receiving more than \$15 billion in total military and economic assistance during that time, and the governments of both countries consider the U.S.-Jordanian relationship to be strategic and vital.<sup>16</sup> Designated a major non-NATO ally by the United States, Jordan plays a proactive role in a range of issues, including the global counterterrorism campaign against ISIS and al Qaeda, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and international peacekeeping missions such as in Afghanistan. But Jordan's real strategic value to the United States is due not so much to any specific policy or challenge, but rather its position as one of the few consistently reliable and capable partners in a region with important U.S. interests that has seen unprecedented instability in recent years.

There is robust bilateral military cooperation between the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom that is applicable to counterterrorism operations and is executed in a number of contexts, including: (1) the counter-ISIS campaign in Iraq and Syria; (2) support for the Syrian opposition in southern Syria; (3) training of Palestinian Security Forces (PASF); and (4) other

nonbinding memorandum of understanding (MOU) that affirmed the U.S. intent to provide \$1 billion a year in overall assistance for three years. Of that, a minimum of \$300 million a year is committed to security assistance. In reality, security assistance was \$490 million in 2015 and \$650 million in 2016, inclusive of additional DoD funds primarily for counterterrorism operations and border security.<sup>20</sup> Since the September 11, 2001, al Qaeda attacks on the U.S. homeland, U.S. security assistance to Jordan has been increasingly designated for counterterrorism missions, especially since the Obama administration announced the initiation of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund. However, in reality, a significant portion of this security assistance is being provided to the Jordanian military for operations that are not considered primarily for the purposes of counterterrorism – most notably, assisting the Jordanian air force in procuring and maintaining a number of F-16 fighter planes. These planes have been used to strike ISIS targets in Syria and Iraq. But the primary focus of this type of support is to continue to enable the interoperability of U.S. and Jordanian forces. It is also driven largely by

### **Overall, Jordan satisfies a key requirement of the current U.S. global, partnership-based counterterrorism strategy: It is generally a consistently able partner that is capable of hosting and providing capacity building and training for other partners.**

global contingencies, such as U.S. and NATO efforts in Afghanistan as well as international peacekeeping.<sup>17</sup> From the perspective of U.S. planners, Jordan is a critical military partner that has demonstrated it can perform a versatile range of missions, and increased security assistance to the Jordanians bolsters that capability.<sup>18</sup>

Over the last decade, Jordan has been one of the top four recipients of U.S. foreign security assistance, which continues with approximately \$1.275 billion in security, economic, and civil society assistance earmarked under the FY 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Act.<sup>19</sup> The United States has steadily increased its financial assistance to the Hashemite Kingdom and in 2015 signed a three-year

demand from senior Jordanian officials and though there is some skepticism by American policymakers about the wisdom and effectiveness of this type of support, they continue to provide it because of the broader importance they ascribe to the U.S.-Jordan relationship.<sup>21</sup>

Overall, Jordan satisfies a key requirement of the current U.S. global, partnership-based counterterrorism strategy: It is generally a consistently able partner that is capable of hosting and providing capacity building and training for other partners.<sup>22</sup> In this regard, the Hashemite Kingdom is more consistent than several other U.S. partners in the greater Middle East region, including Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

## The Impact of the Syrian Civil War and the Counter-ISIS Campaign

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in March 2011, the United States has invested heavily in security and humanitarian assistance to Jordan, pledging more than \$400 million from FY 2015 to FY 2017 to alleviate the immense humanitarian burden incurred by the over 650,000 U.N.-registered Syrian refugees who now reside within Jordanian territory.<sup>24</sup> Further, the Department of Defense budget for FY 2016 included \$665 million respectively for Levant spending as part of the president's Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund initiative. And within the overall FY 2015 Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund allotment, a significant portion went to Jordan – most notably, \$150 million focused on elevating the patrol, surveillance, and interdiction capabilities of Jordanian border security forces.<sup>25</sup>

Starting in 2013, Jordan has served as the training and staging ground for moderate Syrian armed opposition forces battling both the Bashar al-Assad government and ideological extremist actors such as groups associated with al Qaeda, and now ISIS.<sup>26</sup> The Hashemite Kingdom has worked closely with the United States to protect Jordan's northern border, particularly to prevent southern Syria from becoming a staging ground for attacks against it by ideological extremist groups.<sup>27</sup>

U.S. concern over the threat that these extremist groups represented to Jordanian national security, including homegrown jihadists, was a primary factor that led to the increased funding level for total U.S. assistance to the Hashemite monarchy from \$660 million in FY 2014 to \$1 billion annually from FY 2015 to FY 2017.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, 2,200 Jordanian nationals have gone to Syria and joined jihadist organizations such as al Qaeda and ISIS, reflecting a potential long-term counterterrorism threat to the Hashemite Kingdom, especially if many of these fighters return home.<sup>29</sup>

The Jordanian government's response to this challenge has been strongly focused on outlawing Jordanian Salafist clerics sympathetic to the Islamic State and al Qaeda from making public sermons of support for these groups. The government has also released several Salafist clerics from prison with the intent of enlisting their support to combat Salafist jihadist rhetoric projected to the Jordanian public.<sup>30</sup> One notable example of this CVE strategy is the release of the Palestinian-Jordanian

militant Salafist cleric Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who has been jailed by Jordanian authorities several times in the last decade for public rhetoric that supported militant Salafist organizations such as al Qaeda, including online recruitment efforts. A well-known figure in jihadist circles, al-Maqdisi was infamously a mentor to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, before publicly breaking with the al Qaeda in Iraq leader when al-Zarqawi's network conducted the November 2005 bombing in Amman that killed 52 people. Al-Maqdisi is a fierce and outspoken critic of ISIS, and reportedly in concert with the Jordanian security services, he is actively seeking to undermine its ability to recruit in the Hashemite Kingdom.<sup>31</sup>

Further, Jordan has adopted a more strong-handed approach to public dissent, detaining Muslim Brotherhood members and introducing new amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Law that criminalized the criticism of foreign countries and their leaders. The law also allows for the prosecution of journalists and activists for speech-related crimes, as widely interpreted by the State Security Court.<sup>32</sup> The Jordanian government's crackdown on public dissent since the start of the Syrian civil war and the rise of ISIS, which is occurring as part of the Hashemite Kingdom's internal security efforts, has eroded civil liberties. Freedom House has downgraded Jordan's ranking from "partially free" to a "not free" state as a result of the measures taken by the Jordanian government.<sup>33</sup> While the Jordanian government has been a particularly strong supporter of the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS, there is some research evidence to suggest that the Jordanian public is less satisfied with the Hashemite Kingdom's active involvement in the counter-ISIS campaign. A poll conducted by the Doha, Qatar-based Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies revealed that a majority of respondents viewed the campaign as more beneficial to the United States, Israel, and Iran than to Jordanian security and stability.<sup>34</sup> A similar study conducted by the Amman-based Jordanian Center for Strategic Studies revealed broad support for Jordan's role within the counter-ISIS coalition; however, the Jordanian respondents did not consider the country's vital national security interests to be under threat.<sup>35</sup>

## Assessment of U.S. Counterterrorism Security Assistance to Jordan

The primary objective of U.S. security assistance to Jordan is not driven by counterterrorism imperatives, though certainly having a strong and reliable partner is leveraged by the United States to achieve CT objectives. The more significant driver of assistance is the desire to maintain strong relations with King Abdullah, keep him in power, and maintain U.S. influence. This is because the king is a reliable ally with an orientation that is sympathetic to the United States and a highly appealing partner when compared with most of the alternatives in the region. The Jordanian monarch, who has a military background in his country's special operations forces, has emerged as a forceful advocate for the Global Counter-ISIS Coalition and is generally highly regarded by the U.S. Congress.<sup>36</sup> And Jordan's military has also played a supporting role in other missions such as Afghanistan or in broader global U.N. peacekeeping operations.

The most significant downside to this approach is that it often leads to very little scrutiny or analysis of actual counterterrorism or other security assistance programs in support of Jordan and whether they are having the desired effect. When the authors interviewed U.S.

government officials, they had a hard time separating what U.S. support was meant for counterterrorism operations and what was meant for other purposes.<sup>37</sup> Instead, their view was that since the kingdom's stability is paramount and since ISIS is viewed as the most immediate threat to stability, everything the United States provides Jordan can be classified as counterterrorism assistance. As described above, this approach is not simply a function of the U.S.-Jordan relationship but also is linked to the broader challenges the U.S. government has assessing security assistance writ large.<sup>38</sup>

One example of this approach is the U.S. agreement to wholly fund the \$90 million cost for constructing the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC).<sup>39</sup> This site has become a premiere training site for international special forces and military contractors and is an example of the Jordanian monarch's interest in special operations. But objectively speaking, a gold-plated international training center is less impactful on Jordan's ability to effectively conduct counterterrorism operations than programs to root out extremists or address the huge flow of Syrian refugees



*U.S. Marines instruct a Jordanian soldier on how to effectively fire an M-4. A large share of U.S. security assistance to the country focuses on the Jordanian military's interoperability with U.S. forces and on confronting terrorist and conventional threats to Jordan's security. (Cpl. Eric R. Martin/U.S. Marine Corps)*

who have entered Jordan over the past few years.

Overall, there are also few metrics for evaluating the success of U.S. security assistance in Jordan. Outside of maintaining a strong relationship with the king and his team, and having the Jordanians work closely with the United States on issues of common interest, there are few actual metrics to measure success of security assistance in Jordan. The traditional metrics used by American officials have thus focused primarily on outputs, such as how many troops the United States has trained or the types of weapons it has sold to Jordan. But it has been very difficult to track the capabilities or behavior of Jordanian forces that come out of U.S. security assistance programs, and in many cases they are transferred to other units or areas of focus only months after receiving American training, making it more difficult to track. And the authors found no metrics for measuring the success of these programs outside the basic assessment that the king and his people remain reliable partners willing to work together with the United States to

the field hospital it ran. The Jordanian military has also trained approximately 2,500 soldiers of the Afghanistan special forces at KASOTC.<sup>42</sup>

Over the past decade, Jordan has also played an essential role in supporting the training of Palestinian Security Forces by the U.S. security coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority (USSC). The improvement of these forces and their ability to counter the threat posed by Hamas and maintain security within the Palestinian territories has been one of the only positive developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the past 10 years.<sup>43</sup> Jordan has made an important contribution to this effort, with a significant portion of the training taking place at the Jordanian International Police Training Center in Amman. Notably, it was at a USSC training facility for Palestinian security forces that a terrorist attack occurred, resulting in the deaths of five people, including two American trainers, in November 2015.<sup>44</sup>

The Jordanians have also been a reliable partner in attempting to stabilize the situation in Syria and Iraq.

### **Outside of maintaining a strong relationship with the king and his team, and having the Jordanians work closely with the United States on issues of common interest, there are few actual metrics to measure success of security assistance in Jordan.**

address common interests.<sup>40</sup>

Still, it is important to note that the Jordanian military and especially its special operations forces are an effective operational partner in achieving a number of American security objectives. Jordanian forces were deployed to Afghanistan from 2002–2015 as part of the NATO mission and earned praise from American colleagues.<sup>41</sup> The Jordanian forces were primarily engaged in a peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and a civil society capacity-building mission, with a CVE component that engaged with local Islamic leaders to promote a more tolerant and less radical preaching of Islam. Over the course of the Jordanian military's deployment to Afghanistan, estimates are that Jordan provided approximately 750,000 Afghans with medical assistance at

Jordan has participated in airstrikes and operations against the Islamic State. Most notably in southern Syria, the United States and Jordan have worked closely together to support the Southern Front, a coalition of moderate opposition forces that has in the past two years marginalized extremist elements and now controls much of southern Syria. This relatively successful effort stands in strong contrast to other parts of Syria – most notably in the north, where al Qaeda affiliates dominate the opposition. The reason for this success is largely tied to joint efforts by the United States and Jordan to control the Syrian-Jordanian border and ensure that arms are flowing primarily to moderate opposition groups.<sup>45</sup> Where American partners such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia have been less reliable in the north, the results have been much more problematic.

## Focusing on Objectives and Helping Jordan With Internal Security

The heavy focus on maintaining a strong relationship and interoperability leads the United States to de-emphasize efforts to assist Jordan with matters of internal stability. This is not necessarily in line with U.S. objectives, since most policymakers and analysts the authors interviewed expressed concerns that perhaps the single greatest threat to Jordan's long-term stability is internal pressure that leads to the collapse of the monarchy. And yet despite the fact that one of the primary drivers of U.S. support to Jordan is to maintain the stability of the kingdom, this is not a priority of U.S. security assistance.

This internal threat is largely driven by the differences among various demographic groups. The relationship between some segments of Jordan's East Banker tribal population and the Hashemite monarchy is defined by entrenched patronage through welfare benefits and privileged job access. This socio-political and socio-economic situation has the effect of largely marginalizing the Palestinians, who make up the country's majority, many of whom have turned to political Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. It is from the Palestinian population, and to a lesser extent dissatisfied segments of the East Bankers in areas such as Ma'an in southern Jordan, that ideological extremist organizations such as ISIS and al Qaeda have sought to recruit and conduct operations against the Hashemite Kingdom.<sup>46</sup>

Jordan's large resident Palestinian population continues to be mostly excluded from the East Banker-mobilized security forces that support the Hashemite monarchy, which is a long-term security challenge for the stability of Jordan.<sup>47</sup> The successive Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1948 and later in 1967 resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who eventually resettled in Jordan, received citizenship, and currently number approximately 2 million.<sup>48</sup> Palestinian resettlement and integration into Jordanian society has since largely defined the politics of identity, representation, and reform in the Hashemite Kingdom and has been a major push factor toward ongoing efforts to recalibrate the extent to which East Banker tribal dominance continues over the Jordanian state's most pivotal centers of power, particularly the security services.<sup>49</sup> The introduction of nearly 100,000 Iraqi refugees since 2003, and the more recent absorption of over 650,000 official registered Syrian refugees, has done little to ease East Banker tribal concerns over the erosion of their political power and has only further exacerbated the possibility of internal instability.<sup>50</sup>

An American approach that tried to help the Jordanian leadership and security forces reach out to these marginalized populations and take steps to counter the potential of violent extremism in these communities should be a priority for American security assistance programs if one of the primary objectives of American assistance is to strengthen and stabilize Jordan. But these programs receive little funding or emphasis in U.S. security assistance programming for Jordan.

There have been some recent successful pilot programs that are having impact, particularly in the context of countering violent extremism within the Syrian refugee community. In one example, Siren Associates, a CT security implementer supported by the British government, has developed a pilot program for community policing in the Zaatari Refugee Camp in northern Jordan's al-Mafraq Governorate, which with over 70,000 residents would be Jordan's fourth-largest city.<sup>51</sup> Since 2013, this program has reportedly reduced violent incidents by 60 percent inside the Zaatari camp and has been important in improving conditions in an environment that could be very conducive to extremism.<sup>52</sup>

Siren Associates' model has a three-pronged strategy, which includes community policing and outreach, information sharing by local community members once they are more confident with the intentions of the Jordanian state, and incident management if a conflict occurs between security forces and the local community.<sup>53</sup> If it can be replicated in other areas of Jordan, not just focused on the Syrian refugee community in easily delineated and separated camp populations, it could be a useful method to counter radicalization and conflict between the Jordanian state and other at-risk communities, whether East Banker or non-East Banker. Other areas of focus could include Ma'an in southern Jordan, al-Zarqa in central Jordan, and Irbid in northern Jordan, which are potential sites of recruitment and mobilization from the local population, including refugees, Palestinian-Jordanians, and East Bankers, for ideological extremist groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda.<sup>54</sup>

Siren Associates has achieved buy-in from the Jordanian security services, while working closely with the local Syrian community of the camp, building partnerships between retired Jordanian police officers and camp leaders who wanted to participate in the community policing program.<sup>55</sup> Prior to starting such a program,



*Jordanian internal security forces patrol the streets of Amman during a period of Arab Spring-inspired protests in November 2012. Jordan faces domestic unrest, yet U.S. security assistance to the country has not focused on capacity building of police and internal security forces. (Elizabeth Arrott/YouTube)*

Siren Associates seeks to establish baseline metrics for assessment by conducting a pre-survey to understand what needs to be done on the local level, working within the context of the host nation's policy framework. It conducted this survey prior to starting the project in the Zaatari Refugee Camp.<sup>56</sup>

The pre-survey is intended to poll the local community and community police force, as well as interview national security policymakers on their perception of their needs, in order to find commonalities that can bring the different stakeholders into agreement on what policies need to be enacted on the local level. Based on the findings of the pre-survey, Siren Associates designed its Zaatari Refugee Camp project activities to have meaningful impact on the local Syrian community while being relevant and understandable to Jordanian national policymakers, who want to prevent the camp from becoming a stronghold of ideological extremist groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda.<sup>57</sup> Siren Associates regularly conducts community surveys in the middle of the project implementation to assess whether there is impact. One metric the organization uses is the number of security incidents, of all types, that occurred since the project activities began. Another metric is the survey of the community and the perception of security of the local community. This process allows for continuous assessment of the projects being implemented based on feedback from these metrics.<sup>58</sup>

However, the success of the Siren Associates program model depends on the permissiveness of Jordanian security authorities and the Jordanian state's willingness to cede some of its powers to local communities in an ongoing environment where ISIS, al Qaeda, and other ideological extremist groups are seeking to build networks within the Hashemite Kingdom.<sup>59</sup> For all of its limitations, the security services of the Hashemite Kingdom are generally less heavy-handed in their repression than in many other Middle Eastern countries. Further, the Jordanian police force is based on the British system, which has more emphasis on collection of evidence, rather than forcing a confession, than other regional security and justice systems.<sup>60</sup> But whether they can show the restraint necessary to execute such a program is an open question.

Importantly, while the type of program described above could have a meaningful impact at the community level and help reduce the conditions that fuel extremism, it is important to distinguish between that type of change and more fundamental reform of Jordanian institutions, which is much more difficult. Jordan's current stability is closely tied to the socio-political system that supports the Hashemite monarchy, which is primarily drawn from the East Banker Arab tribes who form the majority of the country's military and internal security forces.<sup>61</sup> Although King Abdullah II is provided strong and broad powers over the Jordanian government, the Hashemite monarchy is dependent on the East Banker tribes to support this power. The tribes in turn are dependent on the monarchy to ensure that they collectively remain the most powerful social and political actors in the Jordanian state.<sup>62</sup> The mutually dependent relationship of the Hashemite monarchy, the East Banker tribes, and the Jordanian state makes it much more difficult for American assistance to lead to more fundamental reforms of the country's security institutions. Most notably, leadership appointments and promotions in the Jordanian security services are in many cases not based on performance, but on familial and tribal relationships.<sup>63</sup> And no matter how much the United States invests in professionalizing Jordanian forces, this patronage system and the need to use appointments within the security services to placate certain key power centers within Jordanian society will remain. This feature of Jordanian society will likely continue to stand in the way of fundamental reform or the notion that American security assistance in Jordan can lead to broader institutional or governance changes. This does not mean that the United States should not pursue professionalization efforts and increase the institutional capacity of the security ministries. But American programming and objectives must be realistic and geared first and foremost to assisting the Jordanian government to reduce the conditions at the local level that are conducive to extremism.

## **03 CHAPTER**

# **U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance to Kenya**



Sudan

Ethiopia

Uganda

Somalia

**Kenya**

**Nairobi**



Tanzania

## Introduction and Background

Terrorism in Kenya is rooted in its historically poor relations with Somalia and with its own minority Muslim population. Pressure on Islamists in Somalia has prompted attacks inside Kenya, while some Muslims marginalized within Kenyan society have aided militants in Somalia and conducted their own attacks. Nairobi's long-standing suspicion of Somali-Kenyan communities' loyalty to the state, combined with a steady increase in al-Shabaab-related terrorist violence, fuels a tendency for security forces to use repressive tactics against Muslim citizens and refugees alike. This interrelationship between Kenyan domestic politics and foreign extremism complicates joint U.S.-Kenyan efforts to counter terrorism on the Horn of Africa. U.S. assistance could focus more on human rights and rule-of-law training for Kenyan police, on building judicial capacity to successfully prosecute cases against those involved in terrorism, and on inducing Kenyan political leaders to reduce corruption or support for other policies that victimize Somali and Kenyan Muslim communities.

Kenya and Somalia have always been uneasy neighbors. In the half-century since the end of British colonial rule, Kenya's security forces have been deployed only for two major operations, and both have involved Somalia. The first campaign was an effort to counter the post-independence insurgency in the Northern Frontier District along the Kenya-Somali border.<sup>64</sup> Kenya's nascent security forces, in transition from colonial to local personnel, defeated the *shifto* rebellion absent a resolution of the wider conflicts between Somalia and Kenya and between the marginalized border communities and the central government in Nairobi.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the often-brutal conduct of the government's counterinsurgency operations included extrajudicial killings (EJKs) and detentions of suspected insurgents, community curfews, and collective punishment.<sup>66</sup>

More than 40 years later, Kenya is an ongoing contributor to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The multinational forces were first organized and deployed in 2007 to win southern and central Somalia back from the al Qaeda-affiliated militant Islamist group al-Shabaab. The group, formerly a part of

the governing Islamic Courts Union, has split its focus between Somali nationalism – and its goal of a system of public order based on Islamic legal traditions – and global Islamist terrorism. The group's affiliation with al Qaeda attracted Western concern, and its militancy reanimated regional neighbors' historical concerns about Somali revanchism. Al-Shabaab had demonstrated the ability to conduct attacks throughout East Africa despite losing much of its former territory in Somalia itself.<sup>67</sup> The group has specifically mounted retaliatory operations in AMISOM-contributing states. The 2015 attack on Garissa University that killed 147 people is one vivid example of al-Shabaab's operational capacity inside Kenya.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, successive civil wars, government failures, droughts, and famines in Somalia have driven millions of Somalis over regional borders, especially into Kenya. Viewing refugees as temporary residents, the Kenyan government has made little effort to integrate the Somali population into Kenyan society. This nonpolicy has resulted in large pockets of Kenyan territory populated with hundreds of thousands of Somalis whose only meaningful interactions with the Kenyan state are security-related and too often predatory.<sup>69</sup> The cycle of radicalization begins for some in the refugee camps and urban slums, where economic opportunities are scarce and government services limited.<sup>70</sup> Many Kenyans who have joined al-Shabaab, however, have been radicalized elsewhere, notably in marginalized communities along the Kenyan coast. The companion threat of a Kenyan coastal secessionist movement rounds out concerns about terrorist strikes inside Kenyan territory.<sup>71</sup> As such attacks have mounted, Kenya's government has focused on its own indigenous Muslim population with increasing force. NGOs have alleged systematic abuses at the hands of the police in particular, including abductions, torture, and extrajudicial killings.<sup>72</sup> Kenyan and international analysts alike claim that the escalating antagonism between Muslim communities and the government enables al-Shabaab recruitment – or at least tolerance of the group's aims and operations – inside Kenya.

## Contemporary Kenyan Responses to Terrorism

Numerous structural and systemic barriers hamper Kenyan efforts to counter established terrorists and the radicalization and recruitment of new ones. Corruption and the excessive use of force by law enforcement are two of the most pernicious problems that have transcended individual governments in Kenya.<sup>73</sup> Specific actions by the government exacerbate these structural and systemic obstacles.

In 2015, Kenya ranked 139th on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>74</sup> Corruption often exacerbates existing socio-economic inequities, creating cycles of disenfranchisement that contribute to radicalization. Somalis and Kenyan Muslims are routinely discriminated against in both the public and private sectors. Education and employment opportunities are especially difficult to access, but security is a public good often denied to these communities as well. At the same time, the liberal use and acceptance of bribes to law enforcement enables terrorism by impeding police activity.

Police in Kenya are poorly paid, and many members of law enforcement compensate for their low wages by demanding bribes.<sup>75</sup> While extortion by the police victimizes many Kenyans, it also provides terrorists with pay-to-play impunity. Several people we interviewed, including members of law enforcement and the media, lamented that wealthy al-Shabaab financiers and facilitators are able to exploit corruption in the government, police, and judiciary to operate freely. According to one local journalist, al-Shabaab operatives were able to bring a vehicle loaded with explosive material all the way from Mogadishu to Mombasa by bribing their way through numerous police checkpoints.<sup>76</sup> One police officer recounted numerous instances in which individuals known to be involved in militancy were arrested, easily posted bond, and then used bribery to secure their release.<sup>77</sup> There are, at best, only a few hundred judges in the country, too many of whom are willing to accept bribes and let suspects go, according to numerous interlocutors in Nairobi.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, wealthy financiers and facilitators also use their money to ensure that poor Kenyan and Somali militants are released.<sup>79</sup> And police reform is an elusive wish. Elected officials can be reluctant to crack down on corruption, either because they benefit personally or because they do not want to undermine the useful political services the police are willing to sell them.

Corruption and lack of capacity further down the law enforcement chain also enable the excessive use of force. Impunity for police misconduct, combined with the difficulty in securing thorough investigations and convictions through the anemic justice process, has contributed to a penchant for torture and extrajudicial killings. In some cases, police violence is a pathology of power, whereas in others, it appears to be a perverted effort to take suspected terrorist recruiters, facilitators, radical preachers, and would-be militants off the street. It is also useful when dealing with returning foreign fighters against whom there is often little admissible evidence of their involvement in activities across the border. Various interview subjects posed similar variants of the same rhetorical question: Why not torture or kill suspects if you believe you cannot convict the guilty? Numerous interlocutors, including members of the media, also suggested that terrorists did not deserve human rights and so EJKs were actually a patriotic act, considering the difficulty in securing convictions. These practices are particularly widespread in the coastal areas of Mombasa and Kwale and in the northeast, where militancy is most prevalent.



*An al-Shabaab gunman is captured in security camera footage in the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, on September 21, 2013. The al-Shabaab-directed operation killed 67 people and wounded more than 175, and underscores the challenge Kenya faces from this Somali militant organization. (Eekee/YouTube)*

Of course, draconian solutions to the lack of due process in the courts target the innocent as well as the dangerous. In an effort to reduce the use of torture and EJKs, the United States sought to convince the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) that these actions contributed to radicalization and to equip investigators with the tools needed to secure the kind of incontrovertible evidence that would make convictions more likely. These efforts, which have had some success, are discussed in detail below.

It is important to separate the excessive use of force and collective punishment meted out against Somali and Muslim Kenyans from the wider prevalence of predatory treatment by the police. The latter is common throughout Kenya. Yet there is likely a disproportionately negative effect on Somali refugee and Muslim communities for two reasons. First, this treatment is viewed as part of a wider chain of government abuses. A community provided with few public goods and services, the Muslim minority suspects its insecurity at the hands of government agents is part of an explicit national policy. Second, although data is difficult to come by, police misconduct may actually be more prevalent in these communities. In places such as the slums of Eastleigh, residents are commonly harassed for “walking while Somali,” to use the quip employed by several interview subjects. There is also the lack of officers from these communities. Several law enforcement officials assessed that this contributes to mistreatment because the officers tend to view the populations they are supposed to serve as alien or threatening to them. Questions about the loyalty of Somalis and Kenyan Muslims persist, making recruitment from these communities less likely.

## U.S. Security Assistance to Kenya

Despite the increasing threat of terrorist attacks from domestic sources in Kenya, there is little balance in U.S. assistance between the police and the military. By FY 2015, funding for the Kenyan military comprised the overwhelming majority of all USG counterterrorism support for Kenya’s security services.<sup>80</sup> This is largely a reflection of the greater priority the United States puts on combating al-Shabaab in Somalia, but also the relative ease of securing resources for DoD CT and DoS CT and peacekeeping assistance as compared with other DoS funding.

Kenya is one of the largest recipients of U.S. security assistance in sub-Saharan Africa, receiving approximately \$141 million in security assistance funds between 2010 and 2014.<sup>81</sup> The major focus of this assistance has been on counterterrorism, particularly to secure Kenya’s northern border and support the country’s participation in AMISOM. With this shift came an increase in financing: In FY 2015 alone, the United States provided Kenya \$80 million in CT funds, and over \$100 million in FY 2016.

### Despite the increasing threat of terrorist attacks from domestic sources in Kenya, there is little balance in U.S. assistance between the police and the military.

The government of Kenya has been a primary recipient of the DoD’s Section 1206 “Global Train and Equip” program (now called Section 2282) and the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund.<sup>82</sup> CTPF funding augments existing CT authorities and allows both DoS and DoD to transfer delegated funds into existing departmental accounts.<sup>83</sup> Flexibility in this particular funding authority also allows the transfer of CTPF funds to any DoD accounts, specified DoS accounts, and also shared spending between both departments.<sup>84</sup>

Funding for counterterrorism pursues a variety of tactical ends. Of the \$80 million reserved for CT support in FY 2015, almost two-thirds was directed toward intelligence sharing, maintenance, logistics (including airlift support), border monitoring systems (including unmanned aerial systems), and operations to counter improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

The remaining funds directly supported the Kenyan Ranger Regiment – a special-operations element of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF).<sup>85</sup> In addition to direct equipment and training support, Kenya is also party to bilateral and multilateral military exercises, including Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) with U.S. special forces, and military-to-military exchanges.<sup>86</sup> The United States' modest contributions to KDF human rights and rule-of-law training happen during such exchanges and AMISOM-related peacekeeper training, and are otherwise found in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The United States spent between \$700,000 and \$760,000 per year on IMET between FY 2013 and FY 2015<sup>87</sup> and has sponsored 20 to 35 Kenyan military officers per year to study at U.S. military educational institutions.<sup>88</sup> Professionalization efforts would likely benefit from a greater focus on increasing the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Defence, vice the currently narrower focus mainly on the KDF.

U.S. assistance to domestic Kenyan security services is more modest. Security assistance for the police focuses on improving professionalization, including oversight and accountability and tactical responses to attacks like those on the Westgate Mall and Garissa. Improving coordination and intelligence sharing is also a goal of U.S. assistance, as is increasing investigative capabilities to enable prosecutions of terrorist suspects. U.S. assistance for the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit focused on improving the unit's ability to conduct intelligence-led operations. The United States also helped facilitate and fund development of the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) to provide for civilian oversight over the work of the police in Kenya and the creation of an internal affairs division.<sup>89</sup> These are nascent but important steps in terms of developing the institutional capacity of the Kenyan police. More could be done to build the professional capacity of the Ministry of Interior, which oversees the police and other domestic security services.

Historically, less than 10 percent of U.S. security assistance has been devoted to countering violent extremism. However, the amount is set to triple within the next few budget cycles, and USG personnel anticipate it may rise even further.<sup>90</sup>

## Addressing Structural Problems

CNAS researchers found that the Kenyan government perceives the domestic terrorist threat to be closely tied to al-Shabaab and thus views degrading the group in Somalia as the most effective way to prevent terrorism at home.<sup>91</sup> U.S. security assistance priorities clearly support this view, and the KDF has indeed had some impressive operational successes in Somalia. Since its 2011 deployment, Kenya has cleared and held much of AMISOM Sector 2 in the southwest, including the important port city of Kismayo.<sup>92</sup> Although al-Shabaab has persisted in its efforts to regain control of major towns in Kenyan-controlled areas, the group has yet to achieve lasting success. As is the case more generally when measuring security assistance outcomes, it is hard to draw direct lines between U.S. training and equipping and Kenya's CT performance, but some areas do appear to have benefited from U.S. patronage, in particular Kenya's border patrol capacity.

Yet focusing exclusively on defeating al-Shabaab in Somalia and securing the Kenyan border overlooks the sources of radicalization at home. The lack of economic opportunities for many ethnic Somali Kenyans and refugees, coupled with security force abuses, creates a push-pull effect, where some Kenyans are alienated from Kenyan society and then lured toward al-Shabaab by promises of jobs and money.<sup>93</sup> Nairobi has also failed to connect security forces' conduct with al-Shabaab recruitment in marginalized Muslim communities. While establishing a definitive causal connection between Kenyan security policies and homegrown extremism is very difficult, there is ample evidence that repressive tactics alienate communities from security institutions, precluding police relationships with locals that could support prevention and intelligence-gathering efforts.

These problems are not tied to a single Kenyan administration. Targeted violence by state actors – a mix of law enforcement, intelligence, and the military – has increased in recent years, but that is heavily influenced by the growing nature of the threat. Beyond the frequently cited shortcomings in the justice sector,<sup>94</sup> the current government has taken some actions and failed to take others, exacerbating the domestic structural and systemic problems outlined above.

First, the failure to create and implement a functional rehabilitation and reintegration program has hampered efforts to counter radicalization and probably contributed to the propensity of state actors to disappear returning foreign fighters. A blanket amnesty was issued,

but no infrastructure was created to support it. And when returnees start disappearing or turning up dead, this dissuades others from coming home.

Second, the government has attempted to sideline civil society, especially organizations focused on promoting human rights and rule of law. This not only makes reforms less likely (which might be one of the objectives). It also severs a necessary conduit between the government and communities most at risk of radicalization, thereby making interventions more difficult and reducing access to off-ramps for individuals flirting with militancy.

Third, the government has struggled to coordinate its counterterrorism efforts across agencies and security forces, meaning that both programming and lessons learned fail to complement each other or translate from one effort to another. Counterproductive programs are also allowed to persist. The ill-conceived Nyumba Kumi (Ten Households) initiative is a case in point. The program calls for neighbors to know one another and report suspicious activity. Every interview subject, save for the one person interviewed who was associated with Nyumba Kumi, agreed the initiative is perceived as a “spy on your neighbor” program that is bound to fail in the context of deep suspicion of government intentions. In the meantime, it is diverting attention and resources away from much-needed police reforms.

It is clear that lack of respect for the rule of law and the failure to protect minority rights are major risk factors for radicalization. If the Kenyan government cannot change the culture of the domestic security services, then it will struggle to reduce radicalization. This must be a top-down and bottom-up initiative. Senior officials must make a clear commitment to reform, increase pay for law enforcement to reduce the need for corruption, cease politicizing the police, and commit to a training program with monitoring and evaluation done by an independent party. Police corruption and mistreatment of communities is too endemic and entrenched to be fixed in the near to medium term.

U.S. policymakers and embassy officials in Kenya have urged Nairobi to begin by addressing allegations of domestic security abuses. However, as previously mentioned, U.S. assistance to police training is limited. And while several other Western countries complement the United States’ modest police programming, the United Kingdom’s Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) observed that U.S., U.K., and European Union training efforts sometimes train the same police officers with different approaches, making it more difficult to institutionalize reforms and progress. Moreover, stopping

police abuses appears to be as much about changing the culture of domestic security as it is about changing individuals’ behavior. Community-policing techniques have been tried repeatedly in Kenya but have failed to bear fruit. Police corruption and mistreatment of communities are long-standing challenges, and reforms require change from the top down as well as from the bottom up. Integrating Somali and Muslim Kenyans into the security architecture of the country and making them responsible for policing their home communities is a top-down measure that could help promote change at the grass-roots level.

While the United States has encouraged the hiring of minority officers, it has focused primarily on other top-down reforms that could also have strategic effects. Specifically, the United States helped facilitate and fund development of the Independent Policing Oversight Authority to provide for civilian oversight over the work of the police in Kenya. U.S. officials also worked with their Kenyan counterparts to create an internal affairs division. These initiatives were still relatively new at the time research for this report was conducted, and not much evidence was available to indicate whether they were having the desired effect. Limited attempts at measurement are discussed later in this paper. Funding challenges are also a double-edged sword for the United States. If Washington does not fund IPOA then the organization might not survive Kenya’s own budgeting process. At the same time, U.S. funding may make IPOA look to some like an American tool and rob it of legitimacy.

Efforts to improve the ATPU’s ability to do intelligence-led operations and gather evidence in order to reduce reliance on EJKs have been a major focus of U.S. assistance and cooperation. But CNAS researchers heard suggestions that the ATPU’s interest in these improvements had little to do with a direct respect for the human rights of minority communities. Rather, their American counterparts appear to have convinced ATPU officials of the potential for radicalization within communities targeted by abusive CT policing and provided them with a viable alternative.<sup>95</sup>

Regardless of the rationale for reforms, there is some evidence that professionalization efforts are bearing fruit. Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) programs helped to foster interagency cooperation on intelligence-led operations and to get the security forces, prosecutors, and some members of judiciary on the same page. The result has been to enable targeted operations and infiltration, thus reducing the need for a blunt-force approach aimed at whole communities. These programs also

appear to have improved the ATPU's ability to gather admissible evidence and reduce the chances that guilty suspects go free and innocent people are detained. Data on prosecutions is hard to come by and metrics are anecdotal and internal, but Kenyan and American officials claim that fewer civilians are killed than in the past and fewer arrests are made without evidence. Interview subjects who work for independent NGOs said they have seen some improvement in terms of command and control among police and evidence collection by ATPU. They added that they are seeing more cases in the courts and a dip in ATPU EJKs, which suggests ATPU training helped reduce abuses, if only temporarily.<sup>96</sup>

Yet the ATPU is not the only actor involved in counterterrorism. One drawback to improved coordination and an integrated interagency approach is that it obscures who is responsible for EJKs and disappearances. There is also no overarching mechanism to hold military or intelligence officers accountable in the event they are involved. Numbers are hard to come by, but most of those with whom one of the authors spoke believed that EJKs and disappearances of foreign fighter returnees and suspected terrorist sympathizers had risen since the Garissa attack.<sup>97</sup>

## The State of AM&E

Security assistance is inherently political, and gaps between donor and recipient nations for how it will be used are common. Overcoming these divergences is difficult enough even when assistance is delivered in the most proficient manner. A systematic lack of reliable metrics on program outcomes makes it even more difficult for the United States to target aid effectively and manage or mitigate differences in objectives for assistance where they occur. Members of civil society interviewed for this report agreed that transparency by the United States in terms of where it directs assistance would facilitate independent assessment, monitoring, and evaluation. They added that effective AM&E would make it more difficult for the Kenyan government to claim that the United States supports harsh treatment of suspected militants.

Several examples highlight current AM&E deficiencies. The monitoring plan for IMET is anecdotal. There is some tracking of career progress for participants in the program, but the fact that leaders of all the services in the KDF are U.S.-trained is not proof that professionalization efforts are working. On the policing side, no major U.S. monitoring efforts existed in the past because so little money was spent on CVE. The inspector general of the Kenyan police formed the directorate of operations audit to measure effectiveness of community police training and developed mechanisms to solicit feedback from the public on its website and via social media. But these instruments put the onus on communities to offer feedback and require direct engagement by communities on sensitive issues, greatly reducing their efficacy.

Another area where monitoring and evaluation are lacking is on the efficacy of promoting coordination among different agencies. The United States helped Nairobi develop mechanisms for sharing intelligence and coordinating operations between different security agencies, including the police, intelligence service, and military. Anecdotal evidence indicates this has improved the efficacy of legitimate counterterrorism operations but also made it more difficult to identify culprits involved in extrajudicial actions and hold them accountable. The military's involvement in domestic counterterrorism specifically creates new challenges because there is no mechanism similar to IPOA for exercising oversight. The United States does not have a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the effects of coordinated operations on rule of law. Without developing one, it is difficult to know whether U.S. assistance has created a moral hazard



*A U.S. Army sergeant trains Kenyan soldiers in anti-improvised explosive device operations in 2011. The course was designed to improve the capabilities of Kenyan soldiers to train other soldiers from East African nations participating in peacekeeping operations. (Staff Sgt. Austin M. May/Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa)*

and, if so, to pressure the Kenyan government to rectify the matter by increasing transparency. Nairobi could do so by creating an independent authority to oversee all joint counterterrorism operations and/or an ombudsman dedicated to domestic military and intelligence operations. Alternatively, the Kenyan Parliament could create a committee on domestic counterterrorism that would take on an oversight role. In either case, the key is to create an outlet for communities to bring grievances and a transparent mechanism for investigation.

Now that CVE spending is growing, the U.S. Embassy is considering ways to monitor CVE programs.<sup>98</sup> Embassy personnel are also exploring instruments to study the efficacy of efforts to improve policing, but these instruments have not yet been created. Best practices by implementers within civil society may offer useful guides. There are too many NGOs for CNAS to interview all or even most of them or to assess the AM&E approach each one takes, but RUSI is among the most capable and sophisticated and it has devised several

methods of AM&E that are worth exploring further.

First, when training the police, RUSI develops an instrument to measure knowledge and perceptions immediately before and after training, and returns six months later to measure longer-term success. Second, when putting programs in place in the field, RUSI conducts research in multiple communities across Kenya to identify both crosscutting and community-specific risk factors and to develop targeted programs. In those communities, RUSI develops pre- and post-project surveys and also incorporates other variables, such as the number of incidents of violence or trends in foreign fighter flows to Somalia. Some of these variables are more difficult to quantify than others, but the effort to capture outcomes systematically nevertheless provides useful information. Third, RUSI also resources its AM&E work, sometimes up to 30 percent of a program budget. Such significant resourcing for program evaluation is far beyond the industry standard.

# **04 CHAPTER**

## **Key Conclusions**

Our field research in Kenya and Jordan as well as our consultations and policy roundtables with experts in Washington have led to three central conclusions. First, U.S. counterterrorism security assistance is too focused on external threats to partners and thereby shortchanges support to law enforcement and local counterterrorism efforts. This is partly a function of current U.S. priorities, but also the result of uneven capabilities across the USG. More emphasis should be put on increasing the capacity of U.S. agencies to develop programs designed to improve the capacity, capabilities, and professionalism of domestic security services and on relevant CVE programs to address internal threats.<sup>99</sup> Second, metrics for measuring the outcomes of CT security assistance programs are few and uncoordinated with policy and among agencies. What metrics exist focus almost entirely on investments rather than results.<sup>100</sup> As DoD develops metrics for security cooperation and the State Department increases its emphasis on CVE programming, it will be important to design an interagency architecture of CT program evaluation. Such an effort would benefit from work that is already being done in the field by innovative implementers. Finally, we found that there is a tendency to focus on AM&E as an afterthought rather than a process that must begin in the design phase of any program. Effective measurement begins with the identification and articulation of a theory of change for how assistance will be used. This requires delineating specific and measurable objectives that are achievable in an identified time frame and that if attained will advance wider counterterrorism aims. Conducting this exercise upfront will force policymakers to reconcile where other goals, such as relationship building, should or should not take precedence over improving a recipient's technocratic performance. The remainder of this chapter describes these conclusions in greater detail.

## Put More Focus on Internal Threats

U.S. CT security assistance should devote more to improving the capacity, capabilities, and professionalism of domestic security services and internal security instead of focusing almost singularly on external threats. This requires the executive branch to ask Congress for more support for these types of activities and for Congress to allocate more funds to support partner law enforcement capabilities and less for partner militaries. It also requires agencies responsible for executing these programs to improve their own capabilities, which is something that is impossible without processes to measure success.

The overwhelming preponderance of American CT security assistance both in Jordan and Kenya is directed at the countries' militaries in order to address the external threats posed by ISIS and al-Shabaab, respectively. Yet although these groups threaten the recipient countries in question, their ability to do so depends heavily on the presence of domestic risk factors that lead extremists to travel to Somalia or Syria or to attempt attacks at home.

The collapse of the Hashemite monarchy in Jordan would be disastrous for U.S. interests in the Middle East. If the monarchy were to collapse, the most likely cause would be internal pressures coming from a radicalized group of jihadists who have gone to Syria and Iraq to fight and from the huge flow of refugees who have entered Jordan in the past few years. Yet very little American support has gone to training local police or to internal security. More funds and focus should be targeted at Anti-Terrorism Assistance programs, which receive only a tiny fraction of the \$1 billion the United States provides in aid to Jordan every year. Moreover, the focus should also be on policing programs such as the one developed by Siren Associates in Zaatari camp, which focus less on traditional policing and more on having communities police themselves.

Kenya's internal stability is critical to the United States, yet bilateral security assistance focuses almost exclusively on support to forces participating in AMISOM. It is encouraging that the State Department's budget for countering violent extremism in Kenya is set to increase, and we recommend that either as part of this effort or in concert with it, the United States put more attention and resources into police-related anti-terrorism assistance. In particular, U.S. assistance should focus on improving intelligence-led policing in agencies beyond the ATPU; developing police awareness of the radicalization risks associated with aggressive policing; and helping police develop methods for monitoring at-risk communities and returning fighters.

One example where this more internally based approach is already taking hold in the U.S. government is through the new emphasis on CVE. It is important that the USG follow through on the new CVE strategy's call to "empower and amplify locally credible voices" while lowering the U.S. government's profile and increasing transparency.<sup>101</sup> CVE is notoriously difficult to define, however, and can take years before results are obvious. This makes it essential to identify clear objectives and milestones for progress during the planning phase, which must also include an honest assessment of the time scale involved. The United States should also increase efforts to transparently convey to civil society the programs it is funding, the objectives they are intended to achieve, and the values on which they are based.

One area where external and internal threats meet and where the United States has been quite effective is improving border security. Border security is central to stopping the movement of non-state actors but is also an arena where relatively costly high-tech and infrastructure investments that the United States is uniquely positioned to provide can make a major difference. American efforts to help Jordan on its Syrian border and Kenya on its Somali border should continue to be a point of emphasis in security assistance programs.

Finally, it is also important to note that in many cases the most effective training efforts being conducted in these countries are being led by local and international NGOs and supported by other donor countries. Therefore, the United States should not seek to re-create the wheel as it puts more resources into this space but instead should leverage the work already being done and coordinate with actors who have a demonstrated track record of success.

## Invest in AM&E and Develop Metrics That Measure Outputs

The National Security Council should coordinate the development of a set of shared interagency metrics for measuring the success of CT security assistance programs. These metrics should be designed to measure outcomes rather than simply verifying inputs and should build on the work being conducted by the Department of Defense and the Senate Armed Services Committee. This lack of standard and effective metrics for evaluating CT security assistance has absolved policymakers from clearly articulating upfront how assistance will achieve stated objectives. It also systematically precludes program developers and implementers from judging the impact of U.S. security assistance on both terrorism and partner nation performance.

As noted earlier, the Department of Defense is in the process of developing policy mechanisms and an organizational architecture to assess, monitor, and evaluate all security cooperation programs. This effort should be aligned with an effort to develop similar processes at other USG agencies and to centralize the current AM&E program at the State Department. The absence of agreed-upon methods of AM&E can undermine programming across the interagency and USG efforts to balance short-term security issues and long-term goals related to issues such as governance.

### **Metrics should be designed to measure outcomes rather than simply verifying inputs.**

This does not mean the USG must take a one-size-fits-all approach. The NSC could develop a menu of criteria and metrics to adapt measurement efforts to particular programs, allowing for tailored approaches without losing the ability to compare programmatic achievements. Because each program and environment will be different, the guidelines for gathering data will also need to be adapted for different types of cases.

Importantly, this effort should emphasize concrete objectives and clear outputs. For example, measuring how many police officers or soldiers have been trained in a particular program only tells us how money is spent. Training programs must also assess trainees' attitudes at the outset of a program, how these attitudes have changed once training concludes, whether changes in attitude are durable, how training is applied in the field,

and how the application of new methods impacts the community being policed. Other important metrics include usage rates of the units that are trained and the retention rates of personnel to ensure that the individuals in units that receive training remain in those units instead of being quickly transferred elsewhere. Regular exercises that test the capacity of trained units and personnel both during the training and also regularly thereafter can be another useful method. Existing tools such as community surveys or focus groups can be leveraged to measure these outcomes throughout the implementation process. The United States may face considerable challenges in getting valid measurements of some outcomes of interest, such as local attitudes toward law enforcement. To address this issue, local nongovernment implementers will be an essential complement to direct USG monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

An important point for Congress and the executive branch is that as these projects are implemented, more resources should be dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. Policymakers and funders are often averse to this type of funding and would rather put more into implementation. The internationally accepted best practice is to devote 3 percent to 5 percent of any program budget to AM&E, and the USG should abide by this standard for all its programming. Especially early on, measuring the effectiveness of a program and trying to refine and improve it is critical. Indeed, in many cases the United States should start by funding smaller security assistance programs in specific targeted communities inside a country – most notably those with the highest risk of radicalization. After testing initial results, these types of programs can then be expanded.

The U.S. government should also mine the knowledge of local private and nongovernmental project implementers when designing evaluation criteria. We have found that contractors often have the most experience with monitoring programmatic results and have valuable lessons learned that can be transmitted to those in Washington who are trying to layer on a broader policy framework. As part of this approach, the United States should also make its programming more transparent by releasing details of objectives, recipient agencies, and funding levels to enable outside monitoring and evaluation.

## Effective AM&E Must Start With Clear Objectives Upfront

American policymakers need to be clear and realistic upfront about what objectives a CT security assistance program can achieve and prepared to invest the necessary resources in determining whether the program works. This approach will help balance technocratic objectives for security assistance with broader political ones and could provide a way forward on addressing seemingly insurmountable structural or societal problems in a recipient country. And effective AM&E is impossible to achieve if there is not a clear plan upfront that lays out the objectives against which the success of a program is measured.

If a country, such as Jordan for example, is deemed to be of high value to U.S. policy for geopolitical factors, there is great hesitance to evaluate or critique the logic of certain high-optics security assistance programs. Thus, the sale of advanced military hardware such as F-16s is more geared for a near-peer competitor than to confront terrorist organizations internally. But since there are other strategic imperatives driving the United States to continue a broad range of security assistance programs, even those that are not related to CT are branded as CT and judged to be important and effective in order to prevent criticism of them. In some cases, providing assistance that is not all that important or effective programmatically but maintains an important strategic



*A member of the U.S. Army National Guard-Georgia observes Lebanese soldiers conducting live fire training near Beirut. Since 2007, Lebanon has become the sixth largest recipient of U.S. counterterrorism security assistance. (Georgia National Guard/Flickr)*

relationship is a reasonable use of security assistance funds. But implementers and policymakers should be realistic and clear-eyed about precisely what this type of support is achieving and not achieving.

Additionally, when it comes to affecting governance and institutions within a recipient nation, American leverage is limited. Partner-nation institutions have many incentives that are independent from USG goals and are embedded in context-dependent state-society relations that USG assistance cannot alter overnight. In Jordan, promotions inside the security forces go almost exclusively to East Bankers and are used as a tool by the country's leadership to maintain political order. In the case of Kenya, corruption is a major factor that influences the effectiveness of security assistance programs but that the United States does not have the leverage to dramatically reshape.<sup>102</sup> Corruption often exacerbates existing socio-economic inequities, creating cycles of disenfranchisement that contribute to radicalization.<sup>103</sup> At the same time, the liberal use and acceptance of bribes to law enforcement enables terrorism by impeding police activity. It is hard to see how a

**All security assistance programming that is intended to build capacity or promote reform, as opposed to promoting goals such as relationship building or securing access, must be guided by a theory of change that articulates specific and measurable objectives.**

relatively modest American security assistance program in either country could overcome these challenges. This is precisely why any effective AM&E effort must begin during the planning phase and be tied to independent country assessments, which should include a classified annex to enable a clear-eyed articulation of the strategic environment.

All security assistance programming that is intended to build capacity or promote reform, as opposed to promoting goals such as relationship building or securing access, must be guided by a theory of change that articulates specific and measurable objectives.

It is critical that this planning phase also identify the time frame in which the United States seeks to realize its objectives. This exercise would help policymakers distinguish truly insurmountable challenges from ones that could be overcome or at least substantially mitigated given a sustained commitment over time. In cases where it might be possible to realize a worthy return on security assistance given enough time, identifying milestones would enable a way to track progress over time.

## Conclusion

In the post-9/11 era, security assistance will remain a key element in the United States' toolbox as it looks to address the challenge posed by international terrorism. But thus far, not enough thinking has gone into ensuring that U.S. programs yield the results Washington is looking for. The good news is that both the executive and legislative branches are increasingly focusing on this challenge and looking for new and creative ways to measure success. But to further improve these efforts, the U.S. government should put more emphasis on: (1) assisting its partners with internal security challenges; (2) assessing, evaluating, and monitoring CT security assistance programs; and (3) being clear-eyed about the objectives of CT security assistance programming.



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