

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS Policy Brief

Curbing the threat of Violent Extremism: Lessons learned from PVE in Mauritania.

Issuance date: 11 November 2024

Application Deadline and Instructions: Applications must be received by 1 December 2024. All applications must be submitted electronically to recapsecretariat@wanep.org with, in the subject line "WP_PEV Mauritania".

1. Introduction

The Research and Action for Peace (RECAP) project, funded by the European Union, is implemented by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in 18 countries of West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin¹. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the role of civil society, including regional, national, and community practitioners and researchers, in the promotion of effective peacebuilding, crisis management, and prevention of conflict and violent extremism in West Africa and the Lake Chad Basin to enable more informed decision making by policymakers. The present call is administrated jointly by WANEP, SIPRI, and DRC.

2. Rationale

WANEP, DRC and SIPRI are soliciting proposals for research from RECAP network members for the development of a policy brief on **"Curbing the threat of Violent Extremism: Lessons learned from PVE in Mauritania"**.

This study will determine the main policies lead by Mauritania since 2005 and after 2011 to eradicate the presence of extremist group on it's territory and prevent a new expansion after 2011. The policy brief will indentify and assess effectiveness of the stakeholders involved and their programme in terms of PEV in order to provide recommendation for the development of such policies in the neighboring countries if they are replicable and relevant.

2.1 Background

The proliferation of terrorist groups in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger poses a significant threat to the entire region. The adjacent coastal nations, particularly Togo and Benin, regularly endure attacks on their territories and have been compelled to develop PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) policies to enhance their security strategies and bolster the resilience of their populations against these groups. These policies have often yielded limited results. On the contrary, for several years, Mauritania has been recognized as a nation that has successfully managed to contain the jihadist threat as it has not registered attacks since 2011 and has the highest ranking on the Global Terrorism Index compared to the others countries in the region.

On June 4th 2005, Mauritania suffered the first djihadiste attack on the country. The Salafist Group for

¹ ECOWAS countries and Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania.

Preaching and Combat (GSPC) attacked an army barracks in Lemgheity in the north of the country. Numerous incidents followed until the last in December 20, 2011 when a gendarme was kidnaped by AQIM. In response to these events, the Mauritanian government reacted quickly and developed a multidimensional strategy to reduce the country's vulnerability to violent extremism. It invested in strengthening its military and intelligence capabilities to reinforce border control and facilitate the dismantling of groups within its borders². The government also invested in deradicalization programs, dialogue were organized between scholars, imam and Salafist prisoners to encourage a re-integration policy³⁴. In terms of prevention, a census of madrasas in the country was carried out and hundreds of students who were graduating from these schools were recruited by the administration to avoid any post-graduate radicalisation when faced with the difficulty of finding a job. Some observers also accuse Mauritania of having concluded an unofficial agreement with AQIM for the group to refrain from any attack or intervention on its territory⁵.

Coastal countries in West Africa (Togo, Bénin, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire) could benefit from such practices as they are threaten by the progression of extremist group in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin have already suffered attacks claimed by terrorist groups.

2.2 Objective of the consultancy

WANEP, DRC and SIPRI are soliciting applications from Members of the REcAP Network to produce a Policy Brief on **“Curbing the threat of Violent Extremism: Lessons learned from PVE in Mauritania”**.

The overall aim of this study is to produce an evidence-based policy brief that will serve as a tool for influencing policy and practice with a view to improve PVE programs and the general security in the Sahel region. The study should propose practical recommendations that can be applied by the stakeholders concerned.

In this context, the study will thoroughly assess the policies put in place in Mauritania since 2005, particularly it will analyse the multidimensional approach adopted by the government taking in consideration the effort made on the security sector but also n terms of economical and societal issue at the local level. The paper will consider their effectiveness, challenges and gaps in order to inform future policies in the country and the Sahel.

More specifically, the objectives of this policy brief are as follows:

- A context analysis to understand the specific context of Mauritania when it was subject to terrorist attacks;
- A stakeholder analysis, including identification and analysis of PEV and deradicalisation programs and challenges of key stakeholders (national governments, national army, religious leaders, CSOs etc.), from 2005 until today;
- An assessment of the remaining security risk faced by Mauritania concerning violent groups;
- Identification of best practices and recommendations for future international engagement on PEV in the neighbouring countries focusing on costal countries (Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana).

The policy brief's findings and recommendations should contribute to understanding the effectiveness of the Mauritanian PEV strategy and provide concrete and evidence-based recommendations to stakeholders useful to develop PEV strategy in similar context.

This policy brief will be presented by its author during a online REcAP Meet'Up with members of the network and interested researchers and institute after its publication.

² <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/renewed-jihadi-terror-threat-mauritania/>

³ https://carnegie-production-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/static/files/02_19_Wehrey_Mauritania_final.pdf

⁴ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/dialogue-with-jihadists-mauritania-offers-lessons-for-the-sahel>

⁵ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-has-mauritania-managed-to-stave-off-terror-attacks>

3. Scope of work and methodology

The researcher(s) or institution should clarify their research question, methodology, geographical scope and work plan in their proposal, indicating how the objectives of the research and policy brief will be achieved.

The researcher(s) will be responsible for implementing all stages of the study, from the design of the methodology to the drafting of the final report, including document review and data collection in the field. The researcher(s) will apply the highest rigour, quality and professionalism standards.

The researcher(s) will carry out the following tasks:

- Carry out a **literature review** based on existing documentation (scientific and academic literature, NGO reports) to provide a summary of current knowledge on the subject
- Conduct a few **key informant interviews with main stakeholders**, especially representatives of local organisations in contact with beneficiaries populations, and including representatives of the government and religious leaders, etc.
- Drawing up a **preliminary preparatory report** highlighting: the definition of the subject of the study; the research and data collection methodology; the methodological approach to data processing and analysis adopted; the findings and conclusions of the literature review. It will be validated together with the Scientific Committee as part of the Inception report.
- **Write the first draft of the policy brief** based on the analysis of the desk review.
- **Write the final draft of the policy brief** including comments received from the REcAP Scientific Committee and EU FPI.
- Produce a high-quality policy brief as a resource or tool for advocacy and policy discourse.

If travel is required, the researcher(s) or institution will be responsible to arrange transportation, accommodation, insurance, securing proper visas and research authorizations for their research activities and to make adequate provision in the Financial Proposal. The researcher(s) or institution is also responsible for any staff or sub-consultant they may engage as part of this mission. The final research product is subject to REcAP's internal review and editing process, and the researcher(s) or institution will resolve all necessary revisions within the scope of the contract.

Based on a request from the REcAP Project Secretariat, and conditional on the final product not revealing information that can put anyone or an organization in danger, the researcher(s) or institution might present a briefing of the findings for the public with a focus on targeting practitioners in the field, policymakers, and financial and technical partners.

4. Expected deliverables & timeline

The researcher(s) will be expected to deliver to the Project Secretariat:

- A policy brief on the selected topic in English or French.
- The policy brief should be approximately three thousand words (3,000), excluding the cover page, the executive summary, the table of content, and references (single spacing using Calibri 12).
- The researcher(s) will provide the deliverables by e-mail to the Publication Team (marie.riquier@sipri.org).
- The researcher(s) might be invited to a virtual meeting with REcAP's Scientific Committee to discuss the contents, including policy claims and positions, intellectual arguments, and any other issues.

Expected deliverables	Indicative description	Maximum expected timeframe
-----------------------	------------------------	----------------------------

Draft Policy Brief	Desk research, work meetings and analysis. The draft Policy Brief embedded with in-depth situation analysis, key findings and action-oriented recommendations is presented to the REcAP Scientific Committee. The researcher might be invited to a virtual meeting with REcAP's Scientific Committee and the EU FPI to discuss the findings.	15 working days
<i>Comments</i>	<i>Comments & feedback from the Scientific Committee and/or the EU FPI</i>	<i>7 working days</i>
Final Policy Brief	Final version taking into consideration comments & feedbacks from the Scientific Committee and/or the EU FPI ⁶	7 working days

5. Duration of Assignment and payment schedule

- The assignment is expected to last one month (20 working days) from the contract signature date.
- The payment will be made in one instalment upon approval by the Scientific Committee of the final version of the deliverable.
- The maximum budget available per policy brief is two thousand euros (2,000 EUR).

6. Qualifications

Interested researcher(s) are expected to have the following qualifications:

- Be a member or an aspirant member of the REcAP Network. Members of the REcAP's Scientific Committee cannot apply. However, other researchers from their respective organisations can apply.
- Have a Master's degree or PhD in a relevant field.
- Have research experience in the selected themes/topics.
- Excellent command of French (spoken, read, and written) or English (spoken, read, and written). Working knowledge of the other one. Knowledge of Portuguese is considered an advantage.

7. Application

Interested researcher(s) should submit the following documents to the REcAP Project Secretariat (recapsecretariat@wanep.org) before **23:59 GMT on 1 December 2024:**

- One page statement of Interest presenting an interesting and innovative angle to approach the theme.
- A CV with an updated list of publications.
- Two examples of policy briefs or similar documents published

Only those shortlisted will be contacted.

8. Evaluation criteria for research proposals

The following criteria will be used by the Scientific committee to evaluate research proposals:

No.	Criteria	Max. Score
1	Education: Master's degree or PhD in a relevant field;	10

⁶ The back and force between the SC and the researcher(s) will take place as many time as necessary until the approval of a final draft.

2	Languages: Excellent command of French (spoken, read, and written) or English (spoken, read, and written). Working knowledge of the other one. Knowledge of Portuguese is considered as an advantage.	10
3	Research Experience: At least 3 years of research. Familiarity and knowledge of the selected topic/theme as well as evidence of previous research experience in the selected theme/topic	20
4	Relevance technical narrative proposal: Does the research proposal address the objective of the research? Are the research objectives and research questions well-constructed and easily understood? Do they align with the research problem?	25
5	Methodology: Technical soundness and quality of the proposed methodology including understanding of the assignment and innovativeness of the approach to undertake it.	25
6	Overall quality of proposal: the degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines and is of high quality (table of contents, organization, pagination, margin and font size, ideas effectively presented, referencing, well prepared vitae etc.)	10