

Countering/Preventing Violent Extremism in Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

After a two-decade-long War on Terror (WoT), the world still faces the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. The persistent presence and spread of violent extremism have attracted academic and policy debate on countering the threat. The deep roots of violent extremism are embedded in the state fragility, where extremist elements have exploited the political, economic, socio-cultural and security fault lines in their own favor. The efficacy of kinetic means has undoubtedly resulted in averting the threat; however, there is a need to have a long-term policy to counter and prevent violent extremism by addressing its root causes. With regards, this paper analyses the cases of Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan. Despite being situated in two different regions, the selected countries have been affected by the threat of violent extremism, mainly associated with their state fragility. The paper argues that to counter and prevent the threat of extremism, it is necessary to understand its linkages with 'state fragility'. It further discusses that the linkage can enable policies to counter and prevent violent extremism effectively and sustainably.

Keywords

Countering violent extremism, Nigeria, Somalia, Pakistan, state fragility

Introduction

Long before the United States withdrew from Afghanistan (August 2021), the world witnessed a steady and significant decline in terrorist incidents. Several scholars have cited effective counter-terrorism strategies (both kinetic and non-kinetic) that managed to curb widespread terrorism. According to Global Terrorism Index (GTI), in 2021, the death toll from terrorism was 7,142, representing a 1.1 percent decrease from 2020. In addition, a 'geographical' shift of terrorism concentration was observed; the terrorist activities shifted from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (IEP, 2022). GTI further revealed that the status of the most terrorism-stricken top ten countries remained essentially unchanged

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in 2021. For instance, Afghanistan and Iraq maintained their top two positions, followed by Burkina Faso, Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, and Pakistan (IEP, 2022). This data reflects that, apart from the African countries (especially Somalia and Nigeria), Pakistan continues to be threatened by the menace of violent extremism and terrorism; hence, the issues remain a major security concern for Pakistan and the region. Although Nigeria & Somalia, and Pakistan are situated on two different continents, and there seems to be little correspondence between the contextually-driven nature(s), or realities of violent extremism, the enabling environment for the extremist groups can be attributed to the similar fragile domestic conditions.

Despite having profound links with violent extremism, the concept of 'state fragility' has remained neglected in the discourse surrounding structural determinants of violent extremism. Andrew Glazzard et al. (2017) explained that state fragility provides enabling environment for the emergence of violent extremism; hence, it poses a serious threat to national security. State fragility can be measured using various indicators such as political, social and economic instability (Carment & Samy, 2012; USAID, 2017). In this vein, the paper identifies some common underlying fragile conditions that continue to nourish violent extremism in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia. It establishes a linkage between internal state fragility (emanating from security, political, economic, and exogenous factors) and violent extremism.

Furthermore, the government of Pakistan is committed to developing close economic and political relationships — bilateral and multilateral ties — with several African states. Therefore, understanding and exploring common security challenges and concerns can equally prove to be a vital facet of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Pakistan and the African continent. Against this backdrop, this paper aims to identify common security challenges in Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan. It further elucidates common internal fragile conditions that provide an enabling environment for manifestation, intensification, and resurgence of violent extremism. In doing so, the paper discusses existing policies related to Countering/Preventing Violent Extremism (C/PVE) adopted by the aforementioned countries. Moreover, it illuminates the need for close state-level cooperation to identify and implement best practices within the domain of C/PVE.

A Brief Note on Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, a case study research method was adopted (Baskarada, 2014; Kohlbacher, 2006). The study employed a qualitative research method to keep in mind the relative dearth of data on the subject under discussion, especially for establishing a correlation between state fragility and violent extremism. With regards, official C/PVE policies and other related literature were used to corroborate the main argument of the study. As George and Bennet (2005) discussed, the 'tracing' process was used to analyze the case studies *within* their historical context. It helped to explain how the inherent elements of state fragility were responsible for the rise of violent extremism. On the other hand, the congruence procedure (Willgens et al., 2016) remained helpful in establishing a causal link between state fragility and violent extremism by providing measurement indicators such as level of political participation, economic status, and overall security outlook.

Understanding State Fragility, Violent Extremism, and C/PVE

Understanding the multifaceted dynamics of violent extremism is a major topic of scholarly interest. From a policy perspective, several countries have dedicated

significant efforts to understanding the embedded complexities involved in the manifestation of violent extremism, hence, adopting different definitional approaches to violent extremism. For instance, the Australian Government conceives the construct of violent extremism as “[...] beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence.” (Australian Government, 2016). Similarly, the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development defines violent extremism as the “[...] use of facilitation of violence targeted on civilians as a means of rectifying grievances, real or perceived, which form the basis of increasingly strong exclusive group identities” (De Silva, 2017, p. 5). Whereas, USAID (2011) defines violent extremism as “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives”. The mentioned definitions highlight the exploitation of grievances and marginalization of groups and/or identities as major underlying factors towards increasing violent extremism globally.

Generally, in any given state and/or society, the menace of violent extremism is countered through the C/PVE policies. Such strategies offer a ‘proactive’ approach “to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence” (US Department of Homeland Security, 2016). The C/PVE approaches address the ‘conditions’ and factors that most likely contribute to the recruitment and radicalization of a vulnerable population. Furthermore, they have been widely acknowledged to embrace the idea of de-radicalization and re-integration of extremists. Another critical characteristic of C/PVE is that it includes broad societal stakeholders (such as communities, religious authorities, youth, and civil society actors (Jayakumar, 2019; Makki & Yamin, 2021).

The C/PVE concept has its roots in Europe, attracting attention in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (Fierson, 2005). In response to the ‘homegrown’ terrorism, the United Kingdom initiated a ‘Prevent’ program, introducing the concept of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) at a policy level. The country spent GBP 80 million on local programs to prevent religion-based radicalization (Frazer & Nünlist, 2015).

In the United States, the RAND Corporation report revealed that at least 17 adolescent boys and young men left the Minneapolis-St. Paul area during 2007-2008 and joined Al-Shabaab militant training camps in Somalia (Jenkins, 2010). The reported incidents brought attention to homegrown violent extremism. Consequently, the C/PVE gained momentum during the Obama administration. A task force was established to counter radical ideology *within* the United States (Weine et al., 2011). The ‘soft’ approach became an important component of the ‘Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States’ (SIP, 2011; Weine, 2013).

In the developing or underdeveloped world, several countries have equally taken commendable steps to counter the threat of violent extremism. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize distinct contextual factors or root causes that become responsible for propagating violent extremism. As mentioned earlier, state fragility has a significant role in making any state or society prone to violent extremism. However, the term ‘fragile state’ was first introduced to explain broader factors that influence development and economics; however, later, the term became interchangeable with theoretical expressions such as ‘failed states’ or ‘weak states’ and reflected significant correspondence with the notion of security (Ferreira, 2017).

From a conceptual lens, fragile states exhibit severe developmental challenges resulting from weak domestic conditions, including weak institutional capacities, poor governance, lack of legitimacy, and overall poor human security (Burundi Workshop Draft, 2005).

[A] fragile region or state has weak capacities to carry out basic governance functions and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive relations with society. Fragile regions or states are also more vulnerable to internal or external shocks such as economic crises or natural disasters (OECD, 2015, p. 21).

Violent Extremism and P/CVE in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia

Looking back at the past 20 years since the WoT started in response to 9/11, the threats posed by Al-Qaeda and later by ISIS/Daesh have been addressed primarily through kinetic means. However, violent extremism is still a potent threat in several regional and local contexts, such as Pakistan and the African continent. The efforts to counter violent extremism could not ensure sustainable peace primarily because of the 'reactive' and short-term approach. This paper points toward the state fragility that led to hosting those ill conditions conducive to the propagation of violent extremism. The following sub-sections provide insights into the landscapes of Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan, focusing primarily on the internal weaknesses of the state polity-adopted C/PVE strategies.

Nigeria

Nigeria has been facing the threat of violent extremism and terrorism for many years, and the key group active in the country is Boko Haram. Since 2009, it has undertaken a brutal insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria and neighboring countries of Chad and Cameroon. The insurgency has caused a security and humanitarian crisis. It has resulted in the displacement of approximately two million people. There has also been massive economic devastation in an already poor and underdeveloped region of northern Nigeria (Felbab-Brown, 2018; Adeyeye et al., 2022). In 2021, Boko Haram remained largely weakened primarily due to the killing of its leader (Abubakar Shekau) and the upsurge in terrorist attacks by a rival group called the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) (e.g., Upkong, 2022). The ISWA also has a presence in the country, further complicating Nigeria's militant landscape.

Boko Haram has reportedly started regrouping in Nigeria's North-Central state of Niger, emerging as a serious security threat. The general perception is that the death of rival ISWA leader, Abu Musab al-Barnawi in October 2021, has allowed Boko Haram to a resurgence. Consequently, the United States is assisting the Nigerian security forces to counter any such potential rise of terrorist organizations through kinetic measures (Seldin, 2021). Nevertheless, before making any assumptions, it is important to understand the root causes of violent extremism in Nigeria which 're-enabled' Boko Haram and provided a conducive environment to ISWA. Most importantly, it has been observed that Boko Haram is regrouping in neighboring countries and transnational sanctuaries are the lifeline of any insurgent group (Kindzeka, 2021; Makki & Iftikhar, 2021).

There is a consensus among scholars that Boko Haram (re)emerged in North Nigeria due to the fragile socio-political, economic, and security conditions marked by highly polarized/fractured ethno-religiosity (e.g., Tonwe & Eke, 2013). Hence, the organization effectively exploited the state's fragility in its favor. For instance, the inter-identity-based conflict between Christians and Muslims, general economic

grievances, political instability, and bad governance have all remained core causes of state fragility. Concerningly, the authorities have been unable to address the issue of fragility as a structural determinant of violent extremism (e.g., Omotosho, 2014; Iyekekpolo, 2018). In particular, the economic grievances and deprivation in Northern Nigeria accelerated the rise of Boko Haram. For instance, poverty, lack of employment, and economic inequalities in the Muslim-dominated regions provided extremists to lure the vulnerable segment of society (Mamah, 2008).

Agriculture was the mainstay of the Northern economy before the oil boom of the 1970s. The oil boom severely affected the traditional agricultural economy, causing negative impacts on the local livelihood portfolio. Thus, the region became one of the most impoverished areas in Nigeria, facing extreme inequalities with bottomed human development indicators. The extremist organizations then capitalized on such fragile conditions for recruitment and securing local support — maintaining the ‘disorder’ (David et al., 2015; Anugwom, 2018; Suleiman & Karim, 2015). Similarly, the Lake Chad Basin was once well-known for exporting food products, including millet, sorghum, and livestock herding and fishing. However, climate variability and excessive population growth have altered the socio-economic profile of the region (Owonikoko & Momodu, 2020).

According to the Congressional Research Service, ISWA is currently active in the Lake Chad Basin and is responsible for persistent violence and security threats in Nigeria. It has established several administrative units and is considered more active than Boko Haram in taking advantage of local conditions. In addition, it has exploited the governance vacuum in Lake Chad Basin and accumulated unprecedented support for itself. ISWA has also been engaged in providing so-called humanitarian assistance to the local population, making it difficult for the government to reclaim the ‘state-citizen’ relationship through exclusive reliance on ‘hard’ measures.

During the United Nations Security Council meeting, the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Head of the Multinational Joint Task Force (Ambassador Maman Nuhu) revealed that the youth comprised 60 percent of the total population of the Lake Chad Basin. Therefore, it is important to understand that the significant youth representation in the overall population mix is at ‘risk’. Owing to the lack of economic opportunities and employment, a substantial portion of the local population is already involved in an illicit and illegal economy (e.g., smuggling, drug trafficking, arms and human trafficking). Such informality and economic disorder established a political economy favouring terrorist organizations (United Nations Security Council Meeting, 2021).

Government Responses against Violent Extremism in Nigeria

‘National Counter-Terrorism Strategy’ and the ‘National Security Strategy of Nigeria’ are the primary policy documents that outline the roles of various stakeholders in C/PVE activities (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). The ‘National Security Strategy’ of Nigeria addresses external and internal security challenges the country faces. On the other hand, ‘National Counter-Terrorism Strategy’ focuses on the threats related to terrorism and violent extremism in the country, which are kinetic in nature. Nigeria’s government, with the collaboration of the international community, has started funding various efforts to address the sources of extremism and instability in the country. For instance, in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), a ‘Demobilisation, Disassociation, Reintegration, and Reconciliation’ (DDRR) Action Plan was developed for the country (Nan, 2021).

The Nigerian government undertook several other initiatives to deal with violent extremism and terrorism (e.g., Onapajo & Ozden, 2020). However, there is still a need for better engagement of local communities in C/PVE-related initiatives. The Nigerian state's response to counter the threat of extremism has remained highly ineffective because it has mainly relied on military-centric or kinetic approaches. Consequently, the authorities have been unable to address the underlying reasons associated with state's fragility.

Somalia

Somalia is the most severely drought-affected country in the Horn of Africa, directly affecting 4.3 million people and causing the displacement of 271,000 people (United Nations Security Council Meeting, 2022). The country has long faced the challenge of violent extremism and terrorism. An internationally designated terrorist group, Al-Shabab, is in direct conflict with the security forces of Somalia and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). Al-Shabab is considered to have links with Al-Qaeda (Masters & Sergie, 2015). However, the group is allegedly involved in acts of violence in neighboring Kenya, becoming a threat to regional security. Since 2020, the group has been undergoing a renewed resurgence phase, increasing its violent activities across Somalia. Alfano and Goerlach (2022) believe that the resurgence is primarily because of the relocation of the United States troops from Somalia to Kenya and Djibouti. The Head of United States African Command (AFRICOM), which oversees responsibility for Somalia, reported to Congress that 'we may be backsliding' and that the departure of United States troops from Somalia (and Afghanistan) has limited Washington's ability to contain terrorist groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the ISIS (The Soufan Center, 2022).

Al-Shabab has effectively exploited the bad governance across Somalia, gaining significant territorial control. Widespread unemployment, poverty, corruption, injustice, the ineffective rule of law and poor governance have collectively added to the rise in violent extremism in Somalia (Ali, 2020). Al-Shabab manipulated the state's fragility to justify its ideology. According to a report, Al-Shabab spent USD 25 million on weapon purchases, and its annual revenue mainly comes from the crime-terror nexus, which stands at USD 180 million ("Al-Shabab spent \$24m on weapons last year", 2022). Due to Somalia's poor law and order, the group controls over 100 check posts to collect money and administer several areas.

The continued political instability in Somalia has equally affected the state's ability to counter Al-Shabab. This political uncertainty has emboldened Al-Shabab to keep operating and expanding its influence. James Swan, the United Nations Special Representative on Somalia, states, "Political divisions and election delays have allowed insurgent forces to make some recent gains" (Muse, 2022, n.d.). The political mismanagement and detrimental security situation have created an acute humanitarian crisis in Somalia.

Government Response to Counter Violent Extremism in Somalia

Following the global pattern in countering violent extremism, Somalia has also directed its maximum resources to counter the threat of extremism and terrorism (Botha, 2021). The United States has also provided significant assistance to the country. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somalia's security forces have launched several successful operations against Al-Shabab. Due to the operations, Al-Shabab has been confined to the peripheries. The Federal Government of Somalia, with the help of its international donors, is advancing its efforts toward

C/PVE. Institute for Security Studies shows that at least 27 organizations are working on projects related to C/PVE in Somalia (Van Zyl, 2019). These projects target youth, various religious groups, women, ex-members of Al-Shabab, government agencies, and civil society organizations, and assist them in capacity building to counter the threat of violent extremism (Safer World, n.d.).

In 2016, Somalia developed its own 'National Action Plan' to counter violent extremism through a culture of dialogue and engagement (Safer World, n.d.). The government also introduced Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs to de-radicalize the ex-militants. The Serendi Project in Mogadishu has remained significant in this regard which aims to support the reintegration of low-risk combatants. The project is funded by both local and international organizations (Ali, 2020). Though with the help of the international community (United States, United Kingdom, European Union, and United Nations), Somalia has developed result-oriented C/PVE policies, the C/PVE initiatives typically ignore local grievances and ethno-tribal dynamics (Hansen et al., 2019).

Pakistan

Violent extremism has proved itself to be one of the most significant challenges to Pakistan's national security. Moreover, the menace became highly intensified during the post-9/11 era. Similar to Nigeria and Somalia (as discussed above), there have been several terrorist organizations active in Pakistan. In addition, sectarian and ethnonationalism-based organized violence remains a challenge for national internal security. Nevertheless, in the contemporary context, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) emerged as the most concerning a terrorist organization, which spearheaded several terrorist attacks across Pakistan. TTP primarily stationed itself in the border region of Pakistan and Afghanistan (i.e., erstwhile FATA). Owing to intense military operations, TTP's operational ability has been significantly reduced; nevertheless, in the recent month, it started to re-emerge after the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan. Having ideological inclination and logistical ties with the Afghan Taliban, there is a widespread belief that the TTP is active due to the support from cross-border. Indeed, the argument has been well established, particularly concerning the transnational nature of 'new' terrorism. However, one cannot ignore the fragile local contexts (i.e., structural determinants) of erstwhile Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), which provided fertile grounds for the TTP to remerge and regroup in the aftermath of a successful military operation (Ahmed et al., 2021).

Before May 2018, erstwhile FATA had semi-autonomous status. The region was governed by the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR): a legal, judicial, administrative, and governance framework introduced by the British in 1901 for the tribal areas of Pakistan. Under FCR, all political and administrative powers were accumulated in the hands of tribal Maliks and political agents. The government of Pakistan had very little writ in the region. Furthermore, erstwhile FATA lacked any 'formal' governance-related institutions to serve the local population and develop a state-citizen relationship. Consequently, the entire erstwhile FATA became highly underdeveloped, marginalized (extreme socio-economic and spatial inequalities), and ill-governed, exhibiting poor socio-economic indicators. Similar to the above-discussed cases of Somalia and Nigeria, the institutional and governance vacuum was filled by the non-state actors who managed to anchor their narrative in the local contexts (Yousaf, 2019).

Later, the government of Pakistan decided to mainstream the erstwhile FATA through its merger with the adjacent Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province. The merger was

formalized in May 2018 with a constitutional amendment. So far, significant progress has been made regarding the FATA mainstreaming, including security sector reconstruction, right to vote, institutional development, formalized border management, diversification of the economy, and governance and institutional reforms. There has been a national consensus that the merger will contribute to sustainable peace and development. More importantly, the socio-economic development will address conditions that led the region to be labelled as violent geography (Dastageer, 2019; Khan, 2011).

Government Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism in Pakistan

Initially, the Pakistan army and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) primarily relied on kinetic or hard measures. For instance, since 2001, the Pakistan army has conducted several military operations to eliminate the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. Most of the operations were conducted in the erstwhile FATA. The effectiveness of the kinetic measures can be gauged from the significant decline in terrorist incidents across the country. More importantly, the military-centric approach not only effectively regained the state writ over erstwhile FATA territory but also significantly affected the operational ability of the terrorist organizations.

Although the kinetic/counter-terrorism approach proved to be highly effective, it lacked the aspects of C/PVE, developing a preventive strategy to counter violent extremism embedded in the fabric of society. This necessitated a holistic approach to address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. In response, 20 points National Action Plan (NAP) was developed, reflecting a significant shift from hard to soft measures (e.g., Yaseen & Naveed, 2018). NAP brought attention to several structural issues which were earlier not part of the policy toolkit: for instance, developing counter-narrative to violent extremism, social media and changing dynamics of violent extremism, the establishment of special military courts, actions against sectarian-based violent extremism, Madrasa reforms, and mainstreaming of erstwhile FATA, de-radicalization and reintegration of militants (Shahab & Ullah, 2021; Khan et al., 2021; Orakzai, 2019; Zahid, 2017). NAP was followed by two more important policy documents that supplemented the need to counter the menace of violent extremism through soft measures: National Internal Security Policy (NISP 2018-2023) and National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines (NCEPG, 2018) (e.g., Makki & Akash, 2020; Khalid & Kamal, 2020). Pakistan also introduced several legislations to respond to violent extremism and terrorism in an institutionalized manner. Moreover, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was developed as an institution dedicated to formalizing a plan of action to counter the threat of violent extremism and terrorism in Pakistan. It is important to note that the authority published the mentioned internal security policies and C/PVE guidelines.

Discussion and Conclusion

The above-discussed cases of Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan reveal that violent extremism and state fragility are highly entangled. Despite effective measures that significantly improved the security situation in the cases under consideration, the paper argued that sole focus on kinetic measures could not ensure sustainable peace and stability. Hence, the threat of violent extremism remains a challenge for Pakistan, Somalia and Nigeria, where the resurgence of extremist organizations can be well observed.

Therefore, it is essential to consider the causes of state fragility as important foci of C/PVE policies. The elements and dynamics of state fragility may differ on

state and regional levels; however, its entanglement with violent extremism across distant geographies cannot be ignored. For instance, in the contexts of Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan, state fragility was observed to be the main driver or factor behind the resurgence, intensification, or legitimization of violent extremism. In this regard, the policy should focus on strengthening the state-citizen relationship (i.e., social contract). Public service delivery (health and education sectors), better economic and employment opportunities, the rule of law, protection of human rights, and equal political participation are some key areas that need to be the focus of C/PVE approaches. Such re-orientation necessarily requires community-driven approaches, ensuring inclusivity.

Given the higher percentage of youth in Pakistan, Nigeria and Somalia, it is equally important to devise C/PVE strategies that effectively engage youth. Youth participation in socio-economic and constructive political engagement(s) will not only serve a sustainable national development agenda but will also address their vulnerability to violent extremism. For instance, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) emphasizes youth education, opportunities to raise concerns, and technical and vocational training (e.g., Citaristi, 2022). Such an approach can be implemented in Pakistan, Nigeria and Somalia, where the unemployed and marginalized youth are at risk vis-à-vis violent extremism. Similarly, the C/PVE agenda must acknowledge the role of women in peace and security. It is interesting to observe that in Somalia, several women-based organizations are actively involved in C/PVE-related initiatives (Schamber, 2021). On the other hand, the role of women has not been given due attention in the existing C/PVE policy frameworks in Pakistan. Nevertheless, civil-society actors remain relatively active at the grass-root level, facilitating the effective implementation of C/PVE policies at community levels (Qadeem, 2018).

Furthermore, the education sector can play an integral role in the C/PVE agenda, as argued by several scholars. Indeed arguable, but the role of madrasas has been widely framed as promoting religiously-driven extremist ideologies in the case studies under discussion. Consequently, particularly in Pakistan, there have been deliberate efforts to mainstream and regularize the religious education system (Ahmed, 2020). However, we must acknowledge the ‘welfare’ role that madrasas have been offering to the poverty-stricken and marginalized communities, where the states have failed to provide basic necessities (such as health, education, food, and shelter). We must also not ignore the increasing symptoms of on-campus radicalization in modern education institutions (Brown & Saeed, 2015; Jibrin, 2020; Iqbal & Mehmood, 2021).

The threat of violent extremism necessitates a comprehensive C/PVE policy framework that considers socio-political, economic, security, and legal aspects. Such an approach refers to recognizing the nexus between state fragility and the threat of violent extremism. The presented cases in this article (Nigeria, Somalia and Pakistan) highlight that state fragility is one of the main underlying factors behind the (re) emergence of violent extremism and terrorism.

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