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MODERN COUNTERTERRORISM APPROACHES WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The fight against terrorism has entered a new era, with a growing recognition that traditional security measures alone are insufficient. While robust security remains crucial, a critical shift is occurring towards protecting vulnerable populations who are often targeted by extremist groups.

The definition of a vulnerable population are individuals who are at greater risk of poor physical and social health status. They are considered vulnerable because of disparities in physical, economic, and social health status when compared with the dominant population. Vulnerable populations may be less able to anticipate, cope with, resist, or recover from the impacts of a hazard. The degree to which populations are vulnerable to disasters is not primarily dependent on proximity to the source of disaster [1]. Terrorist groups exploit these vulnerabilities to recruit new members and carry out attacks.

In order to protect vulnerable groups, we need to address the root causes of marginalization and discrimination. This includes tackling poverty, ensuring access to education and healthcare, and protecting human rights. It is important to support and engage vulnerable groups in counterterrorism efforts. This can be done by providing them with information about the risks of terrorism, encouraging them to cooperate with law enforcement, and empowering them to participate in decision-making. Also, it is important to protect vulnerable groups from terrorist propaganda and recruitment online. This can be done by working with technology companies, raising awareness, and supporting online education. Vulnerable groups may not have access to education and other essential services. This can make it difficult for them to understand the risks associated with terrorism and to get help if they need it.

Terrorism constitutes a serious threat to human rights and democracy. While action by states is necessary to prevent and effectively

sanction terrorist acts, not all means are justifiable. There is a compelling duty for states to protect the general interest of public security and the rule of law without jeopardizing the core of human rights, which are enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights [2].

Respect for human rights and the rule of law must be the bedrock of the global fight against terrorism. This requires the development of national counter-terrorism strategies that seek to prevent acts of terrorism, prosecute those responsible for such criminal acts, and promote and protect human rights and the rule of law. It implies measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including the lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, and socio-economic marginalization; to foster the active participation and leadership of civil society; to condemn human rights violations, prohibit them in national law, promptly investigate and prosecute them, and prevent them; and to give due attention to the rights of victims of human rights violations [3]. Modern counterterrorism acknowledges the need to move beyond traditional security measures like surveillance and border control.

Educational programs can teach communities to recognize extremist rhetoric, identify suspicious activity, and report it to the authorities. Partnering with community leaders and religious figures can enhance the effectiveness of these programs. Social cohesion and integration are essential in breaking down the barriers that extremists exploit. Programs that promote dialogue, understanding, and respect for diversity can foster a sense of belonging and counter extremist narratives.

Young people are particularly susceptible to radicalization due to factors like identity exploration and a search for meaning. Educational programs that focus on critical thinking, media literacy, and civic engagement can equip them to challenge extremist ideologies and build a more peaceful future.

Prevention is key, but it's equally important to protect vulnerable populations from terrorist attacks and support those who have been affected. Strengthening security measures in vulnerable communities and around potential targets can deter attacks and save lives. This includes collaborating with local communities to identify potential threats and invest in infrastructure improvements. Terrorist attacks leave lasting scars. Victims require access to psychological and social support services to help them heal and rebuild their lives. This includes ensuring access to mental health professionals and financial.

In Ukraine, The Security Service of Ukraine is the main body in the national system responsible for combating terrorism. The SSU counters

terrorism manifestations and coordinates the activities of other state authorities in this sphere. The SSU Counter-Terrorist Centre is responsible for this coordination. The Centre's staff systematically monitor the level of terrorist threat, gather online information received from partners and conduct drills at critical infrastructure facilities.

In recent years, the SSU has gained crucial experience in uncovering and counter-ing armed terrorist groups infiltrating peaceful Ukrainian regions from the temporarily occupied territories. The SSU shares its experience with foreign partners, especially with NATO and the EU. The Security Service actively interacts such partners to join forces in the fight against international terrorism and its financing [4].

In the United Kingdom police have a long history of working to prevent vulnerable people being drawn into criminal behaviour. The government-led, multi-agency Prevent programme aims to stop individuals becoming terrorists and police play a key role. They work with local authority partners and community organizations to help find solutions and work to support and protect vulnerable people. Following assessment, many referrals to Prevent do not result in any further police action. In some cases other organizations such as health, forensic mental health, housing or education step in to provide support [5].

Modern counterterrorism approaches with vulnerable populations acknowledge that security alone cannot win the war on terror. By investing in prevention, building inclusive communities, and empowering individuals, we can create a more resilient society less susceptible to extremist narratives. This multi-faceted approach holds the key to a safer future for all.

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