



JUSTRAC

JUSTICE SECTOR TRAINING, RESEARCH
& COORDINATION PROGRAM

Exploring the Relationship Between the Rule of Law and Violent Extremism in the Middle East

A Justice Sector Training, Research and Coordination Symposium
The Rule of Law Collaborative at the University of South Carolina
JW Marriott Marquis Hotel, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
June 1-3, 2016

The discussion on countering violent extremism has gained increasing importance in the public discourse in many countries in recent years. While it is increasingly clear that a state's lack of adherence to rule of law principles can create grievances that may contribute to violent extremism, the relationship of violent extremism to the rule of law has not been adequately addressed. Recognizing that many factors contribute to violent extremism of individuals, a state's robust adherence to the rule of law can help to provide a pathway to defuse grievances and avoid violence. As self-evident as this relationship might seem, few forums have focused on the relationship between the rule of law and violent extremism and how these affect one another.

This invitation-only, workshop-style symposium seeks to examine how state-based formal institutions—particularly those charged with upholding the rule of law, such as police, courts and corrections—can contribute to the kinds of grievances that are associated with violent extremism. The symposium will also examine avenues for constructive institutional reform within the context of violent extremism. Participants will consider how injustices, both large and slight, can feed into violent narratives used by extremists and how more inclusive approaches towards governance may increase public trust. Finally, the participants will focus on the unique issues faced by vulnerable populations in the Middle East, including the need for greater accountability and the protection of human dignity.

Composed of experts and stakeholders from the Middle East and beyond, the symposium will seek to generate specific recommendations for reform from thematic working groups that will address current themes impacting the rule of law and countering violent extremism.

Day I

[Unless specified, the entire Symposium will take place in *Emirates Ballroom 5/6 Sixth Floor*]

08:00 **Registration** [Foyer outside *Emirates Ballroom 5/6*]

08:45 **Welcoming Remarks**

09:15 **Plenary: Countering Violent Extremism & Strengthening the Rule of Law in the Middle East**

The opening session will focus on the relationship between adherence to a robust and comprehensive rule of law and the grievances that may encourage violent extremism. This session will also examine how fairer and more inclusive governments can help to avoid the kinds of cumulative grievances that may lead to violent extremism.

10:00 **Session I: Slings and Arrows: How Failing to Adhere to the Rule of Law Can Lead to Violent Extremist Responses**

This session will examine the spectrum of grievances rooted in the injustices committed by formal institutions. These injustices include, but are not limited to, systemic corruption, human and civil rights abuses, political repression, discrimination and marginalization, and arbitrary and capricious application of the law. This session will also consider how such injustices may contribute to a rise in violent extremist responses and specific circumstances or conditions that may accelerate these developments.

11:30 **Lunch** [*Business Bay Sixth Floor*]

13:00 **Session II: Push and Pull: How Violent Extremist Movements Use Rule of Law-Based Grievances For Recruitment**

This session will explore how violent extremist movements invoke rule of law-based injustices as part of their appeal in targeted messaging to various constituencies, including women, disaffected youth and religious minorities.

14:30 **Coffee Break** [Foyer Outside *Emirates Ballroom 5/6*]

14:45 **Working Groups Convene**

Focusing on the topical concerns of rule of law and countering violent extremism, the thematic Working Groups, which will include all symposium participants, will convene to generate specific recommendations for reform.

Working Group A: *Greater Fairness and Accountability in Formal Institutions*

[*Emirates Ballroom 5/6 Sixth Floor*]

Working Group B: *Enhancing Inclusive Governance and Promoting Human Rights*

[*Salon 8a Sixth Floor*]

Working Group C: *Vulnerable Populations and Redress Mechanisms to Alleviate Injustices*

[*Salon 8b Sixth Floor*]

16:30 **Reception** [Foyer outside *Emirates Ballroom 5/6*]

Day II

[Unless specified, the entire Symposium will take place in *Emirates Ballroom 5/6 Sixth Floor*]

09:00 **Session III: The Road to Reform: Pathways for Promoting Greater Human Dignity**

This session will examine how to facilitate a meaningful and sustainable adherence to the rule of law by focusing on the promotion of human dignity. Panelists will focus on human rights violations—large and small—as well as how affronts to human dignity can play a role in reinforcing violent extremist movements.

10:30 **Session IV: Outside In: How Civil Society Can Assist Rule of Law Institutions to Counter Violent Extremism**

This session will consider the role that civil society can play in enhancing more holistic governance. Panelists will focus on coordinating civil society actors, the role that faith-based organizations can play, and how other institutional actors help ensure flexibility and institutional accountability.

12:15 **Lunch** [*Kitchen6 First Floor*]

13:30 **Session V: Ways Forward: How to Empower Formal Institutions to Counter Violent Extremism**

This session will examine how formal institutions can become more effective mechanisms for addressing the kinds of cumulative grievances that may lead to violent extremism.

15:00 **Plenary: Violent Extremism, Governance & Rule of Law: Exploring the Tensions**

15:45 **Working Groups Reconvene**

[*Emirates Ballroom 5/6 * Salon 8a * Salon 8b*]

The Working Groups will incorporate the day's panel discussion into their ongoing sessions and distill a set of recommendations.

17:00 **Adjourn**

Day III

[Unless specified, the entire Symposium will take place in *Emirates Ballroom 5/6 Sixth Floor*]

09:00 **Working Groups Reconvene**

[*Emirates Ballroom 5/6 * Salon 8a * Salon 8b*]

The Working Groups will culminate their meetings by trying to achieve a consensus on a set of practical recommendations for the issues they have been charged with handling.

11:00 **Working Groups Report Recommendations to the Plenary**

[*Emirates Ballroom 5/6*]

This final session will offer an opportunity for the Working Groups to present their findings to the larger plenary of participants and speakers for adoption by the entire group of Symposium attendees.

12:30 **Closing Lunch**

[*Kitchen6 First Floor*]