



MercyCorps

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NEWS RELEASE

MERCY CORPS: INVEST IN NON-MILITARY EFFORTS TO COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM

CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION URGES GOVERNMENTS TO PRIORITIZE PREVENTION, PEACEBUILDING AND POLITICAL SOLUTIONS

mercycorps.org

ABOUT MERCY CORPS

- Global organization dedicated to helping people survive and communities thrive
- Working on the toughest challenges in over 40 countries around the world
- 42 million people benefiting from Mercy Corps' humanitarian assistance and economic development programs
- About 4,000 team members; in the field, 92 percent are from the countries where they work
- Over five years, average 88 percent of revenue channeled directly into programs; \$382.6 million in operating revenue in FY2014
- Founded in 1979

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Washington, DC — A coalition of U.S. civil society organizations, led by the global humanitarian organization [Mercy Corps](http://mercycorps.org), is calling on the Obama administration to address the drivers of community grievances before violent extremism takes root, rather than relying primarily on militarized counter-terrorism responses.

“Billions spent on security operations are coupled with relatively minor investments in development, governance or humanitarian activities,” reads the [coalition statement](#). “We urge that any strategy to address today’s complex threats focus on supporting communities and states to build safe, just, and resilient societies and addressing the core grievances fueling global radicalization.”

Mercy Corps and 40 colleague agencies express concern that the Obama administration’s new nine-point Action Agenda to counter violent extremism will repeat the same mistakes as post-9/11 stabilization initiatives, mainly prioritizing military funding over investments in solutions addressing the root causes of instability. The coalition urges the administration to modify the strategy ahead of September’s global summit on countering violent extremism by:

- Increasing investments in underfunded civilian-led prevention and peacebuilding programs.
- Ensuring that security operations run by the Departments of Defense or State do not work at cross-purposes with development and peacebuilding efforts.
- Reforming counterterrorism laws and regulations that prevent U.S. humanitarian organizations from working with communities affected by violent extremism.

“To have any hope of long-term success, a strategy to counter violent extremism must target the drivers of grievances, not just the symptoms,” says Andrea Koppel, vice president of Global Engagement and Policy at Mercy Corps. “Prevention and peacebuilding activities are chronically underfunded by the U.S. and other major government donors.”

A [recent Mercy Corps study](#) of key contributors to youth engagement in conflict found that experiences of injustice and abuse, not just unemployment or poverty, propel young



people to take up arms. Mercy Corps believes that any initiatives to prevent violent extremism must address the root causes compelling young people to join.

Read the full coalition statement [here](#).