



Detention and Reintegration Working Group

Workshop on Education, Life Skill Courses, and Vocational Training for Incarcerated Violent Extremist Offenders (VEO)

7-8 October 2015, Nairobi, Kenya

Speaking Notes – H.E. John Feakes, Australian High Commissioner

Firstly, I'd like to extend appreciation and thanks to the Government of Kenya for graciously hosting us during the workshop. And a warm welcome to one and all to the Detention and Reintegration Working Group's workshop on rehabilitation and reintegration programs.

Rehabilitation and reintegration are key priorities for the working group, and many of the GCTF's member countries and friends. The rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorist inmates is exceedingly challenging. It is a complex area with enduring knowledge gaps. It is resource-intensive and almost always under-resourced. Solutions are usually highly individualised and always time intensive.

But you know this. We are here because of this. We are here to find ways through these challenges because rehabilitation and reintegration are integral to counter-terrorism.

Most terrorist inmates serve sentences of several years, rather than very long or life sentences. After a period of incarceration, they are released back into the community. Without rehabilitation and reintegration, we are gambling that former terrorist inmates will not re-join the path of violent extremism. We are gambling with the security of our communities. Also: to fail in our efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate terrorist inmates, is to miss a valuable and relatively rare opportunity. Terrorists are hard to find, time-consuming to prosecute and expensive to incarcerate. We apply huge amounts of resources, time and effort in these areas of counter-terrorism. So when we have a terrorist behind bars, we should not squander this opportunity. We have a chance, while they are captive to our influence, to try to lead them away from the path of violent extremism and terrorism. We may not always succeed. But every time we do, we make our communities a little safer. Ultimately, that's why we're here today.

This workshop will help us to exchange ideas, develop new practices, solve problems and learn new ways of approaching enduring challenges. But I'll defer to our partner – the Global Center on Cooperative Security – to talk more about the workshop.

The Global Center has put this workshop together. They have again proven to be a professional, creative, knowledgeable and collegiate partner. The credit for the organisation of this event belongs to them.

I would also like to acknowledge the co-chairs of the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Working Group and the Horn of Africa Working Group for joining us today to help broaden the perspective of the workshop.

And to build working group collaboration.

Before I finish my remarks, I'll take a moment to update you on some of the upcoming activities of the Detention and Reintegration Working Group.

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The Working Group is entering the final stage of its first two year term. The past 18 months have been very productive and the final six months will be our busiest yet. Following this workshop, the working group will hold its 2nd plenary meeting in Sydney, 2-3 November. The plenary meeting will include a desktop exercise that will take advantage of the high level of expertise in the room. Participants will explore the characteristics of different types of terrorist inmates and identify ways to tailor inmate security and management practices to suit.

In February-March next year, the Working Group – again partnering with the Global Center – will hold a regional workshop in Southeast Asia that will focus on intake and classification of terrorist prisoners. Before the GCTF Coordination Committee in April or May next year, we will begin delivering a training program that will help prison officers identify and respond to radicalisation in prisons. The package has an innovative design that includes train-the-trainer format, vertical delivery that includes decision makers as well as practitioners, and follow-up support to help with implementation.

And finally, during this period we will be consulting closely with members and friends of the GCTF to develop the Detention and Reintegration Working Group's next two year work plan.