

116TH CONGRESS
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H. R. 1653

To ensure that the United States recognizes women’s varied roles in all aspects of violent extremism and terrorism and promotes their meaningful participation as full partners in all efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2019

Ms. FRANKEL (for herself, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. KEATING, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. SPANBERGER, Mr. ZELDIN, Ms. MENG, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To ensure that the United States recognizes women’s varied roles in all aspects of violent extremism and terrorism and promotes their meaningful participation as full partners in all efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Women and Coun-
5 tering Violent Extremism Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Women play diverse roles in violent extrem-
4 ist organizations, including as victims, perpetrators,
5 and preventers.

6 (2) Extremist groups benefit strategically and
7 financially from the subjugation of women. Terrorist
8 groups violate the rights of women and girls, from
9 sexual enslavement and forced marriages to limiting
10 their access to education and public life. Violent ex-
11 tremist groups have used women and girls as re-
12 wards for new recruits and as part of their recruit-
13 ment efforts. According to the 2016 U.S. State De-
14 partment's Country Reports on Terrorism, "In 2015
15 and 2016, ISIS abducted, systematically raped, and
16 abused thousands of women and children [in Iraq
17 and Syria], some as young as eight years of age.
18 Women and children were sold and enslaved, distrib-
19 uted to ISIS fighters as spoils of war, forced into
20 marriage and domestic servitude, or subjected to
21 physical and sexual abuse." In northern Nigeria,
22 Boko Haram has kidnapped and subjected thou-
23 sands of women and girls to physical abuse, forced
24 labor, forced marriage and sexual abuse.

25 (3) As perpetrators of violent extremism and
26 terrorism, women adopt all roles, including as in-

1 formants, facilitators, recruiters, and suicide bomb-
2 ers. Empowering women may diminish their support
3 for violent extremist organizations by increasing
4 their sense of agency.

5 (4) Seeing women as partners empowers them
6 to detect early signs of radicalization, intervening
7 before individuals become violent and delegitimizing
8 violent extremist narratives. Analysis by the Council
9 on Foreign Relations concluded that, “Anti-ter-
10 rorism messages are disseminated quite effectively
11 throughout families and communities by women, who
12 can challenge extremist narratives in homes, schools
13 and social environments, and have particular influ-
14 ence among youth populations.”.

15 (5) Extremist groups take strategic advantage
16 of the relative absence of women in police and mili-
17 tary forces. As security officials, women provide dis-
18 tinct insights, information, and analyses that can be
19 mission-critical in keeping the peace. They may have
20 access to populations and sites that men do not, al-
21 lowing them to gather critical intelligence about po-
22 tential security threats.

23 (6) Research has demonstrated a relationship
24 between the security of women and the security of
25 states. According to a Texas A&M study, less em-

1 powerment for women in the household correlates
2 with less stability nationwide, measured by political
3 instability, lack of freedoms, autoocracy, corruption,
4 and internal conflict. Countries where women are
5 less empowered at the household level are also more
6 likely to produce foreign fighters going to territory
7 controlled by terrorist organizations.

8 (7) Counterterrorism policy has not been as ef-
9 fective at understanding how women can improve se-
10 curity efforts. According to the June 2016 U.S. Na-
11 tional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security,
12 “A narrow understanding of women’s roles in CVE
13 [countering violent extremism] limits policy options
14 and perpetuates strategic blind spots, such as failing
15 to recognize women’s agency as potential mitigators
16 and perpetrators of violence.”.

17 (8) According to a 2015 United States Agency
18 for International Development study of women’s
19 participation in violent extremism, there has been “a
20 marked gap in CVE [countering violent extremism]
21 programming, which has focused mostly on male
22 participation, without a commensurate reflection on
23 and response to female-specific drivers and recruit-
24 ment strategies.”.

1 (9) The “Department of State & USAID Joint
2 Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism”, dated
3 May 2016, notes that “women can play a critical
4 role in identifying and addressing drivers of violent
5 extremism in their families, communities, and broad-
6 er society”; and commits to supporting programs
7 that engage women “as key stakeholders in pre-
8 venting and countering violent extremism in their
9 communities”. Women are on the front lines of ob-
10 serving and countering extremist violence, including
11 as police officers engaging with local communities to
12 prevent violent extremism, imams and other religious
13 leaders preaching religious tolerance, and as those
14 countering efforts to radicalize their husbands, chil-
15 dren, and communities.

16 (10) The Women, Peace, and Security Act of
17 2017 (Public Law 115–68) established that “Women
18 in conflict-affected regions have achieved significant
19 success in moderating violent extremism [and] coun-
20 tering terrorism.”.

21 (11) The Consolidated Appropriations Act,
22 2017 (Public Law 115–31) required the creation of
23 a comprehensive, inter-agency United States Govern-
24 ment strategy to support women and girls at risk
25 from extremism and conflict. Congress has also allo-

1 cated \$45,000,000 to support women and girls at
2 risk from extremism and conflict.

3 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

4 It shall be the policy of the United States to recognize
5 women's varied roles in all aspects of violent extremism
6 and terrorism, including as victims, perpetrators, and pre-
7 venters, and to promote the meaningful participation of
8 women as full partners in all efforts to prevent and
9 counter violent extremism and terrorism.

10 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN-LED**
11 **AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ORGANIZA-**
12 **TIONS.**

13 The President is authorized to provide assistance to
14 non-United States-based women-led and women's em-
15 powerment organizations in foreign countries working on
16 countering violent extremism and terrorism in such coun-
17 tries, including for the following purposes:

18 (1) Supporting capacity-building efforts of such
19 organizations and of women preventing and coun-
20 tering violent extremism and terrorism, including in
21 the use of conflict analysis tools and methodologies.

22 (2) Ensuring representation of women in work-
23 ing groups and initiatives discussing countering vio-
24 lent extremism and terrorism policies, strategies,
25 and analyses, and seeking the input of such working

1 groups and initiatives in the design of countering
2 violent extremism and terrorism programs, including
3 policies and programs led by the security sector.

4 (3) Supporting projects that advance efforts to
5 prevent or counter violent extremism and terrorism.

6 (4) Encouraging national, regional, and local
7 platforms for information exchange between female
8 activists from countries facing violent extremism or
9 terrorism so they can share experiences and learn
10 best practices.

11 **SEC. 5. WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY STRATEGY.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 5 of the
13 Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (22 U.S.C.
14 2152j–1; Public Law 115–68) is amended—

15 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “and” after
16 the semicolon at the end;

17 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at
18 the end and inserting “; and”; and

19 (3) by adding at the end the following new
20 paragraph:

21 “(3) include a section on countering violent ex-
22 tremism and terrorism that addresses—

23 “(A) women’s contributions to preventing
24 and countering violent extremism and ter-

1 rorism, including through their community, reli-
2 gious, and security roles;

3 “(B) preventing, detecting, and countering
4 women’s involvement in violent extremism and
5 terrorism, including their roles as informants,
6 facilitators, recruiters, and suicide bombers;

7 “(C) how violent extremist and terrorist
8 groups target women and infringe on their
9 rights and safety, and on the broader relation-
10 ship between gender-based violence and extre-
11 mism and terrorism;

12 “(D) the gender dimensions of disar-
13 mament, demobilization, and reintegration ac-
14 tivities, including women’s positive engagement
15 and participation in such efforts and the disar-
16 mament of women combatants; and

17 “(E) such other considerations as are de-
18 termined appropriate by the President.”.

19 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
20 subsection (a) of this section shall take effect on the date
21 of the enactment of this section and apply beginning with
22 the first Women, Peace, and Security Strategy that is re-
23 quired to be submitted pursuant to section 5 of the
24 Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 after such date
25 of enactment.

1 **SEC. 6. WOMEN AND GIRLS AT RISK FROM VIOLENT EXTRE-**
2 **MISM AND CONFLICT STRATEGY.**

3 Paragraph (2) of section 7059(e) of the Department
4 of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Ap-
5 propriations Act, 2017 (division J of Public Law 115–31;
6 relating to the strategy to support women and girls who
7 are at risk from extremism and conflict) is amended by
8 inserting “and every four years thereafter” after “Act”.

9 **SEC. 7. TRAINING FOR UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OFFI-**
10 **CIALS.**

11 Section 6 of the Women, Peace, and Security Act of
12 2017 (22 U.S.C. 2152j–2; Public Law 115–68) is amend-
13 ed—

14 (1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the
15 following new paragraph:

16 “(4) Preventing and countering violent extre-
17 mism and terrorism.”; and

18 (2) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting “pre-
19 venting and countering violent extremism,” after
20 “resolution,”.

21 **SEC. 8. TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES GOV-**
22 **ERNMENT.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall seek
24 to increase the participation of women receiving training
25 under the Department of State’s Anti-Terrorism Assist-
26 ance (ATA) programs, with the goal of doubling by the

1 date that is three years after the date of the enactment
2 of this Act the total number of women receiving such
3 training as of such date of enactment.

4 (b) ANTITERRORISM ASSISTANCE.—Section 572 of
5 the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2349aa–
6 1) is amended—

7 (1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” after
8 the semicolon at the end;

9 (2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at
10 the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following new
12 paragraph:

13 “(4) to encourage foreign countries to include
14 women participating in such activities.”.

15 **SEC. 9. RESEARCH.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, Sec-
17 retary of State, and the Administrator of the United
18 States Agency for International Development, in consulta-
19 tion with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Di-
20 rector of National Intelligence, shall conduct research on
21 gender and countering violent extremism and terrorism,
22 such as on the following:

23 (1) The root and proximate causes of women’s
24 and men’s participation in terrorist and violent ex-
25 tremist organizations.

1 (2) How both violent extremism and countering
2 violent extremism differently impact women and
3 girls versus men and boys.

4 (3) Ways to engage women and girls who are
5 vulnerable to extremist and terrorist behavior.

6 (4) Ways women and girls can assist in identi-
7 fying individuals of concern.

8 (5) The intersection of violent extremism and
9 terrorism and the following:

10 (A) Gender-based violence.

11 (B) Women's empowerment at the house-
12 hold level, such as property and inheritance
13 rights, bride-price and dowry, and the level of
14 societal sanction for the killing or harming of
15 women.

16 (C) Adolescent girls' empowerment, such
17 as the level of early, child, and forced marriage,
18 and of girls' access to secondary education.

19 (6) Best practices to support women preventing
20 and countering violent extremism and terrorism.

21 (b) UTILIZATION.—The Secretary of Defense, Sec-
22 retary of State, and the Administrator of the United
23 States Agency for International Development shall utilize
24 the results of research required under subsection (a) to
25 inform programming, including by updating relevant coun-

1 try, regional, and inter-agency strategies, projects, and ac-
2 tivities, of the Department of Defense, the Department of
3 State, and the United States Agency for International De-
4 velopment, respectively.

5 (c) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than two
6 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
7 retary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the Adminis-
8 trator of the United States Agency for International De-
9 velopment shall jointly submit to the appropriate congres-
10 sional committees a report on the results of research re-
11 quired under subsection (a).

12 **SEC. 10. ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM.**

13 Section 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization
14 Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. 2656f) is
15 amended—

16 (1) by redesignating subsections (c) through (e)
17 as subsections (d) through (f), respectively; and

18 (2) by inserting after subsection (b) the fol-
19 lowing new subsection:

20 “(c) GENDER ANALYSIS.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The report required under
22 subsection (a) of this section shall include, for not
23 fewer than five foreign countries considered in such
24 report, a gender analysis of the conflict drivers,
25 power dynamics, and impacts that are relevant to

1 violent extremism in each such country, such as the
2 following:

3 “(A) Terrorist recruitment practices.

4 “(B) Drivers of radicalization.

5 “(C) Women’s participation, status, and
6 agency in their homes, communities, and soci-
7 ety, including whether such women experience
8 subordination, exclusion or gender-based vio-
9 lence.

10 “(D) Access to resources and services.

11 “(2) SELECTION CRITERIA.—Foreign countries
12 shall be selected for purposes of the gender analysis
13 required under paragraph (1) on the basis of the fol-
14 lowing:

15 “(A) Low levels of gender equality in such
16 country.

17 “(B) Access necessary to conduct such a
18 gender analysis in such country.

19 “(C) Engagement or attempted engage-
20 ment of organizations, including organizations
21 led by women, to empower women to prevent
22 and counter violent extremism and terrorism in
23 such country.

24 “(D) Other criteria as determined by the
25 Secretary of State.”.

1 **SEC. 11. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
3 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,
4 in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States
5 Agency for International Development and the Secretary
6 of Defense, shall provide a briefing and submit to the ap-
7 propriate congressional committees a report on the imple-
8 mentation of this Act.

9 (b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required
10 under subsection (a) shall be posted and made available
11 on a text-based, searchable, and publicly available internet
12 website.

13 **SEC. 12. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
16 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
17 mittees” means—

18 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations,
19 the Committee on Armed Services, the Com-
20 mittee on Homeland Security and Govern-
21 mental Affairs, and the Committee on Appro-
22 priations of the Senate; and

23 (B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the
24 Committee on Armed Services, the Committee
25 on Homeland Security, and the Committee on
26 Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

1 (2) COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM.—The
2 term “countering violent extremism” means proac-
3 tive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists
4 to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to vio-
5 lence and to address specific factors that facilitate
6 violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to
7 violence.

8 (3) TERRORISM.—The term “terrorism” has
9 the meaning given such term in subsection (d) of
10 section 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization
11 Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. 2656f).

○