Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa
Mining and Australia's interests

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Executive summary

Australia has commercial and strategic interests in helping to prevent and counter violent extremism in Africa. Australian mining companies are engaged across the continent in Mali, Burkina Faso, Kenya and many other countries where there have been high-profile terrorist attacks and kidnappings of foreign nationals, including Australians. Those threats already affect the way Australian mining companies approach their operations on the continent. With rising risks to Australian nationals, businesses and foreign investment through the mining industry, violent extremism in Africa is a direct threat to Australian national interests.

Drawing on the findings of a newly published in-depth report, *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector,* this paper examines how the Australian mining sector should step up efforts aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) in Africa.[1] While the report notes that mining projects present risks that can exacerbate some of the drivers of violent extremism, it also highlights the potential to leverage the work of mining projects as a bulwark against violent extremism.

Electric bucket-wheel excavator, xusenru/pixabay.

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Australian mining companies in Africa are engaged in innovative corporate social responsibility programs that invest in employment and vocational training, engage local youth community groups and work with other companies to develop livelihood programs in an effort to mitigate any negative impacts of mining operations on local communities. These programs can offer a sense of hope and opportunity in local communities and can be used to build community resilience, thereby mitigating some of the drivers of violent extremism.

This paper shows that there's scope for further cooperation and engagement with the Australian Government in the mining sector. The potential of the private sector in P/CVE remains underexplored. Consequently, the mining sector has an opportunity to lead by example in this field.

Implementing the following recommendations will enhance the efforts of Australian mining companies in P/CVE in Africa, thereby strengthening their competitive advantage.

Recommendations to the Australian Government

1. **Strengthen collaboration mechanisms between mining companies, the Australia–Africa Minerals and Energy Group (AAMEG) and the Australian Government**. This highlights the importance of Australian high commissions and embassies engaging with companies to discuss security concerns and opportunities for engaging with the government.

2. **Cooperate with the mining sector to develop and support training programs for mining companies on P/CVE that are appropriate and context-based for the sector**. This could include collaboration with universities in Australia, Ghana and Kenya to identify and develop short-course training opportunities.

3. **Engage with the CVE unit in the Commonwealth Secretariat to share lessons from Australian mining companies' engagement in community programs**. This would also allow Australia to identify opportunities to work with Commonwealth countries, including in Africa, to develop ways to engage mining companies in their national programs on CVE, building on funding that the Australian Government is currently providing for the work of the unit.

4. **Share lessons with international organisations on the potential of the private sector to engage in P/CVE, highlighting the work of the Australian mining sector in Africa**. This could be of value in the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the World Bank and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund. These lessons may also be relevant to countries in other regions with mining operations and concerns about violent extremism (such as the Philippines).

5. **Establish a focal point on P/CVE in the Western Australian Government that can engage with the mining sector**. A focal point on P/CVE in the Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum, for example, could provide information and guidance to mining companies' P/CVE programming and facilitate links for mining companies (largely based in Western Australia) to other government resources at the state and national levels.

6. **Cooperate with Australian mining companies to identify opportunities to support and fund community programs, including as part of Australia's aid program**. Programs should be assessed based on the local context, with consideration given to community organisations that support the empowerment of marginalised groups, women and youth.

Recommendations to Australian mining companies

7. **With stakeholders, develop a set of principles that could guide the work of Australian mining companies on P/CVE**. This should include working with AAMEG and relevant federal and state government departments, as well as community groups engaged in countering violent extremism. It should examine how P/CVE approaches may build on existing corporate social responsibility programs.

8. **Establish a focal point within the mining company to engage with government stakeholders on P/CVE**. This may include engagement within Australia and the host country for advice on their approach to P/CVE programming, risks and opportunities.

9. **Identify opportunities to engage with host governments on programming that might support P/CVE work in local communities**. This is of particular relevance to companies operating in areas at risk of violent extremism. Australian Government funding may be a source of further support for these programs, extending 'brand Australia'.

Introduction

Drawing on decades of experience in the Australian domestic mining sector, Australian mining companies[2] are at the forefront of exploration and investment on the African continent. More than 170 Australian resource companies are operating in 35 countries in Africa.[3] As of August 2017, ASX-listed companies were running 384 mining and exploration projects on the continent.[4] Because Africa has approximately 30% of the world's mineral reserves, there's considerable scope for the sector to grow.

The nature of mining work means that many Australian companies are engaged in remote and often insecure parts of Africa. More than 30% of ASX-listed company projects are in countries in West Africa and the Sahel—a region where there are high levels of insecurity and violent extremist activity.[5] Australian companies are also engaged in projects in Tanzania and Kenya, which are dealing with terrorist organisations such as al-Shabaab. Australia's interests are affected by changes to mining governance regimes and investment in African countries and also by security developments on the continent, including the spread of violent extremism.

While these developments are cause for concern, they also present an opportunity for the Australian Government and the mining sector to leverage their resources to address the threat of violent extremism. As a sizeable private-sector actor, the mining sector can have an influential role in efforts aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). This was the finding of the newly published in-depth ASPI report, *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector,* written by Lisa Sharland, Tim Grice and Sara Zeiger.[6] Drawing on field research and interviews with Australian mining companies operating in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Kenya, the report found that the mining sector is already engaged in activities that can exacerbate or mitigate the drivers of violent extremism. Mining companies are therefore in a position to contribute to P/CVE efforts. This creates an opportunity for Australian resource companies operating in Africa not only to enhance the longer term security of their operations but also to position themselves as a sector that operates to the highest standards of community and social responsibility. It also gives the Australian Government opportunities to directly engage and leverage those efforts.

This paper explores the opportunities for the Australian Government and mining companies to address the threat of violent extremism in Africa. It analyses why that extremism challenges our national interests and values. It then draws on the findings of the *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector* report to identify practical opportunities for the Australian Government and mining sector to work with other stakeholders on P/CVE in Africa.

Violent extremism in Africa: a challenge to Australian interests

Violent extremism poses a direct challenge to Australia's economic and strategic interests.[7] Terrorist attacks have been mounted across the globe by groups such as Daesh, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab. 'Foreign terrorist fighters' have been radicalised online and inspired to travel overseas to conflict zones or undertake 'lone-wolf' or small-cell attacks in their countries of residence. Australia hasn't been immune from such threats and attacks. Violent extremism stands as a direct risk to local civilian populations and the safety of Australian business operations in Africa, and is an affront to Australian values such as democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law.

The Australian Government has committed to a range of P/CVE efforts. In Australia, this has included working closely with communities to prevent Australians being radicalised and subsequently travelling overseas as foreign fighters or mounting domestic lone-wolf attacks. At the international level, the ADF has been directly engaged in efforts to defeat Daesh in the Middle East. Recent events in Marawi in the Philippines have fuelled concerns that Daesh is gaining a foothold in our immediate region, requiring more engagement with our regional partners to respond to this threat and identify cooperative responses and solutions.

Figure 1: Australian mining projects in Africa and terrorism.
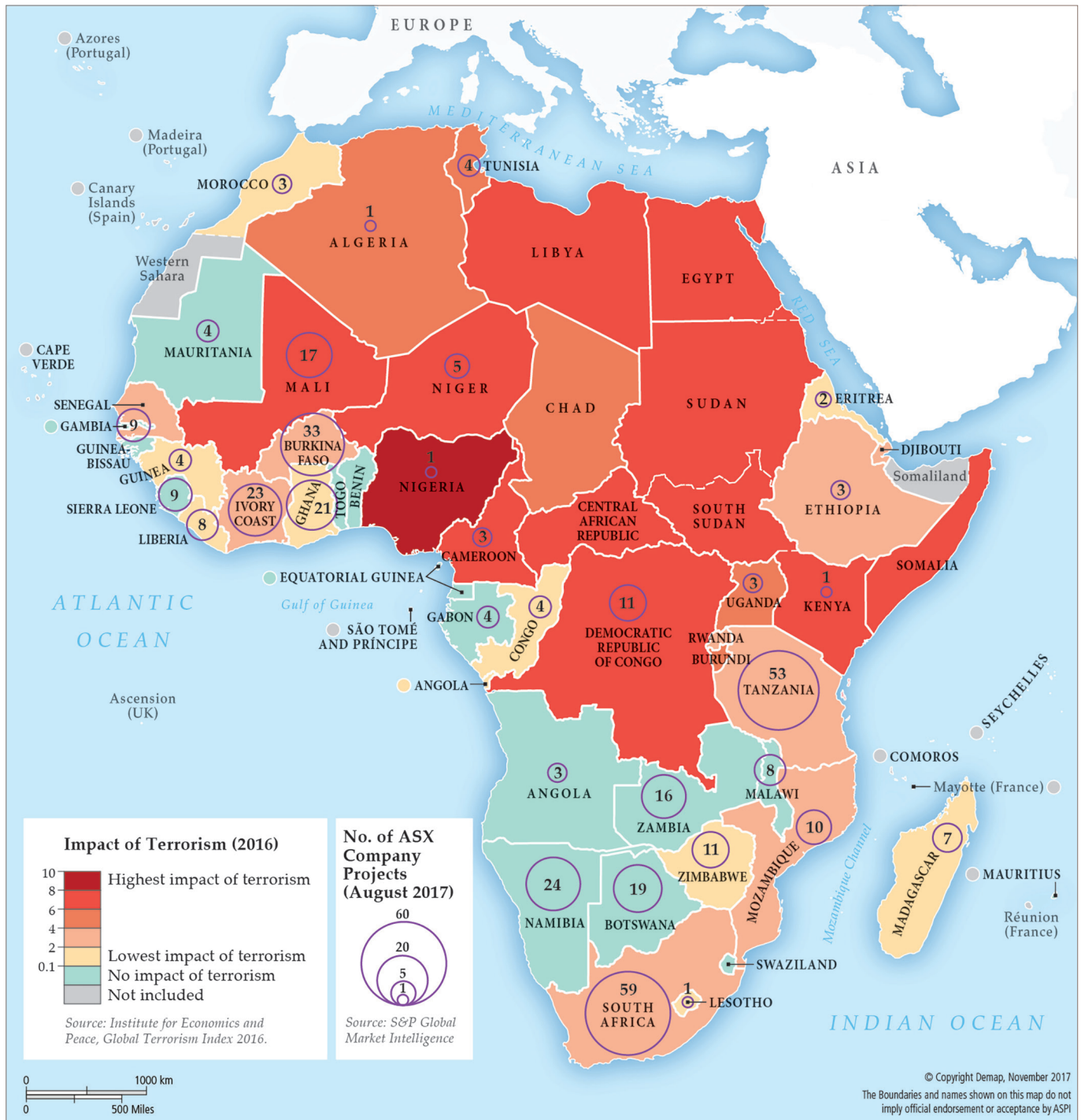
Source: The data for the number of ASX-listed mining projects is provided by S&P Global Market Intelligence as of August 2017. It captures ASX-listed mining company projects by country. The data on the impact of terrorism draws on the Institute for Economics and Peace Global Terrorism Index 2016

Because of concerns about violent extremism in Australia and Southeast Asia, the Australian Government's primary focus isn't on the risks posed by violent extremism in Africa. Yet Australian interests are directly affected by the rise of extremism on the continent. Two Australians were kidnapped in Burkina Faso in January 2016 by the terrorist group Ansar Dine, and one of those kidnapped is still held captive. Kidnapping for ransom has been a lucrative business for terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and dozens of Westerners and Europeans have been kidnapped in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali in recent years. The potential for further attacks poses a risk to Australian nationals who are working in the region. This is of particular concern to Australian mining companies in West Africa, which operate with the risk that expatriate employees may be kidnapped.[8]

Other foreign interests on the continent have also been targeted. Terrorist organisations have attacked so-called soft targets, such as shopping malls, hotels and tourist sites in Nairobi, Ouagadougou and Bamako.[9] Foreign extractives companies operating in Africa have had their operating sites targeted by terrorist groups.[10] Security concerns caused by the growth and spread of violent extremism are already having an impact on decisions by companies to invest or continue their operations. The attack on the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako in 2015, for instance, was a turning point for an Australian mining company in Mali, which consequently revised its approaches to security.[11] This insecurity directly threatens Australian interests, whether in the form of kidnappings of Australian nationals working on mining projects or economic disruption caused by terrorist attacks on sites.

Given the threats posed to Australian nationals, businesses and investments, violent extremism in Africa is a direct threat to Australian national interests. The Australian Government and Australian mining companies have a shared interest in addressing this ongoing threat.

The potential role of Australian mining in P/CVE efforts

Australian mining companies are among the largest foreign investors and operators on the African continent. Despite a reduction in the number of mining projects in recent years, Australia remains one of the largest investors in mining on the continent, with an estimated $30 billion in investments.[12] The Australian companies involved range from many relatively small companies doing exploration work in countries such as Burkina Faso through to mid-tier and major companies that have established sizeable, decades-long mining operations in countries such as Mali, Ghana and Kenya. If you're in Accra or Ouagadougou on a Friday evening and drop by the West African Mining Drinks gathering, you're likely to meet many Australians working for various companies and projects in the region.[13]

By their nature, mining projects often have disruptive impacts on local communities and economies. Many of those impacts can be positive if they're appropriately managed and effectively communicated—for example; by boosting local employment directly with the project or through local businesses, or by developing infrastructure for the project that also benefits the local community. There's evidence that Australian mining companies have been effective in identifying some of the potential areas of mutual benefit with local communities, as demonstrated by visits to mine sites in the case-study countries of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Kenya.

Nevertheless, the disruptive nature of mining means that there are many risks that also need to be managed:

- Individuals and families may be displaced from their land and livelihoods and feel that they've been inadequately compensated.

- Employment opportunities may be limited, and particular jobs may require skills that aren't available in the local community, meaning that employees need to be sourced from outside the local area.

- There may be a lack of transparency about the financial benefits flowing to the community due to a lack of transparency about mining governance in the country.

As our *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector* report shows in detail, the actions of mining companies can have significant impacts on the political, social, environmental and economic conditions in their areas of operations. If some of these risks are not managed well by a mining company, they may result in unmet socio economic

opportunities, fuel existing grievances in the community and frustrate expectations, which are all potential drivers of violent extremism. They can also have an adverse impact on the security of a mine site.

It's in the interests of a mining company to ensure that is has a 'social licence to operate'. Establishing inclusive and consultative mechanisms for engaging with the local community can facilitate this relationship (often through committees and engagement with tribal chiefs and elders). Furthermore, significant and substantive engagement in a range of social and economic programs for the local community, or 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) programs, is vital. The use of the term CSR is somewhat controversial for some in the Australian mining community, as to them this suggests that such programs are an obligation and too transactional; for example, one company prefers the term 'broad-based economic uplift' as a way to describe its engagement with the local community.[14] In any event, such programs can be an important vehicle for mitigating many of the drivers of violent extremism by providing opportunities for social and economic empowerment and hope for the future. Table 1 lists examples of the different types of activities that Australian companies are engaged in in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Kenya.

Table 1: Examples of current Australian mining companies' engagement in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Kenya related to P/CVE

Area of action	Opportunities for the mining sector
Education, skill development and employment facilitation	• Fund the development of infrastructure for schools • Offer scholarships and bursaries to local youth • Support technical and vocational training
Empowering youth	• Support community organisations that develop and support youth entrepreneurship • Engage youth in consultative committees and representative bodies involving the mining company and the community • Establish mentoring programs and offer opportunities for leadership • Identify and build on sources of local resilience for youth
Engaging communities	• Leverage community and civil society engagement to support a discourse on the drivers of violent extremism • Foster community cohesiveness with support to arts, culture and sports programs
Gender equality and empowering women	• Ensure that programs for education, technical and vocational training, and mentoring include women from the local community • Engage women in consultative committees and representative bodies involving the mining company and the community • Integrate a gender perspective into CSR programs in the local area to ensure that the needs of women and men are addressed

Source: Extracted from Lisa Sharland, Tim Grice, Sara Zeiger, *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector,* ASPI, Canberra, November 2017, p. 41, online.

Table 1 shows a range of existing programs and community consultation mechanisms supported and implemented by Australian mining companies that relate to P/CVE efforts. The first column lists actions identified the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which is one of the key international guiding documents on preventing violent extremism. Importantly, that document also notes the potential of the private sector as an engaged stakeholder in those efforts.[15]

However, the table has been developed as an example of how mining companies, in particular, can engage in P/CVE programs. With the exception of one company we spoke with, which had some engagement in community programs directed at countering violent extremism, there was generally much less awareness about how Australian mining companies' approaches to their operations, community engagement and CSR programs might relate to violent extremism. While this may present some risks,[16] it also means that Australian mining companies and the Australian Government are missing potential opportunities to leverage the current work of the Australian mining sector in Africa to address violent extremism. That work could help to reduce the threat that violent extremism poses to the sector's operations.

Australian mining companies can consider implementing various initiatives to ensure that their operations and community engagement programs are more responsive in P/CVE. As Sharland, Grice and Zeiger argue in *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector*, if companies want to contribute to efforts to reduce violent extremism, then they should be applying a "P/CVE lens" to their activities and consider 'the ways in which the mining value chain exacerbates or ameliorates the risks of violent extremism'. This is particularly relevant in areas that may be at high risk. However, even in areas where the risk of violent extremism may be low, such initiatives are still likely to contribute to longer term efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace.[17]

The Australian mining sector has a history of engaging in efforts to improve regulation in parts of the sector, often in response to incidents that have affected its operations. A recent example has been the effort to develop a set of 'model clauses' to guide engagement between host government security forces and mining companies, drawing on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (to which the Australian Government subscribes).[18] Australian mining companies are well placed to take the lead in developing similar principles and guidance that could guide their work on P/CVE, drawing on their extensive experience in Africa. This could be led through an organisation such as the Australia–Africa Minerals and Energy Group (AAMEG), in consultation with relevant federal and state government departments, which have the lead in Australia's domestic P/CVE programs.

In the interim, Australian mining companies could seek to identify ways to engage on P/CVE internally as part of their business plans and work processes. As a first step, a company could identify a focal point in its organisation that can engage with Australian and host country governments on advice about potential risks and opportunities when considering P/CVE engagement as part of its operations and outreach. Australia's Direct Aid Program (DAP), which is managed by our diplomatic posts in Africa, could also be a valuable vehicle to leverage further collective support for community programs that can prevent and counter violent extremism.

Although there's international recognition that the private sector can have a role in P/CVE, it isn't expected to lead in such initiatives. That responsibility generally falls to national governments, given the threats posed domestically to national security and the wellbeing of their citizens. If the Australian mining sector is to be most effective in its engagement in P/CVE, it's critical that the Australian federal and state governments are engaged in those initiatives.

Opportunities for the Australian Government

Australia has a long history of engagement with Africa. However, while African countries are viewed as important partners, Australia's relationship with them is often not afforded the high priority that's given to our relationships with countries in our immediate geographical region, in the Pacific and Asia. In 2015, the Australian Foreign Minister, speaking at the Africa Down Under Conference, noted that 'Australian investment flows to Africa vastly outweigh any aid flows that could possibly be envisaged'.[19] With the reduction in Australia's aid to Africa since 2012, the government has been focused on 'leveraging other drivers for development, such as private sector investment'.[20] In this context, the Australian mining sector, as a private-sector actor, has a unique opportunity to contribute not only to investment abroad but also to wider efforts to prevent conflict and improve security on the continent.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of engaging with the Australian mining sector in the context of its engagement in Africa. This is demonstrated by events such as Africa Down Under each year in Perth, where the Australian Government, the mining sector and ministers from African countries discuss shared interests on the continent. Australian

Government departments are also working closely with industry organisations such as AAMEG, particularly on issues related to security in Africa.[21] The government realises that violent extremism poses an ongoing risk to the operations of Australian companies. However, there's scope for that engagement to be more comprehensive and practical. Supporting Australian mining companies to engage in P/CVE initiatives in Africa is a way to strengthen that cooperation.

Australian mining companies support a range of community activities and programs, often as part of their CSR approach. Working with mining companies, the Australian Government could seek to identify opportunities to leverage funding, including through the DAP. Small DAP grants are used for projects that reduce poverty and support sustainable development. In March 2017, the Foreign Minister announced a new framework, titled 'Development Approaches to Countering Violent Extremism', that enables DAP funding to be used for P/CVE investments,[22] in line with changes to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's guidelines, which now enable official development assistance to be used for P/CVE programs. This gives the Australian Government an opportunity to work closely with mining companies to identify useful programs.

The innovative approaches being used by Australian mining companies as part of CSR engagement can offer a powerful story for the government to share as part of its engagement in initiatives that support economic diplomacy, particularly if more effort is made to strengthen engagement in P/CVE. For instance, the government could work with the Australian mining sector through entities such as AAMEG to share lessons with international organisations such as the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the World Bank and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund on the potential for the private sector to engage in P/CVE. Similarly, the government could engage with entities such as the CVE unit in the Commonwealth Secretariat, which it's providing $2.5 million in funding towards, to share lessons and identify opportunities to cooperate on P/CVE programs with other Commonwealth countries in Africa where the Australian mining sector is engaged. In other words, engaging with Australian mining companies to identify and develop a model for mining-sector and other private-sector engagement in P/CVE could be a useful platform for engagement with other key partners in global efforts to address violent extremism. It may also provide lessons to countries in our immediate region that have mining investments and are vital to addressing the threat locally (for example, the Philippines).

Australian state governments may also have an interest in engaging with the Australian mining sector, given their leading role in domestic P/CVE approaches. This may be particularly relevant to Australian mining companies, of which more than 50% are based and headquartered in Western Australia.[23] That presence and the significant mining industry in Western Australia means that the state government is already engaged directly in cooperating with African countries on mining, including through an established memorandum of understanding with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. The Western Australian Government could consider the value of establishing a focal point on P/CVE, possibly in the Department of Mines and Petroleum, as a way of furthering the discussion and facilitating links for mining companies to other government resources for these issues at the state and federal levels.

If Australian mining companies are going to engage successfully in P/CVE, they'll need to ensure that their efforts are sustainable. That means investing in programs that support training and education on these issues. The Australian Government could cooperate with the mining sector to develop and support training programs on P/CVE for mining companies. The government is well placed to take the lead on such an initiative, given its role in maintaining national security and addressing these issues at the international and domestic levels. This could include collaboration with universities in Australia to develop short courses or even work with universities through established Australia–Africa networks. The Australia Awards initiative, which provides opportunities for Africans to study in Australia, could be a valuable vehicle for ensuring that there's a more sustainable approach in the sector, as well as on both continents. This would also be an innovative example of leadership in exploring the contribution that the private sector can make towards P/CVE.

Conclusion

Australia has an interest in P/CVE in Africa. The spread of violent extremism is anathema to our values and the rules-based global order and directly threatens our national interests on the continent. Australian mining companies, including their personnel and operations and the investments of Australian shareholders, have been and will continue to be affected by the threat in Africa.

As this paper demonstrates, Australian mining companies have a direct interest in engaging in P/CVE efforts:

- First, P/CVE work is a proactive and tangible way for the Australian mining sector to reduce security risks, whether in contexts where there's a high threat of violent extremism or as part of longer term efforts to prevent conflict. Well-designed approaches can build community resilience against these security threats, thereby potentially improving overall security in mining companies' areas of operation over the longer term.

- Second, improved security will enhance mining companies' business operations, producing a potential 'win–win' for the community, the host government and the mining company. It will also ensure that the Australian mining sector has a competitive advantage by demonstrating that it operates to the highest standards of community and social responsibility.

- Finally, because the potential of the private sector in P/CVE work is underexplored, the Australian mining sector has an opportunity to show leadership on this issue. However, this requires a long-term investment by the sector. And, if it's to be most effective, it also requires further engagement by the Australian Government.

It's in the Australian Government's interests to be engaged substantively with the Australian mining sector in Africa. This will not only minimise security risks but also create an important opportunity to leverage Australia's economic diplomacy. By engaging with the Australian mining sector in P/CVE efforts in Africa, the government can also strengthen its relevance and influence in a region that is often not a priority for Australian engagement and contribute more comprehensively to efforts to strengthen security on the continent.

Notes

1   Lisa Sharland, Tim Grice, Sara Zeiger, *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector*, ASPI, Canberra, November 2017, online.
2   The term 'Australian mining companies' includes ASX-listed companies, but may also refer to mining companies headquartered in Australia or managed by Australians that are not listed on the ASX
3   See Australia-Africa Minerals and Energy Group, *Australia and Africa – Assessing the scale and potential of Australian engagement in Africa*, February 2017, online; and Julie Bishop, 'Address to Africa Down Under Conference', 8 September 2017, online.
4   Figures provided by S&P Global Market Intelligence, August 2017.
5   Figures provided by S&P Global Market Intelligence, based on breakdown of ASX-listed company projects by country as of August 2017.
6   Sharland et al., *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector.*
7   There's no one clear definition of violent extremism; however, the Australian Government defines it as 'the use or support of violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals'.
8   There have already been incidents in which Australians working for Australian mining companies have been kidnapped; for example, three Australians working for Macmahon Holdings were kidnapped in Nigeria in June 2016 in a deadly attack on their convoy, although all were returned.
9   They include attacks on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in September 2013, the Radisson Hotel in Bamako in November 2015, Le Campement in Bamako in June 2017, the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou in January 2016, and most recently a Turkish café in Ouagadougou in August 2017.
10 For example, the attack on the In Amenas gas plant operated by BP and the Norwegian oil company Statoil in eastern Algeria in January 2013.
11 Interview with mining company official in Perth, May 2017.
12 Official Committee Hansard, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Estimates, 2 March 2017, p. 67.
13 *Mining drinks,* Sahara Mining Services, 2017, online.
14 Interview with mining company official in Perth, May 2017.
15 UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism—Report of the Secretary-General,* UN Doc A/70/674, 24 December 2015.
16 See Sharland et al., *Preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector,* for detailed analysis of some of these potential risks.
17 See James Bowen, Arsla Jawaid, *Why preventing violent extremism needs sustaining peace,* International Peace Institute, October 2017, online.
18 Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, online.
19 Julie Bishop, 'Address to Africa Down Under Conference', 2 September 2015, Perth, online.
20 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), *Australia's aid program*, DFAT, Canberra, no date, online.
21 This includes engagement with DFAT and ASIO's Business Liaison Unit.
22 See the framework for DFAT interventions for designing, implementing and evaluating CVE investments: do no harm; based on robust analysis of local drivers; and appropriate tools with appropriate partners. See DFAT, *Development approaches to countering violent extremism*, no date, online.
23 Official Committee Hansard, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Estimates, 31 May 2017, p. 119.

Acronyms and abbreviations

AAMEG   Australia–Africa Minerals and Energy Group
ADF   Australian Defence Force
CSR   corporate social responsibility
DAP   Direct Aid Program
DFAT   Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
P/CVE   preventing and countering violent extremism
UN   United Nations

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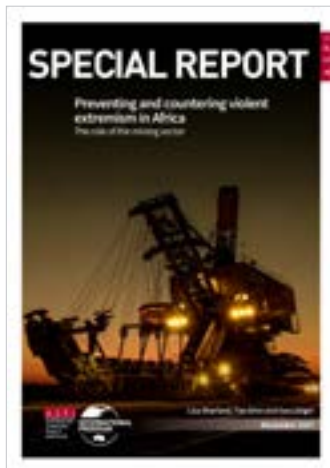
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