



U.S. AGENCY FOR  
GLOBAL MEDIA

### USAGM REACH

Percentage of adults reached  
by USAGM networks  
in each country each week.

LIBYA (2022)

23.5%

YEMEN (2022)

13.3%

SOMALIA (2023)

64.8%

INDONESIA (2023)

32.9%

IRAQ (2023)

33.8%

EGYPT (2023)

13.4%

MALI (2023)

35.1%

LEBANON (2022)

16.9%

## Countering Violent Extremism

**Extremist groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Ansarallah (commonly known as the Houthis) and Hamas restrict access to information, instill fear, intimidate local populations, and propagate disinformation. They also invest heavily in state-of-the-art misinformation campaigns, sophisticated media production capabilities, and social media engagement to dominate regional discourse and push their own narratives.**



VOA reporter Natasha Mozgovaya in Israel.

### USAGM'S APPROACH

The United States Agency for Global Media's (USAGM) approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) is grounded in its role as an independent, public service media organization. USAGM's programming provides people in restrictive media environments with comprehensive and objective information, making them less vulnerable to violent extremist propaganda.

USAGM's networks counter violent extremism with credible, fact-based journalism that exposes the harm of radicalization, builds resilience within communities, encourages dialogue and civic participation, establishes platforms for a range of voices to be heard, and disrupts extremist narratives. USAGM's networks cover violent extremism in their reporting, while engaging and connecting with their audiences to counter root causes of extremism, such as poverty, disenfranchisement, a sense of voicelessness and marginalization.

To do this effectively, USAGM’s networks rely on their credibility among audiences they have proactively built over time by providing a broad range of programming options and creating avenues for civic engagement and constructive discourse.

## OUR IMPACT

USAGM networks reach large audiences in regions that are subject to extremist influence, and provide vulnerable populations — such as Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh — with reliable, fact-based news in places where information voids pervade. Even after the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan, USAGM’s networks reached nearly 66% of mobile phone-owning adults in June 2022. In Nigeria, USAGM’s networks reach one in three adults and an even larger percentage of Hausa speakers, who largely reside in the northern region of the country, where the threat from Boko Haram is the greatest. In Somalia, every two out of three adults report using VOA every week.

## COVERING THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

As soon as Hamas launched its initial attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, USAGM networks began 24-hour live coverage with real-time reporting from the region. The networks conveyed the U.S. response with live coverage from the White House, State Department, Pentagon, and Congress. Journalists interviewed dozens of officials, including National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, as well as Israeli and international lawmakers and experts. This coverage included simulcasting remarks by President Biden with live translation in close to 20 languages. Alhurra delivered round-the-clock, breaking news coverage from the frontlines of the conflict zone, reporting from all sides — with journalists inside Gaza, Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon,



Wissam Yassine, Alhurra Correspondent in Gaza, reporting on the Israel-Hamas war.

and beyond — highlighting not just the latest developments on the ground, but also the human cost of the fighting for everyone involved. Alhurra highlighted stories about and interviews with families of the hostages taken by Hamas, regularly featured Israeli guests, and frequently reported from around Israel, often serving as one of the very few Arabic-language news outlets providing an objective and complete reporting on the conflict. VOA provided extensive coverage of the

conflict for its audiences worldwide, offering the latest updates in its 48 languages, as well as providing special reports for priority audiences in places such as Iran, Indonesia, and Pakistan. USAGM networks’ fact-checking projects monitored and debunked mis- and disinformation about the conflict around the world, helping to clarify facts, undermine false narratives, and expose the disinformation tactics employed by extremist groups.

## USAGM Networks At-A-Glance

### MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING NETWORKS (MBN)

MBN broadcasts in Arabic throughout the Middle East and North Africa, including areas hard hit by violent extremism. Through television, audio, and digital platforms, MBN presents accurate and unbiased news to tens of millions of people each day. In addition to more than 12 hours of news daily, MBN produces original television, audio, and digital programs that counter extremist ideology and are dedicated to empowering women, defending free speech, and encouraging ethnic and religious tolerance. MBN's debate shows constructively address the political, economic, social, and cultural issues that drive the spread of extremism in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, the Palestinian Territories and beyond.

MBN regularly covers sensitive topics not found on other Arabic media outlets (e.g. political Islam, jihadism, freedom of expression, and religion) and engages audiences to join the discussion. MBN features expert analysis, including religious scholars who challenge extreme interpretations of Islam and encourages critical thinking and analytical debate. MBN programs and reports focus on the root causes of extremism and explore solutions to issues such as unemployment, marginalization, political exclusion, and repression by the state. Additionally, MBN highlights stories of building bridges between different communities and religions.



Alhurra reporters

The Raise Your Voice digital platform advocates for human rights, celebrates small victories, and counters extremism of all types. It encourages young people in Iraq and the Levant to explore and engage in open discussions on the causes and consequences of violent extremism and intolerance, including topics such as religious freedom and minority rights. Several of MBN's programs address the root causes of extremism, including shows, such as "Lebanese Scene," "Between Two Niles" and "Gulf Talks," that specifically focus on economic and social challenges facing the region. "Alhurra Investigates" uncovers issues that are considered too sensitive by the local media, while "Did It Really Happen?" counters dis- and misinformation being used to spread extremist rhetoric.



## VOICE OF AMERICA (VOA)

VOA leverages its global reach to address the full scope of threats posed by extremist narratives to marginalized audiences around the world.

In South and Central Asia, VOA broadcasts to regions heavily impacted by the Islamic State (IS), Al-Qaeda, and other designated terrorist groups. In 2023, VOA restored medium wave (AM) radio broadcasts to Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan after the Taliban cut off access to FM transmitters in the country. Additionally, VOA continues to grow its 24/7 direct-to-home satellite television channel for Afghanistan, which carries uncensored news and information in both Pashto and Dari. VOA's Pakistan-focused, Pashto-language Deewa Service has created new programming to raise awareness of women's issues and a new music program for younger viewers, complementing a website section on "IS and Extremism" that examines lives lost or interrupted by extremist threats. In Pakistan, blasphemy laws carry a potential death sentence for anyone who insults Islam. VOA's Urdu Service gives voice to those who claim that hardliners abuse these laws to unfairly target minorities or persecute minority faiths. In addition to closely covering the recent resurgence of the so-called Islamic State in parts of Iraq and Syria, VOA's Kurdish Service follows the impact the group has left on communities in both countries during its brutal reign. A significant focus of VOA coverage is on Yazidi victims and survivors who are still reeling from acts committed by IS militants, as well as on the U.S. policy toward the continued war against remnants of IS.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, VOA provides public service programming amid political instability and the proliferation of Chinese and Russian disinformation across the continent. Operating in regions affected by violent extremist groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, VOA plays a vital role in offering essential information and presenting alternative narratives to combat extremist ideologies. In 2022, VOA's acclaimed documentary "Escaping Cabo Delgado's Nightmare" shed light

on the effects of insurgency in northern Mozambique and provided invaluable insights into the challenges confronting communities in the region. VOA's French-language show, "Focus Sahel," reports on the Sahel region amidst the multifaceted humanitarian crisis there, including escalating jihadi activities, while VOA's expanded Bambara-language programs in Mali demonstrate its commitment to offering accurate information in areas plagued by political instability, foreign disinformation, and extremist narratives.

VOA's acclaimed documentary "Escaping Cabo Delgado's Nightmare"



In Eurasia, VOA's coverage of violent extremism focuses on the Balkan countries, primarily Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, which lack the institutional capacity and resources to address the sources of radicalization and reintegrate

repatriated foreign ISIS fighters and their families. VOA's coverage provides insights and analysis regarding potential security challenges in the region, while informing audiences about U.S. assistance and investments in programs to prevent and counter violent extremism.

### RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY (RFE/RL)

Even after the return of the Taliban, RFE/RL's Radio Azadi (serving Afghanistan) and Radio Mashaal (reaching Pakistan's tribal areas) are true public broadcasters reaching significant audiences in the Dari and Pashto languages. While under significant pressure from the Taliban and extremist organizations, RFE/RL has reported on how radically life has changed since the Taliban's return for ordinary Afghans, particularly women, frequently airing their voices and reporting on the challenges they face. RFE/RL has responded directly to the Taliban's ban on secondary education for women by creating on-air and online girls' education programs and reporting on women's achievements, to strengthen their resolve to resist the Taliban's extremist agenda. To demonstrate community resilience as a tested strategy for countering violent extremism, both services have reported on public health initiatives like vaccination campaigns, provided emergency information in the aftermath of crises, and showcased practical, inclusive alternatives to extremist ideologies. Following extremist attacks, Azadi and Mashaal usually profile victims and give a platform for their families to share their grief and remember.

RFE/RL's five Central Asia services, along with units addressing the needs of the region's economic migrants and the people in the restive Ferghana Valley, lead engagement with audience members and social media users on extremism-related topics, such as the radicalization of migrants in Russia and throughout Europe and how prisons offer fertile ground for recruitment and radicalization. The Central Asian services are uniquely positioned to cover the regional, political, and security implications of violent extremist groups. RFE/RL's Central Asia Newswire provides objective news to media outlets in the region, which is ranked among the most restrictive media environments in the world.

In the Western Balkans, RFE/RL engages young and vulnerable audiences in conversations that explore the root causes of extremism and the effects of ethnic radicalization on their communities. RFE/RL's Balkan Service prioritizes coverage that explores the legacy of extremism and conflict in the region and refutes ongoing disinformation.



RFE/RL journalist Manas Kaiyrtayev reporting from Kazakhstan.



## RADIO FREE ASIA (RFA)/BENARNEWS

Through BenarNews, an online news portal launched in 2015, RFA engages underserved and vulnerable audiences in South and Southeast Asia with news and content in Bengali, Thai, Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. Among the areas on which BenarNews focuses is Islamic militancy in South and Southeast Asia, reporting extensively on the movements that are still active there and the many conflicts that continue to sustain them. The portal also examines the political and socioeconomic factors that feed violent extremism, bringing objective reporting to places where local media tend to avoid these topics and helping hold authorities accountable.

Islamic militancy persists at a low level in the Indo-Pacific region despite the defeat of the IS in the Middle East. BenarNews has reported on regional trends such as financial support and recruitment for violent extremist groups, the introduction of female jihadists, and suicide bombings carried out by family groups. It also examines efforts to counter violent extremism across Southeast Asia.

More recently, the outlet highlighted how community members in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia work to maintain interfaith harmony 25 years after Muslim-Christian fighting drew jihadists to the area. Benar covered the purported elimination of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines, and how the deadly bombing of a Catholic Mass in southern Marawi city exposed the Philippine military's weakness in intelligence gathering. BenarNews has also reported on reactions in majority Muslim Southeast Asian nations to the Israel-Hamas war, amid increased diplomatic pressure from the U.S. to designate Hamas a terrorist organization.



BenarNews marked 25 years since the bloody conflict in Poso, Indonesia.