



# #StopCVE Now

by Muslim Justice League

*In the United States Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is a framework that institutionalizes the fallacy that Muslims are inherently violent, and especially targets individuals who express signs of religiosity and/or [political activism](#).*

CVE IN THE US was initiated by the Obama administration and [modeled after the “Prevent” strategy](#) in the United Kingdom. Similarly to Prevent, CVE began with funding from [federal law enforcement institutions](#), like the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, to entice Muslim leaders and organizations to this framework. While it is framed as “soft counterterrorism,” it is a predatory move towards [self surveillance and community disruption](#). Pre and post 9/11, Muslims in the US and connected communities have experienced blatant intrusions through informants and undercover agents such as in the case of [Tanvir v. Tanzin](#). As communities identified and challenged these incursions from government officials, federal agencies shifted their strategy to “community policing,” which might sound more acceptable, but upon closer examination is actually a guise for communities to surveil themselves.

CVE uses facially neutral language like extremism and radicalization to make it very clear, without being explicit, that this is about Muslims. It is founded on the debunked [“radicalization”](#) theory, which purports that those with “extremist” or “radical” ideologies are prone to committing acts of violence. Theories of radicalization have been disproved repeatedly as demonstrated by the disclaimers in CVE literature and by [psychologists](#) but continue to be used against communities tainted by false narratives of inherent violence, as well as leaders of [social justice movements](#).

CVE LEGITIMIZES DISCRIMINATION AGAINST [Muslims](#) and other communities seen as suspect or inherently violent by:

- [Deputizing mental health providers, teachers, and other service providers](#) to look for constitutionally protected behaviors deemed “pre-criminal.”
- [Funding community and religious organizations](#) through a counterterrorism framework, reifying that we only deserve resources because we are deemed a threat.
- [Justifying harms to Muslim communities](#) by claiming this unproven framework prevents “violent extremism.”

CVE IMPACTS THE OVERALL Muslim community, but has deeper impacts on Muslims who are [multiply marginalized](#) including those who are: youth, black, [refugees](#), low income, incarcerated/formerly incarcerated, and/or need mental health support. CVE chills free speech, access to resources, and political activity.



Like its predecessor, the FBI's CounterIntelligence Program (COINTELPRO), CVE fragments the community and foments suspicion to dampen political organizing. Similarly to COINTELPRO, CVE is rooted in a long history of surveillance of Black Muslims, deemed radical for organizing towards racial justice. The Black Identity Extremism ("BIE") framework, is a corollary to CVE and targets politically active Black Americans. Both CVE and BIE are rooted in a long history of criminalizing and suppressing intra- and inter-community organizing.

Prevent, the UK model which started approximately ten years before CVE in the US, escalated into a mandate that all public workers report people based on debunked radicalization indicators. Muslims are approximately [40 times more likely to be targeted by Prevent](#) than non-Muslims and youth make up about one third of those reported. A [secret database of everyone](#) reported to Prevent and the [criminalization of environmental activists](#) is a glimpse of the institutionalized surveillance we can expect from CVE. CVE propagates the junk science theory that Muslim youth, Black Lives Matter activists, and refugees are on a "dangerous path to radicalization," but CVE is on the dangerous path built by Prevent.

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A PATH FORWARD FOR our communities uplifts our political organizing and includes access to the resources we need without fear that our teachers, [therapists](#), and community leaders were trained to be suspicious of us. Beyond our [First Amendment protections](#) of freedom of religion, speech, and assembly; a human rights framing requires our dignified access to healthcare and education.

There is no equal opportunity CVE. Including white supremacist violence as a target of CVE only [serves to obscure the false foundation of this framework](#). We encourage shifting away from the ill-defined language of extremism, terrorism, and radicalization and instead focusing on addressing the [systemic roots of white supremacy](#) and the violence of inequity that plagues our communities.

Muslim, Arab, Black, and South Asian organizations have spoken out against the dangers of CVE since it was launched and we continue to demand that we [#StopCVE](#). From the civil rights era to anti-war movements, our communities have consistently organized to end violence at its roots. The CVE framework suppresses our political momentum by targeting individuals in marginalized communities, rather than uplifting our work. Our communities deserve to engage in political activity [without fearing criminalization and surveillance](#).

We are building communal spaces where folks can bring their full selves, including their religious practice, free from the historical coercion and surveillance brought on us. We center transformative practices that support, heal, and build community instead of perpetuating violence through criminalization. Our communities are creating resources for ourselves, not based on discriminatory narratives or tied to law enforcement, but rooted in our collective power and strength.