

TROUBLING TIMES: MOBILIZING THE VOICES OF FORMER EXTREMISTS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Against Violent Extremism Network (AVE) and The Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV)

Panel Discussion

5:30 pm to 6:30 pm, March 13th 2018

Concept Note:

Current societal polarization exemplified by the rise of hate speech and acts of violent extremism makes the work of dialogue and community engagement more essential than ever. Authentic, credible voices are needed to challenge divisive, and violent narratives that sow discord and fear in our communities. Voices such as those of “former extremists” can play an integral role in prevention efforts locally, nationally and globally. With the ability to share intimate experiences of pathways into and out of extremist movements, former extremists have the ability to deliver community interventions, support law enforcement, and public policy, all while challenging dominant media narratives about radicalization.

Based on this observation, the Against Violent Extremism Network (AVE) and The Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV) will lead a dialogue with a distinguished panel of ‘former extremists’ who are all in some fashion confronting the challenges of being actively part of prevention strategies both in the United States and Canada.

Effective responses are based on holistic solutions geared toward preventative measures. The need for engagement goes beyond reactive programming. Working with a range of groups, AVE identifies gaps in programming, and develops tailored workshops and roundtables to ‘enhance community engagement’ around issues such as polarization, violence, radicalization, and community awareness.

AVE and CPRLV Panel Members:

Shannon Martinez (AVE): Former Neo-Nazi skinhead. She is now accredited racial dialogue facilitator, community activist and public speaker.

Elisa Hategan (AVE): Ex-member of the Heritage Front. She is a writer, speaker, freelance journalist and educator on far-right extremism in Canada.

Jesse Morton (AVE): Former extremist, cofounder of the radical website Revolution Muslim. He is now research fellow at the Program on Extremism at the George Washington University.

Bradley Galloway (AVE): Former white supremacist, ex member of Volksfront. He is now research and intervention specialist at the Organization for Prevention of Violence (OPV).

Maxime Fiset (CPRLV): Former Neo-Nazi skinhead. He is now project associate at the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence

Benjamin Ducol (CPRLV): Research and Support for Innovation Manager at the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence

Amarnath Amarasingam (AVE): Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

Moderator - Moustafa Ayad (AVE): Head of International Communications Programmes at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and the Against Violent Extremism (AVE) network.