

# Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in South and Central Asia

## Strengthening Regional Civil Society Capacities

NOVEMBER 2015

### BACKGROUND

South and Central Asia have long confronted terrorism and violent extremism at the hands of groups that have espoused a wide variety of political and ideological causes. The phenomenon of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as ISIL, represents a growing threat to South and Central Asia, threatening to destabilize many hard-won development achievements.

Research to date has highlighted a complex combination of drivers that can move individuals or groups from a state of grievance to mobilization, often shaped closely by local and contextualized dynamics that create a permissive environment for extremist groups. These drivers might include sociopolitical inequality, underemployment, or marginalization—drivers that can be exploited by terrorist and/or extremist recruiters wielding compelling narratives as well as material and social incentives to help alleviate the grievances. The international community increasingly recognizes the important role of civil society in developing responses to many of these challenges. Underscoring this point, civil society actors across South and Central Asia have undertaken many innovative efforts, such as educational programming, counter-messaging campaigns, and community engagement.

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Global Center will work with partners from South and Central Asia to develop five to eight pilot preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) initiatives that offer contextually tailored and locally resonant responses to the threat of violent extremism in the region. The initiatives will be selected through a competitive application process and regional partners will have the primary responsibility for developing and implementing the initiatives in consultation with the Global Center. This project is being undertaken against the backdrop of efforts to advance the action agenda outlined by international partners at the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism in February 2015.

The project will contribute to and improve the effectiveness of P/CVE programming in South and Central Asia by supporting the development of concrete projects that build on consultations with regional civil society members. A final report to be released in 2017 will capture the experiences and lessons learned from the diverse projects and will also serve as a resource for policymakers and practitioners to help inform related and future P/CVE programming and initiatives in the region.

#### **ABOUT THE GLOBAL CENTER ON COOPERATIVE SECURITY**

The Global Center works with governments, international organizations, and civil society to develop and implement comprehensive and sustainable responses to complex international security challenges through collaborative policy research, context-sensitive programming, and capacity development. In collaboration with a global network of expert practitioners and partner organizations, the Global Center fosters stronger multilateral partnerships and convenes key stakeholders to support integrated and inclusive security policies across national, regional, and global levels.

For more information on this project, please contact Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Head of Research and Analysis at +1.212.225.8477 or [nfink@globalcenter.org](mailto:nfink@globalcenter.org).

**WASHINGTON DC**  
1101 14th Street, NW  
Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005

**NEW YORK**  
747 Third Avenue  
4th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

**GLOBAL CENTER (UK)**  
27-31 Clerkenwell Close  
London EC1R 0AT  
United Kingdom

**GOSHEN**  
129 South Main Street  
Suite 1  
Goshen, IN 46526

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