



The Roles of Women in Preventing Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia

BACKGROUND

Terrorism and violent extremism is seen by many in Southeast Asia as a persistent threat to development, national and personal security, and socioeconomic opportunities. Furthermore, a number of countries in the region are reportedly witnessing a new dimension to the threat given the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qaeda affiliates like Jabhat al-Nusra. There are concerns about the influence of these groups on existing terrorist networks like Jemaah Islamiya (JI) and the domestic and regional impact of foreign fighters and returnees to the region.

Within this conflict environment, women and girls are predominantly affected directly or indirectly by violence and violent extremism. But women are not only victims of violence and conflict; they also play important roles in international peace and security efforts, including conflict resolution and peace-building. On the other hand, there is a long history of women planning, supporting, and executing terrorist attacks. Women in Southeast Asia, for example, have actively supported ISIL and other violent extremist groups through resource mobilization, recruitment

(particularly via social media), or encouraging family members to travel abroad to join ISIL.

Policy makers and practitioners have increasingly recognized that a closer understanding of the roles women play in relation to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) is critical to developing tailored strategies to strengthen resilience against extremist violence, and support victims and survivors of terrorist attacks. International actors such as the United Nations and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) have also called for greater focus on the roles of women in terrorism, violent extremism, and P/CVE and for integrating a gender dimension into such efforts. For instance, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 (2015) on foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) called on member states to strengthen engagement with civil society, women and youth in CVE efforts. Furthermore, UNSCR 2242 (2015) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) urged member states to ensure the participation and leadership of women in developing national P/CVE strategies.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Global Center on Cooperative Security (Global Center), with the support of the government of the Netherlands, is undertaking a project to further advance the role of women in P/CVE efforts at the national and local levels in Southeast Asia. This project will bring together a diverse set of actors, including policymakers, law enforcement officials, and civil society actors, to explore lessons, good practices, challenges, and opportunities in promoting women's participation and integrating a gender dimension into P/CVE policy and programming in Southeast Asia.

The Global Center, through research and a series of consultations, will examine how women in the region have been working to promote peace and enhance resilience to violent extremism in their communities, specifically in terms of policy advocacy, programming, and engagement with or inclusion in law enforcement. The Global Center will also offer small grants for civil society organizations to undertake initiatives to further elevate the role of women in P/CVE in the region. The lessons and experiences captured through the consultations and small grants component will help to inform a regional conference to further explore challenges and

opportunities to increasing women's participation and integrating a gender perspective into national P/CVE efforts. An outcome policy brief will reflect the research, experiences, and insights gained throughout the project to provide concrete recommendations for regional and national actors, as well as international donors and stakeholders to consider in advancing a gender dimension into national-level P/CVE action plans and strategies in Southeast Asia.

Through the proposed activities, the project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Highlight the work of and potential for women in Southeast Asia to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism;
- Increase knowledge and enhance skills of policymakers, law enforcement practitioners, and civil society actors to integrate a gender dimension and promote women's participation and inclusion in P/CVE policy and programming;
- Generate ideas and concepts to further strengthen gender-sensitive counterterrorism and P/CVE understanding and capacities in Southeast Asia.

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. The Global Center's work focuses on enhancing community resilience to violent extremism and on supporting national and non-governmental institutions in responding to multidimensional security challenges. 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.

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