

PACIFIC FORUM
WOMEN, PEACE & SECURITY



Project Report

YOUTH, GENDER, AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Cover image: UN Women Indonesia Community Peacebuilding Discussions

YOUTH, GENDER, AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: PROJECT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Since 2020, the Pacific Forum has been working with the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and countries in the Indo-Pacific region on issues related to Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Pacific Forum's work in this area has included topics like climate security, cybersecurity, maritime security, and counterterrorism. As part of these collaborative efforts, Pacific Forum and USINDOPACOM conducted a project on youth, gender and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) in Southeast Asia that took place through two engagements in 2023. For this project, Pacific Forum partnered with three countries: Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

1. Emphasize the importance of gender and youth perspectives in addressing extremism for security personnel.
2. Provide a platform for grassroots organizations to voice challenges, concerns, and recommendations directly to security personnel, fostering open and effective communication and knowledge-sharing.
3. Encourage knowledge-sharing between security personnel and grassroots organizations from different countries in Southeast Asia, allowing for regional cross-fertilization of knowledge.
4. Enable the creation of a comprehensive strategy that outlines collaboration between security personnel and civil society organizations going forward.

PARTICIPANTS

Participating Defense Force Branches

The National Counter Terrorism Agency in Indonesia (BNPT)

Malaysia Maritime Enforcement
Royal Malaysia Police

Philippine National Police
The Philippine Army

Civil Society Organizations

Malaysia:
Initiate.MY

Indonesia:
SeRVE Indonesia
Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)
Yayasan Empatiku

Philippines:
Gangadilan Mindanao Women Inc.
Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines
Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Why the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia?

The Pacific Forum partnered with the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia because each country has experienced significant extremist threats in recent decades. Terrorist groups operating in each of these countries have close transnational links, such as Abu Sayyaf and Jamaah Anshurat Dualah. In addition, extremist groups in each country are characterized by similar gender dynamics, with women assuming increasingly active – and sometimes violent – roles. During the late 2010s, women attempted and successfully carried out attacks in each of these countries (Resnyansky; CSG article). All three partner countries have also witnessed a significant decline in attacks since 2020 (Llewellyn), meaning that plenty can be learned from how they have successfully addressed extremism.

Why Gender and Youth for P/CVE?

Gender and age play important roles in the dynamics of extremist groups, regardless of the type of extremism practiced by the group or their location. By examining the interplay between gender, youth, and extremism, policy practitioners can better understand and predict how extremist groups are likely to behave. For instance, a rise in gender-based violence in local communities can indicate a rise in extremist activities. Moreover, extremist groups might draw on different gendered or age-specific language to create recruitment propaganda.

What are WPS and YPS?

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda (also known as UNSCR 1325) serves as a guiding framework for addressing gendered vulnerabilities and factors during conflict and within various forms of insecurity. Originally adopted by the UN

under Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, the WPS agenda arose from the need to formally recognize the gendered impacts of armed conflict on women and girls and the vital role that women play in preventing conflict and other forms of insecurity like extremism and climate crises, post-conflict reconstruction, and disaster response and recovery. It recognizes the unique experiences of women and girls in conflict, especially their heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence such as wartime rape.

Established in 2015 under UN Security Council Resolution 2250, the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda serves as a guiding framework for policies aimed at safeguarding young people from insecurity and trauma during conflict, while also bolstering their representation in decision-making roles that relate to security matters. In addition, the YPS agenda aims to facilitate the reintegration of former youth combatants and extremists and facilitate the free expression of their political opinions.

Why connect CSOs with security personnel?

Pacific Forum invited personnel from security branches such as counterterrorism, police, and the army. These branches were selected because all are focused on addressing extremism in their respective countries both at the local levels (police and military) and at the national level in designing counterterrorism strategies (counterterrorism organizations). Participants also heard from Civil society organizations (CSOs) about how they are working to implement WPS and YPS in their P/CVE efforts. CSOs play a vital role in preventing and addressing extremism,

especially at the local level. They often work closely with local communities and are generally better placed than security personnel to build community trust, allowing them to gain critical information about extremist activity and ultimately helping to monitor and prevent its occurrence. As such, consistently connecting CSOs with security personnel who work on the ground, such as the police, army, and coastguard, can result in better prevention and response activities at the local level.

CSOs are important actors for implementing the WPS and YPS agendas. These organizations often work with women and youth to ensure their needs and rights are taken into consideration in P/CVE policies. They also use gendered approaches on the ground to monitor extremism and its impacts on women. Fostering stronger collaborations between CSOs and security personnel and those working on policy creation, including counterterrorism personnel, therefore also facilitates mutual learning, paving the way for better security approaches in future. As such, this project made space for counterterrorism personnel to collaborate with CSOs. CSOs also made security personnel more aware of how to incorporate gender in designing counterterrorism strategies.

METHODS: WORKSHOPS & SURVEYS

Pacific Forum, in partnership with USINDOPACOM, undertook three primary activities for this project: two events and three surveys. The surveys consisted of an in-depth qualitative survey aimed at CSOs. Pacific Forum also conducted a survey before the start of the workshop and at the end of the workshop, which were mostly designed to ascertain knowledge and opinions of security personnel (police, army,

counterterrorism) on the intersection of gender and extremism.

The methods used to implement these activities are described below.

Activity 1: Virtual Conference (May 30-31, 2023):

On May 30–31, 2023, Pacific Forum hosted a two-day virtual conference attended by counterterrorism personnel, representatives from CSOs, and youth advocates from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The goal of the virtual conference, as with the broader aims of the program, was to allow CSOs to discuss their gender- and youth-focused efforts in the area of P/CVE and the forms of support they require from defense and security institutions in their respective countries. In providing an overview of the intersection of gender and extremism, this conference laid the groundwork for the in-person workshop in November 2023.

The virtual nature of the event meant that more than 60 individuals were able to attend, which generated broad awareness of the project. Over half were security personnel; CSOs formed the next largest group of attendees. Additional participants joined from various government agencies and embassies.

Activity 2: In-person Workshop in Bali, Indonesia (November 29-30, 2023):

November 29-30, 2023, Pacific Forum hosted a closed-door, in-person workshop on Youth, Gender and Preventing Extremism in Southeast Asia that took place in Bali. The workshop had several aims, including introducing additional CSOs who were not present at the first event so they could discuss their work; allowing for more in-depth discussions between CSOs and security personnel; and building stronger in-

person connections between security personnel and CSOs.

Thirty participants attended; just over half of these (16) were security personnel, 11 represented CSOs, and the remaining participants were attendees from US Embassy Jakarta, Pacific Forum, and the USINDOPACOM Office of Women, Peace and Security.

Activity 3: Surveys

Participant survey: Pacific Forum also conducted a pre- and post-workshop survey to determine changes in knowledge and attitude towards the intersection of WPS + P/CVE and YPS + P/CVE, as well as views around collaboration between CSOs and security force personnel. This survey was

largely designed to capture perceptions among security personnel, though CSOs also participated. The findings from these surveys will be discussed throughout this report.

External survey: Pacific Forum also conducted a qualitative survey of CSO representatives in Southeast Asia between October and December 2023 to gather their views and recommendations for enhancing collaboration with security personnel. Pacific Forum received responses from individuals representing five organizations: one in Malaysia, one in the Philippines, and three in Indonesia. These organizations primarily focus on P/CVE from women's or youth perspectives, with one being a peacebuilding organization.



PROJECT FINDINGS

WPS & YPS Insights

The project highlighted various insights related to the intersection of gender, youth, and extremism in Southeast Asia, which are highlighted in the project findings that follow.

Women play diverse and active roles in extremist groups: A common theme raised was the diversity of women's roles in extremist groups across Southeast Asia. This is important because there is a general misperception that women are not active within extremist networks, though awareness has increased in recent years about their more active and sometimes more violent roles. This is due to rising cases in women carrying out terrorist attacks and bankrolling or recruiting extremist actors. Research undertaken by the Center for Naval Analyses divides women's participation in extremist networks into the following categories: supporting (e.g., carrying out household duties), enabling (e.g., recruiting and weapons smuggling), and operational (e.g., leadership and active attacks). There is also evidence that women have attained increasingly active roles in Southeast Asian extremist groups in recent years, particularly in Indonesia and Sulu, Philippines.

Gendered drivers of extremism: Participants heard how extremist groups use specific messaging to capitalize on gender roles, needs, and norms that appeal to women and men in different ways. For example, extremist organizations across Southeast Asia (and elsewhere) have used financial incentives to lure men to join their groups; this messaging appeals to men's need to fulfill the expectation that they provide for their families. Economic incentives may also appeal to women war widows who struggle

to access financial resources for their families in the wake of the deaths of their husbands. This is particularly the case in areas of Southeast Asia affected by conflict. In the Philippines, extremist organizations have been found to attract women with empowerment messaging, portraying women's roles as central to group missions. These groups tell women that in joining, they will serve as "active agents of change" within their communities.

Reintegration of former women extremists: Research from Indonesia highlighted that reintegration of former women extremists has required an extensive program that includes counseling, economic assistance, and support for family members of women extremists. Such programs work to prevent former extremists from facing stigma, which could deter them from re-joining a terrorist network in future.

Violence against women as part of extremist activity: Researchers discussed the link between violence against women and extremism, highlighting studies indicating that men who join extremist groups in Indonesia and Malaysia may be more prone to supporting violence against women. Moreover, some CSOs mentioned transnational crimes, like human trafficking, as a driver for terrorism as it is a way of generating income for extremist groups. Human trafficking can affect women and girls more acutely as they are more likely to be trafficked for sex.

Youth drivers: Various drivers of extremism among youth were spotlighted by CSOs during the workshop. For instance, many young people in Southeast Asia are deeply affected by financial crises resulting in high

unemployment or limited access to financial security, which can make them more susceptible to extremist recruitment tactics that offer financial reward as an incentive. In addition, many youth have political grievances or frustrations if they feel that they are unable to make a change to the political system or their needs are not being represented, and these sentiments can quickly isolate young people socially and emotionally, leading them to turn to insurgent groups as a way to find community, purpose, and even identity. Social isolation more generally may lead young people to turn to social media for support, where they can fall into echo chambers and radical online discourse.

WPS & YPS Implementation

Participants explored the ways in which security personnel and CSOs have integrated WPS and YPS principles in addressing extremism by asking questions around whether they conduct gender analyses in policies, whether they engage with women and young people, or take the needs of women and young people into account.

Implementation of WPS & YPS among security personnel: During the events and in the surveys, security personnel discussed the steps they are taking to implement WPS by consulting women and encouraging greater consideration of gender. For example, certain police representatives indicated that they regularly consult women in local communities about extremist threats and monitor gender-based violence in these communities. Representatives from the Philippines army also spoke about how they have introduced gender training across all security branches.

Through the surveys, security personnel were asked how much gender training they

had received. Respondents from the Philippines army had received more than 2 days training. As the only army personnel who attended were from the Philippines, it is difficult to know whether the Malaysian Army or Indonesian Army also conduct similar levels of gender training. The extent of gender training for police and counterterrorism personnel across all three countries varied; some participants had received no training at all (4 responses) while others received more than 2 days (3 responses). From this small sample, the army appears to conduct gender training more regularly than police or counterterrorism branches. The pre- and post-event surveys inquired about what security personnel perceive as the main challenge in incorporating gender into security efforts; respondents cited gender norms (7 responses), followed by a lack of gender-based policies and procedures (6 responses). This result emphasizes the necessity for more gender-focused policies within security institutions. Additional obstacles included limited financial and time resources.

The survey inquired about security personnel's understanding of gender and extremism, covering their ability to conduct a gender analysis, knowledge of gendered drivers of extremism, and awareness of the roles that women and men play in extremist networks. Responses indicated a middling level of knowledge. When asked why gender should be included in addressing extremism, the most common answer was that women are able to prevent extremism in their homes and among their communities. However, the consensus among experts on gender and extremism is that although women can be encouraged to address extremism within local communities by P/CVE actors, viewing them purely as buffers against their sons and husbands joining

extremist organizations overlooks the fact that many women also participate in extremism, even from within the domestic sphere.

Respondents also said that understanding gender can help improve protection from gender-based violence committed by extremist groups. The least common reason for considering gender in P/CVE was that it can aid in reintegrating former women extremists, suggesting a need to build awareness around why reintegrating women is important to prevention.

On a positive note, there was a marked improvement in security personnel's knowledge of gender and extremism in the post-event survey. Through pre- and post-event surveys, Pacific Forum assessed security personnel's abilities to conduct a gender analysis in P/CVE, using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes no ability and 5 signifies high ability to conduct a gender analysis. In the pre-event survey, the majority rated themselves 2 or 3. In the post-event survey, there was a notable rise in respondents' self-scores, with most respondents rating themselves 4 and 5, indicating that they felt more confident to undertake a gender analysis. Those with a perfect 5 out of 5 knowledge of conducting a gender analysis increased from 2 in the pre-event survey to 8 in the post-event. Moreover, in the post-event survey, all security personnel said they would be highly likely to consider gender and WPS in their work going forward.

In terms of YPS, security personnel spoke about their efforts to engage young people in preventing extremism. For instance, the police in some of the focus countries have actively worked to address extremism among young people by working with well-known social media influencers who have a

large following of young people. Police collaborate with these influencers to promote counter-extremism messaging. The police and army in Malaysia have also formed a cross-sectoral partnership through which they give talks to young people about counterterrorism. In Indonesia, security branches have internal policies that demand they integrate YPS into their activities. Moreover, many security force representatives suggested greater collaboration and more forums with religious leaders and the education sector who have access to young people and can create greater awareness around the dangers of extremism and promote tolerance. That said, not much information was provided on how security forces have implemented YPS in the three partner countries, which suggests that policymakers should provide clearer directives to security institutions on the importance of YPS and how P/CVE policies can consider the needs of young people.

WPS & YPS implementation among CSOs:

Attendees at workshops heard from CSO representatives about how their organizations actively work to integrate WPS and YPS into P/CVE efforts, which help protect and empower women and young people, while also having positive security implications. CSOs that participated in this project carry out the following:

Researching and monitoring extremist activity: This can range from recording online trends in extremism (INITIATE.MY) to harnessing connections with local communities for potential outbreaks of extremist violence, like Yayasan Empatiku, which has been using early warning systems in local villages since 2018. Other organizations work with local communities through community-oriented policing and using community-based warning systems to

effectively monitor extremism, like Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines. As part of this work, they train women in the local community in how to detect and prevent extremism.

Reintegration: Assisting with the reintegration of former extremists, particularly women, is a key focus of many of these organizations, like SeRVE Indonesia, Gagandilan Mindanao Women Inc. (Philippines), Indonesian Ulema Council, and Yayasan Empatiku. It is essential that former extremists are accepted among the community during reintegration, and these organizations facilitate this process by introducing trust-building exercises, financial capacity-building practices, and sustainable livelihood programs.

Empowering women and youth peacebuilders: Many organizations focus on peacebuilding by empowering local peacebuilders, especially women and young people (Yayasan Empatiku). INITIATE.MY has a “peace lab” that brings together youth advocates from across the region and trains them in activism. In addition, Gagandilan Mindanao Women Inc. has actively brought together key stakeholders from opposing sides for dialogues.

Interfaith dialogues: Some organizations focus on conducting interfaith dialogues and providing a platform for religious leaders, including women religious leaders, to promote powerful counter-narratives to extremist recruitment messaging.

Local dialogues: Relatedly, Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in East Java formed a multi-stakeholder forum and a forum focused on peaceful Islam, where women previously associated with extremist groups can discuss the peaceful nature of the religion. NU is especially eager to promote the ideas of

women religious leaders through dialogues and other activities. NU also advocates for simple, non-academic dialogues and emphasizes understanding preventive measures.

Establish formal mechanisms: Many of these organizations work tirelessly with their respective governments to establish formal mechanisms to prevent extremism and promote peace through a gendered lens (e.g., AMAN Indonesia; Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy; and Gagandilan Mindanao Women Inc. Philippines). These organizations work with the government to create national action plans on WPS and counterterrorism, ensuring that security mechanisms incorporate gender mainstreaming and women’s perspectives.

The work of CSOs show how they uphold WPS & YPS while also addressing extremism more effectively. Counterterrorism personnel who design P/CVE policy could work closely with CSOs to find ways of ensuring P/CVE policies also follow similar lines of addressing extremism and upholding YPS and WPS. In addition, the military and police who work on the ground can work closely with CSOs to ensure they are implementing policies in a way that also supports WPS and YPS, and find ways to work collectively with grassroots women and youth organizations.

Collaboration Between CSOs and Security Personnel

Some of the most important findings in the project came from assessing the current status of collaboration between CSOs and security personnel and how both sides feel this can be improved. In order to build local-level connections between CSOs and security personnel, Pacific Forum invited representatives of security branches that work at the local levels – namely the police forces in all three of the focus countries, and representatives from the Philippines army. In order to connect CSOs with policymaking counterterrorism institutions, security personnel from counterterrorism organizations in Indonesia and Malaysia were also invited to participate.

Current collaboration: The organizers inquired about the frequency of meetings between security personnel and CSOs during both workshops and in the in-depth survey sent to CSOs ahead of the workshop. Responses differed by country. In Mindanao, Philippines, CSOs meet with security personnel regularly to discuss P/CVE policies. In Indonesia, meeting frequencies varied, with some CSOs reporting regular meetings and others indicating only twice per year. Collaborative meetings were least frequent in Malaysia, occurring only a few times a year. The organizers found that the army and counterterrorism tend to conduct more meetings with CSOs than the police. Though meeting frequency varies, in the post-event survey, 12 out of 16 security personnel stated that they would like to work with CSOs on P/CVE in future, which demonstrates a high level of interest and openness among participants to collaborate with civil society organizations going forward.

Barriers to collaboration: During the in-person workshop, participants were polled about greatest barriers to CSO-security collaboration – the results can be seen in the Image 1. The words that are larger represent a higher number of responses, revealing bureaucracy, communication, trust, and coordination as the biggest barriers.

Bureaucracy emerged as a recurring challenge to collaboration, with CSOs noting that bureaucracies can make it extremely time-consuming to work with the military, police, and counterterrorism branches; even when rapid response is necessary.

Communication and trust pose challenges, as CSOs expressed the need for more information to effectively address extremism. For instance, grassroots organizations require information on the identities and locations of former extremists for successful reintegration efforts. However, it is important to note that security personnel also expressed the challenges of not being able to share sensitive and classified information more widely. Survey responses from many CSOs highlighted that enhanced collaboration hinges on more frequent information-sharing between CSOs and security personnel, emphasizing the importance of building trust in these relationships.

List the greatest barriers to interaction between the security sector (police, army, counterterrorism) & women's CSOs.

49 responses



Image 1: Poll results from November workshop after participants were asked what they viewed as the greatest barriers to collaboration.

Inadequate coordination emerged as a significant issue, with both CSOs and security personnel highlighting that grassroots organizations and security institutions often operate in silos. This issue is particularly pronounced in Malaysia, where civil society and defense lack strong connections despite sharing a common cause. One participant from the civil society side raised that it is crucial for the defense sector and civil society to have a clear understanding of their respective responsibilities, which includes areas where it may be difficult to work together like confidential information sharing. Having this understanding would facilitate optimal collaboration.

Limited funding and opportunities: Both CSOs and particularly security personnel said

that a key barrier to collaboration is limited funding for collaboration and time constraints. CSOs said they do not receive enough funding to carry out activities, while security personnel indicated that, at an organizational level, not enough funds or opportunities are allotted for them to collaborate with CSOs.

Methods of collaborating in future

Despite barriers, grassroots representatives cited numerous positive examples of government-civil society collaboration on WPS and P/CVE, including those outlined below.

Better communication and trust: Representatives from both sectors

highlighted the value of more frequent meetings and maintaining virtual contact. In Indonesia, CSOs specifically recommended increased data-sharing concerning threats, particularly within local communities. Overall, participants stressed the importance of maintaining communication through informal means like WhatsApp or casual meetings like going for coffee. These activities can also help build trust and transparency, which is seen as essential to forging ties. Dialogues such as this workshop hosted by Pacific Forum – particularly those held in-person – were seen as a useful method for building and sustaining partnerships. Regional forums like ASEAN do not necessarily provide the right forum for discussing security policy due to its emphasis on non-interference.

Better definition of roles: A clearer definition of the roles for CSOs and security branches would mean both sectors could play to their strengths and recognize opportunities to complement one another's work. For instance, in the context of the Philippines, participants heard how security personnel work closely with CSOs to build trust with local communities, as they are better placed to gain communal trust due to the softer approach they adopt, whereas security personnel may be viewed with suspicion among local community members.

Task forces and consultations: Some countries' security personnel work to build task forces and consult CSOs on initiatives like working with families of former terrorists and local communities on early warning. In

addition, CSOs have offered training to local police on how to effectively conduct community policing.

Other Findings

Other findings emerged over the course of the project that are useful for creating better P/CVE policies going forward.

Including more stakeholders: Some security personnel recommended broadening dialogues to include relevant ministries, like those focused on women's and youth issues, and more senior security personnel.

CSOs also recommended inviting schools and religious leaders as there is need for a "comprehensive program of education" to prevent extremism among young school-age children. Some CSOs also asked that judicial personnel be included in future, particularly in Malaysia.

Improving counternarratives: Pacific Forum's P/CVE project also pointed to the use of religious counternarratives and texts in addressing extremism in Southeast Asia. CSOs feel that governments do not use these tactics enough, despite their efficacy. They also noted how important it is to ensure that the perspectives of women religious leaders are incorporated into these counternarratives. Another more general point made by participants was how essential it is to proactively address distant threats that could lead to internal instability, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict and the surrounding rhetoric.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The project team has formulated several policy recommendations based on findings that emerged over the course of this project. These recommendations aim to assist security branches, CSOs, and policymakers generally in devising and implementing P/CVE plans that integrate WPS and YPS, thereby enabling better security outcomes. Relatedly, the recommendations also focus on ways of enabling greater collaboration between security personnel and CSOs that are dedicated to youth and gender in their activities.

Recommendations for National Governments:

The projects highlighted some general policy recommendations for governments from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

- **More Research:** Governments should commission more research into the different ways in which women and men participate in extremist groups. There needs to be greater understanding of why some women became increasingly active in extremist networks in the late 2010s, particularly in Indonesia and Sulu in the Philippines. There also needs to be more research into the decline of attacks and how successful efforts can be monitored in other countries.
- **Holistic Reintegration:** Governments should create more holistic reintegration programs for former women extremists. These programs should include counseling, economic assistance, and support for family members, and also reintegration assistance for women so that they do not face stigma.
- **Gender- and Age-Sensitive Programs, Monitoring, and Reporting:** Policymakers need to be aware of the relationship between gender, age, and extremism in designing P/CVE efforts. For example, there should be better policies to monitor and address violence against women at local and transnational levels, and in the online domain. Measures can include better reporting processes and support services at the local level, and education to promote equality and prevent violence, particularly among school-age children. Other efforts can include monitoring online misogynistic rhetoric. It is also important to find local male role models to mentor and prevent young men from joining extremism.

Recommendations for Security Institutions:

Over the course of this project, it became clear that security institutions across the three focus countries have taken efforts to incorporate WPS and YPS, though there are ways that they could improve awareness and integration of these agendas into their policies, which would also make extremism less likely to be a threat.

- **Gender-Sensitive Budgeting and Culture:** Efforts include ensuring that some of the defense budget is prioritized for gender-focused efforts, including hiring more people focused on WPS. Relatedly, security institutions should conduct assessments into challenges of integrating gender into their workplace, whether that is financial or time

constraints, or a lack of organizational culture. They should consider how to overcome such challenges.

- **Better Training:** Security personnel should be equipped with better training of how gender intersects with extremism, particularly among police and counterterrorism staff. Doing so could help empower and protect women and also deliver better security outcomes. For instance, the security sector can underline the relevance of gender to the work of personnel, showing how gender influences drivers of extremism, positions in extremist groups (women and men's roles), and rhetoric used by extremist groups that relate to gender. Such training should also broaden knowledge of why it is important for former women extremists to be supported in their reintegration – if women extremists are not properly reintegrated, they may be more likely to join an extremist group.

Recommendations for Improving CSO-Security Collaboration:

Several important recommendations were also made for enhancing CSO-security collaboration.

- **Remove Barriers to Collaboration:** For instance, create a streamlined process for CSOs to make contact with security personnel and access information relevant to their work (provided this information will not be a security risk). Such a process could be made easier through vetting for CSOs and their employees and regular meetings between both sides.
- **Concretely Define the Responsibilities of Each Party:** This could be accomplished through a formal document such as a memorandum of understanding. Clearer definitions of each other's roles and also limitations to how they can work together would enable all parties to work more effectively with one another in complementary ways. Moreover, the security sector should consult CSOs through task forces and training on specific issues, like reintegration, early warning, and in how to approach communities.
- **Allocate Funding and Carve Out More Opportunities for Security Personnel to Work with CSOs:** This should involve increasing the frequency of meetings and forums between CSOs and security personnel and facilitating workshops similar to this workshop series, in which both sides can share their views and speak candidly. Encouraging social meetings would also be helpful. These initiatives would be particularly beneficial in Malaysia, where there appears to be some institutional barriers to collaboration between CSOs and the security sector.
- **Widen the Tent:** In future, dialogues on youth, gender and P/CVE in the focus countries should include other stakeholders, such as more senior security personnel, ministries for women's empowerment and youth, judicial workers, the education sector, and religious leaders, as well as CSOs and the security sector. This would enable greater movement towards a holistic P/CVE approach.

CONCLUSION

The project highlighted the nexus between gender, youth, and extremism in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It also demonstrated the unwavering dedication of civil society organizations to advance the rights of women and youth in their efforts to address extremism.

While the project revealed some gaps in knowledge of the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas among security representatives, security personnel were eager to learn more about how both agendas can be implemented in their work going forward. Security personnel also showed a considerable understanding of these agendas at the end of the project. Moreover, it is evident that security branches in the focus countries have taken steps to implementing WPS and YPS. There is room to build on current efforts and further integrate both agendas into security policies, as outlined in the policy recommendations.

The events that Pacific Forum organized as part of this project – particularly the in-person workshop – also created a space for CSOs and security personnel to connect. Both sectors were able to express their current work on implementing WPS and YPS, their needs, and clarified how they can work together in future, as well as possible limitations to collaboration.

This project report was prepared by the Pacific Forum International Preventing & Countering Violent Extremism Project Lead, Jennifer Howe (jennifer@pacforum.org). This report reflects the views of the organizers; it is not a consensus document.