



**Building Government-
Civil Society Organisation Partnerships:**
Implementing Gender-Based Approaches to
Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)

ABOUT THIS NOTE

On 29 July 2017, ministers and senior officials from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and the Philippines met in Manado, Indonesia for the Sub-Regional Meeting on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Cross Border Terrorism. At this meeting Ministers agreed to enhance:

- effort and cooperation in addressing the root causes and underlying conditions of terrorism through countering violent extremism (CVE) programs, such as strengthening social cohesion, education, women's empowerment, public awareness and economic development, as well as developing effective counter-narrative frameworks; and
- collaboration with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other community groups, and encourage community development initiatives, in responding to violent extremism and terrorism.

On 22-23 November 2017, government officials and CSOs from Southeast Asia met in Semarang, Indonesia for a regional dialogue to further explore the themes of partnership and gender when implementing approaches to Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).

This guidance note captures the learnings of the dialogue and possible next steps to be undertaken in the region.

Participants of the dialogue would like to extend a thank you to the following expert facilitators:

- Ruby Kholifah Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN)
Indonesia
- Professor Jacqui True Director, Gender, Peace and Security Centre
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- Josephine P Perez Gaston Z Ortigas Peace Institute
The Philippines

A further thank you is extended to Professor Jacqui True for her advice on the development of this guidance note.

The dialogue and this guidance note were funded by the Australian Government.

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BUILDING GOVERNMENT-CSO PARTNERSHIPS:

IMPLEMENTING GENDER-BASED APPROACHES TO
PREVENTING/COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (P/CVE)

GUIDANCE NOTE

“Building Government-CSO Partnerships: Implementing Gender-Based Approaches to Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)”

This guidance note identifies effective strategies for developing policies on Preventing / Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).

The underlying factors that contribute to the growing threat of radicalism and violent extremism in Southeast Asia are a shared problem of governments and civil society. Greater understanding of the gender dynamics of violent extremism and targeted efforts to build partnerships between and among governments and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) will create more effective and tailored P/CVE interventions.

Context and Frameworks: Gender-Based Approaches to P/CVE

Across time, a range of international policy commitments connect the role of gender in P/CVE and peace building efforts. This includes United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), the UN Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and the work of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF).

UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) highlights the essential role of gender in peace building efforts. UNSC Resolution 2718 (2014) encourages the empowerment of individuals including youth, families and women to counter violent extremism online. UNSC Resolution 2242 (2015) stresses the need for a gender perspective to prevent violent extremism and promote relief and recovery. The importance of gender mainstreaming in P/CVE is also reflected in the ‘Good Practices on Women and CVE’ guidance provided by the GCTF (2014). The 2016 UN Secretary General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism identifies ‘gender equality and empowering women’ as one of its seven priority areas for action. The Fifth review of the resolution of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2016) calls upon States to ‘empower women’ and provide funds to further women’s rights.

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Key Themes of the Semarang Dialogue

The Semarang Dialogue held on 22-23 November 2017, explored the gaps and opportunities that exist between two connected themes.

Theme 1: Implementing gender-based approaches to P/CVE.

Theme 2: Promoting partnership between governments and CSOs.

At the Semarang Dialogue, participants emphasised that a gender-based P/CVE approach should:

- Be undertaken alongside government-CSO partnerships to address the conditions conducive to violent extremism at the family and community levels.
- Not solely focus on the role of women. Effective approaches consider gender norms, and the roles and experiences of men and other individuals that do not identify as cisgender (the gender assigned at birth).
- Recognise that individuals of any gender may be victims, enablers and agents of violent extremism.
- Seek to increase women's active participation in P/CVE, including as leaders and educators. Other groups such as youth and parents also play an important role.
- Recognise where women's rights are systematically undermined (through reinforcement of harmful gender norms and stereotypes, gender-based violence, or lack of opportunity), women may experience grievances or isolation. This can increase the appeal of violent extremist narratives.
- Recognise that the presence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV - including early marriage, rape, abduction and intimate partner violence) may indicate a society's vulnerability to crime and criminal activity (including violent extremism). GBV should be considered when developing approaches to P/CVE.
- Recognise the active involvement of CSOs in P/CVE. Participants stressed that upstream prevention of violent extremism is not a security intervention and should not directly involve the security sector.
- Especially recognise that sustaining peace involves sensitivity to post-conflict situations, which have the potential to foster conditions for violent extremism.

Key Capacity Gaps and Opportunities

The following capacity gaps and opportunities are organised according to the four pillars of the WPS agenda to reflect the importance of mainstreaming and integrating a gender perspective across all levels of P/CVE policy and programming. It is also important to monitor and evaluate P/CVE approaches that address these capacity gapsⁱ.

1. Gender-equal Participation (in all levels of decision-making)

- Women in communities need to be involved in all P/CVE policy responses.
 - **Empower women's leadership, including mothers and women religious leaders, to engage with communities on P/CVE.**
- Women's participation and leadership in the security sectors responding to violent extremism is likely to increase the effectiveness of community-level P/CVE initiatives.
 - **Promote and support women's participation and leadership in the security sectors.**

2. Protection (from violence)

- Violent extremists may manipulate gender-specific narratives or cultural norms to increase the appeal of their cause.
 - **Seek opportunities to develop alternative narratives that can assist to deconstruct these distortions.**
- Links exist between the use of GBV and crime/criminal activity (including violent extremism).
 - **Encourage exploration and understanding of the links between GBV and violent extremism through the implementation of gender-sensitive protection training and guidance for police officers and judiciary working in P/CVE. This training could explore the links between GBV and the threat of violent extremism.**
 - **Provide opportunities should be provided for individuals to leave situations where GBV and violent extremism exist.**
- Everyday bullying, harassment and exclusion, increases the stigmatisation of minority groups.
 - **Tackle everyday bullying, harassment and exclusion, including cyber bullying, to promote resilient societies.**

Key Capacity Gaps and Opportunities

3. Prevention (of violence and the derogation of rights)

- Evidence-based analysis of the gender dynamics of P/CVE should be supported.
 - **For example, universities and governments could collaborate on a gender-sensitive research program on violent extremism to explore the gender-specific drivers of violent extremism and good practices across the region.**
- Education should highlight the importance of gender equality.
 - **Encourage critical engagement with the lens of gender-equality to all texts, including religious and cultural texts.**
- Prevention of violent extremism requires that individuals feel safe and empowered to act.
 - **Ensure safe spaces for families and communities that promote the active role of women in community and public life.**
 - **Support community-based, gender-sensitive and culturally-appropriate early warning systems that empower parents, women, or women-led organisations to act upon their P/CVE knowledge.**
 - **Encourage open, informed and authentic community dialogues about P/CVE, identity and belonging. For example, enabling CSOs to engage with and support individuals who have undergone intervention, disengagement and rehabilitation programs.**

4. Relief and Recovery (following violence)

- Prisoners, deportees, returnees, refugees and their children have specific needs.
 - **Develop gender-sensitive policies that address these needs. These policies should also encompass the welfare of families of former terrorists and the stigma that can affect them. Policies that successfully disengage and rehabilitate men may not work for women.**
- Women's participation and leadership in the security sectors responding to violent extremism is likely to increase the effectiveness of P/CVE initiatives and the communities those initiatives support.
 - **Develop strategies to compensate for gender imbalances in security and justice sector personnel. This is particularly the case in institutions where there are a limited number of female personnel to sensitively address the particular concerns of women and girls.**
- Post-conflict communities are particularly vulnerable to violent extremism.
 - **Coordinate across peace building and P/CVE programs to integrate gender analyses and empower women.**
 - **Recognise the important role of CSOs in peace-building and P/CVE.**

Principles for Partnership

At the Semarang Dialogue, participants discussed principles to guide future government-CSO partnerships on P/CVE. These principles considered key lessons learned by governments, CSOs and academia.

- 1. Engaging multiple stakeholders:** Partnerships between governments and CSOs should recognise the unique contributions each partner makes to P/CVE knowledge and practice. Partnerships should also acknowledge the integrity of government and CSO internal processes.
 - Governments can play a role in facilitating collaboration between CSOs and community-based organisations, the private sector, the security sector and universities.
 - Governments and CSOs are encouraged to design P/CVE programs together and to work at the community level.
 - Sensitive P/CVE programs should consider involving government as a ‘silent partner’.
 - CSOs are well positioned to governments with advice based on their insights into community or gender dynamics.
- 2. Bringing a gender perspective:** Participants emphasised the importance of listening to diverse perspectives, including those of women, in P/CVE forums. Taking a gender-inclusive approach will contribute to more gender-sensitive policies, reduce any potential negative impacts of P/CVE policy on women, and produce counter-narratives that resonate with a wider audience.
- 3. Support formal partnerships between government and CSOs:** There is a need to strengthen support for women’s or women-led CSO groups engaged in P/CVE work. This is outlined in the 2016 UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- 4. International cooperation:** While violent extremism is a shared regional and global challenges, the drivers and responses to violent extremism are localised. **‘No one size fits all’:** what works in one place may not work in another. It is important to both share good practices internationally, and be attentive to the needs of each local context.
- 5. Accountability and transparency:** To begin implementing these principles, a ‘Whole of Government’ P/CVE review may be useful to assess potential partnership opportunities, recognize project overlap and determine what makes partnerships work well.

Ways Forward

Next steps for governments and CSOs from the Dialogue could include:

1. **Establishing a regional ‘Community of gender-based P/CVE Practice’ (CoP)** through a web-based platform or existing regional networks, for example, the Southeast Asia Network of CSOs (SEAN-CSO). Such a CoP could:
 - Foster greater alignment between government and CSO views on gender-based P/CVE.
 - Identify and build on existing national institutional mechanisms to mobilise and coordinate women’s participation in developing regional P/CVE strategies.
 - Connect women-led organisations to promote sharing of lessons learned from family, household and community spaces across the region.
2. **Working together in the early stages of P/CVE policy development.** This could occur through new joint policy development committees, which allow governments and CSOs to design P/CVE policy together.
3. **Considering gender in the design of community early-warning systems.** Early warning systems monitor signs that can indicate a risk of violent extremism. They could incorporate gender-specific indicators including the use of hate speech and GBV that targets gender-specific groups (such as women and girls).
4. **Mainstreaming gender into national P/CVE policy.** This could include integrating gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive goals and programs into WPS and P/CVE national action plans.

ⁱ Gender-based PVE is a new and emerging area and some work has been done to suggest impact measures. One option is to set a target to guarantee a portion of all funds dedicated to addressing violent extremism supports women’s participation and leadership in developing strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism. (see J. True 2016. *Women, Peace and Security in Asia Pacific: Emerging Issues in National Action Plans for Women, Peace and Security*. Discussion Paper for Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium on National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. UN Women and the Embassy of Japan in Bangkok, Thailand, 11–13 July 2016. UN Women, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/12/emerging-issues-in-naps-on-wps>. This is in line with UN Secretary-General’s recommendation that 15 percent of funding be allocated to peacebuilding initiatives that address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women (S/2010/466). The impact of P/CVE financing on ‘Women, Peace and Security’ initiatives was raised in the UN Women 2015 *Global Study on the 15-year Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda* (see UN Women 2015. Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, New York, <http://wps.unwomen.org/>).



