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Strengthening Rule of Law Responses to Counter Violent Extremism

What Role for Civil Society in South Asia?

Introduction

Violence and extremism in South Asia, including potential threats posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), remain a concern for many regional and international observers.[1] Three South Asian countries—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India—are among those with the highest reported incidents of terrorism.[2] Reports of foreign fighters from South Asia have prompted concerns that ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Syria and the establishment of the self-proclaimed caliphate by ISIL serve as a compelling narrative for potential recruits.[3] Even senior Taliban commanders and members in Pakistan and Afghanistan have reportedly pledged allegiance to ISIL and formed a new faction, Wilayat Khorasan, named after a historic region spanning Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as portions of India and other neighboring countries.[4] Al-Qaida, which views ISIL as its primary competitor, established an affiliate organization in South Asia, presumably in an effort to remain relevant in the region. New alliances and splinter groups, as well as emergent competitions, mean increased potential for groups or individuals who may be inspired by violent extremist groups like

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[1] See, for example, Michael Kugelman, "How ISIS Could Become a Potent Force in South Asia," *Foreign Policy*, 20 February 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/20/how-isis-could-become-a-potent-force-in-south-asia; Praveen Swami, "From Kerala Family to Ex-Gangster, Islamic State Pulls Maldives Men," *The Indian Express*, 15 April 2015, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/from-kerala-family-to-ex-gangster-is-pulls-maldives-men.

[2] The global rankings of countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation with the highest impact of terrorism are Afghanistan (2), Pakistan (3), India (6), Bangladesh (23), Nepal (24), Sri Lanka (36), and Bhutan (109). The Maldives was not ranked. The study also indicates that Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are at great risk of increased terrorist activity. See Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index 2014: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism," 2014, pp. 8, 39, http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report%202014_0.pdf.

[3] Richard Barrett, "The Islamic State," Soufan Group, November 2014, http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf.

[4] Iftikhar Hussain, "Islamic State Claims Branch in Pakistan, Afghanistan," Voice of America, 27 January 2015, http://www.voanews.com/content/islamic-state-claims-branch-in-pakistan-afghanistan/2615944.html.

ISIL to carry out attacks either inside or outside of the region. These lone-wolf attacks can be perpetrated with minimal, if any, contact with official group members or leadership.

These dynamics heighten concerns among policymakers and practitioners, particularly those in fields relating to counterterrorism or countering violent extremism (CVE), about insecurity and instability in the region driven by regional as well as extraregional dynamics. Across South Asia, violent extremist groups have contributed to an environment of increasing intolerance for minorities and women, constrained the space for pluralist debate, and restricted civil and human rights. In addition, these groups contribute to and benefit from weakened state-society relationships, which have been corroded by poor governance, corruption, confrontational politics, and lack of accountability. Violent extremists in South Asia have exploited cross border ethnic and cultural ties, weak or insular national security institutions, vulnerable financial and commercial networks, and new communication and information technology platforms to expand their influence, and have forced worrisome changes in religious and cultural rhetoric throughout the region.

Afghan police women prepare to graduate, November 2011.
Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Kristina Newton.

Given this evolving security landscape, counterterrorism experts and policymakers increasingly recognize that traditional security measures, such as military and law enforcement interventions, are not sufficient to respond to these threats. This awareness is especially important since poorly managed law enforcement and military responses have, in some instances, exacerbated these threats. CVE measures are evolving to reflect an improved and critical understanding of the complexities of the circumstances and processes that lead to violent radicalization. Countering violent extremism increasingly draws on a wide range of disciplines, including social and economic development, conflict prevention, peace-building, security sector reform, and diplomacy.[5]

Within South Asia, histories of conflict, development, and state building have yielded many lessons in terms of preventing and responding to violence, including the identity-based violence that shapes and characterizes much of the transitional violent extremist narrative today. South Asian civil society has long played a crucial role in advocating

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[5] For a broader discussion on countering violent extremism as a field of practice, see, for example, United States Institute of Peace, *Insights*, 20 March 2014, http://www.usip.org/publications/insights.

for rights, improved governance, pluralism, and conflict resolution. Civil society organizations, especially those that work with women, have made notable progress and continue to advocate in a number of areas, including female education, maternal health, gender inclusion and sensitivity within the security sector, and women's socio-economic and political mobilization.[6] Moreover, in addition to bearing a disproportionate brunt of violence and conflict, women are often a target of extremist groups who seek to exert power and consolidate authority by diminishing women's roles and dialing back such advances. Women are, therefore, often critical not only in boosting community resilience against violent extremist groups and acting as both identifiers of risk and vulnerability in families and communities, but also in enhancing sociopolitical development.[7]

To further explore the roles of civil society in preventing and responding to violence, in December 2014, the Global Center on Cooperative Security, in partnership with the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore and The Institute for Inclusive Security convened a workshop on "Strengthening Rule of Law-Based Responses to Terrorism and Violent Extremism in South Asia: What Role for Civil Society?" The workshop brought together civil society practitioners, regional and international experts, and officials from across South Asia to explore how civil society actively contributes to strengthening rule of law-based responses to terrorism and violent extremism. The importance of gender and women's roles in preventing and countering violent extremism was a recurrent theme throughout the workshop discussions and remains a critical issue for experts and practitioners in the CVE field, as noted above. The

Workshop participants, Singapore, December 2014.
ISAS photo by Muhammad Yusuf Yacob.

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[6] Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Rafia Barakat, "Strengthening Community Resilience against Violent Extremism: The Roles of Women in South Asia," Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, November 2013, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/13Nov27_Women-and-CVE-in-South-Asia_Policy-Brief_Final.pdf.

[7] See, for example, Sarah Chatellier and Shabana Fayyaz, "Women Moderating Extremism in Pakistan," Institute for Inclusive Security, 2012, http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Policy-Brief-Women-Moderating-Extremism-in-Pakistan.pdf; Kristina London Couture, "A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned From Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco," Brookings Institution, 2014, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2014/07/30%20gender%20conflict%20prevention%20countering%20violent%20extremism%20couture/women%20cve%20formatted%2072914%20couture%20final2.

convening was conceived as part of a broader initiative led by the United Nations (UN) Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to inform ongoing projects in the region.[8]

Drawing on discussions from the December workshop, and desk research and discussions with relevant officials and experts, this brief explores opportunities for civil society to support regional security cooperation and rule of law-based responses to terrorism and violent extremism. It also offers reflections on the limitations and challenges faced by civil society actors in the region. The brief provides a set of recommendations for policymakers and practitioners with a view to informing the design and implementation of policies and programming to prevent violent extremism in South Asia.

Why Engage Civil Society?

Actors responsible for upholding the rule of law—such as judges, attorneys, police, and corrections officers—all have roles to play in preventing terrorism and violent extremism. For example, police forces are not only vital in identifying violent extremist threats and curbing recruitment, but they are a core component of efforts to enhance trust and improve partnerships with communities. The conduct of police officers on the job can influence or shape a narrative about the relationship between citizens and the state. Research and practice suggest that negative experiences with law enforcement and other state officials may corrode the legitimacy of formal institutions and generate grievances that can contribute to violent radicalization.[9] These grievances can also affect the willingness of local populations to work with security actors to identify, address, or otherwise mitigate possible security threats. Interestingly, studies have found that female law enforcement officials in particular can help address these issues and build trust between communities and the police.[10] Strategic integration of women into security forces has also been shown to increase operational effectiveness, as they are more likely to limit the use of excessive force, reduce interpersonal tensions, and gain access to marginalized community members.[11]

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[8] The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) carries out the policy decisions of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, conducts expert assessments of each member state, and facilitates counterterrorism technical assistance to countries. For more information, see http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/.

[9] See, for example, Stephen J. Schulhofer, Tom R. Tyler, and Aziz Z. Huq, "American Policing at a Crossroads: Unsustainable Policies and the Procedural Justice Alternative," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 101, no. 2 (2011): 335–374, http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol101/iss2/1/.

[10] Kim Lonsway, Margaret Moore, Penny Harrington, Eleanor Smeal, and Katherine Spillar, "Hiring and Retaining More Women: The Advantages to Law Enforcement Agencies," National Center for Women & Policing, Spring 2003, p. 2, http://womenandpolicing.com/pdf/newadvantagesreport.pdf.

[11] See, for example, Sahana Dharmapuri, "Not Just a Numbers Game: Women's Participation in UN Peacekeeping," Providing for Peacekeeping No. 4 (2013), International Peace Institute, http://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/ipi_epub_not_just_a_numbers_game.pdf.

Yet, the delivery of security and promotion of rule of law responses to emerging threats is not exclusively a function of formal state institutions. Across South Asia, civil society organizations (CSOs) have contributed significantly to these efforts as advocates, monitors, technical experts, trainers, service providers, and information hubs. In many cases, CSOs have ensured greater responsiveness and transparency in government and law enforcement measures. Proximity to and regular interaction with communities enables civil society groups to amplify local voices and perspectives, ensuring they are integrated into approaches aimed at combatting terrorism and preventing violent extremism. These efforts promote local ownership, which enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of preventive programs.

A number of international frameworks have recognized civil society groups for their contributions and encouraged governments to engage these actors when developing or implementing counterterrorism and CVE interventions. In adopting the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006, the UN General Assembly encouraged member states to engage with nongovernmental organizations and civil society to implement the Strategy. Additionally, as noted during the workshop, Security Council Resolution 1963 (2010) encouraged CTED to interact with civil society and other relevant nongovernmental actors. More recently, Security Council Resolution 2178 urged member states to "engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts, address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism … and adopt tailored approaches to countering recruitment to this kind of violent extremism and promoting social inclusion and cohesion."[12] Resolution 2178 particularly highlights the need for member states to empower women, youth, and other critical civil society groups in these efforts.

Furthermore, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, an informal counterterrorism body that includes 29 countries and the European Union, has developed a set of nonbinding good practices on community engagement and community-oriented policing, which includes strengthening relationships between communities and law enforcement officials.[13] The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe also reinforces the importance of involving civil society in CVE efforts, for example, through developing partnerships, increasing CSOs' awareness about ways they can contribute to countering violent extremism, and improving relationships between law enforcement and communities.[14]

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[12] UN Security Council, S/RES/2178, 24 September 2014, para. 16.
[13] "Good Practices on Community Engagement and Community-Oriented Policing as Tools to Counter Violent Extremism," Global Counterterrorism Forum, 2009, https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/159885/13Aug09_EN_Good+Practices+on+Community+Engagement+and+Community-Oriented+Policing.pdf.
[14] "Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach," Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2014, http://www.osce.org/atu/111438?download=true.

Despite increased recognition and international understanding of the need to engage civil society in rule of law initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism, this awareness is often less apparent at the regional, national, and local levels. Civil society is often underrepresented in efforts to strengthen the rule of law or national security more broadly. Many South Asian governments remain wary of civil society actors and provide little or no space for their engagement in these matters.[15] Competition among civil society actors and organizations for resources and government attention can hinder cooperation and collaboration among groups that may be working toward similar objectives. However, some civil society representatives consider this competition healthy, arguing that it assures a diversity of perspectives are heard.[16]

Governments are at times particularly hesitant to engage with civil society on security issues, because it may contribute to a perception that they are "soft" or "weak." In other cases, governments have been unwilling to work with CSOs that challenge their legitimacy or are perceived as unduly adversarial. Some civil society representatives have also expressed concern that engaging in CVE efforts, particularly those supported by the state, might risk instrumentalizing their work and possibly damage their credibility with local populations. This is especially the case where CSOs rely on the trust they have with communities to carry out their programs.

These concerns have generated an active debate among civil society leaders about the role of civil society in relation to government, with some arguing they should not take up government functions and others noting that it is imperative to play a complementary role where governments may not have the resources or capacity to provide services to all their citizens.[17]

Opportunities for Civil Society Engagement

Building trust between community and law enforcement
CSOs' presence within, and service of, local communities often positions them as effective interlocutors, facilitating communication with, and access to, law enforcement. In this regard, CSOs can contribute to identifying security concerns and needs of communities and help to facilitate dialogue between community members and law enforcement to enhance responsiveness to those needs. Part of this work is ensuring that security operations are gender-sensitive and adequately respond to women's unique security needs in equal measure to those of men, particularly in regard to sexual- and gender-based violence. Tackling these issues can help to further cultivate trust in security institutions and provide important opportunities for CVE engagement with local populations.

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[15] Civil society representatives, workshop on "Strengthening Rule of Law-Based Responses to Terrorism and Violent Extremism in South Asia: What Role for Civil Society?" Singapore, 4–5 December 2014, http://www.globalcenter.org/events/strengthening-rule-of-law-based-responses-to-terrorism-and-violent-extremism-in-south-asia-what-role-for-civil-society.
[16] Civil society representatives, Singapore, December 2014.
[17] Civil society representatives, Singapore, December 2014.

Training for and advocating to security actors

CSOs often have the technical expertise that states need to strengthen their capacity to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism. CSOs are also well positioned in many instances to play an essential training and research role for work with law enforcement, judges, and other criminal justice stakeholders on issues such as reducing corruption; disengaging, deradicalizing, and rehabilitating violent extremists; reforming the security sector; addressing inadequate or inhumane prison conditions; and strengthening community policing mechanisms. There are also numerous examples of CSOs providing critical training for security actors on a variety of issues, such as disengagement, deradicalization, and reintegration; rehabilitation; peacekeeping; and community-oriented policing, as well as sensitizing them to the needs of local communities and promoting institutional reforms through advocacy campaigns. In Nepal and Afghanistan, for example, women's organizations provide training for senior security officers on international human rights, including the rights of women and children, and on how to appropriately attend to crimes of sexual and gender-based violence.[18]

In addition to training, CSOs often take on a central advocacy role with efforts aimed at strengthening the rule of law and encouraging security actors to make institutional changes necessary for addressing underlying conditions conducive to terrorism, including human rights violations, marginalization, and discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, gender, or religion. They also are key actors in advocacy efforts to advance the recruitment and retention of female security forces and sensitizing security actors on gender-related issues. To that end, women-led organizations can play an especially effective role.

Fostering accountability of security institutions and actors

Promoting good governance and ensuring that criminal justice institutions operate within the rule of law are essential aspects of many CSOs' work. Civil society actors play a vital role in condemning attacks against civilians, disappearances, and unlawful detentions, among other human rights abuses, and ensuring respect for human rights and due process. For instance, CSOs have demanded citizen-complaint mechanisms and review boards and have ensured that valuable external oversight of abuses of power and other grievances are appropriately addressed. In addition, through public awareness campaigns, CSOs can help uncover corruption and abuses committed by security institutions and actors, which might otherwise drive violent extremism and radicalization.

Providing policy guidance for rule of law actors

CSOs provide significant contributions to the implementation and monitoring of security sector reform activities, improving the state's ability to conduct effective law

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[18] "Women's Civil Society Organisations Working With Security Institutions," Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2009, http://www.gssrtraining.ch/images/stories/PDF/Civil-society/Example2_Nepal.pdf.

enforcement and counterterrorism measures. CSOs can also supply valuable guidance to shape national counterterrorism/CVE strategies, which typically have implications for a wide range of actors in diverse fields but rarely include these actors in the drafting process. A Bangladeshi CSO, for example, provided guidance and helped to inform a draft counterterrorism strategy for Bangladesh and is currently working on developing a national counterradicalization policy for the country.[19] As interlocutors with international donors, CSOs can provide state agencies with increased information sharing, expanded access to funds, and a widened base of partners contributing to implementation of holistic CVE strategies.

Engaging in deradicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts
Civil society groups—including community leaders, academics, and media—have in a number of instances contributed to rehabilitation and reintegration processes, supporting government efforts in this area. In Sri Lanka, for example, CSOs play a leading role in facilitating the reintegration of former Tamil Tiger combatants. They do so by ensuring these combatants have access to needed psychosocial counseling, peer networking, and vocational training. Long-term disengagement of combatants is inextricably linked to their successful reintegration into society. Civil society actors also facilitate platforms for interaction among community and religious leaders, prison officers, teachers, parents, and others on topics related to radicalization and, in some cases, work directly with radicalized individuals in an attempt to reduce their risk of violent activity.[20] One such program in Pakistan works directly with mothers of radicalized or at-risk youths and helps to reintegrate them back into their communities as peace activists through religious teachings, skills building, job training, and education.[21]

Challenges and Limitations

Protecting the safety and security of civil society actors
A primary challenge for many civil society actors undertaking work on terrorism and violent extremism is security. Many face direct threats and reprisals from extremist groups that accuse them of supporting a Western, foreign, or government agenda. For example, Afghan civil society leaders promoting women's inclusion in political and security processes and enhancing the security of women have been directly targeted by militant groups.

Ensuring legitimacy and accountability of civil society organizations
In some contexts, civil society may at times contribute to fomenting violence and extremism. Civil society actors may exert public pressure or even resort to violence to

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[19] Civil society representative, Singapore, December 2014.
[20] See, for example, Malkanthi Hettiarachchi, "Sri Lanka's Rehabilitation Program: A New Frontier in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency," National Defense University, Center for Complex Operations, *Prism* 4, no. 2, http://cco.dodlive.mil/files/2014/02/prism105-122_Hettiarachchi.pdf.
[21] Renee Montagne, "Pakistani Moms Keep Sons From Being Radicalized," NPR, 26 April 2012, http://www.npr.org/2012/04/26/151417951/pakistani-group-tries-to-keep-sons-from-being-radicalized.

achieve their objectives, even though it may be counter to the rule of law. In some cases, they may use the media to justify violent extremist acts and publicly support militant groups, or they may defend repressive state policies. These actions present challenges to the legitimacy and credibility of civil society actors, which may result in public distrust and lack of confidence in those organizations, and in some instances can be used as a justification for governments not to work with civil society or narrow the space in which it operates. On the other hand, CSOs may be too closely aligned with governments or political parties, further reducing trust of civil society among the population in general and hindering the ability of CSOs to operate.

Shrinking operating environments
Counterterrorism measures can reduce the space in which CSOs are able to work, especially those focused on activities explicitly labeled or identified as "counterterrorism" or even "countering violent extremism." For example, anti-money laundering regimes and burdensome regulations to counter terrorism financing may pose restrictive administrative constraints on CSOs, many of which may be small and informal, without the technical or resource capacity to meet these demands.[22] Furthermore, governments may use counterterrorism measures as a pretext to restrict the activities of civil society groups, particularly those representing marginalized populations or opposition movements.

Policy Recommendations

To support civil society in contributing to rule of law responses to counter violent extremism and address the challenges in these efforts, we present the following recommended actions for national and regional policymakers and international donors:

Funding
1. **Provide funding and technical resources to CSOs implementing, or with the capacity to implement, CVE programming.** This resource allocation should prioritize equal support for women-led and youth-focused CSOs, as well as those promoting the rule of law through direct advocacy to, and training of, criminal justice actors.
2. **Expand funding streams for CSOs to develop evidence-based CVE research.** Research should be oriented to inform and shape government CVE policies and/or improve training for formal implementers. Given the evolving nature of terrorism, studies could look at new trends and possible drivers of violent extremism so that proper preventive mechanisms can be developed.

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[22] See, for example, James Cockayne with Liat Shetret, "Capitalizing on Trust Harnessing Somali Remittances for Counterterrorism, Human Rights and State Building," Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, March 2012, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/CapitalizingOnTrust.pdf; Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, "A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism," 2011, http://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/locatinggender.pdf; Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, "To Protect and Prevent: Outcomes of a Global Dialogue to Counter Terrorist Abuse of the Nonprofit Sector," June 2013, http://www.globalct.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/06/CGCC_Prevent-Protect-Report_pgs.pdf.

3. **Strengthen the transparency of funding mechanisms focused explicitly on countering violent extremism, including any funds provided in target countries under the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund.** Any bilateral or multilateral CVE funding mechanisms should require comprehensive grantee reporting requirements, which should include sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries and a detailed evaluation of their programming impact. An assessment of all grantees should be publicly released, including beneficiary data and an explanation of the role any target countries have played in the distribution of funding.

4. **Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of CVE-dedicated funding.** CVE-dedicated funding should include financial and technical support for grantees to establish strong monitoring and evaluation systems. Resources and/or technical support should be prioritized for small organizations, particularly women's and youth CSOs, to allow them to secure the personnel and/or capacity-building training necessary to evaluate programmatic impact.

Training

5. **Support the training of law enforcement and state security and judicial officials on CVE-related issues.** National, regional, and international actors should look to CSOs as a resource for leading trainings with criminal justice institutions on CVE-related issues. For instance, CSOs could provide training for law enforcement officials to help them develop a more community-centric approach and to better understand and identify violent extremist threats. These trainings should emphasize human rights, women's inclusion in law enforcement, and community policing approaches.

6. **Fund policy development and advocacy training for CSOs and ensure the inclusion of women-led CSOs in this effort.** Building CSO capacity in these areas will strengthen their ability to develop and promote recommendations concerning rule of law institutions and countering violent extremism.

7. **Develop "train the trainers" initiatives for CSOs to amplify the reach and impact of ongoing training efforts.** Many CSOs have critical experience in research, training, and advocacy on CVE-related issues, as well as working with the law enforcement and judicial sectors. Government should provide capacity building in these areas to relevant local CSOs, particularly in regions where governments, and regional and international donors, have difficulty accessing local communities.

8. **Provide resources for civil society training programs that focus on engaging local, regional, and international media on counterterrorism and CVE issues.** These training programs could foster greater collaboration and coordination between CSOs and media on counterterrorism and CVE issues to raise their public profile and promote the accountability of government and nongovernmental actors in this space.

Networking

9. **Foster domestic and regional civil society networks that engage actors at the local, state, federal, and regional levels.** Domestic and regional civil society networks could support information sharing related to best practices and initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges faced by civil society in their work to strengthen rule of law responses to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

10. **Establish forums for ongoing multisectoral dialogue on issues pertaining to countering violent extremism between civil society actors and state officials in the security and judicial sectors.** These platforms could foster dialogue among civil society networks at all levels—regional, federal, state, and local—and across different government sectors, including nontraditional security ministries and agencies, such as those working on education, development, health, and culture. These efforts could also include engagement with private sector actors and the media, focusing on how they can contribute to enhancing CVE policies and programming that are grounded in the rule of law.

Including CSOs in formal rule of law efforts

11. **Strengthen civil society's role in efforts to recruit and retain female law enforcement professionals.** This could include the establishment of mentorship programs between senior women in law enforcement and young female students, through educational and extracurricular programs. Policymakers could also facilitate CSO engagement in evaluations of infrastructure and policies that have inhibited recruitment and retention of female police officers, including the provision of specialized equipment for females, dedicated transport where necessary, facilities for hygiene, and flexible working hours. In addition, policymakers could facilitate and support the engagement of CSOs in the development and reform of law enforcement training and ensure that female officers have access to these trainings and resources.

12. **Expand the pathways and mechanisms that allow police to engage directly with local communities, particularly women and youth.** Policymakers could provide support for the establishment of citizen and police liaison committees to discuss security needs and concerns and determine ways to address them. In addition, they could ensure that security barriers at stations do not hinder the ability of populations to enter stations. Additionally, policymakers could provide adequate resources for agencies that focus on integrating community policing techniques into their work.

Conclusion

In the wake of the White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism held in February 2015 and increased global focus on preventing violent extremism and addressing the threat of foreign fighters, the role of civil society in these efforts has been at the forefront of policy discussions regarding these issues. Terrorism and violent extremism are not simply security challenges but can have devastating effects on the social and economic development of communities. Attacks on women, education, and minorities have become the hallmark of extremist groups. Civil society has in many instances played an important role in securing hard-won rights and liberties and in promoting a resilient social contract between citizens and the state. There are important lessons from the fields of development, public health, and governance, and civil society contributions to them that should inform efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. Women have played critical roles in and outside government in strengthening community resilience to extremism. However, many CSOs remain squeezed between terrorist groups and antiterrorism laws that constrain their access to funds and resources. Often, CSOs, particularly those focusing on women and youth, for example, may not have the administrative infrastructure or expertise to access counterterrorism or CVE resources. As countries and communities struggle against violent extremism and work toward the goal of ensuring stable and peaceful societies, civil society and governments must make an effort to partner in achieving their common goals.

About the Authors
This policy brief was jointly produced by the Global Center on Cooperative Security and The Institute for Inclusive Security. It was prepared by Rafia Bhulai and Naureen Chowdhury Fink of the Global Center and Michelle Barsa and Allison Peters of Inclusive Security. The views expressed in this brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of their organizations or advisory boards.

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The Institute for Inclusive Security's bold goal is to change the international security paradigm. Sustainable peace is possible only when those who shape policy include women and other affected groups in the prevention and transformation of violent conflict. Guided by this belief and vision, Inclusive Security's mission is to increase the participation of all stakeholders—particularly women—in preventing, resolving, and rebuilding after deadly conflicts. (www.inclusivesecurity.org)

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The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) was established in July 2004 as an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore. ISAS is dedicated to research on contemporary South Asia. The institute seeks to promote understanding of this vital region of the world and to communicate knowledge and insights about it to policymakers, the business community, academia, and civil society in Singapore and beyond. (http://www.isas.nus.edu.sg)