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In this article, Eleanor Gordon and Jacqui True analyse policies and programmes to prevent and counter violent extremism in Indonesia and Bangladesh and whether they are gender responsive. Even where the aim is to be gender sensitive, existing policies and programmes reinforce gender stereotypes and are ineffective in preventing and countering threats. Government and non-government policies and programmes in both countries must be attentive to the gender dynamics of violent extremism, including gender-specific drivers of recruitment, gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

Women and men are directly and indirectly affected by violent extremism, albeit in different ways, and equally they participate in efforts to prevent and counter the threat of violent extremism in their homes, communities and broader society. They are also targeted for recruitment by violent extremist groups and are supporters of them, engaged in leadership and combat roles. Until the last two years or so, however, women were largely seen within policy and popular discourse as the victims and rarely the perpetrators of violent extremism – or at most 'unwilling or incidental associates of the primary terrorist actors'.[1] By contrast, men have always been assumed to be the perpetrators of violent extremism, but there has been virtually no consideration of the role of gender constructs of masculinity in mobilising men. As a result, countering violent extremism (CVE) continues to be widely regarded as a male domain without

any explanation of why that is the case, and CVE policies are still largely inattentive to gender.

Preventing violent extremism (PVE) is also broadly considered to be a male domain, and if the role of women is acknowledged, it is generally reduced to the traditional stay-at-home mother, providing moral guidance to and remaining vigilant over the activities of her children. This not only undermines efforts to prevent and counter the threat posed by violent extremism, but also reaffirms traditional gender identities and power relations.

This article explores these issues through a gender analysis of the CVE and emerging PVE policy frameworks and programmes in Indonesia and Bangladesh. While there is no universally agreed definition of CVE, PVE or P/CVE,[2] and these and similar terms are often used interchangeably, for the purposes of this article, CVE is defined as entailing 'hard security', coercive responses to the threat of violent extremism, with security sector

1. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 'Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism', 2019, p. 1, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/17-08887_HB_Gender_Criminal_Justice_E_ebook.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019; Elizabeth Pearson and Emily Winterbotham, 'Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 162, No. 3, June/July 2017), pp. 60–72.
2. William Stephens, Stijn Sieckelinck and Hans Boutellier, 'Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2 January 2019), doi:10.1080/1057610X.2018.1543144.

The family of six linked to the suicide bombings at three churches in Surabaya, Indonesia, May 2018. Puji Kuswati is thought to be Indonesia's first female suicide bomber. *Courtesy of Indonesian Police*

institutions taking the lead, while PVE is generally more holistic and non-coercive, involving ways of enhancing community resilience, building peace and addressing drivers and root causes, often adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.[3] A gender analysis of these processes is critical, as there is limited knowledge of the intersection of gender identities or norms and violent extremism in South and Southeast Asia.

Moreover, recent developments on the ground make such an analysis more urgent. As Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS) began to lose control of territory in Iraq and Syria in 2017, it started to take more interest in other regions, including Southeast Asia.[4] Daesh affiliates began to increase their terrorist and militant activities in the region, leading to the siege of Marawi in the Philippines from May to October 2017 and the coordinated family suicide attacks in Surabaya, Indonesia in May 2018.[5] The Surabaya attacks shocked Indonesian society, not only because they were the most deadly attacks in Indonesia since the Bali attacks of 2002, but also because the suicide bombers consisted of three families, including women and children. The mother of the family partly responsible for the first three suicide attacks became the first successful female suicide bomber in Indonesia, and these attacks were the first time

3.   *Ibid*.

4.   Colin P Clarke, 'The Future of the Global Jihadist Movement After the Collapse of the Caliphate', RAND Blog, 11 December 2018, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/12/the-future-of-the-global-jihadist-movement-after-the.html>, accessed 15 August 2019.

5.   Joseph Chinyong Liow, 'Shifting Sands of Terrorism in Southeast Asia', RSIS Commentary No. 25, 15 February 2018, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CO18025.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019; Michael Peel, 'Militant Islamists Shift Focus to Southeast Asia', *Financial Times*, 18 June 2017.

that a whole family was involved in a terrorist attack in Indonesia.[6] Around the same time, Daesh appeared to begin supporting front line attacks by women combatants and suicide bombers in Iraq and Syria, as well as in other regions. While this tacit support for female fighters appears to contradict Daesh's official commitment to sex segregation and female subordination, it is nonetheless being used as a recruitment tool for both women and men.[7]

Since the rise of Daesh in 2014, Indonesia and Bangladesh have witnessed a growth in violent extremism linked to a rise in conservative and patriarchal fundamentalist political ideologies, which often promote gender-regressive agendas, restricting women's movements and dress.[8] Today, they both face threats of terrorism from Islamist violent extremist groups linked to Al-Qa'ida (including Ansar Al-Islam in Bangladesh and Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia) and Daesh (including Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh in Bangladesh and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah in Indonesia). Both Indonesia and Bangladesh have been particularly affected by the wave of Islamic terrorism from Daesh-affiliated groups.[9] In 2018, Bangladesh was ranked 25th on the Global Terrorism Index (an improvement on 2017 by four places), while Indonesia was ranked 42nd (the same as 2017).[10]

Both countries are also facing new challenges posed by those who join terrorist groups abroad and then return home.[11] They have taken a tough approach to violent extremism, although only after the Surabaya attacks did Indonesia pass an anti-terror law making it a criminal offence for citizens to join militant groups overseas.[12] Indonesia and Bangladesh have both begun to build partnerships with civil society actors – notably, religious leaders – to help counter extremist narratives and prevent violent extremism.[13] Both countries have an explicit government-led focus on women's empowerment in a culture of embedded patriarchal structures, although these structures are somewhat less rigid in Indonesia.[14] This broad similarity allows for a comparative analysis of the extent to which P/CVE policy and programmes are responsive to gender inequalities and differences and how to advance progress.

This analysis draws on research undertaken for UN Women in 2017–18 to identify how policies and programmes can better support women's engagement in P/CVE in Indonesia and

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6.   Irine Hiraswari Gayatri, 'Involve Women in Terrorism Prevention', *Jakarta Post*, 7 June 2018.

7.   It is used as a recruitment tool for women (through the language of empowerment) and men (through the language of shaming), although it is regarded by some as an indication of Daesh moving into a defensive phase and as also causing a potential rift within Daesh. See Nelly Lahoud, 'Can Women be Soldiers of the Islamic State?', *Survival* (Vol. 59, No. 1, 2017), pp. 61–78; Nelly Lahoud, *Empowerment or Subjugation: An Analysis of ISIL's Gendered Messaging* (New York, NY: UN Women, 2018).

8.   Jacqui True and Sri Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism: Gender Perspectives and Women's Roles', Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre (GPS), 2017, <http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1_5fb20e84855b45aabb5437fe96fc3616.pdf> (abbreviated version: <http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1_5780b931ae164ace83e5377c490f05e1.pdf>), accessed 8 August 2019; Jacqui True et al., *Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities: A Case Study of Bangladesh and Indonesia*, Academic Paper (Bangkok: UN Women, 2019).

9.   Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism* (Sydney: IEP, 2018).

10. *Ibid.*

11. Including over 200 Indonesian women and children who went to Iraq and Syria. See Zachary Abuza, 'Counterterrorism in Southeast Asia', in Isaac Kfir and Georgia Grice (eds), 'Counterterrorism Yearbook 2019', Australian Strategic Policy Institute and Counter-Terrorism Policy Centre, March 2019, <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2019-03/ASPI%20 Counterterrorism%20YB2019_acc_1.pdf?VWvpiCRC_om4gXFvmBHvSn0NIDNOrMvM>, accessed 8 August 2019.

12. Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, 'Indonesia's Anti-Terror Bill to Extend Detention', *Strait Times*, 25 May 2018; *The Economist*, 'Indonesia's Prisons Will Soon Start Spawning Even More Jihadists', 15 November 2018.

13. One example of a successful programme includes micro-credit programming for women in Bangladesh, as described by Krista London Couture, who cites positive statistical correlations between women's greater empowerment and fewer violent extremist incidents. See Krista London Couture, 'A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned from Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Applied Successfully in Bangladesh and Morocco', Policy Paper, Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, Brookings, July 2014, pp. 18–35, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Women-CVE-Formatted-72914-Couture-FINAL2.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

14. See Sri Wiyanti Eddyono, *Women's Empowerment in Indonesia: A Poor Community in Jakarta* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018).

Bangladesh.[15] The research adopted a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools, including: conducting a survey (686 respondents); focus group discussions (323 participants); 26 key informant interviews across six sites in Bangladesh (Dinajpur, Satkhira and Rangpur) and Indonesia (Klaten, Sumenep and Depok); and 18 observations across four of those six sites.[16] This research was supported by a gender analysis of policies and programmes in P/CVE in the two countries. Further contextual knowledge of Indonesian P/CVE programmes was gained in October 2018 while delivering gender-sensitive training on the disengagement and return of violent extremists to male and female Indonesian government and non-government officials.[17] This article examines the extent to which P/CVE policies and programmes in Indonesia and Bangladesh are gender responsive, meaning informed by gender-sensitive analysis of the inequalities and differences between women and men, how they can sustain and exacerbate violent extremism and other forms of violence, and whether they are cognisant of and responsive to the gender dynamics of violent extremism and societal gender relations in practice. These questions are critical because gender-blind risk assessment will likely be less effective, as it will be inattentive to the gender-specific threats posed and outcomes possible, enabling women and girls to evade detection[18] and escape prosecution.[19] As the 2018 UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate/UN Women Research Symposium concluded:

Gender must be considered because of the specific threat posed by women and the particular needs and vulnerabilities of women in the context of responses to terrorism, including both punitive measures and softer preventive and CVE tools. ... Counter-terrorism measures might have a differential impact on women's human rights if gender considerations [are] not integrated into their design, implementation and monitoring.[20]

This article argues that if P/CVE policies, programmes and strategies are inattentive to gender, they will be ineffective, not least because certain threats will remain hidden, especially those involving women as perpetrators, but also where women have played significant roles in supporting and enabling violent extremism, such as through logistics, financing and recruitment, and preventing violent extremism, among other things, through early warning, education and collective action. Moreover, such inattention to gender will render P/CVE ineffective because it will not have engaged with the way gender identities – both masculinities and femininities – play a role in radicalisation, mobilisation and extremist messaging, as seen in Indonesia and Bangladesh through extremist discourse. This is observed in recruitment messaging which promotes violent and militarised masculinities, reaffirms the subservience of women to men, and shames men into joining Daesh by questioning their masculinity (their bravery and ability to protect, for instance).[21] Thus, significant opportunities to promote security and resilience will be missed. The Surabaya attacks, as well as

15. True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Setting the Scene for Preventing Violent Extremism in South East and South Asia'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities: Evidence from Indonesia and Bangladesh', Research Brief, March 2018, <http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1_14e939586cd54438bd8ef95eeada9113.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

16. For further details, see True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'.

17. This training to 26 members of Indonesia's government administration, security sector and civil society working in the area of P/CVE (with equal numbers of women and men) was delivered in Australia by Monash University (Global Terrorism Research Centre and Monash GPS), funded by a grant from the Australia Awards programme of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

18. Jessica Davis, 'There are Canadian Women Fighting for Islamic State – and Ottawa Needs a Plan', *Globe and Mail*, 14 February 2019.

19. Thomas Renard and Rik Coolsaet (eds), *Returnees: Who Are They, Why Are They (Not) Coming Back and How Should We Deal with Them? Assessing Policies on Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands*, Egmont Paper 101 (Brussels: Egmont Institute, 2018).

20. United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED) and UN Women, 'CTED/UN-Women Research Symposium', 18 July 2018, p. 2, <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Summary-report_final.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

21. Alejandro Beutel and Krystina Perez, 'From WWI to ISIS, Using Shame and Masculinity in Recruitment Narratives', National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 1 June 2016, <https://www.start.umd.edu/news/wwi-isis-using-shame-and-masculinity-recruitment-narratives>, accessed 8 August 2019; Lahoud, *Empowerment or Subjugation*; UNCTED, 'Gender Dimensions of the Response to Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Research Perspectives',

the return of Daesh-affiliated women to Indonesia and Bangladesh, including the recent high-profile cases of Shamima Begum[22] and Nurshadrina Khaira Dhania,[23] have brought to the fore the need to acknowledge that women can also be perpetrators and supporters of violent extremism.[24] Along with the fact that young men remain the most likely to be involved in violent extremism, these examples have highlighted the need to attend to the gender dynamics of violent extremism in P/CVE in South and Southeast Asia. They have also highlighted the urgency to integrate gender into disengagement, reintegration and rehabilitation policies and programmes.

Gender responsiveness does not only involve the inclusion of women in P/CVE efforts, it requires countering- and prevention-based responses to be tailored to address the different factors affecting men's and women's radicalisation to violence. Gender responsiveness as a concept and a practice seeks to enable operational and practical capacity to address gender inequalities, exclusions and differences affecting women, men, boys, girls, and people of diverse gender and sexual identities through action or implementation efforts that are feasible, monitored and evaluated. Below are key criteria which a gender-responsive policy or programme should meet.

Key Criteria for a Gender-Responsive Policy or Programme

Below are some of the key criteria for a gender-responsive policy or programme:

- Sensitivity to the gender dynamics of violent extremism, recognising that individuals of any gender may be victims, enablers and agents of violent extremism – including effective approaches to consider gender norms, and the roles and experiences of men and other individuals that do not identify as cisgender (the gender assigned at birth).[25]
- Attentiveness to the gender-specific drivers of men's and women's recruitment and to how violent extremist groups use gendered messages and propaganda to recruit (often reaffirming militarised and violent masculinities) and to terrorise (policing compliance with strict gender norms that limit rights and mobility and punishing those who transgress such norms, such as women who do not adhere to strict codes of dress and behaviour and people of diverse gender and sexual identities).[26]
- Appreciation of how gender inequality may support violent extremist religious narratives, preserving leadership and public roles for men and ensuring women's subordination.[27]

CTED Trends Report, February 2019, <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Feb_2019_CTED_Trends_Report.pdf>, 8 August 2019.

22. British-born Shamima Begum left the UK in 2015 to join Daesh in Syria, aged 15. When her British citizenship was revoked after she expressed a wish to return to the UK, it was thought she had a claim to Bangladeshi citizenship as her father was of Bangladeshi origin, but the Bangladeshi government stated Begum does not have Bangladeshi citizenship, which has left her stateless. See Lizzie Dearden, 'Bangladesh Says Isis Bride Shamima Begum not a Citizen and "Nothing To Do With Us"', *The Independent*, 20 February 2019.

23. Nurshadrina Khaira Dhania returned to Indonesia in 2017 after travelling to join Daesh in Syria in 2015. Her case is discussed later in the article. See Charlotte Krol and George Fuller, '"I am Very Naïve": Daughter of Indonesian Family Lured to Raqqa by Islamic State Tells of Ordeal', *The Telegraph*, 3 August 2017; Adi Renaldi, 'What to Do About Indonesia's Forgotten Women and Children of ISIS', *VICE News*, 3 August 2018.

24. Yong, 'Shifting Sands of Terrorism in Southeast Asia'; Peel, 'Militant Islamists Shift Focus to Southeast Asia'.

25. See UN Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York, NY: UN Women, 2015); True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

26. See Pearson and Winterbotham, 'Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation'; Joana Cook and Gina Vale, 'From Daesh to "Diaspora": Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State', International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2018, <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Women-in-ISIS-report_20180719_web.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019; UNCTED and UN Women, 'CTED/UN-Women Research Symposium'; Noor Huda Ismail, 'Masculinity in Radicalization', *Asia Global Online*, 4 January 2018, <https://www.asiaglobalonline.hku.hk/masculinity-in-radicalization-a-case-study-of-a-returned-isis-fighter-in-indonesia>, accessed 8 August 2019; Michael Kimmel, 'Almost All Violent Extremists Share One Thing: Their Gender', *The Guardian*, 8 April 2018; True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

27. True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'; Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE): The Role of Women and Women's Organizations', in Naureen Chowdury Fink, Sara Zeiger and Rafia Bhulai (eds), *A Man's World?:*

- Awareness of gendered indicators of rising intolerance and extremism, such as enforcement of strict codes of segregation, dress and behaviour for men and particularly women, and forms of gender discrimination and gender-based violence.[28]
- Provision of opportunities for women and men to report warning signs, noting that they may be different.[29]
- Recognition of the role of families and communities in P/CVE and providing spaces for them to interact with government and security sector actors to inform their P/CVE approaches.[30]
- Recognition of the active involvement of civil society organisations in P/CVE. Development of partnerships with civil society that include women and women-led organisations.[31]
- Investigation of the gendered impacts of violent extremism, with women and men often differently affected by violent extremism and people of diverse gender and sexual identities often targeted by violent extremist groups.[32]

To provide context for the discussion of P/CVE policies and programmes in Indonesia and Bangladesh, this article first gives a brief overview of the emerging international policy framework on integrating a gender perspective into P/CVE policies and its advances over the last

six years. Second, it presents a gender analysis of the P/CVE policy frameworks and programmes in Indonesia and Bangladesh, assessing the extent to which the criteria recommended above are met and the potential outcomes of limitations in gender responsiveness. The article concludes by identifying how policies and programmes can be made more gender responsive and better able to support women's engagement in P/CVE.

International Policy Framework on Integrating Gender Perspective into P/CVE

Since 2013, there has been increasing international policy attention on the need to understand the gender dynamics of violent extremism, to recognise the gendered impacts of violent extremism and efforts to counter its threat, and to engage women as well as men in preventing and countering the threat. For instance, several UN General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions since 2013,[33] as well as the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016),[34] call for gender to be a cross-cutting issue in P/CVE efforts, and for the participation, leadership and support of women and women's organisations in P/CVE. They

Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, Hedayah and The Global Centre on Cooperative Security, April 2016, <http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AMansWorld_FULL.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

28. True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.
29. True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'.
30. See Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'; Emily Winterbotham, 'Do Mothers Know Best?: How Assumptions Harm CVE', Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 17 September 2018, <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/do-mothers-know-best-how-assumptions-harm-cve>, accessed 8 August 2019; Emily Winterbotham and Elizabeth Pearson, 'Different Cities, Shared Stories', *RUSI Journal* (Vol. 161, No. 5, October/November 2016), pp. 54–65.
31. See Commonwealth of Australia, 'Building Government-Civil Society Organisation Partnerships: Implementing Gender-Based Approaches to Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)', Guidance Note, 2017, <https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/b4aef1_c837c8e52e004944a3d4de051746e6fe.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.
32. True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.
33. See UN General Assembly Resolution 68/178, 28 January 2014, A/RES/68/178 (2013); UN General Assembly Resolution 68/276, 24 June 2014, A/RES/68/276 (2014); UN General Assembly Resolution 70/148, 25 February 2016, A/RES/70/148 (2016); UN General Assembly Resolution 70/291, 19 July 2016, A/RES/70/291 (2016); UN General Assembly Resolution 72/284, 2 July 2018, A/RES/72/284 (2018); UN Security Council Resolution 2122, 18 October 2013, S/RES/2122 (2013); UN Security Council Resolution 2178, 24 September 2014, S/RES/2178 (2014); UN Security Council Resolution 2242, 13 October 2015, S/RES/2242 (2015); UN Security Council Resolution 2354, 24 May 2017, S/RES/2354 (2017); UN Security Council Resolution 2396, 21 December 2017, S/RES/2396 (2017); UN Security Council Resolution 2395, 21 December 2017, S/RES/2395 (2017); True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'; True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; UNODC, 'Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism'.
34. United Nations General Assembly, 'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General', A/70/674, 24 December 2015, <https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674>, accessed 8 August 2019.

recognise the need to engage women in addressing security concerns in order to capture different experiences of insecurity and effectively respond to women's specific insecurity. Recent UN resolutions urge states to develop counternarratives that 'take into account the gender dimension' and 'address specific concerns and vulnerabilities of both men and women',[35] and adopt a gender-sensitive approach to identifying individuals at risk of radicalisation and related intervention programmes.[36]

Bangladesh and Indonesia have signed, ratified or acceded to 14 and 11, respectively, of the 19 international legal instruments related to preventing and combating terrorism[37] and regional conventions in this field.[38] Both countries have also signed bilateral agreements with other countries to enhance P/CVE efforts and are members of various coalitions to address the threat posed by terrorism.[39] Indonesia has taken a particularly active role, including co-chairing, with Australia, the Countering Violent Extremism Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum[40] since 2017 (which held a meeting on Gender and CVE in December 2018) and hosting the annual Sub-Regional Ministerial Meeting on Counter Terrorism in 2017 and 2018 on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Cross Border Terrorism. Indonesia has recognised, in its ministerial statements, the role that women, and the role that empowering women, can play in PVE.[41]

While movement towards recognising the gender dynamics and impact of violent extremism and efforts to counter its threat involving the engagement of women as well as men, are to be welcomed, there are some concerns that women's empowerment is being instrumentalised, their human rights

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35. UN Security Council Resolution 2354 (2017).

36. UN Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017).

37. UNODC, 'Treaties Database', <https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/v3/sherloc/treaties>, accessed 18 June 2019. Both countries have signed: Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (2005); International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005); International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999); International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997); Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (1988); Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1980); Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971); Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970); and Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (1963). Bangladesh has also signed: Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (1988); International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (1979); Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (1973); Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988); and Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (1991). Indonesia has also signed: Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (2010); Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation (2010).

38. Including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (Bangladesh), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking (Bangladesh), and the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (Indonesia).

39. Shahab Enam Khan, 'Bangladesh: The Changing Dynamics of Violent Extremism and the Response of the State', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (Vol. 28, No. 1, 2017), pp. 191–217; Rupak Bhattacharjee, 'Bangladesh's Incredible Success in Countering Terrorism', *Daily Observer*, 22 March 2016, <http://www.observerbd.com/2016/03/22/142748.php>, accessed 8 August 2019; UNODC, 'Country Programme 2017–2020: Indonesia', 2017, <http://www.unodc.org/documents/indonesia//publication/2017/UNODC_Country_Programme_2017_-_2020.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

40. The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) is an international forum of the EU and 29 countries working on P/CVE, co-chaired by Morocco and the Netherlands. Its CVE Working Group is co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia and addresses ways to reduce radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremist groups, working with other states as well as organisations to promote community engagement in CVE. See GCTF, 'Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group', <https://www.thegctf.org/Working-Groups/Countering-Violent-Extremism>, accessed 8 August 2019.

41. Parliament of Australia, 'Sub-Regional Meeting on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Cross Border Terrorism', Joint Statement, Manado-Indonesia, 29 July 2017, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:%22media/pressrel/5426809%22>, accessed 8 August 2019; Commonwealth of Australia, 'Building Government-CSO Partnerships'; *Scoop Independent News*, 'Little Represents NZ at Regional Counter-Terrorism Meeting', press release, 6 November 2018, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1811/S00061/little-represents-nz-at-regional-counter-terrorism-meeting.htm>, accessed 8 August 2019.

securitised, that the principle of gender equality is being co-opted, and that it is women's traditional role as mother that is emphasised to the exclusion of women's diverse roles and capacities.[42]

Notwithstanding these concerns, as a result of the significant policy shift over the last six years in recognising the gender dimensions of violent extremism, and the fact that women as well as men can and do play a significant role in P/CVE, violent extremism is now better understood and efforts to counter the threat of violent extremism have the potential to be more effective. But to what extent have these advances at the international level in gender-sensitive P/CVE policy been reflected in national-level policy and programmatic frameworks in Indonesia and Bangladesh?

Indonesia

On 18 October 2002, six days after the Bali terrorist attacks killed 202 people, then Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri signed the Anti-Terrorism (formally known as Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism) regulation (*Perpu* No. 1/2002), adopted by parliament in April 2003 to become the Anti-Terrorism Law (No. 15/2003).[43]

Previously, Indonesia's counterterrorism policy framework was firmly in the hard security approach to terrorism, rather than adopting a holistic, whole-of-government and inclusive-of-civil-society approach.[44] The Anti-Terrorism Law incorporated both hard and soft measures, focused on preventive as well as repressive efforts, and empowered civil society actors – including religious leaders – to produce counternarratives. These measures appeared to be somewhat effective, at least on the face of it, and the number of attacks decreased between 2002 and 2016, from 42 per year to 19,[45] as did the death toll.

Attacks continued, however, with many resulting in substantial loss of life.[46] Even the threat of the death penalty under Indonesian law did not appear to be an effective deterrent.[47] Consequently, there were calls to harden P/CVE efforts. In response to the terrorist attacks in Jakarta on 14 January 2016, the government announced its intention to amend and strengthen provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Law.

42. See Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Jayne Huckerby, 'Gendering Counterterrorism: How To, and How Not To – Part I', *Just Security*, 1 May 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/55522/gendering-counterterrorism-to/, accessed 8 August 2019; Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Jayne Huckerby, 'Gendering Counterterrorism: How To, and How Not To – Part II', *Just Security*, 3 May 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/55670/gendering-counterterrorism-to-part-ii/>, accessed 8 August 2019; Fionnula Ní Aoláin, 'Jihad, Counter-Terrorism and Mothers', *Just Security*, 4 March 2015, <https://www.justsecurity.org/20407/jihad-counter-terrorism-mothers>, accessed 8 August 2019; Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, 'The "War on Terror" and Extremism: Assessing the Relevance of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda', *International Affairs* (Vol. 92, No. 2, March 2016), pp. 275–91; Katherine E Brown, 'Gender and Counter-Radicalization, Women and Emerging Counter-Terror Measures', in Margaret L Satterthwaite and Jayne C Huckerby (eds), *Gender, National Security and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), pp. 36–59; Sophie Giscard D'Estaing, 'Engaging Women in Countering Violent Extremism: Avoiding Instrumentalisation and Furthering Agency', *Gender and Development* (Vol. 25, No. 1, 2017), pp. 103–18; Jayne Huckerby, 'The Complexities of Women, Peace, Security and Countering Violent Extremism', *Just Security*, 24 September 2015, <https://www.justsecurity.org/26337/womens-rights-simple-tool-counterterrorism/#https://www.justsecurity.org/25983/counter-terrorism-committee-addressing-role-women-countering-terrorism-violent-extremism/%20>, accessed 8 August 2019; Andrew Majoran, 'Mothers & Wives: Women's Potential Role in Countering Violent Extremism', Quilliam, 8 May 2015, <https://www.quilliaminternational.com/mothers-wives-womens-potential-role-in-countering-violent-extremism/>, accessed 8 August 2019.

43. Simon Butt, 'Anti-Terrorism Law and Criminal Process in Indonesia', Background Paper No. 1, University of Melbourne, <https://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1546327/AntiTerrorismLawandProcessInIndonesia2.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

44. True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

45. Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir and Rafiqa Qurrata A'yun, 'Does Indonesia Need a Tougher Anti-Terrorism Law?', *The Conversation*, 24 May 2018, <https://theconversation.com/does-indonesia-need-a-tougher-anti-terrorism-law-85731>, accessed 8 August 2019.

46. Including the Tentena market bombing on 28 May 2005, three coordinated attacks in Bali on 2 October 2005, and attacks on two hotels in Jakarta on 17 July 2009. See *Al Jazeera*, 'Timeline: Bombings in Indonesia', 31 December 2005; Noor Huda Ismail, 'Q&A: Why Did Terror Hit Jakarta Streets – and What Happens Next?', *The Conversation*, 14 January 2016, <https://theconversation.com/qanda-why-did-terror-hit-jakartas-streets-and-what-happens-next-53170>, accessed 8 August 2019.

47. Hikmahanto Juwana, 'Anti-Terrorism Efforts in Indonesia', in Victor V Ramraj et al. (eds), *Global Anti-Terrorism Law and Policy*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 290–309.

Gender and Counter Violent Extremism in Indonesia and Bangladesh

The Surabaya attacks in May 2018 fast-tracked the passage of the amended Anti-Terrorism Law (known in full as the Amendment of the Law Concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism),[48] which was finally passed on 25 May 2018 (Law No. 5/2018). In passing the law, the executive and the legislature wanted to be seen to be acting swiftly in response to the terrorist attacks.

Compared with the passage of the 2003 Anti-Terrorism Law, the 2018 Anti-Terrorism Law underwent an extensive consultation process involving civil society organisations, including women's organisations, scholars, religious groups and political parties. However, policy and position papers provided by civil society organisations and scholars discouraging more repressive measures at the expense of efforts aimed at rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremists appear to have been ignored.[49]

Furthermore, in spite of the consultation process, the law contains no gender-specific provisions nor specific reference to gender. The same is true for other terrorism-related legislation in Indonesia. While gender is a highly sensitive and politicised concept in Indonesia, evident through the contestation and eventual shelving of the Gender Equality and Justice Bill (drafted in 2010),[50] gender has been written into the National Action Plan on Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE NAP), suggesting that it could have found expression in the Anti-Terrorism Law as well.

It would seem, therefore, that there is an awareness within Indonesian society that both violent extremism and efforts to prevent or counter it have a gender dimension, but this has yet to find expression in legislation or policy frameworks. Consequently, threats are overlooked and responses are ineffective because gendered dimensions of terrorism are ignored in the legislative and policy frameworks, including the different ways in which men and women are radicalised and engage in violent extremism and the different ways to effectively deradicalise, disengage and reintegrate men and women, notably recent Daesh returnees. The case of Nurshadrina Khaira Dhania highlights how even within strictly familial roles, women may radicalise others, including family members, and highlights the need for counterterrorism legislation and policy to be gender responsive. Dhania, who travelled to Syria from Indonesia in 2015 at age 16, having consumed Daesh online propaganda, had a role in persuading 26 of her family members to join her. However, on return the Indonesian government imprisoned her father and the male members of the family on charges of terrorism while she, as a radicalised female, and by some accounts playing a key role in mobilising others, was able to go free prior to the 2018 law change.[51] This and other examples, including the Surabaya attacks and the arrest of two female would-be suicide bombers in Jakarta in December 2016 (and a number of other recent arrests of women for terrorism-related offences), demonstrate the shift in women's roles in violent extremist groups, towards their involvement in combat rather than only holding support roles, and the need for policy to understand and respond to women's specific and changing roles.[52]

48. Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 'Amendment of the Law Concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism (Law No. 5/2018)', <https://www.greengazette.id/documents/lembaran-negara-92-2018_20180622-LNI-00092.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

49. Concerns were raised, including by the National Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Watch, that extending the powers of the state and taking a more repressive approach risks undermining human rights protection and compromising efforts to counter the threat of terrorism. For instance, the law provides for the deployment of the Indonesian armed forces in counterterrorism on domestic soil, albeit at the request of the police and with the approval of the president. It also extends pre-charge and pre-trial detention periods, allows for witness anonymity, extends the surveillance powers of the state, and expands the application of the death penalty. Greta Nabbs-Keller, 'Indonesia's Revised Anti-Terrorism Law', *Australian Outlook*, 26 August 2018, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/indonesias-revised-anti-terrorism-law/>, accessed 8 August 2019; Mudhoffir and A'yun, 'Does Indonesia Need a Tougher Anti-Terrorism Law?'; Brad Adams, 'Letter on Indonesia's New Counterterrorism Law to President Joko Widodo and Speaker Bambang Soesatyo', Human Rights Watch, 20 June 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/20/letter-indonesias-new-counterterrorism-law>, accessed 8 August 2019; *Al Jazeera*, 'Indonesia Passes Controversial Anti-Terror Laws to Fight ISIL', 26 May 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/indonesia-passes-controversial-anti-terror-laws-fight-isil-180525055635674.html>, accessed 8 August 2019

50. Thin Lei Win, 'Time Running out for Indonesia's Stalled Gender Equality Bill', *Thomson Reuters Foundation News*, 7 April 2014.

51. Krol and Fuller, '"I am Very Naïve"'.

52. See Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC), 'Mothers to Bombers: The Evolution of Indonesian Women Extremists', IPAC Report No. 35, 31 January 2017, <http://file.understandingconflict.org/file/2017/01/IPAC_Report_35.pdf>, accessed 8

Moreover, because gender is not currently integrated within Indonesian P/CVE legislation or policy frameworks, P/CVE practice which is gender responsive is likely to be ad hoc and lack support. Nonetheless, there have been efforts on the part of the government to facilitate a more inclusive approach. For instance, the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* – BNPT), established in 2010 and staffed with personnel from the armed forces, police and foreign affairs ministry, has engaged Dhania as an outspoken critic of Daesh as part of its disengagement programme.[53] The BNPT also engages with religious and community leaders at the provincial level in PVE programmes. These religious and community leaders, alongside the National Commission on Violence Against Women and various women's organisations at the community level, have also been consulted to inform the development of the PVE National Action Plan (NAP) (expected to be adopted in 2019, and likely to be the first ASEAN country to have such a NAP).[54] UN Women has also provided support to the government in integrating a gender perspective into the NAP.[55] Similarly, the Australian government assisted with the establishment of a network of women leaders active in PVE at the provincial level, which was subsequently formalised into a National Working Group on Women and P/CVE (2017–22) involving government and 16 non-government organisations advocating for gender mainstreaming in P/CVE and the development of the PVE NAP.

This is not to suggest, however, that a more inclusive approach to PVE necessarily leads to comprehensively gender-responsive nor more effective programmes and policies. It can, however, give an indication of the extent to which there is commitment to the principle of inclusion and recognition of the gender dimension to violent extremism, and is a first step in assessing the responsiveness of programmes and policies. Indeed, the government has adopted creative and innovative responses to the threats posed by violent extremism, such as establishing schools for the children of suspected affiliates of violent extremist networks, to remove them from such networks.[56] However, initiatives should also be regarded in the context of increasing intolerance, including of gender equality and women's rights, within society and establishing support of so-called 'anti-vice' organisations that promote intolerance.[57]

Beyond state-level legislation and the operations and strategies of state institutions, civil society actors, international organisations and donor agencies are implementing programmes with the aim of contributing to PVE and reducing other forms of violence. In Indonesia today, there are many civil society PVE programmes which integrate a gender perspective, enabled by Indonesia's strong democratic women's movement and vibrant civil society. There are also a large number of women-led or women's organisations engaged in PVE in Indonesia, including the Civil Society Against Violent Extremism coalition, which has worked with the government on a legal framework for returnees from violent extremist groups and with the government, police and other civil society actors on developing standard operating procedures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, many of whom are women.[58] Other examples include Rahima (Centre for Education and Information on Islam and Women's Rights), a women's NGO focusing on strengthening an Islamic interpretation of gender equality and women's rights and which provides spaces to discuss PVE through its Education Program for Women Ulama (*Pendidikan untuk Ulama Perempuan*), established in 2005.[59] Many women who have participated in this programme have become pioneers promoting tolerance in their own communities.

Other examples of women's or women-led NGOs and networks working in the field of P/CVE – including raising awareness, promoting tolerance, facilitating dialogue, building the capacity of

August 2019; Nava Nuraniyah, 'Not Just Brainwashed: Understanding the Radicalization of Indonesian Female Supporters of the Islamic State', *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Vol. 30, No. 6, 2018), pp. 890–910.

53. Adi Renaldi, 'What to Do About Indonesia's Forgotten Women and Children of ISIS', *Vice News*, 3 August 2018.

54. Gayatri, 'Involve Women in Terrorism Prevention'.

55. UN Women, 'Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities', updated June 2018, <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2018/02/pve-brochure-final-web.pdf?la=en&vs=3112>, accessed 8 August 2019.

56. Abuza, 'Counterterrorism in Southeast Asia'.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Mira Kusumarini, Executive Director of the Civil Society Against Violent Extremism Coalition, Indonesia, presentation given at GCTF CVE Working Group Workshop on Gender and P/CVE: The Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Melbourne, 18–19 December 2018.

59. In Sunni Islam, the ulama are the guardians, transmitters and interpreters of religious knowledge, of Islamic doctrine and law.

women in various fields, and countering radical discourses – include *Solidaritas Perempuan*, the Asian Muslim Network Indonesia, and the Institute for Women's Empowerment.[60]

There are also many gender-focused programmes implemented outside the explicit field of PVE, but which nonetheless directly contribute to PVE efforts by creating a social environment less conducive to violent extremism, one that promotes tolerance, and safer and more inclusive societies. These programmes include those promoting gender equality, addressing violence against women, promoting and protecting women's human rights, and empowering women.[61] These are often grassroots initiatives, but many are also borne of government, donor or international organisation initiatives.[62]

The contribution of civil society actors to PVE is, nonetheless, substantial because many of these programmes and initiatives are generated at the grassroots level and so are knowledgeable about context-specific needs, concerns and risks. Despite this contribution, they are often under-resourced and overlooked, and there is little national coordination or learning across them.[63] The capacity of civil society actors is thus often not optimal, and the opportunity is missed to share best practice and build on successes. This is a particular concern given that approximately 48% of Indonesian women who had travelled to Iraq or Syria have returned from territory formerly held by Daesh, which is an exception to the overall global pattern of 5%–6% of women who have returned to their home country, compared with 18%–20% of men.[64]

Bangladesh

At the national level, the primary counterterrorism legislation in Bangladesh is the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Act (amended in 2012 and 2013), the 2012 Money Laundering Prevention Act (amended in 2015) and the Mutual Legal Assistance Act (2012). There are no gender-specific provisions in this legislation, other than briefly in the Money Laundering Prevention Act, where women are referred to as potential victims of trafficking (alongside children), which can finance terrorist activities, and as being eligible for bail (alongside children and disabled people), as long as the court is satisfied it would not hinder justice. Stereotypical assumptions about women being victims or harmless, that is, generally lacking agency, are implicit in both references to women. This is despite an awareness among counterterrorism officials that violent extremist groups recruit women.[65] While not solely focused on violent extremism, the Digital Security Act (2018) – criticised for threatening to undermine freedom of expression and freedom of the press – is also part of the suite of Bangladeshi laws in this field; there are no gender provisions in this law either.

Again, the lack of gender provisions in the legislation has gendered outcomes, not least in missing significant risks to the community because of the different ways men and women are radicalised and engage in violent extremism. Where gender is briefly referred to, the outcome can be equally disastrous with women (along with children and disabled people) being implicitly regarded as posing less of a risk to security. The cultural and social assumptions about a lack of women's propensity to violence, which feed into the P/CVE legislative

60. Solidaritas Perempuan is a women's NGO that delivers projects which facilitate dialogue, promote tolerance and pluralism, and build the capacity of women. The Asian Muslim Network engages in activities to counter intolerance through a women's school for peacebuilding in several cities (Poso, Bogor, Jakarta, Wonosobo, Maluku, Bantul and Yogyakarta). The Institute for Women's Empowerment is a regional network in Asia with half of the members originally from Indonesia, which collaborated with Fahmina (Cirebon, West Java) and Rahima to deliver the Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratisation project. See True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism' – Appendix B, pp. 82–92.

61. True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Setting the Scene for Preventing Violent Extremism in South East and South Asia'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'.

62. For example, Oxfam's Gender Justice programme and Saferworld's integration of gender into its conflict prevention work, which support PVE efforts although are not are explicitly P/CVE.

63. True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

64. Cook and Vale, 'From Daesh to Diaspora', 2018; Kusumarini, at GCTF CVE Working Group Workshop on Gender and P/CVE, December 2018.

65. ICG, 'Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh', Asia Report No. 295, 28 February 2018, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/295-countering-jihadist-militancy-in-bangladesh.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

framework, directly contribute to the mobilisation and success of women in violent extremist groups.

The government has adopted a tough approach to counterterrorism, but there has been public criticism that it has not done enough.[66] Critics argue that Bangladesh has not focused efforts on addressing its polarised polity and partisan criminal justice system, which create an enabling environment for extremists.[67] Others have argued that the government's robust approach has been counterproductive: using indiscriminate force to eliminate extremist groups has compromised efforts to gather intelligence, for instance.[68] This approach potentially sows the seeds of future instability and insecurity borne of grievance. Another criticism has been the lack of gender-responsive counterterrorism and disengagement initiatives which specifically target women at risk of being or having been radicalised, a result of trivialising the engagement of women in violent extremist groups or assuming they have been unwilling supporters.[69]

Aside from these legislative and policy developments, structures have been created to facilitate P/CVE and counterterrorism work beyond the formal security sector. For instance, a 17-member National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention was established in 2009 to combat extremism and sway public opinion against extremists.[70] Recognising the need to mobilise community support to maximise P/CVE and counterterrorism efforts, the government has taken further steps to broaden the number of actors engaged in P/CVE beyond the security sector, to include local communities, schools, religious leaders and families. The government and the Bangladesh Police have engaged religious leaders and scholars to raise awareness of extremism and the threats it can pose, and to help formulate counter-extremist narratives.[71] The government has also engaged with other civil society actors and communities, supporting the development of community engagement programmes and inter-faith dialogue, to further P/CVE efforts.[72] The Ministry of Youth has consolidated a countrywide network of youth-based programmes and organised various sporting events in an attempt to positively channel the energy of youths.[73] PVE efforts have also included micro-lending for women for self-generating income enterprises and education for girls in recognition that poverty is a key causal factor for radicalisation.[74]

Such efforts beyond the formal security sector take a more comprehensive, whole-of-society approach. However, they are often ad hoc and lack coordination and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks. They also tend to focus on Dhaka, although attacks are not confined to the capital.[75] These efforts are also not always gender sensitive. For instance, the National Committee on Militancy Resistance and Prevention does not (but could) include the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs, and consultations and work with religious leaders, scholars and youths does not always have a gender dimension. Nonetheless, recent efforts to develop a Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan have involved consultations with civil society and governmental actors and have been supported by UN Women in endeavouring to advance, support and consolidate women's role in building peace and security, including in P/CVE.[76]

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66. The Asia Foundation, *The State of Conflict and Violence in Asia* (San Francisco, CA: The Asia Foundation, 2017), <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/The_State_of_Conflict_and_Violence_in_Asia-12.29.17.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.
67. ICG, 'Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh'.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Saimum Parvez, 'Bangladesh and India', in Kfir and Grice (eds), 'Counterterrorism Yearbook 2019'.
70. This committee is chaired by the home affairs minister and membership includes the office of the prime minister, security agencies and a broad range of ministries. See Khan, 'Bangladesh: Changing Dynamics of Violent Extremism and the Response of the State'.
71. Iftekharul Bashar, 'Countering Violent Extremism in Bangladesh', *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* (Vol. 9, No. 6, 2017), pp. 17–21; US Department of State, 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2017', September 2018, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2017/>, accessed 8 August 2019; Centre for Research and Information (CRI), *Bangladesh: Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism* (Dhaka: CRI, 2016).
72. Iftekharul Bashar, 'Another Year of Unresolved Terror in Bangladesh', East Asia Forum, 11 December 2018, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/12/11/another-year-of-unresolved-terror-in-bangladesh/>, accessed 8 August 2019; CRI, *Bangladesh*.
73. Bashar, 'Another Year of Unresolved Terror in Bangladesh'.
74. Couture, 'A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism'.
75. Bashar, 'Countering Violent Extremism in Bangladesh'.
76. UN Women, 'Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities'.

Beyond the policy framework and activities of the government and state institutions, there are several other actors delivering programmes aimed at P/CVE and addressing other forms of violence in Bangladesh. Programmes that contribute to PVE are a more recent phenomenon than in Indonesia, and there are far fewer women-led or women's organisations engaged in PVE in Bangladesh than in Indonesia. Moreover, most programmes are not explicitly PVE focused or do not explicitly refer to violent extremism, but instead use terms such as 'social cohesion' or 'safer communities', unlike Indonesia where the term 'PVE' is commonly used. Such programmes, nonetheless, contribute to PVE efforts because they help to advance the principles and practice of gender equality, tolerance and non-violence.[77]

Those civil society programmes in Bangladesh which are explicitly PVE focused generally do not integrate a gender perspective, again in contrast to Indonesia. However, some PVE programmes do, including those that advocate for the increased representation of women in security sector institutions, ensure funds earmarked for P/CVE address women's specific needs, and reach out to young women (and men) particularly at risk of radicalisation.[78]

Other Bangladesh NGOs delivering programmes which directly or indirectly contribute to PVE efforts include the Hunger Project Bangladesh, which has worked with over 500 other women's organisations, NGOs, government bodies, educational establishments and the media through the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum. That forum has the aim of raising awareness of the importance of girls' access to health, education and nutrition, explicitly as an investment for the future of the country, including its security and resilience threatened by violent extremism. Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, a women's organisation, has also implemented a number of projects addressing violence against women and other safety issues which indirectly impact P/CVE efforts. In addition are the community-level programmes that have

been funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, a private–public global fund which supports grassroots-level P/CVE initiatives and has promoted community agency, critical thinking and alternative narratives to advance social cohesion and thereby contribute to PVE.[79]

As in Indonesia, the value of civil society initiatives in Bangladesh is considerable because they are often borne of a specific context of grievances and motivations, and can thereby be responsive to these drivers and causes of violent extremism as well as more cognisant of the risks and challenges that PVE efforts need to navigate. To a greater extent than in Indonesia, these initiatives, especially community-based initiatives, are often overlooked, under-resourced and exposed to more immediate threats from violent extremists than international or state efforts. Likewise, as in Indonesia, because of limited resources and minimal coordination, lessons learned and best practice are rarely shared, resulting in missed opportunities for mutual support among civil society actors, and a lack of growth in capacity.[80]

But it is important to mention that in both Indonesia and Bangladesh, not all civil society initiatives that are women-focused or women-led, and/or refer to themselves as contributing to PVE, are effective. Gender-focused activities do not necessarily correlate with positive outcomes, nor do they automatically correlate with positive gender outcomes. Politicisation of some civil society organisations and resource competition between them, in particular, has contributed to undermining the effectiveness of some programmes.[81]

Gender Blind, Gender Stereotyped or Gender Responsive?

In the last two years, with shifts in international frameworks and the introduction of explicit women- and CVE-focused initiatives, violent extremism and

77. True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Setting the Scene for Preventing Violent Extremism in South East and South Asia'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'.

78. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, 'The Role of the Media in Countering Radicalisation in Bangladesh', June 2014, <http://bei-bd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/The-Role-of-the-Media.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

79. Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, 'Lessons from GCERF-Funded Programmes in Bangladesh', 2019, <https://www.gcerf.org/wp-content/uploads/Lessons-from-GCERF-Grants-in-Bangladesh.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

80. True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

81. Farhat Tasnim, 'Politicized Civil Society in Bangladesh: Case Study Analyses', *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 2017), pp. 98–123.

the efforts to counter and prevent it have been less male dominated domains in both Indonesia and Bangladesh. Despite the obvious need for a gender analysis when it is mostly one gender engaging in violent acts, the move to gender analysis to explain and prevent violent extremism has only occurred since women have become visible perpetrators of violence. But a lack of gender awareness is still reflected in contemporary P/CVE policies and programmes in both countries.

Gender responsiveness is a relatively new concept, being used to practically address the distinct roles and engagement of men and women in violent extremism in Indonesia and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, most policies are gender blind, do not address violent masculinities and mention women only as victims or those suffering the effects of violent extremism. In Indonesia, policy frameworks increasingly recognise gender differences, but their implementation has resulted in women being treated as less culpable for violence (active engagement or support) as returnees from Iraq and Syria. A further result is that women are engaged in prevention roles though still largely outside the existing mainstream structures of counterterrorism and CVE.

In both countries, moreover, there is also a pervasive myth that mothers are most responsible and able to prevent violent extremism from the 'front line' in households.[82] An oft-cited practice following Quranic teachings is that individuals need to request their mother's permission before committing jihad, which may or may not happen depending on awareness of those teachings.[83] Patriarchal structures in both countries, although somewhat less rigid in Indonesia, have contributed to constraining the extent to which women are engaged in P/CVE efforts and the extent to which policy and programmes in this field are gender responsive.

Beyond their adverse impact on the responsiveness and inclusivity of P/CVE policy and programmes, robust patriarchal structures, gendered inequalities and a deep attachment to hegemonic masculinities can create an environment highly conducive to violent extremist groups.

These local structures often feed into and play on notions of masculinity and fears of emasculation – loss of power, control and identity.[84] This speaks to the need to advance broader gender-equality programming in high-risk areas for recruitment and radicalisation, such as universities, migrant worker pre-deployment and the security sector (and localities where violent extremist networks are present), as well as develop gender-responsive P/CVE policy and programmes.[85]

Unless policies and programmes are attentive to the gender dynamics of violent extremism, enablers for the spread of violent extremism including security sector violence against women, and indicators of increased intolerance such as gendered discrimination and gender-based violence, which can lead to violent extremism, will increase. In such a context, efforts to prevent and counter the threats posed will be ineffective.[86] This is not least because certain threats will remain hidden (the threat of women's and family perpetration of violence, as has been seen) and significant opportunities to promote security and resilience will be missed. Moreover, P/CVE policies and programmes which are not gender responsive will also likely be blind to the fact that women can and do play a key role in P/CVE, albeit often in unrecognised ways, and in communities and households where P/CVE has been least likely to reach.

Despite the limitations, there are opportunities to facilitate a more gender-responsive and inclusive approach to addressing the threats posed by violent extremism. These opportunities include building on increased awareness of the gender dynamics of violent extremism, regional and international support to advance gender-responsive P/CVE, and growing support for government and civil society partnerships – particularly those that involve women and women-led organisations – in PVE. There is also greater awareness that the desire to fulfil expectations associated with male identity can drive some young men to join violent extremist groups; and that violent masculinities can provide an outlet for belonging and male role models set against

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82. Winterbotham, 'Do Mothers Know Best?'.

83. See True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism'.

84. Ismail, 'Masculinity in Radicalization'.

85. See Aneela Salman, 'Green Houses for Terrorism: Measuring the Impact of Gender Equality Attitudes and Outcomes as Deterrents of Terrorism', *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* (Vol. 39, No. 4, 2015), pp. 281–306; True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'.

86. Authors' interviews with women in Bangladesh, for instance, revealed that there are a number of gendered indicators of rising extremism, including husbands controlling the behaviour of wives, particularly related to their clothing. See True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'.

experiences of disempowerment, marginalisation and grievance.[87]

Gender is constructed and contested in different ways in Bangladesh and Indonesia and these specificities will need to inform P/CVE policies and programmes in the future if they are to be effective. For instance, while there is strong attachment to traditional gender norms in both countries, there is more space in Indonesia than in Bangladesh to negotiate and test those norms, including, for instance, for women to engage in the public sphere. In Indonesia, for instance, female imams are allowed to preach and, as has been mentioned, a strong democratic women's movement and vibrant civil society has led to the growth of many women's NGOs actively engaged in PVE.[88] In Bangladesh, however, violence is often used to force women out of the public sphere and to control women's movements.[89]

The intergenerational differences in gender identities and relations within both countries also need to inform P/CVE policy and practice. For instance, Noor Huda Ismail's analysis of masculine belonging in foreign-fighter networks in Indonesia shows how the male recruits seek out father role models and link manhood to the bearing of arms.[90]

Keeping in mind the contextual differences, there are a number of ways to advance gender-responsive P/CVE policies and programmes in both countries. Recent developments in acknowledging women's roles in violent extremism and PVE in Indonesia, in particular, through high-level political statements and popular articles in the press can be built on.[91] Initiatives at the regional and international levels can help inform efforts to progress gender-responsive

P/CVE, such as the UN advice on integrating a gender perspective into the development of the Indonesian PVE NAP. UN Women has also supported research and programmes in both countries which aim to empower women and thereby build community security and resilience, including against the threat of violent extremism.[92] The success of these programmes provides an example of gender-responsive PVE which has had a positive impact on communities.

Growing support for the role of civil society – and communities and families – in PVE stems from an increased awareness that this is precisely where radicalisation begins. Official P/CVE initiatives that have begun to reach out to civil society actors to inform official P/CVE efforts in both Indonesia and Bangladesh can also be expanded and scaled up. There are also civil society-led initiatives contributing to PVE and, particularly in Indonesia, promoting gender-responsive PVE efforts, which should be consolidated and supported. It is recommended that national or sub-regional coordination mechanisms enable best practice and lessons learned to be shared and can help build a supportive network and thereby build capacity; this is incipient in Indonesia. Mechanisms to enable dialogue with (and between) women's organisations, on the part of state actors engaged in P/CVE is also recommended to enable women's engagement and leadership in P/CVE; again, this is beginning to happen in Indonesia (for instance, the National Working Group on Women and P/CVE, previously referred to, involves government and non-government organisations advocating for gender mainstreaming in P/CVE and the development of Indonesia's PVE NAP).

87. Michael Kimmel, *Healing from Hate: How Young Men Get Into – and Out of – Violent Extremism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2018); Elizabeth Pearson, 'Why Men Fight and Women Don't: Masculinity and Extremist Violence', Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 13 September 2018, <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/why-men-fight-and-women-dont-masculinity-and-extremist-violence#article-summary-footnote-28>, accessed 8 August 2019; UNCTED, 'Gender Dimensions of the Response to Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Research Perspectives'.

88. See Yuli Saputra, 'In Indonesia, Female Muslim Clerics Discuss Polygamy, the Hijab, and Gender Equality', *Rappler*, 27 April 2017, <http://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/indonesia/bahasa/englishedition/168068-female-muslim-ulama-hijab-polygamy>, accessed 8 August 2019.

89. As shown in the research for this article, see Monash GPS, 'A Gender Sensitive Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism in Asia and the Pacific'; see also Silja Paasilinna, Sue Palmer-Wetherald and Megan Ritchie, 'The Effect of Violence on Women's Electoral and Political Participation in Bangladesh', International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2017, <https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2017_ifes_effect_of_violence_on_women_participation_in_bangladesh.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2019.

90. Noor Huda Ismail, 'The Indonesian Foreign Fighters, Hegemonic Masculinity and Globalisation', PhD thesis, Monash University, 3 June 2019.

91. See, for example, *Scoop Independent News*, 'Little Represents NZ at Regional Counter-Terrorism Meeting'; Gayatri, 'Involve Women in Terrorism Prevention'.

92. UN Women, 'Preventing Violent Extremism', 2019, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/peace-and-security/preventing-violent-extremism>, accessed 8 August 2019.

It is important, however, that those providing support to women and women-led organisations engaged in P/CVE or those organisations promoting a gender-responsive approach to P/CVE remain attentive to the fact that publicising their activities or integrating them into official structures has the potential to undermine their effectiveness and increase their vulnerability to risks. Ways to mitigate risks include first consulting with such organisations about ways in which they can be supported without undermining their security or effectiveness. In Bangladesh in particular, women and women-led organisations might be less overtly engaged in P/CVE than in Indonesia and will need to be supported sensitively so as not to draw unwelcome attention to them or expose them to unnecessary risk including to their non-P/CVE work. Gender-responsive strategies in Bangladesh might instead involve supporting men's and women's organisations engaged in building security, promoting tolerance and creating environments more resilient to violent extremism without referring to their work as PVE.

Within the context of broadening the engagement of actors involved in PVE in Bangladesh and Indonesia, there is an increasing understanding that the role of the mother is critical because of the moral guidance she can provide and the vigilance she can maintain over her children. Recognising the role of the mother in PVE should not, however, reinforce gender stereotypes and gendered power relations, in effect forcing women back into the home and away from the public domain where decision-making and influence over P/CVE policy and practice takes place. Moreover, focusing solely on the mother as the front line PVE actors means that the role fathers can and do play in PVE and the gender power relations in the family household may be ignored, often constraining women's agency.[93]

Focusing on the role of the mother in PVE not only places emphasis on women's responsibilities rather than their rights, it also fails to factor into women's engagement in PVE, 'the social and economic contexts that give many women second-class and unequal status'.[94] Limiting the role of the woman in P/CVE to their roles as mothers undermines advances towards gender equality by reaffirming traditional gender identities and entrenching patriarchy which can increase the threat posed by violent extremism as well as other insecurities and sources of violence. This is because violent extremist groups often use traditional gender stereotypes to recruit and to terrorise. A backslide in advancing gender equality therefore can be directly correlated with rising extremism leading to violent extremism, as well as broader threats to peace and security.[95] Indeed, not only is gender equality positively correlated with stability and fewer threats from violent extremism, 'gender equality is also one of the most powerful counter discourses to extremism', as has been found in Indonesia and other countries.[96] Thus, efforts to advance gender equality can indirectly contribute to successful efforts to counter the threats posed by violent extremism as well as broader threats to peace and security.

It is important, in this regard, to recognise that more gender-responsive P/CVE policy and programmes is not the same as integrating gender stereotypes and normative assumptions about the roles and skill sets of women and men: just as there is a difference between being gender blind and non-discriminatory, there is a difference between being gender responsive and using gender stereotypes. For example, if a policy or programme aims to integrate gender by supporting the role of mothers as front line PVE actors in the home, this would not be deemed a gender-responsive approach since it addresses only one of the many roles and activities of women and does not address any of men's roles and masculine expectations driving extremism. Again, it also reinforces the same stereotypes reflected in extremist narratives about women's 'place'.

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93. In the authors' most recent research in Bangladesh and Indonesia, research participants' 'maternalistic' assumptions that mothers are best positioned to prevent violent extremism in the first phase of research were reframed in the second phase of research to interrogate the role of fathers vis-à-vis youth and interrogate gender identities, see Monash GPS, 'A Gender Sensitive Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism in Asia and the Pacific'; True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'; Winterbotham and Pearson, 'Different Cities, Shared Stories'.

94. Ní Aoláin and Huckerby, 'Gendering Counterterrorism'.

95. For further discussion on the negative correlation of gender equality and violent extremism, see True et al., 'Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'; Oudraat, 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism'; Couture, 'A Gendered Approach to Countering Violent Extremism'.

96. True and Eddyono, 'Preventing Violent Extremism', p. 61; UN Women, 'Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace'; Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Setting the Scene for Preventing Violent Extremism in South East and South Asia'; Lahoud, *Empowerment or Subjugation*.

Beyond building on recent advancements in the understanding of the gender dynamics of violent extremism, there are further steps that can be taken. These include fully embracing a whole-of-society approach to P/CVE and recognising that the active engagement of government and diverse groups within society is critical to success. This will require investment in reaching out to, building trust with, and consulting women and women-led organisations. It is also important that formal P/CVE efforts comprehensively and meaningfully include women in the development and implementation of P/CVE policy and programmes. This includes creating security sector institutions that are more representative of the demographic they serve. In other words, women need to be represented throughout the security sector more comprehensively and meaningfully, including in management and oversight bodies, and in decision-making, policymaking and leadership roles, with the requisite resources and support to be influential and able to effect change. This requires action to attend to the structural, institutional and cultural barriers to engagement, which may require investment in training and infrastructure, as well as anticipating and attending to risks that engaged women might be exposed to.

When it comes to inclusion of women in formal and civil society-led initiatives, it is important to recognise that women are not, of course, a homogenous whole, and that women belonging to different groups and living in different localities do not always share the same security concerns or experiences. Therefore, every effort needs to be made to ensure the diversity of women's voices can find expression in P/CVE work. Moreover, women's diverse roles in P/CVE need to be acknowledged; patriarchal attitudes regarding the skill set, knowledge and 'place' of women in society in both Bangladesh and Indonesia – as elsewhere – not only constrain women and girls but also limit the likely effectiveness of efforts to address violent extremism and build more peaceful, resilient and prosperous societies.

Beyond efforts to be gender inclusive, advancing gender-responsive P/CVE must involve gender analysis of extant and draft P/CVE legislation and amending, where necessary, to ensure it can accurately inform gender-responsive programmes and practices. For programmes and practices, the integration of a gender perspective is recommended from design, throughout implementation and in monitoring and evaluation – ensuring the gender implications of every part of each current or prospective programme or practice are understood and acted on.

Conclusion

In the first instance, in recognition of the fact that both women and men are recruited to, support, are affected by, and can and do help counter and prevent violent extremism, albeit often in different ways, P/CVE policy and programmes need to be gender responsive – respond to the gender dynamics of violent extremism and recognise that P/CVE policy and programmes have gendered effects (this article focuses less on the latter). However, being gender responsive is not the same as reinforcing gender stereotypes by assuming that women are victims coerced into violent extremist groups or that women's role in PVE is limited to their roles as mothers. Similarly, being gender responsive is not just about women, but allows the different factors affecting men's and women's radicalisation to violence to be addressed as well as the ways in which gender identities feed into extremist discourses and how gender inequalities interplay with the attraction to and the grievances fuelling violent extremism.

Indeed, being gender responsive requires, above all, appreciating that masculinities and femininities play a key role in radicalising and terrorising communities, attending to the fact that young men's desire to fulfil their identity, to belong and gain respect as men are key factors in their mobilisation to violent extremism.[97] Equally, young women who become members of violent extremist or terrorist groups may be seeking to escape from the gender norms of their family, community, and/or society. In such cases, women have sought out liberation from constrained environments as well as sought to enter into terror groups' social structures that have rigid norms around women's roles, which may be perceived as empowering and a strong statement of the rejection of alternative societal norms. Hypermasculine images and gender stereotypes are often used in recruitment messaging precisely because they are persuasive to those who may feel marginalised, dispossessed or bored.[98] Gender-responsive policies and programmes must be informed by an understanding of the drivers and

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97. Jossef Ezekilov, 'Gender "Men-Streaming" CVE: Countering Violence Extremism by Addressing Masculinities Issues', *Reconsidering Development* (Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017), pp. 1–7.

98. Monash GPS, 'A Gender Sensitive Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism in Asia and the Pacific'; Fionnula Ní Aoláin, 'The Complexity and Challenges of Addressing Conditions Conducive to Terrorism', in Manfred Nowak and Anne Charbord

triggers for men's and women's radicalisation as well as the ways in which they are targeted and recruited. Where P/CVE policies and programmes are gender blind or gender stereotyped, threats will be missed (where the complexity of drivers for women's engagement in violent extremism is reduced to sentimentality or weakness) and the vulnerabilities of men to radicalisation will be ignored (where it is assumed men have simply made wrong choices rather than been manipulated, for instance).[99]

In Indonesia and Bangladesh, this means recognising that women are increasingly actively engaging in combat roles and sometimes targeted for recruitment because they are likely to generate less suspicion.[100] It also means recognising that the large majority of those engaged in violent extremism remain young men from diverse socioeconomic groups.[101] As the research for this article has shown, it also means challenging associations of masculine ideals, such as heroism, bravery and leadership, which can drive people to join violent extremist groups.[102] The research also shows that in Indonesia and Bangladesh gender equality and shifting gender norms are sometimes blamed for rising violent extremism, as mothers go out to work and are assumed to no longer provide the vigilance and moral guidance required to keep their children from becoming radicalised, and anti-feminist rhetoric is sometimes used as a rallying call for would-be extremists.[103]

Beyond being gender responsive – and in order to be gender responsive – it is also critical that women (and a diversity of women as well as people of diverse gender and sexual identities) are comprehensively and meaningfully engaged in developing and implementing P/CVE policy and programmes. Comprehensive and meaningful engagement means that women are represented in significant numbers and in decision-making roles in the government, legislature and security sector as well as among those civil society actors consulted and engaged, with the requisite resources and support to have influence. This requires political support and attention to structural and cultural barriers to women's engagement in all public institutions and public life more broadly.

Referring back to the criteria for a gender-responsive policy or programme as outlined at the start of this article, what is required, in sum, is a sensitivity to the gender dynamics of violent extremism (including gender-specific drivers of men's and women's recruitment, gendered indicators of rising extremism, and the role of gender identities and inequalities in extremist discourses) alongside recognition of the role of the whole of society in P/CVE and support for the active engagement of women across society.

Where P/CVE policy and programmes remain blind to gender and/or guided by gender stereotypes, as well as where they marginalise women and ignore the roles that they can and do have in P/CVE, violent extremism will only be partially understood and as a result, threats will remain hidden and opportunities for learning best practice missed. ■

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(eds), *Using Human Rights to Counter Terrorism* (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), pp. 166–94.

99.   UNCTED, 'Gender Dimensions of the Response to Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters'; Pearson and Winterbotham, 'Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation'.

100. See IPAC, 'Mothers to Bombers'; Nuraniyah, 'Not Just Brainwashed'; Bashar, 'Countering Violent Extremism in Bangladesh'; Monash GPS, 'A Gender Sensitive Approach to Preventing Violent Extremism in Asia and the Pacific'.

101. ICG, 'Countering Jihadist Militancy in Bangladesh'.

102. Monash GPS and UN Women, 'Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities'.

103. *Ibid.*