



SEAN-CSO

NEWSLETTER

October 2024

Fostering Resilience:

Insights on Reintegration and Social Cohesion in Southeast Asia

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- The Outlook for Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia
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Opening Remarks

Dear esteemed colleagues and members of our network,

Welcome to the October 2024 Edition of the SEAN-CSO Newsletter. This edition delves into the pressing challenges civil society organisations (CSOs), academics, and practitioners committed to combating violent extremism and fostering peace in Southeast Asia face.

In this issue, we highlight the insights and outcomes from a transformative workshop in Yogyakarta in August, where CSOs from across the region gathered to exchange experiences and strengthen community-based rehabilitation and reintegration strategies. The discussions underscored collaboration's critical role in ensuring sustainable solutions for communities impacted by violent extremism. We also explore the broader outlook for extremism in Southeast Asia, focusing on the evolving global and regional dynamics.

As you read through, we encourage reflection on the role of CSOs in shaping local and regional approaches to preventing extremism and the importance of community-driven initiatives in promoting peace. Our contributor's article on rehabilitation and reintegration further delves into how these efforts can serve as foundational strategies in achieving not just the absence of conflict but also positive peace, defined by justice, harmony, and inclusivity.

We hope this newsletter provides valuable insights and inspires continued dialogue and action within your communities.





Insights from the Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration against Violent Extremism (CRRVE) Workshop

On August 12 to 15, 2024, SEAN-CSO and Empatiku convened a transformative workshop in Yogyakarta. This gathering brought together civil society organisations (CSOs) from Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Australia. The objective was to build capacity, exchange experiences, and share lessons on effective community-based approaches to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE).

Strengthening Community Resilience through Collaboration

The workshop highlighted the importance of joint efforts in ensuring that advanced interventions in PCVE adopt community-based strategies. Participants emphasised that collaboration between governments, civil society, and local communities is essential to creating sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration pathways for individuals affected by violent extremism. Key discussions revolved around the challenges different regions face and how these shared experiences can foster new, localised approaches. The focus was clear—PCVE efforts must prioritise the people at the centre of the conflict, ensuring they have opportunity

for rehabilitation, reintegration, and personal transformation.

One of the workshop's most valuable aspects was the diversity of experiences and perspectives shared by participants. This exchange gave participants actionable insights to improve their initiatives and strengthen community resilience. It underscored the vital role of localised, community-driven efforts in effectively addressing violent extremism.

A Vision for the Future: Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration

The workshop concluded with a collective commitment to advancing community-based rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. Participants recognised that, while there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, exchanging knowledge and best practices is key to improving local interventions. Looking forward, SEAN-CSO and its members plan to continue supporting CSOs across the region, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that PCVE policies reflect the needs and realities of communities affected by violent extremism.



The Outlook for Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia

Global Developments, Trends, Challenges and Opportunities



On August 13, 2024, Southeast Asian civil society leaders gathered in Yogyakarta for a workshop by SEAN-CSO, where Professor Greg Barton from Deakin University participated as a keynote speaker. The session focused on the **outlook for violent extremism in Southeast Asia**, analysing global trends, challenges, and potential opportunities for addressing this critical issue. Below are key takeaways from his presentation:

Current Status and Underlying Trends in Violent Extremism

Despite the ethnic and religious diversity of Southeast Asian societies, these factors are not direct drivers of violent extremism. Instead, countries like Myanmar, Thailand, and the Philippines face issues rooted in ethno-nationalist sentiments and unresolved local grievances. Meanwhile, in Indonesia and Malaysia, globalised Salafi Jihadism linked to Al-Qaeda and ISIS remains the primary concern.

Key highlights:

- **Southeast Asia** has been **less affected by global terrorism trends**, staying outside the top 20 most impacted countries.

- However, the rise of **IS-K** in Afghanistan poses potential future risks for the region, especially with **Southeast Asian foreign terrorist fighters** returning from Syria and Iraq.

Challenges in Domestic Capacity and Counterterrorism

Prof. Greg Barton also addressed the structural dynamics in several Southeast Asian countries, highlighting the challenges in counterterrorism efforts:

- **Philippines:** While improvements are underway, challenges persist, especially in the southern region where IS networks remain extensive. The upcoming 2025 BARMM elections add to the political uncertainty.
- **Indonesia:** The **BNPT (National Counterterrorism Agency)**, **TNI (Military)**, and **Densus 88** face ongoing coordination challenges, even as **Jl (Jemaah Islamiyah)** and **IS** networks continue to adapt and pose risks. A newly elected president has the potential to destabilise effective CT and CVE programs by promoting greater military involvement.
- **Malaysia:** Despite effective police CT measures, the country faces generational challenges in sustaining its counterterrorism operations.
- **Thailand:** The fragile domestic political situation in Thailand could reverse the progress made by civil society actors in countering violent extremism (CVE).
- **Myanmar:** Burmese nationalism has led to destructive anti-Rohingya pogroms and sectarian dynamics. Awful conditions in refugee camps facilitate extremist penetration into the Rohingya diaspora.

Emerging Risks and Global Threats

The growing presence of Al-Qaeda and ISIS in Africa and their potential resurgence in Afghanistan were highlighted as key concerns. These developments might contribute to the global brand power of these organisations and, over time, could have implications for Southeast Asia.





Notable concerns include:

- **Radicalisation in Afghanistan** affecting Southeast Asian fighters.
- The potential for IS-K to form connections with Southeast Asia.
- The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine could rekindle support for global terrorist movements, including in Southeast Asia.

Radicalization and Reintegration

Understanding the process of radicalisation is crucial to addressing violent extremism. Prof. Greg Barton underscored the importance of social networks in radicalisation, with relationships and identity playing a pivotal role.

Reintegration was also emphasised as a crucial part of the disengagement process.

- **Reintegration** strategies must be a key focus to ensure that former extremists are reabsorbed into society safely and sustainably.
- The **Need-Narrative-Network** approach was discussed as a comprehensive method for supporting the reintegration process. It combines rehabilitation efforts with community-based support to help people leave behind a malign network and ingratiate into a healthy pro-social network.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration:

The Often-Forgotten Step Towards Positive Peace

In this month's Newsletter, we have accepted an article by our contributor, Elyzabeth Bonethe Nasution, from Universitas Pelita Harapan

Understanding Peace: Beyond the Absence of War

In modern peace studies, peace is defined not just by the cessation of violence but also by the presence of justice, trust, and harmony. This duality is known as "negative" and "positive" peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, such as war or terrorism, while positive peace emphasises eliminating indirect violence, including discrimination, structural poverty, and intolerance. This nuanced understanding of peace provides the foundation for rehabilitation and reintegration as vital strategies in preventing the resurgence of violent extremism.

Rehabilitation and Positive Peace

Rehabilitation is the process of transforming the beliefs and behaviours of individuals involved in or at risk of becoming involved in violent extremism. In Indonesia, this strategy is regulated under Law No. 5 / 2018 and involves psychological support and vocational training. Offenders undergo a process in penitentiary institutions where radical ideologies are dismantled and replaced with counter-narratives, including patriotism. Rehabilitation acknowledges that if individuals can adopt radical beliefs, they can also be guided away from them through a structured, holistic approach.





Reintegration and Positive Peace

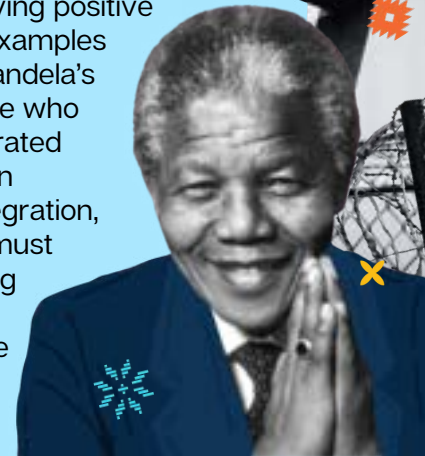
Reintegration is the next critical step after rehabilitation. It involves the smooth return of rehabilitated offenders to society, which poses numerous challenges. Society often rejects former extremists, leaving them isolated and economically unproductive. Successful reintegration requires a community-based approach that fosters forgiveness, trust, and vigilance. Government supervision and family support are essential components of this delicate process, ensuring that offenders do not relapse into extremist behaviour.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration as Foundations for Positive Peace

Both rehabilitation and reintegration are vital for achieving positive peace. Rehabilitation stops direct violence, helping to establish negative peace, while reintegration addresses societal fragmentation and distrust. The holistic approach in both strategies creates an environment conducive to sustainable peace, where former extremists can reintegrate as productive members of society and communities can learn to forgive and rebuild trust.

The Global Perspective: Lessons from Nelson Mandela's Legacy

The possibility of achieving positive peace can be seen in examples from history. Nelson Mandela's decision to forgive those who wronged him demonstrated reconciliation's power. In rehabilitation and reintegration, offenders and society must follow this path—learning to forgive, trust, and rebuild. Such efforts are central to preventing violence cycles and ensuring long-term or even perpetual peace.



Read more of the article on our website at



[SEAN-CSO.org](https://sean-cso.org)

to learn more about Community-Based Rehabilitation and Reintegration from Violent Extremism.



Join Us for an Exclusive Film Screening at Peacetival

We are excited to invite you to a special screening of our upcoming short film, which delves into the real-life stories of families impacted by terrorism and how they find their way back into society.

The film follows a mother and wife's journey from Indonesia as she faces societal stigma and isolation in her tight-knit community after her husband's imprisonment for alleged terrorism. Despite these challenges, she gradually rebuilds trust and reclaims her place in society with the support of community action groups as a local reintegration initiative. Through the collaborative efforts of residents, neighbourhood associations, religious leaders, and local government institutions, The community action group fosters resilience and community engagement, offering the understanding and acceptance needed to move forward.



As a society, we must **support reintegration**, offering second chances to those who have served their time. Reintegration is not just about the individuals but about healing communities and restoring relationships. This film highlights these efforts, showing how dialogue, small initiatives, and persistence can transform lives.

Help us share this story far and wide and support efforts to promote dialogue, reintegration and resilience.

Date & Time:

November 9th 2024, 09.30 - 17.00 WIB



Location:

Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB)

RSVP Now!

bit.ly/peacetivalvol7



Funding Opportunities

Explore the latest funding opportunities and resources available to support initiatives in strengthening community resilience and advancing efforts in rehabilitation, reintegration, and social cohesion across Southeast Asia.

Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity Programme 2025-26

<https://afsee.atlanticfellows.lse.ac.uk/en-gb/apply>

Request for Proposals: Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People Program

<https://being-initiative.org/funding-opportunities/request-for-proposals-funding-bold-ideas-for-youth-mental-health-in-12-countries/>

Call for Applications: CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars Program

<https://cifar.ca/next-generation/global-scholars/>

Call for Proposals: George F. Kennan Fellowship

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/opportunity/george-f-kennan-fellowship>

Thank you for staying connected with the SEAN-CSO through our Newsletter. We invite you to join the conversation and explore more insights on rehabilitation, reintegration, and combating violent extremism. Visit our website at SEAN-CSO.org and follow us on our social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X for more up-to-date content about CB-RR, resources, and opportunities to collaborate in advancing peace and social cohesion across Southeast Asia.



