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## Countering and Preventing Radicalization in Indonesia

### Search for Common Ground

Search for Common Ground (SFCG; [www.sfcg.org](http://www.sfcg.org)) is an international, non-governmental organization whose mission is to change the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches toward cooperative solutions. With programs more than 20 countries on five continents, SFCG works with sectors of society that have significant impacts on conflicts including governments, militaries and non-state armed actors, civil society, women, and youth. SFCG's methodologies include traditional conflict resolution techniques such as mediation, facilitation and capacity strengthening. The organization also uses media to transform public attitudes on conflict, facilitates practical cooperation projects between traditional adversaries, and uses arts, culture, and sports to bring people together across dividing lines. SFCG has headquarters in Washington DC, USA and Brussels, Belgium.

### SFCG in Indonesia

Since 2002, SFCG has worked in Indonesia with the Government of Indonesia (GoI), local civil society organizations (CSOs), media, conflict survivors and others to develop appropriate and innovative conflict transformation initiatives. Over time, SFCG has established strong working relationships with local officials, community leaders, teachers and schools, religious leaders, and community-based organizations, in Aceh, Bali, Central Sulawesi, Jakarta, Central and West Kalimantan, Madura, Papua, and elsewhere. SFCG works to expand knowledge, change attitudes, perceptions, and behavior, advancing the practice of peace.

### Countering Radicalization in Indonesia Background and Methodology

Indonesian youth are disenfranchised, live in unhealthy environments and experience myriad social problems without having the capacity to resolve them. When young people grow up in unstable societies, lacking economic prospects, or basic material and physical security, they often turn away from authority and look to mobilize in search of solutions to their problems.<sup>1</sup> The alienation and deprivation of youth facilitates their vulnerability to identifying with militant extremist ideology as it represents an alternative to their harsh reality. This poses a chronic challenge to communities, hindering democratic development and exacerbating social tensions.

In the absence of strong messages of hope, non-violence and moderation, extremist recruiters try to trigger youths' disdain for the government and build on that resentment to promote fundamentalist and extremist values packaged as the authentic and only acceptable Islamic discourse. The conflicting discourses on modernity, liberalism, and mainstream Islamism with rising extremist values are negotiated daily among youth themselves, across Indonesia.

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<sup>1</sup> "Youth and Conflict: A toolkit", Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). April 2005.

In light of this situation, SFCG has developed a counter-radicalization strategy with the long-term goal of establishing an environment within which the Gol and CSOs can exercise their full potential to advance pluralism and religious tolerance in Indonesia. The short-term goal is to have CSOs and Indonesian Government bodies play a constructive role in tangible de-radicalization and disengagement efforts.

### **Promoting Disengagement from Extremism in Indonesian Prisons**

SFCGI is implementing a program aimed at providing positive messages and behavior models which strengthen the capacity of institutions (particularly prisons, civil society organizations, and media) to foster tolerance, mutual understanding, moderation, violence reduction, and counter radicalization in Indonesian prisons. SFCG is working directly with the Directorate for Corrections within the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, as well as two nationally-recognized NGOs, whose programming extends across Indonesia. *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum* (LBH; Legal Aid Institute), and *Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian* (the Institute for International Peacebuilding), have decades of combined experience in protecting human rights and advancing prison reforms, as well as work to prevent the spread of extremism in Indonesia.

#### *Conflict Management Training*

SFCG is working with the Directorate General for Corrections to develop a Conflict Management Training Curriculum within Indonesian prisons. SFCG conducts trainings and workshops to build the capacity of prison administrators and guards, and partner organizations, in conflict management. In addition, SFCG is implementing a Conflict Management Training Program for prisoners to enhance self-esteem and non-violent life skills. In total, SFCG and its local partners will train 200 administrators and guards, as well as 200 prisoners, from eight prisons across Indonesia.<sup>2</sup>



#### *Standard Operating Procedures for Handling Terrorists*

In addition to the Conflict Management Training and Media efforts in prisons, SFCG is working to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for handling high risk prisoners (including convicted terrorists), as well as those at-risk of radicalization within prisons. Like the conflict management initiatives, the project includes capacity strengthening within prisons and empowerment of government institutions and local civil society organizations (CSOs) to aid in counter-radicalization. The disengagement program builds on the successful approach currently being used by the Indonesian police, and has two main components: an ideological one, which would encourage prisoners to express their religious beliefs in a non-violent manner; and a vocational one, which promotes economic self-sufficiency and reduce prisoners' dependence on terrorist social networks.

The purpose of the SOP project is to *transform the way in which prison officials handle high-risk prisoners within the Indonesian corrections system*. The guidelines focus on two main themes: improving security and surveillance of terrorist prisoners and fostering disengagement through

<sup>2</sup> The target prisons include: LP Cipinang (Jakarta); LP Tangerang (West Java); LP Permisan and LP Batu (Nusakambangan Island, Central Java); LP Porong (Sidoarjo, East Java); LP Petobo (Palu, Central Sulawesi); LP Palembang (South Sumatra); LP Kedung Pane (Semarang, Central Java).

sentence planning, treatment and offending behavior programming. SFCG has successfully completed the SOP (or *Procedur Tetap, PROTAP*) and has conducted subsequent field testing. SFCG is now developing a training manual to operationalize the SOP, and will train prisons officials from more than five provinces in Indonesia.

### **Countering Radicalization through Mass Media**

SFCG is using mass media to promote disengagement inside and outside of prisons. This includes the production and distribution of diverse media programs including: a video documentary (“The Other Side”); production and distribution of two 25-episode radio drama series, and; interactive radio talk **shows**, quizzes, and public service announcements (PSAs). SFCG has formed partnerships with more than 10 commercial and 25 community radio stations on production, distribution, and outreach, providing training in “Common Ground media” techniques. SFCG will run a promotional campaign to augment listenership and increase awareness of radio show and key messages, and establish listener clubs inside and outside prisons, to increase awareness, and change attitudes, perceptions and behavior through communication.

Mass media interventions, coupled with grassroots community level outreach and support to civil society play an important role in effectively countering extremist organisations’ radical intentions. SFCG aims to give the silent majority of Indonesia’s mainstream Muslims a strong voice in repudiating violence and extremism.

### **Promoting Religious Freedom and Tolerance in Indonesian Pesantrens**

SFCG is implementing a project to promote religious freedom, pluralism and understanding through youth-centered educational activities in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools), in areas vulnerable to religious intolerance and violence in Indonesia. This initiative includes structured debate competitions in pesantrens, as well as production of a curriculum-based comic book series reflecting moderate Islamic views and opinions. In addition, innovative media tools, such as comics, combining entertainment and education, engage youth in conflict-transformation activities. All activities are complemented by a host of community outreach activities. SFCG’s partner in this program, Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M), is a non-government organization, which focuses on community and pesantren development.

### **Impact**

Combined, these programs will have the following impact:

- Reduced vulnerability to radicalism among prisoners in Indonesia;
- Improved prison administration and coordination between prisons, courts and police;
- At-risk youth and (ex-)prisoners are integrated into the mainstream of Indonesian society;
- Radical discourses are countered by messages of moderation and tolerance; and
- Violence is reduced in prisons and in vulnerable communities in Indonesia.

For more information about SFCG’s work in countering and preventing radicalization, please contact SFCG’s Indonesia Country Director, Brian D. Hanley, [bhanley@sfcg.org](mailto:bhanley@sfcg.org).