YOUTH VULNERABILITY TO
VIOLENT EXTREMISM

**A Follow-through Study in the
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao**

Front and back cover: Stylized file photo of the rubble left in the aftermath of the Marawi siege (Ram Toledo, 2019)

Printed in Cotabato City, Philippines

YOUTH VULNERABILITY TO
VIOLENT EXTREMISM

A Follow-through Study in the
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

Acronyms

4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BAA	Bangsamoro Autonomy Act
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law
BPAT	Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team
BWC	Bangsamoro Women Commission
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GPI	Global Peace Index
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
IAG	Institute for Autonomy and Governance
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JNIM	Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MMA	Muslim Mindanao Autonomy
NAP P/CVE	National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
P/CVE	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PPI	Positive Peace Index
RRG	Religious Rehabilitation Group
RSIS	Rajaratnam School of International Studies
SPI	Safety Perception Index
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
VE	Violent Extremism

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Philippines continues to encounter unresolved violence among various clans and religious, political, and criminal groups. It has also become one of the targets of global terrorists. Some Muslim rebel groups still operate in the southern Philippines, a region known for five decades of periodic violence.

The phenomenon of violent extremism (VE) has been generally associated with youth vulnerability – young people are deemed vulnerable to recruitment by VE groups[1]. UNESCO pointed out that young men and women are often negatively affected by poverty, marginalization, unemployment, and underemployment, and often find themselves lacking the necessary literacy, capabilities, and skills to overcome these issues. These factors make them vulnerable targets of recruitment by extremist groups that exploit their frustrations and vulnerability.[2]

The Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) undertook research into the vulnerability of urban youth in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, whose findings were released as the Marawi siege in Lanao del Sur happened in 2017. The study analyzed the set of Islamic beliefs of the Moro youth that support acts of terrorism, as manifested in their behavior and attitudes, and examined their perceptions of the drivers of violent extremism. Significant findings revealed that Moro youth were aware of the presence of violent extremist groups in their communities and recruitment by these groups was widespread. Many young Moro gradually adopted radical views through listening to radical preachers, attending prayer groups, and having regular contact with recruiters. This study was one of the materials used in crafting the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP P/CVE) of the Philippine government.

In the five years since 2017, several intervening events took place that might have a bearing on the mindset, views, and opinions of the youth in the Bangsamoro region in Muslim Mindanao concerning violent extremism. These intervening events include (a) the approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), (b) the establishment of the Bangsamoro government under the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), (c) the implementation of the NAP P/CVE, (d) the reemergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and (e) the implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020.

With these intervening developments in the Bangsamoro region, a follow-up study on the vulnerability of the youth to violent extremism is needed to assess the changes in the mindset, perceptions, attitudes, motivations, and influences on the vulnerability of the young Moro. The updated data will be used for developing effective programs and policies for P/CVE.

In this context, this study aimed to undertake a follow-up of the 2017 research on urban youth vulnerability to violent extremism to track changes in their perceptions and attitudes towards violent extremism. In addition, this study sought to generate data on the perspectives of another segment of the Bangsamoro youth, namely those who live in conflict-affected rural areas.

---

1 https://promundoglobal.org/resources/youth-and-the-field-of-countering-violent-extremism/
2 https://en.unesco.org/

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the urban and rural young Moros' views and attitudes toward violent extremism and their perceptions of the drivers of VE;
2. Identify changes in the urban youths' perceptions, attitudes, and views on the drivers of VE;
3. Generate data on the perspectives of the Moro youth in conflict-affected rural areas on VE;
4. Identify the P/CVE programs and projects in the Bangsamoro region and the participation of the Moro youth in the projects; and
5. Determine the perceived effects of the intervening events on VE in the BARMM.

Methods

The data for the study was collected using surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions in selected urban and conflict-affected rural areas in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The urban areas are composed of Cotabato city, Marawi City, Lamitan City, and Jolo, which are also the urban areas covered in the 2017 VE study. The conflict-affected rural areas are Mamasapano in Maguindanao, Butig in Lanao del Sur, Patikul in Sulu, and Tipo-Tipo in Basilan.

The instruments used to generate the data responding to the research questions were (a) a survey questionnaire, (b) key informant interview guides, and (c) focus group discussion guides. Secondary data and a review of related literature on the recent developments of violent extremism in the global and local settings were also done to supplement the results of the study on violent extremism in the Muslim region in Mindanao.

Using the abovementioned instruments, the following research field activities were conducted:
(a) Survey of 800 youth respondents (400 urban youth and 400 rural youth from conflict-affected areas)
(b) Interviews of 32 key informants from local government units, schools, civil society organizations, the security sector, international non-government organizations, and other relevant institutions
(c) 24 focus group discussions with 192 participants, comprising in-school/out-of-school, male/female youth participants from urban and rural areas
(d) 5 case studies of former members of violent extremist groups – ASG (2), Maute group (2), and ISIS/BIFF (1).

Findings

Part 1: Youth vulnerability to violent extremism

While the 800 respondents in general appear aligned with the mainstream interpretation of Islamic concepts, the VE-backed interpretation of *jihad qital* is one exception. Half of the respondents (50.4%) agree or strongly agree that "*jihad qital* (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim." This interpretation is the one propagated by violent extremist groups and is not in line with the moderate interpretation of traditional Islam.

More than six out of ten respondents (67.8%) also agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I believe that discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight." This VE-backed interpretation equates anti-Muslim discriminatory practices (such as denying employment to a Muslim because of his religion) with the life-and-death actions of aggressors bent on destroying Islam, in effect adding a new justification for waging *jihad qital*.

Moro youth remains vulnerable to violent extremism. The two main push factors they identify are poverty and lack of access to education. These are still serious problems across the Bangsamoro autonomous region today. And VE groups are not letting up on their recruitment. Their targets include impoverished out-of-school youth, orphans, those who are unemployed, those involved in local/family feuds, and religiously and ideologically inclined youth leaders.

Only 9.6% of the 800 youth respondents are aware of P/CVE programs and projects. The highest awareness level, at 8.3%, is of programs that disseminate information about the threat of violent extremism in schools. The lowest awareness is of programs that present alternative/counter-narrative campaigns on violent extremism. Yet youth leaders in FGDs and key informants enumerated a long list of P/CVE programs and projects they know. There is evidently a gap between the top and the grassroots, suggesting that P/CVE programs and projects are not reaching the intended beneficiaries.

When told what P/CVE programs are planned, the 800 respondents were most interested in scholarships and training opportunities for Moro youth. About 73.9% chose this option when presented with a list of suggestions on how to prevent young people from joining VE groups. Other chosen suggestions include extending the national government's 4Ps conditional cash grants program to their communities (64.5%) and providing entrepreneurship tutoring to the youth and giving them access to capital (54.8%).

The suggestions by respondents, key informants, and FGD participants can be categorized under three headings. The first is advocacy, education, livelihood, and enterprise support. Raising community awareness of violent extremism is crucial, especially in rural barangays, along with scholarship, training opportunities, entrepreneurship training, start-up capital or support package, and regular interaction with non-Muslims in summer camps, social media groups, schools, and similar avenues to fight discrimination and exclusion.

The second bucket is social safety nets, which include improving and expanding the government's 4Ps program and implementing genuine poverty alleviation interventions that can be felt by those in need. The third bucket is ideological support, including regular interaction with religious leaders who can explain mainstream Islam and help counter the VE ideology among the youth, and relevant P/CVE contents (including a contextual explanation of overseas events that can be misused by local VE groups) on multi-media platforms and tailored to the needs of local youth in the Philippines.

Part 2: Urban youth and violent extremism, 2017 and 2022 Studies:

The top 3 religious concepts relating to VE with high awareness among urban youth have not changed over five years. These are *jihad* (struggle), *ummah* (community), and *hijrah* (migration), the very concepts that VE groups focus on to promote their cause by advancing extremist interpretations of these terms. This implies that the probability of having a VE-inclined consciousness finding its way into the mindset of the youth remains present.

Jihad remains the most known concept among respondents in both studies (2017 and 2022). The level of awareness of this concept slightly increased among youths in Cotabato City and Jolo, Sulu, but slightly decreased in Marawi City and Lamitan City. Since the level of familiarity with *jihad* is high, the likelihood is also high that VE groups will continue to push their extremist interpretation of this concept as a recruitment strategy.

Parents/family have become more influential as a source of information on religious concepts, with more respondents citing parents/family in 2022 compared with 2017. Still, the *madrasah* is consistently identified as the main source of information among urban youth in both 2017 and 2022. Compared with the 2017 study, Islamic seminar/lecture series and other face-to-face events are rarely mentioned in 2022, which might be due to COVID pandemic restrictions.

Where urban youth associated violent extremism with religion in 2017, respondents in 2022 tend to frame VE along legal lines. "*Extreme practice of religion*", "*strategies for the youth to do extremist acts using the wrong concept of Islam*", and "*against Islamic teaching*" are among the descriptors in 2017. In 2022, the descriptors revolve around violations of the law. Interestingly, a greater percentage of urban youth (12%) now categorically consider VE as *"against Islam/Islamic teaching"* compared with just 5% in 2017.

FGD discussants in both 2017 and 2022 characterize VE as an act that involves extreme violence, which is against Islam and against the law. What is interesting is that the 2022 participants correctly identify the name of VE groups and the series of events that, for the participants, manifest VE. The ease with which they provide such details is perhaps not surprising, given the high-profile terrorist attacks that occurred in the recent past, such as the Marawi Siege, the Mamasapano encounter, and the Jolo Cathedral bombings.

There is a change in the attitude of urban youth around *jihad qital* (armed struggle). In the 2017 study, urban youth exhibited a moderate attitude as they agreed that armed struggle is subject to the rules of *shariah* (Islamic law), i.e. that women, children, and the elderly should not be killed or harmed. In the 2022 findings, urban youth indicated agreement with an interpretation popularly upheld by VE groups, that *jihad qital* is an obligation of every Muslim, including women, children, and the elderly.

Urban youth in 2017 were indecisive on two concerns: the use of violence (i.e. armed conflict), and the concept of *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance to a Muslim leader). In the 2022 study, this indecisiveness has been replaced with a more defined attitude, as respondents expressed either agreement or disagreement on these two concepts.

There is also observable movement in the attitude of urban youth regarding the use of violence as a form of response to social (e.g. discrimination) and political (e.g. presence of the West's military presence in Muslim lands) issues. Urban youth respondents in the 2017 study neither agreed nor disagreed with statements around these three areas. In the 2022 research, the majority of urban youth agree that violence can never be a justification for pursuing certain goals.

Poverty remains the most commonly identified driver for joining VE among urban youth. Six out of ten respondents in both the 2017 (63%) and 2022 (60.5%) studies cite poverty as the reason for people signing up with VE groups. As such, economic incentives such as cash remain

effective recruitment tools. In the 2022 study, political drivers such as corruption and poor governance gained attention, being the second and third commonly mentioned motivations. Unstable peace and order also remain among the top reasons identified in 2017 and 2022.

Part 3: Vulnerability of Moro youth in conflict-affected rural areas

The concept of *jihad* is widely known by the majority of youth in conflict-affected rural areas, ranging from 96% in Mamasapano to 53% in Patikul. In Islam, *jihad* has two meanings – a struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam and the spiritual struggle within oneself against sin. VE groups typically frame *jihad* as a "holy war," as justification and rallying cry for engaging in conflict with non-believers. Other Islamic concepts rural youth are most aware of include *ummah*, *fatwa* (religious edicts), and *hijrah*.

More than three-fourths of rural youth mentioned parents as the source of knowledge of Islamic concepts. In conflict-affected rural areas, the *madrasah* and the *masjid* are also primary sources of knowledge. The *madrasah* was overwhelmingly mentioned by the Mamasapano and Tipo-Tipo respondents. But only 23% of Patikul respondents named the *madrasah* as the source of their knowledge.

There is unanimity around beliefs in tolerance and peaceful co-existence with non-Muslims. Rural youth express agreement with the statements: "Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful co-existence," "Muslims are allowed live under non-Muslim government (*hijrah*)", and "VE groups have brought disunity among Muslims." But there are differences in opinions, including the statement "I believe Jihad *qital (*armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim." Seven out of ten respondents in Mamasapano (78%) and Tipo-Tipo (74%) respondents agree with the statement, while 49% in Butig disagree. Patikul respondents are split (41% agree, with another 41% disagree), with 18% undecided. Differences in beliefs are also observed between in-school and out-of-school youth.

Rural youth are cognizant of the presence of violent extremist groups in the region. ISIS is frequently mentioned by a big majority (80-100%) of respondents from Mamasapano, Butig, and Tipo-Tipo. Respondents in the island provinces are highly aware of the Abu Sayyaf (more than 90%). BIFF is familiar to 73% of respondents from Mamasapano, while the Maute group was mentioned by 97% of Butig respondents.

Socioeconomic factors are named by rural respondents as major motivations for joining VE groups. Poverty is a widely perceived push factor for more than three-fourths of respondents from Mamasapano, Butig, and Tipo-Tipo. This is also mentioned in the FGDs, with youth leaders saying cash, guns, and cellphones are the common strategies used to lure rural youth to join the VE groups. Poverty incidence in these rural areas is high, according to Philippine Statistics Authority 2018 data – 72.65% in Mamasapano, 80.72% in Butig, and 76.71% in Tipo-Tipo.
Other drivers cited are corruption and poor governance, political alienation, and exposure to violence. Discrimination is specifically mentioned by respondents from Butig, Tipo-Tipo, and Mamasapano.

Recommendations

While guided by a national policy framework and resource allocation, addressing the push factors in VE recruitment can only be meaningful if government interventions go beyond the traditional kinetic approach (police and military action). The P/CVE effort should be viewed through a more holistic and inclusive human security paradigm that addresses economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Toward this end, this study recommends the following courses of action:

Rural/Urban Contexts (Addressing Push Factors, Strengthening Human Security)

1. **Understand that rural and urban areas in Muslim Mindanao have unique contexts in terms of the needs and wants of young Moros vulnerable to VE recruitment**. Part of that uniqueness comes from the religious context and the history of discrimination against Muslims, along with decades of military action that has brought a measure of peace but also bred suspicion and resentment as their presence in an area draws attacks from violent extremists. The success of P/CVE programs and projects in Muslim Mindanao will depend on how well they take these unique contexts into account.

2. **Refine the structure of the NAP-PCVE Cabinet Cluster System to incorporate decentralization and subsidiarity as core principles of the whole-of-nation approach**. This will help realize regional-local synergy, with the MHSD, DGTE (MBHTE), MSSD, MILG, and concerned LGUs empowered to focus on post-conflict rehabilitation and reintegration in VE-affected communities (such as the SPMS box in Maguindanao, Patikul in Sulu, Tipo-Tipo in Basilan, and Butig and Marawi City in Lanao Sur) using a whole-of-community approach toward comprehensive human security, not just physical security.

3. **Prioritize high-impact and fast-to-implement P/CVE programs and projects in Muslim Mindanao communities, particularly in conflict-affected localities.** Enrollment in the national 4Ps poverty alleviation program, which gives conditional cash grants to qualified families, is one such fast-to-implement initiative. Scholarship and training opportunities are also relatively easy to organize given existing infrastructures like TESDA and the network of state colleges and universities in Mindanao.

Recruitment (Addressing Vulnerability)

1. **Refine education opportunities to cover the full board.** Scholarship and vocational training grants should come with a monthly stipend, board and lodging, daily travel expenses, health insurance, book allowance, free school fees, and so on. A wider and more flexible entrepreneurial and employment support system should also be made available, along with inter and intra-faith and cultural interaction.

2. **Expand beneficiaries beyond youth leaders to other recruitment targets such as out-of-school youth and orphans.** Benefits from P/CVE projects and programs should be cascaded down to ordinary members of youth organizations and outward to poor young people, out-of-school youth, those involved in clan conflicts, and orphans. Ensure that the process of selecting beneficiaries is fair and is seen to be fair.

3. **Disrupt the ability of VE groups to recruit with money, guns, and mobile phones.** Operationalize the National Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Strategy and strictly implement the No Ransom Policy for KFR [kidnap-for-ransom] cases. This can go a long way toward cutting off VE resources from abroad and proceeds from crime.

Resilience (Countering VE Ideology)

1. **Enlist BARMM agencies to build capacity around Islamic *wasatiyyah* (moderation) as a counterpoint to VE ideology.** They should be asked to rally local ulama and religious institutions – schools, mosques, and religious organizations – around *wasatiyyah*.

2. **Curate existing content and develop locally relevant material around *wasatiyyah* that espouses the traditional moderate Islamic belief system.** Enlist the help of the religious sector in the Muslim community since it is well-prepared and well-positioned to counter VE narratives. For example, *jihad* is a very nuanced term. Only Islamic scholars are well-placed to explain the nuances and how VE groups can subtly twist it to suit their ideology.

   The National Action Plan does call for the generation of counter-narratives based on documents that bolster the moderate strain of Islam such as the Amman Message, Marrakesh Declaration, and Charter of Medina. It also calls for tapping "men and women third party advocates (e.g., religious/traditional leaders, former violent extremists) to propagate counter and alternative narratives through various online channels."

3. **Disseminate the curated and original *wasatiyyah* content to the target communities.** Use quad-media (print, broadcast, internet, and social media) to spread the information. Because this study finds that videos are a key medium for VE content, the *wasatiyyah* materials should also be presented in video form. Consider pre-loading the *wasatiyyah* materials on mobile phones that can be distributed to selected Moro youth.

4. **Encourage Filipino Muslim scholars to further their studies in centers of learning in Egypt and Southeast Asia.** Institutions in other areas have a reputation for being influenced by fundamentalist leanings. Filipino Islamic scholars and teachers should also be encouraged to engage and regularly interact with their peers in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, which largely retain much of the moderate traditions of Islam despite the inflow of some fundamentalist and radical ideas.

5. **Work toward creating Islamic institutions organized as part of the government, which has been done in Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia**. Muslim communities in the Philippines are followers of the Shafi'e school of jurisprudence and share commonalities with Muslim countries and communities in Southeast Asia. In these nations, Islamic institutions organized as part of the government guide the Muslim faithful.

   In the Philippines, Presidential Decree 1083 provides for the creation of a national-level Office of the Jurisconsult, but it does not exist at present. BARMM recently organized the Office of the Wali and the Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta'. In the absence of a state-backed national body, these two BARMM entities can provide leadership and authority to guide and influence Filipino Muslims. But they will need support from P/CVE actors to include P/CVE as an integral component of their policy and program priority.

6. **Encourage higher academic institutions to organize school-based P/CVE interventions**. Institutions such as the UP IIS in Diliman, MSU King Faisal Center in Marawi, WMSU CAIS in Zamboanga, and MSU TCTO CIAS in Tawi-Tawi can be organized as a network that can

lead in organizing interventions targeting public and private universities and colleges inside BARMM and those serving Muslim students outside of the region. This can be replicated or complemented with senior and junior high schools supervised by the MBHTE.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Violent extremism is the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals[3]. This definition includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence.

The Philippines continues to grapple with unresolved violence among various clans and religious, political, and criminal groups. It has also become one of the targets of global terrorists. Some Muslim rebel groups still operate in the southern Philippines, a region known for five decades of periodic violence. The formation of a Muslim autonomous region in 2018 eased some of that tension. However, some analysts consider the Taliban victory in Afghanistan in 2021 as a threat that could inspire radical Muslim groups in Southeast Asia to take up arms once more against their governments.[4]

The phenomenon of violent extremism (VE) has been generally associated with the vulnerability of the youth. The primary reason is that young people are deemed vulnerable to becoming violent extremists and they are the ones who are vulnerable to recruitment.[5] UNESCO points out that young men and women are often negatively affected by poverty, marginalization, unemployment, and underemployment, and often find themselves lacking the necessary literacy, capabilities, and skills to overcome these issues. These factors make them vulnerable targets of recruitment by extremist groups that exploit their frustrations and vulnerability[6].

The recent developments in Afghanistan with the return of the Taliban to power have issued a wake-up call thousands of kilometers away in Southeast Asia, home to millions of Muslims (IWAMOTO, 2021).

There is a growing concern that the recent success and reemergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan may be inspiring violent extremist groups around the world. Iwamoto mentioned that one possible trouble spot is the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, long a base for Muslim militants, including those allied with the Islamic State group.[7] This is because there is a perceived network and mutual inspiration among them.

In 2017, IAG conducted vulnerability research on violent extremism in urban cities[8] of ARMM. Data collection was conducted three months before the Marawi siege. The study looked at the young Moro people's vulnerability to violent extremism and sought to understand the set of beliefs that supports acts of terrorism manifested in their behavior and attitudes and examined their perceptions of the drivers of violent extremism. Among the findings:

(a) The young Moro respondents are very much aware of violent extremists such as the Abu Sayyaf, ISIS, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and Dawla Islamiyyah (Maute Group). They also affirmed the presence of recruiters of VE groups in their community.

(b) They believe that young Moro gradually adopted radical views through listening to radical preachers, attending prayer groups, and having regular contact with recruiters. They also think that due to poverty in the conflict-affected areas, the young are easily "lured with gadgets like cellphones, iPad, motorcycles, guns, and money to join the VE group." After

---

3 https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html

4 https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_how-talibans-win-might-influence-radical-muslims-southeast-asia/6219205.html

5 https://promundoglobal.org/resources/youth-and-the-field-of-countering-violent-extremism/

6 https://en.unesco.org/

7 https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Afghanistan-turmoil/ASEAN-on-guard-for-extremism-inspired-by-Taliban-s-Afghan-triumph

8 The vulnerability study was conducted in Cotabato City, Maguindanao, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Lamitan City, and Isabela City in Basilan, and Jolo, Sulu. Jolo is the center of commerce and trade of Sulu.

joining the recruits are taken to remote camps and "Islamic teachings and discussion on *jihad* are used for indoctrination."

(c) The respondents support the idea that education is the way to address violent extremism: first, quality education for young people to get jobs and employment; second, education to mainstream the value of moderate Islam in schools/madaris in Muslim communities, and third, multi-sectoral efforts to raise awareness and understanding of VE.

The research findings became one of the bases for the development of the Philippine Government's National Action Plan (NAP) on Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE), which was launched in 2019. The goal of the NAP P/CVE is to prevent radicalization leading to violent extremism through a whole-of-nation approach or the merging of the government civil society organizations, religious sector, and other key stakeholders' initiatives to implement the intervention programs.

The findings also became the basis for civil society's engagement in P/CVE in their target communities. Since then, policy and program initiatives addressing the vulnerability of young people to violent extremism have been implemented by the government, civil society organizations, and international development partners.

After five years since the study was published, significant intervening events in the BARMM took place – the approval of Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the establishment of the BARMM government, normalization processes, the reemergence of Taliban in Afghanistan, and the growing P/CVE interventions in communities. With these events, follow-through research was conducted to find out the current perceptions, attitudes, views, opinions, and awareness of VE among the Moro youth in the BARMM. Just as the 2017 study informed the National Action Plan on VE, this study is expected to provide current data for policies and programming to strengthen the implementation of P/CVE in the region.

Moreover, the updated data from this study will be valuable for developing effective and relevant policies and programs by local governments, security sectors, CSOs, and international development partners. Considering the vital role of the youth in the P/CVE, the findings will provide data for effective programming for their active involvement in the program.

It will also contribute to the literature on violent extremism in Southeast Asia that helps shape the international response to global terrorism and violent extremism.

Objectives

Generally, this study aimed to undertake a follow-through of the 2017 research on urban youth vulnerability to violent extremism to track changes in their perceptions and attitudes towards violent extremism and generate data on the perspectives of the youth in conflict-affected rural areas on violent extremism. More specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the urban and rural young Moros' views and attitudes toward violent extremism and their perceptions of the drivers of VE;
2. Identify changes in the urban youth's perceptions, attitudes, and views on the drivers of VE;
3. Generate data on the perspectives of the Moro youth in conflict-affected rural areas on VE;
4. Identify the P/CVE programs and projects in the Bangsamoro region and the participation of the Moro youth in the projects; and
5. Determine the perceived effects of the intervening events on VE in the BARMM.

B. Conceptual Framework

In the analysis of data for the research objectives, the study uses the conceptual framework indicating the interrelationship of concepts in this study as presented in Figure 1. The mindset of the young Moros on the VE is generally influenced by their living conditions or environments in urban or rural areas. They also affect their perceptions of the programs in preventing/countering VE. Most often, conflict-affected rural areas are usually the targets of P/CVE programs due to their urgency to deter the recruitment of the youth to join VE groups.

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*
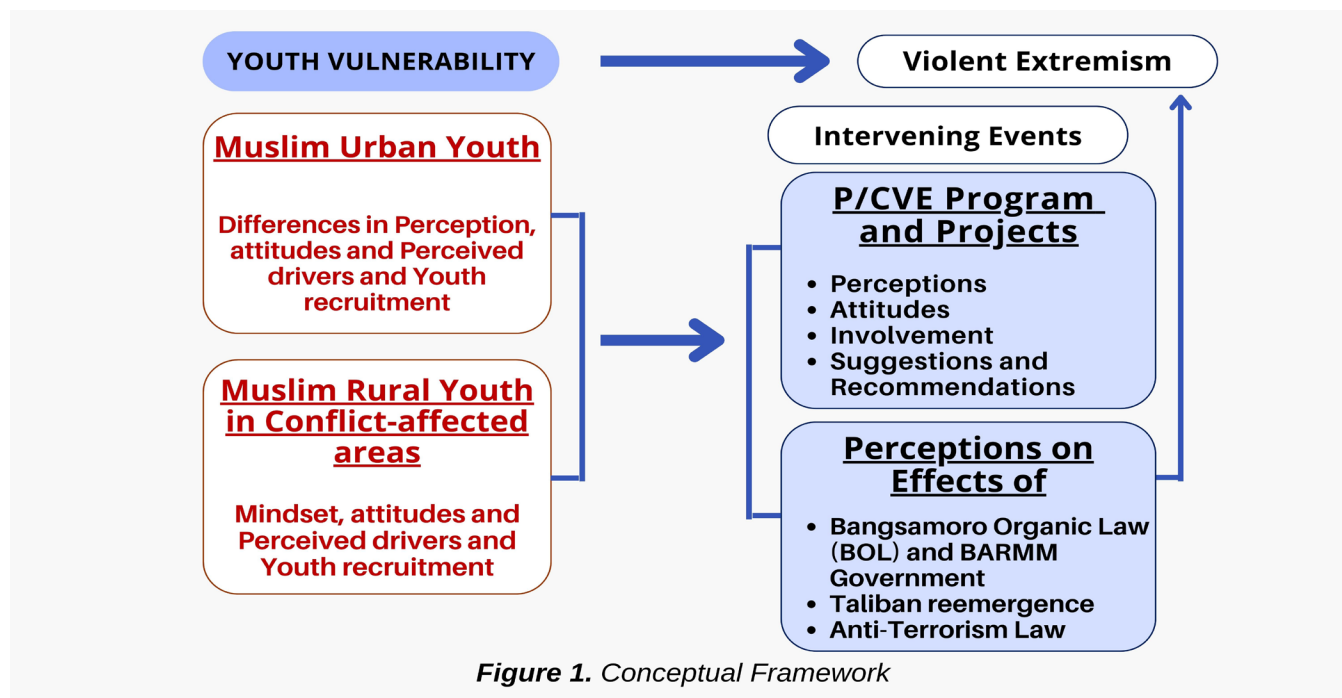
C. Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined as used in this study:

Anti-Terrorism Law. Refers to the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, the most recent effort to address the issue of terrorism and all allied activities while at the same time ensuring the protection of the civil and political rights of citizens.

Attitudes toward violent extremism. Refers to responses of the youth with regards to a given situation, reflecting violent extremism actions/activities that can result in negative or positive feelings or dispositions.

BARMM government. The BARMM government was established in 2019 after the approval of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. It is under the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Bangsamoro Organic Law. Refers to Republic Act No. 110504, providing for the organic law to strengthen and expand the organic act for the autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao.

Conflict-affected areas. These are areas in the Bangsamoro region that are affected by armed conflict between the military and extremist groups such as BIFF, Maute groups, ISIS, or other groups conducting violent activities in the region.

Involvement in P/CVE programs and projects. Refers to the youth participation in the programs or projects implemented in the region that aims to prevent or counter violent extremism.

Mindset. Includes the understanding of the youth on the concepts of violent extremism and knowledge of basic concepts related to violent extremism.

NAP P/CVE. This refers to the Philippine government's National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

Perceptions. Refers to the young people's way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression about violent extremism and terrorism based on their experiences and/or knowledge of these phenomena.

Taliban reemergence. The Islamic fundamentalist group returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021 after waging an insurgency against the US-backed government in Kabul. Their reemergence might energize the VE groups in the region as perceived by the youth.

Violent extremist groups. Refers to ISIS, BIFF, Maute group, or other violent extremist groups engaged in violent activities identified by the youth respondents in the Bangsamoro region.

Violent extremism. A form of extremism that condones and enacts violence with ideological or deliberate intent, such as religious or political violence. Violent extremist views can manifest in connection with a range of issues, including politics, religion, and gender relations.[9]

Youth. These are persons belonging to the age group 15-30 years old[10], residents of urban and rural conflict-affected areas, male-female, in-school, or out-of-school.

Youth recruitment. Activities in the locality that encourage, entice, and/or attract the youth to violent extremist groups using money, gadgets, and other benefits.

Youth vulnerability. The susceptibility of a young person because of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other factors to the "driving forces of violent extremism" at the community level and, ultimately, to radicalization that leads to violent extremism[11].

D. Understanding and Differentiating Mainstream and Violent Extremist Narratives

Islam is at the core of opposing narratives between the overwhelming majority of Muslims, on one hand, and a vocal and active minority of violent extremists, on the other end. The majority maintains that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance and is consistent with universal values and the contemporary world setting. This is mainstream Islam. Claiming the opposite, violent extremists pursue a global hegemonic agenda based on their exclusive view of a monolithic Islam. This peripheral view sees the use of violence as justifiable if it advances the agenda.

At the core of the dispute between mainstream and peripheral narratives are concepts that are common to both, but reinterpreted by the minority to lure youth recruits to join their extreme ideology and violent action. Since these are some of the most misunderstood Islamic concepts, there is a need for a nuanced explanation to understand how these concepts are used or misused in certain contexts.

---

9 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes. "'Radicalization' and 'violent extremism'" in Module 2: Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism, E4J University Module Series: Counter-Terrorism. Accessed Date: September 11, 2022. - https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html

10 Under Republic Act 8044 or "Youth in Nation-Building Act", youth refer to those persons whose ages range from fifteen (15) to thirty (30) years old. - https://nyc.gov.ph/republic-act-8044/#:~:text=An%20act%20creating%20the%20National,Therefore%2C%20and%20for%20Other%20Purposes.

11 Search for Common Ground, Hedaya, Countering Violent Extremism: An introductory guide to concepts, development programs and best practices/ Adapted for the Central Asian region, (2019) https://Www.sfcg.org/countering-violent-extremism/SFCG-Countering_Violent_Extremism-An_Introductory_Guide_Russian.Pdf.

The initial list of disputed concepts comes from the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) Singapore as it dealt with local Jemaah Islamiah (JI) extremists in the 2000s. The RRG started as a voluntary group of *ulama* and *asatidzah* involved in the rehabilitation of detained JI members and their families through counseling in order "to correct the misinterpretation of Islamic concepts", "dispel the extremist and terrorist ideologies they have been indoctrinated with", "counter detainees' ideological misunderstanding of religion", and help the affected individuals and their families to come to terms with the fact that they have been misled and acknowledge the inappropriateness of their behavior. Family members were also counseled "to avoid and disrupt the vicious ideological cycle".

Jihad. From the Arabic *jahada*, it means 'to exert' or 'to struggle.' In Islamic jurisprudence, the term is commonly classified into two: (1) *Jihad Akbar* (Greater, Inner Struggle) and (2) *Jihad Ashgar* (Lesser, External Struggle). *Jihad Akbar*, also called *Jihad an-Nafs* (Struggle Against One's Ego), reflects the personal struggle to better one's self, to battle base desires, an internal mental and spiritual struggle or to become a better Muslim, to exert efforts in worship *(ibadah)* and righteous deed (*amal saleeh*). Jihad Ashgar reflects the right to protect and defend one's self or the community from external threats. For the VE groups, "those who refuse to participate in *jihad* are hypocrites and apostates. They have become non-Muslims, and as such deserve death"[12].

There is a broad rubric of *jihad* known as a struggle associated with personal exertion on the path or the cause of Allah (*Jihad fiy Sabilillah*), a 13-categorization matrix divided into four themes: *jihad* against one's ego, *jihad* against Satan, *jihad* against disbelievers and hypocrites, and *jihad* against aggressors and heresiarchs, as explained by Prof. Ahmad Muhammad at-Tayyeb, Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar[13]. The broad rubric is reflected below:

Table 1. The Broad Rubric of Jihad as explained by Prof Ahmad Muhammad at-Tayyeb, the Grand Sheikh of Al-Adzhar University

1. Jihad against one's self	2. Jihad against Satan	3. Jihad against disbelievers and hypocrites	4. Jihad against aggressors and heresiarchs
1.1. Jihad against one's self to learn the teachings of Islam.	2.1. Jihad against Satan to ward off the doubts and suspicions that Satan stirs up to undermine faith.	3.1. Jihad of the heart	4.1. Jihad by hand if one could do that.
1.2. Jihad against one's self to act following what one has learned.		3.2. Jihad by the tongue	4.2. If he is unable to do so, then by the tongue.
1.3. Jihad against one's self to call to Islam intentionally and to teach whoever does not know about it.	2.2. Jihad against Satan to defend from what is thrown into the heart of lust and corrupt intentions.	3.3. Jihad by wealth	4.3. If he is unable to do so, then with the heart.
1.4. Jihad against one's self to bear patiently the difficulties involved in calling people to Allah and their insults for the sake of Allah.		3.4. Jihad by hand	

John Esposito, Professor of Religion and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, explains the individual and community strains of *jihad* as (1) following and realizing God's will by leading a virtuous life and (2) extending the Islamic community through preaching, education, example, writing, etc. He added that *Jihad* also includes the right, that is, the obligation, to defend Islam and the community from aggression[14].

12 Gilliam, Joshua. 2018. "The Ethics of ISIS: Takfir in Surah 9". Simons Center Special Report 2017. - https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ethics-Symp-pg53-58.pdf

13 "His Eminence Sheikh Dr Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb". The Muslim 500 – 2023 Edition. Jordan: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://themuslim500.com/profiles/ahmad-muhammad-al-tayyeb/

14 Esposito, John. "Jihad: Holy or Unholy War?". Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam and What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam. Oxford University Press. 2002. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://www.unaoc.org/repository/Esposito_Jihad_Holy_Unholy.pdf

Jihad as armed struggle or defense is defined in Islamic jurisprudence as a collective responsibility of a Muslim community or state. It has to be declared and led by a competent leader affirmed by the people in that community or state. The violent extremist narrative views *jihad* as *qital* (war, combat) and makes it a personal responsibility. In this manner, there is even an attempt to expand the core five pillars of Islam – *shahadah* (testimony), *salah* (daily prayer), *zakah* (charity), *sawm* (fasting), and *hajj* (pilgrimage) – to include their call to arms as the 6th pillar.

This martial view of *jihad* can be traced to the crusade regime, when the fight to reclaim the holy land became a holy war. Muslims countered the West's holy crusade with an armed struggle, i.e., to defend the lands under Muslim control. Thus, the West's conception of *jihad* as 'holy war' translates as *harb* (war) or *qital* (kill) in Arabic. Both are starkly different from the defensive nature of *jihad*. As summed up by Richard Burkholder (2002), talking about a Gallup poll on what *jihad* means to 10,004 adults surveyed in predominantly Islamic countries, "across the *Umma* – Islam's global community of believers –- the concept of jihad is considerably more nuanced than the single sense in which Western commentators invariably invoke the term"[15].

Al Wala' wal Bara'. This term is about loving (pleasing) God and hating (withdrawing) from those that are not pleasing to Him, and is translated as "Loyalty and Disavowal". Accordingly, this is a key concept in the violent extremist ideology, and anyone who opposes this is considered by them to violate the Aqidah, the Muslim belief system. To the violent extremists, "Muslims can only give their loyalty (*Wala'*) to Islam and Muslims, while the non-Muslims and Muslims who "are not with them" must be disassociated (*Bara'*), and in the worst case, killed"[16]. At the social level, social interaction with non-Muslims is prohibited by VE groups, including wishing them well on their festivals. According to violent extremists, practices are seen as forbidden, because these constitute Wala' or associations that could threaten the creed and tarnish the purity of faith or religion. Ustaz Ridhwan Mohd Basor, a member of Singapore's Asatizah Youth Network, challenges this myth of religious exclusivism, saying, there is no blanket prohibition in the Quran against befriending non-Muslims, Prophet Muhammad himself established social relations with other faith communities, and Islam promotes peaceful co-existence[17].

Collectively, the ulama and asatidzah from the RRG Singapore there is a need to educate the Muslim community, and especially young people, on how these concepts have been misused by correcting the misunderstanding. "In several places, the Quran qualifies its statements to indicate that this prohibition of allegiance to non-Muslims does not apply to all non-Muslims in general, but, rather, to only a particular type," they say.

They cite the activities of the Prophet Muhammad, both in Mecca and Medina, which "abound with fine examples of how he dealt amicably with everyone, including non-Muslims" and "many pacts and alliances aimed at eliminating injustice and aggression." The Prophet emphasized, "his role and mission, to spread Allah's compassion and mercy that is His *Rahmah* (Mercy), to all the worlds." Therefore, they conclude that "the interpretation of the doctrine of Al-Wala' wal Bara' as one that encourages enmity towards non-Muslims, therefore clearly contradicts the spirit of our religion. Such kind of hatred can never be part of the practice of a true Muslim"[18].

Takfir. The act of *takfir* is to accuse other Muslims of being *kafir* (infidels, apostates). The accuser, called a *takfiri,* is in effect calling for the accused to be excommunicated from Islam, a state of affairs punishable by death[19]. But scholars point to the absence of the concept of *takfir* in both the Qur'an

15 Burkholder, Richard. "Jihad -- 'Holy War', or Internal Spiritual Struggle?". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://news.gallup.com/poll/7333/jihad-holy-war-internal-spiritual-struggle.aspx

16 Al Wala' wal Bara'". Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) Singapore. 2016. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://www.rrg.sg/al-wala-wal-bara/

17 Ustaz Ridhwan Mohd Basor. 2018. "Can Muslims Befriend Non-Muslims?" - https://muslim.sg/articles/can-muslims-befriend-non-muslims

18 Ibid.

19 Poljarevic, Emin. 2021. "Chapter 21 Theology of Violence-oriented Takfirism as a Political Theory: The Case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)". In Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (eds) Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements. - https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004435544_026

and Hadith. It came about in the post-Qur'anic period, and the first one to use this was the Khawarij.

From the 20th century onward, the word gained credence as it was used against individuals, and later on to organizations and governments, seen as deviating from the *takfiri*'s perceived standards of what Muslim and Islamic polity should be. Its preponderance, later on, evolved into the *takfiri* phenomenon[20] that is now common among violent extremists and organizations. Muslims have been the target of the VE *takfiri* ideology. Jamileh Kadiver in her 2020[21] paper cited Anthony Cordesman's observation that "the overwhelming majority of … violent terrorist incidents do occur in largely Muslim states, and most of these incidents are perpetrated by a small minority of Muslims…whose primary victims are fellow Muslims".

In his paper "The Danger of *Takfir* (Excommunication): Exposing IS' Takfiri Ideology" (2017), Dr. Muhammad Haniff Hassan, himself a Muslim scholar and a Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)[22], contradicted the claim of VE groups. He argued that a Muslim cannot be excommunicated for not being part of an Islamic group or for leaving one. He added that the same applies to Muslims living in or under non-Muslim society and/or those refusing to migrate to a Muslim country or area controlled by fellow Muslims[23].

One of the key questions that the Amman Message[24] attempted to answer in 2006 is whether it is permissible to declare someone as an apostate and who and under what circumstances has the right to call someone else as such. According to the *mujtahids* (senior-most scholars), *ulama* (scholars), and *maraji'* (authorities) who were consulted on the matter, it is impossible and impermissible to declare a Muslim an apostate if that person is any of the following:

- Whosoever is an adherent to one of the four *Sunni* schools (*Mathahib*) of Islamic jurisprudence (*Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi`i,* and Hanbali);
- The two *Shi'i* schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Ja`fari* and *Zaydi*), the *Ibadi* school of Islamic jurisprudence and the *Thahiri* school of Islamic jurisprudence.
- Additionally, under Shaykh Al-Azhar's *fatwa*, whosoever subscribes to the *Ash`ari* creed, practices real *Tasawwuf* (Sufism) and subscribes to true *Salafi* thought.

Because of the impossibility and impermissibility, according to these eminent Islamic scholars, the person's blood, honor, and property are inviolable[25]. Further, the Amman Message placed preconditions on the issuing of fatwa (religious edicts) to prevent its abuse and the circulation of illegitimate edicts.

Fatwa. The term denotes a legal opinion (plural, *fatawa*) issued by a qualified jurist (*mufti*) and is different from *hukm* (ruling) issued by a competent Islamic court, which is obligatory and binding. According to the Amman Message (2006), each school of jurisprudence (*madhab*) has its qualification and methodology for arriving at a *fatwa* and no one may issue a *fatwa* without the requisite personal qualifications that each school of Islamic jurisprudence determines. Further, it added, "no one may issue a *fatwa* without adhering to the methodology of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence, to do unlimited *Ijtihad* and to create a new school of Islamic jurisprudence or to issue unacceptable *fatwas* that take Muslims out of the principles and certainties of the Shari`ah and what has been established in respect of its schools of jurisprudence"[26].

---

20 Aniek Nurhayati et al. 2022. "Indonesian takfiri Movement on Online Media in Umberto Eco's Semiotic Perspective". In ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman Volume 15, Number 2, March 2021; p-ISSN: 1978-3183; e-ISSN: 2356-2218; 195-222. - http://repository.uinsby.ac.id/id/eprint/738/1/Aniek%20Nurhayati_ Indonesian%20takfiri%20movement%20on%20online%20media.pdf

21 Kadiver, Jamileh. 2020. "Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media". In Contemporary Review of the Middle East. Volume 7. Issue 3, page(s): 259-285. - https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2347798920921706

22 "Dr Muhammad Haniff Hassan". Date Accessed – September 11, 2022 – https://www.rsis.edu.sg/profile/muhammad-haniff-hassan/

23 Muhammad Haniff Hassan . (2017). "The Danger of Takfir (Excommunication): Exposing IS' Takfiri Ideology". Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses. Vol. 9, No. 4 (April 2017), pp. 3-12 – https://www.jstor.org/stable/26351508?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents

24 "The Amman Message". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - - https://ammanmessage.com/the-amman-message-full/

25 "The Amman Message". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://ammanmessage.com/the-three-points-of-the-amman-message-v-1/

26 Ibid

In the Philippines, there is a provision in Presidential Decree 1083 (Title III – Jurisconsult in Islamic Law) creating the office of the Jurisconsult (Mufti) for the Muslim Community[27]. The last occupant was appointed by the late President Ramos in 1996 and occupied the office until 2015 (for 19 years). There is also the Darul-Ifta' in the Autonomous Region as the office mandated by law to issue a fatwa. The inaugural office was legislated in the ARMM through the Muslim Mindanao Autonomy (MMA) Act No. 323 signed by Governor Hataman in 2015. When the BARMM was organized, the Bangsamoro Darul Ifta' (BDI) was organized through Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BBA) Number 13, approved in October 2020[28].

Aside from these two institutions, there are also non-government jurisconsult entities that operate for the same purpose, such as the Darul-Ifta' of Region IX and Palawan, Darul-Ifta' of Davao Region, and the Darul-Ifta' within the MILF. In 2019, the Darul-Ifta' of Region IX and Palawan condemned the Mt Carmel Cathedral bombing in Jolo, saying that their condemnation is grounded in Islamic Law, which forbids all forms of attacks on innocent civilians, and citing a Qur'anic verse, "whoever kills a human being, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind, and whoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind" (Chapter 5: Verse 32)[29].

In Singapore, the task for *fatwa* formulation lies with the MUIS Fatwa Committee to "assist the Mufti in the process of *fatwa* deliberation and ensure that *fatwas* are deliberated comprehensively". There are five full members and several more associate members appointed by the President of the Republic of Singapore to a three-year term[30]. The Mufti of Singapore, assisted by this Fatwa Committee, has responded to contemporary challenges that require legal opinion (*fatwa*) and guidance (*Irshad*), ranging from family and employment, clarifications on the Muslims' belief system, Covid-19 difficulty and vaccination, finance and estate matters, matters of religious worship (*ibadah*), and advancement in science and technology, such as milk bank, organ and bone marrow transplant, abortion, advancement in stem cell therapy, and presence of ethanol in food flavoring[31].

Salafism. We need to differentiate Salafi ideology as understood within the Islamic community and Salafism that sprang from outside. Joshua Gilliam in a 2018 paper[32] tried to define this term as understood from within and by most Islamic faithful:

- A Salafi is a Muslim who was alive during the first three generations.
- Several Salafi groups have emerged in the last 40 years, desiring to return to the pristine Islam of the Qur'an and Sunnah as practiced by the first three generations of Muslims, who learned it directly from the Prophet Muhammad.
- Modern-day Salafis preach a total rejection of any religious innovation (*bid'a*) within Islam. They call on Muslims to disregard traditional understanding and embrace the pure Islam of the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- The purpose of modern-day Salafi groups is to purify Muslim society and return it to the pattern of the early community.
- Salafis are not only "scripturalists but also literalists" who believe Muslims must behave exactly like their pious forefathers whose deeds and thoughts were found in the sources of Islam.

27 "Presidential Degree 1083 - A Decree to Ordain and Promulgate a Code Recognizing the System of Filipino Muslim Laws, Codifying Muslim Personal Laws, and Providing for its Administration and for Other Purposes". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1977/pd_1083_1977.html

28 "Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BBA) Number 13". Office of MP Ras Mitmug. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://rasmitmug.com/ebooks/BAA-13-Admin-Code-8.pdf

29 "Darul-Ifta' of Region 9 and Palawan: All Muslims and other faiths ought to unite against all those who terrorize innocents and those who permit the killings" - https://www.mindanews.com/statements/2019/01/darul-ifta-of-region-9-and-palawan-all-muslims-and-other-faiths-ought-to-unite-against-all-those-who-terrorize-innocents-and-those-who-permit-the-killings/

30 MUIS. "Fatwa Committee". - https://www.muis.gov.sg/About-MUIS/Fatwa-Committee

31 MUIS. "All Fatwa". - https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa

32 Gilliam, Joshua. 2018. "The Ethics of ISIS: Takfir in Surah 9". Simons Center Special Report 2017. - https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ethics-Symp-pg53-58.pdf

- Therefore, Salafis tend to give more weight to a plain reading of scripture at the expense of contextual nuances or the consensus of the *ulama* (Islamic legal scholars), akin to *the sola scriptura* of the Protestant Reformation.

Wehrey and Boukhars (2019) point to the diversity and dynamism of Salafism as understood within the Islamic community. As a lived reality, it incorporates local social contexts and customs[33]. They recognize that its growth is due to a multitude of socioeconomic and political factors, including a strong moral critique of the existing order and a certitude of virtue that is comforting in times of upheaval.

Salafism as understood from outside of the Muslim community, especially the Western conception, can be gleaned from the scholarly attempt to delineate, demarcate and designate Salafists into three groups: "quietists" (who eschew politics in favor of scholarship and proselytization), "politicos" (who engage in politics through various mediums) and violent jihadists. Wehrey and Boukhars (2019) argue that "these divisions are increasingly blurred and do not account for Salafism's increasing dynamism on matters of creed and practice".

In a 2016 article, Dr. Annabel Inge from King's College London discussed six common misconceptions about Salafi Muslims in the West[34]. While Western interest in the subject is triggered by political and security considerations, academics like Inge are interested in the transnational links of Salafi groups in the West; intra-Salafi diversity and fragmentation in the West; (online) debates between Salafis and Sufis in the West; Salafi group responses to the Islamic State and its ideology; post-Salafi trajectories of ex-Salafi Muslims; constructions of masculinity and femininity in Salafi literature in the West; (online) debates between Salafi and Shi'i Muslims in the West; in-depth examinations of leading Salafi scholars and/or activists in the West; Salafism in particular Western nation-state contexts; approaches to citizenship and political participation among Salafi groups in the West; Salafi vs. mainstream Sunni apologetics/debates in the West; and online engagement/presence of Salafi groups in the West[35].

Wahhabism is an exonymic term for a particular form of Salafism that sprouted within Saudi Arabia through the teachings of Saudi scholar Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab[36]. Neither Abd al-Wahhab nor his followers used this term. In fact, among his contemporary followers, the use of the term Wahhabism is considered negative, derogatory[37], pejorative, and highly offensive. Abd al-Wahhab's teachings undermined the Muwahhidun movement to purge certain practices that he and his followers consider contrary to the purity of Islamic monotheism (Tawhid), which they sought to revive.

His pact with Muhammad Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia, ensured that this reform movement – coined Wahhabism by the Orientalists and in the West – would become the official religious ideology of the country[38]. For the followers of Abd al-Wahhab, what the scholar is advocating is simple – a return to the practice of the Salaf (pious predecessors). The Salaf are the first three generations of Muslims from the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (Sahabah); their successors (Tabi'in); and the successors of the successors (Taba al-Tabi'in)[39],[40].

33 Wehrey, Frederic, and Anouar Boukhars, 'Defining Salafism: Contexts and Currents', Salafism in the Maghreb: Politics, Piety, and Militancy, Carnegie Endowment for Intl Peace (New York, 2019; online edn, Oxford Academic, 19 Dec. 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190942403.003.0002, accessed 11 Sept. 2022.

34 Inge, Annabel. 2016. "6 common misconceptions about Salafi Muslims in the West". Oxford University Press's Academic Insights for the Thinking World. - https://blog.oup.com/2016/10/6-misconceptions-salafi-muslims/

35 "Special Issue "Salafism in the West"". In Religions. - https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/salafism

36 "Muhammad ibn "Abd al-Wahhāb". Online Britannica". Date accessed – September 12, 2022. - https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad-ibn-Abd-al-Wahhab

37 Blanchard, Christopher M. 2008. "The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya". In CRS Report to Congress. - https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf

38 Long, David E. 2009. "Tawhid or Jihad: What Wahhabism Is and Is Not". - https://www.mei.edu/publications/tawhid-or-jihad-what-wahhabism-and-not

39 "The Salaf Information" (2020). - https://salaficity.org/the-salaf-companions

40 "Salafi Movement" (2010). - https://slife.org/salafi-movement/

Ummah. The Arabic word meaning the community has become synonymous with Ummat al-Islam (Islamic community) and Ummat al-Muslimin (Muslim community). It refers to the global Muslim community bonded by their common adherence to the Islamic faith and as followers of Prophet Muhammad. This takes inspiration from the Qur'an, such as, "Truly! This, your Ummah is one religion, and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me (Alone)" (Chapter 21, Verse 92[41]). The word appears in the Qur'an more than 50 times and can be grouped under at least five to six concepts as explained by the Egyptian Dar al-Ifta[42].

Interestingly, the community led by the Prophet in Yathrib (Medina) after he migrated from Mecca was not exclusive to Muslims. The Prophet developed a network of alliances between his *ummah* and other tribes in the locality. His community was not static and permanent. It was dynamic because of defections, expansions, and alliances at one time against his community and at another time part of his community[43]. The Constitution of Medina established the local *ummah* – composed of Muhajirun (migrants from Mecca), and the important tribes of Yathrib (Medina), including Jews, Christians, and newly-converted local Muslims (the Ansar) – as a community united across tribal boundaries and against external aggression, but separate from pagan society. It regulated inter-group relations, including the free practice of religion[44].

VE groups view the global Islamic *ummah* not just as a community of worshippers, but as one monolithic global political entity. Maajid Nawaz, the director of the Quilliam Foundation in the United Kingdom, in his testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the US Senate in 2008, noted the discrepancy between the Prophet's and VE groups' notions of the *ummah.* "The prophetic understanding of *ummah*, which is as a religious community, and the Prophet himself in Medina, when he signed the Document of Medina, the famous document, used the word *ummah,* or nation, to refer to the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims all living together in one city," he observed. "Yet today, Islamists will use it just for Muslims as a global community"[45].

The VE ideology also exploits contemporary inequality, oppression, and exploitation as symptomatic of Muslim disunity and justifies its recourse to extremism and violence as a response to Western political and economic domination over the Muslim world. For Iqbal and Abdul Mabud, navigating this complexity and contemporary turbulence implies working out a middle path for the Muslim ummah, a path that is neither extreme (as mainstream Islam taught) nor violent (as proposed by the West)[46].

Khilafah. Upon the death of the Prophet Muhammad, there was a question of who is qualified to become his successor (Khalifah). Four of his companions succeeded him – Abu Bakar, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, as both religious and temporal guides of the growing Muslim community. After them, a monarchical form of governance and dynastic form of leadership succession became dominant across the Muslim World, while continuously using the title of "Khalifah" (Anglicized "Caliph") and "Amir al-Muhmineen" (Leader of the Faithful).

---

41 Chapter 21, Verse 92. The English translation is from Dr Mohsin Khan who quoted Ibn Kathir - https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=92

42 Dar al Ifta. "The Concept of "Ummah". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - http://www.dar-alifta.org/Foreign/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=367&CategoryID=3

43 "Muhammad's emigration to Yathrib (Medina)". In Online Britannica. - https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-world/Muhammads-emigration-to-Yathrib-Medina

44 Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World. "Constitution of Medina". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/islamiccivilizations/7967.html

45 Senate Hearing 110-942. "The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter It" - https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg44123/html/CHRG-110shrg44123.htm

46 Muhammad Adil Iqbal and Shaikh Abdul Mabud. "Challenge of Globalisation to the Muslim Ummah: Religious Extremism and the Need for Middle Path (Wasat)". In Strategic Studies. Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn 2019), pp. 73-88. - https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544311#metadata_info_tab_contents

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire spelled the end of the Khilafah form of governance and began the call for its revival[47]. The loss of the Ottoman Caliphate and the ensuing Western hegemony over Islamic lands was regarded as shameful for Muslims by VE groups. Such shame became an intense motivator[48] for the evolution of extremist beliefs and violent actions.

The ideology of violent extremists makes use of the terms *Dawlah Islamiyyah* (Islamic State) in general terms and Khilafah (Caliphate) as its specific form. By using both terms, VE groups claim leadership[49] of the Muslim *ummah*, whether in specific areas or at the beginning of their global political entity. The desire for the return of the Caliph as a religious and political leader for Muslims worldwide is an often-mentioned goal of VE groups. We do need to differentiate those calling for its return through peaceful democratic means and those whose call for its return justified their violent means.

McLeod and Hairgrove note that, in 2000, Indonesia's branch of *Hizbut Tahrir* (HT-I) hosted the 3rd International Caliphate Conference with about 5,000 attendees. The 2007 conference drew over 90,000 participants from at least 39 countries. While groups in attendance ranged from moderate Islamic organizations to those associated with Al Qaeda, they were bound by a common desire to re-establish the Khilafah as a global Islamic state headed by a Caliph as the religious and political leader of this politico-religious entity[50]. VE groups believe that the Khilafah is the only acceptable form of governance and the Khalifah is the only acceptable leader for the global Muslim community.

Bay'ah is a term associated with Islamic leadership. Historically, it has been seen as the oath of allegiance to the Khalifa or ruler and the invocation of God's blessing upon that ruler. Members of VE groups swear their *bay'ah* to their group leader and the pledge given is equated with a pledge to the Prophet Muhammad. One who breaks the pledge is considered an infidel and can be a target of violence by any VE member.

Hijrah or migration holds a special place in the history of Islam. It became a lifeline for new Muslims who could no longer bear the violence perpetuated on them by hostile Mecca residents. A group of Meccan Muslims was allowed by Prophet Muhammad to migrate to Abyssinia, a Christian kingdom in present-day Ethiopia. The migrants were eventually allowed to stay and practice their faith freely. The most important migration event is that of the Prophet Muhammad himself and some of his followers seeking refuge in Yathrib (now Medina).

According to VE groups, Muslims should migrate to areas that these groups control and where their brand of Islam is strictly enforced. This particularly applies to Muslims living under what the VE groups consider un-Islamic conditions, such as those in the West or non-Muslim countries. They argue that it is wrong for Muslims to live in such an environment. "They also claim that Muslims who willingly accept the rule of non-Muslims and live under any rule other than the *Shariah* (Islamic law), in all circumstances, are committing acts that will nullify their faith," writes RSIS's Haniff Hassan. "For the extremists, loyalty and sovereignty can only be given to and by God, and Islam is the only way of life for Muslims"[51]. The VE groups intertwine religious loyalty with political sovereignty, instead of taking a nuanced view of the two concepts as they relate to Muslims who are a minority in the general population.

---

47 "The Authority of the Khilafah". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/authority-khilafah

48 McLeod, Douglas M., and Frank Hairgrove. 2008. "Support for the Caliphate and Radical Mobilization." (January). www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/research_briefs/20080131_Caliphate_...

49 Ian Mitch and Ashley L. Rhoades. "The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization)". RAND Corporation. Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html

50 Ian Mitch and Ashley L. Rhoades. "The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization)". RAND Corporation. Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html

51 Muhammad Haniff Hassan. "Living in a Non-Muslim Country: Responding to the Idea of Hijrah (Migration)". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.rrg.sg/hijrah/

Wasatiyyah is a term associated with moderation, an antidote against extremism and violence. Islam is nuanced in its teachings against extremism, which may come in the form of excessiveness (*ghuluww*), harshness (*tanattu*), severity (*tashaddud*), and extremism (*tatarruf*)[52]. In several *hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad warns his followers against extremism as many communities were destroyed because of their extremist ways (Sunan an-Nasa'i 3057). The Prophet reminds the faithful of what awaits the extremists – they will be destroyed (Sahih Muslim). He pointed to two people to whom his intercession is withheld: an oppressive/unjust ruler and a rebellious extremist[53].

In another *hadith*, The Prophet reminds us that "a Muslim (one who proclaims faith) is that person from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe. A Mu'min (one who manifests faith) is that person in whom humanity finds safety and security regarding their lives, property, and honor." (Bayhaqi). Further, he said, God is kind and loves kindness in every matter, and kindness has been granted a capacity that violence could never attain (Sahih Muslim)[54]. Therefore, the acceptable path for Muslims is the middle, median or moderate way, with the Muslims collectively as '*ummatan wasatan*' – "a median community, a people of moderation/a balanced medium; a testimony or model for humanity." (Qur'an, Chapter 2: Verse 143).

Global Consensus. Another set of concepts is contained in current documents that enjoy wide consensus from Muslim political and religious leaders who address contemporary issues within the Muslim world and articulate their meaning and relevance. For the most part, these documents contradict the divisive and exclusive nature of the interpretation of violent extremist groups. As discussed, the Amman Message (2006) lays out the concepts of *takfir* and *fatwa*. Other important declarations relevant to distinguishing mainstream moderate Islam from violent and extremist narratives include the following:

> **Makkah Declaration (2008) of the World Islamic Conference on Dialogue**[55] – Defines the Islamic bases of dialogue; dialogue methodologies; with whom to dialogue; and its groundwork. It concludes that humanity's differences and distinctiveness are pre-ordained and they are there to know each other and help one another. It recognizes dialogue as a genuine Qur'anic call for action. It calls for reflection on the Constitution of Medina as a framework for coexistence and cooperation.

> **Marrakesh Declaration (2016)**[56] – 'The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action.' The summit used the original Charter of Medina, drawn up by the Prophet Muhammad himself, as a basis for addressing the current crisis of religious minorities in parts of the Muslim world. This document aims to "contribute to the broader legal discourse surrounding contractual citizenship and the protection of minorities, to awaken the dynamism of Muslim societies and encourage the creation of a broad-based movement of protecting religious minorities in Muslim lands".

> **Mardin Conference (2010)**[57] – Ibn Taymiyyah's Fatwa is seen in a corrected light, though this conference is a direct rebuke to the VE narrative. In his fatwa, he recognized "that the

---

52 *"Senseless killings in the name of faith". An article in the Arab News. Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.arabnews.com/islam-perspective/news/714221*

53 *Ibid.*

54 *Sadullah Khan. 2017. "The Call of Islam: Peace and Moderation, Not Intolerance and Extremism". - https://www.islamicity.org/6258/the-call-of-islam-peace-and-moderation-not-intolerance-and-extremism/*

55 *Makkah Declaration (2008) - https://www.kaiciid.org/file/1161/download?token=NgO78dXQ*

56 *Marrakesh Declaration - 'The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action'' - https://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/*

57 *"The Mardin Conference – Understanding Ibn Taymiyyah's Fatwa" (2010) – https://muslimmatters.org/2010/06/29/the-mardin-conference-%E2%80%93-a-detailed-account/*

world is not to be divided simplistically into Islamic lands and non-Islamic lands, unlike many before him who held to that dualistic view, recognizing there is a third type of society which has aspects of both. He stated that Muslims can live in such societies as long as they are free to practice their religion and that everyone should be afforded their rights. Muslims should recognize the religious rights of their fellow Muslims living in those lands, as well as the rights of the non-Muslims there who are not subject to Islamic Law."

"This fatwa has relevance for today's pluralistic world, where there is scarcely a country where Muslims do not live. The conditions the Muslims live under vary from country to country. In many countries of the world, Muslim minorities fully enjoy the right to practice their faith. They are allowed to worship according to Islamic teachings, and they are not coerced into suppressing or abandoning their faith. Those countries may not be part of the Muslim world, but they are certain lands of peace and security."

Makkah Declaration or the Charter of Makkah (2019) of the Muslim World League (MWL)[58] – It creates a pan-Islamic set of principles that supported anti-extremism, religious and cultural diversity, and legislation against hate and violence.

Human Fraternity Document for World Peace and Living Together (2019)[59] – This is an important document inviting people who have faith in God and faith in human fraternity to unite and work together. In doing so, it serves as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect and being aware of the great divine grace that makes l human beings brothers and sisters.

58 Charter of Makkah (2019) - https://themwl.org/sites/default/files/TheCharterofMakkah.pdf
59 Human Fraternity Document for World Peace and Living Together (2019) - https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Design and Methods

The study employed a descriptive research design using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection such as surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs).

1. Sampling design

For the KIIs. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants for the key informant interviews on VE. The key informants were selected based on their (a) knowledge and experiences of VE activities happening in the community or at the regional level, and (b) involvement in the implementation of P/CVE programs or activities for the young people in the area. A total of 32 key informants were identified from the local government units, secondary/tertiary schools, non-government organizations, the security sector, international non-government organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and other relevant institutions.

For the FGDs. A purposive sampling of youth leaders of the school or community organizations was done. The participants were in-school or out-of-school youth leaders of the organization in the area. A total of 192 urban youth leaders participated in the FGDs in this study.

For the case studies. A selection of case studies was done in consultation with the military officers in the area who identified former members of violent extremist groups.

2. For the surveys.

The survey sample size was drawn using the following procedures:

(a) A checklist was prepared to contain the names of in-school and out-of-school members of youth organizations in the identified study sites both in urban and conflict-affected rural areas. In the urban areas, a list of 684 youth members (468 in-school and 396 out-of-school; 437 females and 429 males) was obtained from different educational institutions or CSOs. For the rural group, a list of 864 youth members of community-based organizations (522 in-school and 342 out-of-school; 242 males and 280 females) was also obtained from the LGUs or CSOs. Both lists served as a sampling frame for the selection of youth respondents.

(b) Using simple random sampling techniques, a total of 800 youth respondents, consisting of 400 (200 in-school; 200 OSY) from the urban and 400 (200 in-school; 200 OSY) from the conflict-affected areas were identified to comprise the sample size for the surveys. Table 2 presents the number of youth respondents by survey area, in-school/ out-of-school, and by male/ female category.

Table 2. Number of youth respondents by survey area and school status

Survey area	In-school		Out-of-school		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Urban	100	100	100	100	400
Conflict-affected rural setting	100	100	100	100	400
Total	200	200	200	200	800

3. The instruments

The instruments used for data collection are a key informant interview guide, focus group discussion guide, case study guide, and survey questionnaire. They were designed based on the research objectives of the study. Table 3 presents the instruments, data needs, and sources of data.

Table 3. Instruments, data needs, and sources of data

Instruments	Data Gathered	Sources
Survey questionnaire and FGD guide	Changes in the perceptions, and attitudes of the urban youth on VE after 2017	Urban youth respondents
Survey questionnaire	Changes in the drivers of VE as perceived by the urban youth	Urban respondents
Survey questionnaire and FGD guide Case study guide	The mindset of the youth in conflict-affected rural areas in terms of: • Understanding what is "Muslim" • Knowledge of basic concepts related to violent extremism and sources • Understanding of Violent extremism • Attitudes toward VE • Drivers of VE	Rural youth respondents Case studies
Survey questionnaire	P/CVE interventions implemented by the LGU, BARMM, national government, INGOs, and CSOs in the communities	Urban and rural youth respondents
Key informant guide	P/CVE programs and projects that the youth are involved in	Key Informants
Survey questionnaire	Attitudes of the youth toward these programs and projects	Urban and rural youth respondents
Survey questionnaires	Perceptions of the intervening events: • Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and programs of Bangsamoro government • Taliban reemergence • Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020	Urban and youth respondents
Survey questionnaire Key informant guide FGD guide	Suggestions on the implementation of the P/CVE programs and projects in the region	Youth respondents Key informants FGD participants

B. Data Gathering Procedures

Seven teams consisting of one field supervisor and two field interviewers for each study site were trained to conduct the data gathering in each area. The training was held in different venues. For the Maguindanao group, the training was held in Cotabato City; the Lanao Sur group had their training in Marawi City, while for the island group, the training was conducted in Zamboanga City. The training was done between December 2021 and January 2022.

The mayor and barangay chairman of each study site were informed about the data collection using surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with the youth participants of the study. The field interviewers were reminded to discuss the purpose of the VE study and that a consent form should be signed before the interviews began. The consent form should be signed by all respondents of surveys, key informant interviews, case studies, and focus group discussion participants.

The field data-gathering and editing were completed in March 2022.

C. Data Processing, Treatment, and Analysis

The data processing of the survey results involved data cleaning, encoding, and processing with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Frequency, percentages, tables, and graphs were used in the analysis and interpretation of data.

The data from the KII, case studies, and FGD narratives were collated and processed using an analysis tool that allows the categorizing of data from the transcripts, summarizing, tabulating, and organizing by themes. Thematic analysis was applied for the qualitative data generated from the KII, case studies, and FGD narratives. The research questions were the bases for the thematic groupings of the narratives. The data from the KIIs, case studies, and FGDs were used to substantiate the findings from the surveys.

III. THE SETTING AND PROFILE

A. The Study Areas

The study was conducted in the urban and conflict-affected rural areas in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The urban areas are composed of Cotabato City, Marawi City, Lamitan City, and Jolo. The 2017 VE study was conducted in these urban areas as well. The rural areas are Mamasapano in Maguindanao, Butig in Lanao del Sur, Patikul in Sulu, and Tipo-Tipo in Basilan.

Brief descriptions of each study site are presented to give the context of the presence of VE groups in these areas.

1. Maguindanao Province

The province is composed of 36 municipalities and 508 barangays. In the 2020 national census, a total population of 1,342,179[60] was recorded. This number represents 30.47% of the BARMM's total population. The majority of the provincial population are Maguindanaons (64.5%). The provincial capital is Buluan municipality, which is more or less 83 kilometers from Cotabato City.

Maguindanao is largely dependent on agriculture. The major crops are palay (unmilled rice), corn, coconut, mangoes, and bananas. The fishing industry thrives in the coastal municipalities and along Lake Buluan, the third-largest inland body of water in all of Mindanao. The poverty incidence of the province in 2020 was 37.1%[61], meaning that nearly four out of ten households live below the poverty line. This figure is higher than the 34.9% overall poverty incidence rate in BARMM.

The issue of violent extremism greatly affects the peace and order of the province because of the presence of violent extremists in the SPMS Box[62], which includes the municipalities of Shariff Aguak, Pagatin (Datu Saudi Ampatuan), Mamasapano, and Shariff Aguak. About 11 barangays inside the box are affected by several conflicts due to the presence of VE groups – local Islamist militants (BIFF, Dawlah Islamiyah, ISIS, and Maute groups) and private armed groups. An analysis of conflicts in the SPMS Box[63] revealed that the causes of conflicts are (a) a struggle to establish an Islamic state, (b) land grabbing, (c) a power struggle, (d) poverty, and (e) weak government response to the threats against security and protection of the communities.

Two sites for this VE study – Cotabato City and the municipality of Mamasapano – are located in Maguindanao province.

Cotabato City. The city is a 3rd class-independent component city in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It became part of BARMM through a plebiscite on January 21, 2019. It serves as the seat of the regional government of the BARMM. The city has 37 barangays with a total population of 325, 079 in the 2020 PSA Census. Maguindanaons comprise the majority of Cotabato City's population, accounting for more than 60%.

Situated in the center of Maguindanao, the city is the primary trade and commercial hub of the province. People from neighboring municipalities access basic services in the city such as health care, education, banks, hardware, dry goods, and the like. The youth's educational needs are served by the local private secondary/tertiary schools in the city. Most Moro and non-Moro youth are enrolled in Cotabato City State University or private tertiary schools.

---

60 Excluding the City of Cotabato

61 https://bangsamoro.gov.ph/news/latest-news/psa-barmms-poverty-incidence-declines-in-3-years/#:~:text=A%20significant%20decline%20of%20 poverty,37.1%20percent%20of%20poverty%20incidence.

62 The SPMS-box is a military term referring to the contiguous towns of Shariff Aguak, Pagatin (Datu Saudi Ampatuan town), Mamasapano, and Shariff Aguak, where the BIFF operates. https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1137753

63 Conducted in 2020, aimed to provide the general picture of causes and actors in the SPMS Box conflicts.

The city's economy is dependent on commerce and trade of agricultural products produced by neighboring municipalities such as rice, corn, vegetables, poultry, meat, industrial raw materials, and aquatic products. There are at least nine private commercial banks, one Islamic Bank, and government banks (Land Bank, DBP, and the Central Bank) in the city.

The poverty incidence of Cotabato City in 2018 (PSA) is 35.5%. The Philippine National Police, military (AFP), and the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT) maintain peace and order/security in the city.

The youth of Cotabato City is vulnerable to the recruitment of VE groups because of the presence of local Islamist militants (BIFF, Dawlah Islamiya terrorist groups) in the SPMS Box. The city is about 63 kilometers from Mamasapano (the center of SPMS Box) via Shariff Aguak. Before the Marawi siege, the recruitment of young Moro in the city was noted. About 72% of the Moro respondents in the 2017 study[64] cited that one of the motivations and influences that attract Muslim youth to join VE groups was "recruitment".

Mamasapano. This landlocked fifth-class municipality of Maguindanao has 14 barangays with a total population of 27,807 (Census 2020). The economy is agriculture-based, although agriculture remains underdeveloped. Mamasapano is prone to flooding, with most of the land marshy and surrounded by small rivers.

The majority of households are engaged in farming (rice and corn), fishing, driving, or vending. The poverty incidence rate of the municipality was very high at 72.65% in 2018[65].

One of the barangays of the municipality is Tukanalipao, where 44 members of PNP-Special Action Forces (SAF) were killed in 2015 on a mission to capture two-high-value targets, Malaysian terrorist Zukifli bin Hir "Marwan" and Abdul Basit Usman.[66]

Peace and order in the barangays of Mamasapano are currently secured by the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (MILF-BIAF) in coordination with the local government units – the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) plays a leadership role in the BARMM government. The signage "MILF-BIAF" is visible in the barangays. The MILF-BIAF Base and Brigade camps are situated in far-flung barangays of the municipalities within the SPMS Box.

2. Lanao del Sur Province

The province has 39 municipalities, one city, and 1,159 barangays. Lanao del Sur is home to the Maranaws and a smaller number of migrant settlers. In the 2020 PSA Census, a total population of 1,195,518 was reported. This figure accounts for 27.14% of the total BARMM population.

The province is known for Lake Lanao, the largest lake in Mindanao and the second largest in all of the Philippines. Lake Lanao is considered one of the 15 most ancient lakes in the world[67]. The Lanao del Sur economy is primarily agricultural, producing rice, corn, coconut, abaca, bananas, and durian. Brass-making and weaving of *malong* cloth are two flourishing cottage industries.

---

64 *The respondents of the study "Youth Vulnerability to Violent Extremism in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 2017" were from Cotabato City. IAG, Philippines.*

65 *https://www.google.com/search?q=poverty+incidence+of++Mamasapano&rlz=1C1CHBF_enPH858PH858&ei=fMj1YvHSHYOI-AbgoJXQAQ&ved=0ahUKEw jxgLbTrcD5AhUDBN4KHWBQBRoQ4dUDCA4&u*

66 *https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1128457*

67 *https://www.google.com/search?q=Lake+Lanao&rlz=1C1CHBF_enPH858PH858&ei=zO71YszMO_DxhwPrjYjwCw&ved=0ahUKEwjM4ryY0sD5AhXw-GEKHe sGAr4Q4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=Lake+Lanao&gs_*

PSA-BARMM 2021 reports a significant decline in poverty incidence among families in Lanao del Sur, from 68% in 2018 to 11.4% in 2021. However, the province remains the poorest province in the country,[68] with 74.3% of families living below the poverty line. Poor governance is cited as the primary reason for this reality.

Lanao del Sur was the home province of the Maute brothers, who joined forces with the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Marawi Siege of 2017. Chronic armed conflicts occur due to *rido* (clan feuds) and the presence of extremist groups in some municipalities of Lanao del Sur. Ordinary citizens are often caught in the crossfire. In March 2022, the aerial bombing of non-state armed groups by Philippine government forces displaced 2,786 families or about 14,000 individuals in 15 barangays. The most affected were the areas of Balintao, Bubong Bayabao, Camalig, Kianodan, Pilimoknan, Bubong Maguing, and Rungayan of Maguing municipality."[69]

Marawi City and the municipality of Butig were selected as the study areas for Lanao del Sur.

Marawi City. The Islamic City of Marawi is a fourth-class component city and the capital of Lanao del Sur province. In the 2020 PSA Census, it had a population of 207,010 people. The city is an important trading center for the province. The majority of households generate income from agriculture and trading.

The main agricultural products are rice and corn. Other sources of livelihood include hollow block manufacturing, goldsmithing, and sawmilling. Marawi is also known for its handicrafts and bladed weapon products.

The city is host to Mindanao State University, which was established in 1961. Dansalan College, an educational institution founded by missionary Frank Laubach in 1950, was set on fire by Maute militants during the Marawi Siege, which took the Philippine military nearly five months to end and displaced around 360, 000 people.[70] Five years on, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi are still incomplete. Around 1,200 displaced families remain temporarily housed in settlements in Barangay Sagonsongan.

Butig. A sixth-class municipality landlocked in a coastal province, Butig comprises 24 barangays with a total population of 22,768 people, according to the 2020 national census. The majority of households make a living by farming. Among the poorest ten municipalities in the country, Butig was found to have a poverty incidence of 80.72% by the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2018.

Butig was occupied by VE groups in 2016. Fighting erupted between the Philippine Army and local extremists led by Maute brothers, sympathizers of ISIS, and Jemaah Islamiyah.[71] At least 1,590 families were displaced in Barangays Bayabao-Poblacion, Coloyan, Poktan, Ragayan, Samer, and Sandab.[72]

Butig is now slowly recovering. With funding from the European Union through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), initiatives have been launched to empower young people in Butig to advocate for mutual understanding, respect, and increased tolerance.[73] The Butig Youth Movement for Peace (BYMP) was organized to inspire young people to take action toward preventing future violence. Its main objective is to lead joint community peacebuilding activities with other local youth groups, enhancing camaraderie, building mutual respect, and boosting their self-confidence.

---

68 http://rfu12.da.gov.ph/reports-and-documentation/da-rfo-xii-cy2017-bar-no-1/2-uncategorised/1510-list-of-20-poorest-provinces
69 https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-armed-conflict-lanao-del-sur-dg-echo-partners-local-media-echo-daily. Philippines - Armed conflict in Lanao Del Sur (DG ECHO Partners, local media) (ECHO Daily Flash of 11 March 2022)
70 https://www.usaid.gov/philippines/humanitarian-assistance/marawi-conflict
71 https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/848201/firefight-erupts-between-govt-troops-maute-group-in-lanao-sur,Inquirer Mindanao/ November 26, 2016
72 https://www.unhcr.org/ph/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2017/03/Protection-Cluster-June-Displacement-Dashboard_Final1.pdf
73 https://www.peopleinneed.net/the-filipino-peacebuilders-of-butig-7944gp

3. Basilan Province

Basilan province is one of BARMM's three island provinces. Its former capital, Isabela City, voted to remain with Region 9 and not join BARMM, so Lamitan City currently serves as the provincial capital. The PSA Census 2020 puts the total population of Basilan at 426,207 people.

The main sources of household income are farming and fishing. Major crops are rice, rubber, coconut, and corn. Basilan has many coconut and rubber plantations, and its enterprises manufacture fish and seaweed products for commercial use. Despite the province's land and sea resources, however, poverty incidence in the first semester of 2021 is reported at 46.7%,[74] meaning that nearly half of the population lives below the poverty line.

The province is known as the birthplace of the extremist Abu Sayyaf Group, which has pledged allegiance to ISIS. According to the national government's analysis, the ASG was able to carry out terrorist attacks in Basilan and neighboring islands because "it exploited the insurgent violence, pervasive criminality and constant feuding between familial clans to entrench itself in the politics of Basilan...the group convinced numerous local governments to provide sanctuary."[75]

It was not until 2016 that the local government, with support from the Philippine armed forces, was able to re-establish control of the province. Upon the recommendation of the government's Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Evaluation Committee, 29 barangays have been declared free of the ASG.[76] The people now enjoy relative peace and order even as community support programs continue and *madaris* and other education institutions warn about the effects of extremist violence and radicalization.

Lamitan City and Tipo-Tipo were identified as the study areas for Basilan province.

Lamitan City. A fifth-class component city, Basilan's capital is subdivided into 45 barangays and is home to 100,150 people (PSA Census 2020). Three major communities inhabit the city – Chavacanos (26%), Cebuanos (20.1%), and Yakan (20%).

About 73% of Lamitan's barangays are concentrated in agriculture, producing major crops such as coconut, rubber, coffee, bananas, and corn. The fishing industry is the primary source of livelihood in the coastal areas. The poverty incidence in Lamitan City is high at 52.7% (PSA, 2018).

Lamitan City[77] (then a municipality) was not spared from the war. In 2001, the ASG led by Gadhafi Janjalani and Abu Suleiman "occupied the hospital and church in the city, which prompted a large-scale military response from the government military destroying houses and displacement of more than a thousand residents who fled to safety".[78] While this incident took place more than a decade ago, the survivors still worry that it could happen again in the future.

Tipo-Tipo. A coastal third-class municipality with 11 barangays, Tipo-Tipo has a total population of 25,531 people (PSA Census 2020). Fishing is the main source of livelihood for the majority of households. Poverty incidence is very high at 76.71%, indicating that seven out of ten inhabitants have to survive on less than Php13,578, the minimum income required for an individual to meet the basic food and non-food requirement for six months.[79]

Tipo-Tipo also had its share of violent extremism. In 2016, an encounter between the military and the ASG militants took place in the area. The battle resulted in dozens of casualties, with at least 18 soldiers and 31 militants reported killed, and more than 70 non-combatants injured. It was the largest single loss of life for the Philippine Army since the beginning of the year.[80]

---

74 https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2021%201st%20Poverty%20Stats_Full%20Publication_17Dec2021_rev5.pdf

75 https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2021%201st%20Poverty%20Stats_Full%20Publication_17Dec2021_rev5.pdf

76 Ibid.

77 Lamitan was officially recognized as a Component City in 2007.

78 "Painful Memories still haunts Lamitan siege survivors."https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1604064/painful-memories-still-haunt-lamitan-siege-survivors#ixzz7c6XdCfTx. PDI, May 30, 2022,

79 http://rssoarmm.psa.gov.ph/release/content/special/55264

80 https://dbpedia.org/page/Battle_of_Tipo-Tipo

4. Sulu Province

The province of Sulu has 19 municipalities and 410 barangays, with the municipality of Jolo serving as the provincial capital. It has a total population of 1,000,108 people as of 2020 (PSA Census), representing 22.7% of the total population of BARMM. Tausug and Sama comprised the majority of Sulu's population. Poverty incidence is high at 71.9% in 2021[81]. Sulu is classified as one of the poorest provinces in the country.

Most households derive income from fishing, farming, self-employment, and employment in the government sector. The major crops are coconut, cassava, and bananas. Secondary crops include abaca, coffee, lanzones, jackfruit, durian, mangosteen, and marang. Sulu is also known for the production of pearls.

When they were driven from Basilan, the ASG relocated their camps in Sulu, where local ASG supporters also provided shelter to extremist Jemaah Islamiyah members from Indonesia.[82] The province has experienced the worst bombing incidents conducted by ASG, including the Jolo Cathedral bombing in 2019 and twin explosions in the Jolo commercial center in 2020.

At present, Sulu is one of the recipients of a project in the island provinces funded by IOM (International Organization for Migration). The project aims to promote inclusive governance and social cohesion at the community level, which are important measures to prevent radicalization and violent extremism.[83] The IOM program is envisioned to address the main drivers of instability in some of the fragile communities in Sulu.

Jolo and Patikul were identified as the study areas for Sulu province.

Jolo. The first-class municipality of Jolo has a population of 137,266 people, as recorded by PSA Census 2020. The figure represents 13.73% of the total population of Sulu province. Tausug people comprise the majority of the population of Jolo.

The municipal economy depends on the trading of agricultural products such as coconut, cassava, abaca, coffee, lanzones, jackfruit, durian, mangosteen, and marang. The poverty incidence of Jolo in 2018 (PSA) was 58.94%.

Jolo suffered bombing attacks by extremists in 2019 and 2020. Insurgents alleged to be jihadists from the Abu Sayyaf group detonated two bombs in the commercial center of Jolo. At present, Jolo residents enjoy relative peace with the presence of military detachments in the area and with the programs on preventing and countering violent extremism implemented by local CSOs and academe, with funding from international non-government organizations.

Patikul. This coastal third-class municipality has 30 barangays and a total population of 79,564 recorded in the PSA 2020, representing 7.96% of the Sulu population. The majority of households depend on farming and fishing. Poverty incidence in Patikul in 2018 (PSA) was 59.06%. In 2017, many Patikul residents had to leave their homes due to the presence of terrorist groups in their communities. After three years, the national government introduced a Balik Barangay Program providing support to victims of VE groups. Poultry production was introduced to farmers through the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program. The program

---

81 First semester of 2021, PSA.
82 https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/abu_sayyaf.html
83 https://www.norway.no/en/philippines/norway-philippines/news-events/news/promoting-peace-in-the-sulu-archipelago/

was in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) of the BARMM government[84]. Seven barangays of Patikul are expected to benefit from the SAAD Program.
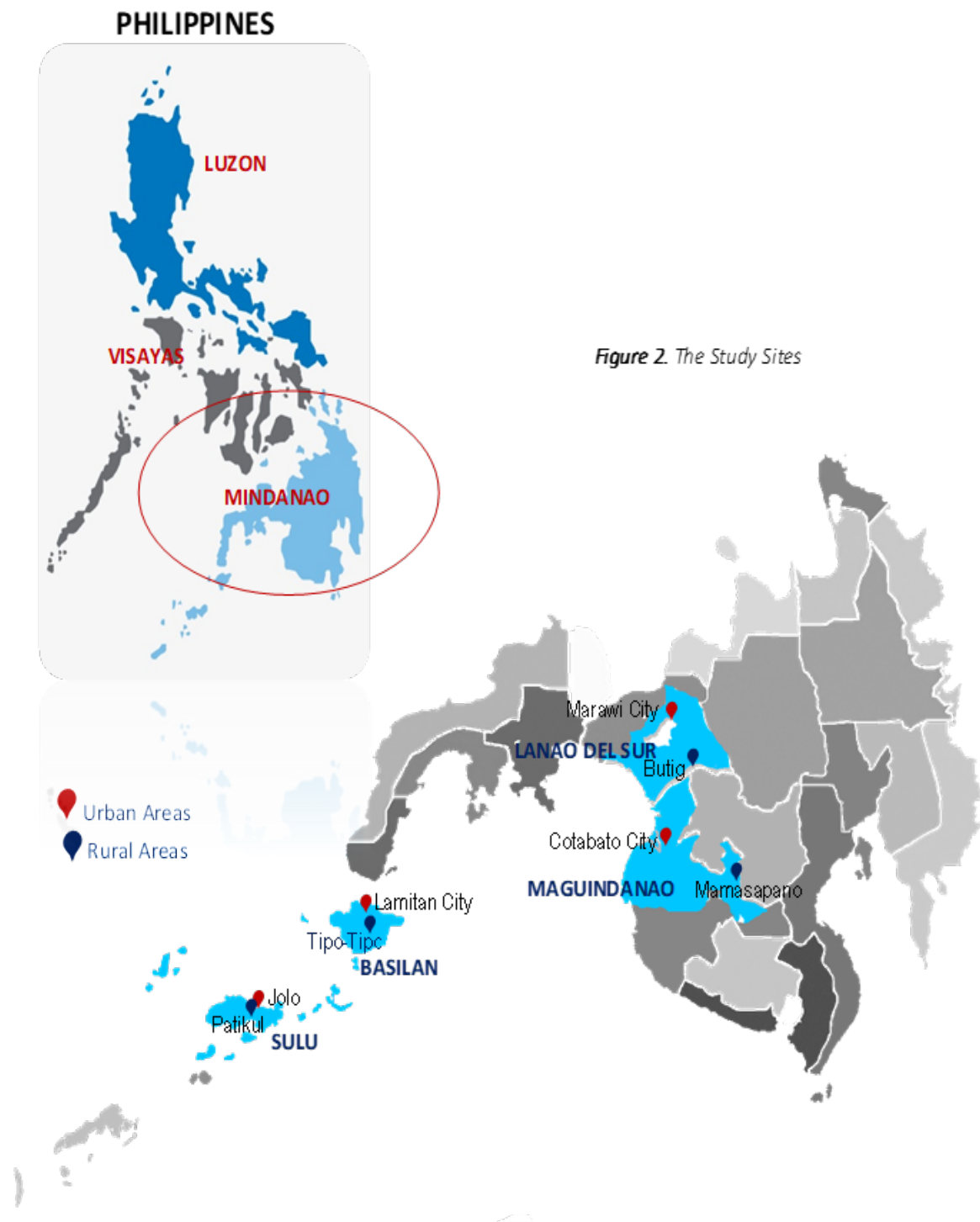
Figure 2. The Study Sites

84 https://saad.da.gov.ph/2021/09/patikul-farmers-receive-30-layer-chicken-egg-machines. September 22, 2021.

B. Respondents' Profile

The data for this study were taken from the survey of youth respondents, interviews with key informants, and participants in focus group discussions. A brief background of the participants is presented below:

The KIIs respondents. A total of 32 key informants (21 males and 11 females) participated in the study. Of this number, 11 are from Maguindanao, and seven each from Lanao del Sur, Basilan, and Sulu. Classified by institution/agency affiliation, nine are local government officials, seven are employed in schools, another seven are from civil society organizations (CSOs), and five are military officers assigned in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, and Basilan. Three are project managers of international non-government organizations (INGOs) based in the Bangsamoro region, while one is a representative from the Bangsamoro Women's Commission (BWC).

The FGD participants. A total of 192 young individuals, 87% belonging to the 15-25 age group, participated in the FGDs. Their average age is 21 years. A little over half (51%) are males. About 51% were out of school while 49% were in school when the FGDs were conducted between December 2021 to February 2022. Nine of ten were single at the time.

By ethnic affiliation, 38% of participants are Tausug, 25% each are Maguindanao and Maranaw, and 12% belong to the Yakan tribe. In terms of educational attainment, 38% have a college education, 23% have a high school education, and 17% have a senior high school education. About 7% are college graduates.

A sizable number (48.7%) are either the president or vice president of a youth organization in their respective communities.

The survey respondents. A total of 800 youth respondents comprise the sample size (400 urban youth and 400 rural youth). The group is relatively young, with eight of ten respondents belonging to the 15-25 age group. The mean age is 21 years. Almost 10% have elementary education. The number of rural youth with high school education is 45.8%, higher than 41% of the urban group. In terms of college education, a good number of urban youth have a college education (34.3%), double that in the rural group (16.8%).

The majority of the youth respondents have Arabic/Islamic education, with 42.8% completing Ibditai and 11.8% Idadi education. More rural youth completed Ibditai (44.8%) or Idadi (15.5%) compared with urban youth (40.5% Ibditai; 8% Idadi). Similarly, regarding Thanawi education, 10.8% of the rural group have Thanawi compared with 4.3% of the urban group. About 2% of rural youth have Kulliyah education (urban youth: 1%).

Both groups have a large household size, with seven members on average. The majority of households derive income from farming (urban: 17.5%; rural: 45.5%), business (urban: 26.3%; rural: 25.5%), employment in government or private offices (urban: 16.3%; rural: 3.6%), or driving transport (urban:13.5%; rural: 7%). Another source of income among 9.6% of households in rural areas is fishing. Remittances from abroad are another source of income among urban and rural households (6.8% and 5.8%, respectively).

The average monthly income is Php9,409.56 for urban and Php6,832.48 for rural households, far below the BARMM's per capita poverty threshold in the first semester of 2021 of Php14,126 to meet the monthly basic food and non-food requirements for a family/individual.[85]

Table 4. Selected characteristics of urban and rural youth survey respondents

Selected characteristics	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
1. Age group			
% 15-25 years old	87.0	89.6	88.0
% 26 – 30 years old	12.0	10.3	11.1
Mean age (in years)	**21**	**20**	**21**
2. Highest educational attainment			
% with elementary education	9.0	10.8	9.9
% with high school education	41.0	45.8	43.4
% with senior high school education	13.8	13.8	13.8
% with a college education	34.3	16.8	25.5
% with Voctech education	1.3	0.0	0.6
3. Arabic/Islamic education			
% with Ibtidai	40.5	44.8	42.6
% with Idadi	8.0	15.5	11.8
% with Thanawai	4.3	10.8	7.5
% with Kulliyah	1.0	2.0	1.5
4. Average household size	**7**	**7**	**7**
5. Sources of household income			
% farming	17.5	45.5	31.5
% business	26.3	25.5	25.9
% remittance abroad (OFW)	6.8	5.8	6.3
% employed in private/government offices	16.3	3.6	9.9
% driving	13.5	7.0	10.3
% fishing	0.3	9.5	4.9
6. Average household monthly income	**Php9,409.56**	**PhP6,832.48**	**Php8,103.01**

---

85 https://psa.gov.ph/content/poverty-threshold-pt-2

IV. FINDINGS

PART 1: YOUTH VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

This section presents aggregate findings from the survey of 800 respondents in four urban areas and four conflict-affected rural areas. It also includes insights from key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

A. Knowledge of Concepts Related to Violent Extremism

1. Understanding of Islamic concepts

The survey respondents were presented with a list of Islamic concepts that relate to violent extremism and asked to indicate which ones they know. Those who said they were aware of a concept were asked to briefly describe their understanding of it and their sources of information.

Table 5. Awareness of Islamic concepts related to VE (percent, multiple answers)

Islamic concept	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
Jihad	82.8	73.5	78.1
Ummah	50.0	46.5	48.3
Hijrah	27.8	25.3	26.5
Wahhabi	19.3	12.5	15.9
Salafi	16.3	18.3	17.3
Fatwa	13.0	17.0	15.0
Bay'ah	8.0	8.0	8.0
Khilafah	7.5	8.0	7.8
Al Wara Al Bara	3.0	1.8	2.4
Takfir	2.5	3.0	2.8
Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter	0.5	0.3	0.4

The most known Islamic concept is *jihad,* a term that 78.1% of all respondents say they are familiar with. Awareness is higher in urban areas (82.8%) than in rural areas (73.5%). Awareness of the second most known concept, *ummah,* is much lower at less than half of respondents (48%), with the third most known concept, *hijrah*, way down at only 26.5%.

The concept of co-existence as stated in the Medina Charter[86] is virtually unknown to youth in Bangsamoro, with only 0.4% of respondents saying they are aware of this concept, which is a key idea in the document constituted by the Prophet Muhammad. Those who said they were aware of the term *jihad* were asked to briefly describe it. The words and phrases most associated with *jihad* are "struggle for the sake of Allah," "physical jihad against transgressors," "fight," and "war". The *madrasa*h is identified as the primary source of information on *jihad*, followed by the family and elders.

---

86 According to Prof. Mohamed Bin Ali of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, "the Medina Charter constitued by Prophet Muhammad in 622 in Arabia was intended to end inter-tribal conflicts and maintain peace and cooperation among the Medinan people 1,400 years ago." One of its most significant features is "the recognition of all different communities as one nation (ummah) regardless of religions and tribes."

Ummah is associated with people "who believe in the oneness of Allah and Prophet Muhammad as the last messenger of Allah" – a formulation credited to teachers in the *madrasah*. The term *hijrah* is associated with the "calendar in Islam," "migration," "pilgrim" and "journey of Prophet Muhammad". This concept too was learned from the *madrasah* and secondarily from parents.

Table 6. Understanding of Islamic concepts and source of knowledge

Concept	How described by respondents	Source of information
Jihad	Struggle for the sake of Allah/sacrifice	· Madrasah
	Physical Jihad against the transgressors/fight/war	· Family
	To protect the religion of Islam	· Elders
	Fighting against hypocrites is another type of Jihad	· Social media
Ummah	Who believes in the oneness of Allah and Prophet Muhammad as the last messenger of Allah	· Madrasah
		· Family
Hijrah	Calendar in Islam	· Madrasah
	Migration	· Parents
	Pilgrim	· Mosque
	Journey of prophet Muhammad	· Elders
Wahhabi	Different ideologies in Islam	· Madrasah
	They forbid the celebration of Mawlid	· Elders
	Religious sector	· Friends
		· Mosque
Salafi	Sunni Muslim	· Madrasah
	Belief in Allah and Prophet Muhammad	· Ulama
	Aqeedah	· Social media
	Following the Quran and Sunnah	· Madrasah
Fatwa	Lecture from a mufti/religious leader	· Madrasah
	Islamic guidance/giving good advice	· Elders
	Islamic teaching	· Mosque
		· Family
		· Social media
Bay'ah	Pledge of loyalty	· Madrasah
	To swear	· Mosque
	Obedient	· Elders
Khilafah	Islamic government	· Madrasah
	Successor/leader of Islam after the death of the prophet Muhammad	· Islamic books
	When both Ulama are not agreed in the field of law	· Ustadz
		· Social media
Al Wara Al-Bara	Loyalty	· Madrasah
	To love and to hate for the sake of Allah	· Social media
	No good	· Elders
	An oath of allegiance	· Ulama

	Non-Islamic believer	· Madrasah (7)
Takfir		· Family (3)
		· Social media
Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter	Every living and non-living that exists	· Madrasah

This research chose the above concepts to present to respondents because these are the Islamic ideas that extremist groups are redefining to fit their ideology and to recruit young people. The concept of *bay'ah*, for example, is historically associated with Islamic leadership. The subjects of the Khalifa or ruler pledge an oath of allegiance to him and invoke Allah's blessing upon that ruler. In the VE interpretation, giving *bay'ah* to the VE group leader is the same as giving *bay'ah* to the Prophet Muhammad. A person who breaks his *bay'ah* becomes an infidel.

The findings of this research suggest that young Muslims do not know most of these concepts, opening up the possibility that the VE interpretation could fill the void, or at least get layered onto or raise doubts about mainstream traditional definitions. An empty vessel can be filled with any liquid of a persuasive advocate's choosing. The challenge in the Bangsamoro is to make sure that the advocate is not a violent extremist.

2. Extremist versus traditional interpretations of Islamic concepts

To probe whether the 800 respondents are consciously or unconsciously in sync with VE-aligned interpretations of Islamic concepts or with the traditionalist and moderate line, they were presented with a list of statements and asked whether they agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with them or are undecided about them.

Aligned with traditionalist beliefs. In general, the respondents appear to be aligned more with the mainstream traditional interpretation of Islamic concepts. For example, 94.3% agree or strongly agree that Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with all of humanity, both as individuals and communities. Eight out of ten (83.9%) agree or strongly agree that Muslims are allowed to live in a non-Muslim majority country and be under a non-Muslim government, as long as the state permits freedom of religion and respects basic human rights.

The statement about living in a non-Muslim society was rephrased to align with the VE interpretation: "I believe Muslims living in the non-Muslim country is wrong because Muslims will have to live under un-Islamic conditions." This time, 68.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, upholding the traditionalist interpretation. But the proportion of those who held to the traditionalist line is 15.6 percentage points lower than with the original phrasing.

The assertion about living in a non-Muslim society is again rephrased: "I believe that a Muslim (e.g. Filipino Muslim) who gives loyalty to a non-Muslim or adheres to a non-Islamic government or system is a 'kafir' (infidel)." This time, 57.9% of respondents upheld the traditionalist interpretation (those Muslims are not infidels) by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the VE-aligned statement. But their numbers are smaller than with the other formulations, although still represent the majority.

Seven out of ten (71.4%) agree or strongly agree that "violent groups have brought about more disunity among Muslims and deepened the differences between them," an assessment that VE groups would certainly contest. Six out of ten (67.5%) disagree or strongly disagree with the VE belief that "kidnapping, holding captive for ransom, and confiscating properties

of non-Muslims and similar people/groups considered an 'enemy' are justified." And 57% disagree or strongly disagree with the VE position that "using violence to establish the Khalifah (Islamic government) is justified and encouraged."

Table 7. Attitudes toward Islamic beliefs related to VE (percent)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
I believe Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with all of humanity both as individuals and communities.	92.3 A/SA	96.3 A/SA	94.3 A/SA
I believe Muslims are allowed to live in a non-Muslim country or under a non-Muslim government, as long as they have the freedom to practice their religion and can experience basic human rights.	85.3 A/SA	82.5 A/SA	83.9 A/SA
I believe violent groups have brought about more disunity among Muslims and deepened the differences between them.	67.0 A/SA	75.8 A/SA	71.4 A/SA
I believe that neglect of the government is the reason for the youth in far-flung communities joining armed groups.	70.0 A/SA	72.3 A/SA	71.1 A/SA
I believe Muslims living in non-Muslim countries is wrong because Muslims will have to live under un-Islamic conditions.	64.8 D/SD	71.8 D/SD	68.3 D/SD
I believe that discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight.	54.2 D/SD	73.3 A/SA	67.8 A/SA
I believe kidnapping, holding captive for ransom, and confiscating properties of non-Muslims and similar people/groups considered an "enemy" are justified.	76.3 D/SD	58.8 D/SD	67.5 D/SD
I think that the giving of cell phones, arms, and money to the youth by certain groups is a tactic to persuade them to join violent groups.	61.5 A/SA	69.8 A/SA	65.6 A/SA
I believe that a Muslim (e.g. Filipino Muslim) who gives loyalty to a non-Muslim or adheres to a non-Islamic government or system is a "kafir" (infidel).	57.5 D/SD	58.3 D/SD	57.9 D/SD
I believe using violence to establish the Khilafah (Islamic government) is justified and encouraged.	64.3 D/SD	49.8 D/SD	57.0 D/SD
I believe Jihad qital (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim.	57.0 A/SA	43.8 A/SA	50.4 A/SA
I believe Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims, including wishing them well at their festivals.	57.5 D/SD	53.3 A/SA	46.5 D/SD
I believe that Bay'ah or the pledge of loyalty given to their leader is the same as that given to the Prophet.	51.0 A/SA	41.5 U	43.0 A/SA
I believe that one who breaks the Bay'ah has committed a grave sin and becomes a kafir (infidel).	37.5 A/SA	40.8 U	35.8 D/SD

A/SA: Agree/Strongly Agree; D/SD: Disagree/Strongly Disagree; U: Undecided

Aligned with extremist beliefs. What is concerning is that half of the respondents (50.4%) agree or strongly agree that "*jihad qital* (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim." The level of agreement with this statement is higher among urban respondents (57%) than among those in conflict-affected rural areas (43.8%).

The VE-backed interpretation of the concept of *jihad qital* is not in line with the moderate interpretation of traditional Islam, which holds that *jihad qital* is a form of *jihad ashgar* (lesser, external struggle against aggressors) that not all Muslims can or should undertake. If you are unable to take up arms, for example, because you are aged, then you can undertake *jihad* by tongue or with the heart.

The emphasis in traditional Islam is on *jihad akbar* (greater, inner struggle), in the form of escaping the devil's persuasion to evil, speaking the truth and spreading the word of Islam, and choosing to do what is right and fighting injustice. Jihadists are expected to comply with *Shariah* law in waging *jihad qital*, one of the strictures being not harming women, children, and the elderly.

More than five out of ten urban respondents (54.2%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: "I believe that discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight." This VE-backed interpretation indicates that the majority of the youth believe that anti-Muslim discriminatory practices (such as denying employment to a Muslim because of his religion) are not a reason to bear arms and fight.

Split and undecided. There is a split in belief on the traditionalist statement: "I believe Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims, including wishing them well at their festivals." Nearly six out of ten (57.5%) urban respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, indicating alignment with the VE line. However, 53% of rural respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, upholding the traditionalist interpretation.

There is a high number of undecided respondents on the statements: "I believe that *bay'ah* or the pledge of loyalty given to the leader is the same as that given to the Prophet" (41% of rural respondents are undecided) and "I believe that one who breaks the *bay'ah* has committed a grave sin and becomes a *kafir* (infidel)" (40.8% of rural respondents are undecided).

But half of the urban respondents (51%) agree or strongly agree with the VE position that pledging *bay'ah* to one's leader is the same as giving *bay'ah* to the Prophet. Only 37.5% of urban respondents agree with the corollary statement, however, that breaking a *bay'ah* is a grave sin and makes the oath breaker an infidel, which is the interpretation VE groups advance to prevent recruits and longtime followers from challenging VE leaders and being disloyal to them.

B. Knowledge of Violent Extremism

1. What is VE

Respondents were asked what their understanding is of the term 'violent extremism' and requested to answer in free form, with no prompting or list of choices presented. FGD participants were asked the same question. Same or similar answers were grouped under a common category and computed as percentages.

Table 8. Categories of phrases associated with VE (percent)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
Against Islam	14.0	9.5	11.8
"No to violence"/"Not want to be bad"	9.8	9.0	9.4
Illegal Act/Against the Law/Bad deeds	6.5	10.0	8.3
Killing people	2.8	0.5	1.6
No Answer	4.5	26.5	15.5

More than a tenth of respondents (15.5%) would not give an answer. Of those who did provide an answer, most gave irrelevant information, such as equating violent extremism with bullying or lack of manners. The answers judged to be relevant were grouped based on their similarities and filed under categories.

The most common relevant descriptor of violent extremism is that it is against Islam (11.8%), followed by answers that associate violent extremism with the phrases "No to violence"/"Not want to be bad" (9.4%), and value judgments that violent extremism is against the law and a bad deed (8.3%). A tiny percentage – 1.6% – associate violent extremism with killing people.

Compared to survey respondents, the FGD participants gave more relevant answers, perhaps because they are leaders of youth organizations who are likely to have attended seminars on violent extremism. Few of the survey respondents, who are ordinary members of youth organizations, would have been invited to these meetings.

Most of the FGD participants associate violent extremism with terrorism and armed conflict. "It's the process by which people come to support terrorism," said one discussant in Tipo-Tipo. Added a participant in Lamitan City: "*Ang pinagmulan ng* violent extremism *yung* terrorism *sa bundok* (Violent extremism started from terrorists hiding out in the mountains.)" Said a participant in Butig: "*Ang pagkakaintindi ko sa* violent extremism *ay pag-gyera, gaya nung nangyari sa Marawi at dito sa Butig* (My understanding of violent extremism is going to war, like what happened in Marawi and here in Butig)."

A secondary association of violent extremism for the FGD participants is youth recruitment. "*Ang unang pumasok sa isip ko ay ilegal na panghihikayat* (The first thing I thought of is illegal recruitment)," said an FGD participant in Mamasapano. "*Sa aming munisipyo, may mga* out-of-school youth *na hindi nag-aral. Yun ang mga kabataan na* easy to recruit *kasi nga* lack of *knowledge* (We have out-of-school youth in our municipality, and they are not educated. These are the young people who are easily recruited, because they lack knowledge)."

However, even among youth leaders, there is a misunderstanding about what violent extremism is. Some equate it simply with hurtful behavior. "Violent extremism can be emotional or physical," said an FGD discussant in Jolo. "Physical, when I slap someone, and emotional, when I speak ill of someone and hurt their feelings." Another Jolo participant said one example of violent extremism is "teasing a person with a disability."

It is unclear whether the misunderstanding is due to the term being in English and whether translating the term into Filipino – for example, *marahas na ekstremismo* – will communicate at least the extreme seriousness of the term. It will be helpful to launch an information campaign on what violent extremism is, as used in this study: "A form of extremism that condones and enacts violence with ideological or deliberate intent, such as religious or political violence. Violent extremist views can manifest in connection with a range of issues, including politics, religion, and gender relations."

2. Who practices VE

If respondents are not able to articulate exactly what violent extremism is, they have no trouble identifying the groups in Muslim Mindanao that practice it. Respondents were presented with a list of VE groups and asked whether they have heard of them. Seven out of ten of those surveyed (70.5%) know of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). A slightly smaller number (67.3%) are aware of ISIS/ISIL/DAESH while the majority (55%) have heard of the Maute Group.

Table 9. Awareness of VE groups in Muslim Mindanao (percent, multiple answers)

Extremist Groups Known	Urban	Rural	Total
	(N=400)	(N=400)	(N=800)
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	73.8	67.3	70.5
ISIS/ISIL/DAESH	60.5	74.0	67.3
Maute Group	56.3	53.8	55.0
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)	32.0	30.0	31.0
Jemaah Islamiyah	6.0	18.8	12.4
Al-Qaeda	5.8	9.3	7.5
Khalifah Islamiyah Movement	1.5	3.3	2.4

The homegrown Abu Sayyaf is better known among urban youth (73.7%) than among young people in rural areas (67.3%), while the opposite is the case with foreign-linked ISIS/ISIL/DAESH (rural: 74%; urban: 60.5%). The local organization Maute Group is almost equally known in urban areas (56.3%) as in rural areas (53.8%).

Only three out of ten respondents (31%) have heard of the Maguindanao-based Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), with those aware coming equally from urban (32%) and rural (30%) study sites in Maguindanao (Cotabato City and Mamasapano). Only a tenth (12.4%) know of the foreign-inspired Jemaah Islamiyah, most of them in rural areas (18.8%) rather than in urban locations (6%). Another foreign group, Al-Qaeda, has an even lower profile at just 7.5% awareness. Almost no one knows of the Khalifah Islamiyah Movement (2.4%).

In general, the FGD participants have a negative view of VE groups. They are associated with heinous acts like bombings, beheadings, kidnapping, and extortion. Some even accuse them of being drug lords. "*Gusto nilang pinapatay ang mga* non-Muslim *sa* Marawi *dahil ang hangad nila ay magkaroon ng* totally Islamic law *sa* Lanao del Sur (They want to kill non-Muslims in Marawi because they want to impose Islamic law in Lanao del Sur)," claimed an FGD participant in Butig.

One participant in Mamasapano said that his youth group monitors the activities of ISIS and BIFF in their community. "*Ang karahasan na ginagawa nila* is *pagpatay,* bombing *at* casualties *sa* civilian (The violence they undertake includes killings, bombings and causing civilian casualties)," he asserted. The lack of regard for the safety of non-combatants is a common thread in many of the focus group discussions. "*Nagpapasabog sila ng bomba sa mataong lugar, gawain ng* suicide bomber (They explode bombs in crowded places, which is the handiwork of suicide bombers)," said a discussant in Tipo-Tipo.

Another typical narrative is the money-making activities of VE groups, particularly the Abu Sayaff. "They target the rich and if they don't give them money, they threaten them," said a participant in Tipo-Tipo. Other participants in the same FGD spoke about the kidnap-for-ransom and extortion schemes of Abu Sayyaf and Maute. "*Karamihan sa mga karahasan nila ay dahil sa pera* (Most of their violent activities are motivated by money)," said a participant in Mamasapono. The money allegedly lines the personal pockets of VE leaders and members, and funds recruitment drives.

That said, a tiny minority of FGD discussants have a softer view of VE groups. "*Wala naman silang ginagawang problema sa amin* (They don't cause us problems)," said a participant in Butig. "*Maganda ang* treatment *nila sa amin. Pinapasama nila kami sa masjid tapos pinapalaganap sa amin ang Islam* (They treat us well. They invite us to the *masjid* and exhort us to propagate Islam)." A couple of participants, one in Marawi and the other in Butig, said that ISIS was used as an instrument by Allah to cleanse Marawi because its inhabitants had become sinful. In the Marawi participant's view, ISIS is undertaking true *jihad*.

For a participant in Patikul, the Abu Sayyaf are fighting for their beliefs. He is unsure about the atrocities they are said to commit, recounting an encounter in August with an Abu Sayyaf member who happened to be the fiancé of a friend. The Abu Sayyaf member denied that the group beheads people or makes bombs. Those are just accusations, he insisted. "I was confused," said the Patikul participant. "I don't think we can pass a verdict on them."

3. Where learned about VE

Survey respondents were presented with a list of ways to access information about violent extremism and asked whether they have encountered or utilized them. Half of the respondents learned about VE from watching videos (53.1%) on their phones, tablets, computers, or TV screens. The materials could have been downloaded from social media sites, sent through email or chat groups, or in the form of physical DVDs and videotapes.

Table 10. Accessing information about VE (percent)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
Watched videos on violent extremism	51.5	54.5	53.1
Extremist social media	2.5	21.8	12.1
Read articles on extremism	7.8	11.5	9.6
Conversed with other people about VE and why Moros should join extremist groups	3.3	1.8	2.5

While only a tenth of respondents (12.1%) learned about VE via extremist social media, most of them are based in conflict-affected rural areas (21.8%) rather than in the cities (2.5%).

More rural respondents also read articles about extremism (11.5%) than their counterparts in urban areas (7.8%). It may be that VE groups are making special efforts to disseminate information via social media and printed materials in conflict-affected rural areas.

C. Recruitment of Youth into Violent Extremism

1. Drivers of VE membership

Survey respondents were presented with a list of motivators and influences and asked to choose which ones they think motivate young people to join VE groups. They were allowed to tick off as many items on the list as they wanted. By far, the top two reasons are poverty (67%) and limited/no access to education (65.9%).

Table 11. Motivations and influences in joining VE groups (percent, multiple answers)

Description	Urban	Rural	Total
	(N=400)	(N=400)	(N=800)
Poverty	60.5	73.5	67.0
Limited/No access to education	51.1	80.8	65.9
Discrimination	29.8	46.8	38.3
Corruption	36.0	37.8	36.9
Poor governance	30.3	43.3	36.8
Unstable peace and order	27.3	43.5	35.4
Ideological	24.5	37.3	30.9
Recruitment by violent extremist groups	26.0	32.3	29.1
Modernization	24.5	32.0	28.3
Personal experience of armed conflict	24.3	29.0	26.6

It is interesting to note that more rural respondents think that lack of access to education drives VE membership (80.8%) than those who cite poverty (73.5%). The opposite is true for urban respondents. More of them believe poverty (60.5%) is a driver compared with those who point to limited/no access to education (51.1%). This is probably because there are numerous public and private schools in cities and urbanized towns, so access to education is not as big a problem as in rural areas, where students have to travel long distances to attend school.

A third or more of respondents think anti-Muslim discriminatory practices (38.3%), corruption (36.9%), poor governance (36.8%), and an unstable peace and order situation (35.4%) push young people into joining VE groups. Rural respondents cite these drivers in larger numbers than urban respondents, indicating that they choose three or four items on the presented list while their urban counterparts tend to tick off only one or two. This suggests that there may be more reasons for young people to join VE groups in conflict-affected rural areas than in cities and urbanized towns.

While overall ideology is seen as a minor driver for VE membership (30.9%), more rural respondents (37.3%) than urban respondents (24.5%) cite ideological reasons as a driver – an indication that narratives around ideology may be a more effective recruiting tool in rural areas than in cities and towns.

2. Recruitment activity

Most key informants confirm that VE groups in Muslim Mindanao are still recruiting young people into their ranks, although it is not as prevalent these days as it was before the sieges in Butig and Marawi. "Before the siege, the recruitment was very evident," recounts a key informant based in Lanao del Sur. "We would see foreign nationals passing by our school and some young men going to the mountainous areas near Kapai [municipality]. Now they're all gone."

Recalls another informant: "The recruitment was like bargaining or selling vegetables, it was very open. *Napaka*-rampant *nung* recruitment *kasi nandyan yung* offering *ng* money, which is *mahirap tanggihan* (Recruitment was rampant because money was openly offered in amounts that were hard to turn down)." After the defeat of extremists in Butig and Marawi and the Covid lockdowns, recruitment efforts are now said to be less widespread and more discreet.

3. Targets of recruitment

FGD respondents and key Informants identified and described the typical targets of recruitment by the various VE groups. Vulnerability to recruitment is heightened if someone has two or more of the characteristics targeted by extremists, such as a poverty-stricken out-of-school youth whose parents died in the conflict.

Poor Moro youth. As the survey results reveal, poverty is perceived as the major driver for joining VE groups. Given this, the promise of a large sum of money for joining a VE group can be a very attractive incentive among the youth. Said an FGD participant in Cotabato City: "*Yung mga gusto nilang pasalihin sa grupo nila, binuhusan talaga nila ito ng pera* (They really shower those they want to recruit with cash)."

Out-of-school youth. Youth leaders in the Marawi City FGD say OSYs are the primary target of recruitment in their area. FGD participants and key informants explain that young people who do not attend school are perceived as easily manipulated because they are unschooled. Others are hungry for knowledge, particularly in relation to their faith, and are vulnerable to intense indoctrination of VE-backed interpretations of Islamic concepts. As detailed by a key informant, someone introducing himself as an *ustadz* (teacher) offers to make these OSYs *haffith* (scholars). They are later brought to a secluded place to be trained and become part of the VE group.

Youth involved in conflicts. Young people whose family gets involved in conflicts such as *rido* are offered support by a VE group, according to key informants. They are then obliged to join the VE group to return the favor or show appreciation, sometimes at the behest of their family.

Orphans. In the island provinces, says a key informant, "*binabantayan nila yung vulnerable sector, kung sino yung nahihirapan, yun yung tutulungan nila para makuha ang sympathy, tulad ng mga orphans, mga anak ng namatay na ASG members, iniipon nila at tini-train nila.*" (The VE groups monitor the vulnerable sector. They help those who are in dire straits to gain their sympathy, like orphans, the children of dead ASG members. Those young people are gathered together and trained in the armed struggle.)

Youth leaders. Those who are articulate and have an established network with other youth groups are prime targets of recruitment. Once they join, their leadership skills and influence on other young people are assets that are maximized to facilitate further recruitment. One key informant says university scholarships are offered to smart students who have been identified as potential recruits.

4. Recruitment venues

According to FGD participants and key informants, recruitment can take place in many locations and venues, including mosques, *madaris*, secular schools, *toril* and in the community itself. Said an FGD participant in Cotabato City: *"After congregational prayer sa masjid, nakakaroon ng gathering ang mga tao, nag-uusap-usap, sharing, nagsasabi ng problems, counseling po, para matulungan sila kung paano ma-solve yun. Doon na nila ini-insert ang rhetorical preaching".* (After congregational prayer at the mosque, people gather to talk and share their problems so they can be helped to solve them. That's when the VE group inserts rhetorical preaching.)

While learning institutions are mentioned as avenues of recruitment, these have become less emphasized compared to the recent past, the sources say, likely because of the suspension of classes due to the physical restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic.

5. Recruitment process

VE groups employ different strategies in the process of recruitment. Enticing the youth through large sums of money is mentioned as a common strategy across all study sites. One FGD participant in Lamitan City said that as much as Php100,000 is offered to young recruits. The monetary incentive is often bundled with guns and gadgets such as cell phones.

"Base sa nakikita ng bata, parang normal society na yung mga matatanda humahawak ng baril, kaya choice din ng mga bata na humawak din ng baril paglaki nila," explained a key informant. *"Tapos pinapakita nila [VE groups] na ito yung jihad, way of struggle ng Muslim".* (Based on what children see in daily life, it's normal for adults to carry a gun, so they choose to do the same when they grow up. The VE groups then link the gun to jihad, saying this is the way of armed struggle of the Muslim.)

The use of religion (i.e. Islam) is another tactic of VE groups, particularly the propagation of extremist interpretations of Islamic concepts such as *jihad*. "People claiming to be imam and ustadz introduce Islamic concepts that diverge from the real teachings of Islam," said an FGD discussant in Cotabato City. A Marawi participant notes that there is a strong emphasis placed on the promise of Paradise for the *jihadist* in the VE-backed concept of *jihad.*

The use of social media has become part of the recruitment process. FGD participants say videos are posted that justify the killing of those who are judged to be destroying Islam. Other videos show injustices inflicted on Muslims to stir emotions among young people. The online videos are also circulated offline as video CDs or videotapes because of poor Internet connectivity in many areas.

Gatherings organized by certain groups in the guise of propagating Islam have been reported as avenues of recruitment at the community level. An FGD participant in Cotabato City recounted a new tactic where someone claiming to be an ustadz was asking around for names and personal information of people in the community for membership in a community organization that will receive cash and goods from the government's Covid aid program *(ayuda)*. It was later found out that the Maute Group was picking through the list of potential recruits.

The FGDs also reveal that some young people are being recruited by force. They are requested to undertake errands for the group and then find themselves sequestered in a secluded place and indoctrinated into the group's ideology. In some instances, VE groups threaten the family of the recruit if he does not proceed with the membership.

In summary, it can be concluded that the strategies used by the VE groups in their recruitment process are diverse and tailored to their targets. The incentives on offer address the specific needs and want of young people. For instance, the large amounts given out alleviate their family's poverty, at least in the short term. Orphans are provided with a sense of belonging and family, thereby meeting their psychological need for emotional support. Young people caught up in *rido* conflicts are offered guns to wreak vengeance on their enemies, while university students get scholarships in secular schools in exchange for VE membership.

Ideologically-inclined students and out-of-school youth who hunger for religious enrichment are serviced with intensive indoctrination of extremist interpretations of Islamic concepts, while other OSYs are ensnared with *barkadahan* (camaraderie) and peer pressure. VE groups are turning to social media sites popular with young people to spread their message. A key informant revealed that some groups even undertake individual profiling of their prospective recruits, enabling them to further come up with an appropriate strategy or set of incentives that respond to the individual's needs.

D. Programs and Projects on P/CVE

1. Awareness of P/CVE programs and projects

Survey respondents were presented with a list of programs or projects designed to prevent and counter violent extremism and asked whether they were aware of them. The vast majority of respondents said they are not aware of the existence of any of the P/CVE programs or projects listed.

Table 12. Awareness of P/CVE programs and projects (percent)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
Awareness-raising on the threat of violent extremism in schools	4.5	12.0	8.3
Educational and vocational training	6.3	6.5	6.4
Employment opportunities for the youth	2.5	10.3	6.4
Community trust building with law enforcement	2.3	10.3	6.3
Counseling program for the youth	2.5	9.0	5.8
Public information campaigns on the effects of violent extremism	4.3	3.0	3.6
Interfaith and interfaith dialogues	2.3	3.5	2.9
Media messaging and alternative/counter-narrative campaigns on violent extremism	3.3	1.0	2.1
Peace camps integrating P/CVE	2.5	1.3	1.9
Capacity building for teachers and community leaders to support the youth on P/CVE	1.5	2.3	1.9
Ideological reeducation among the youth	0.3	3.5	1.9

The top program in terms of awareness – educating young people about the threat of violent extremism in schools – is known by only 8.3% of respondents, most of them living in conflict-affected rural areas (12%) and only some from cities and towns (4.5%). Even fewer respondents say they are aware of public information campaigns on the effects of violent extremism (3.6%) and media messaging and alternative/counter-narrative campaigns (2.1%).

In general, rural respondents are more aware of P/CVE programs and projects than urban respondents, which may indicate that government and non-government agencies are focusing their efforts on conflict-affected rural areas rather than in the cities. This is especially true of programs to create employment opportunities for the youth (rural awareness: 10.3%; urban: 2.5%), community trust building with law enforcement (rural: 10.3%; urban: 2.3%), and counseling programs for the youth (rural: 9%; urban: 2.5%).

FGD participants, who are presidents or vice presidents of youth organizations, are more knowledgeable than the survey respondents about P/CVE programs and projects. The programs and projects they articulated include education and information campaigns about violent extremism, such as seminars and symposia organized by the Philippine National Police, Balay Mindanaw, and other Moro youth organizations.

FGD participants also frequently mentioned the Islamic seminar/symposium or *da'wah*, where the youth are taught how to be good Muslims. Also named are livelihood training, Alternative Learning System training, psychosocial support, support programs for returnees/surrenderees, and generic initiatives of the government such as the 4Ps, scholarships, housing, and livelihood projects. The key informants also cited a lengthy list of P/CVE programs and projects, which are compiled in Annex A of this report ("P/CVE Programs and Projects Implemented in the BARMM Cited by the Key Informants").

The gap between what key informants and youth leaders know and what youth organization members see on the ground is startling. To be fair, the National Action Plan on P/CVE was finalized only in 2019 and the COVID pandemic slowed the planning and implementation of programs and projects. But now that daily is almost back to normal, more must be done to cascade information about P/CVE programs and projects from the top to the grassroots, and more importantly, ensure that the benefits are felt by young people in Muslim Mindanao, particularly those who are vulnerable to recruitment by VE groups.

2. Awareness of BARMM programs and projects

Survey respondents were asked whether they were aware of programs and projects of the BARMM regional government, which were grouped under three categories and presented to respondents. Nearly seven out of ten (69.5%) say they know of BARMM programs and projects that address issues around education. Programs and projects that address poverty are known to 55.6% of respondents. The least known are initiatives that address corruption (39%).

Table 13. Awareness of BARMM programs and projects (percent)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
To address education	56.0	83.0	69.5
To address poverty	45.8	65.5	55.6
To address corruption	25.8	52.3	39.0

There is a noticeable rural-urban divide in awareness of BARMM programs and projects. More rural respondents (83%) know about education initiatives compared with their urban counterparts (56%). The gap is also evident in terms of poverty programs (65.5% vs. 45.8%) and corruption (52.3% vs. 25.8%). This suggests that the BARMM government is prioritizing rural areas as part of its P/CVE strategy, which may not be a bad idea if indeed rural youth are more vulnerable to VE recruitment than their urban peers.

Key informants and FGD participants provided some descriptions of the various BARMM initiatives they know. Of the poverty alleviation programs, the most commonly mentioned are the Sagip Kabuhayan Program in Cotabato City, the distribution of relief goods to poor families including solo parents, and giving *ayuda* (aid) in cash and in kind. The national government's 4Ps program was also mentioned, areas, along with the provision of livelihood and employment opportunities.

Of the education programs, the most frequently mentioned are scholarship grants provided by BARMM's Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the national agency TESDA. This education support comes in the form of cash, educational assistance, peace grants, and tertiary educational subsidy.

There was hardly any mention of specific anti-corruption programs, although some sources cited the Moral Governance campaign of the BARMM leadership. "They're still in the transition period," one key informant explained. But another informant stressed that reducing corruption should be prioritized. "Usually those who are truly in need cannot avail of the programs or goods that are being distributed," this informant said. "Only those who are relatives of those in a position get them." This unfair state of affairs could add fuel to the VE recruitment narrative.

3. Attitudes toward P/CVE programs and projects

Survey respondents were presented with a list of statements about P/CVE programs and projects and asked to say whether they agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or are undecided about them. Nine out of ten respondents agree or strongly agree with almost every statement.

Table 14. Attitudes toward P/CVE programs and projects (percent agree and strongly agree)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
I believe that P/CVE programs for the youth should be implemented in our community.	91.3	79.5	85.4
I believe the local government units should be involved in the implementation of the P/CVE programs/projects.	87.3	73.2	80.3
I believe the youth should actively participate in programs/projects on P/CVE.	88.8	78.3	83.2
The participation of family members in the P/CVE programs helps prevent the youth from joining violent extremist groups.	89.3	68.0	78.7
I believe the whole community should be involved in the implementation of P/CVE.	85.8	72.5	78.8
I think the programs on P/CVE are relevant to eliminating the activities of extremist groups in the region.	85.0	76.5	80.8
If invited, I will participate in training on P/CVE.	82.5	66.0	74.3
The P/CVE programs/projects hinder the recruitment of the youth to join extremist groups.	79.0	72.3	75.7

In effect, Muslim youth in both rural and urban areas want P/CVE programs and projects to be implemented in their community with the full participation of the entire population, including leaders and staff of local government units, family members, and especially the youth. Seven out of ten respondents (74.3%) expressed willingness to be trained on P/CVE if asked.

There is a slightly weaker agreement with the notion that P/CVE programs and projects are relevant in eliminating the activities of extremist groups (88.3%) and will hinder the recruitment of youth to join them (84.4%), but those numbers still indicate strong support.

E. The Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan

The triumphant return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2021, two decades after the US ousted them, caused some worries that Moro youth would be inspired to join VE groups in larger numbers. But it seems that not many young people are even aware of the Taliban victory. Only 17.3% of respondents, most of them in urban areas, say they have heard of what happened in Afghanistan.

Table 15. Awareness of the Taliban return in Afghanistan (percent)

Description	Urban	Rural	Total
	(N=400)	(N=400)	(N=800)
Yes	24.8	9.8	17.3
No	75.3	90.3	82.7

Many key informants doubt that the Taliban victory will have an impact on violent extremism in Muslim Mindanao. "There is no connection," said one of them. "They have a different context compared to the Philippines." But others are not so sure. "I think the takeover of the Taliban in Afghanistan is energizing the violent extremist groups in the Philippines because they are making it their inspiration to pursue their activities," said an informant.

"There's a chance it can motivate other groups," agreed another informant. "Our MILF here are Afghan-trained too." Asserted the third informant: "It's possible for ISIS and Maute to do what the Taliban did because they are fighting for a similar cause."

That may be true, but key informants in the security sector argued that any effect will not matter because the tide has turned against local extremists. "Just last week, an entire faction of the ASG surrendered to the brigade in Basilan," said one of them. "For me, there is no effect here at least in Basilan." Added another informant: "I think there will be no effect. If we speak of the current situation, the Philippines is nearly successful in combating terrorism because of the implementation of EO No. 70."[87]

Taking the middle road, another informant noted that "it's difficult to validate whether the Taliban is influencing extremist groups here because there have been many surrenders, especially by commanders." The implication seems to be that if the number of surrenders abates, it may be a sign that VE groups are being reenergized – possibly by the Taliban victory.

---

87 *Executive Order No. 70 created the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict under the Office of the President in 2018*

F. The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020

Respondents were asked what they know of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, which aims to prevent, prohibit, and penalize terrorism in the Philippines, including violent extremism in Muslim Mindanao. The law has been challenged in the courts, but the Philippine Supreme Court upheld most of its provisions in December 2021.

Table 16. Awareness of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 (percent)

Description	Urban (N=400)	Rural (N=400)	Total (N=800)
Yes	7.0	3.8	5.4
No	93.0	96.2	94.6

Very few Moro youth (5.4%) are aware of the anti-terrorism law, with more of those who know about it living in urban areas (7%) than in rural areas (3.8%). In contrast, all the key informants have heard of the new law. Their assessment ranges from the positive ("It's advantageous for Muslims because it will minimize violent extremism") to the wait-and-see ("Let's see if it will change the peace and order situation and can minimize security threats") to the negative ("We Moros are the No. 1 target of that law because we are suspected as ISIS members").

One key informant attempted to be fair handed: "*Maganda siya dahil may programa* to counter terrorism. *Pero mayroong* portion *doon na pwedeng kang hulihin pag* suspect *ka kahit walang* warrant (It's good because there's a program to counter terrorism, but there's a portion where you can be arrested without a warrant)."

Another informant highlighted the preemptive value of the Anti-Terrorism Act: "Those with negative thoughts can be made aware that if they do bad things, they will be immediately held accountable [because they can be arrested without a warrant]." But that's assuming Moro youth are aware of the new law and the risk they run of being immediately arrested on suspicion of joining a VE group. The new law has no preemptive value for those who do not know anything about it, which is the case at the moment with the young Moros of Muslim Mindanao.

PART 2: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF MORO YOUTHS IN URBAN AREAS

This section presents findings from the survey and focus group discussions conducted among youths in the urban setting: Cotabato City in Maguindanao, Marawi City in Lanao del Sur, Lamitan City in Basilan, and Jolo in Sulu. Insights from key informant interviews are also discussed. The findings of this 2022 study are compared with the findings of a study conducted in 2017 involving youths in similar areas and presented in Section E.

A. Knowledge of Concepts Related to Violent Extremism

The survey respondents were presented with a list of Islamic concepts related to VE and were asked to indicate their awareness of these concepts. Those who affirmed awareness were requested to provide a brief description of how they understood the concept and to identify the sources of information for these concepts.

1. Awareness of Islamic concepts related to VE

Urban youth respondents revealed awareness of these top four concepts: Jihad (83%), Ummah (50%), Hijrah (28%), and Wahhabi (19%). The least known concepts are Khalifah (8%), Bay'ah (8%), Takfir (3%), Al-Bara Al Wara (3%), and Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter (1%).

Table 17. Awareness of Islamic concepts related to VE, urban youth (percent, multiple answers)

Description	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Jihad	94	92	62	83	83
Ummah	62	64	45	29	50
Hijrah	21	44	26	20	28
Wahhabi	5	8	9	55	19
Salafi	7	41	6	11	16
Fatwa	18	6	12	16	13
Bay'ah	9	5	5	13	8
Khalifah	7	10	8	5	8
Al Wara Al Bara	6	4	1	1	3
Takfir	1	6	2	1	3
Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter	0	0	0	2	1

Across the four study sites, it is noted that there is no significant difference in the level of awareness between male and female respondents of the top four concepts. However, it is interesting to note that males are far more familiar with Wahhabi in Lamitan (16%) and Jolo (72%) than females (Lamitan: 2% and Jolo: 38%).

Overall, there is a relatively higher level of awareness of the top four concepts among in-school youths compared to out-of-school youths across the four study sites. In Jolo, for instance, the concept of Ummah is known by 42% of in-school youths compared to 16% of out-of-school youths. Similarly, 32% of in-school youths are familiar with Hijrah compared to only 8% of out-of-school youths.

Jihad. There is a very high level of awareness of this concept across three study sites: Cotabato City (94%), Marawi City (92%), and Jolo (83%). Lamitan City respondents registered a lower level of awareness at 62%, but Jihad is still the top concept that Lamitan respondents are aware of.

When asked to briefly describe how they understood the concept of Jihad, the following phrases most often recur: "struggle for the sake of Allah/sacrifice", "protect the religion of Islam", and "fighting against hypocrites is another type of Jihad". Close to a quarter (24%) describe Jihad in a manner that manifests some leaning towards extremist interpretation: "physical jihad against the transgressors/fight/war". The bulk of respondents who used this descriptor comes from Jolo.

As to the sources of their knowledge, the youths identified the madrasah as their main source, followed by family, elders, and social media.

Table 18. Understanding of Islamic concepts and sources of knowledge, urban youth (percent, multiple answers)

Concepts	Description	Sources
Jihad	• Struggle for the sake of Allah/sacrifice • Physical Jihad against the transgressors/fight/war • To protect the religion of Islam • Fighting against hypocrites is another type of Jihad	• Madrasah • Family • Elders • Social media
Ummah	• Who believes in the oneness of Allah and Prophet Muhammad as the last messenger of Allah	• Madrasah • Family
Hijrah	• Calendar in Islam • Migration • Pilgrim • Journey of prophet Muhammad	• Madrasah • Parents • Mosque • Elders
Wahhabi	• Different ideologies in Islam • They forbid the celebration of Mawlid • Religious sector	• Madrasah • Elders • Friends • Mosque
Salafi	• Sunni Muslim • Belief in Allah and Prophet Muhammad • Aqeedah • Following the Quran and Sunnah	• Madrasah • Ulama • Social media
Fatwa	• Lecture from a mufti/religious leader • Islamic guidance/giving good advice • Islamic teaching	• Madrasah • Elders • Mosque • Family • Social media
Bay'ah	• Pledge of loyalty • To swear • Obedient	• Madrasah • Mosque • Elders
Khalifah	• Islamic government • Successor/leader of Islam after the death of the prophet Muhammad • When both Ulama are not agreed in the field of law	• Madrasah • Islamic books • Ustadz • Social media
Al Wara Al-Bara	• Loyalty • To love and to hate for the sake of Allah • No good • An oath of allegiance	• Madrasah • Social media • Elders • Ulama
Takfir	• Non-Islamic believer	• Madrasah • Family • Social media
Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter	• Every living and non-living that exists	• Madrasah

Ummah. Fifty percent (50%) of survey respondents say they are aware of the concept of Ummah, most of them coming from Cotabato City and Marawi City. They understood Ummah to mean "one who believes in the oneness of Allah and Prophet Muhammad as the last messenger of Allah". Most say their information source is the madrasah, while a few cited their family as the source of information.

Hijrah. Hijrah is the third most known concept, although it is identified only by some 28% of the survey respondents. Half of them understand the concept to mean *"calendar in Islam"*. A third describes Hijrah as *"migration"* and *"pilgrim"*.

Wahhabi. A fifth (19%) of urban youth say they are aware of the concept of Wahhabi. More than half (55%) of survey respondents in Jolo affirm familiarity with the concept, compared with only 9% or fewer of youth in the other study areas. This high awareness can be associated with the ongoing friction between the different schools of Islamic thought in Jolo.

Respondents describe Wahhabi as a *"different ideology in Islam", "they forbid the celebration of Mawlid", and "not saying Bismillah".* The madrasah and elders as cited as the main information sources on Wahhabi, together with friends and the mosque. It is interesting to note that males are more familiar than females with this concept, by more than 50 percentage points, particularly in Lamitan City and Jolo.

2. Sources of knowledge on Islamic concepts related to VE

Across all study sites, urban youth identify the *madrasah* as the main source of knowledge about Islamic concepts. This points to the vital contribution of this traditional learning institution in providing the needed understanding and knowledge of Muslims about their religion. Other frequently mentioned sources of information include the elders, family, and ulama.

While fewer respondents cite social media as part of their sources of information, it is interesting to highlight that social media is consistently mentioned as a source in almost all of the concepts presented. This reflects the growing popularity of social media as a source of information among the youth. Eventually, the use of social media (on various platforms) can be an effective means of clarifying and countering extremist interpretations of Islamic concepts espoused by various VE groups.

B. Knowledge of Violent Extremism

1. Understanding of VE

Survey. The results of the survey reveal that there is a relatively low level of consensus in terms of the youth's understanding of VE. The most common descriptor of VE is shared only by about a fifth of respondents, at most. As seen in Table 19, the answer ("No to violence"/"Not want to be bad") is given by 18% of respondents, indicating their understanding that VE involves violence and heinous acts.

The youth's understanding of VE tends to be legalistic ("Illegal act"/"Against the law"/"Bad deeds" at 17%), rather than reflective of a religious dimension: "Against Islam" (14%). It is interesting to note that while only 5% of the total number of respondents did not express their views, 15% of the surveyed youth in Marawi City did not give any answer.

Table 19. Perceptions of VE urban youth (percent, multiple answers)

Description	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
"No to violence"/"Not want to be bad"	20.0	19.0	19.0	14.0	18.0
Illegal Act/Against the Law/Bad deeds	21.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	17.0
Against Islam	15.0	16.0	12.0	13.0	14.0
Killing people	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
No Answer	0.0	15.0	2.0	1.0	5.0

Focus Group Discussions. Moro youth leaders participated in the focus group discussions conducted in their respective areas. The FGDs allowed for deeper probing into how these young leaders understand the concept of violent extremism.

Cotabato City. FGD participants from Cotabato City associate violent extremism with the Marawi Siege. They cite the unfortunate event as a classic example of terroristic activity. VE for them is synonymous with violence, conflicts, terrorism, crimes, and radicalism. Mentioned as people upholding VE were those in "black shirts" who were doing recruitment activities, which later were identified to be part of ISIS. A participant expressed an interesting description of VE as: *"Poverty + Ideology".*

Marawi City. Like in Cotabato City, FGD participants from Marawi City quickly cite the Marawi Siege as a concrete example of their view on VE. The Mamasapano Massacre was another VE incident cited as illustrative of VE. They relate VE to terrorism, and extreme use of violence by people whose demands from the government are not granted. They also mention the Maute group as an example of those involved in VE.

For the participants, VE activities include killing innocent people and using harmful weapons. The relatively low knowledge of young people about Islam was mentioned as a possible reason that made them vulnerable to recruitment by VE groups. But one alarming statement was expressed by a participant: *"Para sa akin, nasira ang Marawi dahil pinarusahan ng Allah ang mga tao dito. Hindi maisisi sa mga ISIS group".* ("For me, Marawi was destroyed because people here are being punished by Allah. The blame cannot be pinned on the ISIS group.")

Lamitan City. FGD participants in Lamitan City equate VE with terrorism. They assert that people with wrong beliefs engage in VE, using violence to achieve ideological or political goals such as *Jihad*. They mentioned the following groups as engaging in VE activities: ISIS, ASG, and NPA. They describe VE as not morally right, but few associate VE with radicalism. It's interesting to note that other participants relate VE to bullying, which according to them affects people negatively.

Jolo. As understood by Jolo FGD participants, VE acts that are forbidden by law, such as terrorism and land grabbing, are characterized as violent and extremely bad. They highlighted kidnap for ransom as an act of VE. A participant expressed the opinion that people who engage in VE do it for Jihad. Interestingly, some participants consider VE as simply bad deeds that affect people physically or emotionally, such as slapping a person or speaking ill to someone. Further, others simply understand VE as violating rules and policies and exhibiting a lack of respect for others.

Some of the opinions about VE shared by FGD participants appear shallow and simplistic. That this includes some youth leaders in Jolo, considering that the area is identified with the presence of the ASG and had suffered recent terrorist activities such as the bombing of Jolo Cathedral, indicates that much more must be done in terms of providing the youth with the correct and much deeper understanding of what VE is all about. It is also worth noting that there are FGD participants in Lamitan City and Jolo who associate VE with the act of bullying.

Overall, youth leaders in Cotabato City and Marawi City provided a deeper and more concrete understanding of the concept of VE. They were quick to provide incidents or events to illustrate their views on VE, with a few offering relevant explanations as to why VE exists. Compared to the other three study sites, the youth's understanding of VE in Jolo is surprisingly shallow.

At the top of the list of sources for the youth's understanding of VE are social media and news. Other sources mentioned include Islamic books, the ulama, and activities such as Islamic symposiums and seminars. A few youths from Jolo said their personal experience formed the basis of their understanding of VE.

2. Attitudes toward VE

Respondents were presented with 14 statements and asked whether they agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or were undecided about each one. The following are the results:

Many urban youths agree with a VE-linked interpretation of armed struggle, raising questions about their vulnerability to VE recruitment. Across the study sites, more than half of respondents (62%) agree or strongly agree with this statement: "I believe Jihad *qital* (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim". This is highly evident in Marawi City (87%) and Cotabato City (67%). A bare majority (51%) of respondents in Lamitan City also agree or strongly agree. Jolo respondents are more divided, with only 43% who agree or strongly agreeing, 41% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 16% undecided.

Overall, the significant level of agreement with the statement, which emphasizes the "lesser Jihad" (the interpretation pushed by VE groups), suggests some receptiveness on the part of urban youth to VE-related ideologies – and perhaps to VE recruitment.

Table 20. Attitudes toward Islamic beliefs related to VE, urban youth (percent)

Description	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
I believe Jihad qital (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim.	A/SA (67%)	A/SA (87%)	A/SA (51%)	A/SA (43%)	A/SA (57.0%)
I believe Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims, including wishing them well at their festivals.	D/SD (58%)	D/SD (65%)	D/SD (80%)	A/SA (58%)	D/SD (58%)
I believe that a Muslim (e.g. Filipino Muslim) who gives loyalty to a non-Muslim or adheres to a non-Islamic government or system is a "kafir" (infidel).	D/SD (71%)	D/SD (38%)	A/SA (44%)	D/SD (77%)	D/SD (58%)
I believe Muslims living in the non-Muslim country is wrong because Muslims will have to live under un-Islamic Conditions.	D/SD (70%)	D/SD (54%)	D/SD (87%)	D/SD (48%)	D/SD (65%)
I believe that Bay'ah or the pledge of loyalty given to their leader is the same as that given to the Prophet.	A/SA (54%)	Unde-cided (40%)	A/SA (58%)	A/SA (54%)	A/SA (51%)
I believe Muslims are allowed to live in a non-Muslim country or under a non-Muslim government, as long as they have the freedom to practice their religion and can experience basic human rights.	A/SA (81%)	A/SA (72%)	A/SA (97%)	A/SA (91%)	A/SA (85.3%)
I believe using violence to establish the Khalifah (Islamic government) is justified and encouraged.	D/SD (65%)	D/SD (51%)	D/SD (63%)	D/SD (78%)	D/SD (64%)

I believe that one who breaks the Bay'ah has committed a grave sin and becomes a kafir (infidel).	D/SD (39%)	A/SA (39%)	A/SA (55%)	D/SD (39%)	A/SA (37.5%)
I believe violent groups have brought about more disunity among Muslims and deepened the differences between them.	A/SA (76%)	A/SA (67%)	A/SA (93%)	D/SD (32%)	A/SA (67%)
I believe Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with all of humanity both as individuals and communities.	A/SA (97%)	A/SA (78%)	A/SA (95%)	A/SA (99%)	A/SA (92%)
I believe kidnapping, holding captive for ransom, and confiscating properties of non-Muslims and similar people/groups considered an "enemy", are justified.	D/SD (80%)	D/SD (58%)	D/SD (81%)	D/SD (86%)	D/SD (76%)
I believe that neglect of the government is the reason for the youth in far-flung communities joining armed groups.	A/SA (43%)	A/SA (57%)	A/SA (81%)	A/SA (65%)	A/SA (70%)
I think that the giving of cell phones, arms, and money to the youth by certain groups is a tactic to persuade them to join violent groups.	A/SA (52%)	A/SA (56%)	A/SA (83%)	A/SA (58%)	A/SA (62%)
I believe that discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight.	D/SD (53%)	D/SD (41%)	D/SD (70%)	D/SD (53%)	D/SD (54.2%)

*A/SA: Agree/Strongly Agree; D/SD: Disagree/Strongly Disagree

There is some unwillingness among urban youth to interact with non-Muslims, believing that such interaction is prohibited in Islam. On the statement "I believe Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims, including wishing them well at their festivals", more than half (58%) of respondents disagree or strongly disagree. This disagreement is high in Lamitan City, where 80% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree. Urban youth in Marawi City and Cotabato City share their attitude, at 65% and 58%, respectively.

Youth in Jolo are more open to social interaction with non-Muslims, with a solid majority (58%) saying they agree or strongly agree that Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims.

Expressing a disagreement with the statement implies unwillingness to dialogue and interact with non-Muslims, which stems from the belief that doing so is prohibited in Islam. Given the above findings, there is a need to clarify the mainstream interpretation and further popularize interfaith dialogue and interaction across religious traditions.

Respondents do not go so far as to brand as infidels Muslims who recognize a non-Muslim government. A high percentage of respondents in Jolo (77%) and Cotabato City (71%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: "I believe that a Muslim (eg. Filipino Muslim) who gives loyalty to a non-Muslim or adheres to a non-Islamic government or system is a kafir (infidel)". This attitude is consistent with the view upheld in the Siyar (Islamic jurisprudence on international law) that, in the Philippine context, Muslims are bound by state law as long as the state protects them and does not tolerate attacks on their life and property. (Shadid and Koningsveld, 1996).

However, 44% of respondents in Lamitan City agree that a Muslim giving loyalty to a non-Muslim is an infidel. And while 39% of urban youth in Marawi City believe otherwise, a quarter of them are undecided. These results need to be looked into further.

Muslims living in a non-Muslim country are acceptable to urban youth. As regards the statement: "I believe Muslims living in a non-Muslim country is wrong because Muslims will have to live under

un-Islamic conditions", 65% of the survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree. The level of disagreement is highest in Lamitan City (87%), followed by Cotabato City (70%). In these two cities, the Muslim population largely co-exists peacefully with non-Muslims, which may explain the respondents' accepting attitude in terms of living side by side with people of other faiths.

More than a quarter of respondents from Marawi City (26%) and Jolo (39%) are "undecided" on this matter. These areas are largely populated by Muslims, which might have some bearing in terms of how accepting they are of the idea of non-Muslims in the community.

Half of the urban Muslim youth believe that their allegiance to their leaders reflects the same allegiance they have to the Prophet, a belief that can be exploited by VE groups. On the statement: "I believe that Bay'ah or pledge of loyalty given to their leader is the same as what is given to the Prophet", at least half of the respondents (51%) in three study sites (Cotabato City, Lamitan City, Jolo) agree or strongly agree; while 40% in Marawi City are undecided.

The concept of Bay'ah is being exploited by VE groups to foster a strong sense of loyalty and allegiance from members toward their leaders, while at the same time pushing an extremist ideology. This raises the possibility that urban Moro youth would blindly follow their leaders' extremist interpretation of this Islamic concept, believing that it equates with loyalty to the Prophet.

It is noted that at least a quarter of the respondents from all four study areas are undecided on the statement. This suggests there is a window of opportunity to shape their understanding of the concept of Bay'ah along more moderate lines, especially in Marawi City, while efforts are undertaken to shift the understanding of the bare majority towards moderation as well.

Living in a non-Muslim country is acceptable among the majority of urban youth. A large number (85.3%) of respondents from all four study sites agree with the statement: "Muslims are allowed to live in a non-Muslim country or under a non-Muslim government, as long as they have the freedom to practice their religion and can experience basic human rights." The agreement is highest in the island areas (Lamitan, 97% and Jolo, 91%).

The use of violence to establish an Islamic government is largely regarded as unjustifiable. Overall, the majority of the respondents from all study areas disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: "I believe using violence to establish the Khalifah (Islamic government) is justified and encouraged." This is highest in Jolo (78%), which has experienced terrorist bombings. But it is notable that more than a quarter of respondents in Marawi City, which still has to fully recover from the 2017 siege, express agreement with the statement.

There is no consensus among urban Muslim youth about the consequence of breaking the bay'ah. On the statement: "I believe that one who breaks the Bay'ah has committed a grave sin and becomes a kafir (infidel)", a plurality of respondents in Cotabato City (39%) and Jolo (39%) disagree or strongly disagree. Those in Lamitan City (55%) and Marawi City (39%) agree or strongly agree. In aggregate, 39% of urban youth agree or strongly agree with the statement, which is the line peddled by VE groups.

A third each of respondents in three of the four study sites (Lamitan is the exception) are undecided, meaning that there is still space to shape understanding of Bay'ah towards moderation, along with efforts to change the minds of those who accept the VE interpretation of the concept.

Urban youth recognize that VE groups are dividing Muslim communities. Respondents in Lamitan City (93%), Cotabato City (76%) and Marawi City (67%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I believe violent groups have brought about more disunity among Muslims and deepened the differences between them."

On the other hand, only 32% of youth in Jolo agree with the statement, with another 32% expressing disagreement. This split may be brought about by the ongoing friction between the different schools of thought in the area and highlights the need for unity against VE and non-violence in Islam.

Urban youth hold an idealized view of Islam as a religion of tolerance and peace. Nine out of ten respondents (92%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I believe Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with all of humanity, both as individuals and communities." The exception is Marawi City, where a lower but still substantial proportion (72%) agree or strongly agree.

The majority disapprove of kidnapping non-Muslims and confiscating their property. Seven out of ten urban youth (76%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: "I believe kidnapping, holding captive for ransom, and confiscating properties of non-Muslims and similar people/groups considered an 'enemy' is justified".

It is interesting to note, however, that compared to other areas, a smaller though still substantial proportion (58%) in Marawi City expressed disagreement with the statement. Indeed, a fifth (21%) agreed that kidnapping non-Muslims and confiscating their property are justifiable.

Urban youth perceive the government as neglectful of their peers in remote communities, making them vulnerable to VE recruitment. The majority of urban youth (70%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I believe that neglect of government is the reason for the youth in far-flung communities joining armed groups." The agreement is highest in Lamitan City (81%), perhaps an indication that government neglect is most apparent in this area.

One key plank of VE propaganda is that government – national, regional, and local – does not care about Muslims, including the youth. This finding suggests that this VE line has gained traction among urban young people, a trend that should be countered not only by actually implementing P/CVE programs but also by publicizing the delivery of government services down the grassroots.

The majority of urban youth believe that VE groups lure young people to take up arms by offering mobile phones and other incentives. Six out of ten respondents (62%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I think that the giving of cell phones, arms, and money to the youth by certain groups is a tactic to persuade them to join violent groups". Lamitan City is the study area with the highest proportion of respondents who agree with this statement (81%), suggesting that this VE tactic is well-known there. Basilan used to be Abu Sayyaf's stronghold.

The majority of urban youth do not think violence is the answer to anti-Muslim discrimination. VE groups exploit the issue of discrimination against Muslims to stir the emotions of potential youth recruits. But more than half of respondents (54%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: "I believe that discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight". However, a quarter of respondents (26%) do agree with the statement, particularly in Marawi City.

In general, the respondents' responses to the 14 statements suggest that urban youth is closer to moderate Islam than to VE-backed radical Islam. Six of the statements are expressed in a way that reflects a moderate interpretation of the Islamic concept addressed. Respondents agree with all of them, including the belief that Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, that resorting to violence is not justified in upholding religious and political ideology, and that Muslims are allowed to live in non-Muslim countries.

But of the eight statements formulated to reflect VE-backed radical interpretation of Islamic concepts, respondents agreed with three that relate to the concepts of *jihad qital* and *bay'ah*. This suggests that VE groups are making headway in winning hearts and minds among urban Moro youth at least on some Islamic concepts, although the moderate interpretation still holds for most Islamic beliefs. P/CVE information and education programs should focus on countering the VE interpretation of *jihad qital* and bay'ah among urban youth in Muslim Mindanao.

Male/Female Perspective. Overall, male and female respondents share the same attitude on almost all of the statements. However, there are differences in certain areas, where the commonly shared attitude among males is opposite to the commonly shared attitude of females. In Jolo, most males believe that *jihad qital* is an obligation of every Muslim, while most females disagree with this belief. Similarly, most males believe that a Muslim who breaks the *bay'ah* becomes an infidel; female respondents tend to disagree with this assertion. In Marawi City, most males believe that discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight. Most female respondents disagree.

In-School/Out-of-School Perspective. There are differences as well between in-school and out-of-school youth. In Lamitan City, most in-school respondents agree that *jihad qital* is an obligation of every Muslim, while most out-of-school respondents disagree. The situation is the other way around in Jolo, where in-school youth express disagreement, while out-of-school youth agree. In Marawi City, both in-school and out-of-school youth agree that every Muslim is obliged to participate in armed struggle, but the percentage is higher among those out of school.

C. Drivers of Violent Extremism: Motivations and Influences in Joining Violent Extremist Groups

Poverty

Results of the survey point to poverty, a condition where the minimum basic needs of the people are not met, as the primary reason that drives the youth in joining VE groups. As Table 21 shows, this is the top driver cited by 63% of urban youth: Cotabato City (72%), Marawi City (70%), Jolo (68%), and Lamitan City (32%).

Key informants suggest that BARMM's high poverty incidence make the region's youth vulnerable to recruitment by the various VE groups. *"Kung sino yung nahihirapan, yun yung tinutulungan nila para makuha ang* sympathy (They help those who are in need to gain their sympathy)," said one expert.

Large sums of money are then provided as allowance or honorarium for needy young people who are willing to fight with the group, said another informant.

One FGD participant observed that the targets of recruitment are the poor and less educated or out-of-school youths aged 15 years and older. One of this research's case study subjects confirmed the role of poverty in making him join a VE group. He had been orphaned at 13: "*Wala akong mapagkuhaan ng kabuhayan. Mahirap ang buhay* (I had no means of making a living. Life was tough.)"

Table 21. Motivations and Influences in joining VE groups, urban youth (percent, multiple answers)

Description	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Poverty	72.0	70.0	32.0	68.0	60.5
Corruption	41.0	86.0	0.0	17.0	36.0
Poor governance	41.0	56.0	3.0	21.0	30.3
Discrimination	47.0	63.0	2.0	7.0	29.8
Unstable peace and order	29.0	61.0	2.0	17.0	27.3
Limited/No access to education	64.0	61.0	13.0	23.0	51.1
Recruitment by violent extremist groups	40.0	53.0	3.0	8.0	26.0
Ideological	29.0	34.0	1.0	34.0	24.5
Modernization	31.0	64.0	2.0	1.0	24.5
Personal experience of armed conflict	30.0	45.0	6.0	16.0	24.3

Corruption and Poor Governance

Corruption and poor governance are two other reasons cited by survey respondents for joining VE groups. Corruption was cited by 86% of respondents in Marawi City, 41% in Cotabato City, and 17% in Jolo. No one in Lamitan City mentioned corruption. Poor governance is considered a key VE driver by respondents in Marawi City (56%), Cotabato City (41%), and Jolo (21%), though not so much by respondents in Lamitan City (3%).

The logic behind corruption and poor governance as VE drivers are that they redirect public resources from programs to provide basic services to lining the pockets of government officials and workers. When young people feel or witness that the government is doing this, they may join VE groups to redress the situation.

> "
>
> **Still, many in Maute and ISIS are not laying down their arms because they are awaiting proof that government promises of assistance, livelihood opportunities, housing projects and scholarship grants will be realized.**
>
> *From the case study:*
> *The Farmer Who Went to War*

Discrimination

A large percentage of respondents from the mainland areas – Marawi City (63%) and Cotabato City (42%) – cite discrimination against Muslims as a factor that pushes the youth to join VE groups. Few respondents say the same thing in the island areas: Jolo (7%) and Lamitan City (2%).

Unstable Peace and Order Condition

Perhaps not surprisingly, 61% of respondents in Marawi City cite the unstable peace and order situation as a driver of VE recruitment – the city endured a months-long siege in 2017. The proportion of respondents who say the same is lower in Cotabato City (29%) and Jolo (17%).

One key informant said that in their area, "adults who are freely carrying firearms" is a common sight, normalizing guns and making children desire to get one when they grow up. The message sent is that firearms represent protection when conflicts arise within the community. Against this background, young people can be persuaded to join VE groups when guns are on offer.

In one of the FGDs, a participant stated that *"the VE groups offer help by providing guns and ammunition so that they [family] can fight back."* Conflicts within the community can be a result of

family feuds *(rido)* that had escalated and become a bigger conflicts involving more individuals from both parties. Family members (especially the youth) who are victims of these conflicts become easy targets of VE recruitment.

Limited/No Access to Education

Five out of ten (51.1%) survey respondents in Marawi City cite limited/no access to education as a driver in young people joining VE groups, along with 64% in Cotabato City, 23% in Jolo, and 13% in Lamitan City. Many FGD participants believe that young people with limited can be easily persuaded to join these groups with out-of-school youth particularly vulnerable. A key informant mentioned that the youth, especially the OSYs, are indoctrinated as part of the VE recruitment process. VE ideas, in effect, fill in the gaps in the recruits' limited or non-existent secular and religious education.

Ideology

A third each of respondents in Marawi City and Jolo (34%) and 29% in Cotabato City cite ideology as a driver in joining VE groups. VE groups use ideology to recruit university students who are passionate about their religious beliefs, says a key informant. The strategy is to engage these students in ideological discourse and persuade them to adopt the VE interpretation of Islamic concepts such as *jihad* and *bay'ah.*

Two former militants interviewed for this research, who are profiled as case studies, confirm this VE tactic. The first said that he was not recruited nor paid to sign up to become a VE member. Instead, it was his belief in the purpose of the VE group that led him to join. The second person recounted: "I believed that they [ASG] were recruiting young people to join their group for *jihad*. I was assured and made to believe that it was for *jihad* to protect our religion."

Modernization and Destruction of the Environment

Some 64% of urban youth in Marawi City and 31% in Cotabato City identify modernization, in the context of Muslims being influenced by the modern world and turning away from traditional values like modesty among women, as a driver for young people joining VE groups. Conflicts may also arise as agricultural/ancestral lands are modernized and converted to industrial use or developed for housing and commercial spaces. VE groups can use the displacement of people and loss of cultural and natural traditions to stoke anger in the young and fuel the VE recruitment campaign.

Personal Experience of Armed Conflict

Four out of ten (45%) of urban youth in Marawi City, 30% in Cotabato City, and 16% in Jolo believe that a Muslim's personal experience with armed conflict can be a driver in the decision to join a VE group. According to a key informant, violent extremists target orphans of war – young people whose parents died due to the war between the government and rebel groups – for recruitment, telling them to seek justice by joining the VE cause. Says a former jihadi who has surrendered to the government and is profiled in a case study in this research: "When a parent gets killed, there's a tendency that family members will join the ASG to exact revenge."

Male/Female; In-school/Out-of-school Perspectives. Overall, there is no big difference in terms of drivers identified by male and female respondents. They cite the same factors they think influence the decision-making of youth in joining violent extremist groups. The same can be said of in-school and out-of-school respondents, who broadly identify the same drivers of VE. However, it is worth mentioning that a higher proportion of out-of-school youth cites a lack of education as a driver, compared with their in-school peers.

D. Awareness and Views on Violent Extremist Groups

1. Awareness of VE Groups

Awareness of the existence or presence in the respondent's area of a particular VE group apparently depends on geography. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is the most known VE group among urban youth in Lamitan City and Jolo. ISIS and BIFF are known mostly in Cotabato City, while the Maute Group has the highest profile in Marawi City.

A large majority (73.8%) of urban youth are aware of the existence or presence in their area of the ASG, particularly in Jolo (100%), Lamitan City (96%), and Cotabato City (64%). Only a third (35%) of respondents in Marawi City say they are aware of the ASG.

More than 60% of respondents are aware of the existence of or presence in their area of ISIS/ISIL/DAESH, led by those in Cotabato City (88%) and Marawi City (62%). ISIS/ISIL/DAESH militants operate mostly on the mainland, rather than in the island provinces.

Respondents in Marawi City are very much aware of the Maute Group (89%). So are urban youth in Cotabato City (77%), which is less than 90 kilometers away from Marawi. The Maute Group has been blamed for the 2017 Marawi Siege. Of the four study areas, respondents in Cotabato City have the highest awareness (76%) of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters. The BIFF has its stronghold in the province of Maguindanao.

While there are respondents who reported being aware of some international VE groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah, Al-Qaeda, and Khilafah Islamiyah Movement, the percentage though is small.

Table 22. Awareness of VE groups, urban youth (percent, multiple answers)

Extremist Groups Known	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	64.0	35.0	96.0	100.0	73.8
ISIS/ISIL/DAESH	88.0	62.0	39.0	53.0	60.5
Maute Group	77.0	89.0	22.0	37.0	56.3
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)	76.0	31.0	8.0	13.0	32.0
Jemaah Islamiyah	6.0	9.0	4.0	5.0	6.0
Al-Qaeda	6.0	9.0	6.0	2.0	5.8
Khilafah Islamiyah Movement	1.0	3.0	2.0	0.0	1.5

Male/Female; In-school/Out-of-school Perspectives. Overall, there is no difference in the level of awareness among male and female survey respondents across the four study areas. But in-school respondents generally have a slightly higher level of awareness of the following VE groups – ISIS/ISIL/DAESH, Maute Group, and BIFF – compared with their out-of-school counterparts, who are slightly more familiar with ASG.

Description of VE Groups (from FGDs and KIIs). Generally, four VE groups are commonly known by survey respondents and FGD participants across the four study areas. These are ASG, Maute, BIFF,

and ISIS. Key informants also confirmed the existence of these VE groups.

When asked to describe these groups, FGD participants characterize them in terms of the various violent activities these groups are known for, based on what they heard or from their personal experience.

In addition to the four VE groups, a few key informants mentioned Dawlah Islamiyah and Jemaah Islamiyah. Others referenced specific ASG factions such as Ajang-Ajang, Ninuc Faction, Mundi, Sahiron, and Lucky 9.

> **Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).** FGD participants in Lamitan City and Jolo share similar descriptions of the ASG, stating that this group is involved in killings, bombings, beheadings, kidnaps for ransom, and extortion. They add that the group is known to be engaged in family feuds (*rido*) and illegal drugs. From the perspective of the FGD participants, the killing of innocent people makes the ASG a terrorist group. Two specific factions of the ASG were mentioned: Lucky 9 Group and Ajang-Ajang Group.

> FGD participants in Cotabato City describe the ASG as involved in bombing activities that do not spare the innocent. There was no mention of the ASG from the Marawi FGD participants. One FGD participant in Lamitan City deviated from the prevailing view and categorically said the ASG is not an extremist group.

> **Maute Group.** FGD participants in Marawi City have much to say about the Maute Group. Many of them link the said group to the 2017 Marawi Siege, emphasizing that the Maute Group is the main culprit in the destruction of Marawi City. They describe the group as making use of Islamic perspectives and popularizing the concept of jihad. FGD participants in Cotabato City likewise associate the Maute Group with the Marawi Siege.

> The responses reflect an assumption that the Maute Group is closely linked to ISIS, as manifested in the participants' use of the terms "ISIS-Maute" and "ISIS and Maute".

> One Marawi discussant considers the Maute Group as particularly extremist, saying: *"Binubombahan nila ang lugar ng mga sibilyan. Parang hindi nila naiisip na kapatid lang nilang mga Muslim ang nakatira doon. Tapos sinisiraan nila."* (They bomb civilian communities, seemingly not taking into account that fellow Muslims live in those areas. And then they denigrate the bombing victims.)

> **BIFF.** FGD discussants in Cotabato City describe the BIFF as engaged in violent activities prohibited by Islam, such as killing innocent people and undertaking suicide bombings.

> **ISIS.** Participants in the Marawi City FGD said that the purpose of ISIS is the establishment of an Islamic government. Two of them declared that the group has a principled stand: *"Ang ISIS, ang paninindigan nila ay totoong jihad* (ISIS upholds true *jihad.*)"

2. VE Groups and their violent acts

Asked what they know of the activities of VE groups, FGD participants described violent acts in the recent past that stood out for them. Discussants in Cotabato City recounted clashes between the military and the BIFF, as well as *rido* involving Muslim families fighting over land and politics, which got out of control as VE militants and government soldiers stepped in. These incidents show that the involvement of VE groups goes beyond just religion and jihad.

In Marawi City, discussants talked about the Marawi Siege and the Butig Siege as evidence that VE groups are not afraid of extremist violence in pursuit of their goals. In Lamitan City, FGD participants mention the Lamitan Siege and the Zamboanga Siege, while in Jolo, the discussion revolved around the twin bombings in Jolo Cathedral and the suicide bombing at Kilometers 3 and 2.

Key informants discussed two common violent activities of VE groups: targeted attacks against the military and indiscriminate attacks against the entire community. The anti-government missions include ambushes of military personnel and harassment of military camps, checkpoints, and detachments. The attacks against communities include the bombing of churches and kidnapping, extortion, killings, and harassment of civilians. Some informants say there are instances when VE groups stage attacks to force a community to flee homes and farms. The militants then gain access to food and other material to restock their depleted resources.

3. Sources of information about VE Groups

A bare majority of urban respondents (52%) cite videos on violent extremism as their major source of information about VE groups. This is very much the case in Jolo (82%), followed by Cotabato City (64%). Because Internet connectivity in Sulu province is very poor, the high percentage reported in Jolo implies that most of the video materials were accessed offline. The videos may have been shared in the form of CDs/DVDs and through cellphones, laptop computers, and tablets.

Reading news and feature articles about VE is much less common (7.8%), as are conversations with other people (3.3%) and extremist social media (2.5%). Reading is higher in Cotabato City (14%) while conversations are slightly so in Marawi City (7%). While extremist social media is overall a minor source of information, it has the potential to grow more potent as mobile phone coverage and Internet connectivity improve in Muslim Mindanao's urban areas.

Table 23. Sources of information about VE, urban youth (percent)

Description	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Watched videos on violent extremism	64.0	25.0	35.0	82.0	51.5
Read articles on extremism	14.0	6.0	7.0	4.0	7.8
Conversed with other people about VE and why Moros should join extremist groups	2.0	7.0	4.0	0.0	3.3
Extremist social media	3.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	2.5

Male/Female; In-School/Out-of-school Perspectives. Many more male respondents reported having watched videos on violent extremism compared with females, who tend to mention reading articles. It seems that gender has a bearing on preference in types of information sources, something that can be taken into consideration by planning more targeted dissemination of counter-VE materials. While both in-school and out-of-school youth say videos are their main source of information on VE, video watching is more prevalent among those out of school. The opposite is the case in terms of extremist social media, which only in-school youth (except some out-of-school in Lamitan City) report as having encountered. This may be an issue of access (universities typically have wifi service) and a deliberate strategy of VE groups to tailor their social media messaging to in-school youth.

Table 24. Sources of VE information, urban youth (in-school/out-of-school youth)

Media and outlets	Cotabato City		Marawi City		Lamitan City		Jolo, Sulu		Total	
	In Sch	OSY	In Sch	OSY	In Sch	OSY	In Sch	OSY	In Sch	OSY
Watched videos on violent extremism	62.0	66.0	30.0	20.0	44.0	26.0	64.0	100.0	50.0	53.0
Read articles on extremism	16.0	12.0	12.0	0.0	8.0	6.0	8.0	0.0	11.0	4.5
Conversed with other people about VE and why Moros should join extremist groups	4.0	0.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.5
Extremist social media	6.0	0.0	8.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	4.5	0.5

E. Findings of 2017 and 2022 studies on Violent Extremism: A Comparison

This section presents the changes in the findings of the 2017 youth vulnerability study concerning the 2022 study in terms of selected VE findings.

1. Awareness of Islamic concepts relating to VE

After five years, the top three religious concepts urban youth are aware of remain unchanged. These are *jihad, ummah,* and *hijrah* – the same Islamic beliefs chosen by VE groups to underpin their cause by advancing extremist interpretations of these concepts. Interestingly, *jihad* is the only concept with unchanged high awareness (2017: 80% and 2022: 83%). Awareness of *ummah* (75% to 50%) and *hijrah* (65% to 28%) has fallen sharply over five years, perhaps partly because VE groups are focusing less on Islamic concepts other than *jihad* in their propaganda and recruitment efforts.

The level of awareness of *jihad* has increased among young people in Cotabato City and Jolo but decreased in Marawi City and Lamitan City.

Table 25. Awareness of Islamic concepts related to VE, 2017 and 2022 studies (percent, multiple answers)

Concept	Cotabato City		Marawi City		Lamitan City		Jolo, Sulu		TOTAL	
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022
Jihad	88	94	100	92	68	62	64	83	**80**	**83**
Ummah	80	62	100	64	64	45	56	29	**75**	**50**
Hijrah	64	21	100	44	48	26	48	20	**65**	**28**
Wahhabi	24	5	32	8	24	9	52	55	**33**	**19**
Salafi	36	7	56	41	16	6	32	11	**35**	**16**
Fatwa	44	18	64	6	44	12	12	16	**41**	**13**
Bay'ah	44	9	56	5	28	5	4	13	**33**	**8**
Khilafah	40	7	84	10	48	8	36	5	**52**	**8**
Al Wara Al Bara	24	6	32	4	8	1	4	1	**17**	**3**
Takfir	36	1	32	6	16	2	4	1	**22**	**3**
Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter	20	0.0	32	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	2	**14**	**1**

The greatest decrease in awareness is around the concepts of *Khilafah* (down 44 percentage points) and *fatwa* (down 28 percentage points). Awareness of the concept of co-existence of Muslims and non-Muslims espoused in the Medina Charter, which was low at 14% in 2017, fell by 13 percentage points in the 2022 study.

In both 2017 and 2022 studies, the *madrasah* is identified as the main source of information about religious concepts among urban youth, followed by parents/family. But more urban youth now also point to parents/family as a source of information, compared with respondents in the 2017 study.

In the 2017 study, Islamic seminar/lecture series and other face-to-face events were popular sources of information about Islamic concepts. These are rarely mentioned in the 2022 study. This might be due to restrictions in face-to-face activities brought about by the pandemic, including in-person schooling. Indeed, secular schools are also rarely mentioned in the 2022 study as information sources, unlike in 2017.

Another apparent outcome of the pandemic restrictions is the rise of social media as a source of information for urban youth. Social media was rarely mentioned in the 2017 survey.

2. Understanding of VE

There is a perceptible change among urban youth in terms of focus in comparing the 2017 and 2022 survey results around the understanding of violent extremism. In 2017, their perceptions of VE revolved around religion: "Extreme practice of religion", "strategies for the youth to do extremist acts using the wrong concept of Islam", and "Against Islamic teaching". In 2022, the personalistic (No to violence/Not want to be bad) and legalistic (Illegal act/against the law/bad deeds) mindsets are more dominant.

In the FGDs, both the 2017 and 2022 participants characterized VE as an act that involves extreme violence, which is against Islam and the law. Unlike in 2017, the 2022 participants explicitly identify the groups and series of events that for them manifest violent extremism. The ease in providing such details is expected, given the several terrorist attacks that occurred in the recent past such as the Marawi Siege, the Mamasapano encounter, and the Jolo Cathedral bombings. It also brings home that what was largely theoretical and remote about VE in 2017 has become a concrete phenomenon with real-life consequences in 2022.

3. Attitudes toward VE

The 2017 findings indicated a moderate attitude towards *jihad qital,* with respondents five years ago agreeing that armed struggle is subject to the rules of *shariah*, for example, that women, children, and the elderly should not be killed or harmed. Respondents in the 2022 survey now agree that *jihad qital* is the obligation of every Muslim, an interpretation put forward by VE groups and one that implies that women, older people, and even children could be killed or harmed since they too are obliged to participate in armed struggle in defense of Islam.

There is likewise an observable change in the attitude of the youth regarding the use of violence in response to social (e.g. anti-Muslim discrimination) and political (e.g. Western military presence in Muslim lands) problems. The 2017 study showed that the youth was on the fence about the issue. Five years later, urban youth have a clearer position: the majority agrees that violence cannot be justified as a response to discrimination against Muslims.

On the surface, these positions may seem inconsistent. But *jihad qital* is in the religious sphere whereas violence in the context of discriminatory practices is in the socio-political context. What the majority of urban youth seems to be saying is that violence is justifiable in defense of Islam,

but it is not the answer to fixing social and economic problems, where there are other possible avenues such as legislation and elections.

4. Drivers of VE

There is not much change in urban youth's perceptions of what drives young people toward violent extremism. Poverty remains the most commonly cited driver, mentioned by more than 60% of the respondents in both the 2017 and 2022 studies, followed by corruption and poor governance. Mentions of unstable peace and order as the driver remain steady, but there is an uptick in citing discrimination against Muslims (from 24% to 29.8%).

Table 26. Motivations and influences in joining VE groups, 2017 and 2022 studies (percent, multiple answers)

Motivations	2017 (N=100)	2022 (N=400)
Poverty	63	60.5
Corruption	35	36.0
Poor governance	32	30.3
Discrimination	24	29.8
Unstable peace and order	28	27.3
Limited/No access to education	36	51.1
Recruitment by violent extremist groups	40	26.0
Ideological	19	24.5
Modernization	***	24.5
Personal experience of armed conflict	33	24.3

***Not mentioned in 2017*

5. Awareness of VE Groups

Five years on from 2017, the two VE groups most known to urban youth remain the same: the Abu Sayyaf Group (2017: 70%; 2022: 73.8%) and ISIS/ISIL/DAESH (51%; 60.5%). The Maute Group's public profile jumped by 21.8 percentage points, from 34% to 56.3%, likely on the back of its prominent role in the Marawi Siege.

While the Abu Sayyaf is now much less well known in Marawi City (from 100% to 35%) and slightly so in Cotabato City (72% to 63%), the VE group sharply increased its public profile in Lamitan City (36% to 96%) and Jolo (72% to 100%). ASG suicide bombers are alleged to have carried out the Jolo Cathedral attack in 2019.

Urban youth awareness of ISIS/ISIL/DAESH jumped 34 percentage points in Lamitan City to 38% and by 37 percentage points to 85% in Cotabato City, where the Maute Group also raised its profile among the youth by 50 percentage points to 75%. Marawi City, known for the Marawi Siege, is not too far away from Cotabato City.

Already well known in Cotabato City in 2017, the BIFF further raised its profile among youth there in 2022 by 20 percentage points to 76%. On the other hand, the group has seemingly been almost forgotten in Marawi City (from 80% awareness to 31%). International groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah and Al-Qaeda fared worse, falling to single digits in awareness. The government had cracked down on the activities of these foreign VE groups after the Marawi Siege finally ended.

Table 27. Awareness of VE groups, 2017 and 2022 studies (percent)

Concept	Cotabato City		Marawi City		Lamitan City		Jolo, Sulu		TOTAL	
	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	72	63	100	35	36	96	72	100	70.0	73.8
ISIS/ISIL/DAESH	48	85	100	62	4	38	52	52	51.0	60.5
Maute Group	28	75	100	89	0	22	8	37	34.0	56.3
Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)	56	76	80	31	0	8	28	13	41.0	32.0
Jemaah Islamiyah	28	6	19	9	0	4	12	5	14.0	6.0
Al-Qaeda	16	6	40	9	0	6	24	2	20.0	5.8
Khilafah Islamiyah Movement	4	1	4	3	0	2	4	0	3.0	1.5

6. Targets and the recruitment process

The targets of VE recruitment remain unchanged, based on what survey respondents, FGD participants, and key informants said in 2017 and 2022. VE groups still focus on young male Muslims who possess one or more of the following characteristics: poor, orphaned, unemployed, out-of-school, involved in local/family feuds, and religiously and ideologically inclined, youth leaders.

Current recruitment practices are the same as those identified in the 2017 study, but with some changes in emphasis. The use of social media as an avenue for recruitment has intensified – FGD participants in the 2022 study mentioned social media more frequently than their counterparts in 2017. As the reach and influence of social media increase and become a major source of information among the youth in Bangsamoro, it seems VE groups are starting to utilize social media as well for recruitment purposes.

In 2017, recruitment took place within learning institutions such as the *madaris, toril,* and secular schools. These venues are mentioned less frequently by FGD participants and key informants in the 2022 study compared with their peers in 2017, although they are still acknowledged as possible venues of recruitment. A number of these schools have temporarily suspended classes or adopted blended learning modalities, reducing in-person interaction among its students.

Finally, the Covid pandemic and lockdowns worsened the already difficult economic situation of households in Bangsamoro. It is perhaps not surprising that FGD participants and key informants in the 2022 study more frequently mention the use of monetary incentives to persuade young people to join VE groups, compared with their counterparts in 2017.

F. Perceptions, Attitudes and Involvement of Urban Youths in P/CVE Programs and Projects

1. Awareness of P/CVE programs and projects

One of the intervening events in the past five years is the NAP P/CVE interventions of the Philippine government designed to prevent and counter violent extremism across the nation. When asked about this national plan, only 6.5% of urban youth respondents reported being

aware of any P/CVE programs and projects in their community. Most of those aware are females and in school.

When those aware were asked to identify these initiatives, they mentioned the following: Islamic symposium (committee on dawah and masjid affairs), youth leadership summit, "NGO Positive Vibes – P/CVE, information educational campaign (Sangguniang Kabataan), Peace Camps/Summit for youths, and Information Dissemination Campaign- Youth Resiliency: National Action Plan implemented by men in uniform.

Figure 3. Awareness of P/CVE Programs and Projects in the Community, urban youth
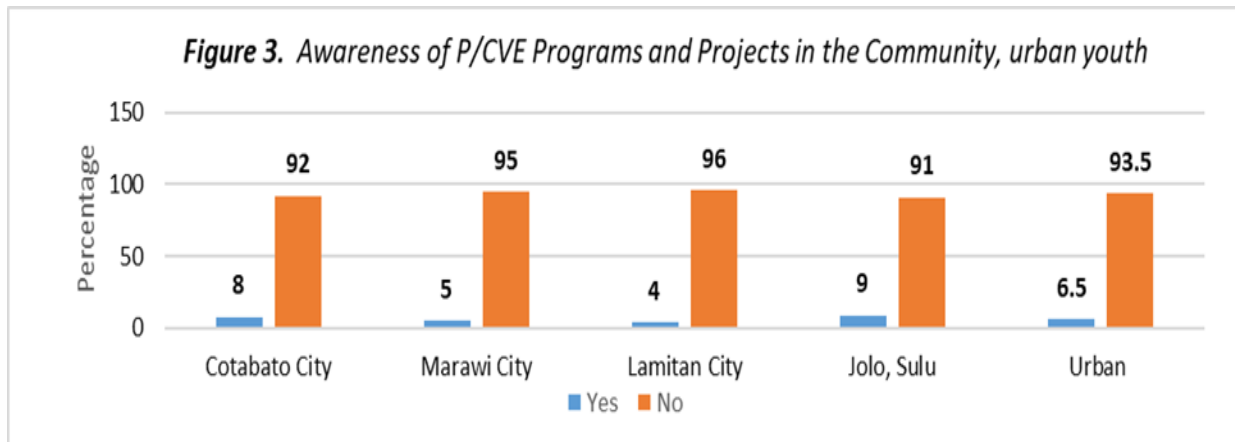
Awareness of identified P/CVE program categories is equally low: vocational and educational training (6.3%); awareness-raising on the threat of violent extremism in schools (4.5%); public information campaigns on the effects of violent extremism (4.3%); and media messaging and alternative/counter-narrative campaigns on violent extremism (3.3%).

Table 28. Awareness of P/CVE programs and projects, urban youth (percent)

Description	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Educational and vocational training	2.0	10.0	4.0	9.0	6.3
Awareness-raising on the threat of violent extremism in schools	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.5
Public information campaigns on the effects of violent extremism	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3
Media messaging and alternative/ counter-narrative campaigns on violent extremism	4.0	4.0	5.0	0.0	3.3
Peace camps integrating P/CVE	2.0	3.0	4.0	1.0	2.5
Counseling program for the youth	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5
Employment opportunities for the youth	1.0	7.0	1.0	1.0	2.5
Interfaith and interfaith dialogues	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.3
Community trust building with law enforcement	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	2.3
Capacity building for teachers and community leaders to support the youth on P/CVE	1.0	3.0	0.0	2.0	1.5
Ideological reeducation among the youth	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3

In contrast, the urban youth leaders in the focus group discussions can name various P/CVE programs and projects that they know, as listed in Table 29. In general, FGD participants

recognize the usefulness of the P/CVE in helping intended beneficiaries in different ways.

They agree that P/CVE programs increase the level of awareness of the youth in terms of the presence of various VE groups in their community, including their recruitment activities. In Cotabato City, participants say young people are helped to realize how vulnerable they are to recruitment. In Marawi City, they are made to understand their responsibilities to their community and taught to be more discerning in accepting invitations from any group.

Lamitan City participants point out that increasing awareness about violent extremism prevents young people from joining VE groups. They consider P/CVE programs as poverty alleviation efforts because the knowledge and skills they impart facilitate livelihood opportunities, especially for out-of-school youth. This also helps prevent them from getting into VE activities.

But the gap in awareness between the survey respondents, who are rank-and-file members of youth organizations, and the FGD participants, who are youth leaders of those organizations, indicates that much work needs to be done to cascade awareness from the top to the grassroots.

Table 29. Knowledge of P/CVE programs and projects, urban youth leaders (from FGDs)

Cotabato City	Marawi City	Lamitan City	Jolo, Sulu
• Training and education, livelihood programs initiated by the BARMM government • Information Dissemination campaigns to make the youth aware of VE • Bangsamoro Community Resilience • Training workshops for the OSYs	• Provincial officials engaged in conflict resolution • P/CRVE conducted by Balay Mindanao in Sultan Dumalondong, Butig • Training-Seminar among Socially Excluded Youths (SEYs) conducted by Thuma Ko Kapagingud • Participative/Community Vulnerable assessment • "Lapis and a Bala" — an education program implemented in 2018-2019 in partnership with the brigade • The hiring of mediators — a program of the Ministry of Public Order and Safety • Programs of the Militaries at MSU	• Note: 6 FGD participants expressed no knowledge of any P/CVE programs • Program for Surrenderees under Pres. Durterte where they were given livelihood, housing, and scholarships. • ALS programs • TESDA programs provide opportunities for employment and livelihood • 4Ps and scholarships • Peace camps/Summits	• Note: 9 FGD participants expressed no knowledge of any P.CVE programs • Livelihood programs • The government provides livelihood opportunities for surrenderees • Awareness program about extremist groups

2. Attitudes toward P/CVE programs and projects

To determine the urban youths' attitude towards various P/CVE programs and projects, they were asked to signify their agreement or disagreement with a given statement or choose "undecided" if they are not sure. The statements are formulated to indicate positive perspectives regarding P/CVE programs and projects.

Overall, survey respondents recognize the importance of P/CVE programs and projects in the effort to address violent extremism (79%-91% agree). The level of agreement is very high among respondents in Lamitan City (88%-99%) and relatively lower in Marawi City (72%-79%). Urban youth in the island areas express more willingness to participate in training on P/CVE (Lamitan City: 93%; Jolo, Sulu: 91%) compared with those in Marawi City (74%) and Cotabato City (72%).

Youths from Lamitan City (88%) and Cotabato City (82%) are more optimistic that P/CVE programs and projects hinder the recruitment of youths to join extremist groups. The proportion of respondents who say they are undecided about all the statements is relatively higher in Marawi City (11%-19%) than in the other study sites.

Table 30. Attitudes toward P/CVE programs and projects, urban youth (percent agree or strongly agree)

Statement	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo, Sulu (N=100)	Total (N=400)
I believe the youth should actively participate in programs/projects on P/CVE.	A/SA (87%)	A/SA (76%)	A/SA (99%)	A/SA (93%)	A/SA (88.8%)
I think the programs on P/CVE are relevant to eliminating the activities of extremist groups in the region.	A/SA (84%)	A/SA (76%)	A/SA (98%)	A/SA (82%)	A/SA (85%)
I believe the local government units should be involved in the implementation of the P/CVE programs/projects.	A/SA (87%)	A/SA (79%)	A/SA (93%)	A/SA (90%)	A/SA (87.3%)
If invited, I will participate in training on P/CVE.	A/SA (72%)	A/SA (74%)	A/SA (93%)	A/SA (91%)	A/SA (82.5%)
The P/CVE programs/projects hinder the recruitment of the youth to join extremist groups.	A/SA (82%)	A/SA (74%)	A/SA (88%)	A/SA (72%)	A/SA (79%)
The participation of family members in the P/CVE programs helps prevent the youth from joining violent extremist groups.	A/SA (90%)	A/SA (75%)	A/SA (98%)	A/SA (94%)	A/SA (89.3%)
I believe the whole community should be involved in the implementation of P/CVE.	A/SA (91%)	A/SA (72%)	A/SA (98%)	A/SA (82%)	A/SA (85.8%)
I believe that P/CVE programs for the youth should be implemented in our community.	A/SA (91%)	A/SA (85%)	A/SA (98%)	A/SA (91%)	A/SA (91.3%)

*A/SA: Agree/Strongly Agree

Male/Female, In-school/Out-of-school Perspectives. In Cotabato City, male respondents express a more positive attitude on all the statements compared with female respondents. On the other hand, in Marawi City, female respondents are the ones that express a more positive attitude.

Overall, out-of-school youth have a more positive attitude on all the statements compared with in-school respondents, indicating a higher degree of optimism that P/CVE programs and projects can address the problem of violent extremism.

3. Awareness and involvement in BARMM programs and projects

The majority of survey respondents are aware of programs and projects implemented by the Bangsamoro government in the field of education (56%). Four out of ten urban youth (45.8%) know of BARMM's poverty alleviation initiatives. Programs to reduce corruption are the least known, known only to 25.8% of respondents.

Awareness of Bangsamoro government programs is higher in the mainland areas – Cotabato City and Marawi City – than in the island areas of Lamitan City and Jolo, where very few respondents (3%) say they know of Bangsamoro government programs to reduce corruption.

BARMM politics may have something to do with this state of affairs. The majority of BARMM's leaders hail from the mainland provinces of Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, while the island provinces, most especially the Province of Sulu, maintain a somewhat antagonistic relationship with the BARMM leadership.

Figure 4. Awareness of BARMM programs among urban youths (percent)
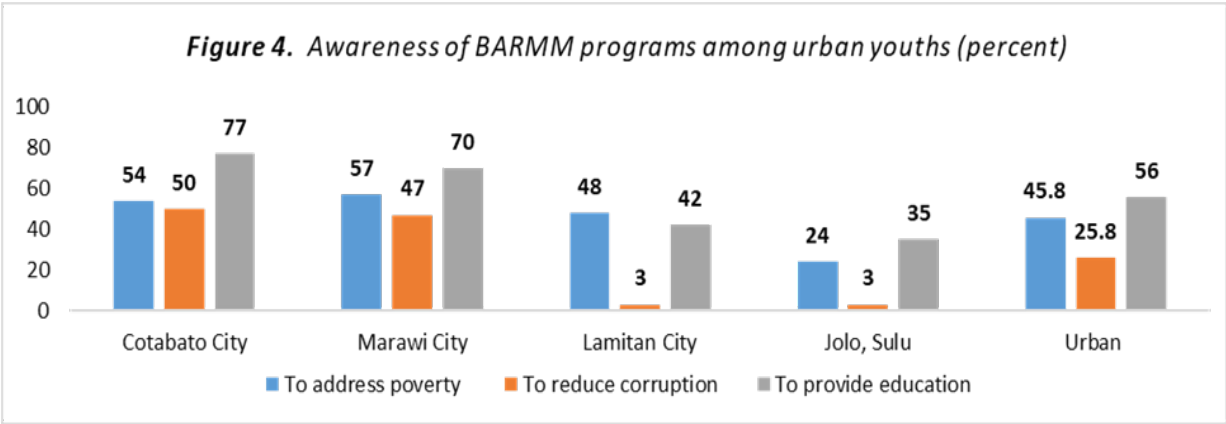
G. Awareness of Recent Events Related to Violent Extremism

1. Taliban Takeover in Afghanistan

Only 25% of urban respondents know that the Taliban has retaken power in Afghanistan. Awareness is highest among Jolo respondents (31%) and those in Marawi City (30%), followed by respondents in Cotabato City (25%) and Lamitan City (13%).

Of those aware, many are undecided about whether or not this event is reenergizing VE groups in the Philippines (39.4%). The significant percentage of youth who are not certain is perhaps a consequence of not having enough information surrounding the event, other than the occurrence of the takeover itself.

The highest proportions of respondents who think the Taliban takeover is reenergizing VE groups in the Philippines are in Marawi City (33.3% of those aware) and Jolo (25.8%). Those who believe otherwise are in Lamitan City (69.2%). The highest number of undecideds are in Cotabato City (72%).

The perception that the Taliban takeover is reenergizing the VE group is shared mostly by In-school respondents. In general, out-of-school youth do not believe that this is the case.

Figure 5. The takeover of Taliban reenergizing VE groups in the Philippines: Attitudes of urban youths (percent)
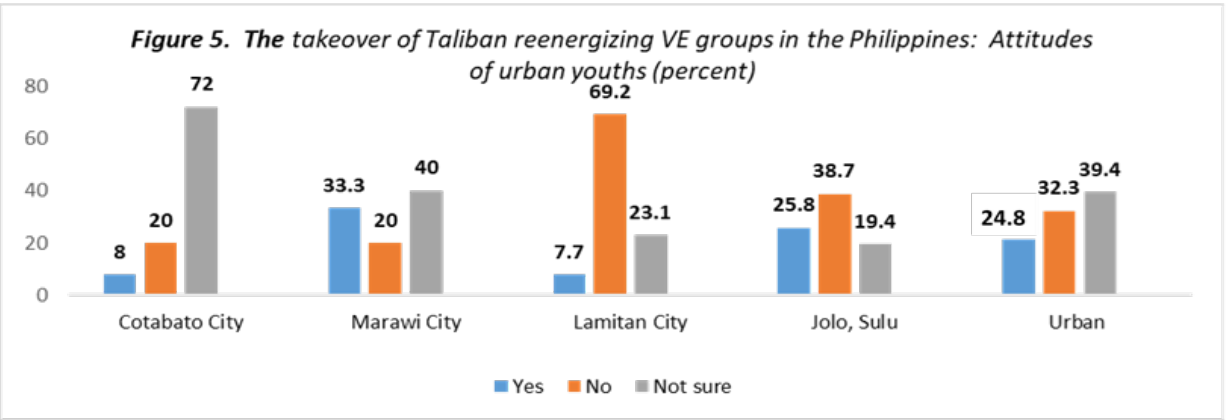
In contrast to the survey findings, many youth leaders during the FGDs in Cotabato City, Marawi City, and Jolo opined that the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan is having some effect on the VE groups in the Philippines. They say the Taliban's achievement can provide these groups renewed motivation, encouragement, and a sense of confidence in pursuing their goals.

Said a youth leader Cotabato City: *"Para sa akin, yung* incidence *ng Taliban, parang nagbigay ulit sya ng* spark *sa* local extremist groups *na magkaroon na naman ng* motivation *na mag*-grow *dahil meron silang nakitang* example *para mag*-push *sa kanila."* (For me, the reemergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan seems to be giving local extremist groups new motivation to grow because they're witnessing an example that's spurring them on).

2. The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020

A very high percentage (93%) of urban youth are not aware of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, with no one in Lamitan City knowing anything about it. The highest level of awareness is among respondents in Cotabato City, although their number is at a meager 13%.

Figure 6. Awareness on the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 (percent)
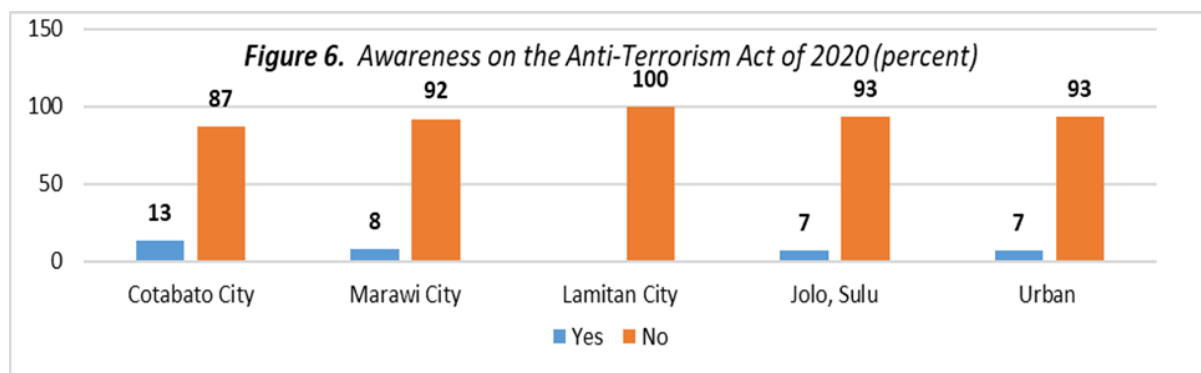
The respondents who reported having some knowledge of the Anti-Terrorism Law (7%) provided some descriptions of it. Close to 40% of those aware describe the law as a counter-terrorism measure to prevent, prohibit and penalize terrorist activities in the country.

Table 31. Description of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, by urban youth (percent)

Description	Cotabato City (N=13)	Marawi City (N=8)	Lamitan City (None)	Jolo, Sulu (N=7)	Total (N=28)
Counter-terrorism law intended to prevent, prohibit and penalize terrorism in the Philippines	76.9	0.0	0.0	14.3	39.3
To capture terrorist groups/bad people	0.0	0.0	0.0	57.1	14.3
No idea	23.1	0.0	0.0	14.3	14.3
A law where the government can arrest people without a warrant	0.0	12.5	0.0	14.3	7.1
Awareness about the terrorist group	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	3.6
ISIS or MAUTE group	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	3.6
Ahlol-Sunnah Wal-Jummah	0.0	62.5	0.0	0.0	3.6

The majority of FGD participants in Marawi City oppose the Anti-Terrorism Law because they are concerned about possible abuse directed against Muslims, who they say are already subject to discrimination. They add that Muslims can be the main targets of the

law since they are easily labeled as "terrorists" by non-Muslims.

FGD participants in Cotabato City are more moderate and emphasize the need for information campaigns about the law so people can make up their minds about it. As it is, youth leaders from the islands say they have no idea about the law except its title, which indicates to them that it is there to prevent terrorism.

PART 3: Perspectives of the Moro Youth in Conflict-Affected Rural Areas

This section of the report presents the baseline data of Moro youth in conflict-affected rural areas that are targeted for recruitment by violent extremist groups. The data is presented under the following topics: (1) perceptions and attitudes on violent extremism and extremist groups; (2) recruitment of Moro youth, motivations, and processes; (3) perceptions, attitudes, and involvement in P/CVE; and (4) awareness of recent events related to violent extremism.

A. Perceptions and Attitudes on Violent Extremism and Extremist Groups

1. Awareness of Islamic concepts related to VE

A list of Islamic concepts taken from the Religious Rehabilitation Group of Singapore was presented to the survey respondents to determine the level of awareness of rural youth of contemporary issues.

Table 32. Knowledge of Islamic concepts related to VE, rural youth (percent)

Awareness	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Jihad	96.0	65.0	81.0	53.0	73.5
Bay'ah	5.0	0.0	27.0	0.0	8.0
Fatwa	17.0	5.0	46.0	0.0	17.0
Salafi	4.0	44.0	18.0	7.0	18.25
Wahhabi	3.0	2.0	29.0	16.0	12.5
Ummah	64.0	58.0	63.0	1.0	46.5
Khilafah	3.0	3.0	26.0	0.0	8.0
Al Wara Al Bara	1.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	1.8
Hijrah	16.0	19.0	66.0	0.0	25.3
Takfir	3.0	3.0	6.0	0.0	3.0
Co-existence as stated in Medina Charter	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.25

Jihad, variously translated as struggle, striving or holy war (the last is the definition pushed by VE groups), is the most well-known among rural respondents at 73.5%. Almost all respondents in Mamasapano are aware of the term (96%), followed by those in Tipo-Tipo (81%), Butig (65%), and Patikul (53%). In the island municipalities of Tipo-Tipo and Patikul, out-of-school youth are more aware of the concept of *jihad* than those in school. In Tipo-Tipo, 92% of out-of-school youth say they know of *jihad*, compared with 70% of in-school youth who say the same. In Patikul, 60% of out-of-school respondents know the term, while only 46% of in-school youth are aware of *jihad*.

Ummah is also a known Islamic concept, but it is a far second to *jihad* at 46.5%, largely because only 1% of respondents in Patikul say they are aware of the term. *Ummah* refers to the whole community of Muslims bound together by ties of religion. A significant majority of rural youth in Mamasapano (64%), Tipo-Tipo (63%), and Butig (58%) say they know the concept.

Four out of ten (44%) Butig youth say they are aware of the term *Salafi,* a reform branch within the Sunni sect. *Hijrah* (migration) and *fatwa* (religious edict) are widely known only to Tipo-Tipo respondents (66% and 46%). *Hijrah* is known more by out-of-school youth in Tipo-Tipo. The differences in the level of awareness among the youth in the four study sites may depend on how relevant they perceive these concepts to their daily lives. The extent of their exposure to advocates, including VE groups and influencers on social media, maybe a factor as well.

2. Sources of knowledge of Islamic concepts

Asked where they get their basic understanding of religious concepts, 88.5% of rural youth respondents credit their parents. The *madrasah* (61%) and the *masjid* (50.8%) are also significant sources of information.

The *madrasah* is mentioned by large numbers of respondents in Tipo-Tipo (80%), Mamasapano (77%), and Butig (64%), but only by 23% in Patikul. Nine out of ten Butig respondents (92%) cite the *masjid* as a source of knowledge, but fewer than half named it as such in the other three study areas.

Table 33. Sources of knowledge of Islamic concepts, rural youth (percent)

Sources	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Parents	76.0	100.0	87.0	91.0	88.5
Elders	40.0	64.0	30.0	17.0	37.8
Madrasah, Ma'had	77.0	64.0	80.0	23.0	61.0
Masjid (Mosque)	40.0	92.0	31.0	40.0	50.8

3. Sources of VE information

The majority of respondents (54%) say that what they know of violent extremism from watching videos on the subject. This is especially true of Tipo-Tipo respondents (81%), followed by those in Mamasapano (57%). Young people in Patikul (45%) and Butig (35%) also rely on videos for information, but not in as high a number.

Fewer young people learn about VE from extremist social media sites (21.8%), except in Tipo-Tipo, where 68% of respondents utilize social media. Still, social media has the potential to become a potent tool for recruitment as the speed and quality of Internet access improve in the Bangsamoro region. In a study conducted by the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, fully half of 236 interviewees said Internet-based recruitment and perusal of social media factored into their decision to join ISIS.[88]

Also mentioned as a source of VE information are news and feature articles on extremism (11.5%), which may be in print, online, or spread by social media. There is not much difference according to gender, except in watching videos. More male respondents in Mamasapano, Butig, and Tipo-Tipo watch videos on violent extremism compared with female respondents. The opposite is the case in Patikul.

---

88   *How Social Media Fuels Extremism — ACCO (counteringcrime.org)*

Table 34. Sources of VE information, rural youth (percent)

	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N400)
Watched videos on violent extremism	57.0	35.0	81.0	45.0	54.5
Extremist social media	0.0	3.0	68.0	16.0	21.8
Read articles on extremism	18.0	3.0	23.0	2.0	11.5
Conversed with other people about VE and why Moros should join extremist groups	0.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	1.8

4. Attitudes toward Islam and Islamic practices related to VE

Survey respondents were presented with attitudinal statements and asked whether they agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or are undecided. Some statements reflect the traditional moderate interpretation of Islamic concepts while others reflect the interpretation espoused by VE groups.

Nearly all respondents (96.3%) agree or strongly agree with the moderate statement: "I believe Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with all of humanity both as individuals and communities." Other statements that are endorsed by the majority support the moderate line, including the sentiment that violent groups are sowing more disunity among Muslims (75.8% agree) and that Muslims are allowed to live under a non-Muslim government (82.5% agree).

Adding more support to the moderate view, the majority of respondents reject a statement that reflects the position of VE groups, that it is justified and encouraged to use violence to establish an Islamic government (49.8% disagree).

But some VE-aligned statements elicit agreement or indecision. There is strong agreement in Mamapasano (78%) and Tipo-Tipo (74%) with the statement: "I believe *jihad qital* (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim". The moderate interpretation is that not all Muslims are obligated to take part in armed struggle and that women, children, and the elderly should not be harmed.

In Butig, however, 49% reject this VE interpretation, along with 41% in Patikul are undecided (thus bringing down the VE-supportive number to 43.8%), underscoring the uncertainty around the interpretation of *jihad* in conflict-affected rural areas – and the potential for the extremist interpretation to prevail as VE groups advocate for the idea.

Rural youth are also split on two other VE-backed statements that relate to the concept of *bay'ah* (pledge of loyalty), and a third statement about social interaction with non-Muslims. Eight out of ten respondents in Butig (85%) and 42% in Patikul are undecided about the notion that giving bay'ah to one's leader is the same as giving bay'ah to the Prophet – an interpretation that VE groups espouse to justify unquestioning loyalty to their leadership. The majority of respondents in Tipo-Tipo (56%) and Mamasapano (54%) agree.

Nearly all respondents in Butig (85%) are undecided on the statement: "I believe that one who breaks the *bay'ah* has committed a grave sin and becomes a *kafir* (infidel)". And while the majority in Tipo-Tipo (56%) and Patikul (83%) agree with this VE-backed interpretation, 59% in

Mamasapano reject it.

Table 35. Attitudes toward Islamic beliefs related to VE, rural youth

Attitudinal statements	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
I believe Muslims are allowed to live in a non-Muslim country or under a non-Muslim government, as long as they have the freedom to practice their religion and can experience basic human rights. (hijrah)	A/SA (74%)	A/SA (96%)	A/SA (68%)	A/SA (92%)	A/SA (82.5%)
I believe using violence to establish the Khilafah (Islamic government) is justified and encouraged.	D/SD (75%)	Undecided (63%	D/SD (63%)	D/SD (58%)	D/SD (49.8%)
I believe violent groups have brought about more disunity among Muslims and deepened the differences between them.	A/SA (55%)	A/SA (96%)	A/SA (69%)	A/SA (83%)	A/SA (75.8%)
I believe Islam is a religion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence with all of humanity both as individuals and communities.	A/SA (99%)	A/SA (99%)	A/SA (90%)	A/SA (97%)	A/SA (96.3%)
I believe Jihad qital (armed struggle) is an obligation of every Muslim.	A/SA (78%)	D/SD (49%)	A/SA (74%)	Undecided (41%)	A/SA (43.8%)
I believe Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims, including wishing them well at their festivals.	D/SD (54%)	A/SA (98%)	D/SD (78%)	A/SA (62%)	A/SA (53.3%)
I believe that Bay'ah or the pledge of loyalty given to their leader is the same as that given to the Prophet.	A/SA (54%)	Undecided (85%)	A/SA (56%)	Undecided (42%)	Undecided (41.5%)
I believe that one who breaks the Bay'ah has committed a grave sin and becomes a kafir (infidel).	D/SD (59%)	Undecided (85%)	A/SA (56%)	A/SA (83%)	Undecided (40.8%)

Respondents are split as well on the traditional notion that Islam allows social interaction with non-Muslims, including wishing them well on their festivals. While 98% of respondents in Butig and 62% in Patikul uphold this moderate position, 78% in Tipo-Tipo and 54% in Mamasapano disagree, in effect aligning with the VE interpretation that Muslims should not interact with non-Muslims.

The disparities in beliefs may be ascribed to the sources of knowledge available to young people in conflict-affected rural areas, where VE-aligned advocates and even extremist social media may be competing with the *madrasah*, *masjid,* and parents in imparting information. That many young people agree with or are undecided about the VE interpretation of *jihad qital* and *bay'ah* suggests that advocates of the traditional moderate view of Islam need to intensify their youth information efforts.

5. Awareness of VE Groups

Not surprisingly, given the conflicts in their area, survey respondents are well aware of the existence of VE groups. All respondents in Butig and 80% of respondents in Mamasapano know of ISIS, a foreign-linked militant organization that emerged as an offshoot of al Qaeda in 2014. Fewer respondents in the island areas of Tipo-Tipo (38%) and Patikul (28%) are aware of ISIS, suggesting that its presence is concentrated in the mainland.

In terms of the local violent extremist groups, awareness varies according to geography. The Maute Group is very well known in Butig (97%), which experienced a siege instigated by Maute before they did the same in nearby Marawi City. The Maute is known to 60% of respondents in Mamasapano, which is located in Maguindanao, a province that borders Lanao del Sur, whose capital is Marawi City.

The island municipalities of Tipo-Tipo (95%) and Patikul (91%) have a very high awareness of the Abu Sayyaf Group, which is also known to the majority in Mamasapano (54%), but not so much in Butig (29%). The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters are known in Mamasapano (73%) – Maguindanao is a BIFF stronghold – and to some extent in Tipo-Tipo (45%). But the BIFF is basically unknown in Butig and Patikul (1% each).

Table 36. Awareness of VE groups, rural youth (percent)

Group name	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
ISIS	80.0	100.0	38.0	28.0	74.0
Abu Sayyaf	54.0	29.0	95.0	91.0	67.3
Maute Group	60.0	97.0	44.0	14.0	53.8
BIFF	73.0	1.0	45.0	1.0	30.0
Jemaah Islamiyah	8.0	37.0	30.0	0.0	18.8
Al-Qaeda	4.0	25.0	8.0	0.0	9.3
Khilafah Islamiyah Movement	4.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	3.3

FGD participants in the four rural areas described the VE groups they are aware of in some detail. The goal of ISIS and Maute, they say, is to establish an Islamic government (Khilafah) and promote their religious ideology through violence. These VE groups are experienced recruiters, having gone on aggressive recruitment campaigns to prepare for the Butig and Marawi sieges.

ISIS and BIFF are described as enjoying the support of foreign forces in pursuit of their goals through violence. Foreign experts have been seen operating in BIFF communities, for example. The Abu Sayyaf, on the other hand, is seen by some participants as essentially a brutish group that kidnaps and behead hostages and attack government camps, causing armed conflict in the community and exposing people to the crossfire. One FGD discussant in Patikul has a somewhat positive image of the Abu Sayyaf, saying that the group is fighting for its ideals.

Table 37. Knowledge of violent extremist groups (from the FGDs)

Butig	Mamasapano	Tipo-Tipo	Patikul
• The call of ISIS/Maute is to bring about an Islamic Government • VE groups promote religious ideology through violence • Aggressive recruitments before Butig & Marawi siege	• ISIS/BIFF supports violence to achieve their goals • The groups are supported by foreign forces • The BIFFs have communities of their own supported by foreign forces as seen with the presence of foreign experts	• Abu Sayyaf is Violent • They kill and behead people • They kidnap and attack army camps resulting in armed conflict in the communities	• Abu Sayyaf na mayroong pinaglalabanan (something to fight for) • Provide support to families in rido • Use ideology to convince the youth in the communities • Convince the youth to join through jihad as the only way to enter paradise

Many of the FGD discussants in Butig recounted their emotional experiences during the Butig Siege in 2016. They witnessed Abu Sayyaf militants beheading captive government soldiers and civilians. Entire families fled to far-off evacuation centers as houses were burned to the ground.

FGD participants in Mamasapano spoke of life in barangays that host military camps, which regularly drew BIFF attacks. In other communities, mortar shelling destroyed houses, and government troops and BIFF fighters exchanged gunfire, putting civilian lives in danger. The inhabitants would flee to safety, return when the fighting stopped, and then evacuate again when fighting flared up.

The key informants confirmed the personal stories of the FGD participants as they drew on their research and extensive knowledge of ISIS and the local VE groups. In the interviews, the most commonly cited was the Abu Sayyaf, but they also talked about the BIFF and Maute, and the lesser-known Dawlah Islamiya and factions within the Abu Sayyaf. The violent acts recounted by the key informants included attacks against the military, the massacre of Christian laborers in Piagapo in Lanao del Sur, harassment of civilians, and the Butig and Marawi sieges.

B. Violent Extremist Groups' Recruitment of Moro Youth: Motivations and Processes

1. Drivers of recruitment

Recruitment by violent extremist groups has been ongoing in the BARRM. In a study conducted by IRI[89], among the drivers identified are lack of opportunity; corruption and poor governance; political alienation; and exposure to violence. Similar findings were shown in a DAI[90] study, which named feelings of community marginalization and discrimination; belief that Islam is under attack; support for revenge-seeking; lack of self-efficacy; the culture of guns; and insecurity.

Socioeconomic factors are named by survey respondents in conflict-affected rural areas as major drivers for joining violent extremist groups. Poverty is the widely perceived push factor, named by more than three-fourths of the survey respondents in Butig (95%), Tipo-Tipo (82%), and Mamasapano (81%). The 2018 poverty incidence in BARMM was 61.3%, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Poverty is also cited as a key driver by youth leaders in the FGDs, making the VE offers of cash, guns, and cell phones almost irresistible. The incentives are worth Php30,000 to Php100,000, estimated by the FGD participants in Mamasapano, who also mentioned promises of livelihood opportunities for the recruit and his family. The same tactic is at work in Patikul. "According to the people in the community, there is recruitment in the locality, where huge sums of money and guns are offered," said a key informant.

> ❝
>
> **It was poverty that pushed the disillusioned commander to become an extremist. Unable to finance their son's studies in a secular school, his parents enrolled him in an Arabic school instead, but even the minimal expenses became too much for them and the boy had to drop out. "When I stopped going to school, I started to carry guns and trained in Camp Abubakar," he recalls. The teenager trained as a sniper and learned how to make improvised explosive devices. He and some friends and relatives formed a gang that later joined forces with the larger Basit Usman and Marwan group.**
>
> *From the case study:*
> *The Disillusioned Commander*

Having no access to education is cited as another socio-economic factor pushing young people to violent extremism. All survey respondents in Butig name this as a key driver. Respondents in Butig say there is very limited opportunity for them to acquire an education because they have to travel long distances to attend school – there are no educational facilities in Butig – even as sporadic armed conflicts in the municipality disrupt transport schedules and endanger those on the road.

---

89 IRI, 2019. *Violent Extremism In The Philippines: Endemic Conflict, Volatile Politics And The Struggle for Identity*
90 DAI, 2018. *Youth and Violent Extremism in Mindanao, Philippines*

Cultural factors are also cited as drivers for young people joining VE groups. Rural youth respondents point to anti-Muslim discrimination as a push factor, notably mentioned by more women than men. Anecdotally, women complain about being discriminated against in daily life (being served in shops, for example) because of their Islamic attire. Men report discrimination in employment and promotion, and inadequate facilities and policies to allow them to practice their faith.

> **"**
>
> **The farmer was persuaded to join Maute when his barangay's imam (religious leader) decided to become a member. "Everyone of us respected him so much," he recalls. Suddenly, he was no longer just training to protect his neighborhood from attack. He was going on a jihad to establish an ISIS state in Mindanao.**
>
> *From the case study:*
> *The Farmer Who Went to War*

Modernization is named by more than 90% of Butig respondents as a driver of VE recruitment. As explained by a key informant, this cultural factor was the centerpiece of the Maute recruitment campaign pre-Butig and pre-Marawi sieges. Maute leaders declared that Islamic teachings on modesty and preventing one's self from subscribing to worldly things were under threat from modernization. They decried what they saw as families seemingly deviating from fundamental Islamic values because of their embrace of modern ideas and institutions.

Butig respondents (98%) also single out ideology as a driver for youth deciding to join a VE group, although less than a third of those in the three other study sites say the same. Butig FGD participants say that young people are invited to attend an Islamic *da'wah* (symposium), where they are exhorted to help spread Islam and promised a reward for joining the *jihad*.

Rido or clan conflict is one of the motivations for joining a VE group, according to FGD participants in Butig and Patikul. They explain that VE group recruiters will offer assistance and protection to the youth members of the clan in *rido* – protection so that the potential recruits will not be a victim of the rido and assist in carrying out revenge on the other clan. The clan is then expected to let the young people join the extremist group.

Political factors such as poor governance and corruption can be push factors in VE recruitment, says a key informant in Butig. He pointed to prevalent logging activities in the town that are destroying the environment yet are not being addressed by government officials at the local or regional level. The informant says this is providing an opening for violent extremists to offer alternatives, burnishing their reputation as defenders of the people and potentially attracting recruits to the cause.

Personal growth can also be a driver of VE recruitment. The subject of one of this research's case studies is a member of the Tausug tribe who recalls feeling empty and searching for identity and purpose in life. "I was not satisfied with my personal life because I spent most of my time on non-productive things such as roaming around, and that is perhaps why I was triggered to get involved with ASG," recounts. He has since given up on violent extremism and surrendered to the government.

2. Recruitment narratives

Very few survey respondents attest to the presence of violent extremist group recruiters in their rural community. However, the focus group discussion participants mention sightings of VE members recruiting young people in their locality. Some disscussants even know friends who got recruited, adding that some parents supported their decision.

The key informant interviews reveal how prevalent recruitment is in rural communities. "I have first-hand information that recruitment is going on in Patikul," says one key informant. "Almost

all barangays here in Patikul have recruiters who recruit the youth through the *barkadahan* (friendship) system." The prime targets include young people that are in *rido* or into drugs. Another key informant observed that recruitment is prevalent among relatives of ISIS fighters.

In Mamasapano, an FGD participant recounted how a friend was invited to go to the mountains and promised a monthly salary for joining ISIS. It was the last time that friend was seen. Another FGD participant shared that he once received an invitation. He and some other young people were offered money and listened to preaching about *jihad*. VE recruiters offer cash and use religious ideology to entice the youth, especially those with little education.

In Butig, FGD participants spoke about the experience of getting recruited by ISIS and Maute. These groups persuade Moro youth by sharing the wonders of Islam and the reward of Paradise for waging *jihad*. Cash and other incentives are also mentioned. The process of convincing is done through the *da'wah*.

Participants in the island FGDs largely talked about cash, guns, and cell phones as the incentives used by VE groups, rather than religious ideology and the heavenly reward for participating in *jihad.* FGD participants in Patikul also highlighted the use of *rido* narratives by the Abu Sayyaf to persuade young people to join them, emphasizing the protection that the group can grant the recruit's family. Government neglect was also mentioned as a push factor.

Compared with in-school youth, more out-of-school survey respondents in the island provinces say they know a person who has been recruited by violent extremist groups. Youth who are out of school in Patikul (16%) and Tipo-Tipo (8%) claim to know someone who has been recruited by the Abu Sayaff.

C. Perceptions, Attitudes, and Involvement in P/CVE Programs

1. Awareness of P/CVE programs and projects

Survey respondents in all four conflict-affected rural areas have a low level of awareness (12%) of P/CVE programs implemented in the community. This is especially true of the mainland towns of Butig (1%) and Mamasapano (4%). More young people in the island municipalities are aware of some P/CVE programs in their community, at 31% in Tipo-Tipo and 12% in Patikul.

Table 38. Awareness of P/CVE programs and projects, rural youth (percent)

Awareness	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N-400)
Yes	4.0	1.0	31.0	12.0	12.0

This is not the case with FGD participants, who are all leaders of youth organizations in the four conflict-affected study areas. Asked what P/CVE programs they know of, they frequently mention the Islamic seminar/symposium or *da'wah*, where the youth are taught how to be a good Muslim. Also named are livelihood training, Alternative Learning System training, psychosocial support, support programs for returnees/surrenderees, and a long list of other P/CVE projects.

The gap is most evident in Mamasapano, where only 4% of respondents are aware of P/CVE programs in their community. Yet it is the FGD participants in this town who cite the most P/CVE programs they know of or in which they have been a participant.

Table 39. Programs participated in by youth leaders (from FGDs)

Butig	Mamasapano	Tipo-Tipo	Patikul
• Islamic seminar • Livelihood • Alternative Learning System • Psycho-social support • Gov't program on moral governance • Interfaith dialogue • Housing and livelihood for returnees • Youth Leaders Summit	• Peace camps • Ideation peacebuilding program • Peace journalism • ASA Microfinance Foundation • Violence Against Women and Children • Program to prevent early marriage • Parenting and birth control • Livelihood for Women empowerment • Seminars on security and empowerment for Peace • TESDA Training • Peace Education Program • Youth Leadership Training program • The MoroPreneur Inc.) namimigay ng (giving of) cash assistance for pregnant and poor • Islamic symposium (Committee on da'wah and masjid affairs) • Inter-generational Dialogue (Magungaya foundation) • Youth Engagement and Empowerment (Magungaya Foundation) • Awareness- Raising on the threat of Violent Extremism (Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxilliary Brigade in partnership with Magungaya foundation) • Youth leaders summit	• Islamic seminar • Psychosocial support • Alternative Learning System • Seminars on P/CVE • Youth Leaders Summit	• Islamic seminar • Livelihood program for VE surrenderee • Seminars on P/CVE • Agama Islam • Providing school supplies • Teaching the youth to read & giving reading materials • Youth Leaders Summit • Barangay Peace Action Team

2. Awareness of BARMM programs and projects

The survey respondents exhibit high awareness of BARMM projects that can be considered part of the anti-VE effort, although some may not have been explicitly branded as P/CVE originally. Eight out of ten (83%) are aware of BARMM programs that provide access to education, 65.5% know of programs that address poverty, and 52.2% have heard of programs to reduce corruption.

Nine out of ten respondents in Tipo-Tipo (95%) and Butig (93%) know of BARMM programs that provide access to education, with lower but still substantial awareness in Mamasapano (75%) and Patikul (69%). Tipo-Tipo respondents are also highly aware of BARMM's anti-poverty programs (94%), but those in the other three areas are less so, particularly in Patikul (38%) – perhaps an indication that the program has not reached Patikul.

A bare majority (52%) say they are aware of BARMM programs to reduce corruption, with the lowest awareness among respondents in Mamasapano (39%) and Patikul (28%).

Table 40. Awareness of programs of the Bangsamoro government, rural youth (percent)

Concerns	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Provide education	75.0	93.0	95.0	69.0	83.0
Address poverty	56.0	74.0	94.0	38.0	65.5
Reduce corruption	39.0	86.0	56.0	28.0	52.2

Asked to name the BARMM programs they are aware of, the FGD participants in Mamasapano cited scholarship programs for children of combatants, college scholarships from CHED, and the Islamic Studies and Arabic Language (ISAL) program to assist in the licensing of ustadz. FGD participants in the three other study sites also mention tertiary education scholarships. In addition, Butig participants named a BARMM program that distributes school supplies while those in Patikul

cited TESDA skills training. Most of the programs identified are national government initiatives administered by BARMM.

Table 41. Education programs identified by youth leaders (from FGDs)

Mamasapano	Butig	Tipo-Tipo	Patikul
• Scholarships for children of combatants • Commission of Higher Education scholarships • Islamic Studies and Arabic Learning Scholarships for Ustadz	• Tertiary Education Scholarships • School supplies for Moritz (Madrasah students) • Senior High School Scholarships • Salary for Ustadz	• Scholarships for Highschool and College students	• Islamic Studies and Arabic Learning • CHED scholarships • TESDA skills training

In terms of poverty alleviation, the Mamasapano youth leaders named livelihood programs for various beneficiaries, while those in Butig focused on cash and food assistance and also employment. Cash and food assistance and 4Ps are the programs named by FGD participants in the island provinces.

The FGD participants were also asked about programs on reducing corruption, but only some youth leaders in Butig commented. They claimed that there is less corruption in the town now, that cash gifts from the government are given in full, and that there is strict surveillance of government workers to discourage corrupt acts.

Table 42. Poverty alleviation programs of BARMM named by youth leaders (from FGDs)

Mamasapano	Butig	Tipo-Tipo	Patikul
• MAFAR fisheries Program • Livelihood for children of combatants • Livelihood for widows • Livelihood for decommissioned combatants	• Relief goods: grocery packs and rice • Cash for work • Cash assistance for senior citizens & Person With Disabilities • Food assistance from Ustadz • Employment by the Ministry of Labor	• 4Ps • Cash Assistance of Senior citizen/IPs • Livelihood programs	• 4Ps • Tabang Program • Cash assistance for senior citizens/ Person With Disabilities

3. Attitudes toward P/CVE programs and projects

The survey respondents may not be aware of any P/CVE program in their community, but they are nevertheless supportive of them. More than three-fourths of rural respondents agree with the statements: "I think the programs on P/CVE are relevant to eliminating the activities of extremist groups in the region" and "I believe the youth should actively participate in programs/ projects on P/CVE". The rest of the statements garnered the agreement of large majorities as well.

Indeed, according to the key informant interviews, other sectors are equally supportive. The informants singled out the LGUs – barangay captains, mayors, and governors – as big backers of P/CVE programs listed in Annex B of this report. They add that youth, women, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable sectors are willing to join in the activities for the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

Table 43. Attitudes toward P/CVE programs and projects, rural youth (percent agree or strongly agree with the statements)

Statements	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
I believe the youth should actively participate in programs/projects on P/CVE.	78.0	95.0	78.0	62.0	78.3
I think the programs on P/CVE are relevant to eliminating the activities of extremist groups in the region.	74.0	93.0	72.0	67.0	76.5
I believe the local government units should be involved in the implementation of the P/CVE programs/projects.	68.0	92.0	74.0	59.0	73.2
If invited, I will participate in training on P/CVE.	67.0	86.0	57.0	54.0	66.0
The P/CVE programs/projects hinder the recruitment of the youth to join extremist groups.	72.0	87.0	63.0	67.0	72.3
The participation of family members in the P/CVE programs helps prevent the youth from joining violent extremist groups.	67.0	87.0	51.0	67.0	68.0
I believe the whole community should be involved in the implementation of P/CVE.	72.0	89.0	80.0	49.0	72.5
I believe that P/CVE programs for the youth should be implemented in our community.	72.0	95.0	81.0	70.0	79.5

D. Awareness of Recent Events Related to Violent Extremism

1. Return of the Taliban in Afghanistan

The survey respondents were asked if they were aware of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Just about one out of ten (9.8%) say they have heard of it. Awareness is highest in Butig (13%) and Tipo-Tipo (10%), and lowest in Mamasapano (7%).

FGD participants in the four study sites were asked how they view the Taliban resurgence. Some in Mamasapano express concern that the development may provide inspiration to local VE groups and incentivize them to continue their struggle. One participant said that their mindset may now be informed by this thought: "If the Taliban did it in Afghanistan, why can't we make it in the Philippines"? He notes the renewed attempts of some local VE groups to occupy more barangays.

The Patikul FGD participants concur with the idea that the VE groups have gotten more inspired after the Taliban takeover. However, some discussants across all four study sites think the worries are overblown. They claim that VE membership numbers have been greatly reduced by the aggressive campaign of the Armed Forces of the Philippines after government troops ended the Marawi Siege.

2. The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020

Republic Act 11479, also known as the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, is intended to prevent, prohibit, and punish terrorism in the Philippines. When asked whether they are aware of this new law, only 3.8% of survey respondents answered in the affirmative. The highest level of

awareness is among respondents in Tipo-Tipo (9%).

Table 44. Awareness of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, rural youth (percent)

Awareness of Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Yes	9.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.8

Most FGD participants are also unaware of the Anti-Terrorism Act. The few who have heard of the law expressed concerns about it. Said a participant in the Butig FGD: "*Hindi ako sang-ayon dyan kasi inaakusahan nila ang mga taong nakasuot ng* Islamic garments *tulad ng kimon. Maaring makasuhan tayo na* terrorist *ka sa pagsusuot mo ng ating kasuotan. At lalo na pag makikita nila tayo na may malaking* bag *dahil iisipin na may dala kang armas* (I don't agree with this law because they have long been suspicious of people wearing Islamic garments. We may be taken to court just because of what we're wearing. It's worse if they see us with a big bag, since they'll assume we're carryings guns)."

A Patikul FGD participant worries that the law can be easily misused. "*Kung may galit sa iyo ang isang tao, puwede kang ituro na terrorista at makakasuhan ka*" (If a person holds a grudge against, he or she can accuse you of being a terrorist and you may then be taken to court)."

V. CASE STUDIES

The following five case studies focus on the life stories of former Islamic violent extremists who have decided to lay down their arms and surrender to the government. The narratives shed light on various aspects of the subjects' experience with violent extremism, from the reasons they joined the VE group to the reasons they decided to leave to the process of surrendering to life after VE. These are some of the insights gleaned from the case studies:

1. ***Poverty is a key driver of violent extremism***. In "The Orphaned Jihadi," a former member of the Abu Sayyaf Group recounted how, as an orphan, he could not depend on his elder siblings who had their family feed. He could not find a job, so joining the ASG at 17 seemed the only way out. But even those living a comfortable enough life with their parents and siblings can find their way to violent extremism too. In "The Tausug Fighter," a middle-class youth joined the Abu Sayyaf because "I was not satisfied with my personal life."

2. ***Life on the run can be fun – until it isn't***. The Tausug fighter revealed in carrying and firing guns. "We're brave to carry guns for this noble purpose," he said. But there were days when government troops relentlessly pursued them through the rain and mud and there was no time to eat and treat the wounded, who later died. In "The Boy Soldier," a surrendered Maute member remembers the laughter and camaraderie with his cousins and friends, who were with the Maute too. But in the Marawi Siege, he saw children and old people die from government air strikes and his uncles perish as well.

3. ***It is relatively easy to surrender to the government***. In "The Farmer Who Went to War," a former Maute member was contacted by an uncle who asked him to surrender, presumably at the behest of the authorities. For his part, the boy soldier simply showed up at the camp of the 49th Infantry Battalion and surrendered his firearm. But the orphaned *jihadi* thinks more of his comrades still with the ASG would surrender if the government actively engages with them and negotiates with sincerity. The farmer who went to war said many in Maute and ISIS have yet to surrender because they want to see proof that government promises of assistance, livelihood opportunities, housing, and scholarships actually materialize.

4. ***Life as a returnee requires patience and a refusal to lose hope.*** In "The Disillusioned Commander," a former fighter with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters spoke about returning to farming and waiting for the regional autonomous government to grant his request for farming equipment and tools. For his part, the Tausug farmer is currently unemployed but is reunited with his family. The boy soldier is a self-described *tambay* (loafer) waiting for the government to make good on its promises. Five years after he surrendered, the orphaned jihadi said he is still cautiously optimistic but warns against insularity among former extremists who now run the regional autonomous government. They should not think that the Bangsamoro is about them. "The Bangsamoro is all of us, regardless of religion or group."

A. The Orphaned *Jihadi*

Born into poverty and orphaned at 13, the former member of the militant Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Mindanao's Basilan province was uneducated and jobless and faced a bleak future. At 17, he joined the militant ASG, which ISIS leaders in the Middle East refer to as Islamic State – East Asia Province. Ten years later, in 2017, the orphaned *jihadi*, who requested that his name be withheld, surrendered to the Philippine government.

Now part of a group of returnees being helped by the non-profit organization Balay Mindanaw, the surrendered fighter talks about the reasons for his decision: doubts about the ASG's adherence

to Islamic teachings, worries over the impact on his family of their father being a militant, and hope from President Rodrigo Duterte's announcement that ASG members are welcome to peacefully surrender.

"There was never a president before who called for ASG to surrender or asked the ASG if we wanted to," says the former rebel. "It was only President Duterte." He is a beneficiary of the government's PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) housing program and lives with his family in a remote barangay in his Tipo-Tipo hometown. "Praise to God, everywhere I go, I'm free," he says. "I have no fear anymore. It's all up to me now to find a decent job."

Inside the Abu Sayyaf

That was not the case in Tipo-Tipo when he was growing up. An ASG leader who was born in the town visited frequently. Residents lived in fear of getting caught in the crossfire or Tipo-Tipo getting razed to the ground should the ASG clash with government troops in the area, although it never happened. "It was hard for the civilians," says the former *jihadi*. "They feared coming out of their house to go to work."

After his parents passed, he was raised by his older siblings. "They had part-time jobs, but they had their own family to feed," he recalls. "I had no means of making a living. Life was tough." He got attached to a kind relative who had joined the ASG, although this kin discouraged the young orphan from joining too, warning him against becoming a man hunted by the military. But aimless and desperate, the teenager eventually decided to fight with the ASG too.

"I believed that they were recruiting youths to join their group for *jihad*," he recalls. "I was assured and made to believe that it was for *jihad* to protect our religion." But he witnessed in his ten years with the group instances when civilians were kidnapped for ransom and bombings carried out when the ASG's demands for financial support were not met. "Those who commit church bombings are those who lack understanding and knowledge and who stand for the wrong ideology," he says.

Still, the camaraderie he found in the ASG, particularly among other young men like himself, made for some good times. "The only time we felt unhappy was when we were outnumbered by the military. We couldn't eat and sleep well." He was a foot soldier assigned to the transport and delivery of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). He says the ASG tries to redirect operations away from civilians to avoid casualties among non-combatants. But he says few in the general population back the ASG. "It's really hard when civilians are scared to support us. There's no one to call on for help. Civilians are really scared to get involved."

Cautiously Optimistic

Five years after his surrender, the former *jihadi,* now 32*,* remains cautiously optimistic. He thinks the government can do more to persuade those who are still with the ASG to lay down their arms. "The government should look for them," he suggests, particularly those who operate in the Basilan municipality of Sumisip. "They should negotiate with sincerity and involve the DILG [Department of Interior and Local Government], mayors, and community leaders."

He is concerned about the family of those mistakenly identified as Islamic rebels or caught in the crossfire of the fighting. "When a parent gets killed, there's a tendency that family members will join the ASG [to exact revenge]." He also warns against insularity among those now in power. The leadership of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is dominated by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

They should not think that the Bangsamoro is about them, says the former ASG fighter. "They assume that they have the sole right to carry firearms," he says. "They don't have the understanding that Bangsamoro is all of us, regardless of religion or group. They're supposed to help others who are more in need."

B. The Farmer Who Went to War

Seven years ago, the farmer was one of 40 or so men in his hometown of Piagapo in Lanao del Sur province who were being trained by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which was negotiating with the national government on political autonomy for Muslim Mindanao but was also preparing for military conflict in case the talks failed. He learned to assemble and dismantle firearms and engage in guerilla tactics and other ways of waging war to defend Piagapo.

On the 20th day of the training, some of his comrades revealed that they were part of the Maute group, also known as the Islamic State of Lanao. Join us, they urged. Like their ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) comrades in the Middle East, the Maute members wanted to set up a caliphate, not just an autonomous region in Mindanao. The Maute group's message was also about *jihad* and the obligation of Muslims to take up arms in a just war to fight for Islam.

Following the Imam

The famer was hesitant at first, but he was persuaded to join Maute when his barangay's *imam* (religious leader) decided to become a member. "Every one of us respected him so much," he recalls. Suddenly, the farmer was no longer just training to protect his neighborhood from attack. He was going on a *jihad* to establish an ISIS state in Mindanao. That meant leaving Barangay Gacap, where his wife and relatives enjoyed a peaceful life.

War came to Piagapo in 2017. The farmer mixed with government troops and acted as if he was going to volunteer and fight with them, but in reality, he was the lead backup and rescuer of Maute members who were escaping from the war zone besieged by the government forces. A month after the battle in Piagapo, he became an active combatant in the Marawi Siege. When the Maute leaders perished in the fighting, he joined the exodus of residents fleeing the city and ended up living with them in an evacuation center while he looked for Maute survivors.

But he found no one and he ended up seeking refuge with lawless elements operating in the municipality of Baloi in neighboring Lanao del Norte. He could not go back home to Gacap because he was a wanted man and did not want to endanger his wife and newborn child or his many relatives living there. All the while, though, he could hear his family's voices in his head and grew increasingly sad as he recalled the happy times with his nine siblings, to whom he was very close.

Lessons Learned

Sometime in 2018, while hiding out in Baloi, he was contacted by an uncle who asked him to surrender to the government. Disillusioned and badly missing his family, he agreed. Now 31, the farmer has returned to farming, but he keeps a very low profile. He has angered ISIS leaders in Piagapo for being instrumental in the surrender of other Islamic militants. He does not regret his decision to surrender. He almost died in Marawi from his battle wounds and was deeply lonely while on the run. He realized that he could not afford to be in the wrong again.

If he was to advise young people about joining an extremist group, he would counsel them to be very vigilant and think long and hard. They should observe where the majority of the people are and take their side, rather than follow the path of the extremist few or even the *imam*. The majority is where the correct way is, where the good is, he says. Fortunately, he adds, the Taliban victory in

Afghanistan does not seem to have had a significant effect on extremist recruitment in Piagapo and elsewhere in Mindanao. He believes that ISIS and the Maute no longer have a big following in Lanao as they did before.

Still, many in Maute and ISIS are not laying down their arms because they are awaiting proof that government promises of assistance, livelihood opportunities, housing projects, and scholarship grants will be realized. At this time, he says, the national government has yet to fulfill pledges made to returnees like himself. As for the regional autonomous government, he would like to see Bangsamoro officials take care of regional governance to turn BARMM aspirations into reality.

C. The Boy Soldier

At 20, the boy soldier has seen more life and violence than most other young people. Born in the municipality of Butig in Lanao del Sur province, he lost his father at an early age and watched with increasing worry as his impoverished mother worked hard to feed and clothe him and his six siblings.

At age eight, he was fortunate to be taken in by a relative and brought to Cotabato City, where he was enrolled in a *toril* [boarding school for Quran reading], which gave him Php500 monthly allowance. But he had to return to Butig a few years later. He was enrolled in an Islamic secondary school, but he stayed only until Grade 5.

In 2015, at just 13, he formally became a member of the Maute group, also known as the Islamic State of Lanao, which was headquartered in Butig. The group tried to take over Marawi, Lanao's capital, in 2017, resulting in the city's destruction and hundreds of civilian and military deaths during five months of fighting.

A Volunteer for Allah

The boy soldier remembers the camaraderie and laughter as much as the fighting and the killing. He first learned about Maute from some cousins and friends who had joined them. He was not recruited, he says, nor was he paid to sign up. The young man barely in his teens had volunteered, attracted by the group's adherence to Islamic precepts and its belief that it was engaged in *Jihad Fi Sabilillah* (a just war for the cause of Allah). He says he also wanted to root out bad practices in his community such as cockfighting – and desired, at his death, to enter Paradise.

He was immediately sent to battle without undergoing training. Besieged by government troops in 2016, Butig was unfamiliar terrain to many Maute members, and the teenager was deployed as a guide to help the fighters map out routes for offense, defense, and escape. As the fighting raged, hundreds of families fled the municipality to the capital. But they and the city's residents had to flee again during the Marawi Siege, where he was assigned to hold the strategic Banggolo Bridge.

Until now, the boy soldier says he cannot forget the faces of his friends and relatives, all members of Maute, who died in the war. He saw children and old people die from government airstrikes. He witnessed his uncles perish too. At one point, the young fighter saw an old man begging a tricycle driver to let him ride his vehicle out of town. But the driver refused because his family was already inside. He fired at the driver to compel him to let the old man join them to escape the war.

Lessons Learned

In 2018, he decided to surrender to the government at the tearful urging of his mother. Afraid to lose his only parent, he went to the 49th Infantry Battalion camp and gave up his firearm. He is now a self-described "*tambay*" (loafer), waiting for the government to make good on its promises. In December, he worked as a salesboy for one of a relative's shopping stalls in Quezon City so he could help provide for his mother and siblings.

He says he has learned lessons from his experiences. His time with the Maute group taught him to distinguish between what is and what is not true faith, and to appreciate the importance of being cautious in everything that he does and who he engages with as friends or even as a family. Asked about his perspective on the Taliban, the group that recently took control of Afghanistan, he describes them as advocates of true Islam in governance, in contrast to ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), which he describes as seeking to destroy the community.

Butig is now free of elements of ISIS, he claims, and he is unaware of any new militant group in the municipality as an offshoot of the Taliban victory. He counsels young people to investigate the real goals and motivations of the group that they seek to join or which recruits them and to avoid those that would sacrifice the local community in pursuit of their objectives.

Waiting on Promises

As the conversation progressed, he shared his thoughts about government programs that can help him and his community. Right now, he observes, what he sees is the government simply doling out rice and dry goods. He thinks it is more sustainable if the focus is on forming and supporting cooperatives, so former fighters like him and other citizens get experience in properly running a business enterprise or livelihood project. They will be proud of the results and have a sense of achievement because they put effort into it.

What is his opinion of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)? He thinks the BARMM's decommissioning of the weapons program is a good step, but he feels it is not reaching the true combatants. He believes many of the program's beneficiaries tend to be those who are close to or have access to BARMM officials. He said BARMM and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which signed a peace agreement with the government, should first put an end to unIslamic practices such as cockfighting and gambling. They are, after all, Moros and Muslims.

Asked about the controversial Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, he says he has no idea about it. The world of terrorism and violence seems a faded memory to him now. Barangay Sandab, his community in Butig, is a very special place, he says. It is peaceful and has abundant resources, rivers, and fertile soil for farming. He has good memories there. With luck, hard work, and delivered promises, the former boy fighter may settle down to a life free from want and live according to Islamic precepts.

D. The Tausug Fighter

The young man felt empowered when he joined the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in 2015. Just 22, he wanted to be part of the fight to create a community and a state dominated by Muslims and Islam in his hometown of Patikul in Sulu province and the rest of Mindanao. "I thought ASG was a good organization fighting against the military and fighting for and protecting our religion," says the Tausug Muslim, who asked that his real name not be used.

Never mind the occasional beheadings. "It's often a consequence of unfulfilled demands or ransom," he explains. "We resort to it to make a point." He was also fine with the group's expectation that anyone could be ordered to explode a bomb strapped to his body, which is said to be the highest form of sacrifice an ASG fighter can make. But he drew the line at ASG killings of his fellow Tausugs. "I joined to fight our *satru'* (enemies), not our *pagkahi* (fellows)." He surrendered to the government in 2019.

Companion of the Prophet

Unlike other recruits who decided to join ASG in part because of extreme poverty, he led a comfortable enough life with his parents and siblings. His village in Patikul was a largely peaceful place. "But I was

curious about ASG," says the former combatant. "I was not satisfied with my personal life because I spent most of my time on non-productive things such as roaming around, and that is perhaps why I was triggered to get involved with ASG." His parents strongly objected to his decision, but he went ahead anyway.

The ASG unit he joined was called Ajang-Ajang. Every member chooses a name taken from religious books. The Tausug fighter called himself Ibnu Mas'ud (Son of Mas'ud), one of the Prophet's companions and an exegete [interpreter] of the Qur'an. "We mimic the mujahideen, the freedom fighters of old," Ibnu Mas'ud explains. His morale was high in his first two years with Ajang-Ajang. "I was fascinated with carrying guns. We're brave to carry guns for this noble purpose."

There were many moments of calm in the beginning. When recruits were not firing at military camps as a test of their ability and determination, the Ajang-Ajang fighters would clean their guns and stay put in one place. Anticipating police or military operation in the area, they would move away from their likely path. But the violence intensified and came even to Ibnu Mas'ud's community, forcing his family to scatter. In bad weather and still pursued by the military, the fighters could hardly eat. Wounds were left untreated, often resulting in death. "I began to wonder, to question," he recalls. "My mind was in disarray."

A Good Life

Now 29, the former Ibnu Mas'ud says he is happy to be reunited with his family. He is currently unemployed but helps out during harvests and takes on the occasional job when one becomes available. He is clear on what he wants. "We are after a good life that is based on our being Muslim and on our Islamic faith. Government should lead and local leaders should negotiate and provide a livelihood that will improve a lot of ASG members. Provide them also with space in the community where they and their family are left in peace."

He suggests that civilian leaders in Sulu, not military personnel, should be the ones to reach out to ASG members who are ready to return to normal life. Government can also reach out to people in areas affected by conflict through development projects that respond to their needs. He wants to see minimal military patrols to avoid civilian displacement. Patrols often result in armed confrontations, he says, which place local livelihoods and enterprises at risk. "When livelihoods and enterprises are at a standstill, life becomes difficult for all."

E. The Disillusioned Commander

For nearly two decades, the disillusioned commander fought government troops in Maguindanao province, mainly in the battle zone, the Philippine armed forces call "SPMS Box" – the stronghold of the ISIS-aligned Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The territory covers the contiguous towns of Shariff Aguak, Pagatin, Mamasapano, and Shariff Saydona, the last being his hometown, where he and his 12 siblings had led a hardscrabble existence.

Now 37, the veteran combatant has surrendered to the government and returned to farming, but this time with a bit more hope. The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has been established and promises have been made by both the national and regional governments for assistance to returnees. He is asking the regional autonomous government for farming equipment and tools and is focused on generating electricity for his community and improving dirt roads to the rice fields.

Becoming a Mujahideen

It was poverty that pushed him to become an extremist. Unable to finance their son's studies in a secular school, his parents enrolled him in an Arabic school instead, but even the minimal expenses became too much for them and the boy had to drop out. "When I stopped going to school, I started to carry guns and trained in Camp Abubakar al Siddique," he recalls, referring to the headquarters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government in 2014. He wanted to become a *mujahideen* (fighter) in the *Jihad Fi Sabilillah* (a just war for the cause of Allah) in Mindanao.

The teenager trained as a sniper and learned how to make improvised explosive devices. He and some friends and relatives formed a gang that later joined forces with the larger Basit Usman and Marwan group, led by bomb expert Abdul Basit Usman, a former Filipino overseas worker in Pakistan, and Malaysian militant Marwan, who was on the US Most Wanted terrorist list. They were disciplined and they trusted us, so we joined them, he says.

Marwan was killed in January 2015 and Basit Usman died four months later. He decided to leave the leaderless group after fighting with them for nearly a decade. "I steered clear of engaging in extremist activities," he recounts. "I didn't join any groups, did not carry guns for months, and became a civilian. I started farming again and grew rice to provide daily food for my family."

The period of inactivity ended when his brother was shot by a close relative. Commander Kagi Karialan, who led the BIFF-Karialan Faction, settled the dispute. "I was happy that our family got the justice we deserved," he says. To repay the commander and show his gratitude, he and his brother joined the BIFF-Karialan Faction and fought with them for seven years. He recalls ambushing government forces within and outside SPMS Box and planting bombs around their camps.

One day, another armed group suddenly attacked BIFF Karialan members, wounding him and his brother and killing two comrades. His brother later died. Asked about the reason for the ambush, the group leader said it was borne out of a grudge against a member of the Karialan faction. "When I heard about this, I decided to stop fighting for the cause and surrender to the government," he says. "I did so to avoid falling victim to the grudge they held." His family also worried about the negative impact of his BIFF affiliation on their own lives.

Lessons Learned

The violent incident brought home to the disillusioned commander the realities on the ground. While ostensibly united as Muslims, members of the various armed groups and factions in Muslim Mindanao can also turn against each other over personal and sometimes ideological issues. The BIFF split from the MILF, for example, because it believes in a separate homeland while the MILF accepted Manila's offer of autonomy.

Now no longer with the BIFF, he publicly says that Bangsamoro Organic Law and the Moro Liberation Front-Philippine Government Peace Agreement are "beneficial" and that the MILF-dominated BARMM transitional government "has significantly improved and transformed the region." He has also changed his mind about the armed struggle. He regrets the combined 17 years he spent away from his family and community and still feels the pain from the death of many of his comrades.

It's terrible to be poor, but it's much more difficult to discover that the things you spent time and effort on, thinking they were beneficial to you, were the wrong choices and made your life even more unhappy, he says. "I do everything I can to keep ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and BIFF from infiltrating the neighborhood where I now live. I also make sure that my family, relatives, and the youth in our area are safe from them because I don't want them to go through what I suffered.

There's still time to reform and work for the government as a civilian."

He worries about the Taliban victory in Afghanistan, which he thinks "will have a massive impact on ISIS, particularly in terms of recruitment." But he does not believe the BIFF will be able to leverage the Taliban's achievement to persuade young people in Maguindanao to join them. He is also not convinced that the BIFF and ISIS in Mindanao will see a windfall in foreign funding as a result of the Taliban victory.

Even so, he urges the government and the private sector to pay attention to impoverished young people unable to attend school. "I view education as one of the effective programs that help lessen poverty," he says. "Also, provide livelihood programs for parents of Moro youth to help them support their children's education." Counseling in every community on the dangers of violent extremism is key as well, especially in places that do not benefit from government assistance.

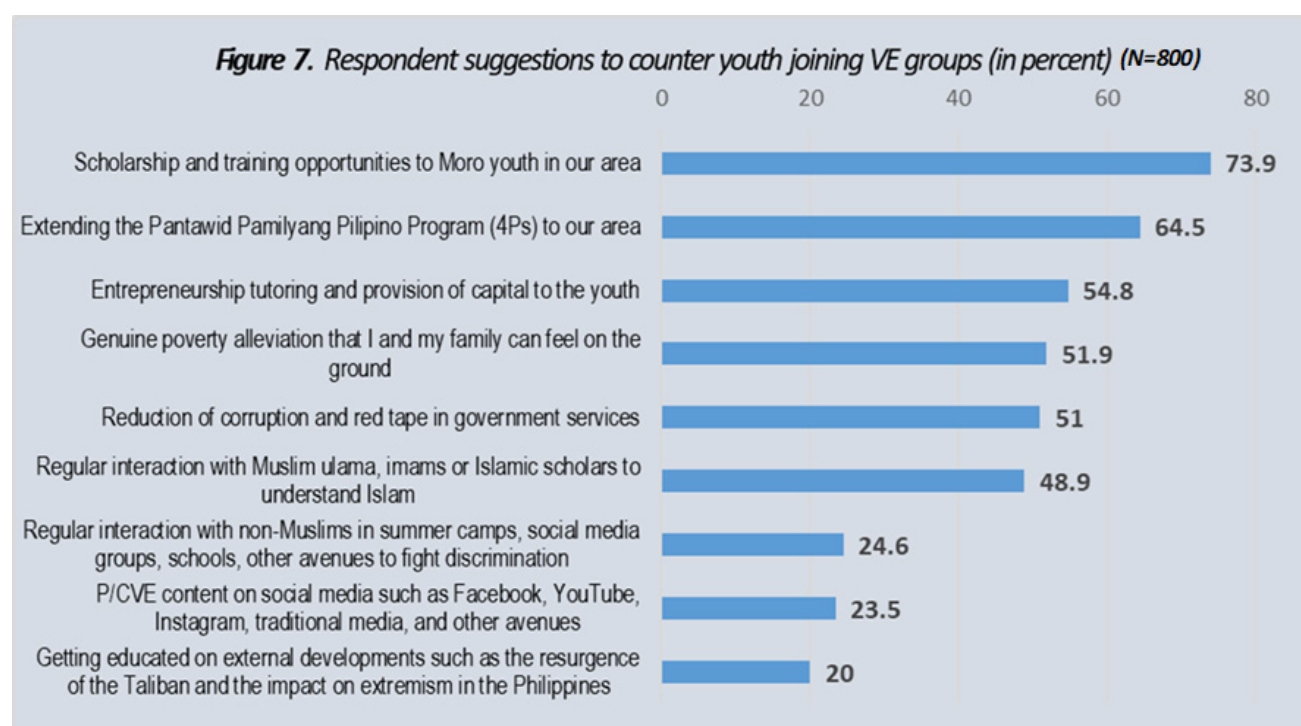# VI. ADDRESSING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: STAKEHOLDERS' SUGGESTIONS

The 800 survey respondents in both urban and conflict-affected rural areas were presented with a list of P/CVE programs and projects and asked to choose which ones they think would be most effective in preventing and countering violent extremism. The 196 participants in all 24 focus group discussions as well as the 32 key informants were also asked to offer suggestions on how to prevent young people in Bangsamoro from joining violent extremist groups. Suggestions by former violent extremists who are the subjects of this research's case studies are also included.

The various and diverse suggestions of these key stakeholders can be grouped under five categories:

1. programs around education, including scholarship grants and educational assistance for the poor and vulnerable groups,
2. programs that can create livelihood opportunities and generate income for the family,
3. programs to build the leadership capacity of the youth to enhance their advocacy and engagement on community concerns such as violent extremism,
4. improved delivery of basic social services, and
5. community interaction, including sports activities and enhanced interaction among the youth with Ulama, Imam, and other Muslim scholars for a better understanding of the Islamic faith.

A. One Size Does Not Fit All

In aggregate, topping the survey respondents' list of suggestions are P/CVE programs around scholarship and training opportunities for Moro youth (73.9%). Second is extending the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to the respondents' area (64.5%). Third is providing entrepreneurship tutoring to young people and giving them access to capital (54.8%).

Figure 7. *Respondent suggestions to counter youth joining VE groups (in percent)* **(N=800)**

Suggestion	Percent
Scholarship and training opportunities to Moro youth in our area	73.9
Extending the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to our area	64.5
Entrepreneurship tutoring and provision of capital to the youth	54.8
Genuine poverty alleviation that I and my family can feel on the ground	51.9
Reduction of corruption and red tape in government services	51
Regular interaction with Muslim ulama, imams or Islamic scholars to understand Islam	48.9
Regular interaction with non-Muslims in summer camps, social media groups, schools, other avenues to fight discrimination	24.6
P/CVE content on social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, traditional media, and other avenues	23.5
Getting educated on external developments such as the resurgence of the Taliban and the impact on extremism in the Philippines	20

On a more granular view, what respondents in urban areas think work best in preventing young people from joining VE groups is somewhat different from the assessment of their rural cousins. There are differences as well between and among the study sites, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all approach is not an efficient and particularly effective way of preventing and countering violent extremism.

Table 45. Urban youth's suggestions to prevent young Moros from joining extremist groups (percent)

Activities/Outcomes	Cotabato City (N=100)	Marawi City (N=100)	Lamitan City (N=100)	Jolo (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Genuine poverty alleviation that I and my family can feel on the ground	46.0	90.0	15.0	34.0	46.2
Extending the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to our areas	51.0	86.0	10.0	14.0	40.3
Reduction of corruption and red tape in government services	45.0	78.0	5.0	35.0	40.8
Scholarship and training opportunities for Moro Youth in our area	**60.0**	**76.0**	**69.0**	**55.0**	**65.0**
Entrepreneurship tutoring and provision of capital to the youth	31.0	77.0	32.0	64.0	**51.0**
Regular interaction with Muslim Ulama, Imams, or Islamic scholars to understand the Islam	**71.0**	**82.0**	10.0	17.0	45.0

Among urban youth, scholarship and training opportunities are seen as the best way to prevent young people from joining VE groups (65%), followed by entrepreneurship tutoring and provision of capital (51.0%). Genuine poverty alleviation (46.2%) is in third place. Only 40.3% of urban respondents suggest extending the 4Ps program to their community as an anti-VE measure, 47.9 percentage points lower than rural respondents.

Breaking down the data even further, what is regarded as the most effective P/CVE programs in one urban location may not be regarded as highly in another locality. For instance, 71% of respondents in Cotabato City suggest that young people be given the opportunity to interact regularly with the *ulama, imam,* or Islamic scholars to understand Islam. Only 10% in Lamitan City say the same. Instead, 69% of Lamitan respondents suggest scholarships and training opportunities be given to Moro youth in their city.

Table 46. Rural youth's suggestions to prevent young Moros from joining extremist groups (percent)

Activities/Outcomes	Mamasapano (N=100)	Butig (N=100)	Tipo-Tipo (N=100)	Patikul (N=100)	Total (N=400)
Genuine poverty alleviation that I and my family can feel on the ground	42.0	98.0	76.0	14.0	57.5
Extending the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to our areas	**62.0**	**99.0**	**97.0**	**97.0**	**88.8**
Reduction of corruption and red tape in government services	9.0	92.0	48.0	96.0	61.3
Scholarship and training opportunities for Moro Youth in our area	48.0	**100.0**	**95.0**	**88.0**	**82.8**
Entrepreneurship tutoring and provision of capital to the youth	17.0	80.0	43.0	94.0	58.5
Regular interaction with Muslim Ulama, Imams, or Islamic scholars to understand the Islam	**63.0**	**66.0**	63.0	19.0	52.8

Nearly nine out of ten respondents in conflict-affected rural areas (88.8%) suggest that the 4Ps program be extended to their area, more than twice the number of urban Moros who say the same. Rural respondents also favor scholarships and training opportunities to prevent youth in their area from joining VE groups (82%). Their urban counterparts agree, but not nearly in as strong numbers (65%).

Rural respondents say reducing corruption and red tape in their area will help in the anti-VE campaign (61.3%). This suggestion is the third most mentioned course of action. Among urban respondents, reducing corruption and red tape is in fifth place (named by 40.8%), suggesting that this issue is more serious in rural areas than in urban areas.

For the Mamasapano youth, improving their understanding of Islam through regular interaction with Muslim scholars is most important, followed by the provision of the 4Ps program. The Butig respondents prioritize education through scholarships, training, and 4Ps. Poverty alleviation is also mentioned by the Butig respondents. The preferred solutions of the Tipo-Tipo respondents to prevent VE focused on education, 4Ps, and scholarship program. Patikul respondents emphasized 4Ps and programs to improve government services

The survey results by gender reflect the overall trend of program preferences. Both male and female respondents chose as their top three suggestions: (1) scholarship and training opportunities for Moro youth in their area, (2) extending the 4Ps program to their area, and (3) entrepreneurship tutoring and provision of capital to the youth.

Further breakdown of survey results for male and female respondents in urban areas shows that the top two suggestions are scholarship and training opportunities for Moro youth in their area and entrepreneurship tutoring and provision of capital to the youth. Interestingly, urban female respondents chose regular interaction with Muslim Ulama, Imams, or Islamic scholars to understand Islam as their third suggestion, while their male counterparts selected genuine poverty alleviation.

B. Poverty Alleviation and Education

The suggestions of the FGD participants, key informants, and case study subjects are broadly consistent with the choices and priorities of the survey respondents but are more detailed and comprehensive, given the format of their interaction with the researchers and each other. Education and poverty alleviation also top their list of suggestions.

A former BIFF commander urges the government and private sector to pay attention to impoverished young Moros who are unable to attend school. "Also, provide livelihood programs for parents of Moro youth to help them support their children's education," he adds. One FGD participant in Cotabato City suggested broadening access to livelihood, scholarship, and TESDA programs by relaxing some requirements for those who wish to study.

Added a Butig participant: "*Mag*-provide *ng training kung paano kumita at maghanapbuhay, lalong lalo na sa mga liblib na lugar, kasi doon ang madalas ang ginagawang recruitment ng* VE groups. (Provide livelihood skills training among the youth especially in remote areas since those are the places where VE groups carry out recruitment)."

The key informants suggested offering micro-skills programs at the community level, such as how to find a job and make money in simple ways. Entrepreneurship skills should not just be developed, but starting kits and capital should be provided as well, they said. Also suggested were developing youth skills in marketing, agriculture, and livelihood.

The key informants emphasized the importance of improving the delivery of basic services, especially in far-flung areas. While livelihood, entrepreneurship, and other business skills can raise family incomes, communities need the public and private sectors to invest in the infrastructure to deliver electricity, water, and other basic services.

One key informant proposed that government set aside money specifically for the educational needs of young people in impoverished communities. *"Magbigay ng sapat na pondo para sa educational needs ng kabataan sa mahihirap na komunidad at scholarship para ma-uplift ang kabuhayan ng mga pamilya. Dapat on time ang pagdating nito, especially sa poor and deserving students* (Provide enough funds for the educational needs of deserving children in the poor communities and make sure the money gets to them on time.)"

Among the youth leaders in the focus group discussions, TESDA – the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority – is seen as a major resource. The national agency has offices in all the country's regions, including BARMM, offers online and face-to-face training programs, and maintains a registry of certified workers that employers can consult. The participants said that TESDA should continue to provide extensive skills training, especially for out-of-school youth in rural barangays.

The youth leaders believe that education is the best tool to prevent young people from turning to violent extremism. This is why those vulnerable to VE recruitment, meaning members of disadvantaged groups such as the poor, orphans, and indigenous peoples, should be given access to education, said one Jolo FGD participant. Suggested a key informant: "Requirements to avail of educational assistance especially for tertiary education should be lowered because many of those who need assistance find it difficult to comply with the existing requirements."

Equal and fair access to educational opportunities was also part of the conversation. Said an FGD participant in Mamasapano: *"Dapat pantay-pantay ang opportunidad sa edukasyon. Minsan nakikita natin na ang binibigyan lang ay yung mga dating combatants at mga anak nila. Marami ring mahihirap na batang gustong mag-aral. Dapat bigyan ng chance ang lahat.* (Everyone should be treated equally in terms of access to education. Sometimes we see that only combatants who surrendered and their children get access to opportunities in education. Other poor children also want to go to school. Everybody should be given a chance)."

C. Advocacy and Community Involvement

The FGD participants proposed that youth leaders be equipped with the opportunity and skills to increase youth awareness of the negative effects of violent extremism and what actions young people being recruited can take. This suggestion was also made by FGD participants in 2017 when the Institute for Autonomy and Governance conducted research on the vulnerability to violent extremism of urban Muslim youth. "Organize youth leaders and train them to conduct regular small group sessions to continuously discuss violent extremism as well as ways of avoiding vices," said a Mamasapano FGD participant.

Young people should be empowered to become active members of the community. One participant suggested setting up what he called Project Kapayat – *kapayat* being a Maguindanaon term meaning 'to spread.' Both in-school and out-of-school youth should be made to actively participate to become both beneficiaries and influencers, said the participant.

The FGD discussants also supported the idea of educating parents on peacebuilding. Said one participant: *"Dapat sa bahay pa lang natutunan na ang konsepto ng kapayapaan. Ito ang*

makakatulong upang ang mga kabataan ay di ma-recruit ng VE groups. Pwede rin itong maging pundasyon upang maiwasan ang rido. (The concept of peacebuilding should be learned early at home to help insulate young people from the recruitment efforts of VE groups. This will also serve as a foundation in avoiding rido)."

One suggestion that was made by almost all FGD participants was to encourage community activities for the youth such as sports and cultural activities. Said one participant in Tipo-Tipo: "*Magkaroon ng liga upang mabigyan ng libangan ang mga kabataan at maiwasan ang pagsama sa masamang grupo* (Establish a sports league in the community to provide diversion to the youth and prevent them from joining bad groups.)

It is a suggestion endorsed by key informants as well. Said one informant: "*Bigyan pansin din ang sports activities. Ito ay isa sa pinakamahusay na paraan upang di maakit ang mga kabataan sa di mabuting gawain* (Pay attention to sports activities because they are one of the best ways to ensure young people do not engage in unsavory activities)."

Other suggestions from key informant interviews, FGDs and case study subjects include the following:

- Establish a support system for the youth on issues around P/CVE. *Barkadahan* (a circle of close friends) can be used as an avenue to raise awareness about violent extremism and provide a support system against recruitment by VE groups.

- Conduct information, education, and communication (IEC) sessions with parents to equip them with counseling skills and help them give good advice to their children.

- Encourage barangay officials to engage with and organize their constituents to keep watch on the presence of recruiters for VE groups in their community.

  Place due importance on Islamic education. Enhance the teaching of Islamic values at all levels of education both in the *madrasah* and secular schools, and conduct Islamic symposiums to educate Moro youth on the precepts and doctrines that have come down as tradition in the Philippine context.

- Utilize former extremists who have surrendered to the government to speak to young Moros vulnerable to violent extremism. Their experiences and credibility could be persuasive. They can also become part of public information campaigns to warn young Moros of recruitment attempts and deter them from signing up with VE groups.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

It is clear from this research that young people in Muslim Mindanao are vulnerable to recruitment by groups that espouse violent extremism in pursuit of their ideological, political, and religious goals. The survey respondents, FGD participants, and key informants identified poverty and limited or no access to education as the key drivers for joining VE groups. Sadly, these remain serious problems across the autonomous region today. The poverty incidence in BARMM, for example, stands at around 35%, meaning three of every ten households live below the poverty line.

Exploiting this situation, VE groups offer to pay recruits as much as Php100,000 as well as supply them with guns and mobile phones. They also promise university scholarships to high school graduates and Islamic education to out-of-school youth to become Islamic scholars. Beyond this, VE groups actively push their radical interpretation of Islamic concepts such as *jihad*, which this study finds is the one Islamic concept known by a large majority of survey respondents.

The VE interpretation of *jihad qital* (armed struggle) appears to be taking root among young Muslims. Half of the survey respondents agree with the VE-aligned statement that armed struggle is the obligation of every Muslim, which is contrary to traditional Islamic teaching. More than six out of ten respondents also agree with the VE-supported statement that "discrimination against Moros is enough justification to bear arms and fight." Anti-Muslim discriminatory practices (such as denying employment to a Muslim because of his religion) are in effect equated with the life-and-death actions of anti-Islam aggressors and interpreted as also a legitimate reason for waging *jihad qital.*

Also worrying is the finding that young Muslims do not know many of the Islamic concepts that VE groups are reinterpreting, raising the possibility that young people may internalize the VE line rather than the traditionalist moderate interpretation. They can be seen as near-empty vessels into which the most committed, passionate, and persuasive advocates, aided with the clever use of social media, videos, and other non-traditional channels could pour their ideas about Islam. The question is whether those ideas will align with moderate Islam – or with violent extremism.

Are VE ideas indeed making headway among Moro youth? The comparison of the findings of a 2017 study on urban youth and this current study's urban youth respondents suggests that this may be the case. Urban respondents five years ago agreed with the moderate line that armed struggle is subject to the rules of *Shariah*, including the injunction that women, children, and the elderly should not be killed or harmed. Urban respondents in this 2022 research agreed with the VE line that *jihad qital* is an obligation of every Muslim and that discrimination is enough justification to take up arms.

Tracking changes in beliefs and attitudes is possible with urban youth because the 2017 study surveyed those who live in cities but not those in rural areas. In this 2022 research, rural youth have been added to the pool of respondents, so it will be possible in the future to ask both urban and rural respondents the same or similar set of questions and see whether or not Moro youth are aligning themselves with VE thinking. The most we can say at this time is that there are signs that acceptance of some elements of the VE narrative is growing among urban youth. That trend cannot be extrapolated onto rural youth, who are shown in this current study to still be undecided on their attitude toward some VE-aligned statements.

In fact, this research finds that there are some differences in attitudes and beliefs between urban and rural Moro youth, notably in agreement with the VE position on *jihad qital* (57% of urban respondents agree vs. only 43.8% of rural respondents). The differences extend to suggested solutions, with the proportion of respondents in rural areas who suggest extending the 4Ps program to their community more than twice that of the urban respondents (88.8% vs. 40.3%). This is a reminder to policymakers and implementors of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism that a one-size-fits-all approach to preventing and countering violent extremism is not likely to be the most efficient use of resources.

Are Moro youth benefiting from the interventions in the Action Plan? This research finds that the answer is 'not yet. To begin with, very few of the 800 survey respondents say they are aware of P/CVE programs and projects that various national agencies, local government units, and the private sector are supposed to be implementing. Yet FGD participants and key informants are able to enumerate a long list of such programs and projects, suggesting a gap between theory (formation of P/CVE programs and projects at the top) and practice (benefits cascaded down to the grassroots).

Approved in 2019, the National Action Plan harnesses not only the military and police to continue battling violent extremism but also national agencies and local government units to address the conditions that allow VE to grow, such as poverty, lack of education, unemployment, and, in the context of Muslim Mindanao, Islamic ideology reinterpreted in the service of violent extremism. The Plan also empowers and mobilizes the private sector and civil society organizations. It is actually ready to go, with numerous P/CVE programs and projects that come complete with the expected short- and long-term outcomes and the entities responsible.

Except that, as this study finds, it is not really going, at least not yet in Muslim Mindanao. When the programs and projects were listed and described to them, the 800 respondents got excited and energized. They wanted them in their community and expressed willingness to be trained on P/CVE and get involved. They also made suggestions of their own. The Moro youth is primed and ready. It is now up to the various levels of government and non-government actors to really get moving.

Recommendations

This study's recommendations center on the three Rs: Rural/Urban Context, Recruitment, and Resilience. Understanding the VE context in the rural and urban settings in Muslim Mindanao is crucial in addressing the push factors in the community. Addressing youth vulnerability means focusing on VE recruitment targeting and tactics. Building youth resilience is about countering the VE ideology through mainstreaming the Islamic concept of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) to counter the VE reinterpretation of traditional Islamic ideas.

While guided by a national policy framework and resource allocation, addressing the push factors in VE recruitment can only be meaningful if government interventions go beyond the traditional kinetic approach (police and military action). The P/CVE effort should be viewed through a more holistic and inclusive human security paradigm that addresses economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. This is the prism through which the National Action Plan was crafted. It should remain the guiding light in its actual implementation.

Toward this end, this study recommends the following courses of action:

Rural/Urban Contexts (Addressing Push Factors, Strengthening Human Security)

Understand that rural and urban areas in Muslim Mindanao have unique contexts in terms of the needs and wants of young Moros vulnerable to VE recruitment. Part of that uniqueness comes from the religious context and the history of discrimination against Muslims, along with decades of military action

that has brought a measure of peace but also bred suspicion and resentment as their presence in an area draws attacks from violent extremists. Young Moros, especially those targeted for recruitment by VE groups, are being shaped by these contexts, foremost by poverty and lack of access to education, but also by the assault of violent extremism on the tradition of moderation in Islam. The success of P/CVE programs and projects in Muslim Mindanao will depend on how well they take these unique contexts into account.

Refine the structure of the NAP-PCVE Cabinet Cluster System to incorporate decentralization and subsidiarity as core principles of the whole-of-nation approach. This will help realize regional-local synergy, with the MHSD, DGTE (MBHTE), MSSD, MILG, and concerned LGUs empowered to focus on post-conflict rehabilitation and reintegration in VE-affected communities (such as the SPMS box in Maguindanao, Patikul in Sulu, Tipo-Tipo in Basilan, and Butig and Marawi City in Lanao Sur) using a whole-of-community approach toward comprehensive human security, not just physical security.

At the community level, the MILG, MHSD, MSSD, and LGUs should be empowered to deepen barangay development planning through a human security framework. Multi-year, multi-sector, multi-actor, progressive, and sustainable implementation should be strengthened, flexibility and adjustment in consonance with the prevailing community situation should be allowed, and a "development facility" for VE-affected barangays to address their local concerns created.

Prioritize high-impact and fast-to-implement P/CVE programs and projects in Muslim Mindanao communities, particularly in conflict-affected localities. The National Action Plan is necessarily national in scope and contains literally hundreds of P/CVE programs and projects. Many projects require long lead times such as electrification and roads. In Muslim Mindanao, priority should be placed on P/CVE programs and projects that can be implemented immediately so Moro youth vulnerable to VE recruitment are able to see fast results and may therefore hold off on joining the extremists.

Enrollment in the national 4Ps poverty alleviation program, which gives conditional cash grants to qualified families, is one such fast-to-implement initiative. Scholarship and training opportunities are also relatively easy to organize given existing infrastructures like TESDA and the network of state colleges and universities in Mindanao. The National Action Plan specifically identifies TESDA, the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Ministry of Education-BARMM, among others, as the key actors in education programs.

Recruitment (Addressing Vulnerability)

Understand the nature of recruitment by every VE group and how they are manifested in a certain locality (e.g. SPMS box). Then tailor interventions that will reduce vulnerability, increase resilience, and counter VE recruitment tactics. For example, if a VE group's recruitment drive is based on offering money, guns, and mobile phones, the intervention can focus on cutting off its sources of funds (proceeds from extortion, kidnap-for-ransom, informal 'taxes' on local businesses) and giving young Moros in the locality with mobile phones loaded with anti-VE videos and content espousing the Islamic concept of *wasatiyyah*. They should also be given access to scholarships, training, and livelihood opportunities.

Refine education opportunities to cover the full board. Scholarship and vocational training grants should come with a monthly stipend, board and lodging, daily travel expenses, health insurance, book allowance, free school fees, and so on because Moro youth in rural areas have to travel to towns and cities to study. Even if they stay home, the daily commute, books, stationery needs, and other expenses are frequently too expensive for an impoverished family. A wider and more flexible entrepreneurial and employment support system should also be made available, along with inter and intra-faith and cultural interaction.

Expand beneficiaries beyond youth leaders to other recruitment targets such as out-of-school youth and orphans. Leaders of youth organizations tend to be the first to benefit from P/CVE projects and programs. Those benefits should be cascaded down to the members of the organization and outwards to other Moro youth that this research finds are targets of recruitment – poor young people, out-of-school youth, those involved in clan conflicts, and orphans. But ensure that the process of selecting beneficiaries is fair and is seen to be fair.

Disrupt the ability of VE groups to recruit with money, guns, and mobile phones. Operationalize the National Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Strategy and strictly implement the No Ransom Policy for KFR [kidnap-for-ransom] cases. This can go a long way toward cutting off VE resources from abroad and proceeds from crime.

Resilience (Countering VE Ideology)

Enlist BARMM agencies to build capacity around Islamic wasatiyyah (moderation) as a counterpoint to VE ideology. These entities include the BARMM Office of the Wali, Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta', BYC, BWC, MBHTE (DGBE, DGME, and DGHE), and MPOS. They should be asked to rally local ulama and religious institutions – schools, mosques, and religious organizations – around *wasatiyyah*. Initial mobilization can be supported by the donor community in partnership with local civil society.

Curate existing content and develop locally relevant material around wasatiyyah that espouses the traditional moderate Islamic belief system. Enlist the help of the religious sector in the Muslim community since it is well-prepared and well-positioned to counter VE narratives. For example, *jihad* is a very nuanced term. Only Islamic scholars are well-placed to explain the nuances and how VE groups can subtly twist it to suit their ideology.

The National Action Plan does call for the generation of counter-narratives based on documents that bolster the moderate strain of Islam such as the Amman Message, Marrakesh Declaration, and Charter of Medina. It also calls for tapping "men and women third party advocates (e.g., religious/traditional leaders, former violent extremists) to propagate counter and alternative narratives through various online channels."

Disseminate the curated and original wasatiyyah content to the target communities. Use quad-media (print, broadcast, internet, and social media) to spread the information. Because this study finds that videos are a key medium for VE content, the *wasatiyyah* materials should also be presented in video form. Consider pre-loading the *wasatiyyah* materials on mobile phones that can be distributed to selected Moro youth. (They can use the phone for other purposes, such as online learning, entrepreneurial ventures, entertainment, financial inclusion, and so on.)

Encourage Filipino Muslim scholars to further their studies in centers of learning in Egypt and Southeast Asia. Institutions in other areas have a reputation for being influenced by fundamentalist leanings. Filipino Islamic scholars and teachers should also be encouraged to engage and regularly interact with their peers in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore, which largely retain much of the moderate traditions of Islam despite the inflow of some fundamentalist and radical ideas.

Work toward creating Islamic institutions organized as part of the government, which has been done in Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia*.* Muslim communities in the Philippines are followers of the Shafi'e school of jurisprudence and share commonalities with Muslim countries and communities in Southeast Asia. In these nations, Islamic institutions organized as part of the government guide the Muslim faithful.

In the Philippines, Presidential Decree 1083 provides for the creation of a national-level Office of the Jurisconsult, but it is non-existing at present. BARMM recently organized the Office of the Wali and the Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta'. In the absence of a state-backed national body, these two BARMM entities can provide leadership and authority to guide and influence Filipino Muslims. But they will need support from P/CVE actors to include P/CVE as an integral component of their policy and program priority.

Encourage higher academic institutions to organize school-based P/CVE interventions. Institutions such as the UP IIs in Diliman, MSU King Faisal Center in Marawi, WMSU CAIS in Zamboanga, and MSU TCTO CIAS in Tawi-Tawi can be organized as a network that can lead in organizing interventions targeting public and private universities and colleges inside BARMM and those serving Muslim students outside of the region. This can be replicated or complemented with senior and junior high schools supervised by the MBHTE.

References

https://promundoglobal.org/resources/youth-and-the-field-of-countering-violent-extremism/
https://en.unesco.org/
https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-
extremism.html
https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_how-talibans-win-might-influence-radical-
muslims-southeast-asia/6219205.html
https://promundoglobal.org/resources/youth-and-the-field-of-countering-violent-extremism/
https://en.unesco.org/
https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Afghanistan-turmoil/ASEAN-on-guard-
for-extremism-inspired-by-Taliban-s-Afghan-triumph
The vulnerability study was conducted in Cotabato City, Maguindanao, Marawi City, Lanao
del Sur, Lamitan City, and Isabela City in Basilan, and Jolo, Sulu. Jolo is the center of
commerce and trade of Sulu.
 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes. "'Radicalization' and 'violent extremism'" in
Module 2: Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism, E4J University Module
Series: Counter-Terrorism. Accessed Date: September 11, 2022. - https://www.unodc.
org/e4j/zh/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html
Under Republic Act 8044 or "Youth in Nation-Building Act", youth refers to those
persons whose ages range from fifteen (15) to thirty (30) years old. https://
nyc.gov.ph/republic-act-8044/#:~:text=An%20act%20creating%20the%20
National,Therefore%2C%20and%20for%20Other%20Purposes.
Search for Common Ground, Hedaya, Countering Violent Extremism: An introductory guide to
concepts, development programs, and best practices/ Adapted for the Central Asian
region, (2019) https://Www.sfcg.org/countering-violent-extremism/SFCG-Countering_
Violent_Extremism-An_Introductory_Guide_Russian.Pdf.
Gilliam, Joshua. 2018. "The Ethics of ISIS: Takfir in Surah 9". Simons Center Special Report
2017. - https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ethics-Symp-
pg53-58.pdf
"His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb". The Muslim 500 – 2023 Edition.
Jordan: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre. Date accessed July 29, 2022 -
https://themuslim500.com/profiles/ahmad-muhammad-al-tayyeb/
Esposito, John. "Jihad: Holy or Unholy War?". Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam and
What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam. Oxford University Press. 2002. Date
accessed July 29, 2022 - https://www.unaoc.org/repository/Esposito_Jihad_Holy_
Unholy.pdf
Burkholder, Richard. "Jihad -- 'Holy War', or Internal Spiritual Struggle?". Date accessed
July 29, 2022 - https://news.gallup.com/poll/7333/jihad-holy-war-internal-spiritual-
struggle.aspx
Al-Qahtani, Muhammad Saeed. Al-Wala'Wa'l-Bara According to the Aqeedah of the Salaf.
1992. London: Al-Firdous Ltd. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://www.kalamullah.
com/Books/alWalaawalBaraa1.pdf
Al Wala' wal Bara'". Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) Singapore. 2016. Date accessed July
29, 2022 - https://www.rrg.sg/al-wala-wal-bara/
Ustadz Ridhwan Mohd Basor. 2018. "Can Muslims Befriend Non-Muslims?" - https://muslim.
sg/articles/can-muslims-befriend-non-muslims
Poljarevic, Emin. 2021. "Chapter 21 Theology of Violence-oriented Takfirism as a Political
Theory: The Case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)". In Muhammad Afzal Upal
and Carole M. Cusack (eds) Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements. - https://doi.
org/10.1163/9789004435544_026
Aniek Nurhayati et al. 2022. "Indonesian takfiri Movement on Online Media in Umberto Eco's

Semiotic Perspective". In ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman Volume 15, Number 2, March 2021; p-ISSN: 1978-3183; e-ISSN: 2356-2218; 195-222. - http://repository.uinsby.ac.id/id/eprint/738/1/Aniek%20Nurhayati_Indonesian%20takfiri%20movement%20on%20online%20media.pdf

Kadiver, Jamileh. 2020. "Exploring Takfir, Its Origins, and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media". In Contemporary Review of the Middle East. Volume 7. Issue 3, page(s): 259-285. - https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2347798920921706

Dr. Muhammad Haniff Hassan". Date Accessed – September 11, 2022 – https://www.rsis.edu.sg/profile/muhammad-haniff-hassan/

Muhammad Haniff Hassan. (2017). "The Danger of Takfir (Excommunication): Exposing IS' Takfiri Ideology". Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses. Vol. 9, No. 4 (April 2017), pp. 3-12 – https://www.jstor.org/stable/26351508?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents

The Amman Message". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - - https://ammanmessage.com/the-amman-message-full/

The Amman Message". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://ammanmessage.com/the-three-points-of-the-amman-message-v-1/

Presidential Degree 1083 - A Decree to Ordain and Promulgate a Code Recognizing the System of Filipino Muslim Laws, Codifying Muslim Personal Laws, and Providing for its Administration and for Other Purposes". Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1977/pd_1083_1977.html

Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BBA) Number 13". Office of MP Ras Mitmug. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://rasmitmug.com/ebooks/BAA-13-Admin-Code-8.pdf

"Darul-Ifta' of Region 9 and Palawan: All Muslims and other faiths ought to unite against all those who terrorize innocents and those who permit the killings" - https://www.mindanews.com/statements/2019/01/darul-ifta-of-region-9-and-palawan-all-muslims-and-other-faiths-ought-to-unite-against-all-those-who-terrorize-innocents-and-those-who-permit-the-killings/

MUIS. "Fatwa Committee". - https://www.muis.gov.sg/About-MUIS/Fatwa-Committee

MUIS. "All Fatwa". - https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa

Gilliam, Joshua. 2018. "The Ethics of ISIS: Takfir in Surah 9". Simons Center Special Report 2017. - https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ethics-Symp-pg53-58.pdf

Wehrey, Frederic, and Anouar Boukhars, 'Defining Salafism: Contexts and Currents', Salafism in the Maghreb: Politics, Piety, and Militancy, Carnegie Endowment for Intl Peace (New York, 2019; online edn, Oxford Academic, 19 Dec. 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190942403.003.0002, accessed 11 Sept. 2022.

Inge, Annabel. 2016. "6 common misconceptions about Salafi Muslims in the West". Oxford University Press's Academic Insights for the Thinking World. - https://blog.oup.com/2016/10/6-misconceptions-salafi-muslims/

Special Issue "Salafism in the West"". In Religions. - https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/salafism

"Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb". Online Britannica". Date accessed – September 12, 2022. - https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad-ibn-Abd-al-Wahhab

Blanchard, Christopher M. 2008. "The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya". In CRS Report to Congress. - https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf

Long, David E. 2009. "Tawhid or Jihad: What Wahhabism Is and Is Not". - https://www.mei.edu/publications/tawhid-or-jihad-what-wahhabism-and-not

The Salaf Information" (2020). - https://salaficity.org/the-salaf-companions

Salafi Movement" (2010). - https://slife.org/salafi-movement/

Chapter 21, Verse 92. The English translation is from Dr. Mohsin Khan who quoted Ibn Kathir - https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=92

Dar al Ifta. "The Concept of "Ummah". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - http://www.dar-

alifta.org/Foreign/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=367&CategoryID=3

Muhammad's emigration to Yathrib (Medina)". In Online Britannica. - https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-world/Muhammads-emigration-to-Yathrib-Medina

Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World. "Constitution of Medina". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/islamiccivilizations/7967.html

Senate Hearing 110-942. "The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter It" - https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg44123/html/CHRG-110shrg44123.htm

Muhammad Adil Iqbal and Shaikh Abdul Mabud. "Challenge of Globalisation to the Muslim Ummah: Religious Extremism and the Need for Middle Path (Wasat)". In Strategic Studies. Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn 2019), pp. 73-88. - https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544311#metadata_info_tab_contents

"The Authority of the Khilafah". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/authority-khilafah

McLeod, Douglas M., and Frank Hairgrove. 2008. "Support for the Caliphate and Radical Mobilization." (January). www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/research_briefs/20080131_Caliphate_...

Ian Mitch and Ashley L. Rhoades. "The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization)". RAND Corporation. Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html

McLeod, Douglas M., and Frank Hairgrove. 2008. "Support for the Caliphate and Radical Mobilization." (January). www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/research_briefs/20080131_Caliphate_...

Muhammad Haniff Hassan. "Living in a Non-Muslim Country: Responding to the Idea of Hijrah (Migration)". Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.rrg.sg/hijrah/

Senseless killings in the name of faith". An article in the Arab News. Date accessed September 12, 2022 - https://www.arabnews.com/islam-perspective/news/714221

Sadullah Khan. 2017. "The Call of Islam: Peace and Moderation, Not Intolerance and Extremism". - https://www.islamicity.org/6258/the-call-of-islam-peace-and-moderation-not-intolerance-and-extremism/

Makkah Declaration (2008) - https://www.kaiciid.org/file/1161/download?token=NgO78dXQ

Marrakesh Declaration - 'The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action'' - https://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/

The Mardin Conference – Understanding Ibn Taymiyyah's Fatwa" (2010) – https://muslimmatters.org/2010/06/29/the-mardin-conference-%E2%80%93-a-detailed-account/

Charter of Makkah (2019) - https://themwl.org/sites/default/files/TheCharterofMakkah.pdf

Human Fraternity Document for World Peace and Living Together (2019) - https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

Global Terrorism Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GTI-2022-web-09062022.pdf

Global Peace Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf

Positive Peace Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PPR-2022-web.pdf

Safety Perceptions Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022

- https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SPI-2022-web.pdf

Thomson, Jared. "Examining Extremism: Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin". July 15, 2021. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Blogspot - Examining Terrorism. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-jamaat-nasr-al-islam-wal-muslimin

Ansar Dine". Mapping Militants - A program of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). CISAC is a research center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Stanford University. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ansar-dine

Al Mourabitoun". Mapping Militants - A program of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). CISAC is a research center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Stanford University. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-mourabitoun

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Mapping Militants - A program of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). CISAC is a research center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Stanford University. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-mourabitoun

United Nations. "World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" - https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2018.html

International Crisis Group. 2022. "Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines". REPORT Ň323. - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines

International Republican Institute. "Violent Extremism in the Philippines: Endemic Conflict, Volatile Politics and the Struggle for Identity". Winter 2018. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/philippines_ve_report_-_winter_2018.pdf

Women's Media Center. "Wives, Widows, and Mothers: The New Faces of Violent Extremism in the Philippines". Relief Web International. April 30, 2021. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/wives-widows-and-mothers-new-faces-violent-extremism-philippines

Michael Darden. 2022. "Examining Trends in Malaysia and the Philippines". Conflict and Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia - https://www.usip.org/events/conflict-and-violent-extremism-southeast-asia

International Crisis Group. 2022. "Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines". REPORT Ň323. - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines

Sumpter, Cameron and Joseph Franco. "Islamist Militancy in Indonesia and the Philippines: Domestic Lineage and Sporadic Foreign Influence" International Center for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) Publications. September 15, 2021. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://icct.nl/publication/islamist-militancy-in-indonesia-and-the-philippines-domestic-lineage-and-sporadic-foreign-influence/

International Crisis Group. 2022. "Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines". REPORT Ň323. - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines

UNESCO. "Preventing Violent Extremism" - https://en.unesco.org/preventingviolentextremism

Farhadi Adib. (2020). Countering Violent Extremism by Winning Hearts and Minds. US: Springer

Excluding the City of Cotabato

https://bangsamoro.gov.ph/news/latest-news/psa-barmms-poverty-incidence-declines-in-3-years/#:~:text=A%20significant%20decline%20of%20poverty,37.1%20percent%20

of%20poverty%20incidence.

The SPMS-box is a military term referring to the contiguous towns of Shariff Aguak, Pagatin (Datu Saudi Ampatuan town), Mamasapano, and Shariff Aguak, where the BIFF operates. https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1137753

Conducted in 2020, aimed to provide the general picture of causes and actors in the SPMS Box conflicts.

The respondents of the study "Youth Vulnerability to Violent Extremism in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 2017" were from Cotabato City. IAG, Philippines.

https://www.google.com/search?q=poverty+incidence+of++Mamasapano&rlz=1C1CHBF_ enPH858PH858&ei=fMj1YvHSHYOI-AbgoJXQAQ&ved=0ahUKEwjxgLbTrcD5AhUDBN4KH WBQBRoQ4dUDCA4&u

https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1128457

https://www.google.com/search?q=Lake+Lanao&rlz=1C1CHBF_ enPH858PH858&ei=zO71YszMO_DxhwPrjYjwCw&ved=0ahUKEwjM4ryY0sD5AhXw-GEK HesGAr4Q4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=Lake+Lanao&gs_

http://rfu12.da.gov.ph/reports-and-documentation/da-rfo-xii-cy2017-bar-no-1/2-uncategorised/1510-list-of-20-poorest-provinces

https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-armed-conflict-lanao-del-sur-dg-echo-partners-local-media-echo-daily. Philippines - Armed conflict in Lanao Del Sur (DG ECHO Partners, local media) (ECHO Daily Flash of 11 March 2022)

https://www.usaid.gov/philippines/humanitarian-assistance/marawi-conflict

https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/848201/firefight-erupts-between-govt-troops-maute-group-in-lanao-sur, Inquirer Mindanao/ November 26, 2016

https://www.unhcr.org/ph/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2017/03/Protection-Cluster-June-Displacement-Dashboard_Final1.pdf

https://www.peopleinneed.net/the-filipino-peacebuilders-of-butig-7944gp

https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2021%201st%20Poverty%20Stats_Full%20 Publication_17Dec2021_rev5.pdf

https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2021%201st%20Poverty%20Stats_Full%20 Publication_17Dec2021_rev5.pdf

Lamitan was officially recognized as a Component City in 2007.

Painful Memories still haunts Lamitan siege survivors."https://newsinfo.inquirer. net/1604064/painful-memories-still-haunt-lamitan-siege-survivors#ixzz7c6XdCfTx. PDI, May 30, 2022,

http://rssoarmm.psa.gov.ph/release/content/special/55264

https://dbpedia.org/page/Battle_of_Tipo-Tipo

First semester of 2021, PSA.

https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/abu_sayyaf.html

https://www.norway.no/en/philippines/norway-philippines/news-events/news/promoting-peace-in-the-sulu-archipelago/

https://saad.da.gov.ph/2021/09/patikul-farmers-receive-30-layer-chicken-egg-machines. September 22, 2021.

https://www.counterextremism.com/content/jihad

https://www.counterextremism.com/content/jihad

How Social Media Fuels Extremism — ACCO (counteringcrime.org)

DAI, 2018. Youth and Violent Extremism in Mindanao, Philippines

https://mssd.bangsamoro.gov.ph/angat-bangsamoro-kabataan-tungo-sa-karunungan-program

Annex A

P/CVE Programs and Projects Implemented in the BARMM Cited by the Key Informants

P/CVE Programs/Projects/Activities	Implementing Agencies/Institutions	Participants
1. Reaching out to the Community Security Programs		
• End local conflicts in the area VE/reach out to the community/Balik Barangay Program	NTF-ELCAC Provincial Government/AFP	Barangays officials and Civilians People who were displaced-balik barangay
• Balik Barangay Program	Sulu Provincial Office	IDPs
• Community Convergences Consultations-PCVE Education	AFP	Community people
• Marawi Response Project-Self-help Groups (Skills Training and Capacity Building)	Plan International	Victims of the Marawi siege
2. P/CVE Information Awareness/Livelihood Training		
• P/CVE Information awareness drive/ Counter violent extremism	MLGU/1103rd Brigade military	OSY/in-school grade 10-11 students/community leaders/ municipal employees/former rebels/religious leaders
• Forum on violent extremism Info dissemination	AFP	Students
• Youth Entrepreneur Summit/seminar workshop	Notre Dame of Jolo College/ Municipal Planning and Development Office/LGU/AFP/ Peace Advocates	Youths/students
• Youth Leadership Seminar	AFP/BLGU/LGU	In-school youth and OSY
• Kabataan Kontra Droga at Terorismo	PNP/BLGU/LGU	Youth
• Reach to Teach	Save the Children/BLGU/BTA	Youth, Barangay Council, Elders, Ustadz
• Disengagement Counselling Program	Enhance Managing Police Operations (EMPOs)-BARMM/AFP/ Provincial Government	Youth and Adults
• IEC Campaign on PCVE	Barangay Peace and Order Council/ BLGU	Youth
• Socially Excluded Youth (SEY)/Peace- tival	Thuma/IAG/GCERF/55th Battalion	Madalum Youth
• Active Citizens for Social Cohesion	People in Need Philippines/EU/ EIHDR (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights)	Socially excluded youth
• Peace Building and Peace Education Program	RPMD National Science High School (Racman Pimping Maniri National Science High School)-Marawi City	Youth leaders/Student Leaders
• Creation of Youth Organization in dif- ferent barangays in Butig	LGU Butig/DepEd Butig	Youth
• Moro Youth Peace Camps/Leadership Training Program	CMYM (Coalition of Moro Youth Movement)/PNP	Youth

• Youth Against VE-Workshops and Training	NCMF	Youth leaders
• Preventing VE among the Youth Program	USAID	VE Youth
• Advocates for youth Summit	Nagdilaab Foundation	Youth
• Community-based Enterprise development	TVET/Plan International	Youth
• TESDA Skills Enhancement training	TESDA	Youth
• Skills training-Sewing	DSWD	Youth
• Livelihood programs	LGU	Indigent Youth
3. Programs for VE groups returnees		
• Enhance Comprehensive Local Integration Program (ECUP)-Amnesty Program	Sulu Provincial Office /MSSD/PNP/AFP	ASG surrendered members
• Localize Integration Program	AFP	Surrendered rebels
• Community Support Program on Violent Extremism	Philippine Army/LGU	Specific armed-groups
• Re-integration Program	EMPOs/Provincial government/AFP/INGO	Youth/Adults and Women
• Project TUGON (TULONG)-for BIFF former combatants	ELCAC/ECUP/MILG	Community people/BIFF combatants
• Program for the Returnees	AFP	Youth returnees
• Housing Project for the Surrendered ASG	LGUs	ASG surrendered members
• Rehabilitation of surrendered VE group members	Joint Task Force-Basilan/ National Government/LGUs	Surrendered VE group members
• Small and Light Weapons/Kabuhayan Support	AFP	Surrendered
• Medical Mission	Children for War Foundation/LGU	Children of surrendered VE group members
• PVE for Peace	Military-AFP	Former combatants
• Resiliency and Empowerment Program –Training on Livelihood Program	NGO-Balay Mindanao	Former combatants
• Program for ASG Returnees: Livelihood Program/Technical Skills Training	DILG/TESDA/LGU	ASG Returnees
4. Programs for women		
• Capacity Building on Local conflict mediation	Regional Action Plan on Women Peace and Security/UN Workers/CSO-Unyphil	Women/IP Leaders/Social Welfare Committee of MILF
• Prevention/Consultation Dialogue and Capacity Building Program	LGU/PNP/AFP	Religious groups, Youth, Women, Farmers, Students
• Women for Peace Program	Thuma/Australian Embassy	Women
• Saguiaran Mothers for Peace/PCVE Program	Thuma/IAG/GCERF	Mothers/women
5. Research		
• Research on P/CVE (Skills Training/Early Warning/and Early Response)	Balay Mindanao and UNDP	BLGU/LGU
• Research On the Orphans of War	The Asia Foundation	Selected Pilot Barangays

Annex B

Current Development/Events in Violent Extremism

A. Global State of Violent Extremism

There are three indices relevant to the discussion and comprehension of global terrorism: The Global Terrorism Index (GTI)[91], the Global Peace Index (GPI)[92], and the Positive Peace Index (PPI)[93].

1. **GTI Findings and Trends.** The Global Terrorism Index looks at incidents, fatalities, injuries, and property damage as a consequence of violent extremist group activities. To measure the impact of terrorism, a five-year weighted average is applied. Key findings and trends in the GTI 2022 include the following:

   (a) There were 5,226 terrorist attacks recorded in 2021, but only 52% were attributed to particular groups. While there was a decrease of 1.1% in the number of fatalities in 2021 compared with the previous year, there was a 17% increase in attacks mainly in the Sahel Region of Africa and in Afghanistan. At least a 10% decrease in the death toll was reported in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA), Europe, Russia and Eurasia, South America, and sub-Saharan Africa regions. A substantial decrease in terror deaths was reported in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Deaths from terrorism have fallen by over a third since the peak in 2015.

   (b) Seven of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism deteriorated in terms of GTI numbers in 2021. Three of them are in the Sahel Region of Africa. Deaths in the Sahel region accounted for 35% of global terrorism deaths in 2021, compared with just 1% percent in 2007. Afghanistan experienced the highest impact from terrorism for three consecutive years, followed by Iraq and Somalia. Of the 163 countries included in the analysis, nearly two-thirds (105 nations) recorded no attacks or deaths from terrorism in 2020 and 2021, the highest number since 2007.

   (c) Terrorist activity has been concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, with both regions recording more terrorism deaths than MENA for the last three years. While COVID-19 has affected the tactics used by terror groups to spread their ideology, radicalization, and recruitment, Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims – JNIM) based in MENA (Maghrib, North Africa) and West Africa[94] is now the fastest growing terrorist organization responsible for 351 deaths in 2021, a 69% increase. JNIM came out of the merger of Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith)[95], Katibat Macina (Macina Liberation Front), Al-Mourabitoun[96] , and the Saharan branch of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)[97].

   (d) There were three attacks by Islamic extremists in Europe. This is the lowest level since 2012. In total there were 113 attacks in Europe in 2021. Political terrorism has now overtaken religious terrorism in the West, with religiously motivated attacks declining 82%

91 "Global Terrorism Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content uploads/2022/03/GTI-2022-web-09062022.pdf

92 "Global Peace Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf

93 "Positive Peace Index 2022". Institute for Economics and Peace. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PPR-2022-web.pdf

94 Thomson, Jared. "Examining Extremism: Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin". July 15, 2021. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Blogspot - Examining Terrorism. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-jamaat-nasr-al-islam-wal-muslimin

95 "Ansar Dine". Mapping Militants - A program of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). CISAC is a research center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Stanford University. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ansar-dine

96 "Al Mourabitoun". Mapping Militants - A program of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). CISAC is a research center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Stanford University. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-mourabitoun

97 Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Mapping Militants - A program of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). CISAC is a research center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. Stanford University. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-mourabitoun

in 2021. There were 40 politically motivated attacks, compared with just three religiously motivated attacks. While the motivation can be inferred, most attacks driven by a left or right ideology are perpetrated by individuals or groups with no formal affiliation to a recognized organization.

Terrorism and Local-Conflict Nexus. Importantly, GTI noted the intersection between terrorism and local conflicts, observing that "80% of all terrorist incidents have occurred within 50 kilometers of a zone where a conflict is taking place." It found a correlation between the intensity of conflict and the lethality of terrorist actions: "Terrorist attacks in conflict countries are more than six times deadlier than attacks in peaceful countries. In armed conflicts, the intensity of terrorist activity in a given year is proportional to the number of battle deaths". In terms of death and vengeance, on average, the index noted that the "4.7% increase in battle deaths is associated with a 10% rise in terrorist attacks".

VE Groups' Existence, Insurgency, and Activity. Half of the terror groups cease to exist beyond three years. The average life span of a terror group also classified as an insurgent group is 11.8 years; beyond this, they are difficult to eradicate. "Of the 84 active terrorist groups studied in 2015, only 32 were active in 2021," GTI noted. Among OECD countries, social equity and acceptance of violence (political terror, access to weapons, and militarization) correlate with VE groups' existence, insurgency, and activity. In the rest of the world, the factors that correlate the strongest are weak institutions and societal fractionalization.

The Philippines in the GTI 2022

- Ranked 16th (6.790) in the Global Index 2022, a step higher than the previous year.
- The country's situation is slightly better than that of Yemen (5.870), Libya (5.100), and the US (4.961).
- The Philippines is not among the Top18 countries with the deadliest attacks in 2021. However, it is still the Top1 country in the Asia-Pacific region.
- It is in the Top10 countries with the largest decrease (-44) in deaths from terrorism from 2020-2021.
- The Philippines should be concerned with the Top4 deadliest groups in the world list because the Top1, IS/ISIS/ISIL or its affiliate, is present locally in the southern Philippines. This group is responsible for more than 2,000 deaths worldwide in 2021.
- IS declared a global caliphate, favors a so-called jihadist ideology, is anti-West, promotes violence on those who do not adhere to its beliefs, and exploits Sunni-Shia tension. Armed and explosive attacks are its favored tactics. IS also uses suicide bombers. While suicide bombing incidents have decreased, casualties increased in 2021, with civilian casualties increasing by 36%. Attacks on the military represent 41% of IS attacks.
- Despite past terror incidents and casualties, the Philippines is not in the Top10 most impacted by terrorism list from 2011 to 2021.
- The number of deaths in the Philippines fell for the second consecutive year, from 97 deaths in 2020 to 53 deaths in 2021.
- Overall, the Philippines has had the highest death rate in the Asia-Pacific region over the last decade, recording over 1,000 of the total 3,250 terrorism deaths in Asia-Pacific.

Over 96% of deaths from terrorism occurred in countries experiencing a conflict. This has implications for the BARMM, parts of which had in recent years gone through the trauma of violence such as the Marawi Siege. The post-conflict transition in the BARMM is therefore a critical element in addressing the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. Incidents and deaths from terrorism can also be

understood in terms of the ideology that drives violent extremism. While terrorism in the southern Philippines is an example of a violent ideology with religious elements, political (far-right, far-left) beliefs, nationalist (separatist) sentiments, and other drivers that can also provide impetus to terrorism. It should be noted that many terror attacks especially in the West are undertaken by terrorists referred to as lone wolves because they have no formal affiliation with any group.

In this GTI report, the important pillars that affect a country's ability to mitigate VE and terror risks include governance, corruption, and human capital. This means that well-functioning governance, low levels of corruption, and high levels of human capital are contributors to building a country's resilience to VE and terror threats.

1. **GPI Findings and Trends**. The Global Peace Index measures the state of peacefulness among countries using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators spread across three domains: the level of societal safety and security; the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict; and the degree of militarization.

   (a) The report notes a deterioration in peacefulness across countries in the last 14 years. The countries that are considered "least peaceful" in the GPI are also among the top countries highly affected by terrorism. In the past year, 90 countries recorded improvements in peacefulness, while 71 recorded deteriorations. Three countries recorded no change in their overall score.

   (b) While Europe is the most peaceful region (where seven of the ten most peaceful countries are located), Russia and Ukraine join the five countries in the world with the largest deterioration of peacefulness. Russia and Eurasia showed the largest regional deterioration in peacefulness, followed by North America.

   (c) The largest improvements are in South Asia (substantial improvement in the ongoing conflict domain, experiencing reductions in the number of deaths from internal conflicts) and MENA (improvements across all three GPI domains, with the region's result being driven by improvements in military expenditure, deaths from internal conflict, terrorism impact and nuclear and heavy weapons).

   (d) The gap between the least and the most peaceful countries continues to grow. The 25 least peaceful countries deteriorated on average by 16 percentage points, while the 25 most peaceful countries improved by 5.1 percentage points. Conflict in the Middle East has been the key driver of the global deterioration in peacefulness since 2008.

   (e) Of the 23 GPI indicators, ten recorded improvements, and 13 recorded deteriorations. Substantial improvements are seen in terms of terrorism impact, nuclear and heavy weapons, deaths from internal conflict, military expenditure, incarceration rates, and perceptions of criminality. Deaths from terrorism have also been decreasing for the past seven years. The largest deteriorations were recorded in five indicators: political terror, neighboring country relations, the intensity of internal conflict, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and political instability. Ongoing conflict recorded the largest deterioration of any GPI domain, while the safety and security domain also deteriorated.

   (f) There are now 17 countries where at least 5% of the population are either refugees or internally displaced with Sudan (over 35% of its population displaced), Somalia, and the Central African Republic (more than 20% of its population displaced) having a huge percentage of displacement.

Economic Impact and Positive Peace. In 2021, the global economic impact of violence is estimated at $16.5 trillion (10.9% of global GDP or $2,117 per person), inclusive of a 12.4% increase ($1.8 trillion) from the previous year. All regions of the world recorded increases in the economic impact of violence from 2020 to 2021, with MENA (32%), Russia, and Eurasia (29%) having the largest proportional increases. The global economic impact of refugees and internally displaced persons

was more than three times higher than the GDP losses from conflict, while the economic impact of suicide was $757.1 billion in 2021, or 4.6% of the global impact of violence, increasing by 4.7 percentage points from the previous year. The Russia-Ukraine war and the international sanctions placed on Russia have put additional pressure on food prices, as both Russia and Ukraine are large exporters of agricultural commodities. The two countries also export natural gas, an important component in the production of fertilizer.

The Philippines in the GPI 2022

- The Philippines ranks 125th out of the 163 countries in the world in the GPI 2022, with a score of 2.339 points, rising four places in the ranking. It is one of five countries that showed the largest improvements in peacefulness in 2022 across all three domains, with the most significant improvements occurring in safety and security and ongoing conflict domains.

- Despite this improvement, the Philippines ranks 17th out of the 19 countries in the regional ranking within the Asia-Pacific region. While the regional average is 1.86, the Philippines is lower at 2.339, making it the 3rd least peaceful country in the region for two consecutive years, surpassed only by Myanmar and North Korea.

2. **Positive Peace Index (PPI) Findings and Trends**. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) defines positive peace as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. It is, therefore, a measure of societal resilience that is associated with many desirable socio-economic outcomes such as higher income, greater economic stability, and more efficient, transparent, and inclusive governance. The Positive Peace Index (PPI) gauges the state of societal resilience across 163 nations using statistical indicators of socioeconomic development grouped across the eight pillars of positive peace: well-functioning government, sound business environment, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, low levels of corruption, and equitable distribution of resources.

Countries that have a higher rank in Negative Peace than in Positive Peace are said to have a Positive Peace deficit. This is where a country records a higher level of peacefulness than can be sustained by its level of societal resilience. Most countries in this situation record increasing levels of violence over the subsequent decade. Of the countries with a substantial Positive Peace deficit in 2009, 80% deteriorated in GPI in the subsequent decade. Countries with a high Positive Peace deficit in 2009 recorded an average deterioration of 11.6% in GPI in the subsequent decade. This compares with very little change recorded for other countries.

Economic Benefits of Positive Peace. On average, each index-point improvement in the PPI is associated with a tenfold rise in US$ GDP per capita. Countries that improved in Positive Peace from 2009 to 2020 recorded an average annual growth rate in per capita GDP of 2.7 percentage points higher than nations where Positive Peace had deteriorated. Countries in which Positive Peace improved had less volatile inflationary outcomes. Among countries where Positive Peace improved, household consumption rose between 2009 and 2020 at a rate almost twice as high as countries where the PPI deteriorated.

Construction is the sector most responsive to improvements in Positive Peace, with countries that improved PPI seeing gross value added (GVA) growing at almost 4% per year. Countries that consistently improve in Positive Peace are more attractive to foreign direct investment because of greater economic returns, improved governmental transparency and efficiency, enhanced rule of law, protection of private property and enforcement of contracts, and cheaper and less burdensome dispute, compensation, and remediation procedures. Foreign direct investment flows towards countries that improved in Positive Peace grew strongly over the past decade, while countries where Positive Peace declined became less attractive in global capital markets.

Governance and Peacefulness. There is a conceptual link between the quality of governance exercised by authorities and the level of peacefulness enjoyed by society. Countries that improve in Positive Peace tend to fare better in the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) ratings. Countries that improved in the PPI also advanced in their CPIA ratings over the past decade, especially in the areas of education, equity, quality of administration, and business regulation.

The Philippines in the PPI 2022
• The Philippines jumped four notches to 125th place (2.339 points, 1.0 is the highest) out of 163 countries in the 2022 PPI, escaping from the Bottom 10. It was among the five countries with the biggest improvements this year. • Despite jumping four notches, the Philippine rating remains lower than the Asia-Pacific average (1.860), and among the three lowest-ranked Asian nations in peacefulness, together with Myanmar (139th) and North Korea (152nd).

3. World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

According to the World Youth Report, "the most effective youth development efforts are founded on national and local initiatives aligned with the unique needs of young people and other relevant actors in any particular country or community context… Governments should therefore support those youth initiatives and activities at the grassroots and national levels that contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda[98]."

The youth, defined as those aged 15 to 24 years old, represents 16% of the global population. Their active involvement in community and global affairs is considered by the World Bank as central "to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies" and "to averting the worst threats and challenges to sustainable development, including the impacts of climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and migration".

The World Youth Report expresses concern about the high number of young people experiencing poor education and employment outcomes, which it says contribute to their vulnerability to violent extremism. Globally, youth employment has worsened. Many young people are in precarious or informal work situations. "Decent work is even more serious and complex for vulnerable and marginalized youth including young women, those living in humanitarian settings, youth with disabilities, migrant youth, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth," notes the report.

Without a diverse and robust employment strategy, there will be even more limited options and opportunities for all young people in society, especially those in remote and rural settings – and thus making them more vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups.

B. Local State of Violent Extremism

1. **Urban Warfare, Dispersion and Small-Scale Attacks.** The Marawi Siege is considered the first and most explosive urban warfare ever carried out by a VE group in the Philippines and the aftermath of that siege is still felt to this day. "The 2017 Marawi siege – a conflict in which VEOs [violent extremist organizations] battled with Philippine government security forces – resulted in the dispersion of the Maute Group, the Ansar Khalifa Philippines (AKP), and other ISIS-affiliated fighters throughout

---

[98] United Nations. "World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" - https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2018.html

the country," the International Republican Institute recounted in a report[99]. "As VEOs scattered, their greater geographic reach has increased the terrorist and VEO recruitment threat to an unprecedented level in the Philippines."

After their defeat, the insurgents, some of whom pledge allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), resumed their previous strategy of smaller-scale attacks and remained outside the peace process. "Although the total number of fighters remains small – no more than a few hundred – each of these outfits poses a challenge to peace in the Bangsamoro," warns another report, this time by the International Crisis Group.[100] "In Maguindanao province, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and their ISIS-inspired offshoots still wield some clout. In the Lanao region, remnants of the Maute Group, who made up the bulk of the jihadist forces during the Marawi battle, are much weakened but still appear to be recruiting. In the Sulu archipelago, the Abu Sayyaf criminal-militant network is on the defensive but not extinct."

The International Republican Institute (IRI) reports one operational reality: the Philippines has become a recruitment and operational hub, in part because "ungoverned and insufficiently governed spaces have allowed VEOs to ravage large swaths of Mindanao." These violent extremist groups manipulate community and individual grievances using targeted messaging campaigns and tailored incentives to increase recruitment. They also exploit the generational divide among the different violent extremist groups, with older fighters who belong to the MNLF and MILF participating in the peace process and younger recruits of the ASG, BIFF, and ISIS-Philippines rejecting negotiations. Many aggrieved young Mindanaoans see the MNLF and MILF as sellouts, a sentiment that ASG, BIFF, and ISIS-Philippines exploit to increase youth recruitment.

"Pervasive violence and limited access to justice may drive individuals to consider violent extremism as a legitimate way to redress grievances," the IRI continues. "Discrimination against individuals of the Muslim faith intensifies feelings of marginalization and could aid violent extremist organization recruitment efforts . . . Political alienation and disenfranchisement may increase the appeal of violent extremism to vulnerable individuals". The IRI also notes how "low socioeconomic standing drives vulnerable Filipinos to consider joining violent extremism organizations, primarily because of the financial incentives"[101].

Table 47. IRI's recommendation for a three-party community approach

Local Government	Civil Society	Citizens
Local government units should conduct outreach campaigns, town halls, and listening tours to ensure citizens' perspectives are being taken into account.	Civil society should amplify the voices and priorities of citizens and promote community needs. Civil society organizations should work with citizens to conduct awareness campaigns on issues of violent extremism. International nongovernmental organizations and local civil society actors should provide support to the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao government officials after the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law	Citizen access to decision-making and political inclusion should be prioritized over political ideology and the quest for political power.

99 International Republican Institute. "Violent Extremism in the Philippines: Endemic Conflict, Volatile Politics and the Struggle for Identity". Winter 2018. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/philippines_ve_report_-_winter_2018.pdf
100 International Crisis Group. 2022. "Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines". REPORT Ñ323. - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines
101 International Republican Institute. "Violent Extremism in the Philippines: Endemic Conflict, Volatile Politics and the Struggle for Identity". Winter 2018. Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/philippines_ve_report_-_winter_2018.pdf

Aside from looking at vulnerabilities, the IRI also examined potential sources of resilience. It mentions the "peace process as a viable method of resolving conflict" and the need to build high levels of trust especially in "local government efforts to counter violent extremism. Importantly, "existing public interest in improving awareness of violent extremism could be leveraged to strengthen community resilience to radicalization and violent extremist organization recruitment".[102] The IRI recommends a three-party community-based approach composed of the local government, civil society, and citizens, as reflected in the succeeding table 47.

2. **Women Suicide Bombers.** In January 2021, twin suicide bombings carried out by an Indonesian couple occurred in Jolo. In August 2022, another twin suicide bombing was carried out in the same town, this time by widows of ASG militants. Is it simply because of the failure of men to get what they wanted that woman-bombers are entering the picture of violent extremism in the southern Philippines, as Dr. Rommel C. Banlaoi, chairman of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, puts it?[103]

3. **Decline and Dynamism.** Michael Darden of the US Institute for Peace observes that "terrorist activity has declined in Southeast Asia, including in both Malaysia and the Philippines. However, despite this decline, many of the same dynamics that have historically given rise to terrorism and violent extremism remain the same.[104]" This implies that terrorist activity can intensify because the ground that nourishes it remains fertile.

The International Crisis Group concludes that the threat of major violence appears low, but "sporadic clashes in the region continue," it warns. "Meanwhile, while frustration at the region's lack of development will not necessarily fuel militancy, it could push people, including youth, into the militants' arms. To avoid this outcome, the interim government [in Bangsamoro] should enhance the pace, quality, and scope of service delivery; calibrate, where needed, reintegration programs for militants; and boost its conflict resolution efforts throughout the region."[105]

4. **Indigenous Roots, Secession, and Violent Extremism:** "Aside from narratives and messaging, operational realities, and the difficulty in conducting terrorist attacks will likely see VE groups fixate on dynamics closer to home rather than ideological developments overseas," the International Crisis Group predicts. "While global jihadist groups may surge or fade, it will be the indigenous roots of the Islamist extremist movements in Indonesia and the Philippines that will confirm their resilience".

"Militants, who are overwhelmingly from the Bangsamoro, tap local grievances to promote their agenda and take advantage of the nexus of politics, clan ties, and the shadow economy to sustain themselves. Although the armed groups cannot hold territory due to intensified military operations, kinship ties often provide their members with safe havens. At times, militants ally themselves with criminal elements or local politicians. Meanwhile, unemployment and poverty, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, threaten to spoil the last few years' gains."[106]

5. **Globalization and Branding.** Cameron Sumpter and Joseph Franco, writing for the International Center for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) Publications in 2021, downplayed the ideological alignment of

---

102 Ibid.
103 Women's Media Center. "Wives, Widows, and Mothers: The New Faces of Violent Extremism in the Philippines". Relief Web International. April 30, 2021.
    Date accessed July 7, 2022 - https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/wives-widows-and-mothers-new-faces-violent-extremism-philippines
104 Michael Darden. 2022. "Examining Trends in Malaysia and the Philippines". Conflict and Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia - https://www.usip.org/events/
    conflict-and-violent-extremism-southeast-asia
105 International Crisis Group. 2022. "Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines". REPORT Ñ323. - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-
    asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines
106 Ibid.

militants in the southern Philippines and ISIS[107]. "Various local violent extremist (VE) groups seem to change their superficial ideological moorings to whatever global brand is popular," they note. "But a scan of the history of political violence in the southern Philippines suggests the long history of conflict" – meaning that the reasons behind the militancy long predated ISIS.

"The trajectory of Filipino militant groups, especially their attempts to link up with foreign jihadist brands, demonstrates the need to look at underlying drivers of the conflicts," Sumpter and Franco argue. "This would prevent overemphasis on superficial markers of purported ideological alignment. There must be efforts to identify other indicators to detect and then subsequently confront violent extremism. Measures to detect the lack of effective governance and the occurrence of clan conflict appear to be the most promising indicators to forecast other future 'Marawis'."

6. **Return of Taliban as Inspiration to VE Groups.** Still, they concede that international events such as the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan can influence Muslim militancy in Mindanao. "Rather than direct causal links, such high-profile global events will provide an inspirational narrative for some VE groups in both Indonesia and the Philippines," write Sumpter and Franco. "The collapse of the Afghan government will likely be used to fuel the narrative that even the US can be defeated. The Philippine military, organized and trained largely along American lines, is a perfect surrogate target for messaging and propaganda by local VE groups in the Philippines".

7. **Non-Traditional Approach to PVE:** How may the national government and the Bangsamoro be alerted that another Marawi may be in the offing? "It could entail monitoring non-traditional measures that may not be directly related to countering violent extremism (CVE) or security initiatives," write Sumpter and Franco. The early warning indicators include:

   - Statistics that capture municipal or even village-level economic inequality, issues around out-of-school-youth, and even incidents of financial fraud;
   - The responsiveness of local governments, poverty levels, and the effectiveness of educational institutions;
   - The success of the Bangsamoro region in bringing quality-of-life changes could be "the more reliable indicator of how extremism is diminished in the southern Philippines, rather than fluctuations in the influence of jihadist movements overseas."

8. **Adjustment to Military and Police Operations.** The International Crisis Group urges changes in the way the military and police operate in conflict-affected areas. It calls for "further adjustments to military and police operations, which, while necessary, often lead to large-scale displacement of civilians because units have used excessive force in populated areas." One recommendation is to strengthen non-military counter-insurgency tactics such as "a stronger focus on policing and intelligence in some areas."[108]

9. **Autonomy, Peace, and PVE.** Another recommendation is for "augmentations of the interim regional government's efforts to resolve local conflicts by strengthening the reach of responsible ministries, such as those handling public safety and local government, and by supporting existing community-based mechanisms." The International Crisis Group also recommends:

   - Closer coordination among the various disengagement programs for militants that exist in BARMM provinces, with extra funding for such initiatives when required, and cooperation

107 Sumpter, Cameron and Joseph Franco. "Islamist Militancy in Indonesia and the Philippines: Domestic Lineage and Sporadic Foreign Influence" International Center for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) Publications. September 15, 2021. Date accessed July 29, 2022 - https://icct.nl/publication/islamist-militancy-in-indonesia-and-the-philippines-domestic-lineage-and-sporadic-foreign-influence/

108 International Crisis Group. 2022. "Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines". REPORT N323. - https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines

with local authorities. The interim regional government should also design gender-sensitive measures for male and female combatants, as well as for their families.

- Better delivery of public services and development outreach in places marred by conflict, for example, the hinterlands of Maguindanao province known as the SPMS Box and remote areas of Lanao del Sur province.

- Expedited reconstruction of Marawi City through the Philippine government's Task Force Bangon Marawi."[109]

10. Global Perspective, Local Action. It may be useful to revisit global initiatives and actions to align current and future local actions with global perspectives. After all, P/CVE is a global view that requires local actions. UN documents point to conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism – "including but not limited to prolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of the rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and lack of good governance."

None of these conditions can excuse or justify acts of terrorism, but they should be addressed nevertheless. The second course of action is to take stock of measures that prevent and combat terrorism. These include denying terrorist access to the means to carry out their attacks, to their targets, and the desired impact of their attacks.

Towards these ends, UNESCO's work with young people/youth centers around education, skills development, and employment facilitation; empowerment of youth; strategic communications, the Internet, and social media; and gender equality and empowering women.[110]

Finally, the need for nuanced, tailored, informed and local perspectives and interventions are reiterated by Adib (2020) when she observed, "while the policy statement focused on Islamic violent extremism, everyday Muslims who fit the stereotype often become profiled as terrorists, leaving ordinary Muslims marginalized and undermining US attempts at winning the hearts of the world's 1.8 Muslim ummahs."[111]

---

109 Ibid.
110 UNESCO. "Preventing Violent Extremism" - https://en.unesco.org/preventingviolentextremism
111 Farhadi Adib. (2020). Countering Violent Extremism by Winning Hearts and Minds. US: Springer

References

Adib, F. (2020). Countering Violent Extremism by Winning Hearts and Minds. US: Springer Excluding the City of Cotabato. https://bangsamoro.gov.ph/news/latest-news/psa-barmms-poverty-incidence-declines-in-3-years/#:~:text=A%20significant%20decline%20of%20poverty,37.1%20percent%20of%20poverty%20incidence.

Alipala, J. (2016, November 26). Firefight erupts between gov't troops and the Maute group in Lanao Sur. Inquirer Mindanao. https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/848201/firefight-erupts-between-govt-troops-maute-group-in-lanao-sur, Inquirer Mindanao

Alipala, J. (2022, May 30). Painful Memories still haunt Lamitan siege survivors. Philippine Daily Inquirer. https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1604064/painful-memories-still-haunt-lamitan-siege-survivors#ixzz7c6XdCfTx. PDI, May 30, 2022,

Al-Qahtani, M. S. (1999). Al-Wala'Wa'l-Bara': According to the Aqeedah of the Salaf. London: Al-Firdous Ltd. https://www.kalamullah.com/Books/alWalaawalBaraa1.pdf

Aniek, N., et al. (2022). Indonesian takfiri Movement on Online Media in Umberto Eco's Semiotic Perspective. In ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman Volume 15, Number 2, March 2021; p-ISSN: 1978-3183; e-ISSN: 2356-2218; 195-222. - http://repository.uinsby.ac.id/id/eprint/738/1/Aniek%20Nurhayati_Indonesian%20takfiri%20movement%20on%20online%20media.pdf

Blanchard, C.M. (2008). The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya. CRS Report to Congress. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/RS21695.pdf

Britanica Online (n.d.). Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad-ibn-Abd-al-Wahhab

Britannica. (n.d.). Muhammad's emigration to Yathrib (Medina). In Online Britannica. - https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-world/Muhammads-emigration-to-Yathrib-Medina

Burkholder, R. (2002). Jihad -- 'Holy War', or Internal Spiritual Struggle?. https://news.gallup.com/poll/7333/jihad-holy-war-internal-spiritual-struggle.aspx

Counter Extremism Project (2022). Jihad. https://www.counterextremism.com/content/jihad

Dar al Ifta. (2022). The Concept of "The Ummah". http://www.dar-alifta.org/Foreign/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=367&CategoryID=3

Darden, M. (2022). Examining Trends in Malaysia and the Philippines. Conflict and Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia - https://www.usip.org/events/conflict-and-violent-extremism-southeast-asia

DBpedia (n.d.). Battle of Tipo-Tipo. https://dbpedia.org/page/Battle_of_Tipo-Tipo

Department of Agriculture (2017). List of 20 poorest provinces. http://rfu12.da.gov.ph/reports-and-documentation/da-rfo-xii-cy2017-bar-no-1/2-uncategorised/1510-list-of-20-poorest-provinces

Dine, A. (2018). Mapping Militant Organizations. Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). Stanford University. https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ansar-dine

Duderija, A. (2020). Special Issue "Salafism in the West". In Religions. *MDPI Journal.* - https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/salafism

Encyclopedia (2019). The Authority of the Khilafah. https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/authority-khilafah

Esposito, J. (2022). Jihad: Holy or Unholy War*? Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam and What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*. Oxford University Press. 2002. https://www.unaoc.org/repository/Esposito_Jihad_Holy_Unholy.pdf

Fernandez, E. (2021, April 23). Army launches preemptive strikes a new vs. BIFF. Philippines News Agency. https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1137753

Gilliam, J. (2018). The Ethics of ISIS: Takfir in Surah 9. Simons Center Special Report 2017. - https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ethics-Symp-pg53-58.pdf

Gilliam, Joshua. (2018). The Ethics of ISIS: Takfir in Surah 9. *Simons Center Special Report 2017*. - https://thesimonscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Ethics-Symp-pg53-58.pdf

Global Peace Index (2022). Institute for Economics and Peace. https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/GPI-2022-web.pdf

Global Terrorism Index (2022). Institute for Economics and Peace. https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GTI-2022-web-09062022.pdf

Hassan, M. H. (2016). Living in a Non-Muslim Country: Responding to the Idea of Hijrah (Migration). https://www.rrg.sg/hijrah/

Hassan, M. H. (2017). The Danger of Takfir (Excommunication): Exposing IS' Takfiri Ideology. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses,* 9(4), 3-12. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26351508?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents

Human Fraternity Document for World Peace and Living Together (2019). Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to the United Arab Emirates. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

IAG (2017). Youth Vulnerability to Violent Extremism in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 2017.

Inge, A. (2016). 6 common misconceptions about Salafi Muslims in the West. Oxford University Press's Academic Insights for the Thinking World. https://blog.oup.com/2016/10/6-misconceptions-salafi-muslims/

International Crisis Group (2022). Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines. REPORT Ň323. https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines

International Crisis Group. (2022). Addressing Islamist Militancy in the Southern Philippines. REPORT Ň323. https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/323-addressing-islamist-militancy-southern-philippines

International Republican Institute. (2018). Violent Extremism in the Philippines: Endemic Conflict, Volatile Politics and the Struggle for Identity. https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/philippines_ve_report_-_winter_2018.pdf

Iqbal, M. A. & Mabud, S. A. (2019). Challenge of Globalisation to the Muslim Ummah: Religious Extremism and the Need for Middle Path (Wasat). *Strategic Studies, 39*(3), 73-88. - https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544311#metadata_info_tab_contents

Iwamoto, K. (2021). ASEAN on guard for extremism inspired by Taliban's Afghan triumph. Afghanistan Turmoil. NIKKEIAsia. https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Afghanistan-turmoil/ASEAN-on-guard-for-extremism-inspired-by-Taliban-s-Afghan-triumph

Jennings, R. (2021, September 3). How Taliban's Win Might Influence Radical Muslims in Southeast Asia. Extremist Watch. https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_how-talibans-win-might-influence-radical-muslims-southeast-asia/6219205.html

Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World. (n.d.). Constitution of Medina. Ismalimc Civilizations. - https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/islamiccivilizations/7967.html

Kadiver, J. (2020). Exploring Takfir, Its Origins, and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media. In Contemporary Review of the Middle East. Volume 7. Issue 3, page(s): 259-285. - https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2347798920921706

Khan, M. (2019). Chapter 21, Verse 92. The English translation is from Dr. Mohsin Khan who quoted Ibn Kathir. https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=21&verse=92

Khan, S. (2015). Senseless killings in the name of faith. An article in the Arab News. https://www.arabnews.com/islam-perspective/news/714221

Khan, S. (2017). The Call of Islam: Peace and Moderation, Not Intolerance and Extremism". - https://www.islamicity.org/6258/the-call-of-islam-peace-and-moderation-not-intolerance-and-extremism/

Long, D. E. (2009). Tawhid or Jihad: What Wahhabism Is and Is Not. https://www.mei.edu/publications/tawhid-or-jihad-what-wahhabism-and-not

Majlis Ugama IsLAM Singapura (MUIS). (n.d.). All Fatwa. https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa

Marrakesh Declaration (2020). The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities: Legal Framework and a Call to Action. https://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/

McLeod, D. M. & Hairgrove, F. (2008). Support for the Caliphate and Radical Mobilization. www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/research_briefs/20080131_Caliphate_...

MindaNews. (2019, January 29). Darul-Ifta of Region 9 and Palawan: All Muslims and other faiths ought to unite against all those who terrorize innocents and those who permit the killings" - https://www.mindanews.com/statements/2019/01/darul-ifta-of-region-9-and-palawan-all-muslims-and-other-faiths-ought-to-unite-against-all-those-who-terrorize-innocents-and-those-who-permit-the-killings/

Ministry of Social Services and Development (2022). Angat Bangsamoro: Kabataan tungo sa karunungan program. https://mssd.bangsamoro.gov.ph/angat-bangsamoro-kabataan-tungo-sa-karunungan-program

Mitch, I. & Rhoades, A. L. (2022).The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization). RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html

Mitmug, R. Jr. (2021). Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BBA), Number 13". Office of MP Ras Mitmug. https://rasmitmug.com/ebooks/BAA-13-Admin-Code-8.pdf

Mourabitoun, A. (2018). Mapping Militants. Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). Stanford University. https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/al-mourabitoun

Muhammad Al-Tayyeb, A. (n.d.). The Muslim 500 – 2023 Edition. Jordan: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre. https://themuslim500.com/profiles/ahmad-muhammad-al-tayyeb/

National Intelligence (n.d.). Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/abu_sayyaf.html

National Youth Commission, Republic of the Philippines. (1994). The Youth in Nation-Building Act, Under Republic Act 8044. https://nyc.gov.ph/republic-act-8044/#:~:text=An%20act%20creating%20the%20National,Therefore%2C%20and%20for%20Other%20Purposes.

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Manila (2020). Promoting Peace in the Sulu Archipelago. https://www.norway.no/en/philippines/norway-philippines/news-events/news/promoting-peace-in-the-sulu-archipelago/

People in Need (2021). The Filipino Peacebuilders of Butig. https://www.peopleinneed.net/the-filipino-peacebuilders-of-butig-7944gp

Philippine Statistics Authority (2018). 2018 First Semester Poverty Statistics among Families in ARMM. http://rssoarmm.psa.gov.ph/release/content/special/55264

Philippine Statistics Authority (2021). Official Poverty Statistics of the Philippines. https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2021%201st%20Poverty%20Stats_Full%20Publication_17Dec2021_rev5.pdf

Poljarevic, E. (2021). Chapter 21 Theology of Violence-oriented Takfirism as a Political Theory: The Case of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)". In Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (eds) Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements. - https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004435544_026

Positive Peace Index (2022). Institute for Economics and Peace. https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PPR-2022-web.pdf

Presidential Degree 1083 (1977). A Decree to Ordain and Promulgate a Code Recognizing the System of Filipino Muslim Laws, Codifying Muslim Personal Laws, and Providing for its Administration and Other Purposes. https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1977/pd_1083_1977.html

Protection Cluster in Mindanao, UNHCR (2016). Displacement Dashboard. https://www.unhcr.org/ph/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2017/03/Protection-Cluster-June-Displacement-Dashboard_Final1.pdf

RRG Loving Sharing Caring (2016). Al Wala' wal Bara'. Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) Singapore. 2016. https://www.rrg.sg/al-wala-wal-bara/

Safety Perceptions Index (2022). Institute for Economics and Peace. https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/SPI-2022-web.pdf

Salafi Movement (2010). The spiritual life. Salafi Movement. https://slife.org/salafi-movement/

SalafiCity (2020). The Salaf Information. https://salaficity.org/the-salaf-companions

Search for Common Ground, Hedaya (2019). Countering Violent Extremism: An introductory guide to concepts, development programs, and best practices/Adapted for the Central Asian region. https://Www.sfcg.org/countering-violent-extremism/SFCG-Countering_Violent_Extremism-An_Introductory_Guide_Russian.Pdf.

Senate Hearing 110-942. (2008). The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter It. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg44123/html/CHRG-110shrg44123.htm

Sommers, M. (2018). Youth and the Field of Countering Violent Extremism. https://promundoglobal.org/resources/youth-and-the-field-of-countering-violent-extremism

Sumpter, C. & Franco, J. (2021). Islamist Militancy in Indonesia and the Philippines: Domestic Lineage and Sporadic Foreign Influence" International Center for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) Publications. https://icct.nl/publication/islamist-militancy-in-indonesia-and-the-philippines-domestic-lineage-and-sporadic-foreign-influence/

The Amman Message. (n.d.). The Amman Message. https://ammanmessage.com/the-amman-message-full/

The International Dialogue Centre (2008). The Makkah Declaration at the close of the world Islamic conference on dialogue. https://www.kaiciid.org/file/1161/download?token=NgO78dXQ

The Makkah Charter (2019). The Charter of Makkah by the Conference on the (Charter of Makkah" under the umbrella of the Muslim World League. https://themwl.org/sites/default/files/TheCharterofMakkah.pdf

The Mardin Conference (2010). Understanding Ibn Taymiyyah's Fatwa". https://muslimmatters.org/2010/06/29/the-mardin-conference-%E2%80%93-a-detailed-account/

Thomson, J. (2021). Examining Extremism: Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Blogspot. Examining Terrorism. https://www.csis.org/blogs/examining-extremism/examining-extremism-jamaat-nasr-al-islam-wal-muslimin

UNESCO. (2021). Preventing Violent Extremism. https://en.unesco.org/preventingviolentextremism

United Nations Office on Drug and Crime. (2018). Radicalization' and 'violent extremism. *Module 2: Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism. E4J University Module Series: Counter-Terrorism.* https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html

United Nations. (2018). World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2018.html

USAID (2017). Marawi assistance. https://www.usaid.gov/philippines/humanitarian-assistance/marawi-conflict

Ustadz Ridhwan Mohd Basor. (2018). Can Muslims Befriend Non-Muslims?" - https://muslim.sg/articles/can-muslims-befriend-non-muslims

Wehrey, F. & Boukhars, A. (2019). Defining Salafism: Contexts and Currents. *Salafism in the Maghreb: Politics, Piety, and Militancy, Carnegie Endowment for Intl Peace,* New York, 2019; online edn, Oxford Academic. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190942403.003.0002.

Women's Media Center. (2021). Wives, Widows, and Mothers: The New Faces of Violent Extremism in the Philippines. Relief Web International. https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/wives-widows-and-mothers-new-faces-violent-extremism-philippines

The Research Team

BENEDICTO R. BACANI
Research Director

Attorney Bacani is the founder of the Institute for Autonomy and Governance. He is the former vice president for research and extension and dean of the College of Law of Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, Philippines. A fellow of the United States Institute of Peace (Washington, DC), he specializes in political solutions to conflicts and in promoting the rights of minorities. He was also a Hubert Humphrey fellow at the University of Minnesota, specializing in federalism and conflict management, a short-term consultant on constitution-making in Nepal, and visiting lecturer at the European University Centre for Peace Studies in Austria.

NORMA TILLO-GOMEZ
Lead Researcher

Dr. Gomez conducted a wide range of research, including an analysis of the power relations in the ARMM, displacement due to armed conflict, disaster risk reduction management, social inclusion of indigenous children in the ARMM in the national and regional development agenda, and youth vulnerability to violent extremism in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. She is former executive director of the Notre Dame University Research Center (2003 -2012) and team leader, BRAC Philippines, Cotabato City (2017 -2018).

OFELIA DURANTE
Senior Researcher

Dr. Durante was director of the Ateneo de Zamboanga Research Center from 2003 to 2010, and a former faculty and vice president for academic affairs and director of the Peace Education Center at Notre Dame University. She facilitated highly specialized peace education workshops, assisted in the development of peace education modules, conducted reviews of peace education researches, and evaluated development projects in Mindanao.

CESAR BACANI
Research Associate & Editor

A finance and business journalist, research editor, and opinion columnist with special interest in accounting, finance, business, and investing in China, Cesar Bacani was formerly Editor-in-Chief of Hong Kong online publication CFO Innovation. He was previously Contributing Editor of CFO Asia, a specialist publication of The Economist Group also in Hong Kong, and Research Editor of CFO Asia Research Services, where he drew on his market research experience as consultant at market research organization TRENDS in the Philippines (now TNS Philippines). He is the author of The China Investor (John Wiley, 2003) and was Business Editor and Personal Finance Editor of Asiaweek Magazine, the Hong Kong-based Time Warner publication that was closed in 2000. Cesar is a published poet and short story writer who has been honored with several awards, including the prestigious Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature in his native Philippines.

NOOR SAADA
Research Associate

Prof. Saada is a development consultant, specializing in conflict studies and Muslim education in the context of minority communities in non-Muslim states and on recognition and integration of the indigenous Madrasah system into the mainstream education system. He is a consultant for the ARMM Jurisconsult and former assistant regional secretary for programs and projects of the Department of Education-ARMM. He trained on Shari'ah at the Shari'ah Academy.

HOWARD J. MAÑEGO
Research Associate

Dr. Mañego is former professor in research and international business management at Korea Nazarene University, South Korea. He has conducted various studies in the areas of peace education, socio-economic, human security, and governance as associate researcher at the Ateneo de Zamboanga Research Center. He is a development worker involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of foreign-assisted development programs and projects in Mindanao.

Research Advisers

SHAYKH MONER BAJUNAID
Former Chancellor, Mindanao State University-General Santos

Shaykh Bajunaid is a specialist in Islamic and Arabic studies from the Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, in 1975. He finished a master's degree in economics from the Cairo University in 1978 and Islamic studies from the International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan. He was chancellor of the Mindanao State University-General Santos and Director of the Center for Peace Studies.

SHAYKH ABDULMUHMIN MUJAHID
Member of Parliament, BTA-BARMM
Former Executive Director, Office of Regional Darul-Ifta'-ARMM

Shaykh Mujahid completed his Islamic degree in Da'wah from the International Islamic Call College in Tripoli, Libya, and his public administration degree from the Mandaue City State College. He was a member of the Basilan Ulama Supreme Council and has served in the municipal legislative council and the provincial legislative council prior to his appointment as executive director of the Regional Darul-Ifta' in the now defunct Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

ASSOC. PROF. MACRINA A. MORADOS
Former Dean, Institute of Islamic Studies, University of the Philippines-Diliman

Assoc. Prof. Macrina A. Morados finished her Bachelor of Arts in Islamic Studies and Bachelor of Laws at the Mindanao State University in 1991 and 2001, respectively. She earned her Master's Degree in Islamic Studies at the UP-IIS in 2003 and is presently pursuing her PhD in Philippine Studies at the UP Tri-College majoring in Philippine Culture and Society. She passed the Shari'áh Bar Examinations in 2006. She was appointed chairperson of the Shari'áh Bar 2022 by the Supreme Court.

Research Support

MARY JACQUELINE C. FERNANDEZ
Finance & Administration

MYRNA S. CESTINA
Finance Assistant

RAMIE P. TOLEDO
Knowledge & Communications Management

IRENE FERNANDEZ
Layout

Australian
Aid