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VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN INDONESIA: RADICALISM, INTOLERANCE AND ELECTIONS

CENTER FOR
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THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN INDONESIA: RADICALISM, INTOLERANCE AND ELECTIONS

WINTER **2017**

International Republican Institute
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approach

- In late 2017, the International Republican Institute (IRI) conducted a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) to gain insight into the local political dynamics in West Java that are contributing to radicalism and intolerance, with a specific focus on how these dynamics could impact the forthcoming local elections (*Pilkada*).
- This report is based on FGDs conducted with residents, political parties, Islamic student groups and moderate and conservative Islamic mass organizations in Bogor and Bandung in Indonesia's West Java province. These communities were selected due to recent religious-based controversies in the province, as well as the rise in prominence of radical entities such as Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). By assessing the rise of radicalism and intolerance, IRI is seeking to better understand whether or not the preconditions for recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism are under way ahead of the province's *Pilkada* in June 2018.
- IRI's approach to preventing violent extremism is anchored in three phases: **understand, inform, and equip.** This report represents the first phase.

Findings

Potential Sources of Vulnerability to Violent Extremism

- **Finding #1:** Most participants from across the focus groups were critical of the quality of Indonesia's democracy, often citing elitism, the importance of moneyed interests and growing intolerance. Participants from Islamic political parties were particularly disillusioned with democratic outcomes.
- **Finding #2:** Most participants were critical of the Indonesian government's performance on specific issues, including corruption, insecurity, economic

hardship and its defense of free expression. However, members of the nationalist parties, which control government, were less critical of the government and its overall representation of constituents and ability to address the country's primary challenges.
- **Finding #3:** Most participants find local government inaccessible, with many saying social media and street protests are more effective forums for expressing grievances.
- **Finding #4:** Many participants cited Islam as a justification for their opposition to minorities and the prospect of women being elected president.
- **Finding #5:** Participants were closely divided on whether the government should be more Islamic, with proponents often citing Islam's orientation toward justice and morality.

Potential Sources of Resilience to Violent Extremism

- **Finding #1:** Most participants across the focus groups expressed a common definition of democracy and had positive associations with the nation's founder, Sukarno, and his ideology, *Pancasila*.
- **Finding #2:** Most participants were opposed to violence in all cases and associated the Islamic State (ISIS) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) with negative characteristics. However, a small group of participants believed violence can be justified when defending Islam or a political position.
- **Finding #3:** Most participants described the drivers of violent extremism in negative terms, often citing a lack of education and opportunity.
- **Finding #4:** Participants from religiously conservative parties, Islamic organizations, and university groups expressed some support for minority religious groups despite opposing other inclusive policies and political behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Political parties should develop positions that promote more tolerant, inclusive policies in West Java, particularly in the forthcoming *Pilkada*.

Recommendation 2: National religious organizations should lead efforts to promote positive expressions of Islam.

Recommendation 3: Civil society should work with local government to hold them accountable for existing preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) efforts and support initiatives to promote community resiliency in a more holistic and productive way.

Recommendation 4: National and local government officials should work together to more effectively distinguish between the public and private spheres. This should include a communications strategy to reassure citizens that shifts in public affairs do not necessarily threaten Indonesians' personal beliefs and practices.

Recommendation 5: Community-based organizations and religious organizations should work together to promote social cohesion.

Recommendation 6: The local government should work with civil society to fund and support efforts to create space for young Indonesians to ask questions and debate controversial policies.

Recommendation 7: Local elected officials and civil society organizations in Bandung and Bogor should build on the identified potential sources of resilience to violent extremism to develop P/CVE programs.

Recommendation 8: National and local government officials should improve vertical and horizontal coordination when developing P/CVE strategies and implementing P/CVE policies.

INTRODUCTION

T he International Republican Institute (IRI) conducted this research in two cities in Indonesia's West Java province to understand the extent to which the province's upcoming elections will serve as referenda on tolerance. As intolerance creeps into the political and electoral systems, other dynamics can emerge which often cause segments of a population to consider adopting a radical ideology. The country finds itself at a critical juncture where the formal political processes can be distorted and even coopted to institutionalize a more exclusive, religiously conservative, and even violent ideology. The April 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections—the most recent electoral contest in Indonesia—exposed mounting religious tensions and cast a foreboding shadow on the country's forthcoming *Pilkada* (local elections). Whether or not the formal electoral and political processes institutionalize radical ideology, violent extremist organizations (VEOs) can use this political groundswell to recruit new adherents more effectively.

IRI takes a three-phased approach to preventing violent extremism: **understand, inform, and equip.** Each phase is critical to forging a comprehensive, responsive, governance-focused strategy capable of preventing the conditions that allow violent extremism to take root. IRI's approach is politically-informed, locally-driven and customized to the unique needs of specific communities.

Drivers of violent extremism stem from several interconnected factors as detailed in Figure 1. Much of the existing research on violent extremism focuses exclusively on factors at the macro (global), meso (national and subnational), or micro (individual) levels. However, focusing on just one of these levels risks obscuring the ways in which the levels interact with and reinforce each other. In recognition of this fact, the research approach taken by IRI in our "understand" phase uses qualitative methods of information gathering, including focus groups, to gather data across multiple levels of analysis. Our regional and thematic knowledge and political expertise allows us to glean unique insights from the research to develop a comprehensive yet nuanced understanding of local drivers of violent extremism.

IRI's "understand" phase framework includes several levels of analysis to assess "vulnerabilities," as well as sources of "resilience." "Vulnerability" encompasses the full spectrum of drivers, including social, political and/or economic grievances that cause an individual to support violent extremism. "Resilience" connotes the ability of individuals to withstand recruitment efforts despite these grievances. Our unique framework allows us to identify not only differences between violent extremists and resilient individuals, but also between "cognitive radicals"—those who agree with violence but do not perpetrate attacks—and "behavioral radicals"—those who act on their radical ideology by committing violent acts. Building on decades of survey research experience by IRI's Center for Insights in Survey Research and Office of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, our "understand" phase is customizable and scalable to fit the myriad contexts susceptible to the threat of violent extremism.

This research—the first of the three phases—took place in the West Java cities of Bogor and Bandung: two cities with a long history of intolerance and Islamic-tinged radicalism, where an increasing number of protests, parties and political actors are espousing intolerance toward religious minorities and a moderate brand of Indonesian Islam.

METHODOLOGY

Intolerance and violent extremism are on the rise in Bandung and Bogor. In response, IRI designed a series of focus groups to understand the behaviors, perspectives and attitudes of the local population and political elites.

Four groups were identified as representative of non-political segments of the local population: ordinary citizens; moderate Islamic mass organizations; conservative Islamic mass organizations; and conservative university students. Two groups represented the political elite opinion: members of nationalist political parties and members of Islamic political parties. Across these groups, the discussion probed for sources of vulnerability and resilience.

The drivers of violent extremism are myriad and vary across individual contexts. Key drivers include perceptions of injustice at the global, national and local level, as well as the desire for money, opportunity or status. By examining local perspectives on the political, economic and social setting in Indonesia, these focus groups aimed to assess the potential sources of vulnerability and resilience that exist in Bogor and Bandung: areas of growing extremism.

As Bogor and Bandung are both experiencing rising intolerance and violent extremism, expressions of grievances and intolerant attitudes during the focus group discussions were documented as potential sources of vulnerability, while attitudes and behaviors that indicated social cohesion and tolerance were documented as potential sources of resilience. The results of these focus groups identify potential sources of vulnerability and resilience that should be considered by policymakers and P/CVE practitioners.

IRI conducted FGDs in West Java to better understand the means and extent to which radical ideology is filtering into the local political and electoral processes, as well as the general population of these two cities and the province as a whole. The perpetuation of this type of ideology in the political discourse, which is formalized in political party platforms and party rhetoric, could breed an intolerant
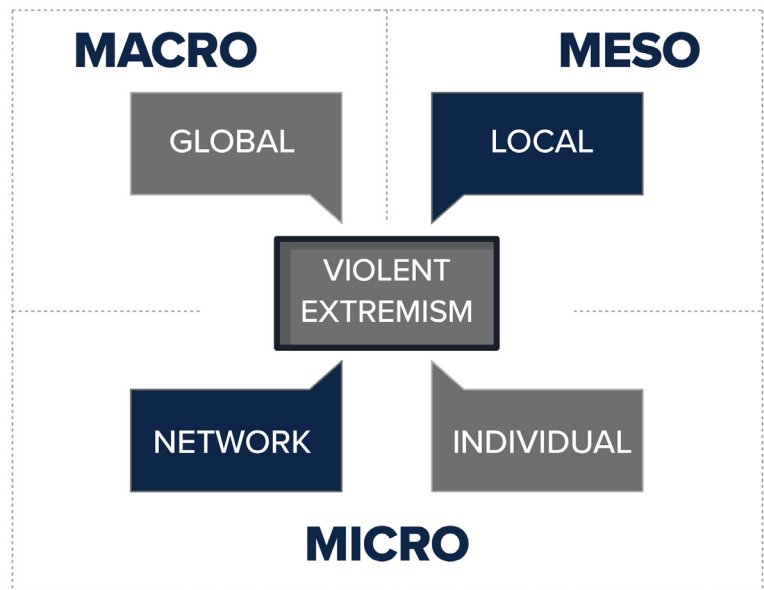
**Figure 1:
IRI analyzes grievances at multiple levels**

socio-political landscape that primes a population for radicalization and potential recruitment by VEOs.

We conducted six focus group discussions in the West Java cities of Bogor and Bandung in November and December 2017 targeting three categories of residents: political party leaders, "ordinary" citizens, and civil society and religious organizations (including national religious organizations).

After completing the FGDs, IRI conducted a series of data validation meetings from March 19 to March 24, 2018, in Jakarta, Indonesia. During these meetings, IRI researchers met local P/CVE practitioners, as well as international experts on the political situation in Bogor and Bandung. During these meetings, IRI presented its preliminary findings and solicited feedback. Based on the questions and comments received during the data validation meetings, IRI refined and finalized its findings and analysis.

Focus Group Participants

We used our unique pathways to violent extremism model (Figure 2), a literature review on violent extremism in Indonesia and input from our local research partner–the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)[1]–to determine the composition of our focus groups. With a geographic focus on Bandung and Bogor, participants were selected from four sectors across the two cities:
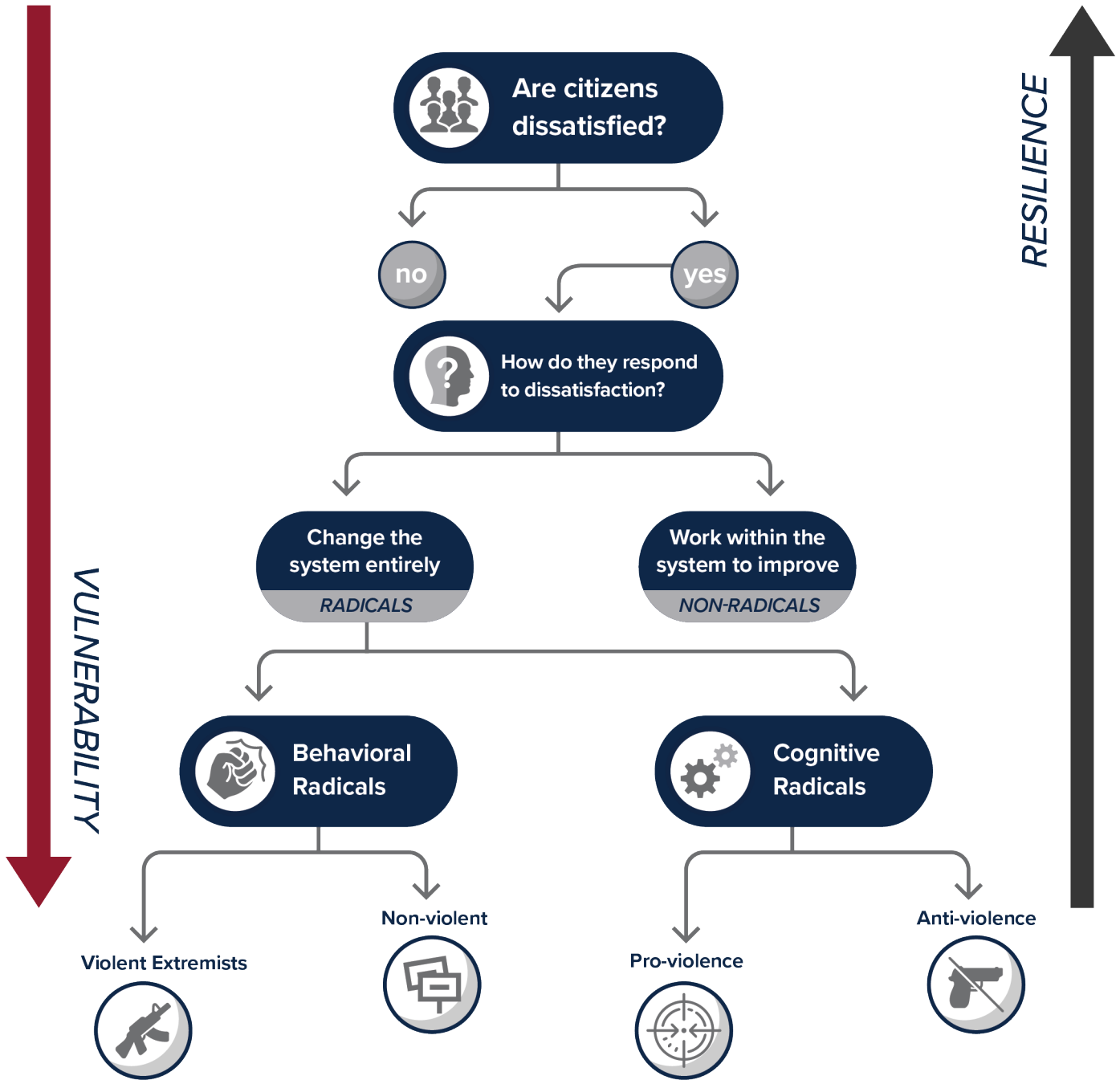
1. **Ordinary Citizens**
   a. A demographically-inclusive sample that included youth and adults, men and women, and urban and rural participants
   b. Students representing conservative Islamic university organizations (LDK and Kammi)

2. **Political Party Leaders**
   a. Nationalist Parties – PERINDO (The Indonesian Unity Party), GOLKAR (Functional Group Party), PDIP (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), GERINDRA (The Great Indonesian Movement Party), NASDEM (National Democratic Party)
   b. Islamic/Religious Parties – PKS (Prosperous and Justice Party), PKB (National Awakening Party), PBB (Crescent Star Party), PPP (United Development Party)

3. **Moderate Islamic Mass Organizations**
   a. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)
   b. Muhammadiyah
   c. Indonesia Ulemas Council (MUI)

4. **Conservative Islamic Mass Organizations**
   a. Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)
   b. Islamic Community Forum (FUI)
   c. Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (LDII)
   d. The National Alliance for the Anticipation of Shiite (ANAS)
   e. Islam Union (PERSIS)

These specific sectors were chosen to provide a holistic sense of the perspectives and opinions of political actors, religious organizations and ordinary citizens on issues of radicalism, intolerance and politics. By triangulating the opinions of these three sectors, this report provides a unique insight into the circumstances in West Java which have the potential to escalate into conflict during the upcoming provincial elections or strengthen the influence of VEOs.

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[1] CSIS has no affiliation with the Washington, DC-based think tank of the same name.

Figure 2: IRI's Pathways to Violent Extremism

RESILIENCE

VULNERABILITY

Are citizens dissatisfied?

no   yes

How do they respond to dissatisfaction?

Change the system entirely
RADICALS

Work within the system to improve
NON-RADICALS

Behavioral Radicals

Cognitive Radicals

Non-violent

Anti-violence

Violent Extremists

Pro-violence

FINDINGS

Potential Vulnerabilities to Violent Extremism

The following five findings represent potential vulnerabilities to violent extremism. The focus group data reflect disillusionment with the state of Indonesia's democracy; criticism of the government's performance on key economic, political, and social issues; frustration with inaccessible local government; regressive views on women's and minority rights among conservative groups; and substantial support for more religious government among conservative groups. While none of these dynamics represents a necessary or sufficient condition for violent extremism, they have the potential to play a substantive role in Bandung's and Bogor's rising extremism.

Finding #1:

Participants from across the focus groups criticized the quality of Indonesia's democracy, citing elitism, the influence of moneyed interests, and growing intolerance. Participants from Islamic parties and conservative Islamic organizations were particularly disillusioned with democratic outcomes.

Participants across the focus groups—both moderate and conservative—criticized Indonesia's democratic quality. A common concern was continuing elitism (or even authoritarianism) and lack of representation. A member of a nationalist political party said, "In post-*Reformasi* Indonesia[2] the democracy was initially very authoritarian and controlled by elites. This has not changed appropriately… On the one hand, it looks like democracy, but on the other hand, the process is very elitist."[3] A conservative university student from Bogor claimed, "Our democracy right now is authoritarian." A participant from a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said, "I no longer understand if there is democracy in Indonesia. What is democracy now? Whose aspirations [are respected]? All things are mixed up."

"So we are confused, what is democracy today? Is accepting insults included in being democratic? Is blasphemy acceptable in democracy? How is this democracy? What is meant by Indonesian democracy today?...What is Indonesia as a nation?"

- Member of a conservative Islamic organization, Bogor

Another common concern was the role of corruption and capitalist influence manipulating politics. In Bandung, a member of the moderate Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, argued, "From what I've seen, we've been leaning toward an oligarchy…in my view, we tend to favor the capital holders." A member of the NU contended that Indonesia's democracy is "still characterized by…manipulation" in the form of "money politics." A conservative student from Bogor University said, "I think that our process of democracy is not running well. There are still many people who are manipulated. The rich people are playing the democratic system." A Bandung

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[2] The era of political transition in Indonesia following the end of the authoritarian presidency of Suharto in 1998.
[3] The translation of these quotes was minimally altered to ensure as accurate a translation from Bahasa Indonesian as possible.

> **Perhaps the problem of our freedom is we cannot distinguish which one is personal affairs and which one is public affairs. Today... democracy has become tyranny of the majority... Those who have greater access will benefit more."**
>
> *- Citizen from Bogor*

member of NU agreed: in his view, Indonesian democracy "is tainted by things...like money politics," which "is deeply rooted in our society."

When asked about democracy, several participants lamented the growing tensions around Indonesia's Islamic identity. A citizen from Bogor said, "Our country...should be tolerant. Especially with religious issues in recent times. That is what I see and it is a bit annoying because we do know that our country does not belong to one race or one religion or a tribe."

While participants across the focus groups were critical of Indonesia's democracy, participants from Islamic parties were vociferously critical. One participant from an Islamic party said, "I think we have not experienced the phase of guided democracy. Today I am seeing liberal extremism. The values on which the consensus agreement as built have been lost." Another member of an Islamic party said, "Today...democracy has become tyranny of the majority... Those who have greater access will benefit more... For

me, we have to question whether democracy is the only solution to creating a better life in this country. Because if we ask to the society, it's not the issue of democracy that is prioritized but rather the equity of justice and prosperity." A participant from another Islamic party said that justice is essential to *Pancasila* but asked, "What is happening right now? The absence of justice. And that causes our country to collapse." Another participant said, "although nowadays the system is democratic...it is not felt by society."

Finding #2:

Most participants criticized the Indonesian government's performance on specific issues, including corruption, insecurity, economic hardship, and its defense of free expression. However, members of the ruling nationalist parties were less self-critical.

Participants across all groups affirmed that government **corruption** persists. A citizen from Bogor said, "There are still many in this government who are corrupt." A Bogor participant from the conservative Islamic organization group claimed, "We are only commoners...trying to judge the government's actions every day regarding corruption. Everything is zero." A conservative university student from Bogor contended that despite efforts to end corruption, "It is still the way it is now." Another citizen from Bogor said, "To prevent and crackdown on corruption...from the central government, it must be more transparent...and more assertive. There are a lot of examples on the news about corruption." A participant from a Bandung moderate Islamic organization asked, "Why does corruption happen in the first place? Maybe because some parts of our state apparatus do not respect public ethics."

Insecurity was another commonly cited problem across focus groups. An FGD participant from Muhammadiyah said, "In regards to giving a sense of safety, I don't think it's here yet. Every time I go back home late at night I'm still scared." Similarly, a citizen from Bogor decried petty crime: "Pickpockets! Pickpockets! My own kid experienced it." A conservative university student said, "The sentiments toward race, tribes, and religion are starting to become

worrying." Many participants directly criticized the government's efforts to address the problem. A citizen from Bogor said, "I think the central government's effort on security has not been effective yet." A participant from a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said, "Providing a sense of security? What kind of security can we have? There is so much unemployment, which will automatically trigger crime." A participant from a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor concluded that the government's approach to addressing insecurity and other policy issues is "terrible."

Economic hardship was also cited during the sessions. A participant from a moderate Islamic organization in Bandung said, "Regarding an increase in economic opportunity, the government has said this is happening, but we have not felt it. Access to capital is…not yet full, I think." A citizen from Bogor explained, "On economic factors… there are still many people who do not have a permanent job…I think the performance of government should be better." Another citizen from Bogor said, "For job vacancies, indeed still so much is needed, especially in my area. There are still many high school graduates who are looking for job." A participant from a Bogor-based conservative Islamic organization said, "If we look at the [national] campaign's promises…almost all of them are zero…except infrastructure development." A conservative university student from Bogor concurred: "In terms of our economic development, we are still lacking, especially at the national level. We can see it in the increase of our national debt. The economy isn't running smoothly."

Many participants criticized the **status of free expression** in Indonesia. A participant from a moderate Islamic organization in Bandung said, "[Regarding] upholding rights and the right to free speech, I perceive that there are too [many] cases of authoritarianism. Freedom is ongoing, but on the other side, the current regime is still like a scared regime: Authoritarian yes; hate speech, yes." Another participant from a Bandung-based moderate Islamic organization complained, "So when someone criticizes a regulation, a system, they are faced with defamation laws, hate speech, or whatever they're called—spreading issues of hostility, hate, and others." A university student from

Bogor said, "In terms of freedom of expression, it's also worrisome…there are many things that are lacking; that is the freedom today. When we have different opinions, those can be eliminated." Another university student from Bogor said, "In terms of defending our rights of free speech, it is still the same. We, as religious people, [speaking freely is] still difficult for us."

Participants from political parties, particularly from nationalist parties, were largely silent on these issues. One participant from a nationalist party said corruption in the national government must be curtailed. Another participant acknowledged rising intolerance and insecurity but said "These conflicts are not too extensive." Overall, the political parties' focus group sessions were far less critical of government performance and less forthcoming on issues including corruption, insecurity, economic conditions and the defense of freedom of expression.

Finding #3:

Most participants find local government inaccessible, with many identifying social media and street protests as a last resort for expressing grievances.

Across the FGDs, most participants said there are few government forums where grievances can be expressed. According to a participant from Muhammadiyah in Bandung:

> I don't see a complaint mechanism…The regional government is elected by the people…Ideally, the society should have a control mechanism because they're the one that chose [the government]…But the problem is that these political parties are not oriented toward the aspirations of society, but in forwarding their own interests. Hence, people don't have enough trust to issue a complaint through the institution that's supposed to hold the government accountable.

"

A female leader in Islam is clearly forbidden. Haram. If we let this nation, which has a majority of Muslims, violate Allah's provisions, then do not expect this nation to succeed."

- Member of a conservative Islamic organization, Bogor

A participant from a moderate Islamic organization in Bandung said that government officials are quick to address problems that fit their political interests. "If your concern is in line with the concern of the government, it'll be quick, easy, no need to go through the bureaucracy and all that. But if your concern is on opposite ends, you quarrel. It's a bit hard usually." A participant from a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said, "We are confused…where we should complain. When contacting the members of the House of Representatives…everything is difficult…We face difficulty when conveying complaints." Another participant from the same group said, "The mayor's staff should report to the mayor incidents in the society, so that public opinion [is heard]…Until now society sees no impact from its complaints."

The youth participants from the university in Bogor discussed expressing grievances through social media and street protests after formal governmental channels fail. A participant said he started with formal complaint mechanisms, but then moved to protest when the situation was not resolved. However, he acknowledged, "Even through protest, [the issue] isn't actually being addressed." Similarly, another participant said she starts with formal petitions to the mayor, but "then we have to go down to the street." Another student said people resort to posting on social media to get the attention of elected officials. The participant explained that the local mayor likes to update his Instagram and other social media platforms, so citizens "give comments on the comment section," sometimes posting pictures of potholes or other public hazards. However, the participant concluded that "this wasn't actually effective. The government is obviously not directly responding."

Finding #4:

Participants from religiously conservative parties, Islamic organizations, and university groups often cited Islam to oppose minorities and women being elected president even while supporting minority religious rights.

Participants from conservative FGDs often opposed minority political rights, even while strongly supporting the religious rights of minorities. When asked about the ability of religious minorities to practice their religion or to criticize Muslim politicians, most participants said they had this right. A participant from a conservative Islamic organization said, "They are allowed to worship freely. We Muslims never bother them. We really appreciate their religion." However, when questioned on the ability of minorities and women to become political leaders, participants from conservative groups were often hostile, generally citing Islam as justification. A conservative Islamic organization member from Bogor said that a minority president is "not allowed, because this is a Muslim majority country... Islam will never allow it because it is in...the teachings of the Quran, which is the word of God." Another member of the same group said, "In all areas where the majority of people are Muslim...it is compulsory to have Muslims as leaders." Yet another conservative Islamic organization member from Bogor said, "Muslims will not be willing to have non-Muslim leaders except in places where the majority is non-Muslim." A conservative university student from Bogor said, "My religion prohibits" minorities becoming president. Another student from the same group said, "In the Quran, there are sayings that the majority should lead."

Many participants were equally skeptical of female leaders. A member from an Islamic party said, "[T]he expansion of women has gone everywhere. Men's jobs are almost all taken away. So, if these are all taken and the president is taken, what do men get to be? Soon it will be the apocalypse." A member of a different Islamic party said women should create male leaders, rather than become leaders: "In my opinion...there is a special role of women that is so noble: to create leaders is the woman's main job." Young participants were also sometimes dismissive of women leaders. A conservative university student from Bogor said, "I agree the president should not be a woman. Why? Because...men are the only ones who deserve to become a president."

Finding #5:

Most participants from conservative Islamic organizations, parties and university organizations said the government should be more Islamic, often citing Islam's orientation toward justice and morality.

Participants from religiously conservative groups generally favored a greater role for Islam in the state and associated religion with better policy outcomes. A member of an Islamic party said, "For me, it should be more Islamic. Because when we speak about Islam, then we will speak about all rights." A member of another Islamic party said, "If only the government is run with Islamic morality, then I'm sure, 100 percent sure, we can more rapidly develop this country." Many young participants were also supportive of more Islamic values in government. A university student in Bogor said, "For me the current government is good enough. But it would be even better if it's more Islamic. As we adopt the laws, the laws should be based on Islam." Another university student in Bogor said, "For an example in Bogor, yesterday there was a rule that the supermarket cannot sell alcoholic drinks. And that's great...No immoral cultures should be freely spread."

Outside of religiously conservative groups, many participants believed the government is already sufficiently Islamic. A member from a nationalist party said, "Regarding values, I think *Pancasila* is already Islamic. What of *Pancasila* is opposed to Islam?" Another member of a nationalist party said, "Even today [Indonesia] is already very Islamic. First, we have a religious court. Second... there are many laws that are actually regulations in Islam." A member of a moderate Islamic organization in Bandung said, "These days there are already a lot of rules that are Islamic. It's just that the implementation is sometimes still far from being Islamic...but that doesn't require Sharia

Islam." Other participants appeared to defend secular government more firmly. A moderate Islamic organization member from Bandung said, "Our founding fathers...did not mean to establish an Islamic state." A conservative student from the university in Bogor said, "For me, just stay with the current one because we are a country with *Pancasila*. The problem with Islam...is intolerance."

ZOOM-IN: OUR ANALYSIS OF THE DRIVERS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST JAVA

The above findings represent potential sources of vulnerability to violent extremism that can help explain rising levels of radicalism in Bandung and Bogor. They indicate the presence of grievances and attitudes that often correspond with rising violent extremism in other contexts. Disillusionment with democratic processes and outcomes is often a crucial condition for anti-system ideologies. Recruiters can draw on poor democratic performance to justify the violent pursuit of alternative systems of governance. The FGD participants' criticism of democracy, policy outcomes, and local governance in Indonesia—as well as the inability of mainstream parties to recognize these grievances—are potential wellsprings of radicalism. In addition, violent extremists often hold regressive social attitudes. Conservative FGD participants' beliefs on the right of minorities and women to become president and the role of religion in state affairs are important indicators of intolerance and anti-pluralism. While these attitudes certainly do not make a person a violent extremist, most violent extremist organizations advocate hardline positions on these issues. Together, these findings do not constitute definitive drivers of violent extremism in Bandung and Bogor, but rather indicate key conditions, grievances and attitudes that could contribute to the problem.

"

For me, democracy is how we express our opinion to the political parties. It gives voice to people that...deserve to be listened to."

- Conservative university student, Bogor

Potential Sources of Resilience to Violent Extremism

The five findings cited above indicate the grievances, conditions and attitudes that are likely contributing to rising violent extremism in Bogor and Bandung. However, FGD participants also expressed constructive and optimistic attitudes that could be drawn upon to counter these drivers. The focus group data show most participants expressed a common and positive definition of democracy and associated positive attributes with key elements of Indonesia's national identity. Ordinary citizens, in particular, supported tolerant and inclusive politics; most participants were opposed to political and religious violence and associated negative characteristics with terrorist organizations; and most participants described the drivers of violent extremism in negative terms. While none of these attitudes represents a necessary or sufficient condition for resilience, these sentiments could constitute important sources of cohesion and peace.

Finding #1:

Participants across the focus groups expressed a common definition of democracy and had positive associations with Indonesia's founder, Sukarno, and the national ideology of *Pancasila*.

Across focus groups, most participants expressed robust and positive views of democracy as a political system. A member of a nationalist party said democracy "is a form of government that gives space for the public to... channel their aspirations, so that the government can decide its policies in accordance with the aspirations evolving in society." A member of an Islamic party said, "In the simple definition of Abraham Lincoln, [democracy is] government of the people, by the people, for the people." A participant from the NU said, "In my opinion, democracy is a system of decision making that involves society... in the decision making process of a state." A participant from Muhammadiyah said, "I understand democracy as the equality of society to participate, which encompasses equality to access and also politics." A citizen from Bogor said, "In my opinion democracy [exists] as long as we can express our opinion in this country freely and responsibly." In addition to these common definitions of democracy, most participants were unified in their positive views of Sukarno, the country's founder, and *Pancasila*, Indonesia's founding ideology. When asked what qualities they associate with Sukarno, participants' reactions included "amazing," "patriotic," "very wise," "our hero," and "the nation's strength" (among other positive responses). When asked about *Pancasila*, participants expressed various positive attributes, such as "nation's principle," "incredible," "justice" and "belief in God."

Finding #2:

Among potentially vulnerable groups, ordinary citizens were more likely to support minority and women's political rights, favor greater tolerance, oppose the government becoming more Islamic, and praise President Jokowi and former Jakarta governor Ahok.

In contrast to Islamic organizations, parties and university students, participants from the ordinary citizen group in Bogor advocated more tolerant and inclusive politics. Regarding women leaders, one participant said, "We believe that government is from God. So, God wills a woman leader sometimes. Nothing happens accidentally." Another participant said that a minority president is "totally allowed, but in reality, it is not. Ahok is a minority, not only in terms of ethnicity but also religion... He is said to be an outsider. But in the Constitution, he is an Indonesian citizen and has all rights and obligations as legal subjects." Many ordinary citizens also lamented the growing tensions surrounding Indonesia's Islamic identity. A citizen from Bogor said, "Our country...should be tolerant, especially with religious issues. It is a bit annoying because we know that our country does not belong to one race or religion or tribe."

When asked if the government should be more Islamic, ordinary citizens expressed a more consistent opposition to Islamic government than conservative groups. One participant said, "I think Islamic government will eventually cause conflict. In Indonesia, Islam is not the only religion. There are about five religions. What would be the role of Islamic government? Suppose that in Islam, women should wear a veil. But not all Muslim girls wear a veil." Another participant agreed that Islam is more than a set of restrictions: "There is Islam and there is Islamic. Actually, the current government is right. A person can be a good Muslim not just because she is veiled or is dressed like an Arab. It is also how she behaves, respects one another, loves each other, and has been taught." Another participant argued, "In my opinion, the government should not be Islamic. If you want to be Islamic...you can do that with your own attitude."

Ordinary citizens were also more consistently and openly laudatory of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and former Jakarta governor Ahok—a Christian who was jailed for blasphemy charges in 2017. When asked which word they associated with Jokowi, ordinary citizens said "justice," "down to earth," "close to the citizens," "respected by the citizens," "leader," "close to the community," "great"

and "religious." Jokowi's critics in other groups called him "simple," a "village person," and "weak." Furthermore, ordinary citizens were more likely than other groups to say they would vote for Jokowi in the upcoming election. Participants across other groups were more likely to refuse to answer, or to say they would vote for Prabowo Subianto. Similarly, ordinary citizens were more likely than others to describe Ahok in positive terms, often calling him "assertive," "brave" and "tough." In contrast, a conservative university student said Ahok was a gift to Islamist movements because he gave an otherwise disparate group of organizations a common enemy and a rallying cry.

Finding #3:

Most participants were opposed to violence in all cases and associated ISIS and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) with negative characteristics. However, a small group of participants believed violence was justified when defending Islam or political positions.

Across focus groups, most participants were opposed to the use of violence for political purposes. Participants from both nationalist and Islamic parties criticized violence. A member of a nationalist party said, "There should be no violence...in defending political goals." A participant from an Islamic party in Bandung said, "In politics, I never tolerate...violence." Citizens were also opposed to violence. A citizen from Bogor said, "For me [violence] is not allowed...for political purposes." Another citizen from Bogor said, "In my opinion, in any context, the use of violence...is not allowed." Yet another citizen from the same area said, "For any kind of purpose, violence is not right. In Islam, it is taught not to do any violence." A member of a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said, "Physical violence in any form—for either religion or politics—is not justified." However, a dissenter from an Islamic party asked, "Regarding violence for political purposes...I want to ask whether there is any defense of political objectives that is without violence?"

Most participants were opposed to using violence to defend Islam. A citizen from Bogor distinguished between historical Islamic contexts and contemporary Indonesia: "In ancient times, perhaps Muslims defended themselves with war. But...our county is not an Islamic country, meaning, we are a democratic country and a *Pancasila* state. Violence is not necessary." Speaking about a recent religious protest that turned violent, another citizen from Bogor said, "In my personal opinion, it means they...tarnished their own religion. Because they know that religious teachings prohibit violence." A member of a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said, "Everything must be carried out with the wisdom of the representatives of the people. Why does violence happen? Because the wisdom of the representatives of the people is not applied." A smaller group of participants said violence could be used if attacked. A member of an Islamic party said, "For me... defending Islam does not necessarily need violence. But... violence can be used when we are attacked...violence is the last resort, and only then."

In addition, all participants associated ISIS and JI with negative characteristics. In relation to ISIS, participants used terms such as "threat," "American game," "terrorist," "racist," "radical," "violence," "common enemy" and "destroyer." Regarding JI, participants said that the group had an inadequate understanding of Islam, is a bad "match" for Indonesia, and "should not be in Indonesia."

However, a smaller group of FGD participants supported religious violence (this group was larger than the minority that supported violence for political purposes). A citizen from Bogor said, "We must defend religion until death." Another citizen from Bogor said, "Do not say we fight for Islam through words, we do jihad to defend the religion." A member of a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said violence to enforce Sharia is not actually violence: "When a woman recently stole gold...[and] had her hand cut. Is that violence? That is a fair punishment set by Allah." Another participant from a conservative Islamic organization in Bogor said that if Muslims do not act when Islam is insulted, then they "are like living corpses."

Finding #4:

Most conservative university students and ordinary citizens described the drivers of violent extremism in negative terms, often citing a lack of education and opportunity.

Among potentially vulnerable populations, namely ordinary citizens and university students, participants overwhelmingly cited negative reasons for why some Indonesians join terrorist organizations. Many participants said terrorism was linked to poor religious training and general education. An ordinary citizen from Bogor said terrorists were "brainwashed," adding that terrorist recruiters "infiltrate common society—people who don't understand religious teachings—and push their doctrine." Another citizen from Bogor linked terrorism to an Arab interpretation of Islam: "Muslims in Indonesia are not like Muslims in the Arab world. The Islam of Indonesia is different from the Islam of the Arab world."

Conservative university students in Bogor were also critical of extremists' motives and tactics. A university student said terrorists have "narrow understandings" of religion. She continued: "When we ask [radical student groups] why they would bomb, they say, 'because he's an infidel.' The narrowness of the term 'infidel' is actually being used by radicals to influence younger generations and low-educated people." Another student said the term "jihad" was misinterpreted by extremists to mean only war. A different student argued, "For me, the main reason is due to education. Even with a poor economy, if I have a strong education then [extremism] is not a problem." Another student said people join terrorist groups to get paid or for the promise of a wife. One student said radical groups on her campus try to create "distance" between "certain sects of Islam," but the "true Islam is just one. The one that brings peace, justice."

ZOOM-IN: OUR ANALYSIS OF RESILIENCE TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST JAVA

The above findings constitute potential sources of resilience to violent extremism in Bogor and Bandung. They indicate the presence of social cohesion around key issues and nonviolent attitudes that could be utilized to counter radicalism.

The positive definitions of democracy and views of Sukarno and *Pancasila* suggest a robust and persistent dedication to the country's democratic character. Additionally, many ordinary citizens supported Jokowi's re-election and admired Ahok. This represents a potential countervailing force to anti-system ideologues who try to criticize democracy in order to recruit and mobilize.

However, the depth of some participants' dedication to Sukarno and *Pancasila* is unclear. The moderate views of conservative Islamic organizations on these topics might represent a form of strategic moderation designed to gain public acceptance. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how genuine conservative FGD participants were in their support for Sukarno and *Pancasila*. Nevertheless, their responses indicate that openly radical views are not palatable to mainstream Indonesian society.

Participants' critical attitudes toward violence, ISIS and JI showcase a general predisposition toward nonviolence that can be wielded to marginalize radical groups. Additionally, a lack of sympathy for extremism can be inferred from participants' description of its drivers. The participants identified poverty, miseducation and lack of religious knowledge as causes of extremism, which implies negative attitudes toward extremists themselves. These resilient attitudes toward democracy, nonviolence and extremism complement Indonesia's cultural diversity, which has historically undermined monolithic interpretations of religion in the country's sprawling archipelago. The strongly syncretic and pluralistic character of Islam at the local level in Indonesia could prove to be the foundation of resilience to violent extremism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations listed below are designed to address the vulnerabilities and societal grievances identified in the focus group discussions. They do not directly correlate with the suggested solutions mentioned in the FGDs, but those suggestions were taken into account. IRI also drew on past and existing projects in Indonesia, relationships with Indonesian stakeholders and practitioners, and overall country knowledge. These recommendations are intended for national and local government officials, as well as domestic and international implementers.

1 ▍ *Recommendation 1:*
Political parties should develop and highlight positions that promote more tolerant and inclusive policies in West Java.

The consensus around the tenets of *Pancasila* should serve as an entry point through which political parties formulate policies that promote tolerance and inclusion.

2 ▍ *Recommendation 2:*
National religious organizations should lead efforts to promote positive expressions of Islam.

Organizations like the NU and Muhammadiyah already promote positive, nonviolent expressions of Islam that resonate in Indonesian society. These national religious organizations should work with both religious and non-religious civil society organizations to better unite the religious and non-religious community around a common Indonesian identity.

3 ▍ *Recommendation 3:*
Civil society actors should supplement ineffective and unresponsive local government actors.

While not all local government actors are inaccessible to the general population, there is a perception that local government officials are corrupt and self-serving. Civil society organizations could help to bridge this gap in West Java by serving as advocates for marginalized communities to engage with local government.

4 ▶ *Recommendation 4:*
National and local government officials should work together to reassure citizens that shifts in public affairs will not necessarily threaten personal practices.

The FGD data suggest that Indonesians in West Java feel personally threatened when certain decisions are made or trends emerge in the public sphere. Indonesians need to be reassured that certain personal beliefs and practices—namely, those consistent with the principles of *Pancasila* and the Indonesian Constitution—are protected. By clearly explaining the limitations of certain policies, the Indonesian government could help mitigate the fears many citizens feel about the erosion of their freedom to practice their personal beliefs in a peaceful, democratic manner.

5 ▶ *Recommendation 5:*
Community-based organizations and religious organizations should work together to promote social cohesion.

Given that the FGD data suggest that Indonesians in West Java and elsewhere feel that their government and country are moving in the opposite direction to their personal beliefs, they have begun to disengage from mainstream society in favor of alternative communities—including violent extremist organizations or bodies that contribute to social tensions. Community-based organizations and religious organizations with local buy-in and shared goals should unite to foster societal cohesion—tapping their networks to develop initiatives that integrate vulnerable populations into the social fabric in West Java.

6 ▶ *Recommendation 6:*
The local government should work with civil society to fund and support efforts to create space for young Indonesians to ask questions and debate controversial policies.

The FGD data indicates that young Indonesians are often confronted with challenges to their national and religious identity. A social environment that does not give them the space to express these concerns or help guide productive conversations and responses will increase the vulnerability of young Indonesians to radical and even violent ideologies. Local government officials should lead the effort to fund CSO-run programs that give young people the space and mentors they need to express grievances in a productive, nonviolent way.

7 ▶ *Recommendation 7:*
Local elected officials and CSOs in Bandung and Bogor should build upon the identified potential sources of resilience to violent extremism to develop P/CVE programs.

There are many citizens, organizations and even political parties who support or actively promote policies that guarantee the free, peaceful expression of belief. These actors should not only be encouraged but sought out by local policymakers to develop and promote resilience efforts at the community level. A whole-of-society approach is essential to any effective and sustainable P/CVE effort.

8 ▶ *Recommendation 8:*
National and local government officials should cooperate in order to more effectively implement P/CVE efforts more effectively.

The BNPT and other national government agencies should work with local actors such as the FKPT, the ministries of religion and education, and local governments to develop and implement policies that address societal grievances and better integrate vulnerable populations into society.