

POLICY NOTE

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HOPES AND HURDLES FOR INDONESIA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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SOUTHEAST ASIA SERIES

"Indonesia has almost 20 years of experience with initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE)."

FAST FACTS

- 2018 amendments to Indonesia's anti-terrorism legislation are now supplemented by a national action plan to prevent violent extremism, established by presidential regulation in January 2021.
- The plan aims to improve coordination, multi-stakeholder input, and data collection methods. Ideally, it will also lead to a decentralization of P/CVE policy and programming through the facilitation of working relationships between local governments and civil society organizations.
- Public debate and uncertainty over key concepts suggest a need for Indonesian academic research funding to better understand the current drivers of radicalization to violence in different parts of the country.
- Coordinating the myriad stakeholders may be the plan's most challenging task, as contending priorities, ambiguity over the underlying risk factors, and the possibility of institutional competition are potential obstacles to collaboration.

Context

Indonesia has almost 20 years of experience with initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE). Following the 2002 Bali bombings, police developed what came to be known as the nation's soft approach to counterterrorism.¹ From the mid-2000s, officers attempted to cultivate relationships with detained terrorism suspects, incentivizing engagement through favorable treatment and support for their families.² Government efforts soon grew more ambitious with an emphasis on ideological discussion and promoting the

¹ Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek, *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), 107, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND MG1053.pdf.

² International Crisis Group, "'Deradicalisation' and Indonesian Prisons," November 19, 2009, 13, https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/deradicalisation-and-indonesian-prisons.

nation's founding state philosophy of Pancasila.3 Much of this revised approach was associated with the establishment of a national counterterrorism agency in 2010. Primarily tasked with policy development and coordination, Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) also spearheaded the government's P/CVE programs.

The new agency presided over a downturn in terrorist activity through its first few years. The picture changed rapidly with the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, which rejuvenated militants throughout Indonesia.⁴ Amid a string of attacks and failed plots, the nation suffered a shocking month in May 2018, when a deadly riot in a police cellblock housing terror suspects was followed by suicide attacks on three churches by extremists with children in tow. 5 Stalled amendments to the nation's 2003 anti-terrorism legislation were pushed through in the wake of these tragedies, which extended powers of investigation, opened avenues for prosecution, and clarified BNPT's role as the lead agency in formulating and implementing prevention programming.⁶ In January 2021, a supplementary national action plan to prevent violent extremism was instituted by a 121page presidential regulation, after three years of consultations and preparation.⁷

The ambitious strategy (known by its Indonesian acronym, RAN PE)8 could decentralize P/CVE programming in Indonesia, facilitate the formalization of working relationships between civil society organizations and local government authorities, mainstream gender perspectives, and streamline activities to improve targeting and avoid overlap. But constructive outcomes will depend on overcoming thorny obstacles, such as coordinating the varied interests, motivations, and capacities of the many stakeholders involved, and allaying concerns over applicable definitions which some perceive as overly broad and possibly divisive.

This Policy Note will outline the plan's key details before discussing the evident challenges and opportunities moving forward. Analysis is partly informed by several informal discussions with Indonesian government officials and civil society practitioners in late 2021 and early 2022.

³ Sandro Gatra, "Ada Napi Terorisme Tak Akui Pancasila," Kompas, July 30, 2013, https://nasional.kompas.com/ read/2013/07/30/2227177/Masih.Ada.Napi.Terorisme.Tak.Akui.Pancasila.

⁴ See: Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, ""The Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia," IPAC Report No. 13, September 24, 2014, http://www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/30/The-Evolution-of-ISIS-in-Indonesia.

Agustinus Beo Da Costa, "Islamist prisoners kill five Indonesian counter-terrorism police," Reuters, May 9, 2018, https://www. reuters.com/article/uk-indonesia-security-idUKKBN1I92RO; Devianti Fardidz, Euan McKirdy, and Eliza Mackintosh, "Three families were behind the ISIS-inspired bombings in Indonesia's Surabaya, police said," CNN, May 15, 2018, https://edition. cnn.com/2018/05/13/asia/indonesia-attacks-surabaya-intl/index.html.

⁶ Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 5/2018 tentang Perubahan atas Undang-Undang Nomor 15/2003 tentang Penetapan Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang Nomor 1/2002 tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme Menjadi Undang-Undang, June 21, 2018, https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/82689/uu-no-5-tahun-2018.

Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 7/2021 tentang Rencana Aksi Nasional Pencegahan dan Penanggulangan Ekstremisme Berbasis Kekerasan yang Mengarah pada Terorisme Tahun 2020-2024, January 6, 2021, https://peraturan.bpk. go.id/Home/Details/157948/perpres-no-7-tahun-2021.

The full name is: The National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism that Leads to Terrorism (Rencana Aksi Nasional Pencegahan dan Penanggulangan Ekstremisme Berbasis Kekerasan yang Mengarah pada Terorisme).

Relevance to policy and practice

How is the plan structured?

RAN PE is described as a "living document" with an initial implementation phase of four years, between 2020 and 2024.9 A central goal is to facilitate input and collaboration across government and potentially (but not necessarily) with civil society organizations. Further stated targets are the improvement of data collection and monitoring methods, and the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of P/CVE. The initial strategy for realizing the plan's broad goals is outlined by three pillars, which more or less resemble BNPT's three divisions (known as deputies). Several sub-focus points then sketch out ambitions in more detail:

- Pillar One deals with preparedness, counter-radicalization, and de-radicalization, with eight sub-focus points encompassing issues such as target hardening, prison programs, reintegration assistance, community policing, youth radicalization, and promoting resilience among vulnerable sections of society.
- Pillar Two involves law enforcement coordination, witness and victim protection, and legislative oversight. Its five sub-focus points also cover terrorist financing and the harmonization of relevant legal mechanisms and regulations.
- Pillar Three is concerned with international partnerships and capacity building, which are detailed in two sub-focus points.

Notably, RAN PE includes no mention of repatriating Indonesian nationals who have been involved in violent extremist activity abroad. Head of BNPT, Boy Rafli Amar has asserted RAN PE is "more about preventive and preemptive efforts" to resist radicalization. 10 Yet pillar one covers deradicalization outside (after) prison, which is a similar venture to that of addressing returnees. The Indonesian government announced in early 2020 that it would not repatriate its citizens from the displacement camps in northeast Syria. Ignoring the issue today involves dire humanitarian consequences in the present and conceivably dangerous security implications for the future. 11

Who are RAN PE's leading actors?

At the heart of the plan is a Joint Secretariat that is chaired by the head of BNPT and comprises representatives from five ministries: Political, Legal, and Security Affairs; Development and Cultural Affairs; National Development Planning; Home Affairs; and Foreign Affairs. The secretariat will take responsibility for ensuring coordination and evaluating progress, as outlined through reporting mechanisms. While it is unclear whether the plan will ultimately amount to an all-ofsociety approach, it is certainly aiming to be all-of-government, with around 40 state institutions

Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 7/2021 Tentang Rencana Aksi Nasional Pencegahan dan Penanggulangan Ekstremisme Berbasis Kekerasan yang Mengarah pada Terorisme Tahun 2020-2024, January 6, 2021, https://peraturan.bpk. go.id/Home/Details/82689/uu-no-5-tahun-2018.

¹⁰ Devina Halim, "Kepala BNPT: 1.250 WNI Berangkat ke Irak dan Suriah karena Terpengaruh Radikalisme," February 2021, https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/02/05/21014361/ Kompas, kepala-bnpt-1250-wni-berangkat-ke-irak-dan-suriah-karena-terpengaruh.

¹¹ See: Cameron Sumpter and Chaula Rininta Anindya, "Repatriating Militants: Indonesia's Dilemma and Its Consequences," RSIS Commentary, February 19, 2020, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/cens/repatriating-militants-indonesias-dilemmaand-its-consequences/#.YihDqHpBy5c.

and agencies involved, as well as dozens of regional government bodies. 12

During a period of democratic reform from the late 1990s, Indonesia devolved administrative powers from the central government to several hundred regencies and municipalities, largely bypassing the nation's (now) 34 provincial governments. 13 Indonesia's national action plans are generally led by a central government agency with representation at the district (or at least provincial) level of government, which facilitates program implementation and vertical coordination.¹⁴ This is not the case for BNPT, as the agency is limited to relatively ad hoc prevention forums (called FKPT) in 32 of the 34 provinces. 15 Instead, the Ministry of Home Affairs will play an important role with regard to regional government participation in RAN PE. This additional layer of bureaucracy may not be helpful, but it should be mitigated in the near term as the current Minister of Home Affairs is a former Head of BNPT (and previous Chief of the National Police).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) form another crucial piece of the puzzle. Many small CSOs in Indonesia have years of experience with initiatives to prevent violent extremism. But as in other nations, state security agencies and non-governmental practitioners have not always agreed on appropriate prevention strategies. Ultimately, the regulation's wording of CSO involvement was not as explicit as many had envisioned, but practitioners nevertheless appear optimistic about the plan's potential to facilitate their input and ongoing activities.

Potential Challenges

Definitions and ambiguity

The global field of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) is plagued with definitional uncertainty, and broad consensus is most likely unattainable. Indonesia's RAN PE and supporting documents take care to conceptualize the key terms and are clear that violent extremism can involve identities with no religious foundation. But there is still a disconnect between non-violent activism and violent action. While the RAN PE regulation emphasizes that its focus is squarely on convictions that lead to violence, a supplementary publication notes that non-violent extremists still "occupy a priority" of the plan, as they are vulnerable to committing violence. 16 In 2017, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) was legally banned following a fractious period of partisan politics

¹² The precise number of government entities involved is unclear. As with other aspects of the Plan, ultimate participation may be evolving.

¹³ Anwar Nasution, Government Decentralization Program in Indonesia (Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute, 2016), https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/201116/adbi-wp601.pdf.

¹⁴ For example, the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Narcotics Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (RAN P4GN) is led by the National Narcotics Agency (Badan Narkotika Nasional), which has regional offices at the provincial and city/ regency levels of government.

¹⁵ Forum Koordinasi Penanggulangan Terorisme (Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forums) are assemblies of regional representatives comprising retired security officials, clerics, academics, and community leaders who meet semi-regularly for seminars at local hotels and organize events such as school visits.

¹⁶ BNPT, "Tanya Jawab RAN PE Apa Mengapa Bagaimana?," Deputi Bidang Kerja sama Internasional, Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme, April 2021.

that set Islamists in stark opposition to the government's 'pluralist' support base. 17 Any conceptual ambiguity surrounding RAN PE could deepen the divide and generate backlash among certain stakeholders, such as religious conservatives.

Another reason to be cautious about RAN PE's targeting is the apparent lack of identified, contextspecific risk factors and pathways to violence in Indonesia. The plan expressly states the aim is to "address the drivers of violent extremism," but the examples provided under the categories of (1) conducive conditions and structural context and (2) the radicalization process were taken directly from the 2015 UN General Secretary Report on plans of action to prevent violent extremism. 18 The UN's examples are likely common to a range of contexts. RAN PE does go on to state five broad areas identified as "background for the growth and development" of violent extremism in Indonesia, including communal conflict and religious intolerance. 19 However, the reliance on UN content suggests more could be known about the specific factors most relevant to Indonesia and its diverse regions. Prevention programming must be tailored to the particular context.

Community concerns

When the regulation outlining RAN PE was issued in January 2021, commentary and critique focused on definitional uncertainty and unintended consequences. While the action plan ostensibly covers all forms of violent extremism, the leader of one of the nation's largest Islamic organizations highlighted the low base rate of terrorism in Indonesia and expressed concern over the plan's impact on freedom of belief.²⁰ An Islamist political party spokesperson called the Plan "dangerous," claiming it would create mutual suspicion and societal division.²¹ This rhetoric should be interpreted in the context of the polarized party politics of recent years, and the current government's contention with Islamist opponents, but human rights activists have also raised the issue of potentially misusing broadly worded regulations for political purposes.²²

A related but more tangible area of apprehension that received media coverage was RAN PE's promotion of community policing, which was taken by some to mean co-opting community members to spy on each other.²³ Neighborhood-watch-type scenarios can conjure uneasy memories of informants coerced by the military to weed out dissent during the authoritarian

¹⁷ Gregory Fealy, "Jokowi's bungled ban of Hizbut Tahrir," Lowy Institute, July 17, 2017, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/ the-interpreter/jokowi-s-bungled-ban-hizbut-tahrir.

¹⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, December 24, 2015, 7-10, https://www. un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

¹⁹ The RAN PE regulation provides these five broad areas as key factors "among others," but does not elaborate or state whether the identified considerations are based on research.

²⁰ Syifa, "Catatan Sekum PP Muhammadiyah tentang Rencana Aksi Nasional Penanggulangan Ekstremisme Presiden Jokowi," Muhammadiyah, January 25, 2021, https://muhammadiyah.or.id/catatan-sekum-pp-muhammadiyah-tentang-rencana-aksinasional-penanggulangan-ekstremisme-presiden-jokowi/.

^{21 &}quot;PKS Nilai Perpres Ekstremisme Bisa Buat Masyarakat Terbelah," CNN Indonesia, January 21, 2021, https://www.cnnindone- $\underline{sia.com/nasional/20210121150829-32-596711/pks-nilai-perpres-ekstremisme-bisa-buat-masyarakat-terbelah.}$

²² Haris Prabowo, "Perpres Ekstremisme Jokowi Rentan Memicu Aksi Kekerasan Baru," Tirto.id, January 21, 2021, https://tirto. $\underline{id/perpres-ekstremisme-jokowi-rentan-memicu-aksi-kekerasan-baru-f9qw.}$

²³ A. Muh. Ibnu Aquil, "New antiterror policy sparks fears of witch hunt," The Jakarta Post, January 18, 2021, https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2021/01/18/new-antiterror-policy-sparks-fears-of-witch-hunt.html.

Suharto regime of the late 20th century.²⁴ Boy Rafli Amar, head of BNPT, has stressed that RAN PE is firmly grounded in the principles of human rights, and the community policing provisions are simply designed to improve professionalism and build trust.²⁵ Still, the immediacy of public reaction to community partnerships with law enforcement suggests that any co-optation to share information would be harmful, particularly in the context of the current government's broader campaign against Islamist political opponents.

Implementation and coordination

The COVID-19 pandemic most likely delayed the launch of RAN PE, which is slated for an initial implementation period between 2020-2024. Since early 2021, BNPT has been holding implementation meetings with each major stakeholder. These bilateral discussions are considered vital for delineating the relevance of each party's role and the practical aspects of their respective contributions. Coordinating the myriad stakeholders required for an all-of-society approach will likely continue to be the most difficult challenge. The 2018 anti-terrorism amendment legislation has cemented BNPT's role as the lead coordinating agency within the government. But as a relatively young institution, it may not always be easy to ensure that other, much larger state entities all land on the same page.

Some with busy policy portfolios may question why preventing violent extremism should be part of their scope. Others may want to be involved in theory but remain uncertain of the underlying problems requiring attention. After all, violent extremism in Indonesia has a miniscule incidence rate when held up against the array of possible risk factors. P/CVE strategies also compel security agencies and state social service providers to work together closely, which can produce awkward partnerships thanks to differences in organizational culture (and even worldview). Then there is the potential for competition. RAN PE is a presidential regulation, and certain agencies may seek to claim undue credit for collective output when reporting to the executive. The term "sectoral ego" arises quite frequently when discussing intragovernmental affairs with observers in Jakarta.

Greater sensitivity surrounds the potential funding of programs and workflow. The regulation notes that resources will come from the state budget, regional revenue and expenditure budgets, "and/or other legal and non-binding sources in accordance with the provisions of the legislation." In practice, this would involve several funding streams, all of which will have faced considerable pressure during the pandemic. Crucial support will also come from international donor organizations, particularly for CSOs in the field.

Genuine Opportunities

Formalizing relationships and empowering local actors

Despite the possible challenges to implementation outlined above, RAN PE represents a promising

²⁴ See: Joshua Barker, "State of Fear: Controlling the Criminal Contagion in Suharto's New Order," Indonesia 66 (1998): 7-42, https://hdl.handle.net/1813/54156.

^{25 &}quot;Polemik Perpres 7/2021, Warga Jadi Intel Bagi Warga Lainnya?," Kompas, May 27, 2021, https://jeo.kompas.com/polemikperpres-72021-warga-jadi-intel-bagi-warga-lainnya.

plan for streamlining P/CVE activities and potentially transitioning towards more local ownership of programming. Since the national counterterrorism agency was established in 2010, the majority of P/CVE policies and initiatives have been developed and directed from Jakarta. With relevant knowledge and expertise concentrated in the nation's capital, this was probably a necessary initial approach. But P/CVE experiments generally work best when broader strategies are reconfigured to fit specific local contexts.²⁶ RAN PE will ideally facilitate this shift.

Over the past several years, CSOs have approached regency, municipal, and district level government officials and asked to form working partnerships for P/CVE projects, for instance assisting former inmates assimilate with communities after a prison sentence for terrorism offences. Typically, regional officials would recognize the problem but contend (correctly) that national security issues were the central government's remit and that their local administration had neither the funding nor expertise to be involved. Even if this barrier was breached, regional officials would still require the CSO representative to provide an endorsement letter from BNPT, which was not a straightforward process.

RAN PE has changed this dynamic by providing a direct legal basis for projects to proceed. The regulation states that local governments are responsible for implementing RAN PE in their regions. Given the flexibility of determining what this may mean exactly, CSOs with collaborative P/ CVE project plans can help to fulfill local government commitments to RAN PE, provided they have secured a source of funding. This should empower CSOs and build capacity and relevant knowledge among regional administrations.

One prominent CSO contribution to date has been to ensure that RAN PE recognizes that gender is a critical element in determining vulnerabilities and appropriate prevention programming.²⁷ A consortium of Indonesian CSOs called the Working Group on Women and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism negotiated for the plan to integrate the principles of gender mainstreaming, which are reflected in RAN PE's various workstreams.²⁸ This initial success should set the stage for ongoing CSO involvement and collaboration.

Coordinating knowledge management

Another positive development is the formation of a coordination platform known as the Indonesia Knowledge Hub on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (I-KHUB). The hub was formally established in October 2020 as a central mechanism for collating information on P/CVE initiatives conducted and/or funded by Indonesian government agencies and ministries, local governments, donor organizations, Indonesian CSOs, and the private sector.²⁹ I-KHUB will be an impor-

²⁶ See, for example: Eric Rosand, "Communities First: A Blueprint for Organizing and Sustaining a Global Movement Against Violent Extremism," The Prevention Project, December 2016.

^{27 &}quot;Ran PE: Sudahkah Inklusif Perempuan?," Working Group on Women and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism, April 1, 2021, https://womenandcve.id/blog/2021/04/01/ran-pe-sudahkah-inklusif-perempuan/.

^{28 &}quot;Dukung Pengesahan RAN PE, Kepala BNPT Apresiasi Sosialisasi Perpres No. 7 Tahun 2021 dalam Acara Kenduri Perdamaian," BNPT, January 29, 2021, https://web.bnpt.go.id/dukung-pengesahan-ran-pe-kepala-bnpt-apresiasi-sosialisasi-perpres-no-7-tahun-2021-dalam-acara-kenduri-perdamaian.

^{29 &}quot;BNPT Luncurkan I-KHUB on CT/VE, Era Baru Kolaborasi Penanggulangan Terorisme Manfaatkan Teknologi Informasi," BNPT, October 19, 2000, https://www.bnpt.go.id/bnpt-luncurkan-i-khub-on-ctve-era-baru-kolaborasi-penanggulangan-terorismemanfaatkan-teknologi-informasi.

tant means for mapping the many constructive projects in motion, identifying gaps (particularly in areas of concern), and preventing program overlap, which has been an issue among some CSOs in recent years. The online platform also aims to be a springboard for collaboration with international development agencies.³⁰

The designation of RAN PE as a "living document" could be read as incomplete, but P/CVE plans of action are still developing in several nations that have established comparable strategies to date.³¹ The many and varied stakeholders required together with the experimental nature of the associated programs mean that strategies are evolving by default. Success is also hard to quantify given the wide range of variables.³² However, there is emerging consensus that P/CVE initiatives are more likely to be effective if programs are designed, delivered, and managed at the community level.³³ RAN PE appears to have laid important groundwork for this approach in Indonesia.

Recommendations

- International donor organizations should view the new plan of action as a fresh opportunity to support constructive grassroots P/CVE projects involving collaboration between civil society and local governments. As outlined above, RAN PE has facilitated these pivotal working relationships, and given the ongoing pandemic's pressure on resources, programs will require all the financial support they can muster.
- Provincial government plans of action supporting the wider RAN PE strategy are beginning to develop. RAN PE provides a potentially effective overall framework, but to ensure activities are relevant to Indonesia's diverse islands, regions, and urban areas regional governments should develop localized action plans in alignment with the broader RAN PE strategy.
- Government should consider specific research grants for Indonesian academics who intend to explore the drivers of violent extremism in certain regions, ideally in collaboration with security agencies who may facilitate access. Comparative studies between different regions that have experienced militant activity could be helpful.
- Some government agencies that expected to be involved in RAN PE seem unclear on the intentions and details of the plan. The BNPT's ongoing coordination meetings are clearly important, and the agency should follow up with guidelines and training seminars to build knowledge and capacity among stakeholders unfamiliar with P/CVE.
- The RAN PE strategy states the need for pilot projects to assess viability and potential effectiveness. Central government agencies have often preferred large-scale programs, such as mass communication campaigns or well-attended events and seminars. Pilot projects should include several small community initiatives with local leadership, specific targeting, and monitoring and evaluation strategies, ideally involving control groups and longitudinal design.

³⁰ See: https://ikhub.id/about-us.

³¹ Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 7/2021 tentang Rencana Aksi Nasional Pencegahan dan Penanggulangan Ekstremisme Berbasis Kekerasan yang Mengarah pada Terorisme Tahun 2020-2024, January 6, 2021, https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/157948/ perpres-no-7-tahun-2021.

³² Georgia Holmer, Peter Bauman, and Kateira Aryaeinejad, Measuring Up: Monitoring and Evaluating P/CVE Programs (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2018), https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/09/measuring-monitoring-and-evaluating-pcve-programs.

³³ See, for example: Eric Rosand, Emily Winterbotham, Michael Jones, and Franziska Praxl-Tabuchl, "A Roadmap to Progress: The State of the Global P/CVE Agenda," The Prevention Project and Royal United Services Institute, September 2018, https://www.eccnetwork.net/sites/default/ files/media/file/GCCS ROADMAP FNL.pdf.

Suggested further reading

On terrorists networks in Indonesia

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