

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

- 1 -

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is a pillar of the United State's strategic approach to counterterrorism, with the key goal to deny terrorism new recruits by reducing sympathy and support for violent extremism. In order to decrease the number of terrorist recruits, the CVE program outlines three lines of effort:

1. building secure and resilient communities where individuals are at-risk for violent extremism;
2. eroding support and legitimacy of violent extremist narratives and messaging; and,
3. building capable and responsive partners in host countries.

RELEASE IN PART B5

The Philippines is a recent participant in the CVE Local Grants Program; 1st participating in 2013 as an Economic Support Fund (ESF) pilot country. Currently, the CT Bureau funds two projects. The CT Bureau is currently funding a project that will allow influential Philippine political figures from Mindanao to participate in a two-week structured study tour in Indonesia to build networks with relevant officials, party leaders, and other civil society experts on de-radicalization and democratic development. Participants will learn how their Indonesian neighbors successfully emerged from conflict and managed to nurture the transformation of an armed insurgent movement into moderate, democratic political parties by integrating countering violent extremism (CVE) messaging and values. The Asia Foundation (TAF) will produce a report directly following this exchange to record how the participants discussed and planned to incorporate CVE messaging and strategies.

In addition, the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines will partner with the Philippine National Police – Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) to develop a university-based Counter-Radicalization campaign designed to undermine and counteract the recruitment efforts of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) and Trans-National Terrorist Groups. The PNP-SAF will promote the many positive facets of law enforcement service and increase their presence on college campuses. Interactions with students, teachers, and staff will help frame the PNP-SAF as a professional organization leading students to recognize the PNP-SAF personnel as role models and career mentors. As a result, students and faculty will become more prone to report misconceptions as well as the recruitment activities of VEOs and terrorist groups.

B5

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

- 2 -

B5

With the increased threat of ISIL messaging and recruitment in East Asia, CVE engagement is more critical and therefore, EAP and CT (as well as other interagency partners) look to partner more closely with the Philippine government and other key stakeholders in the region. While we are seeing Filipino's traveling to Syria and fighting for ISIL, it is unclear if these are domestic workers in the Gulf or those traveling from the Philippines. In addition, we have not seen ISIL exploit the Mindanao conflict for recruiting or messaging purposes. However, we encourage the Philippines with its Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts to include all stakeholders to build community resilience against violent extremism throughout the region. Therefore, immediate and future CVE programming must work with civil society organizations as well as government stakeholders to identify the best approaches to counter violent extremist messaging and recruitment.

A number of Filipino officials and civil society members participated in the November 4-6 Regional Workshop to Counter Violent Extremist Messaging Online. This was a preliminary step for the Philippines to hear best practices from regional counterparts and counter-messaging practitioners as they are significantly farther behind than their Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts. Social media and online forums allow violent extremists to establish relationships, provide violent ideology, and seek sympathy and support for the cause all for a relatively low cost. Governments can and should provide their own narratives that shape identities, relationships, and interactions among peoples and states. While we understand some governments struggle to directly challenge violent extremist messages and assert counter messages as well as provide alternate messages, workshops should continue to share best practices and provide support for the development of counter-messages indigenous to the Philippines.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**RELEASE IN PART B5**

- 1 -

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is a pillar of the United States' strategic approach to counterterrorism, with the key goal to deny terrorism new recruits by reducing sympathy and support for violent extremism. In order to decrease the number of terrorist recruits, the CVE program outlines three lines of effort:

1. building secure and resilient communities where individuals are at-risk for violent extremism;
2. eroding support and legitimacy of violent extremist narratives and messaging; and,
3. building capable and responsive partners in host countries.

The Philippines is a recent participant in the CVE Local Grants Program; 1st participating in 2013 as an Economic Support Fund (ESF) pilot country. Currently, the CT Bureau funds two projects. The CT Bureau is currently funding a project that will allow influential Philippine political figures from Mindanao to participate in a two-week structured study tour in Indonesia to build networks with relevant officials, party leaders, and other civil society experts on de-radicalization and democratic development. Participants will learn how their Indonesian neighbors successfully emerged from conflict and managed to nurture the transformation of an armed insurgent movement into moderate, democratic political parties by integrating countering violent extremism (CVE) messaging and values. The Asia Foundation (TAF) will produce a report directly following this exchange to record how the participants discussed and planned to incorporate CVE messaging and strategies.

In addition, the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines will partner with the Philippine National Police – Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) to develop a university-based Counter-Radicalization campaign designed to undermine and counteract the recruitment efforts of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) and Trans-National Terrorist Groups. The PNP-SAF will promote the many positive facets of law enforcement service and increase their presence on college campuses. Interactions with students, teachers, and staff will help frame the PNP-SAF as a professional organization leading students to recognize the PNP-SAF personnel as role models and career mentors. As a result, students and faculty will become more prone to report misconceptions as well as the recruitment activities of VEOs and terrorist groups.

B5

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

- 2 -

B5

Through a CT Bureau grant to ICCT-The Hague, the Philippines worked with the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) in an effort to apply the Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders.

Through an interagency agreement with OPDAT, the CT Bureau will bring together government and civil society participants from the Philippines (as well as Malaysia and Indonesia) to attend regional training workshops focused on strengthening counter-narratives and counter-messaging capacity in Southeast Asia. Workshops will demonstrate the dangers of online radicalization and recruitment – specifically, how the internet and social media are used to attract foreign fighters from Indonesia and Malaysia to Syria. Workshops will also present relevant approaches and solutions to countering the violent extremist narrative online.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED