Mapping Radicalisation and Violent Extremism in Malaysia

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by: IMAN Research

Executive Summary

As a secular and pluralistic nation, how is Malaysia particularly susceptible to the threat of violent extremism (VE) and what are some of the key drivers that contribute to VE beliefs and tendencies among vulnerable segments of the population? The answers to these pertinent questions can only emerge from an in-depth research and analysis of the local context, and how it is distinctive to VE in other parts of the world.

To better understand this complex and growing phenomenon in the local context, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Malaysia commissioned a study in early 2019 to map radicalisation and VE in Malaysia. The following inquiry was designed to specifically research the Malaysian experience with VE in the online and offline spaces, especially amidst the current threat of the Islamic State (ISIS) terror group. Similarly, it aimed to research the available avenues and pockets of population that are conducive to the spread of terrorist propaganda, and also conduct a review of existing mechanisms - laws and policies - that are in place to counter security threats in Malaysia. The ultimate purpose of this study is to inform and assist the conceptualisation of a National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP P/CVE), based on the UN's recommendation for states following a review of its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2015. The following is a breakdown of chapters that form this report, consisting of an in-depth exploration and discussion of four facets of the VE problem in Malaysia.

In **Chapter 1** of this report, the virtual space for VE is dissected by mapping the communications and potential recruitment activities that occur on social media and instant messaging platforms like Youtube, Facebook and Telegram. **Chapter 2** deep dives into two popular subcultures among Malaysian youths - biking and gaming communities - which as previous research has shown, are regarded as 'at-risk' groups that display a propensity towards VE.

Meanwhile, **Chapter 3** is a desk review of the strengths and challenges of the current terrorist rehabilitation programme in Malaysia, in comparison to the rehabilitation models of selected countries. Some weaknesses and criticisms of the Malaysian programme are also brought to the fore via an interview with a family member of a former extremist detainee.

Finally, **Chapter 4** wraps up the report as it considers the findings from the previous chapters in providing a set of viable recommendations towards a National Action Plan on P/CVE - consisting of eight strategic pillars. It is envisaged that the combined findings from this report will inform relevant stakeholders and decision-makers in crafting strategies to achieve community resilience towards VE.

Contents

Report prepared by: *With the help of field facilitators:*

Akil Yunus   ***Tadzrul Adha***

Tharunnia M.S Ganesan   ***Asrin Utong***

Farah Hanip

Background

In the decades since its independence, Malaysia has confronted evolving forms of ideological threats that have largely been enabled by conducive socio-economic and political structures within its society. From the communist insurgency in the 1960s to the recent influence of religiously motivated terror groups like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (ISIS), violent extremism (VE) has been a prominent and constant feature of the Malaysian security landscape. The country has utilised a number of laws such as the now abolished Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA) and most recently the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA) to deal with subversive elements within its borders. To a significant extent, these preventive laws coupled with stringent counter-terrorism policing have managed to keep Malaysia free of any deadly attacks, even as its neighbours Indonesia and the Philippines grapple with a resurgence in terrorist violence. The 2017 siege of Marawi by ISIS-linked insurgents in the Philippines and a spate of recent suicide bombings across Indonesia are clear warning signs that the region is fast turning into a hotbed for VE activity.

Within this backdrop, Malaysia has had to remain vigilant and step up its surveillance activities against those suspected of promoting VE ideology and supporting local terrorist cells. The country is already known to be a popular transit point for would-be terrorists looking to link up with existing networks in neighbouring countries, made possible primarily due to lenient immigration laws against the entry of certain foreign nationals[1]. Many of these foreigners use Malaysia as a base to plan attacks and recruit local followers. Meanwhile, the country's relative peacefulness by no means implies that it is safe from an impending attack. Since 2013, the police have foiled at least 25 terror plots and arrested some 74 individuals in the process[2]. In April 2019 alone, Malaysian police detained 12 people for planning attacks on non-Muslim places or worship, politicians, and public spaces in Kuala Lumpur[3]. Another potential weak spot is eastern Sabah - with its porous borders and geographical proximity to southern Philippines via the treacherous Sulu Sea, it is a prime location for terrorist activity. The notorious Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which is affiliated to ISIS, is well-known in these parts for conducting kidnap-for-ransom activities that target fishermen and tourists[4].

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[1] https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/11/05/malaysia-remains-transit-hub-for-terrorists-due-to-visa-free-travel-says-bukit-aman

[2] https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/10/02/police-have-thwarted-25-terrorist-attacks-since-2013

[3] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/26/malaysian-police-arrest-12-people-isis-links

[4] https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/03/12/report-abu-sayyaf-kidnap-for-ransom-group-eyeing-targets-in-sabah/1731628

Apart from the threat of physical attacks, governments also have to contend with a more immediate concern: the proliferation of violent extremist propaganda in cyberspace. Unlike its predecessors, ISIS has mastered the use of social media to disseminate its ideology and recruit followers to its cause. Applications like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube serve as effective conduits because they are vast domains that are difficult to regulate. Although tech giants have been ramping up efforts to weed out VE content[5], balancing between online freedoms and active incitement to violence is a slippery slope they have yet to conquer. Many Malaysians arrested for supporting ISIS were radicalised online and subsequently recruited by the group's operatives. The recruiters' *modus operandi* typically involves scouring these pages to identify individuals who exhibit solidarity with injustices against Muslims and display a strong hatred for Western powers. Once initial contact has been made and reciprocated with interest, the interactions often switch to more secure offline channels like Telegram to avoid detection. Virtual VE networks pose a serious challenge to counter-terrorism capabilities as they transcend borders, and in Southeast Asia for instance, this has enabled ISIS to unite its followers from across the region under a common 'caliphate'.

Southeast Asia as a new stronghold is an appealing proposition for ISIS because the region shares geo-political characteristics: porous borders, unstable governments, history of VE plus existing terror networks, and growing disenfrachisement among the Muslim population[6]. The latter in particular is crucial to understanding why there has been a spike in receptiveness towards VE ideology. In Malaysia, extremist behaviour has intersected with struggles over identity and the issues of race and religion, especially among youths. There is also growing discontent among the majority Malay Muslims over what they perceive to be an erosion of their rights and privileges, and the new Pakatan Harapan (PH) government's purported friendliness towards non-Muslims communities and minorities like the LGBTQ population. The pushback against the government's decision to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), coupled with the riots that erupted at a Hindu temple in Seafield, Selangor, have signalled a boiling over of racial and religious tensions. Young Malay Muslims in particular have responded to these socio-cultural threats to their livelihood by turning back towards religion, which they view as the solution. In turn, these sentiments have been exploited by ISIS to expand its following among locals[7]. A baseline study on youth and radicalisation in

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[5] https://www.thestar.com.my/tech/tech-news/2019/09/24/tech-giants-beef-up-body-to-fight-extremist-content

[6] https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/islamic-state-terrorism-extremism-eyes-southeast-asia-11199586

[7] https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3010061/islamic-state-wolf-pack-malaysia-planned-wave-terror

2018 found that 10% of youths from Selangor and Sabah supported VE or considered it to be justified[8], affirming a previous Pew Research Centre survey in 2015 that found 11% of Malaysians held favourable views of ISIS. If left unaddressed, these deep-seated grievances could be further manipulated by VE groups to inspire attacks on Malaysian soil.

Despite the loss of its territorial strongholds in the Middle East and the recent killing of its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi by US troops, ISIS continues to endure. Its global member base has not dissipated overnight, with many of them looking to return to their home countries or identifying new battlegrounds to continue their violent *jihad* (struggle). Like other countries, Malaysia faces a dilemma in dealing with dozens of citizens who wish to return home as they are currently stranded in detention or refugee camps in Syria[9]. Many of those hoping to return consist of women (ISIS widows) and children, and while the government is open to having them back, how it will effectively deradicalise and reintegrate them into society is less clear. Public opinion over the return of these individuals is divided - on the one hand, it would offer them a second lease on life while allowing the police to interrogate them for valuable intelligence on ISIS operations. At the same time, however, they remain a high-level security risk if released back into society, given that many of them retain their radical beliefs. Existingly, Malaysia's preventive laws against terrorism includes a comprehensive deradicalisation program for radical detainees, which combines religious re-education with a series of psychological assessments that prepare them for life after prison. Government officials claim that the program has registered a 97% success rate[10], though the actual figure is debatable due to a lack of empirically proven methods to measure rates of recidivism. The details of how the impending batch of returnees will be handled remains unclear, although Malaysian police had previously said that they would be put through some form of rehabilitation prior to being released.

The VE threat landscape in Malaysia continues to evolve at an exponential rate and will require innovative and holistic solutions if it is to be tackled effectively. In particular, there is a need to further study local VE drivers and how they correspond to the overarching appeal of groups like ISIS so that sound preventive measures can be implemented to address the problem at its roots. A starting point for Malaysia in this regard would be to finalise the National Action Plan (NAP) on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE), which is long overdue. The idea for an NAP in Malaysia was first mooted in 2016, in line with the UN's call for all member states

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[8] https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/01/24/study-is-violent-extremism-justifiable-one-in-10-malaysian-youths-think-so/1715920
[9] https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/10/13/cops-40-malaysians-held-in-syria-seeking-to-return-home
[10] https://www.thesundaily.my/local/97-success-rate-for-malaysia-s-deradicalisation-programme-says-nga-FX1437250

to step up their fight against terrorism. However, to date Malaysia is still in the midst of developing its own version of the plan, while its Southeast Asian neighbours Indonesia and the Philippines introduced theirs in 2018. The NAP will encompass a 'whole-of-society' approach that combines traditional counter-terrorism initiatives with systematic preventive measures that directly address VE drivers[11]. It is hoped that the insights, findings, and recommendations shared within this report will be beneficial to policymakers and assist them in expediting this process.

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[11] https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/08/27/519-terror-suspects-held

1. Digital Mapping of Violent Extremist Communications, Online Communities and Recruitment in Malaysia

1.1 Introduction

As of July 2019, Malaysian authorities have arrested 519 individuals on suspicion of terrorism and related activities linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)[1]. Among those arrested include would-be militants and funders who engaged in recruitment, training, funding and transportation for ISIS. While fortunate to have avoided any large scale acts of terrorism except for one minor incident in 2016[2], the country serves as a hotbed for terrorism activities with numerous international terrorist attacks being linked back in some way or form to Malaysia; prominent terrorists are from Malaysia[3], those involved have either travelled to Malaysia before, while others have sourced for funding from Malaysia in some form. Terrorist organisations have also permeated the online space, with ISIS being particularly well-known for successfully leveraging social media to spread its propaganda. In response, the Malaysian government says it has shut down more than 250 social media accounts that promote terrorism or extremist content.

The following mapping exercise was conducted to further understand Internet-based terrorist communication and recruitment activities in Malaysia, especially on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, as well as instant messaging platforms like Telegram. With the increase in terror-related arrests in recent years, it seemed prudent and timely to examine how these groups operate in the public online domain, their recruitment campaigns, and understanding the methods they employ to attract local followers to their cause.

Global trends

The Internet by nature is an open market for global terrorist recruitment, with various terrorist organisations operating public accounts that display clear links and affiliations to terrorist activities and organisations. These organisations and their well-known personalities own Twitter, Facebook and even YouTube accounts which they utilise to post everything from statements on global terrorist activities, recruitment posts, and even mundane posts about everyday life that would be of interest to their followers.

Due to rising criticism from governments and the public, tech companies operating these online platforms slowly began clamping down on such accounts to curb the

spread of extremist propaganda. The turning point was when Twitter (which was seen as the most prominent tool for terrorist recruitment) finally began taking down terrorist related accounts in 2015[4]. Since then, they have succeeded in removing over a million accounts as terror groups still attempt to use various methods to leverage the public nature of this platform for recruitment[5]. Most social media platforms have since been working around the clock to shut their doors to terrorist content. Consequently, these groups have been forced to find more covert ways to circumvent the latest cybersecurity measures.

Without a public focal point that can be used to distribute and serve as an attraction point for would-be supporters, terror groups required a stealthier approach. Open recruitment and propaganda are no longer viable options as these accounts are quickly removed and exposes its creators to detection by authorities.

1.2 The Social Conversion Funnel

In a report jointly prepared by The Asia Foundation and Rappler on terrorist social media messaging in the Philippines[6], they defined the Social Conversion Funnel as the new means for which terrorist recruitment is conducted in public spaces now. This approach divides the recruitment process into several stages designed to both avoid detection and to subtly plant extremist ideologies into unsuspecting victims. Each stage of the funnel is designed to slowly integrate and acclimatise new recruits towards the terror group's ideals and goals which culminates in them being fully indoctrinated into the organisation by the end (see Fig 1).
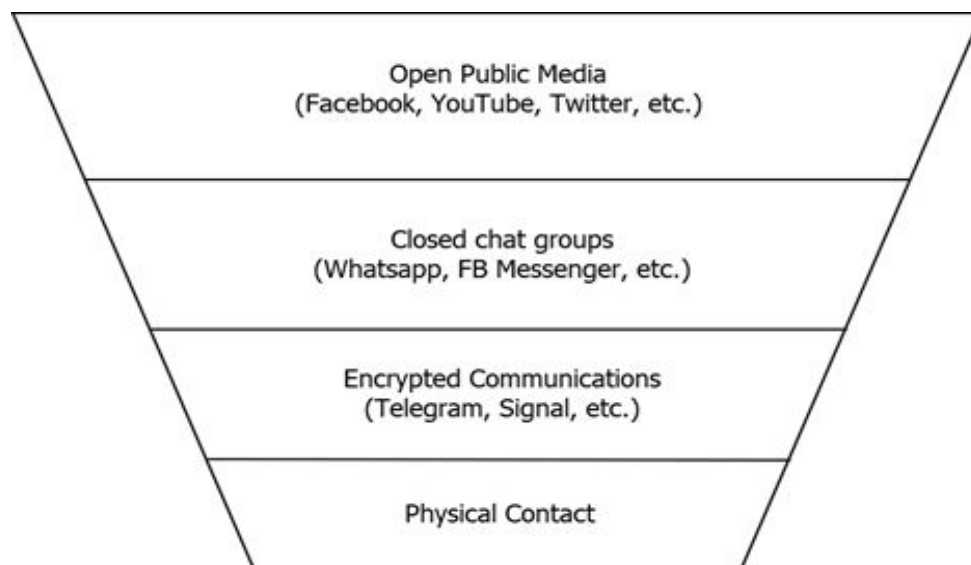
Fig 1: Social conversion funnel for terrorist recruitment

This structured approach is divided into four main phases: Open Public Media (OPM), Closed-chat groups, Encrypted Communications and Physical Contact. First,

it is the use of open and public media sites. As these sites are being monitored by authorities, terror recruiters employ various strategies to still spread their ideologies. They would generally promote ideologies that are closely related to their terror organisation's own views. These views are presented in very general and non-specific terms in order to draw in sympathisers and curious observers. Some of the issues include alternative Islamic teachings, anti-Western rhetoric and Middle Eastern conflicts. These issues are used as a catalyst to trigger discussions among the public about 'bigger' ideas. Through these messages by the main account and other confederate users, they create a false impression of "public" support over an issue in an attempt to lull casual visitors into believing that these points of views are genuinely popular and held by other real people. As the visitors start to question and learn more about these alternative teachings, the accounts controlled by violent extremist personalities start to communicate with these users to answer their questions and provide them with more in-depth teachings. Given enough encouragement and interaction, these potential recruits start to buy into the ideology being propagated and then get herded into the next phase.

The next phase involves would-be recruits being invited to join closed chat groups with other followers. Many of the 'other' users here are largely like-minded terrorists or proxies of the recruiters who are tasked with cultivating a social in-group that normalises terrorist ideals and values. Through open discussions and groupthink dynamics, the potential recruits will begin to feel that these alternative views are not as radical as they once appeared to be and slowly accept them as reality. Once fully indoctrinated, the recruiter will switch to a more secure, private communication channel and start discussing the individual's role within the terrorist group and how they can contribute. Given enough time, physical contact is made, whereby the potential recruit finally becomes an active member of the terrorist organisation.

1.3 Mapping Online VE Activity

Preliminary research

This digital mapping exercise was conducted through a collaboration between IMAN Research and the Counter Terrorism Division (E8) of the Royal Malaysia Police's Special Branch, together with the generous support of UNDP Malaysia. Over the years, and especially in the face of resurgent terrorist threats, the E8 has been conducting comprehensive surveillance and monitoring of public and online spaces for signs of terrorist activity, often with great success. The findings of this present report are based on some raw data from social media sites that the division had collected and updated up to 2016. More recent data could not be disclosed for security reasons.

The E8 also provided information regarding traditional recruitment strategies that were being used by ISIS followers in Malaysia. Mainly, they noted that recruiters often operated an Islamic guide group or community that sought to educate average Muslims about 'true' Islamic teachings and lifestyles. Potential recruits in this case were people who wished to become better Muslims, and as a result would enroll in regularly advertised talks or *usrahs* (study sessions) where participants get to learn more. Once they become regulars, the recruiters start injecting extremist interpretations of Islamic values into these teachings. This is meant to prime the participants to accept different interpretations of Islam, which is then exploited to prepare them to embrace more extremist views down the line. The police say this approach has been highly effective at indoctrinating potential recruits into becoming diehard violent extremists. As the incorporation of extremist views and ideals is both subtle and organic, the indoctrinated become enthralled with these extremist teachings, thereby considering it to represent the real Islam and a requirement for being a faithful and pious Muslim.

With this information, it was posited that a similar approach is also employed for Internet-based recruitment. For instance, it can be said that many of the approaches used in physical spaces would be replicated in the OPM space of the social conversion funnel. Similar to the *usrahs* and Islamic talks, recruiters may also be integrating themselves amongst Islamic teachings or lifestyle-based online groups and communities. As these groups are quite popular in Malaysia, with membership in the tens of thousands, recruiters either create similarly themed groups of their own or infiltrate existing groups to find potential recruits. Additionally, they would also trawl through random social media postings about religion and everyday Muslim living to gauge the conversations being had and identify potentially radical leanings.

As such, this mapping exercise was focused on exploring popular Islamic online content, which usually comprises of interpretations of Islamic values and principles, guidelines to live life as a good Muslim, or discussions of major issues affecting the Muslim world, such as the Israel-Palestinian conflict or the Syrian war. Based on existing trends, it was posited that VE sentiments would likely be hidden or embedded within such discourse, which is otherwise informative and educational in nature.

The data furnished by E8 included several helpful hashtags and websites with direct/indirect links to violent extremist (VE) activity. For this exercise, the hashtags in question served as important keywords for finding VE-related groups and sites in cyberspace. As the list provided by E8 was slightly dated, some keywords were either inactive or no longer relevant. Despite that, there were several active keywords that proved invaluable in finding Islamist groups or related pages of interest.

Analysing VE messaging on social media

The mapping exercise involved diving into social media platforms that are popular among Malaysians, specifically sites and pages that regularly discuss Islamic issues. Since outright terrorist support and recruitment is limited and highly monitored by platforms like Twitter and Facebook, the study opted to focus on finding out which online groups could potentially be OPM spaces for VE recruitment. In examining these potential groups, we also sought to identify keywords that would be useful for tracking trends that may lead to indoctrination and subsequently, recruitment.

The following is an overall analysis of each of these online platforms for VE communications and recruitment in Malaysia, alongside some key insights that would be beneficial for counter-terrorism officials and online regulators to act upon. A more detailed list of potential sites and groups worth monitoring can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B contains a list of potential keywords that are associated with these trends.

i) Twitter

As Twitter began shutting down terror-linked accounts as early as 2015, its function as a terrorist propaganda dissemination and recruitment tool diminished greatly. VE activity on Twitter has also dropped precipitously, at least in terms of outright messaging. Correspondingly, many of the hashtags provided by E8 were either defunct or no longer active. However, it cannot be discounted that terror groups have found subtler ways of reaching out to their followers while circumventing Twitter's regulations and settings.

Meanwhile, hashtags with clear terrorist group names such as #Alqaeda and #AbuSayyaf pulled up predominantly news reports and rarely included non-media tweets. Some hashtags such as #daulahislamiah appeared to have strong prominence in Malaysia and the region in terms of linkage to VE activity, though there was no explicit evidence that the activity itself originated from legitimate pro-VE accounts. There were a handful of accounts that still registered some activity, and some notable ones that are worth observing further are listed in Appendix A.

ii) Websites/Blogs

Unfortunately, the checks conducted on the various websites or blogs that had previously been flagged by E8 yielded little data as most had either been shut down or abandoned by their owners over time. Several that did remain active (see Appendix A) were mainly Indonesian news portals that were dedicated to covering a wide range of topics on Islam. One other website that was accessed during the study

– [Jihadology](#) – appeared to be a propaganda site that was still active and being regularly updated. The site has been blocked by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), but can be bypassed by savvy Internet users.

iii) YouTube

A mix of English and Malay/Indonesian hashtags furnished by E8, such as #daulah #jihad4syria, and #khalifahnusantara led to the discovery of mostly Islamic-based channels that occasionally feature extremist propaganda videos. These videos had limited spread and appeared rather sporadically amongst the more mundane videos within the channel. This suggests that the channels in question may have either been compromised (by hackers who then spammed it with terrorist propaganda videos) or that the channel's operators are interspersing their VE videos with non-extremist content in order to avoid detection by the authorities.

By and large, however, prominent channels featuring VE recruitment messaging or communications were mostly non-existent or had been removed. This could be attributed to YouTube's strengthening of its own regulations in clamping down on VE content, or it could mean that the platform is just not as viable for terrorist recruiters to attract followers, especially since most users who access such content can opt to remain anonymous.

Other keywords such as #jihad and #jihadist also remained active but were linked to more generic activity. There was no clear evidence to indicate that these were being utilised directly by VE recruiters.

iv) Facebook

Due to its own proactiveness in weeding out extremist content and hate speech, Facebook is another social media network that has seen a reduction in active VE support and recruitment in recent years. That said, there is some evidence to suggest that terrorist groups are still covertly using public/private Facebook groups to attract and monitor their followers, while the ideological conditioning and recruitment takes place offline and via more secure channels.

For one, the VE keyword search on Facebook uncovered several public groups that had a large member base but little to no visible posts or public communications. There were several other private groups that displayed similar traits. This raises the possibility that VE organisations may have set up groups and pages that appear inconspicuous so as not to fall foul of Facebook regulations. Simultaneously, they would maintain open lines of communication with their member base through more private domains such as Facebook Messenger and other supported applications.

Another interesting finding from the Facebook keyword search was the discovery of numerous gaming related groups and pages that adopt the names of popular terrorist organisations like Abu Sayyaf and Al-Qaeda. While these groups had no obvious correlation with VE activities, the tendency to use such names does highlight the novelty that is sometimes associated with terrorist groups and even romanticises their brand of violence.

Apart from that, many other keywords that have become synonymous with violent extremist ideology, such as #salafijihadi, #supportjihad, and #supportISIS surprisingly offered up no active or prominent groups with clear ties to terrorist activity, though it did uncover some generic Islamic based groups. The majority of Facebook groups and pages that employed the list of VE keywords provided by E8 were mostly focused on espousing Muslim lifestyles, daily reminders through religious quotes, and interpretations of Islamic teachings.

v) Telegram

A relatively new social communication platform, Telegram's moto is about protecting the identity and data of its users. It is widely considered to be one of the most secure social communication platforms with end-to-end encryption, no data collection from Telegram itself, and the ability to destroy one's own account and remove all traces of it. It is unsurprising, therefore, that this is one of the most popular apps[7] for terrorist organisations to manage their internal communications, and more recently, recruitment activities.

Telegram naturally indicated the strongest activity and potential for VE recruitment. As the service makes it easy to follow specific channels while remaining completely anonymous, individuals are able to subscribe to channels of interest without exposing their identities. In sharp contrast to other social media or instant messaging networks, Telegram users who follow a certain channel may only see how many followers the channel has but cannot check who these followers are. This ensures that Telegram channels can be a secure method of broadcasting messages to large groups of followers anonymously. Since the operators of Telegram place high value in protecting each individual user's personal identity, this makes it an ideal location for disseminating VE related materials.

Within the Malaysian context, there were numerous Islamic based Telegram channels of different languages (Malay/Indonesian, Arabic, English) that drew an extensive following (see Appendix A). Similar to other social media domains, these channels were seemingly harmless in emphasising general Islamic teachings, values and lifestyles to its audience. However, it is through this method that possibly extremist or non-standard values can be spread, which then lead to potential VE recruitment in the future. Of the many channels that had come under the

counter-terrorism division's radar, there were a couple that engaged in the direct distribution of VE recruitment materials, such as the ambiguously labelled *AntiTerrorismResearch-ATR* that was actually a media dump of what appeared to be IS propaganda videos. There was also an Arabic channel on jihad that carried VE propaganda video and audio clips, though checks showed that it had been dormant for several years. On the other side of the spectrum, the keyword search also flagged an anti-Islamic channel called *Otak Udang*, which showcased strongly worded anti-Islamic sentiments.

There were other channels that had not been updated with new content in a while but were maintained to ensure that any interested party could browse and read through its existing posts. Telegram channels are only removed or deleted when their owners have not logged in over a prolonged period, which allows for latent posts to remain indefinitely accessible.

1.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations that can be put forth to assist the authorities in stemming future recruitment activities and the proliferation of sympathiser groups. The reality is that although social media giants are clamping down on public recruitment, the recruiters themselves have found newer and more covert methods to stay one step ahead. Therefore, a key consideration is for tech companies to work with online regulators and law enforcement agencies to step up active monitoring of current trends and allow for better identification of terrorist recruiters and their *modus operandi*. In addition to that, community stakeholders such as local councils, NGOs, and religious institutions also play an important role in improving media literacy and education amongst the Malaysian population – especially the youth – to quash the appeal of VE propaganda. Religious community stakeholders should also become more proactive online and engage more with you as a source of alternative narrative. As mentioned above, online religious discourse and classes seem to be an easy area for potential recruitment online.

Active Monitoring

Using the list of groups from Appendix A and the list of keywords from Appendix B, there needs to be an active monitoring of these groups on a regular basis. These groups are customarily spurred to discuss or react towards major events affecting the Muslim world, while content originating from Malaysia also typically touch upon issues facing the Malay-Muslim majority. Hence, it would be beneficial to regularly monitor such groups and their activities – whether periodically (daily/weekly/monthly) or whenever there is breaking news, so that potential new trends and recruitment

techniques can be identified quickly and easily. This endeavour is undoubtedly labour intensive but with the advances in technology, it can be facilitated using automated or artificial intelligence (AI) software. While human interpretation is crucial to detect potential terror recruitment activity, it can also be a mentally draining affair. The use of technology would help to filter out noise and reduce the physical workload, while maximising monitoring effectiveness.

For the act of monitoring itself, there needs to be a working database in which the team will have to constantly update a list of potential online groups and communities, related keywords and prominent users that appear to be engaging in terror recruitment. The team would perform regular checks of suspected groups and users, examine their posts for potential extremist teachings or embedded terrorist codes for any clues or information, and take note of new keywords or issues that may crop up. With the keywords as a base, the team should also be searching popular media platforms to identify potential new groups or activities that might lead to terrorist recruitment.

More crucially, the monitoring team needs comprise members who are familiar with Islamic teachings and values (i.e. academics and religious preachers) in order to identify potentially dangerous and extremist interpretations of Islam. These members will examine posts of Quranic interpretations and other religious texts to identify potential links or subversive content that can be related back to terror recruitment.

In a nutshell, it is proposed that a social media monitoring team comprising multiple stakeholders needs to be established to conduct the following:

● Monitor the activity of online groups, communities and prominent users on a periodic basis, and implement regulatory measures accordingly.

● Regularly conduct searches of popular online media for the presence of keywords to find potential new groups and communities to monitor.

● Update and maintain a live database of online groups and communities and keywords based on existing monitoring activity.

● Examine posts that present interpretations of Islamic values and teachings to identify the presence of subversive or covert terror propaganda.

Improving media literacy

Media literacy refers to the ability of an individual to evaluate and determine the legitimacy and accuracy of media content that they encounter. Prior to the advent of digital media, media literacy was perhaps not as crucial as most print or broadcast media were thoroughly vetted and approved beforehand to ensure that the content

which is produced is both accurate and reliable. Digital media has significantly blurred the role of these gatekeepers and allowed for a more open and democratised distribution of information. While this means that people have the freedom to search for information on their own, it also exposes them to unscrupulous parties who may spread false and slanderous information to infuriate the masses for their own gain.

Contrary to popular opinion, the solution to this problem is not to impinge further upon freedoms by enforcing censorship or increased government controls. Instead, it is imperative that we educate the general public and equip them with stronger critical thinking capabilities that would enable them to determine if an online group or community is legitimate or harmful. As there are a litany of interpretations when it comes to religious teachings, Malaysians should be taught to refer to multiple sources of information to get a better overall understanding of right and wrong. They should regularly seek out their local religious leaders or elders, preferably outside their immediate social circles, to determine if the ideas they embrace are aligned with universal moral values, or if it risks steering them towards violent extremism (VE). This is by no means an easy feat. It will require state and non-state actors to play a proactive role in improving the media literacy of the Malaysian population, and altogether achieve greater community resilience towards VE.

At the same time, perhaps future studies need to also look into addressing the non-violent aspects of extremism, recently termed as hateful extremism - encompassing behaviours that draw on hostile or supremacist beliefs against others, and which might ultimately lead to violence[8]. This form of extremism, while technically not a crime, is most rampant in cyberspace. However, identifying and regulating such content is less than straightforward as it potentially undermines freedom of expression. As such, further in-depth research is required in tackling this complex problem.

Notes

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[8] Commission for Countering Extremism 2019, '*Challenging Hateful Extremism'*, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/challenging-hateful-extremism.

2. Assessing Violent Extremist Perspectives and Tendencies among 'At-Risk' Youths

2.1 Background

Violent extremism (VE) is becoming increasingly recognised as a major security challenge to the global population and is especially prevalent among young people. Violent extremist movements typically target groups or individuals that display a propensity towards violent behaviour. In the region of the Americas for instance, particularly Latin America, records have shown that 28.7% of the total homicides in the region occur among adolescents aged 10-19 and the highest mortality rates due to homicide mostly occur in young men between the ages of 15 to 24. Some countries with the highest homicide rates among these young males include Columbia, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Brazil, with the crimes usually perpetrated by youth gangs. That being said, the issue of gang violence is growing considerably in many of these Latin American countries. According to the 1997 Carribean Health Survey, one out of 11 adolescents reported they belonged to a gang and an additional 10% said they had in the past (Blum and Ireland, 2004). One out of nine of those 16-18 years old reported having been in a fight where weapons were involved within the preceding year; an additional 4% had used weapons in fights three or more times. Exposure to these high rates of violence not only forms a breeding ground for aggressive behaviour, but also encourages youths to act as perpetrators or intermediaries of various violent deeds. As a result, these young people are particularly susceptible to adopting the extreme political ideologies of militant or separatist groups.

On top of that, studies have also shown that the phenomenon of radicalisation among young Europeans can be explained by psychotic disorders and risk factors - whether individual, micro-environmental (e.g. family), or societal. A study conducted by Campelo, Oppetit, Neau, Cohen, and Bronsard (2018), suggests that radical commitment is conceptualised as a "risky behaviour", thus appealing to delinquent adolescents and making them more susceptible to joining radical groups. According to these researchers, "personal uncertainty is another individual risk factor for radicalisation". They explained that "identity and identification issues and idealisation processes are central during adolescence", therefore the idea of being associated with a radical group may provide these youths a sense of reassurance and identity. Although VE essentially feeds off grievance and groups' perceived form of justice, pliable teenage minds make them easy prey for terrorist recruiters; consequently, they are one of the populations most affected by violence in all its forms.

Youth delinquency has seen an equal spike in Malaysia in recent years, with many reports on incidences of violence such as rape, murder, bullying, and gangsterism. As such, IMAN Research (2019) embarked on a study of youth to identify their beliefs and associations to specific characteristics of the VE phenomenon in two states: Selangor and Sabah. A summary of findings from this study are as follows:

- **Support for VE**

Almost 10 percent of youth in Sabah and Selangor across different religious groups supported VE. This could be further categorised into three drivers:

Figure 1:Individual characteristics seen in the 10% of youth in Sabah and Selangor.

- **Profile of 'at-risk' youths**

At-risk youths are essentially youths who have not committed a violent act (or at least not yet), but exhibit violent tendencies by endorsing VE and justifying terrorist agendas. As derived from the study, some prominent characteristics that explained Malaysian 'at-risk' youth included:

a) Gender

- Despite the prevailing notion that males are more prone to endorse VE, there has been an increase in women's participation as well - though understudied, it is an issue that is equally significant in the study of VE. However, this study mostly focuses on males being the more vulnerable group.

b) Social capital

- Social capital broadly refers to "networks together with shared norms, values, and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups" and can be linked to trends in violence, suicide, and mental health. Studies have also shown that the lack of social capital can be used to explain radicalisation and terrorism. While the dimension of social capital can be further categorised into structural social capital (relates to information sharing and collective action through social networks) and cognitive social capital (relates to shared norms and

values; a more subjective concept), findings in Sabah suggest that there is little to no evidence as to which aspect contributed more to terrorism. However, according to a study conducted in Honduras, structural and cognitive social capital were inversely related to the risk of violence; that is, high cognitive social capital was associated with a lower risk of violence whereas high structural social capital was associated with a higher risk of violence, challenging previous findings. Suffice to say, social capital is an important factor in explaining at-risk youths.

c) History of delinquent behaviour

- Further findings also suggest that youths who endorsed violent acts were either juvenile delinquents or had a history of performing illegal and immoral acts - "risky behaviour". Those with past criminal behaviour are at a higher risk of adopting extremist beliefs and engaging in terrorist acts.

d) Group identity

- Group identity refers to when a person derives their sense of identity and belonging from social groups. The social influence one has within the group can help explain social and political phenomena, including a person's likelihood to commit a violent act. For instance, this study showed that those who are members of motorcycle/car groups such as Mat Rempit and Geng Myvi, and computer games clans have a higher chance of endorsing VE due to the often violent or aggressive nature of these activities.

● **Psychosocial risk factors associated with support for VE**

Psychosocial risk factors not only help in explaining violent behaviour in youth, but the identification of these factors also encourage the development of preventive strategies in the mental health field. The three psychosocial risk factors prevalent in the youths of this study were:
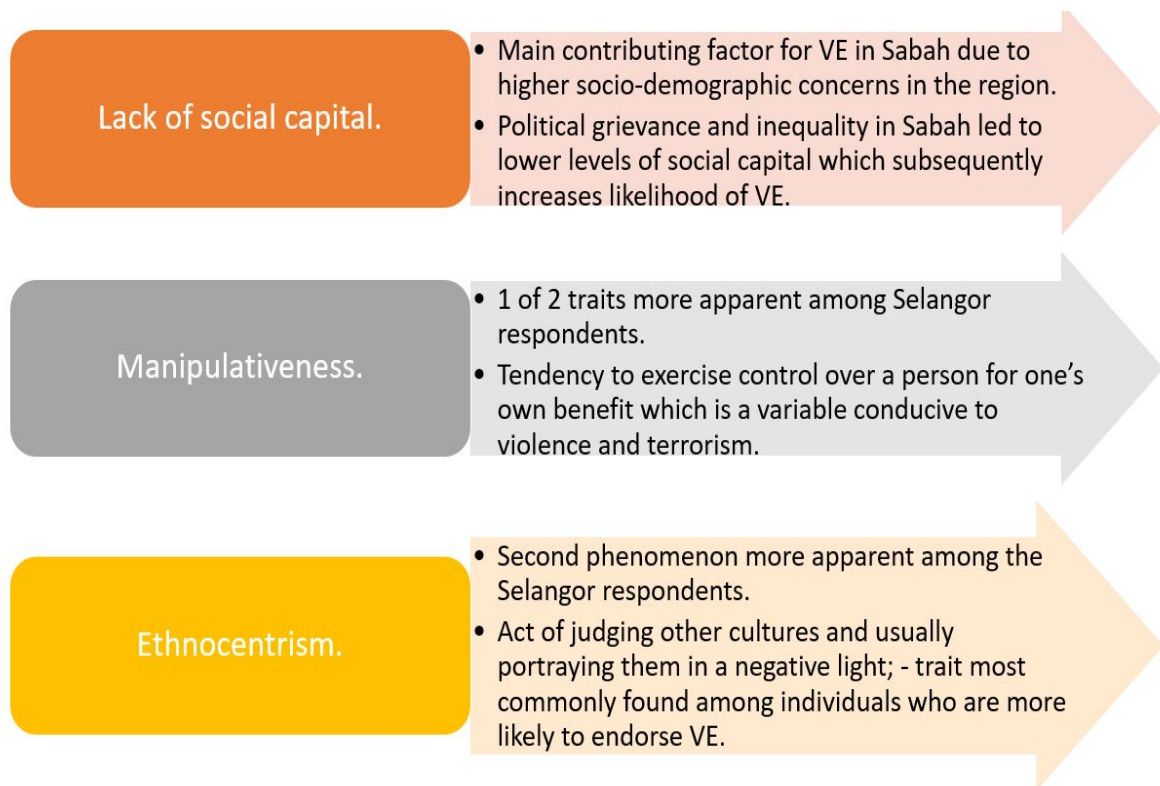
Figure 2: Identified distinct psychosocial traits among respondents.

The above study has provided a significant starting point for the discussion of VE in Malaysia in understanding the factors that contribute to behaviours potentially prevalent to VE, especially among the local youth population. A timely follow-up study would be able to delve deeper into grasping the dynamics of 'at-risk' groups mentioned above; their groupthink, and the factors that might trigger their violent tendencies. The findings gleaned from such a study would help IMAN understand the gaps, challenges and opportunities on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) in Malaysia. These would subsequently inform collaborative decision-making at the highest levels and assist in the crafting of tailor-made strategies/ recommendations to tackle the problem in a holistic manner.

2.2 Methodology

The established aim of this study was to deep-dive into the perspectives and experiences of 'at-risk' youths from the street racing and gaming communities in Malaysia, which were identified in IMAN's baseline study on youth and radicalisation (2018) as being especially vulnerable to violent extremist tendencies and behaviour. This study used a qualitative research design in which focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to better understand the previously identified 'at-risk' communities by adopting a thematic analysis (TA) method.

All potential participants across four locations - Pulau Langkawi (LGK), Alor Setar (AS), Lahad Datu (LD) and Kota Kinabalu (KK) were required to participate in a pre-FGD screener (Refer to Appendix C), which acted as a filter for demographic information, and also to assess participants' psychosocial traits such as manipulativeness, ethnocentrism and social capital levels. The pre-FGD screener was administered online via Google Forms and for some, via phone call. A total of 27 male participants, aged between 18 - 35 years old; eventually contributed to the FGDs which was collaboratively conducted by researchers from IMAN Research and local facilitators from local biking/gaming communities. A discussion guide (Refer to Appendix D) was used as a reference during the FGD session. The names of all participants have been altered to protect their identities.

Perhaps a significant limitation of this study was an accidental lack of racial diversity in the recruitment of participants, who were solely from Malay-Muslim backgrounds. The lack of homogeneity in the sample population was not an intended study design, but purely an oversight which did not take into account the presence of potential bias from assigned third party local facilitators who were active members of the gaming and biking scene. While they were the most appropriate individuals to assist in recruiting eligible participants, individual biases and selective sampling of local facilitators was an unexpected outcome of the design conceptualisation. As such, this limitation should be considered when understanding the following findings and possibly avoided in future replications of the study. Nonetheless, it is envisaged that this study should still present itself as a pertinent reference to 'at-risk' youth behaviour in Malaysia, given that a higher number of Malay-Muslims exhibit a general propensity towards VE activities.

Based on the pre-FGD screener that was administered, the charts below inform the presence of psychosocial traits among participants within the four locations and both demographic groups (bikers and gamers).
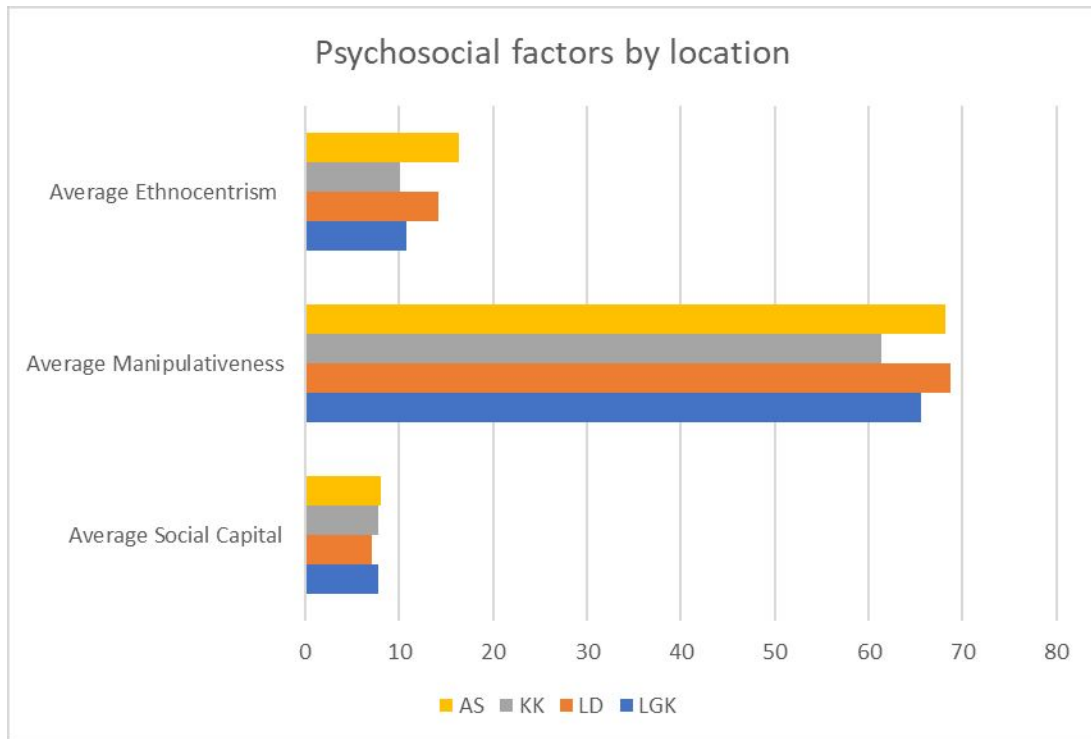
Figure 3: Average scores of each psychosocial trait across four locations.
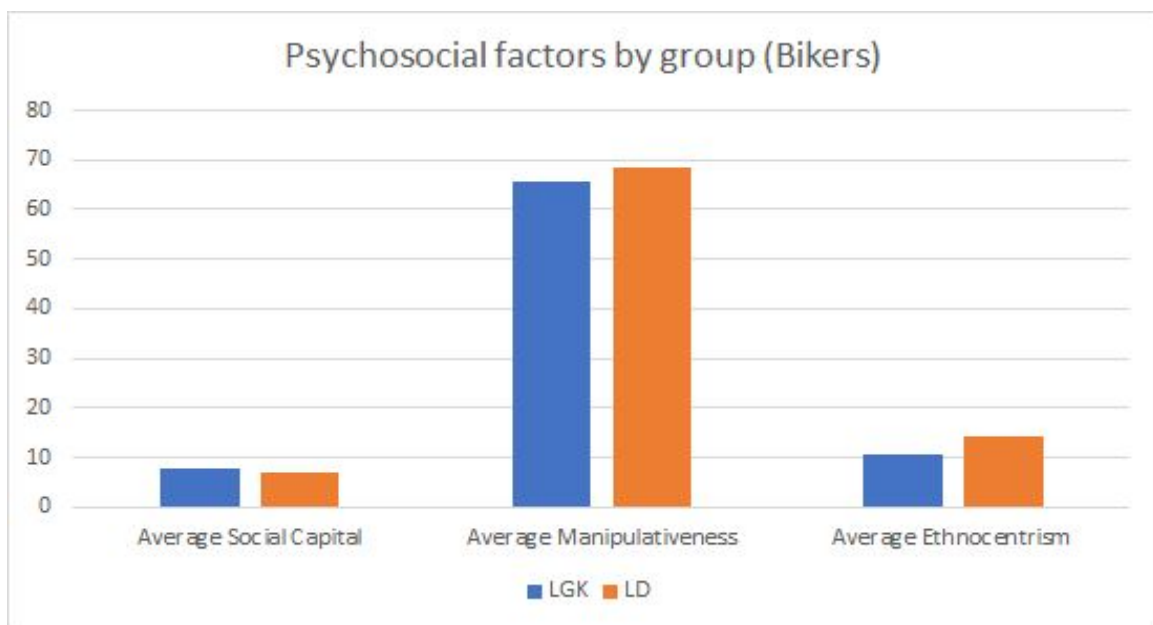
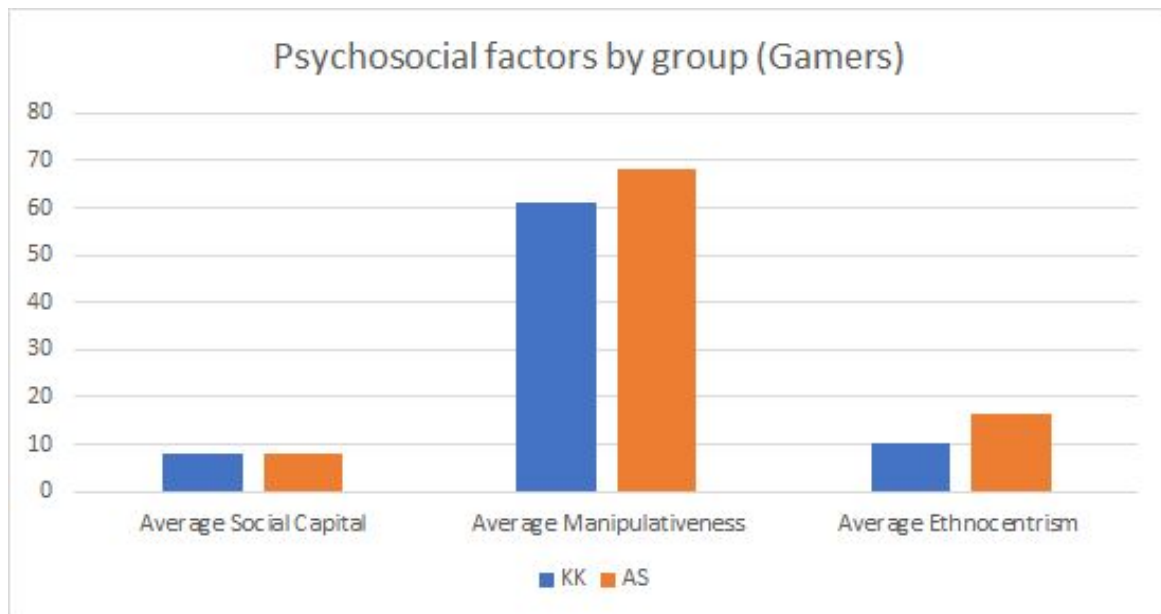*Figure 4: Average scores of psychosocial traits among bikers only.*

Figure 5: Average scores of each psychosocial trait among gamers only.
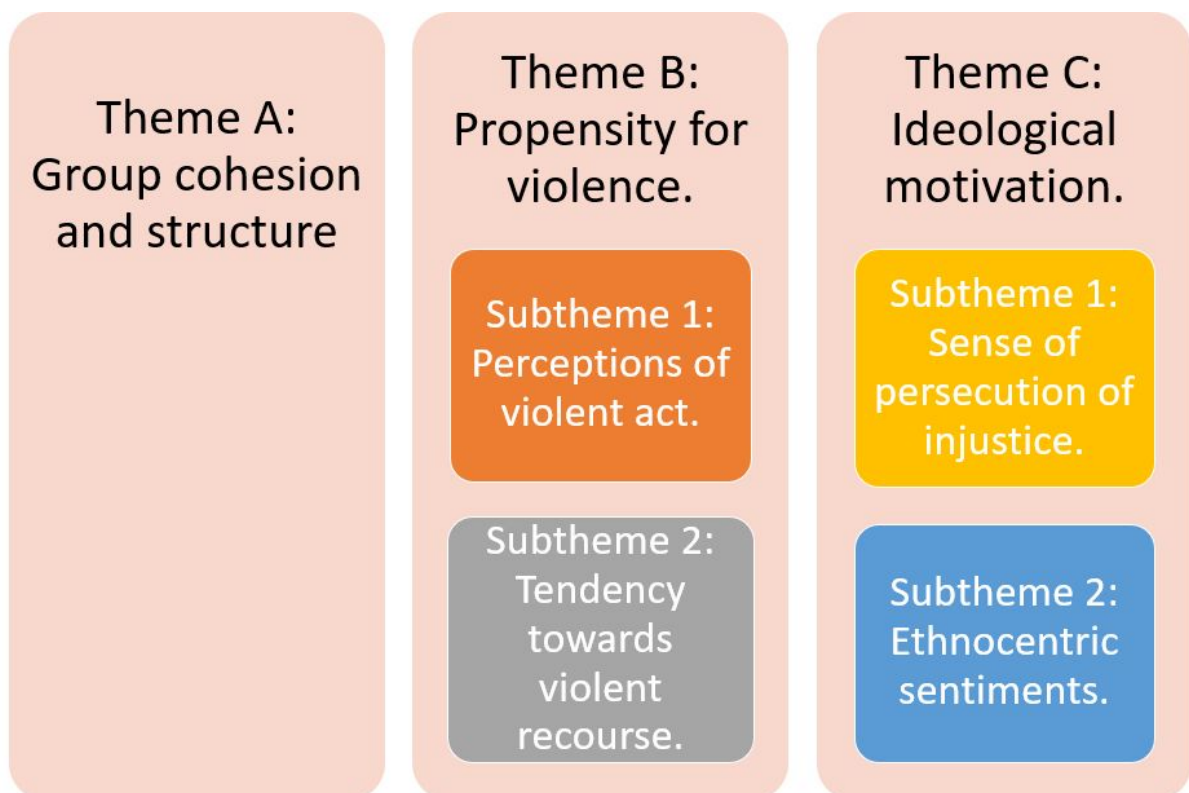
2.3 Findings

Figure 6: Themes and subthemes developed from the FGD data

2.3.1 Group cohesion and structure

In understanding the demographics of bikers and gamers in their respective group, the most salient theme that developed across four focus group discussions (FGDs) were highly focused around the nature and dynamics of their group functioning. There was a unanimous perception towards religiosity and conflict resolution.

It was acknowledged that racial remarks during gaming tournaments were common however the choice of not participating in it was vital to avoid any racial or religious tension. This was similarly reasoned with a younger age group that resorts to using race as a defence in arguments. Similarly, across the groups, peaceful conflict resolution was always preferred rather than a competing conflict resolution.

> *"Kalau berdasarkan pengalaman saya ni, pernah maki agama la… […] lepas tu dia sangkutkan dengan agama.* [Participant refers to an explicit religion]*. Saya report je. Kalau kena bahan agama, reply je 'thanks'."* – Ahmad,19, Alor Setar.

> *"Based on my experience, I have been insulted based on religion… that later relates the insult to my or their religion [Participant refers to an explicit religion]. I would just report the incident. If religious insults happen, simply respond with a 'thanks'."* - Ahmad, 19, Alor Setar.

> *"Pertama, bagi nasihat kepada individu yang bergaduh [...] Seterusnya, adakan satu perjumpaan untuk mereka berbaik."* - Abu, 21, Lahad Datu.

> *"Firstly, provide advice to individuals involved in the fight [...] Next, have a meeting for them to reconcile."* - Abu, 21, Lahad Datu.

Threading the dynamics of the group together, social cohesiveness reflected the most in gamers as they had lesser requirements in switching between various gaming groups, allowing them to test different gaming environments. This resulted in a higher group cohesion due to adaptability skills they acquire when regularly engaging with different gamers. In terms of understanding group structure, choosing a leader highly revolved around individuals with the most experience in the field, rather than seniority which was more common (not dominant), in bikers.

> *"[…] memang saya ada kumpulan yang formal tapi saya suka masuk group group yang lain jugak untuk kenal orang lebih. Tak rugi […] saya kenal orang johor dalam game, lepas saya pergi tournament kat johor sorang sorang,*

member saya yang kat johor tu bagi tidur rumah dia, bagi makan." – Ahmad, 19, Alor Setar.

"[...] while I have a formal group, I still enjoy joining other groups as it enables me to meet other players. No loss [...] I know johoreans through my gaming and so when I have a tournament in johor, they would allow me to sleep and eat at their houses." - Ahmad, 19, Alor Setar.

"Macam group kami, kalau berkonvoi tak ada ketua, siapa yang ada pengalaman lebih jauh, dia yang akan jadi ketua." – Faizal, 18, Pulau Langkawi.

"When we convoy in our group, there is no leader. Naturally, the person with the most experience will be the leader." - Faizal, 18, Pulau Langkawi.

2.3.2 Propensity towards violence.

The phenomenology of triggers towards violent behaviour within the community of bikers and gamers have been established under separate subthemes. The two sub-themes below describe the distinctions between their perception of violence firstly comprehending the cognition aspects of their triggers, followed by their behavioural processes.

a) Perception of violent acts

Across both groups, it was consistent that the use of violence is justified in self-defence. For example, if the self has been violently harmed by another party, or if the situation is a matter of life and death, then they would cognitively be inclined to resort to violence.

"Kalau dalam cerita ini untuk kita mempertahankan diri, memang terpaksa gunakan kekerasan juga la." – Luqman, 30, Pulau Langkawi.

"If this story revolves around self defence, it is a need to use violence." - Luqman, 30, Pulau Langkawi.

"Melihat kepada situasi. Sekiranya saya ingin dibunuh, saya akan cederakan. Selagi boleh hindar, saya akan hindarkan." – Dollah, 30, Kota Kinabalu.

"Depends on the situation. If I am to be murdered, I will exert hurt. For as far and long violence can be avoided, I will avoid it." - Dollah, 30, Kota Kinabalu.

Distinctively to gamers however, the cognition of violent act was also described as a form of added knowledge. Applicably, the frequency and enthusiasm towards the realm of gaming now gives them the ability to know the features and functions of actual weapons – either seen in movies or in real life.

"Keganasan tiada, tapi melalui game boleh tahu maklumat berkaitan senjata lebih-lebih lagi ketika menonton filem" – Firdaus, 30, Kota Kinabalu.

"No violence, but through gaming we are able to gather information and knowledge about weapons, noticing it especially when we watch movies." - Firdaus, 30, Kota Kinabalu.

b) Tendency towards violent recourse (behaviour)

When it comes to acting on their violent tendencies, many share the sentiment that while violence can be a form of conflict resolution, it also continues the cycle of violence. Though violence has been admittedly used as a solution, it is similarly deduced that violence does not assist in eliminating the root of the problem and additionally, makes matters worse. Subsequently, if and when violence is used as a recourse, it is also because they take strength in numbers.

"Tidak setuju. Apa-apa yang melibatkan keganasan akan mengakibatkan sesuatu menjadi semakin buruk. Di Malaysia, keganasan jalan raya agak teruk. C dan D memang perlu untuk berhenti dan berbincang namun tidak perlu berpukulan." – Abu, 21, Lahad Datu.

"Disagree. Anything that involves violence only makes matters worse. Road rage in Malaysia is quite bad. C and D should have stopped and discussed, but did not have to resort to violence." - Abu, 21, Lahad Datu.

"Tapi kita memang akan bagi semangat tau. So kita akan join. Bila semangat berkumpulan memang ada, boleh backup kawan. Kadang bukan sengaja pun. Kadang, tak

tahu cerita pun pergi ramai ramai. Semangat setia kawan." –
Ali, 18, Alor Setar.

"But we will still provide encouragement, so we will join the group. When there is team spirit, you can defend your friend. Most times, non-intentionally; however there are times due to team spirit many engage without knowing the actual story." - Ali, 18, Alor Setar.

Similar to the previous theme, characteristically with gamers; the behaviour and willingness to turn to violence especially in the fight for their religion is almost united. The interesting commonality among individuals, however, is the fact that there is a high priority for making sure all their loved ones are in a safe environment first, before they partake in what is perceived as a *"fight for justice".*

"Imej A sekiranya berlaku di Malaysia, saya akan bawa keluarga ke tempat yang aman…saya sendiri akan berjuang mempertahankan Islam." – Rahim, 27, Kota Kinabalu.

"If Image A happens in Malaysia, I will bring my family to a safer place...and alone, I will join the fight to defend Islam." - Rahim, 27, Kota Kinabalu.

2.3.3 Ideological motivation.

Ideologies and beliefs were developed under two sub themes as the nuances differed in the nature of motivations being shared among these demographics. The first sub theme encompasses a strong element of inequality as a motivation towards violence, while the second sub theme reflects a dominant sense of racial supremacy and radical beliefs.

a) Sense of persecution and injustice

The presence of persecution and injustice towards oneself, their loved ones and community acknowledges the merit of violence as a last resort, when all non-violent forms of actions of problem solving has been exhausted. Peaceful protests speak of a non-violent solution, however if such protests do no solve the injustice present in the community, violent actions will be resorted to. As an effect, the demographic concludes that the propensity towards VE will increase for the younger generation, if the exposure with continuous acts of injustice too increase.

"[…] kalau kita buat ini [imej B] dulu, akan jadi macam imej A, jadi kalau imej B kalau kita buat dulu, tapi kalau kita tak buat yang imej B ni […] Kemungkinan kita pun akan angkat senjata jugak lah, dia ingat kita tak ambik tindakan dan tak ambik kisah." – Ali, 18, Alor Setar.

"[...] if we do this [image B], it will become like image A, so if we proceed with image B first, [...] Probably, we too will have to carry our weapons as they will think that we are not reacting, or care to defend our welfare." - Ali, 18, Alor Setar.

"Tidak baik untuk anak muda. Ini kerana Imej A menggunakan keganasan yang boleh mempengaruhi orang muda. Saya terkesan dengan Imej B walaupun tidak berlaku di Sabah." –Saiful, 22, Lahad Datu.

"It is not good for the young generation. This is because Image A uses violence that can influence the young ones. I am affected by Image B although it never happened in Sabah." - Saiful, 22, Lahad Datu.

b) Ethnocentric sentiments.

Racial supremacy and radical beliefs were also a uniformed point of view in the gaming and biking community when it came to understanding their outlook on recent protests and violent gatherings locally and around the globe. Some felt a strong sense of threat towards their race, dismissing the idea of equal rights among other races – therefore, leading to potentially showing signs of radical beliefs which was concluded as ethnonationalism.

"Tak sesuai sangat, sebab kita majmuk, kita ada semua kaum. Kita ada kuasa raja-raja melayu…dan undang-undang dalam perlembagaan, dari dulu lagi. Jadi benda tu tak boleh nak diubah, kena hormat tetamu la, hormat tuan rumah hormat hormat." – Ali, 18, Alor Setar.

"It is not suitable because we are a plural society. From the beginning, we have a special position of the Malay rulers and laws in our constitution. So, we have to respect the host, respect respect. " - Ali, 18, Alor Setar.

"[…] kita sekarang berada dalam satu peralihan kerajaan sebab majoriti yang mentadbir sekarang ialah Cina, jadi merasakan mereka ada kuasa lah. Depa nak tukar kedudukan yang ada selama ni, nak minta [hak sama rata], pasal hak keistimewaan Melayu ini memang dari dulu lagi. Kerajaan tak boleh la nak luluskan ICERD ni." – Azman, 25, Pulau Langkawi.
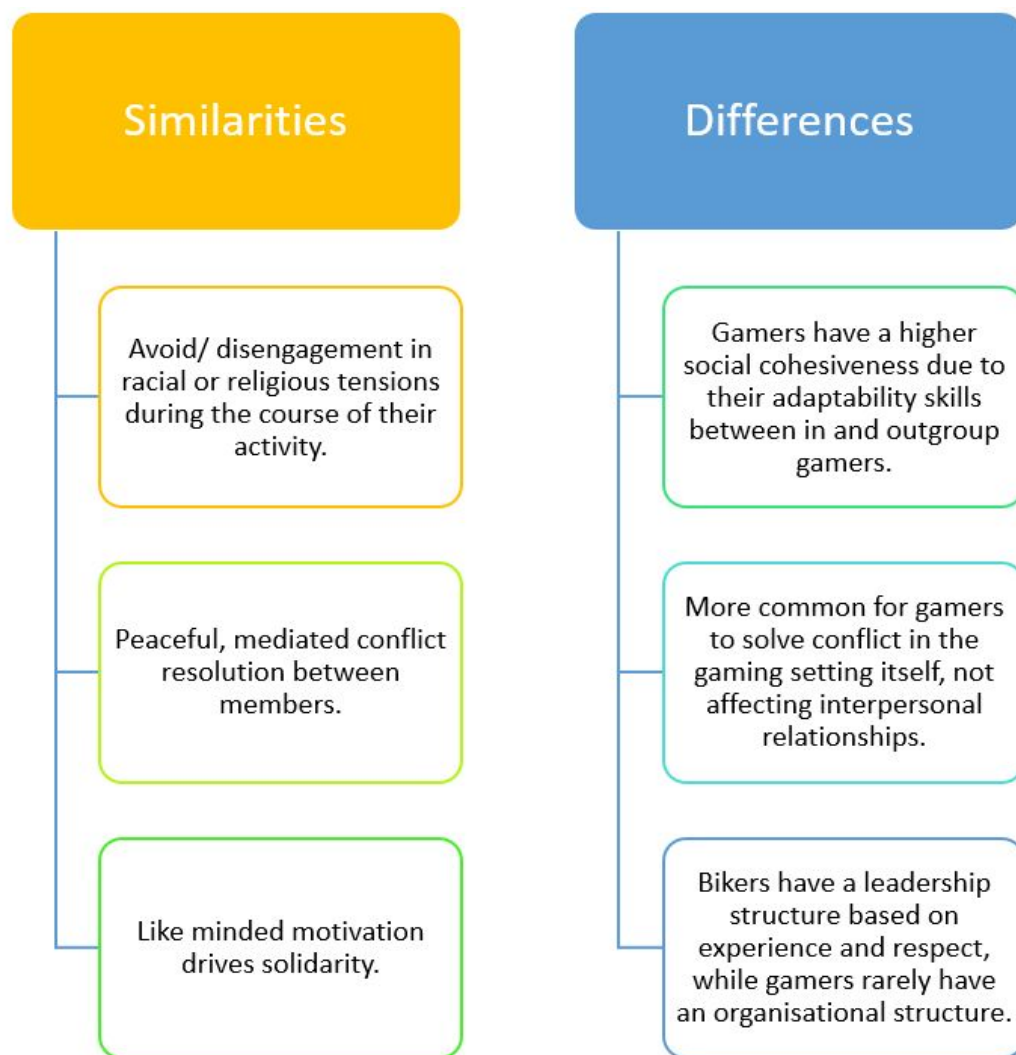
"[...] we are now experiencing a transition in our government whereby the majority of stakeholders are Chinese, so they feel empowered. They want to change the structure that has been in place previously, requesting for [equal rights], the special Malay rights has been around from a really long time back. The government cannot approve ICERD. " - Azman, 25, Pulau Langkawi.

2.4 Discussion

The exploration above was undertaken to understand the lived experiences of Malaysian youth participating in street racing and gaming activities towards their perceptions of violent extremist tendencies and behaviour. The study found three forms of perceptions; group cohesion and structure, propensity for violence and ideological motivation; of which the two latter themes yielded two distinct subthemes respectively. At the time of writing, this is believed to be the first research that seeks to deep-dive into perceptions of VE among a specific pocket of youth in Malaysia. This study fills a gap highlighted by Samuel (2019), that the relationship between youth and radicalisation has been given very little emphasis for a country that places youth policy reforms at the forefront of its development. As such, more needs to be done to understand youth phenomenology in Malaysia to avoid developing further policies that fail to directly address issues facing this segment of the population. The following is a cogency of arguments and findings on specific 'at-risk' youth demographics in Malaysia that hopefully provides new light to what is already known about youth and VE.

2.4.1 Group cohesion and structure

Considering the novelty of the chosen subculture, this segment informs us of the group characteristics and its structure which subsequently advises the nature of their interdependence and attachment between members of the group. The distinctive similarities and differences between bikers and gamers charted in the table below provides threaded information of respective group functioning.

Similarities

- Avoid/ disengagement in racial or religious tensions during the course of their activity.
- Peaceful, mediated conflict resolution between members.
- Like minded motivation drives solidarity.

Differences

- Gamers have a higher social cohesiveness due to their adaptability skills between in and outgroup gamers.
- More common for gamers to solve conflict in the gaming setting itself, not affecting interpersonal relationships.
- Bikers have a leadership structure based on experience and respect, while gamers rarely have an organisational structure.

Figure 7: Differences and similarities of group traits between bikes and gamers.

Group structure for both bikers and gamers indicated a fluid and loose structure in terms of hierarchy, however for bikers most norms or actions are decided based on majority consensus and a leader is elected only for convoy purposes, and there seems to be more emphasis on equal treatment of all members. Interdependence explains how group members are mutually dependent upon each other to reach a shared goal successfully. We found both groups reported some level of interdependence, although gamers were within the context of their roles during a gaming tournament for instance. On the contrary, bikers shared an interdependence with activities outside of the activity; volunteering or social work to name a few.

The more cohesive the group, the less likely we are to leave the groups we belong to. Groups with high cohesion tend to interact more with each other, are friendlier and more cooperative as a group, have greater influence over their group members, and are more satisfied as a member as they view their person and group goals are

aligned. None of the groups however seems to identify any external threats, are mostly open to others, can engage with others. Additionally, there's enough members and independence of each individual to avoid group-think effect.

In conclusion, strong group identity exists among the people that were interviewed, with the majority sharing a positive identification towards themselves and as a member of a group. There are differing features between out groups; while gamers have strong identity within the gaming community and accord importance to their individual roles within the game itself, bikers on the other hand see their identity also from outside their community, which may also contribute to their strong solidarity. Subsequently, all of these have an impact on decision-making, engagement styles, and physical or external exertion of their group identity.

2.4.2 Propensity for violence (Behavioural – Problem solving)

In hypothetical or actual conflict situations, there was a unanimous initial negative *perception towards violence* and acts of violence, with peaceful conflict resolution being preferred and prioritised. The stimulus provided in the study allowed participants to share their problem-solving insights and to opt for violent or non-violent recourse in response to a number of hypothetical conflict scenarios. In the given situations, both biker and gaming groups justified that violence is a viable option under two circumstances; i) in self-defence, it being a matter of life and death; and ii) standing up for one's rights/achieving justice. However, in their natural state of social belonging and within their respective environments, problem solving was mostly based on mutual respect and mediation that aimed to achieve a compromise between the troubled parties. In a nutshell, it was evident that with hypothetical situations involving day-to-day conflicts such as road rage or disagreements among neighbours, the majority of participants viewed violence as an undesirable and avoidable outcome.

Moving on from their initial thoughts and observations of violent acts, the researchers attempted to identify outright *tendencies towards violent recourse* that reflect certain behaviours or traits that might drive the subjects towards violence. Participants in both groups believed that violence begets violence – essentially suggesting that it feeds the cycle of violence if one initiates violence, while adding that utilising violence does not guarantee a solution to the root cause of the conflict.

Interestingly, in individual settings there was mostly a non-inclination towards violence, while group settings yielded quite the opposite. The loyalty and attachment these individuals share within their like-minded social spheres are a primary indicator for their conflict resolution methods - violent or otherwise - outweighing rational engagement or thinking in this instance. It is deductible that this stems from a strong

sense of collective self for both bikers and gamers and the 'strength in numbers' logic, which is discussed further in the next theme.

2.4.3 Ideological motivation (Cognitive mechanisms in VE)

The above was explored to see the varied layers of motivations youths had towards engaging in violence, if and when it happens. While the act of VE is highly correlated with the dynamics of social movements and the sheer influence and security of knowing that the act will mostly be done as a group, it is similarly vital to recognise the makeup of each individual themselves; as the social movement at the end of the day consists of "willing participants" (Kruglanski, Fernandez, Factor, & Szumowska, 2019).

Kruglanski et al. (2019) argued that extremism is a behaviour that is driven by individuals' goals and their "quest for personal significance". This argument can be supported within both studied groups, which encompassed two differing nature of motivations - a sense of persecution and injustice, and inherent ethnocentrism. However, it must be recognised that as much as these are individual goals which could have contributed to the motivational imbalance resulting in comfort of engaging in violence, the motivation could also be social in nature, stemming from in-group persuasion or pressure.

Sense of persecution and injustice explored the demographics' justification of violence when adopted as a last resort. The rationale of participants in this case was that violence is acceptable and can be pursued if a sense of injustice is present towards oneself or their loved ones, but only when non-violent methods have been exhausted. However, the study was unable to ascertain how participants interpreted "exhaustion of peaceful solutions", except to suggest that there is a degree of ambiguity that might be influenced by individual beliefs or past experiences with violence. Nonetheless, when considering intervention programmes to alter individual attitudes or perceptions towards violence, it would be worth tapping into this cognitive gap - the point between opting for non-violence and deciding that all non-violent means have been exhausted. At present, empathy training is often earmarked as a policy to educate the masses against using violence to achieve their goals. These findings illustrate that it can yet be implemented effectively to further increase youth aversion towards violence.

Similarly, while gaming is often associated with desensitisation to violence (as a growing body of research suggests), this study found it to be untrue. The active gamers in this study gave uncharacteristically strong responses - both verbally and non-verbally - to the violent visual stimuli presented to them. This suggests that violence and violent behaviour, even in visual forms, still elicit a strong reaction, contrary to the argument of desensitisation. In reference to literature suggesting that there is a moral evaluation process present in understanding aggression and exposure to violent games, it would be worth looking at empathy as a mediating variable between violent game frequency and aggressive tendencies or behaviour.

Perhaps more generally, empathy as a variable could also be adopted in improving intercultural sensitivity and understanding.

Another factor that could inform the motivations of biking and gaming groups is the 'thrill-seeking' narrative, which was also evident among participants in this study. A high thrill-seeking characteristic may subsequently trigger a "personal quest" or the need for significance that Kruglanski and his colleagues have highlighted. Coupled with ideological triggers such as disillusionment with the political situation or the perceived erosion of rights (injustice), these youths would then have ample motivation to resort to violence to 'correct' their plight. Such grievances were visible triggers that were cited by the sample population as a reason for their unhappiness, and these likely mirrors the sentiments of the larger population.

A striking and telling discovery from this study was the evidence of *ethnocentric sentiments* prevalent within the biking and gaming groups. Many participants exhibited an inherent dislike for universal and anti-discriminatory movements such as ICERD, while sharing their displeasure with the new PH government for being supposedly too "non-Muslim" friendly. Both the verbal and non-verbal cues projected by the demographics in question indicated a visible bias on subject matters that dealt with the rights and privileges of those outside their race. They also appeared comfortable in taking actions against those who threatened these privileges. Grievances leading to an increase in ingroup and outgroup thinking is aligned with similar phenomenological studies that observe violent and nonviolent groups. In such cases, the social psychology phenomenon is present due to racism and prejudice, feelings of abandonment and marginalisation of rights (Knight, Keatley and Woodward, 2019).

While this is a sensitive finding, Kruglanski et al., (2019) suggest that religion or ethnicity only act as an explicit motivation, while the actual ascription of behaviour is strongly driven by a more innate variable. This premise ties in to the current findings because only a handful of participants actually understood the underlying meaning of given events such as ICERD, while the majority of participants merely subscribed to the notion that they needed to defend their racial privileges, without any deeper reasoning attached.

The findings from this study also reinforce that violence is ultimately still chosen as a last resort, which would imply that a cognitive process is present and requires many interconnected factors to eventually drive an individual towards violent activities. This explains why and how individual VE behaviour or tendencies surface - in the presence of related schema that are primed by factors such as the above (social or nationalist cause), only after which VE manifests (Higgins, 1996). That said, further research on a larger scale needs to be carried out among the different segments of the youth population to better understand the varied traits and cognitions that could potentially trigger violent extremist behaviour.

2.5 Conclusion

The findings from this study have provided valuable insights into the phenomenology, group structures, cognition, and behaviour bikers and gamers exhibit towards violence/violent extremism. Some key takeaways from the analysis of these demographic groups are: i) the presence of formal/informal group hierarchies but with strong cohesiveness and resilience to external threats; ii) both groups favour peaceful conflict resolution above all else, justifying violence only in self-defence or if their lives are at stake; iii) individuals belonging to an in-group are more likely to behave violently in the presence of other team members, which stems from a prevailing sense of loyalty to the group. However, these groups are also aware that violence is often not the answer; iv) empathy training as a valuable mechanism to measure how youths perceive "exhaustion of peaceful means" and the cognitive process that eventually triggers violent tendencies; v) Both bikers and gamers display a 'thrill-seeking' streak that may likely inform their motivations for violence, especially when coupled with socio-political grievances or disillusionment; vi) finally, there is evidence of ethnocentrism within both demographics, especially against outsiders whom they perceive as a threat to their rights and privileges. It is hoped that these findings can assist policymakers and P/CVE stakeholders, particularly those working with youths, in recognising the practical implications and applications of such behaviours, and guide them in identifying long-term solutions to address the problem at its roots. Future research should nonetheless be mindful of and improve upon the limitations the current study inadvertently encountered.

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3. Strengths And Challenges Of Malaysia's Rehabilitation Program for Terrorists

3.1 An Overview of Rehabilitation Programs

Rehabilitation programs form part of counterterrorism strategies, alongside hard measures and preventive efforts. It presents a long-term solution as incarceration alone is insufficient to address the problem. The offenders cannot be detained indefinitely as they will have to be released at some point, also there are concerns that prisons are becoming a breeding ground for radicalisation and recruitment into terrorist groups. Following the fall of ISIS, states also face returning nationals which pose a security risk as they may have expertise or knowledge of the groups' networks, and may serve as financiers, propagandists, recruiters etc.[1]

In light of this, the incarceration period should be utilised for rehabilitation to reduce the possibility of recidivism, which occurs when individuals relapse into their previous VE lifestyle. The rehabilitation process poses several challenges as there are concerns regarding the threat to society, and whether their families and the larger society is prepared to accept them back.

Rehabilitation programs typically involve elements of deradicalisation, disengagement and reintegration. They are targeted towards individuals detained for terrorist or violent extremist acts, and may serve as a preventive measure by addressing those who are radicalised but have yet to engage in violence. Identifying the root cause of involvement in violent extremism (VE) determines the approach undertaken.

● Deradicalisation denotes a cognitive approach which stresses re-education of the detainee's ideological/theological worldview.
● There is no clear definition of disengagement as it may refer to a shift in the role within an organisation[2], the renouncement of violence as a means or distancing oneself from a group[3]. For rehabilitation programs, disengagement denotes the removal of the individual from the group, the militant world and the rejection of the use of violence. In practice, it entails behavioural intervention or "engagement somewhere else"[4].
● Reintegration is the process of integrating an individual back into the community or society.

A survey of rehabilitation programs identified several common features: religious re-education (in the case of Muslim states and states dealing with Islamist extremists), psychological rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, vocational training, and aftercare or post-rehabilitation measures[5].

i) Religious re-education

Often employed in states dealing with the threat of Islamist militants, the underlying assumption is that a misunderstanding of Islam is the root cause of radicalisation. Clerics or religious scholars are brought in to interact with the detainees, engaging them in dialogue and at times, challenging their worldview.

ii) Psychological Modules

All programs include psychological modules which consist of counselling sessions with trained professionals. These sessions may deal with the mental and emotional ramifications of their actions. Addressing grievances felt may prove useful in identifying reasons for engaging in VE or terrorism.

iii) Social and Vocational

Social and vocational programs aim to prepare the detainees for life after the program. They are provided opportunities for self-improvement, with self-efficacy being the aim. Vocational training targets the socio-economic needs, providing them with skills that may aid in job procurement. The ability to sustain themselves and their family can bolster their confidence and self-esteem.

Detainees may also face challenges in reintegration due to being removed from society. Some programs opt to bring in family members to ease the process, which can play a role in mending the relationship. Familial involvement is crucial as they are the primary support system.

iv) Aftercare (Post-release)

Once released, former detainees are still monitored and under strict probation conditions. These may include reporting to an officer in charge of their case, being confined to a specific area and not interacting with their former circles or any known terrorists.

Recidivism

Violence caused by recidivism, or re-engagement in violent extremist or terrorist activities, indicates that a program has failed. As such, recidivism rates are the main figures used to assess a program's effectiveness[6]. Official figures on a program's success or recidivism rate may be available yet lack empirical evidence due to lack of transparency as internal evaluations are not made public. The lack of access to necessary information may also prevent external evaluations. In addition to that, there is no consensus on what constitutes a successfully reformed terrorist[7]. The absence of a criteria makes it impossible to determine or verify that a program has deradicalised a terrorist.

For the purpose of this review, a comparison was made between rehabilitation programs in Southeast Asian countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, as well as the Netherlands in Europe (refer to Appendix E).

3.1.1 Indonesia

The De-radicalisation and Counter-radicalisation program was established following the 2002 Bali Bombings by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). It is administered by Detachment-88 (the counterterrorism unit) and coordinated by *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT)[8].

Indonesia's program focuses primarily on deradicalisation as it seeks to address the ideology of militant Islam and the idea of establishing an Islamic state within the region. Unlike similar programs for Islamist militants such as Saudi Arabia and Singapore, Indonesia relies on ex-militants to interact with the detainees as they are deemed to be more credible compared to the clerics or religious scholars[9]. As they possess knowledge and experience on the matter, detainees are more likely to trust them. In addition to that, the program encourages familial support as their travel expenses and accommodation while visiting detainees are covered[10].

Sukabdi's study identifies the key elements of rehabilitation through interviews with 43 former terrorist offenders and religious activists who had undergone the prison system. It was found that the practitioner's religious knowledge, economic empowerment, humane treatment and humility from the practitioner and the effects' sustainability are important[11]. Humane treatment and kindness displayed by personnel are key, allowing rapport-building between staff and detainees; this subverted expectations of torture and harsh treatment.

There are no official statistics released for the program though Indonesian officials have stated that most of the convicted terrorists re-offended within two years of their release. This is attributed to them rejoining old social circles/networks, which include family members who may be radicalised.

Several gaps in the program were identified, including post-release support, an initial assessment and greater involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs). Sukabdi found that detainees' required additional support after their release to ensure the effects are sustainable, as it is insufficient to "[undergo] counselling for 3 says or a year and then left just like that[12]." The same study also suggested an assessment of the detainees beforehand to tailor the rehabilitation process to respective individuals. He states the example, "when there is a brother with talent in automotive but asked to cook or become a restaurant waiter…of course he doesn't want to[13]".

CSOs were notably absent from the program. Their involvement could aid the reintegration aspect as they possess the access and ability to interact with the grassroots, as well as to build trusting networks within communities[14].

3.1.2. Singapore

The Religious Rehabilitation Program (RRP) initially began with Ustaz H. Ali. Mohamed and Ustaz H. Mohamed Hasbi Hassan's assessment of JI detainees. They were brought in as the government felt ill-equipped to deal with the subject matter. Since then, the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) is responsible for religious re-education of the detainees. RRG personnel undergo training in counseling in order to conduct structured sessions. Some have even pursued a postgraduate degree in the field of counter-terrorism and counter-extremist ideology.

The RRG oversees the rehabilitation process, taking over after the 30-day investigation period by ISD. The process entails psychological, religious and social components. Largely modelled after Saudi Arabia's program with changes to accommodate the state's concerns, the program focuses on deradicalisation and assumes that religious deviance is the main cause of radicalisation. It addresses the risk of jihadist or Islamist militants such as JI detainees. Nevertheless, the overemphasis on religious radicalisation risks overlooking other contributing factors of VE.

The program makes attempts to include support systems. Though the family unit has a minimal role to play. Family visits are restricted due to fears that family members may be ideologically affected. However, the RRG has expanded the program to include community involvement upon realisation that society's understanding of Islam is part of efforts to prevent radicalisation, and perhaps avoiding recidivism.

Between 2001 and April 2010, approximately 50 individuals were detained and two-thirds have been released. As those released are considered ideologically and behaviourally neutralised, and have not reoffended, the Internal Security Department (ISD) officials claim a 100% success rate for the program[15]. This is attributed to surveillance and the use of Restriction Orders (ROs), which prevents them from relapsing into their previous lifestyle.

3.1.3. Netherlands

The Dutch Reintegration Approach is a joint venture between the National Coordinator for Security and Terrorism (NCTV) and the Dutch Probation Service (RN). Team TER (Terrorism, Extremism and Radicalisation) carries out the actual program.

It benefits from RN's prior experience in dealing with normal offenders. Furthermore, RN staff were provided additional training on deradicalisation, jihadism and terrorism. In fact, it is worth highlighting that the program stresses subject matter expertise for all stakeholders and not just the front-line practitioners. Frequent meetings are also held to share findings, experiences and best practices.

The program's overall objective is to prevent recidivism in detainees of terrorism-related offenses. However, the NCTV and RN have differing views on the approach. NCTV stresses deradicalisation, whereas RN prioritises disengagement or behavioural change. Generally, the approach applied is tailored to the individual based on their initial assessment.

Religious deviance is identified as the root cause of radicalisation. The program is aimed at detainees of terrorism related offenses and those suspected of involvement in such activities. However, recent trends have seen the need to expand the program to include domestic and homegrown threats, particularly right-wing groups.

Between 2012 and 2018, Team TER supervised 189 clients (denotes detainees in this context) with 8 individuals found to have re-engaged in terrorism-related activities, indicating the program has a 4.2% recidivism rate[16]. The program is deemed successful if the client does not reoffend and abides by the conditions of parole or probation[17].

The program necessitates multi-agency collaboration and cooperation with stakeholders at all levels, including municipalities which may have their own CT strategies. This is crucial for implementing recommendations and facilitating the reintegration process as municipalities manage issues pertaining to employment, housing and supervision[18].

Existing laws such as the Regulation on Sanctions for the Suppression of Terrorism prevents them from opening bank accounts and possessing debit cards which can impede reintegration.

Moreover, society and the community present an additional obstacle, especially with high-profile clients. Community leaders are concerned with the potential risk and political responsibility should anything happen. This is understandable, as during Team TER's initial run in 2012, two of five clients later travelled to Syria and joined Islamist forces.

3.2 Malaysia's Integrated Rehabilitation Module for Violent Extremist Detainees

Malaysia has enjoyed relative success in rehabilitating former terrorists or violent extremists, a feat dating back to its handling of captured communist insurgents. Since then, the rehabilitation process has undergone revisions to adapt to the

changing times. The rehabilitation process is stipulated under preventive laws such as the Internal Security Act (ISA), which was later abolished and replaced with the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA). More recently, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA) was introduced to deal specifically with the ISIS threat. It is under this law that the country's rehabilitative measures were refined to include a holistic recovery process to help ensure that detainees do not relapse upon release from prison.

When a suspect is arrested for terrorism, they are brought to the Special Branch Department at Bukit Aman for interrogation. Depending on the information gathered, they may be charged under either POTA or SOSMA, or can be released under Restricted Orders (ROs) or unconditionally[19]. The POTA Rehabilitation Module for Violent Extremist Detainees is a two-year program run jointly by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Prisons Department and the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP). It targets low-risk sympathizers and conspirators. These individuals often have no prior criminal record, have yet to commit a terrorist act, and are usually detained whilst attempting to travel to Syria. Meanwhile, the more hardcore offenders are typically charged under the Penal code or SOSMA. The individuals charged under these laws also undergo rehabilitation, though theirs is tailored slightly differently from the POTA program. It is a two-year program comprising 18 submodules that are divided into three phases (Table 1):

Phase I	Disengagement (6 months or less – dependent on detainee responsiveness) Prisons Department	• This phase aims to adapt detainees to prison life and shaping positive behavior (risk of it being one-sided if the detainee rejects the program)
Phase II	Deradicalisation (6 months – but will continue into 3rd phase) RMP, Prisons Department, MOHA and JAKIM	• Practitioners refer to this as "ideological rehabilitation" instead of deradicalisation; perceived as more neutral and focuses on diminishing the detainees' violent predispositions so as to prevent reoffending upon release. • Spiritual and thought – religious reeducation promoting a moderate Islam and non-violent jihad.
Phase III	Reintegration (1 year)	• Continues on from previous phase

Table 1: The phases of the POTA rehabilitation model

Detainees of both POTA and SOSMA undergo a Religious Rehabilitation Program which aims to change their ideology. Thus far, the program has operated on the assumption that religion is the main cause of radicalisation. As such, personnel from the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) are engaged regularly to offer religious re-education lessons to detainees that seek to instil a moderate interpretation of Islam.

At the end of their sentence, the Prevention of Terrorism Board (POTB) assesses the detainee to determine if they are eligible for release. This is based on a joint evaluation by the administering agencies using a scoring method (shown in Table 2[20]).

RMP	40%
Prisons Department	40%
MOHA	20%

Table 2: Integrated Scoring Evaluation Method

Those eligible for release require a minimum overall score of 70% to qualify. In the event they do not meet the minimum passing mark, the POTB can then apply to extend the individual's detention for an unspecified period.

3.2.1 Success rate

Malaysian government officials claim that the country's rehabilitation program sees a success rate ranging between 95-97%. This includes charges under the now defunct ISA, and SOSMA. Between 2001 and 2012, 289 individuals were detained under the ISA and seven individuals later returned to their previous lifestyle[21]. The 97% success rate also indicates that the rest were successfully reintegrated into society[22].

Zachary Abuza questions the program's effectiveness, as detainees are held indefinitely under the charges and the programme presents the only opportunity for release[23]. He compares this to the Indonesian model where detainees are released from prison at the end of their sentence, regardless of whether they joined the rehabilitation program.

In 2017, two unnamed suspects were detained and charged under POTA for recruiting prison convicts to launch attacks on houses of worship in order to spark conflict amongst followers of different religions in Malaysia[24]. Both individuals were released in 2017 after being held under SOSMA; the 53-year-old was also charged under ISA and detained for seven years.

As the POTA program is relatively new, no official statistics are available. At the end of 2018, nine of 135 POTA detainees had completed the third phase and were yet to

undergo evaluation on whether they are fit for reintegration into the community (Phase IV). It is premature to assess the program's effectiveness as the first batch of detainees were recently released in 2019[25] which include Harris, an unnamed 36-year-old man[26] and Yazid Sufaat.

- A former recruiter for IS, Harris (alias) was detained under SOSMA and POTA. He found that the rehabilitation program played a role in re-shaping his worldview. Despite his involvement with IS, Harris had doubts about the actions undertaken from a religious standpoint, questioning its permissibility. In his search for true Islamic teachings, he encountered "videos of injustice done against fellow Muslims aboard on Facebook and reading the materials that made [him] angry".[27] He states that the classes and discussions held clarified any queries about religion, and solitary conditions also allowed him time for reflection.

  Initially hostile to the practitioners for their inability to counter his arguments, he found the sessions with religious figures to be beneficial. Currently, he assists the Prisons Department with the rehabilitation program[28].

- The most notable 'graduate' is Yazid Sufaat, a Malaysian who was formerly a member of Al-Qaeda and was directly linked to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. He was released from the Simpang Renggam Detention Center in November 2019, and will continue to be monitored by police under house arrest. Yazid has been jailed three times in the past 17 years for terrorism-related offences, earning him the moniker "unrepentant terrorist".[29]

Compared to previous efforts, the POTA model attempts to engage with other stakeholders such as family members of detainees, community leaders and civil society organisations (CSOs). The POTA model also encapsulates a more holistic approach to dealing with extremist detainees that comprises rehabilitation not only in the form of religious re-education (to alter VE ideology), but also shaping personality and equipping them with vocational skills to earn a livelihood once released from prison, the rehabilitation phases can often be employed on a sporadic or ad-hoc basis, meaning that some detainees do not undergo the entire process. This needs to be improved further.

3.2.2 Challenges and Recommendations

Due to the restricted nature of the program, not much is known aside from information gleaned from the published module and statements from government officials or individuals involved in the program. Gaps to be addressed in the program were pulled from the article by Kamaruddin, Mat Noordin and Abd Rahman through interviews with credible figures in CVE and two former detainees.

However, during the course of this report we engaged with *Desak Sampai Mansuh* (DSM), a non-governmental organisation set up by family members of SOSMA, POCA and POTA detainees. The following are a threaded second-hand experience of the rehabilitation system which should be taken with precaution as while these experiences should not be completely dismissed, they cannot be generalised.

The overall impression given towards the rehabilitation programme is that it lacks structure and rehabilitation techniques used by the rehabilitation team/ personnel is similarly criticised. DSM's spokesperson Halim (not his real name), a brother of a detainee, mentions that although the Malaysian rehabilitation programme is pictured to be successful and wholesome, the effectiveness however has not seen light – at least to Halim's first-hand experience with his detained brother. External influences such as the Halim protesting the quality of overall custodial system does influence how his brother gets treated in the prison, with him being placed in separation from other inmates with possibly the same degree of crimes.

In terms of health and wellbeing, Halim accounts that the mental wellbeing of his brother has deteriorated consistently despite being under the rehabilitation programme claimed to be from the pressure given my rehabilitation or prison personnel. Immediate family members such as the detainee's wife and toddler child are said to be traumatised by the entire exposure of his arrest and the way he was arrested from their home while the wife and child were there to witness. To support, there is also a lack of professional counselling assistance provided, if and when interventions of those nature are provided; they are done in the presence of police officials in the room. This then leaves little to no room for confidentiality and a sense of lingering pressure for detainees to actively participate during the counselling sessions.

On the contrary, Halim accounts for some positive changes from the new transition of government to PH, stating that detainees are now given more allowance for leisure time; an increase from 1 hour to 4 hours. The prison also allows visitation initiatives for families during Hari Raya.

There were also other reports of abuse and ill-treatment in prison, which resulted in a mass hunger strike by 160 SOSMA detainees in August 2018. The hunger strike lasted only for two days, but according to Halim, it managed to make changes in the treatment of prisoners, and there were talks on SOSMA detainees getting pardoned by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. However, up to now, there has been no progress and follow-up.

3.2.3 Programme structure

Local counter-terrorism expert Thomas Samuel warns of the dangers in implementing a one-size-fits-all approach. A review of several rehabilitation models

found that European programs preferred to tailor the rehabilitative process to the individual whereas Southeast Asian ones tended to be more general, based on the primary assumption that a poor understanding of religion is the root cause of VE. The Malaysian program is rigidly structured so all detainees undergo the same phases, regardless of their motivations or level of involvement, to be eligible for release. Compared to that, detainees of the Dutch program are assessed on the likeliness of recidivism and only then are recommendations made for their recovery.

3.2.4 Training of front-line practitioners

Samuel also stresses the importance of continuous development of expertise, stating that "regardless of your qualifications, you have to keep up to date."[30] Another expert, Ahmad El-Muhammady, suggests emulating the Singaporean model where the religious scholars are given training in counselling to ensure they are equipped to deal with the challenge. In addition to that, academic Professor Rohan Gunaratna warns of radicalisation among practitioners themselves, stressing the importance of regular background checks.

3.2.5 Utilisation of former militants as role models/credible figures

The use of former militants such as Ahmad Wan Ismail and Suhaimi Mokhtar[31] were commended by former detainees as they were perceived as credible figures who understood their worldview and experiences. In addition to that, their own experiences in the rehabilitation process played a role in influencing their decision to assist in CT efforts, which include countering IS' narrative in talks delivered to university students.[32]

3.2.6 Stakeholder engagement

Wider stakeholder involvement in counterterrorism strategies, particularly rehabilitation efforts are crucial. In that regard, CSOs have an important bridging role to play, both in terms of preparing detainees for a life outside prison and educating communities to embrace these individuals back into society. In turn, this would also reduce the stigmatization of ex-militants, which studies have indicated is a hindrance to reintegration and a major cause of recidivism. Enhancing the role of community actors, especially in aiding reintegration, is crucial at the present time given the impending return of ISIS followers from Syria. While there have been largely unfavourable opinions about accepting them back into society, Malaysia has a proven network of state and non-state actors that can effectively support these individuals upon their return.

At the same time, considerable attention should be given to offering ex-militants opportunities for skills-based training and some financial support that will allow them to pursue *'halal'* (religiously permissible) and non-violent livelihoods upon release.

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4. Conclusions and Recommendations: Towards a National Action Plan on P/CVE

4.1 Envisaging a national strategy against VE

Violent extremism (VE) is not a new phenomenon, having afflicted societies for decades if not centuries. However, its rapid evolution, specifically in the post-9/11 period and the rise of ISIS, have forced governments to rethink outdated and ineffective policies designed to preserve national security. Most countries now require innovative solutions that can holistically address the complex and often unpredictable drivers of VE in their respective societies. A 'whole-of-society' or 'whole-of-government' approach has long been mooted by P/CVE practitioners, though how such an approach would be implemented is unclear. In bridging this gap, the United Nations has developed a guideline for nations to follow in formulating their own strategies to tackle VE.

In 2015, the then UN Secretary General announced a comprehensive Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) in response to the fourth review of the Global CounterTerrorism Strategy and Security Council resolution 2178. The plan recommended that: "each Member State should consider developing a national plan of action to prevent VE which sets national priorities for addressing the local drivers of VE and complements national counter-terrorism strategies where they already exist."[1]

The UN also stipulated that any action plan should uphold human rights and promote equality and respect for all in the eyes of the law. It should be developed in an inclusive and multi-disciplinary manner in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 agenda[2]. Another key provision was that the plan should tackle the problem of returning foreign terrorist fighters, which is an immediate and highly-debated concern for many countries. Despite a steady increase in terror-related arrests in recent years, Malaysia has yet to finalise a NAP. In Aug 2019, the Home Ministry announced that it was still developing the action plan, and did not provide an indicative timeframe for its completion[3].

In anticipating the launch of any kind of action plan (the details of which are not publicly available), and adopting the UN priority areas above as a guide, IMAN proposes eight strategic pillars for the Malaysian NAP that comprises preventive and reactive solutions to what are essentially highly localised VE dynamics. These pillars (Fig 1; Appendix F) will highlight policy areas and identify the stakeholders responsible in tackling local VE drivers while strengthening existing mechanisms to counter the terrorist threat in online and physical spaces. IMAN's proposed national strategy will also moot improved measures in dealing with convicted terrorists and

returning foreign fighters from the Middle East, particularly their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Fig.1: Strategic Pillars - (Proposed) National Action Plan on P/CVE

4.2 Leading the way through Prevention

4.2.1 Pillar I: Dialogue and Peace Narrative

Prevention needs to be at the core of any long-term action plan against VE, and the first step in this arduous process is to identify the drivers or motivators that make VE narratives an appealing prospect. In Malaysia, these drivers are inherently linked to a deep-seated racial and religious polemic that need to be addressed through sustained dialogue and a prevailing peace (counter) narrative. To that end,

governmental and non-governmental stakeholders such as the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), the National Unity Department, and faith-based entities play a proactive role in creating a space for interfaith/intrafaith dialogue that promotes greater understanding and tolerance among Malaysians.

At the same time, P/CVE practitioners and the authorities should come together to develop counter-narratives that can be presented in creative ways to debunk the myths and falsehoods peddled in cyberspace by terrorist groups like ISIS. Such narratives should be designed for dissemination on social media and content sharing sites as these platforms appeal the most to target audiences, especially the youth. Another measure to combat VE narratives is to create an info bank (online and in printed form) containing trusted local and international *fatwas* (edicts), verified religious works and Quranic interpretations. The info bank would serve as a reference or fact-checking mechanism against the litany of questionable online sources for religious knowledge. It is also suggested that this be made available in multiple languages to ensure maximum penetration among the masses.

4.2.2 Pillar 2: Education and Community Engagement

Education is at the epicentre of preventing VE, especially in terms of cultivating empathy and mutual respect from the early stages of childhood. Parents play a crucial role in encouraging their children to mingle with those outside their race during the kindergarten years, while the teaching of multiculturalism should be incorporated into the primary and secondary school syllabus. Meanwhile, the Education Ministry should collaborate with other ministries and CSOs in training school teachers to identify risky behaviour or violent tendencies among their students and teachers. Much like the UK's Prevent strategy, it would train educators to become frontliners in the battle against extremism, enabling them to carry out early intervention or corrective measures. However, it must be noted that programmes such as Prevent Strategy also have its negative side effects - targeting can result in unintended consequences, such as alienation, abuse and profiling and it also puts the onus on teachers to police students. Therefore, in tandem, blanket preventive programmes such as the Global Citizenship Education (GCED) framework by UNESCO to equip learners, of all ages, and notably young women and men, with the knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours, which foster responsible global citizenship, critical thinking, empathy and the ability to take action against VE. It should be emphasised that Education plays a key role in providing a sustainable solution.

There is also a desperate need to stem the unauthorised religious learning centres (*pusat tahfiz*), which have mushroomed in Malaysia in recent times. These centres often teach syllabuses that have not been vetted by the government and can be a front for the propagation of violent and extremist ideas. A prevailing concern is that

tahfiz schools are popular among parents who want a religious upbringing for their children, and attempts to shut them down may be met with opposition. While a solution may not be forthcoming, the authorities can still implement monitoring and regulatory measures to ensure these centres comply with certain requirements. *Tahfiz* schools are also not homogenous with many propagating different ideologies and have multiple funding streams. It would be in the interest of the Government to monitor all schools and provide guidelines for parents to help them when choosing schools for their children.

Similarly, increased community engagement is crucial to address VE at the grassroots level. The P/CVE landscape in Malaysia has thus far been a new and staggered field, with most actors operating independently from one another. While there is a growing interest in studying this issue, greater collaboration and engagement is necessary to actualise a 'whole-of-society' approach. Most CSOs dabbling in CVE practices require capacity-building training as they lack the resources and knowledge to affect significant change. International bodies with the right expertise fill the gap in this case to develop the understanding of VE among local CSOs and train them on early stage intervention, given that they work regularly with vulnerable communities. Additionally, engagement also needs to be facilitated with state religious departments, which are the most credible voices in promoting a moderate Islam that prohibits violence and fosters respect between different faiths.

4.2.3 Pillar 3: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Islamist terror organisations have in the past typically placed women in roles that are subservient to their male counterparts - most often as 'jihadi brides', cooks or even sex slaves to the men in terrorist camps. That pattern changed with ISIS, which has recognised the empowering role of women and positioned them at the forefront of its agenda. The group's rise has seen an equally staggering number of women serving as recruiters, financiers, and even soldiers on the battlefield - a phenomenon that has yet to be effectively addressed by the counter-terrorism apparatus and CVE practitioners on the ground. A significant number of Malaysians who were arrested for supporting ISIS and a number of impending returnees are young women, who require a different treatment from men. As such, Malaysia needs to invest more in developing the role of women, specifically through women's welfare groups and NGOs, to participate in the P/CVE agenda. This should be pursued alongside ongoing efforts to promote female empowerment and gender equality at all levels of society, acting as a counter-narrative to the purported 'empowerment' and 'equality' groups like ISIS claim to offer its female followers.

Another aspect worth considering is leveraging the family institution, specifically mothers, sisters, and maternal figures in general, as powerful conduits for prevention. While not discounting the importance of male members in a family,

females often possess certain qualities such as empathy and a nurturing nature that goes a long way in deterring their family members from being brainwashed by VE ideology. Admittedly, the growing involvement of women in VE is a new phenomenon, which requires further cross-sectional studies that seek to better understand VE motivations by gender and its impact on different female age groups.

4.2.4 Pillar 4: Good Governance

Upholding good governance, transparency and accountability contributes significantly to VE prevention as it represents a solution to many of its enablers, such as corruption, money laundering and human trafficking. Hardcore terror groups customarily become involved in criminal networks that carry out such activities as it ensures a consistent cash flow to support the organisation's survival. As such, the Malaysian government needs to be more proactive in stifling such activities by making drastic institutional changes, both in terms of legislation and the structure of national/state agencies. Poorly run governments also cause grievances to manifest among the public and additionally reinforce the propaganda of groups like ISIS, who often call upon their followers to combat *'taghut'* (tyrannical) or un-Islamic governments. Good governance reduces public disillusionment with the country's leadership, and thereby lessens the likelihood of citizens embracing VE ideology as an outlet to act on their grievances.

4.2.5 Pillar 5: Youth Empowerment

Multiple studies, including the latest one by IMAN (see Chapter 2), have proven that youth populations are one of the most susceptible to VE behaviour. This is due mainly to a struggle with identity, disenfranchisement, unemployment, and other socio-political drivers that put them at risk of being targeted by terrorist recruiters, especially in cyberspace. Coupled with innate psychosocial traits and a strong 'thrill-seeking' desire, VE tendencies among youths stem from multiple factors and necessitate a multi-faceted response. In its engagement with the Youth and Sports Ministry in Dec 2019, IMAN proposed a range of measures aimed at empowering youths, among which is to harness sporting events as a unity tool, while increasing youth participation in sports and e-sports as an alternative thrill-seeking outlet.

Young Malaysians also want greater political agency, and this can be actualised by involving them in decisions and policy-making processes - for instance by giving more teeth to the Youth Parliament in proposing and passing laws. Local youth groups have also long mooted a National Youth Assembly that would unite them under a single umbrella and convene once or twice a year to develop policies of interest to the youth. The Malaysian Parliament's decision in July last year to lower the voting age to 18 was an important step in giving youths a bigger voice in shaping the country's future. However, more needs to be done in terms of engaging and

empowering youths who remain on the fringes of society - those who lack basic access to education, employment opportunities, and are therefore turning to social ills (including VE) out of frustration and desperation.

4.2.6 Pillar 6: Strategic Communications, Information and Social Media

As the first chapter in this report highlighted, the current battle against VE ideology and its perpetrators is taking place predominantly in cyberspace. Malaysia, much like its counterparts, is in need of a comprehensive strategic communications and information management strategy that leverages public-private partnerships to combat online VE content. Such a partnership would involve local experts and tech giants such as Google, Facebook and Twitter coming together to:

- Monitor and regulate content on that are hateful, discriminatory, or extremist in nature;
- Develop online counter-narratives that automatically appear as 'search results' whenever internet users browse loaded terminology such as 'ISIS', 'violent extremism', 'terrorism', etc;
- Create and online info bank (see Dialogue and Peace Narrative);
- Promote online resilience through increased digital literacy - responsible and accountable usage of online spaces.

Additionally, the role of mainstream or traditional media outlets as strategic partners cannot be underestimated, particularly in promoting universal values of moderation and tolerance. Similarly, media organisations perform a better job of disseminating information publicly (i.e. the successes of state-led institutions in curbing VE).

4.3 Beefing up existing Counter-Terror apparatus

4.2.7 Pillar 7: Human Rights and the Rule of Law

While existing laws such as POTA, SOSMA and the ISA before that have proven effective in preventing deadly terrorist attacks on Malaysian soil, the country faces persistent pressure in ensuring that, as per the UN guideline, it continues to uphold human rights and the rule of law in its fight against terrorism. This has not always been the case, with a history of preventive laws being used to stifle political dissent. The new PH government also failed to keep its promise to abolish SOSMA, which activists and human rights groups continue to condemn for its "draconian" provisions[4]. There are also reports that those detained for terrorism offences are abused and treated poorly in prison, as the case highlighted in Chapter 3 suggests.

Despite this, enforcement agencies continue to stress the need for the law in the interest of national security. Going forward, the NAP should:

- Include a commitment to refine laws dealing specifically with terrorism and VE, in keeping with the UN guideline for states;
- Emphasise restorative justice rather than punitive measures in addressing VE cases.

Beyond these, the government must continue to uphold individual liberties such as freedom of religion and expression, which will largely be assessed in the way it treats refugees and minorities like the Orang Asli, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trangender, Queer), Shia Muslims, and the Rohingyas.

4.2.8 Pillar 8: Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Having reviewed Malaysia's deradicalisation and rehabilitation programme in the previous chapter, it can be surmised that crucial improvements are required. In dealing with convicted terrorists and returnees, the impending NAP should look towards ensuring long-term desistance from VE. This can be achieved by placing greater emphasis on the post-release or reintegration phase, which is arguably the most crucial in preventing recidivism. The lack of community or CSO involvement in the rehabilitation process has been Malaysia's weakness for some time, but a growing community of P/CVE practitioners are primed to fill the existing gap by providing post-release support to VE probationers. This would not only go a long way in realising the ideal 'whole-of-society' approach to tackling VE, but also limit a state-centric model, which can often be problematic as most VE detainees possess prevailingly negative perceptions of the state apparatus. In fact, more than just involving CSOs, the NAP should empower these organisations to play a more proactive role in rehabilitating and reintegrating VE offenders, through:

- Involvement of CSOs in the rehabilitation process
  - Preparing the community for the reintegration process;
  - Help overcome community distrust on state policies;
  - Engagement and relationships between CSOs and the community can open opportunities for them to shape the policies affecting them.

- Skills-based training and personal development
  - Equip detainees with skills to pursue sustainable livelihood upon release;
  - Rather than stigmatizing or isolating VE offenders from their community upon release, they should be allowed to play a bigger role in their community, including in charity organisations or advocacy groups.

- Preventing recidivism

- VE offenders should be prevented from re-entering the environment that radicalised them in the first place;
- Their immediate communities should also be monitored, and if needed, rehabilitated as well, to prevent recidivism;
- Besides monitoring, they should also be provided with opportunities to pursue healthier and safer activities that can divert them from re-engaging with extremist groups. These can be tied with activities proposed in Pillar 5 (Youth Empowerment).

Notes

[1] United Nations, *'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism'*, 2015: https://www.un.org/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/plan_action.pdf

[2] United Nations, *'Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism'*, 2015: https://www.un.org/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/plan_action.pdf

[3] The Star Online, *519 terror suspects held*, 27 Aug 2019: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/08/27/519-terror-suspects-held

[4] The Star Online, *Groups and MPs call for total repeal of Sosma*, 21 Nov 2019: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/11/21/groups-and-mps-call-for-total-repeal-of-sosma

Appendices

Appendix A: Online groups

Websites

JIHADICA - Blog monitoring Jihadi activities (English)
http://www.jihadica.com/

JIHADOLOGY - Active with video propaganda posted several times a day
http://jihadology.net/

Kiblat - Indonesian news. Mainly syndicated news
http://www.kiblat.net/news

Era Muslim - Indonesian news
http://www.eramuslim.com/

Twitter

<u>Notable accounts</u>

@abusayyaf2004

@alqaeda

@MaioOraby

@bijak_politik

@KhubaibNazri

@CtrlSec - ISIS Twitter account tracker

@MK_Pharmacy

Facebook

Hashtag/ Keyword	Activity/Comments	Facebook Pages/Groups

#abusayyaf	Gaming related	Abu_Sayyaf Gaming - Gaming related, Indonesian/Malaysian. https://www.facebook.com/Abu_Sayyaf-Gaming-354655465224487/ AS.AbuSayyaf - Thai based gaming group https://www.facebook.com/ASAbuSayyaf-1151884484902330/
#alqaeda	A lot of groups which are private and have no public content, mainly international.	https://www.facebook.com/groups/154563831256573/permalink/355101644536123/
#baqiah	Only groups, mostly retail related	KISWAH Terapi Ruqyah Syariyyah - Group Perawat Islam https://www.facebook.com/groups/kiswah/
#baaqiyyah		Informasi Pembinaan Masjid Bandar Bukit Raja https://www.facebook.com/groups/dosone/
#darulislamiyyah		Jom CARI ILMU dan CINTAI MASJID https://www.facebook.com/groups/655493884497964/ JUTAAN Sokongan Kepada Perjuangan Penyebaran Ilmu Syahadah dan ZikrulLah https://www.facebook.com/groups/682529091923408/

#daulahislamiah		https://www.facebook.com/daulahislamiah/
#fisabilillah	Very active locally	FISABILILLAH https://www.facebook.com/groups/221155131336380/ JEHAD_FISABILILLAH https://www.facebook.com/imantakwa/
#jamaahansharutdaulah	Very active locally	JUTAAN Sokongan Kepada Perjuangan Penyebaran Ilmu Syahadah dan ZikrulLah https://www.facebook.com/groups/682529091923408
#jihadfisabilillah		Let's Dakwah https://www.facebook.com/groups/240014819401237/
#khalifahnusantara		BAHTERA KHALIFAH NUSANTARA https://www.facebook.com/groups/khalifahnusantara/?ref=group_header
#khilafahislamiyah		Sheikh Imran Hosein Malaysia Lecture Tour Series https://www.facebook.com/groups/161336870667754/?ref=group_header
#khilafahnusantara		Khalifah_nusantara https://www.facebook.com/Khalifah_nusantara-612789942418362/

#mujahiddin	No posts but several followers	Mujahiddin https://www.facebook.com/Mujahiddin-336920436457148/
#revenge4muslim		MUSLIM VILLAGE (dedicated to Sheikh Imran Nazar Hosein) https://www.facebook.com/groups/mualim.village/?ref=br_rs
#syahid	Very active	SYAHID FISABILILLAH IMPIAN KAMI https://www.facebook.com/groups/264930346951033/ Kami mahu syahid https://www.facebook.com/groups/362239760520253/ Kami Ingin Syahid !!!!!!! https://www.facebook.com/groups/143188125816176/about/

YouTube

Keyword	YouTube Channel
#daulah	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB8J23rVkz3f6ddEyl6rJzQ
#dawlah	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCumpEsozixbl-PyKw12hmnw
#dawlah_islamiah	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXpgwEuvuulAgjw31QLlZSw

#jihad4syria	https://www.youtube.com/user/Ridwen3677/videos
#khalifahnusantara	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3pfeio2ZJx_uC8powlggzw/videos
#khilafahnusantara	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPaejthMwq2HWoEssMXmVtg/videos
#mujahiddin	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYhmxvr1QR7HmKN0t4OYHBw
#toghut	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmsbf4kTxfF0sxoA--vEYSA/videos

Telegram

Channel	Description	URL	Comment
@daulah islamiah		https://t.me/daulaislamiah	
Daulah Media	Daulah Media Onlinestore "Berbudaya Baca, Berdakwah Bijak" Pemesanan buku: 085242870420 (Call / Whatsapp)	https://t.me/mydmedia	Islamic book releases. Daulah Media is a publisher
طبخات جزراوية	حياكم الله وبياكم٨٨ خصصنا هالقناة للطبخات الجزراوية "اليمنية"الشامية القناة للدولاويين فقط للإستفسار @ansar_kitchen1:left_right_arrow:أسك	https://t.me/ta_dawlah0	Sharing of mostly food pics/recipes?
NUsantara		https://t.me/nusantara	Only one post in Arab/Jawi
Membanteras Kufur,Syirik,Bid'ah&Toghut	memberi penerangan pada umat mengenai ISLAMIC FAKE@islam palsu selain cara Nabi Muhammad saw&Sahabat r.a	https://t.me/IslamicFake	Islamic quotes and interpretations
The Nusrah	Segala ilham hanya milik Tuhan, Diberikan sebagai pinjaman. - Legasi Tarbiyyah:cherry_blossom:	https://t.me/thenusrah	Islamic lifestyle posts

Usrah Jihad Hijrah	Group Usrah Non-Gonvernmental Organisation (NGO) NGO Registration No: PPM 0181111022019 Since 31 December 2014 Hijrah Tanpa Lelah, Dakwah Tanpa Rebah.	https://t.me/UsrahJihadHijrah	Islamic quotes and videos
Perindu Syahid	Kerana Syurga itu bukan percuma, maka harus ku bayar dengan titik peluh dakwahku	https://t.me/PerinduuSyahid	Islamic lifestyle and videos
Harakah Islamiyah	Channel Telegram yang Berisi Konten Positif dalam format Islamigrafis (Infografis Islamis) dan Video. #YukNgaji #Harkis	https://t.me/harakahislamiya	Islamic practices, videos and worship guide
Tarbiah Islamiyah	Tarbiah Islamiyah	https://t.me/tarbiahislamiyah	Islamic lifestyle (Malaysian centric)
UiTO Channel:Bid'ah Nusantara	Membicara amalan bidaah yg berlaku di nusantara. Pautan untuk di kongsi t.me/BidaahNusantara Channel rasmi t.me/UiTOSaluranRasmi Channel tazkirah t.me/tazkirah Channel Rektor t.me/BicaraCR	https://t.me/BidaahNusantara	Islamic lifestyle, quotes and interpretations
كلام من ذهب	السّعادة لا تحتاج إلى معجزات عظيمة كلّ ما تحتاجه قلب متسامح , وجه مبتسم وقناعة بالرزق و ثقة تامّة بالله.	https://t.me/abusayyaff	Islamic quotes, etc.
مناظره با القاعده		https://t.me/ALQAEDAMIR	Discussion on an issue. Active for only one day
Kitab At-Tawhīd	Learn the first and foremost thing in Islām. Tawhīd.	https://t.me/alqaedah	A series of posts on Islamic intrepretation with quotes. No new posts since inception. Account is maintained to keep channel alive
جمهوری:satellite: بزرگ داعش:satellite:	satellite:ابراتحاد داعش:satellite: اخبار داعش:telephone_receiver: را دنبال کنید:telephone_receiver:	https://t.me/JOMHORI_DAESH	Some discussions in Arab and then abandoned

DAESH		https://t.me/bbc_daesh	Some quotes and reposts, then abandoned
سلطنت داعش		https://t.me/Saltanat_daesh	Invitation to join a chat and Arab written post
Darul Istiqamah	Muassasah Qiyadah Darul Istiqamah (MAQDIS)	https://t.me/darulistiqamah	Highlighting local/global Islamic issues and soliciting donations from public
Daarul istiqaamah	Barashada culuumta sharciga ah للنساء فقط	https://t.me/darulist	Islamic quotes
دارالاسلام سسٹرز جموں و کشمیر	دارالاسلام سسٹرز جموں و کشمیر کا مقصد ہے بہنوں کو دینی تعلیم سے باخبر کرنا ہے .. باطل کے سامنے جکنا ہماری عادت نہین بلکہ انکوں اللہ کے سامنے جوکنا ہماری عادت ہے ... مجاہد کے خواب مکمل کہاں ہے جینے کی خواہش میں مرنا جہاں ہے..	https://t.me/darulislamsisters	Islamic inspirational quotes and posts (Video and images) Some interpretations in English
Даруль Ислям دار الإسلام	Нет силы и мощи кроме как у Аллаха!	https://t.me/darulislam1	Mainly audio clips with some video Some presentation of Islamic quotes and interpretations
Maktabah Darul Islam	Maktabah Darul Islam	https://t.me/darulislam2	Islamic books and media
Otak udang	Free speech is a right, as long as it doesnt involve crimes	https://t.me/daulahkontoliah	Anti-Islamic posts. Attacking the entire religion of Islam
Manufofin Daular Musulunci		https://t.me/Daulah	Pirated media or guides to support pro-VE media creation
AntiTerrorismResearch-ATR	Providing Research Material for AntiTerror Monitoring Activities.	https://t.me/Dawlahvids1	Media dump of possibly IS propaganda videos.

Syiah Kafir Harbi ii	Membongkar Kekafiran Syiah Laknatullah syiahkafirharbi.wordpress.com @SyiahKafirHarbii	https://t.me/SyiahKafirHarbii	Islamic quotes and interpretations. Dormant and kept alive
Jamaah		https://t.me/jamaah	Islamic quotes and interpretations
Ayat Ayat Tambahan		https://t.me/nusrahmumtazarabicara	Teaching Arabic terms for Islamic quotes. Use of audio files
Financial Jihad	Tips, panduan, motivasi kewangan dan hartanah http://bit.ly/ComboKEY Koleksi Ebook Kewangan & Hartanah Nak dapat Nota Kewangan terus ke whatsapp anda? 1. Save no 011-1532 3481 2. Klik link di bawah :point_down: wasap.my/601115323481/SayaDahSaveNo	https://t.me/FinancialJihad	Islamic financing advice for Malaysians
د جهاد لاره	دلته به د نژی د ګوټ ګوټ مجاهدینو احوال په تفصیل سره ذکر کیږی ان شاءالله	https://t.me/jihad4	VE propaganda with video and audio. Dormant for years
تولیدی کتیبه ژیلافه	تولید انواع کتیبه چوبی پلاستیکی پلی استر منبط پی وی سی پروفیل	https://t.me/katibahjilafah	Mainly selling curtains initially, then later posts are related to Islamic related postings
DOKUMENTASI DALAM KEKHALIFAHAN		https://t.me/Khilafahislamiyah	A single post with numerous references to Islamic teachings and quotes using videos and various media

lone wolf	درتلگرام﷽lone wolfﺍﯾﻨﻬﺎ چنل رسمی﷽ تکست:page_facing_up: کانالی پر از بان های:page_facing_up: واسلاو دیسلاو های اهنگ :broken_heart:وغمگین:broken_heart: انواع عکس:white_check_mark: های پروفایل و والپیپرو ﷽:white_check_mark:... لینک کانال ما:point_down: :point_down: https://t.me/joinchat/AAAAAEV HYZfgVf3k0Fx8Ig	https://t.me/lonewolfs32	Captioned images and text based posts
TAHSIN FHQ MUJAHIDDIN	Group Kelurga FHQ Mujahiddin	https://t.me/TahsinFHQMuja hiddin	Group leader commonly posts Islamic teachings with and reposts from elsewhere
Mujahidin Pekak 0001	ILMU kena BELAJAR, AMAL & SEBAR	https://t.me/MujahidinPekak0 001	Group discussion and sharing about Islamic lifestyle and teaching Islamic concepts and Arab language
Salafi		https://t.me/salafi	Islamic teachings, quotes and perspectives on issues of importance
Jihad Dan Syahid	Jiwa yang hidup adalah jiwa yang menyedari dia akan menemui ilahi, dan dia merindukannya. Dek kerana itu, dia berusaha menjadi hamba pada Allah SAHAJA!	https://t.me/syahidimpianku	Islamic guidance and teachings in relation to daily life
Toghut Buster	Memberi penerangan mengenai toghut diseluruh dunia berdasarkan Alquran&Sunah serta tindakan terhadap mereka	https://t.me/ToghutBuster	Postings about Islamic warfare and Islamic teachings. Mainly reposts from other sources

Mujahidin Huffaz :cactus::muscle:	:point_up: جهاد في سبيل الله، Goncanglah Dunia dengan Dakwahmu.:green_heart: Mantapkan akhlakmu.:green_heart: Kuatkan hafazanmu.:green_heart: Jadikan Al-Quran sebagai sahabatmu.:green_heart: Perbaikilah hubunganmu dengan Allah SWT.:green_heart: Maka Dakwahmu Pasti Berjaya! " :cactus::green_heart: :earth_americas:HuffazulQuran :green_heart:	https://t.me/MujahidHuffaz	Postings about Islamic teachings and lifestyles. Mixed with numerous repostings from other sources
Nusrah || نُصرة	مؤسسة مناصرة لأسرى التوحيد | نسعى لإقرار أعينكم حساب التواصل @Nussrah [تم إنشاء المؤسسة يوم الجُمعة 8 رجب 1437 هـ الموافق 2016/4/15 م]	https://t.me/ghkjoi	Arab messages and captioned images
Khalifah Untuk Semua	Perkongsian Video Kuliah Dan Sebagainya...	https://t.me/khalifahuntuksemua	Reposting of issues for Islamic lifestyle and teachings. Mainly using videos and YouTube
JAMAAH NGAJI MASJID DARUSSALAM		https://t.me/JamaahNgajiMasjidDarussalam	Sharing of Islamic teachings and quotes. Use of images and video links. Mainly reposting and little discussions. Often conducted by a small series of active individuals
Dakwah Kaktus	Jangan malu untuk berhijrah, Tapi malu bila kamu kekal dalam jahiliah:heart::fire: Semoga channel @mujahidah_kaktus dapat bagi manfaat untuk semua subscribers dan para admin:relieved::cactus:	https://t.me/mujahidah_kaktus	Mainly advertising and postings about solat times. Some occasional Islamic quotes on lifestyle and teachings with video links

Daru al-islam	🌹 Подписывайтесь БисмилЛях, очень много полезного. Обратная связь: @darulislam_bot	https://t.me/darulislam	Postings in Russian with Arabic quotes. Use of images and videos
Hijrah Fisabilillah	Mengumpulkan bahan2 berkenaan ISLAM bagi mengajak kita untuk lebih mendekati kehidupan mengikut ajaran ISLAM	https://t.me/HijrahFisabilillah	Postings on Islamic teachings, lifestyle, and quotes. Use of images and some reposts
Hikmah Salafiyyah	Meraih Hidayah Dengan Dakwah Salafiyyah	https://t.me/hikmahsalafiyyah	Main postings are about Islamic events in Indonesia and captioned posters with Islamic quotes. Many other posts on Islamic teachings and lifestyle with Islamic quotes
II Ukhuwah Salafiyyah II	•✦• Jalinkan Ukhuwah dengan bimbingan Kitab & Sunnah di atas pemahaman Salaf •✦• Pertanyaan & Saran: @AbulAbbas_MUS	https://t.me/ukhuwahsalaf	Main postings are about Islamic events in Indonesia and captioned posters with Islamic quotes. Many other posts on Islamic teachings and lifestyle with Islamic quotes

Appendix B: Keywords and Hashtags

Hashtags (Twitter)

#alqaeda

#alqaeda_apologists

#aqap

#daulah

#daulahislamiah

#dawlah

#jamaahansharutdaulah

#jihad4syria

#jihadfisabilillah

#kilafah

#khilafahislamiyah

#khilafahnusantara

#mujahiddin

#pray4syria

#salafi

#salafijihadi

#supportISIS

#supportjihad

#syahid

Keywords (i.e. Facebook, YouTube)

#abusayyaf

#alqaeda

#dawlah_islamiah

#khalifahnusantara

#toghut

#baqiah

#baaqiyyah

#darulislamiyyah

#daulahislamiah

#fisabilillah

#jamaahansharutdaulah

#jihadfisabilillah

#khalifahnusantara

#khilafahislamiyah

#khilafahnusantara

#mujahiddin

#revenge4muslim

#syahid

Appendix C: Focus Group Recruitment Screener

The goal of the focus group discussions (FGDs) is to understand and assess the factors that contribute to violent behaviour and extremist tendencies among 'at-risk' youth populations in Malaysia. The 'at-risk' population identified for an in-depth assessment in this case are members of street racing gangs and online gaming clans.

Focus group composition and location:

Group #	Location	Demographics
1	Kedah (Langkawi)	Mixed – street racing gangs
2	Kedah (Alor Setar)	Mixed – gaming clans
3	Sabah (Lahad Datu)	Mixed – street racing gangs
4	Sabah (Kota Kinabalu)	Mixed – gaming clans

Each focus group will have between 6-8 participants.

To the extent possible, participants in the same focus group session will not know one another. Snowball sampling methods will therefore refrain from placing direct referrals into the same group as the referring person.

Screening method: Public/online via Google Forms

We are looking for people who fit a specific profile. To find out if you qualify, we need to ask you a few questions, which will take about **15 minutes**.

Language of recruitment screening *(indicate respondent's preferred language)*:

English	*Ensure that recruited participants are fluent in the*
Bahasa Malaysia	*language of the focus groups discussion.*

Disclaimer: I agree to being contacted by IMAN for the purpose of participating in a focus group discussion (FGDs) if I meet the requirements of the study.

☐ Yes (keep for all, continue to Section A: Demographic info)

☐ No (terminate)

A. DEMOGRAPHIC

1.) Location (*tick one*):

Kedah (Langkawi)	
Kedah (Alor Setar)	
Sabah (Kota Kinabalu)	
Sabah (Lahad Datu)	

2.) Have you participated in a focus group study in the past 12 months?

Yes	*Terminate*
No	*Keep for all*

3.) Do you regularly/occasionally participate in any of the following activities? (*please tick all that apply*)

Street racing (cars)	*Keep for all*
Street racing (motorcycles)	*Keep for all*
Gaming (computer/console)	*Keep for all*
None of the above	*Terminate*

4.) Gender

Female
Male

5.) How old are you? WRITE DOWN EXACT AGE : _____

Under 18	*Terminate*
18 to 35	*Keep for all*
Over 35	*KIV*

6.) What is your highest level of education? (*pls tick one*)

No formal education
Primary
Secondary
College/University

7.) What is your occupation? WRITE DOWN: _____

8.) What is your monthly household income? (*please tick where appropriate*)

Below ☐ 2000- ☐ 4000- ☐ 7000- ☐ 10000- ☐ ≥ 15000 ☐
2000   <4000   <7000   <10000   <15000

9.) What type of housing do you live in?

☐ Flat   ☐ Apartment   ☐ Terrace
☐ Semi Detached   ☐ Bungalow   ☐ Others

10.)   What is your living arrangement?

☐ Alone   ☐ Nuclear family   ☐ With parents
☐ Extended Family ☐ Roommates/Housemates   ☐ Other

B. SOCIAL CAPITAL

1.) How satisfied are you living in this area?

0 = very ☐   1 = fairly ☐   2 = neither ☐   3 = fairly ☐   4 = very ☐
dissatisfied   dissatisfied   satisfied   satisfied

2.) Do you have trust in your neighbours?

0 = ☐   1 = A few ☐   2 = Some ☐   3 = Many ☐
None   people   people

3.) Do you feel safe living in this area?

0 = very ☐   1 = Fairly ☐   2 = Fairly ☐   3 = Very ☐
unsafe   unsafe   safe   safe

C. PSYCHOSOCIAL TRAITS

SELF-REPORT PSYCHOPATHY SCALE (SRPS)

This test consists of 26 statements that could possibly apply to you. You must rate each on how much you agree with it on a scale of (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree. Most people complete the test in five minutes or so.

No.	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
A1	Success is based on survival of the fittest; I am not concerned about the losers.					
A2	For me, what's right is whatever I can get away with.					
A3	In today's world, I feel justified in doing anything I can get away with to succeed.					
A4	My main purpose in life is getting as many goodies as I can.					
A5	Making a lot of money is my most important goal.					
A6	I let others worry about higher values; my main concern is with the bottom line.					
A7	People who are stupid enough to get ripped off usually deserve it.					
A8	Looking out for myself is my top priority.					
A9	I tell other people what they want to hear so that they will do what I want them to do.					
A10	I would be upset if my success came at someone else's expense.					
A11	I often admire a really clever scam.					
A12	I make a point of trying not to hurt others in pursuit of my goals.					
A13	I enjoy manipulating other people's feelings.					
A14	I feel bad if my words or actions cause someone else to feel emotional pain.					
A15	Even if I were trying very hard to sell something, I wouldn't lie about it.					
A16	Cheating is not justified because it is unfair to others.					
B1	I find myself in the same kinds of trouble, time after time.					
B2	I am often bored.					
B3	I find that I am able to pursue one goal for a long time.					
B4	I don't plan anything very far in advance.					
B5	I quickly lose interest in tasks I start.					

B6	Most of my problems are due to the fact that other people just don't understand me.					
B7	Before I do anything, I carefully consider the possible consequences.					
B8	I have been in a lot of shouting matches with other people.					
B9	When I get frustrated, I often "let off steam" by blowing my top.					
B10	Love is overrated					

D. HISTORY OF RISKY/DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR

1.) Have you ever been in trouble with law? YES / NO

    IF YES, a) Arrested ☐   b) Specific criminal record ☐   c) Juvenile ☐
                                                                    detention

2.) Have you ever taken drugs/illegal substance? YES / NO

    IF YES a) Narcotic (heroin, morfin, candu) ☐

              b) *Stimulants* (amfetamin, ecstacy, kokain) ☐

              c) *Depressant* (trankuilizer, barbiturate) ☐

              d) Hallucinogen (LSD, PSP, Meskalin) ☐

              e) Kanabis (ganja, hashish, marijuana) ☐

E. MAJOR NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS

In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following events:

1. Broke up with significant other ☐   5. Hospitalised at a mental ward ☐

2. Dropped out of university/study ☐   6. Committed a crime ☐

3. Lost job ☐   7. Violent victimization ☐

4. Death of a loved one ☐   8. Negative encounter with the police ☐

F. ETHNOCENTRISM

Indicate whether you strongly agree or strongly disagree with the following statements.
(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Somewhat Agree (5) Agree
(6) Strongly Agree.

No.	Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q1	People from other ethnic groups abuse the system of social benefits.						
Q2	The religious practices of people from other ethnic groups threaten our way of life.						
Q3	The presence of other ethnic group is a cause of insecurity.						
Q4	People from other ethnic groups are given preferential treatment by the government.						
Q5	People from other ethnic groups are given preferential treatment by the private sector.						

G. GROUP IDENTIFICATION

Do you belong to any of the following groups? (*tick all that are applicable*)

1. PEKIDA	☐	9. Hizbut Tahrir	☐	17. Music band	☐
2. Silat	☐	10. Leadership organisation	☐	18. Literature club	☐
3. Belia	☐	11. Gaming community	☐	19. Football supporters' group	☐
4. Motor/kereta	☐	12. Community Welfare Organisations	☐	20. Motor vehicle appreciation club	☐
5. Brotherhood	☐	13. Issue advocacy groups	☐	21. Political Interest groups	☐

Concluding remarks: Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire. We would now like to collect your name and contact information. If you are a match for IMAN's research project, we will get in touch with you. In case you qualify, we anticipate that the discussion will be held on [DATE/TIME]. Would you be available then?

NAME	PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL

Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Research title: Analysing Violent Behaviour and Extremist Tendencies among 'at-risk' Youth Populations

1. Warm-up interactions (10 minutes)

At this stage, participants will be made aware of the format and guidelines of the FGD. They will be asked to introduce themselves and familiarise with their fellow participants. They will also be prompted to share their personal backgrounds and general interests.

2. Group identity and sense of belonging (20 minutes)

Participants take turns describing the racing/gaming groups they belong to, and what appeals to them about the activities, dynamics, and communication patterns of such groups.

2.1 Communication patterns

i)   What appeals to you the most about being a part of this group?

ii)   Is there a leader and hierarchy in your group?

a. Do the opinions of all members matter in your group?

  iii) When there is a misunderstanding or conflict in your group, how is it usual resolved?

   iv) How does your group view the use of violence in certain situations? (Probe: Can you
       provide examples?)

1.   Understanding triggers for violent behaviour (25 mins)

Participants to be presented with several hypothetical scenarios and will be asked to choose between a violent/non-violent/do nothing course of action. They will be asked to justify their responses and comment on the responses of others.

3.1 Scenario #1

'A' and 'B' live in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood. One night, 'B' hosts a wedding at his house while 'A', who is of a different ethnicity, simultaneously conducts a religious funeral procession. This causes guests at the wedding to feel uneasy. 'B' then decides to gatecrash the funeral and uses force to end the procession.

i)   Do you agree with the actions of 'B'? Please explain why/why not.

ii)   What would you do in that situation? *(probe: violent/non-violent/do nothing?)*

iii)   Would you react differently if you experienced that situation in a group of friends?

3.2 Scenario #2

'C' is driving along a busy highway when 'D' suddenly cuts into his lane from the left, scratching the front of his car in the process. Furious, 'C' chases down 'D', and the two stop by the side of the highway to confront each other. Other road users intervene to diffuse the fight but 'D', who is still unhappy, grabs a steering lock from his vehicle and proceeds to smash the car of 'C'.

i)   Do you agree with C's actions? Please explain why/why not.
ii)   What would you do in that situation? *(probe: violent/non-violent/do nothing?)*
iii) Would you react differently if you experienced that situation in a group of friends?

3.3 After obtaining opinions about both given scenarios, ask participants:

Is it justifiable to harm others in self-defense or to achieve justice?

2.   Ideology and beliefs (25 minutes)

4.1 Visual elicitation

Participants will be asked to study TWO different images, depicting:

A.   The Syrian conflict

Caption: Jabhat al-Nusra supporters in Syria. / Source: Fadi al-Halabi (AFP and Getty Images)

B.   A recent ethnic clash/controversy in Malaysia

Caption: Youths at the anti-ICERD rally in December, 2018./ Source: European Press photo agency.

Give participants **2 minutes** to study each image in detail, then ask them the following questions:

i)   What's the first thing that comes to mind when you see this picture?

ii)   Are you familiar with the incident depicted in the image? *(those unfamiliar will be prompted with an explanation)*

iii)   How do you feel about such incidents?

iv)   Why do you think such incidents occur?

What impact does it have on society?

4.2 After participants have commented on both images, ask them:

Do you see a connection between both images? How does the incident in image A link to local contexts, such as the issue depicted in image B?

5. Final comments (10 mins)

Participants will be asked to offer some final remarks or comments on any of the themes previously discussed. The moderator will then conclude the session. --- *FGD end*s ---

Comparison of Rehabilitation Programs

	Malaysia	Indonesia	Singapore	Netherlands
Program Name	Integrated Rehabilitation Module for Violent Extremist Detainees	De-radicalization and Counter-radicalization Program (detailed in Deradicalization Blueprint)	Religious Rehabilitation Program	Dutch Reintegration Approach
Administrator	• Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) • Prisons Department • Royal Malaysian Police (RMP)	• Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) ○ Detachment-88	• Religious Rehabilitation Group	• Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) • Dutch Probation Service ○ Team TER (Terrorism, Extremism and Radicalization)
Official Figures	Success rate of 97%[1]	Recidivism rate of 15%[2]	Success rate of 100%[3]	Recidivism rate of 4.2%[4]
Definition of Success or Recidivism	-	-	-	Success - former detainee does not reoffend and abides by probation conditions
Targets	• The POTA module is specifically for low-risk sympathizers and conspirators	• Islamist extremists	• Islamist extremists	• Detainees for terrorism-related offenses • individuals suspected for involvement in such activities
Assumption of Root Cause	• Religious Ideology (Misinterpretation of Islam)	Religious Ideology (Militant Islam)	Religious Ideology (Militant Islam)	Religious Ideology

[1] TheSundaily, "97% Success Rate for Malaysia's Deradicalisation Programme, Says Nga," *TheSundaily*, October 1, 2019, https://www.thesundaily.my/local/97-success-rate-for-malaysia-s-deradicalisation-programme-says-nga-FX1437250.
[2] Susan Ismail, Noor Huda; Sim, "From Prison to Carnage in Jakarta: Predicting Terrorist Recidivism in Indonesia's Prisons (Part 2)," Brookings Institute, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/predicting-terrorist-recidivism-in-indonesias-prisons/; Sylvene See, "Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: A Catalyst for Recidivism Among Disengaged Terrorists," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 10, no. 6 (2018): 7–15.
[3] Hamas El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism. Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
[4] Liesbeth van der Heide and Bart Schuurman, "Reintegrating Terrorists in the Netherlands: Evaluating the Dutch Approach," *Journal for Deradicalization*, no. 17 (2018): 196–239.

Approach	Deradicalization through religious re-education. Emphasizes the "correct" interpretation of Islam, essentially a moderate, peaceful one.	Deradicalization through dialogue sessions with ex-militants, in order to challenge their worldview and use of violence.	Deradicalization through religious re-education with members of RRG.	Disengagement through behavioural change, emphasizing the need to re-engage elsewhere i.e. commitments, work, education etc.
Successes	• Wider stakeholder engagement compared to previous attempts • Comprehensive approach to rehabilitation encompassing psychological, spiritual and vocational components	• Use of ex-militants in rehabilitation program • Emphasized humane treatment and kindness in dealing with detainees.	• Religious scholars are provided training in counselling. • Minor CSO involvement. Financial assistance for detainees' families come from local mosques and Muslim organizations.	• Transfer of RN's previous experience in reintegrating normal offenders to extremist offenders. • RN staff provided training on deradicalization, jihadism and terrorism so as to be better equipped. • Emphasis on subject matter expertise for all stakeholders, at all levels.
Challenges	• In evaluating the effectiveness due to the lack of transparency	• Budgetary constraints limit infrastructure and financial resources to be allocated to the program. This can hinder its' effectiveness and sustainability. • Lack of CSO involvement.	• Narrow focus on religious radicalization risks overlooking other contributing factors of VE. • Minimal involvement of family in the program due to that the family members are ideologically affected.	• Concerns that the external consultants for the religious components may hold radical or extremist beliefs themselves. • Obstacles in reintegrating high-profile detainees as it presents a greater risk.

Appendix F: NAP Strategic Pillars

PREVENTION

PILLAR	MINISTRY/AGENCY/S TAKEHOLDERS	POLICIES/AREAS OF ACTIVITY
DIALOGUE AND PEACE NARRATIVE	Faith CSOs, the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), National Unity Dept under the Prime Minister's Office	Creation of platforms to facilitate interfaith/intra-faith dialogue
	JAKIM, state muftis, state religious departments, faith NGOs	Development of counter-narratives to debunk myths peddled by VE groups like ISIS ● Presented in factsheet Creation of info bank (online portal) for public reference ● Contains trusted local and international *fatwas*, verified religious works, Quranic interpretations, etc. ● Should be disseminated in Malay (*Overlaps with Strategic Communication, Information and Social Media*)
		Promoting values of pluralism and multiculturalism at all levels of society
EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	MOE	● To include syllabus on multiculturalism in schools ● Empathy training for both teachers and students
	MOE	To create a Teacher's Guide on Identifying and Assessing VE Risk Factors
	Law enforcement, religious bodies, MOE	Monitoring and regulating unauthorized religious learning centres (*pusat tahfiz, usrahs*) ● Their syllabi are unknown
	International development agencies, CSOs, government departments	Capacity-building of civil society organisations (CSOs) to address VE at the grassroots level ● Develop their understanding of VE and train them on early stage

	Religious bodies, Ministry for Islamic Affairs under PMO, state religious depts, state governments	intervention
		Engagement with state religious departments to promote moderate Islamic practices ● Also, to involve them in community resilience initiatives
GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERING WOMEN	Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, CSOs	Acknowledge and develop the role of women in PVE ● Leverage on womens' welfare NGOs to Equal opportunities platform
		Empower family institutions ● Role of parents/siblings in deterring family members from being brainwashed by VE ideology
GOOD GOVERNANCE	All government ministries, parliament, judiciary, law enforcement	Combating enablers to VE ● Corruption, money laundering, human trafficking, etc Anti-discriminatory practices at all levels of gov't ● Repeal discriminatory policies, legislation
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT	Youth and Sports Ministry, youth NGOs	Address youth disenfranchisement by channeling their grievances to more positive outlets ● Use sports and sporting events as unity tool Involve young people in decision-making processes ● Youth parliament/ National Youth Assembly
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA	Tech giants i.e Google, Facebook; Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Ministry of Comm and Multimedia	Digital literacy ● to monitor and guard against the rise of hateful extremism online Monitor and regulate Step up efforts to remove VE content online
	Religious clerics, faith NGOs, CSOs	Development of counter-narratives to debunk myths peddled by VE groups like ISIS ● Presented in factsheet Creation of info bank (online portal) for public reference ● Contains trusted local and

		international *fatwas*, verified religious works, Quranic interpretations, etc. ● Should be translated into Malay (*Overlaps with Dialogue and Peace Narratives*)
		Promote development of online resilience to reduce susceptibility to hateful extremist content online

COUNTER-TERRORISM/VIOLENT EXTREMISM

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW	All government bodies, CSOs, SUHAKAM,	Strengthen respect for human rights ● With regards to the treatment of detainees, due to reports of abuse by authorities/practitioners. Refine laws dealing with terrorism/VE offences ● Avoid ambiguous interpretations that may lead to it being used against political dissent; emphasis on restorative justice rather than punitive measures. Treatment of minorities and refugees ● Uphold individual liberties like freedom of religion, expression, right to sexuality (LGBTQ).
REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION	Prisons Department, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Royal Malaysia Police, Welfare departments, welfare NGOs, religious institutions	Involvement of CSOs in the rehabilitation process ● Preparing the community for the reintegration process Skills-based training and personal development ● Equip detainees with skills to pursue sustainable livelihood upon release ● Prevent recidivism