ASEAN'S BALI WORK PLAN

PARTNERING AGAINST RADICALIZATION & VIOLENT EXTREMISM

About

This program "Flash" was prepared by the ASEAN-USAID PROSPECT project, a joint project of the U.S. State Department, USAID, and ASEAN.

A five-year project, ASEAN-USAID PROSPECT works to enhance ASEAN capacity to address transnational security challenges and more effectively advance a rules-based architecture for a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

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Introduction

Terrorist attacks and growing violent extremism pose a threat to ASEAN's vision for regional stability and prosperity. ASEAN has ramped up efforts in recent years focusing on concrete action, such as the development of the Bali Work Plan to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism launched in late 2019, supported principally by the U.S. Government with contribution from civil society.

Timeline Source: The Counter Extremism Project
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BALI WORK PLAN - AT A GLANCE

Purpose
To guide regional coordination on efforts to counter violent extremism among key stakeholders over the next five years.

Four Main Components
- Prevention of radicalization and violent extremism
- Counter-radicalization and deradicalization
- Law enforcement and strengthening national legislation related to countering radicalization and violent extremism
- Partnership and regional cooperation

Types of Activities
Consultations; assessments and research; trainings including development of training-of-trainers materials; exchange programs/field visits.

BALI WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT & LAUNCH

Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN's principal objective has been to maintain a peaceful, secure, and stable region. This shared responsibility among member states is affirmed by the ASEAN Charter (2007), which lays out a mandate to maintain regional stability; strengthen peace-oriented values; and respond effectively to security threats, transnational crimes, and transboundary challenges.

The regional context has evolved significantly since the ASEAN Charter was ratified and certainly since ASEAN's founding. Communities worldwide face a rise in extremist ideologies that take advantage of social media and manifest in new types of conflict.

Led by the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (SOMTC WG-CT) with catalytic support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Partnership to Promote Regional Optimization within the Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT) project, the Bali Work Plan was developed and adopted in late 2019. Conscious of the complexity of push and pull factors, the Bali Work Plan proposes activities under four main components.

Tackling a multifaceted issue, the drafting of the Bali Work Plan brought together relevant stakeholders, including representatives from all 10 member states across 14 bodies, various UN agencies, and others. ASEAN typically does not involve civil society organizations (CSOs) in policymaking, however, two dozen CSOs were engaged early on. The Bali Work Plan (2019 – 2025) was adopted at the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime in Bangkok in November 2019.

STRENGTHENING DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital illiteracy, particularly amongst youth, is an increasing concern. Multiple member states are addressing the challenges of radicalization and disinformation spread online as the number of social media users in the region continues to grow. By encouraging stakeholder cooperation with social media companies to counter radical ideas, hate speech, and intolerant messages, activities within the Bali Work Plan aim to raise media awareness and community resilience against radicalization and violent extremism.

ENGAGING VULNERABLE GROUPS

Youth are particularly vulnerable to radical and violent narratives and are more often recruitment targets of terrorist groups and other nefarious groups. Among the push factors are social banishment and widespread corruption, pull factors include economic grievances and promise of economic gain. Activities under the Bali Work Plan focus on narrowing economic gaps and providing opportunities for youth exchanges to encourage tolerance and respect for diversity.

HARNESSING PARTNERSHIP

The Bali Work Plan also established a Multisectoral Task Force representing 14 ASEAN bodies and the Secretariat. During the first task force meeting in December 2019, members agreed on roles and responsibilities; resource mobilization strategies; and priority activities. During the ASEAN Partners Meeting held immediately afterward, the taskforce presented their commitments and initiated discussion on shared priorities and potential areas for collaboration. For example, joint activities will be undertaken drawing upon expertise from UN Agencies, such as a training program for correctional services officers in ASEAN member states, based on the Rome Memorandum. Opportunities also exist for engaging private sector partners such as Facebook, which participated in the Bali Work Plan development, to address disinformation in social media.