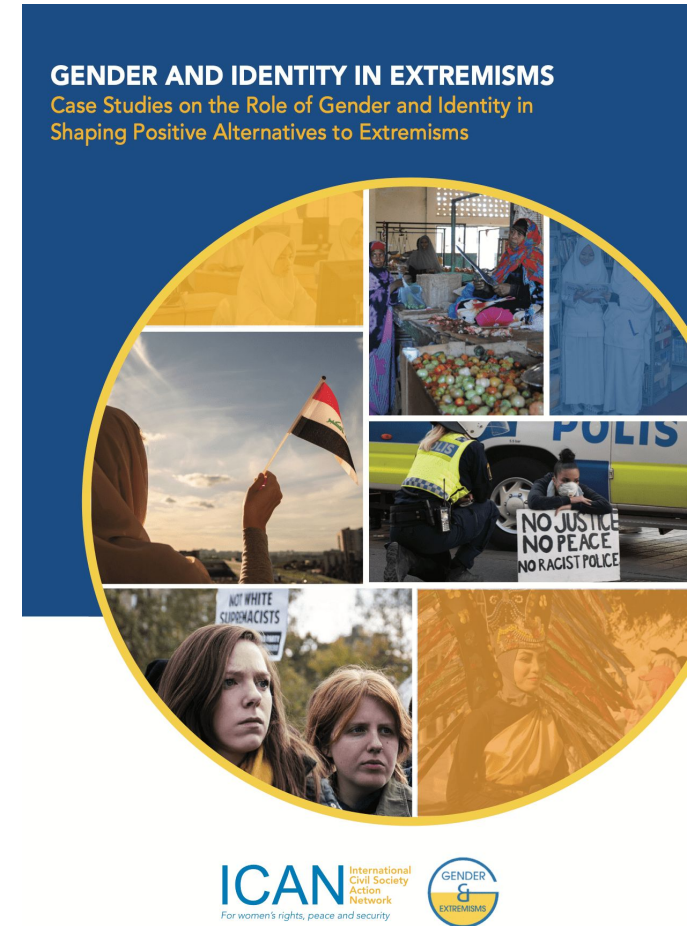


# Building Partnerships to Counter Misogynistic, Faith-Based Extremist Messaging

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# Misogyny and Religious Extremism

- Use of faith-based messaging to advocate for oppression of women
- Cultural relativism by international actors
- Social media a new outlet for ultraconservative and misogynistic religious interpretations



# How are women peacebuilders responding?

## Al-Firdaws Society (Iraq)

- Use of religious texts, tradition, history to promote women's rights and gender equality
- Negotiating with religious and tribal leaders to transform their perceptions of women's place in society
- Agreement among 150 tribes to stop VAW

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**GENDER & EXTREMISMS**

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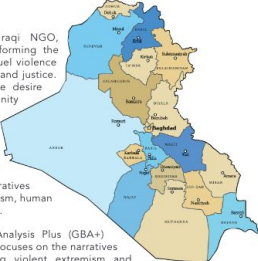
**CASE STUDY**

**UNIFY AND CONQUER:  
THE POWER OF GENDERED  
NARRATIVES TO TRANSFORM  
EXTREMIST HATE SPEECH IN IRAQ**

A Case Study on the Role of Gender and Identity in Shaping Positive Alternatives to Extremisms<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY**

Al-Firdaws Society, an Iraqi NGO, has led the way in transforming the gendered narratives that fuel violence into those that fuel peace and justice. Al-Firdaws' work takes the desire to fight for one's community and redirects it into community service and caring for one's neighbor. The organization uses religious texts, legal instruments, and social media to disseminate narratives that promote peace, pluralism, human rights, and gender equality.



Taking a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) approach,<sup>2</sup> this case study focuses on the narratives promoting and countering violent extremism and terrorism in Iraq and examines how narratives that promote peace and justice can act as power-building tools for marginalized groups.

Since the defeat of Daesh, Iraq has seen popular uprisings over political and economic grievances. The Sadri-aligned militias concentrated in southern Iraq have responded with violence. With impending parliamentary elections, the risk of widespread political violence is exacerbated by increasingly prevalent and extreme hate speech that has found new vigor online amid the digital context of the pandemic. Online hate speech uses gendered narratives to attack civil society actors – particularly those who are female, LGBTQIA+ or members of ethnic minority groups – with sexual defamation and accusations of working with Western regimes. This sometimes leads to their kidnapping or murder. Iraqi political elites have benefited from sowing division through hate speech, using it as a tool to silence dissent, enrich themselves through corruption, and maintain power.

1. The International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) was commissioned by Global Affairs Canada to produce this set of case studies on the role of gender and international identities in countering violent extremism and counterterrorism. For more information or to contact the authors please email ICAN at info@icancanada.org.

2. Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical process that provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. More info on the GBA+ approach is available here.





# How are women peacebuilders responding?

## AMAN Indonesia

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For women's rights, peace and security

**GENDER  
&  
EXTREMISMS**


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**CASE STUDY**

**HEIRESSSES TO THE PROPHET:  
WOMEN RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS  
TRANSFORMING VIOLENT EXTREMISM  
IN INDONESIA**

A Case Study on the Role of Gender and Identity in Shaping Positive Alternatives to Extremisms<sup>1</sup>

**SUMMARY**



Indonesia has a well-established tradition of female religious leadership, with women ulama (religious scholars) playing significant roles in education, activism and religious legal discourse. The Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) in Indonesia co-convoked the Indonesian Congress of Women Scholars or Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) to amplify the Islamic narratives of women ulama and work with them to promote gender equality and counter extremist violence.

Taking a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) approach,<sup>2</sup> this case study discusses the narratives promoting and countering violent extremism and terrorism. It focuses on how the women ulama movement's trust-based relationships, gender-sensitive Islamic perspective and consultative process enables them to deconstruct violent narratives as they pursue gender justice in Indonesia.

Violent extremism in Indonesia is framed by gendered narratives that draw on narrow interpretations of Islam and Qur'anic texts, which are further amplified by social media. This includes extremism among Indonesians who traveled to join the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. These narratives use conservative gender roles and familial power structures to promote violent extremist ideology among young men and women.

<sup>1</sup> The International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) was commissioned by Global Affairs Canada to produce this set of case studies on the role of gender and intersectional identities in countering violent extremism and counterterrorism. For more information or to contact the authors please email [info@icanresponse.org](mailto:info@icanresponse.org).

<sup>2</sup> Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical process that provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. More info on the GBA+ approach is accessible [here](https://www150.com/gba/).

- Convening women religious leaders (women *ulama*) to contest extremist narratives
- Promoting Islamic perspectives that advance gender equality and women's empowerment
- Creating spaces for civic dialogue + debate



# Key takeaways

- Elevating women's voices in discussions on religion and culture
- Credibility and trust
- Promoting a culture of pluralism and dialogue
  - Rights-based approaches
- Protection needs



# Discussion questions

- What is the responsibility of the religious community in countering extremist, faith-based messaging that justifies the oppression of women?
- What are best practices and tactics for partnership between women peacebuilders/activists and religious and traditional leaders?
- What are challenges and barriers to this type of partnership – how can they be overcome?

