

The Asia Foundation Virtual Event - Launch of [*The State of Conflict and Violence in Asia, 2021: Identity-based Conflict and Extremism*](#)

October 20, 2021

Kim McQuay: Good morning, everyone, my name is Kim McQuay my need the Asia foundations program specialist group team of technical specialists and our core program areas, including conflict and fragility.

I am delighted to welcome you to this webinar to launch the second edition of the foundations report on the state of conflict and violence in Asia identity-based conflict and extremism.

A brief word on the format of the webinar start will begin with eight-to-10-minute presentations by us three speakers then transition to a question and answer session.

For the Q&A will be taking questions like a channel located at the bottom of your zoom screen you're welcome to pose questions broadly or to individual speakers.

And we'll do our best to direct questions or to cluster those innovative things are zoom platform includes accessibility features and which will be posting details on the chat space to ensure phone inclusive access by all participants.

Those new to the Asian we're an international NGO with headquarters in San Francisco liaison in Washington DC your host today and a network of 18 country offices and South southeast and northeast Asia.

Pacific islands seem to be added, since 1954 we've worked with partners in government, civil society, academia in the private sector through a combination of grant making technical support and operational pro.

User foci include governance conflict and fragility women's empowerment and gender equality.

Pro environmental climate action, regional and international relations, acknowledge.

Our extensive work on conflict and fragility underscores the foundation's commitment to working with Asian governments, local partners.

And conflict affected communities to reduce and prevent conflict and violence to arrange of programmatic approach.

Our work dries heavily on several key institutional competencies include a focus on the interface of governance conflict intentions, giving rise to violence.

With are working for rigorous analysis of local political, cultural and other.

field work on strong trust relations with our local partners are substandard experience in peacebuilding negotiations and discourse, as well as well as context driven responses to violence against women and local level of violence reduction.

If I'm a cross sectoral approaches specific sectors that effect conflicts that environment and climate action technology.

And women's empowerment and gender equality state of contract record is one of the name research initiatives conflict came through the Foundation contributes to thought leadership and shares evidence based learning and program recommendations and.

We hope that the second edition report will be well received by readers and users to welcome your questions today, as well as later feedback, do you spend time with the referral rewards accessible in digital format now briefly introduce our three.

Adam Burke is the Asia foundations Bangkok based director of conflict and fragility pro over the last 20 plus years old right.

And undertaken assignments for the United Kingdom United Nations, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank and the OECD.

Is Asian experience stands Indonesia Lao Malaysia Nepal Pakistan Philippines Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and other countries.

Adam's work is underlying the importance of understanding and responding to specific political context in peace building in development with political economy analysis triggering prominently in this word.

lead an offer the number of analytics reports for the Foundation and other organizations, we are grateful for leadership.

Sidney Jones is the director of the Jakarta based Institute for policy analysis of conference 2000 to 2013 she served the southeast Asia project director International Crisis Group.

And nice approve analysis insights and recommendations have for many years been: welcomed as required reading for Asia foundation country leadership program staff.

She previously served before foundation Amnesty International and Human watch Cindy has a recognized and keenlyside expert on security in Southeast Asia.

specialty focus on Islamic radicalism and extremists in the region.

publications, including Labor migration ethnic conflicts after nationalist insurgencies and conflicts overland, we're honored that Sidney has contributed a thoughtful keynote overview of identity conflicts in Southeast Asia.

Sophia Shakil is the Asian foundations Manila based director of economic programs who earlier twice served as our country.

So, she has a background in economic and development policy and it depth of experience with international development organizations.

To really see service served as ADB is principal knowledge management specialist for innovations and a senior education specialist at the World Bank under Sofia's leadership the Foundation is sharpening

the strategic focus of our support for the inclusive economic growth of the Asian Pacific regions, including policy support.

middle income countries future of work women's economic empowerment education reform and securing the broader condition needed.

Private sector to thrive in the new global account, I invite you to lead us off the Sidney and Sophia to follow me back a bit later in the program to facilitate Q amp a.

Adam Burke: Thank you everyone I'm very pleased to be presenting this report after a long, long period of preparation and research.

grateful also if people can keep microphones muted, so that the sound is as clear as possible, given that people are logging in from all sorts of places.

With this state of conflict and violence in Asia second edition, the first edition came out four or five years ago we saw this as an opportunity to focus attention on critical concerns.

Beyond the detailed data gathering, which has gone into the country chapters, so we have the broader regional overviews in Part one before the country level detail in part two and will be concentrating mainly on the broader regional overviews today.

identity based conflict and Violent extremism that's the second part of the title of the report and it sums up what we're going to be exploring we started to take a step back, first in writing this report and putting it together before addressing these prominent and.

concerns that are addressed in the populace fair very, very regularly and have been over the last few years, given the resonance globally.

And we're trying to offer a regional overview, particularly for south and southeast Asia exploring common trends and asking what lies behind them, the report presents a range of views through its three guest chapters, all of them quite concise and hopefully accessible.

As we as we move through this analysis in the report, we immediately see some trends which I'll try and summarize here in a few brief minutes.

What we, what we see broadly across the region is disenchantment with a political mainstream.

which has facilitated in several countries, the emergence of controversial leaders we've seen identity politics, rising to the fore in many places.

and public debate has become increasingly polarized also in numerous countries global power struggles have returned as China gained in confidence and stature.

The carbon pandemic meanwhile swept across this confrontational terrain in many places' cases turning up the heat on tensions, a ground level.

A trend towards more authoritarian governance is well established in many Asian countries and indicators such as.

The Economist's Democracy Index, as well as various others show a significant regional decline.

This is reflected in diminishing space for independent media growing restrictions on civil society and has led to popular protests in several countries.

Political leaders have appeared increasingly willing to tolerate or even encourage cases a resurgence of identity-based tensions in order to build their support base.

This has been seen most clearly in the violent displacement of some 700,000 or more from Myanmar to Bangladesh.

deadly majority of violence, meanwhile, perpetrated by organized and often politically connected mobs has also broken out in several other countries meanwhile Violent extremism persists.

While the greatest fears of jihadist influence have not been realized the interplay of international influences and local grievances remains a concern.

Perhaps most evident in the siege of Marawi in the Philippines in 2017 when militants seized the city and subsequent parlance led to over 1000 deaths.

In Asia results were that the term Violent extremism, it is no longer applied solely to jihadist movements.

polarizing politics are associated with a fringe and extremist perspectives and avoid violence carried out by radical fringe sometimes politically supported among Buddhist and Hindu as well as Muslim populations.

These trends have been fueled by online disinformation sponsored by extremists and the times, as I mentioned by political leaders to now.

This will paint a picture of quite significant breakdown, it sounds dramatic and concerning and indeed in many ways it is.

But at this point, I think it's worth taking a step back and looking at some of the statistics on violence across the region as it's interesting and it presents a less straightforward picture which, in many ways is counterintuitive.

This graph indicates the number of fatalities through on conflict organized on conflict or battles sometimes they're known as battle deaths.

In Asia, since 2010 This is particularly south and southeast Asia, although included East Asia it wasn't hugely and one of the important points here is that it includes Afghanistan.

Now what you see, apart from an anomaly of 2020 the last column is an overall increase over the last six or seven years in levels of violence, however, if we show the same graph but without Afghanistan.

You see a very, very different trend, so, in fact, what that graph is showing is more or less conflict in Afghanistan, rather than anything else, which indicates the severity of the conflict there increasing severity over the decade from 2010 up to 2020 and indeed beyond.

What you see here is a significant decrease so rather than conflict getting worse despite all these concerns and problems and trends that I mentioned the actual number of people dying in.

It has gone down there's a blip in 2017 which is explained by the two incidences which are already referred to in Myanmar.

And the seizure morality in the Philippines, but even then, you can see, if you look at the numbers that are slightly hard to read on slide when you're talking about 6000 5000 4000 and still less per year, which for an area with such a

large population and large number of countries, these are quite low levels, historically, or even globally and so what's going on here, why is there such a significant decline, which is these figures are taken from one database, but other databases indicate a similar trend.

And these conflicts what's actually causing the casualties, both in 2010 and 10 years later, throughout this period it's mostly sub national conflict or.

forms of civil unrest, there are growing regional tensions, but with the odd exception they haven't generated huge numbers of casualties.

Civil War on a national level, it is also only really prevalent in Afghanistan, with the possible exception of Myanmar that comes after this data set.

Since the coup early in 2021 and you've seen the numbers of people dying in the southern national conflicts in localized complex cross region has been going down.

Throughout this period, many of the bloodiest of these internal conflicts have got a lot less bloody.

Examples include Mindanao Indian Kashmir Northwestern front or Pakistan far south of Thailand or considerably less violent over the course of the previous decade.

Why well in some cases, there have been reformed or concessions by the government, some form of political change on the ground locally and often nationally.

But in many of these sites of violence, what you've seen it is greatly increased state capacity to impose security measures and enforced peace.

So many of Asian conflict still continue all of those I just mentioned a store conflict areas.

But the status subdued some of the violence states are in more control of their territory as they come on average wealthier and security services are better funded over what a period of what a historically extremely fast rates of economic growth across Asia.

And these trends I don't think they contradict the broad points I just made before.

On declining civil society space increasing authoritarianism and so on, I think they confirm them in many ways.

So, what you see is an increase or significant level of tension across the board, but increasing state control.

In many ways, and that that fits the description of increasing authoritarianism across the region as well, where that leads to in future is not yet clear but it's only fair that there are going to be continued and persistent attentions of many sorts.

With a continued mixture of some suppression and perhaps some reforms in places throughout the report we tried to indicate.

Some of these trends Michael vertically artists offers a broad sweep of the region, and he stresses how domestic politics have repeatedly played to ethnic and religious tensions, while international support for liberal norms of pluralism, tolerance and democracy have declined.

Much of the tension being felt across the region is fueled by frustration and inequality.

And you've seen a revival of ethnic nationalism have reinvented traditions, often linked with religious identity in Sri Lanka and India.

more strident and exclusionary versions of Islam and typically tolerant Indonesia is a very diverse or plural societies and picking apart the fragile glue that binds them together may well be a recipe for increasing tensions or instability in future.

The, the report also presents a striking set of findings on the links between social media and violence, we were fortunate to have been able to interview three Eminence specialists Sarah oh San gennaro tour and Maria.

Maria, of course, has just become a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, only a few days ago. 91 Adam Burke The interviews with all three presenters strong call for action to stem current manipulation of online spaces.

are criminals by extremists by abuses of women, and especially by governments across much of the region.

These interviews reveal a start current situation social media being a key driver, not the sole driver or the instigators but a key factor in extremism and political manipulation.

To quote Maria Reza from the report we're on the precipice, this is destroying all of us, how do we prevent our tools what we create from destroying humanity and destroying our structures,

What new structures do we need to put in place, and on that last point of the new structures that we need to put in place.

The report does, try to point towards action that can be taken, and I think will be emphasizing this across the presentations today.

In the online sphere, the interviews emphasize the need for the development of standards and norms.

coalition's that operate at a range of levels from the global down to the Community, and particularly for non-governmental organizations such as big foundation many more both international and national, local.

The scope to engage in many areas, has been established, even as the space to do so has been shrinking.

Conflict prevention measures, support for peace, dialogue, represent a fraction of the amount that the international community spends on crisis responses and on reconstruction. 101 Adam Burke

So typically turning a funding tap on is not going to solve highly complex political problems and, but it is part of the challenge.

With the response also requires nuanced understanding of country and local context as well as the broader regional trends and also require support for local bodies, as well as international.

I'll stop here, I think the final comment I'd like to make, which I think cuts across many of these challenges and across proposed solutions.

Is that the word inequality crops up repeatedly, not only in economic inequality, but also frustration at being politically or socially marginalized.

And this generates a lot of the future, which enables volume protagonists to stoke both fearing conflict, whether online or otherwise, focusing on supporting the role of women in conflict prevention is another common thread, which is, overall, to generate equality, as well as peace.

Knowledge how to engage across many of these sectors is increasing, especially in the field of countering extremism, where more nuanced approaches and recognition of gender dynamics are becoming mainstream.

That I'll pass over to Sidney to continue the discussion during on comments from her chapter, very briefly, the report itself is now live online, you can get to it at the Asia foundation website, or there is a dedicated website stateofconflictinasia.org thanks.

Sidney Jones: Hello everyone, thank you very much and I'll pick up on some of Adams themes here.

I would like to look at how extremism insurgency and migration, have become or continue to be major drivers of conflict and violence in the region, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia next. it's interesting if we look at how nationalist movements and extremist movements intersect in the region, because I think there are three major.

kinds of violence that we see taking place that involve.

nationalism and extremism in some form and they often get inter intermixed.

That said, before I go into these three it's worthwhile also noting that extremist violence has gone down in Southeast Asia, we're seeing declining support for movements like ISIS and.

Even though we still have terrorist cells in Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere in the region there actually has been some success.

in countering Violent extremism, at the same time, but if we look at how these three intersect, we have ethno nationalist movements.

And where we have Muslim ethno nationalist movements there's always been concerned that sooner or later, these could morph into.

A global Jihadi movement, but it actually very rarely happens I've changed never morphed into a. into the global Jihad Thailand never showed any interest in joining the global Jihad, none of the movements in the deep South were interested.

Through Rohingya movements by and large, have not been interested in affiliating with the global jihad and you think about it.

And it makes sense, most of these movements, first of all have very specific political goals related to ethnicity, more than religion.

And also, many of them are interested in international support which, and it would be political suicide to affiliate with global Jihad, a movement if you're interested in getting that kind of support so by and large.

They these movements remain very distinct, but there are two major exceptions in the region.

In a one is the weaker movement where we've had a fringe violent movement, which has been used as justification by the Chinese Government for intense repression of what amounts to the entire ethnic group.

But also, the Philippines has been as an exception, where we've had ethno nationalist movements identify, particularly since 2014 with ISIS I think this is also declining.

But it's worth thinking about why this took place in the Philippines and not elsewhere, and it has to do.

I think, with the number of different insurgencies and the competition regionally and ethnically in the Philippines, we can get into that later.

The second big division is the majority Terry and political movement, which often use violence but not have the terrorists time its violence of the bricks stones iron pipes thuggery kinds of.

Violence that are characteristic of many of these movements with that kind of violence often directed against minorities and where you have.

A terrorist movements often rejecting democracy in a way majority Terry and political movement seeks to use democracy as a way of getting into power so many of the autocrats that we now see emerging in Southeast Asia have been democratically elected, and we see lots of.

A majority Terry and mobilization around election times in some of these countries.

And one word on the global Jihadi movement there is a lot of concern now that there could be blowback to Southeast Asia from the rise of the Taliban, the return to Taliban and what could be increased protection for Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, I think, for Southeast Asia.

Most of these fears are somewhat overblown for a variety of reasons that we can talk about later.

The interesting factor is that for Indonesia, in particular, there was actually more interest in ISIS what us on in Afghanistan with about two dozen Indonesians having already tried.

To get to Horace on most of them ending up in detention, but some of them still on accounted for in in chorus on and one of the interesting.

reasons why horizontal was such an attraction is because it had the same kind of end of time connotations that Syria had with the idea that the image these forces would arise in chorus on okay next slide.

If you think about some of the government responses to these kinds of movements, one of the things we see is that there's often a.

Two wrong assumptions that are made, one that Adam referred to is that somehow poverty is the major driver of radicalization and, therefore, economic development is the solution.

To ethno nationalist violence to majority Terry and violence and to extremist violence of the Jihadi variety.

it's almost never the soul factor and oftentimes it's not even one of the key factors, so that, for example, economic development, if we're talking about an ethno nationalist movement that's not Islamic in popular economic development is not the.

solution to the popular and pro-independence movement and it's not going to make political grievances go away.

Likewise, there's an assumption that somehow there's a continuum from intolerance to majora Terry aneurysm.

To violence Violent extremism and that people who are involved in one kind of movement will graduate to the progressively more violent movement, this also very rarely takes place generally the nonviolent or the thuggery kinds of movements.

are very distinct from the violent extremist movements and they don't intersect, but there is an assumption that it particularly today in Indonesia is very pronounced.

That these movements are linked, and that therefore there needs to be a crackdown on the majority Terry and movements more generally.

This has created this phenomenon that Greg fili has termed repressive pluralism, because, in an effort to stop radicalism in the country, more generally, the jacoby government has moved against.

Groups defined as radical without being clear of what the lines are that distinguish political dissent criticism of the government and potentially criminal activity and again many, many ways in which. 1

This is a development that's of concern.

Another issue is that for minorities who become the target of violence or of political majority terrorism in some of these states many do not want.

The work on their behalf, to be seen as defense of minority rights, they want to be seen as full-fledged citizens.

And therefore, when we think about responses, the responses are in terms of encouraging constitutional guarantees of citizenship that make people of any ethnicity or any religion, a.

able to enjoy the same kind of rights next.

A third kind of identity conflict that increasingly overlaps with some of the religious and ethnic issues is the division between.

Migrants and indigenous and this are increasingly an issue as it comes to land and resource conflicts across Southeast Asia, where we have.

Expansion of palm oil plantations and other kinds of plantation agriculture into hinterlands occupied by indigenous groups where a competition over land becomes caught up with migrants coming in from outside the region, often associated with the dominant ethnic group to.

Work on some of these.

Economic development projects or plantations mining and so on, and this can be an issue that increases conflict that in some cases fuels ethno nationalist conflict but also can be.

Something that targets that makes migrants, a target of violence themselves and, of course, we can see a migration being used as a tool of the state to.

pacify some of these outline hinterlands so migrant versus indigenous has become a real major dividing line across Southeast Asia we've also seen that.

As indigenous rights movement becomes become.

A way of trying to establish claims to land and resources this state, in many cases has set up rival indigenous associations as a way of challenging some of these groups on the ground so for all of these.

Reasons it's important to look at how migration, migration and identity intersect with conflict.

And finally, next slide if we think about solutions, I think it's important to underscore that the Asia foundation has been a pioneer in many of these efforts to reduce or address conflict and.

In many cases, what we need to do is more of what the H foundation is already doing this includes getting more technical expertise on communication strategies to local NGOs.

That use social media or using new technologies to address conflict.

I think we absolutely have to protect investigative journalism not only Maria Reza but investigative journalist across the region, it was great to see the writers, journalists released from insane prison yesterday.

I hope they stay out, but investigative journalism is critical.

We need to find and ways to document and address local land conflicts looking where possible at non judicial methods, often because the criminal justice systems are not.

always an impartial way of addressing these conflicts educational exchange programs across the region more generally.

Raising the capacity of some of the groups working on these issues and we need to find a way for addressing military accountability which remains a critical issue across the region, thank you very much.

Sofia Shakil: So I'm going to take a slightly different angle and thank you Sidney and Adam for launching on this.

I'm going to talk about the vulnerabilities of migrant workers and looking at how this important segment of the regional economic war for workforce can move from a situation of perpetual and structural agility to a state of long-term resilience to conflict and sharks.

So just some perspectives and some numbers and patterns lay that out the Asia Pacific region is home to.

One fifth of the world's migrant workers that's almost 80 million.

Out of which 48 million work within the region majority of these work in migration corridors within the regions such as young or cross border migrants, such as India, Nepal or Malaysia, Singapore.

And comprise those seasonal and long-term workers internal migration with a rapid we you know with the kind of rapid urbanization that's driving workers towards cities or for seasonal Labor on agricultural lands is also another facet.

Many Of the migrant workers are driven by distress and whether it's compelled distress compelled by conflicts, such as in Myanmar Bangladesh are focused on or induced by calamity and climate change in the Pacific's small island states or coastal communities and much of the region.

And I think you know, this is where it links back into the whole conflict agenda that you know a lot of. there's a lot of movement and we heard from Sidney's was Adam you know there's the closing space, but how migrant workers are impacted.

But those not driven by distress, but for purely economic reasons, are also caught in a web of vulnerabilities characterized by low skills largely gaining employment in the informal sector or an informal jobs in the formal economy largely irregular or undocumented.

So, you know if we want let's take a little bit of a deeper look at the vulnerability.

You know prism a deeper examination of the vulnerabilities of the Asian Pacific migrant worker shows a range of structural challenges and conditions that we must try to understand and unpack.

Before moving towards what it is that we can do to build their long-term resilience so there's a heavy reliance on informal sector work.

And this goes, you know for all workers, but, in particular, looking at migrant workers when you're relying on informal sector work there's no social protection measures kind of tend to fall through the cracks and you're marred by four conditions of employment.

Often, you know we see unsafe passage and living conditions, and you know characterized by physical abuse and dangerous conditions, and we particularly see that, when it comes to the gender angle. restricted, and you know, and we see, I mean you just have to look not even in Asia, but you know just the headlines from you know the.

Workers the migrants trying to flee conflict on boats, and you know crossing in from terrible conditions.

Restricted you know but what's more fundamental is that you, you know migrant workers, workers face restricted access to basic services, I mean no access to health care, decent housing.

Then there's the whole angle of social stigma does.

You know, and that is basically brought upon by a lack of documentation.

an identity fear disease etc. and, and this is something that is really particularly come out as we've seen how the pandemic has you know put a spotlight on this, then you know another very important angle.

is about the susceptibility to climate change, conflict and other disaster impacts and.

You know this manifests itself in with a sudden loss of livelihoods or income, where migrant workers have to quickly you know they're up their livelihoods are up ended and Victor repatriate and then, of course, poor rehabilitation upon return.

And so, as you can you know just want to lay out that this is, you know quite a complex kind of. set of challenges that migrant workers deal with now when you all of these vulnerabilities are further amplified when looking at it from the gender dimensions.

Migration provides on one hand, and economic opportunity to women, but also exposes them to increase risk of new discrimination and gender-based violence, women are certainly more susceptible to trafficking, giving the undocumented nature of their employment.

A large a large number of them are employed in domestic work and informal employment in the services industry.

There is less regulation and sectors dominated by women, making them more susceptible to exploitation and unsafe conditions and work environments.

men also there's an interesting dimension there where they're employed in construction or seasonal jobs, making them more vulnerable to shocks, such as the pandemic.

Other incidents of conflict and significantly more exploitive working conditions. 204 Sofia Shakil

If we look at the social policy framework, what exists and its failure.

On one, we see that there's a plethora of policies to protect migrant workers and workers in general, I mean, but the international conventions to protect workers numerous laws and policies, the sustainable development goals.

For, particularly those relating to you know, providing sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all or reducing inequalities within countries.

I mean, then the ASEAN consensus on protection and promotion of rights and migrant workers is another example in the news numerous sorts of things, but the problem is that majority of the migrant workers.

Like other vulnerable workers that I'll just touch on in a bit fall through the cracks of policies and social safety nets.

And you know if we look at what this means in terms of

Falling through the safety nets, you know migrant workers makeup you know our form as I just said they work in the informal sector largely and documented.

And what we've seen if we move on the pandemic has only spotlighted.

On several underlying systemic problems, I mean as an example in the Indian migration problem during the early lockdown of corporate 19 or the persistent outbreaks and for long lockdowns of the Singapore migrant dormitories show.

You know this is, you know, truly, a situation which is you know just highlight some of the underlying to stern issues, then there's the all-new dimension of the new economy or the so called new economy where you've got the digital platform, the gig based workers.

Which just reveals that there is a need to redefine work.

The definition of workers needs to be reviewed to look at to include those that are part time or gig workers.

Making the whole definition of the workforce more about welcome to include worker welfare and in taking it into the human rights dimension.

I mean, basically, in order to build a long-term resilience of migrant workers it's really important to focus on a number, you know, three important things first to improve social policies, such as social protection programs healthcare, housing conditions and basic access to services.

supporting their social capital now social capital is really essential because it involves building their you know, strengthening their networks, associations and registration.

If they're largely employed workers are employed in the informal economy, they're not documented they're going to fall through the cracks so it's really important to support.

Enhancing the social capital and then, finally, investing in and imparting skills development to upscale them to gain better employment opportunities to move up the value chain.

Migrant Workers must be seen as more than just some of their remittances their contribution to the economic recovery will be as essential.

As a word during the pandemic, but also the long-term economic development of the whole economy, growth really depends on how we value migrant workers and returning migrants.

And in conclusion, I would just say that you know that, while we see conflict and violence is definitely a major driver of.

Migrant Workers Economic migration is intricately linked to the push factor of conflict and violence that exists and as Adam said, you know so aptly in his opening the report sheds light on.

The closing space that we are facing what migrant workers and workers in general, especially the vulnerable workers are at the core of this agenda, so I'm stuck there.

Kim McQuay: Thanks very much two or three speakers we're going to shift now to the Q & A. And I see that the Q&A space is starting to get populated with some questions I'm going to begin with question to each of our participants then we'll shift over to our guests, and the first question is for Adam your presentation concluded reflection on some striking trends of recent years.

And from what we understand and deciphering these trends can you speculate on what the next 10 years might look like well the trends that you defined in your remarks continue or there's some new or altered trends on the horizon.

Adam Burke: Thanks Kim I'm not going to try and become a futurologist. 234 Adam Burke But when you start looking at what's happened over the last decade, and it does just that the increasing authority and capacity that many states have is something that assuming economic growth continues at relatively high levels is going to continue.

At the same time, you have seen these increasing trend towards more authoritarian states which, which is fairly clearly documented and identified now so.

If you take a step back and look at what a lot of these conflicts are and where the strains are coming from some of them are many of them these sub national complex, in particular we've been discussing relate to how states are growing or how states.

are consolidating internally, so how they are increasingly managing to control internal territory and how they're managing to form a common identity.

Now for mainstream nationalist for many and I don't mean that in a negative sense.

That may well look like a very positive process, but for many of the minorities that we're talking about that looks an awful lot like internal colonialism of one sort or another.

And you see these trends and trades played out in different ways in cases it's to do with groups to themselves or are identified by others as being indigenous and you see issues concerning migration from the Center to the periphery or internationally that play into those tensions.

All of these concerns are likely to continue but they're not necessarily likely to lead to enormous amounts of violence, because of the capacity of states to keep a lid on a lot of it.

At the same time, you're seeing these challenges, very significantly in terms of what actually a nation is defined as being if you have more strident.

ethnic nationalism or religious nationalism and you see in many countries across the region, then national development becomes something that is still more of an imposition.

Whether that's taking place across an entire nation or whether it's something that is particular to a specific area and, as you see this move away from what can very loosely be termed.

liberal values but they're not necessarily western liberal values so much more at the notion of pluralism and notion of tolerance notion of understanding which lie behind the basis of many of these countries and often.

Tell a very successful story of jelling disparate populations together, you see an awful lot of tensions there at the moment and that's the majority Sidney was referring to.

So, within all of that, I think you're likely to see for the identity-based conflict and elements of extremism that we've been looking at.

Continued problems and continue concerns Obviously there are other forms of conflict out there as well from.

You know pervasive violence against women, gender-based violence through to the risk of international conflict, but what we're dealing with in this report, particularly tends to follow that sort of a trend.

Kim McQuay: Thank you Adam.

next question is for Sidney. Sidney, in your presentation, you spoke about indigenous people in my friends about land complex, all of which are in some sense linked to identity-based tensions. With continued economic growth, adding to the pressure and predict a climate change on top of that is this likely to lead to potentially disruptive effects and, if so, what steps might be taken to minimize those effects going forward.

Sit near muted.

there's no question that that this can have disruptive effects, I think that, throughout the region we're seeing.

Concerns about people living in coastal areas where flooding increasing flooding is an issue, we're also seeing the deforestation that comes as a result of plantation expansion.

Being another source of flooding as they're no longer any barriers to river waters coming in.

And there's very little power that local communities have when it the state or state oligarchs working with private companies to address some of these I should say, though, that when we look at land conflicts in the region too often, they're seen as black and white as poor farmers against.

Bad companies and it's never that simple and, increasingly, there are some good elements in the private sector that are actually trying to.

Work with local communities to find solutions on the ground so it's not always the case that all the farmers are pure as the snow and it's also not the case that all companies are evil.

Entities increasingly there's room for dialogue and compromise in a way that I think could facilitate some of the work that the Foundation is doing.

Kim McQuay: Thank you.

question is for Sophia so he can you suggest some potential interventions that could strengthen the economic resilience of migrant workers.

Sofia Shakil: I mean, I think you know, as I, as I said in my presentation migrant workers are part you know their situation is really embedded in some.

deep structural issues a lot of them relating to conflict and all the other things that we've heard about, but I think some of the possible interventions that are tangible going forward really would involve building their long-term investing in and building their long term skilling.

skills development certification, I mean we have seen how skilled migrant workers fare better even during times of crisis and conflict.

Especially when we look at women.

Can are able to move up the value chain and break you know away from some of. 269 Sofia Shakil The conditions that are unfavorable so just investing in skills and certification programs is, I think, a very, very important.

Intervention that one can look at long term the others, you know another really important one is, we need to look at how we can promote rehabilitation of returning migrants.

Now we've seen you know as.

Even whether it's this pandemic or other times of crises.

A lot of migrant workers are forced to come back or displaced again and return home or they come back and then they are not able to integrate and go back now a lot of these migrant workers bring a lot of innovation, new skills new ideas and, more importantly, new work ethics.

How can we invest in or develop programs that return, you know rehabilitate them into the local economy by investing in skills that promote their entrepreneurship business acumen their networks?

So that returning migrants become part of domestic long term economic development, and you know how this links to the conflict and violence agenda is that when you see more.

Shared economic growth and prosperity, it is going to lead to you know lesser conflict, I mean of course there's you know ethnic conflicts or whatever, but I think these are the two angles, if we try to tackle them.

In addition to all the sort of political and other interventions, one can make I think these are really important to strengthen the economic resilience of migrant workers, workers in the new economy, which includes you know, like.

A lot of the internal domestic migrants.

Kim McQuay: Now we will turn to our external guests, and the first question comes from the World Bank

And a former Asia foundation colleague. this is directed to Adam.

Adam, obviously you mentioned a theory that sub national conflict was declining in the region because states regaining more capacity.

enhance could control possibly buy off local insurgents notes of this growth and expansion of capacity came earlier and sub national conflicts for exploding.

With growth rates declining in recent years, with many of the insurgencies of tailed off, do you think there's anything in the explanation that sub national conflicts are declining because of conflict fatigue with Miami and Mars a potential exception.

I think that I don't think there's any particular reason my conflict fatigue would suddenly kick in over a certain period of time.

Conflict fatigue can be a factor in in conflicts at any point, and you see these conflicts generationally wax and wane right as newer generations.

take a different line, maybe a more conciliatory as all the.

fighters become more cynical or more willing to negotiate a fight a peaceful solution, so I don't see why that would suddenly become a particular point unless it.

Somehow related to a huge growth in conflict and particular generation earlier so that might be a continual factor, and of course these conflicts haven't gone away.

This is part of the point I was trying to make they've just become less bloody so it's not that insurgence of a given up it's that states.

Many cases it's that States appear to be controlling them more effectively now, in some cases that has happened, through reforms, rather than purely through security and traditions Mindanao would be a very obvious example of that.

In other cases, that's not necessarily the case, and it is more through a security in possession or through reforms that a very much defined by the.

Central state and their interests, as you might see in Indian Kashmir, for example.

So, it's never clear cut and you're dealing with a huge area where there are going to be diverse responses and local conditions and factors that are bound to be.

more significant than any one place in any big global trend, but it points towards what I've what I've, broadly speaking, been discussing and its international conflicts are part of it, but there are also other forms of violence.

Which insofar as the data shows and statistics are partial, but the data across many different data sets shows the same trend and we clearly have something.

going on here I mean I'd be open to it to a broader discussion about what's happening and pick that apart it's very interesting.

But certainly, that the link between economic growth and violence is a complicated one that the while, if you take a big long duration of time and we look at wealthier countries compared with poor countries.

more economic growth, wealth does tend to reduce levels of conflict when you break that down into any specific country.

It is not possible to say that growth will lead to a reduction in conflict at all, and you see many, many examples where.

frustration at the nature of that growth that how it's been an equal or resources have been captured by one particular group of exacerbated conflict trades and across the region.

The next question is directed to Sidney for walk us Raja and, if I understood correctly, what causes interested in hearing from Sidney on the implications of poverty for recruitment by extremist organizations and, yes, as poverty, seed recruitment with poverty reduction, have an impact.

I think, Adam has underlined as well.

addressing poverty without addressing political grievances almost never works and one example now is

We have seen an escalation of violence in the Central Highlands with a more active opm that's the free popular movement.

More control expansion of geographic control by the opm, which is also now better resourced and better armed than was three years ago, and this is in the face of.

What was supposed to have been a priority area for the central government in Indonesia pouring money into pop were.

The President visited the area more times than any other, President, but the focus was all on infrastructure, it was as though infrastructure was seen as the key to solving the problem and that's clearly not the key and.

I think the government is going to have to look more into respectively at why conflict and violence in the Central Highlands have increased and why do bm is stronger now than it was three years ago.

The next question is posed by amber air to Sofia amber notes that you spoke about the importance of improving social policy.

and wonders if you could share more in your thinking about the dimension gender dimensions, in particular, how are the needs are different for men and women migrants Sofia.

I mean that's a very that's a very important point, I mean there's significant gender dimensions to.

Men and women migrants, I mean if we just even take a look at, we did a series of studies that.

In both south and southeast Asia and found that you know, during the pandemic which wasn't just exclusive to the pandemic, but this reflected the kind of you know, employment patterns that exist. women workers tend to be more employed in those sectors that get hardest hit by certain shots so during the pandemic, we saw that women were employed in domestic care or the personal care services industries which were.

restricted and there was a larger loss of employment, and whereas men tend to be employed in sectors which were considered essential whether it was construction or.

You know, food service delivery or whatever, and so these you know immediately bring to light that there are.

significant differences in the kinds of jobs that take now when you take this to migrant workers, we're seeing the same kind of thing when you're looking at internal migration or external.

There are more women that are employed in sectors which are unregulated or informal there an informal jobs within the formal economy or working more in the informal sector.

So how does this, you know relate to social policy now, I think that one of the biggest implications on social policies that point about redefining work so not classifying informal work.

Workers and having them then fall through the net and not sort of social safety net and not be you know eligible for.

Some of the financial support and other cash support that's provided during these times of crisis or for general even you know social security.

That is provided, I think that needs a really read you know, a significant redefinition and then how the private I mean how private sector employers are made to respond to providing.

A certain level of income support or social safety net is also important, especially when it comes to the gig economy, and this transcends you know any kind of.

situation where we've got a pandemic or conflict so definitely there is a need to revisit how social protection programs are designed, what kind of healthcare services and.

um you know adequate safe housing is provided these are really, really important and there's significant gender dimensions to this.

I apologize if I microphone is picking up noise or somebody's willing to change, so I my neighbor's garden so.

Hopefully, nothing too dramatic next question comes from Nicholas brooklyn it's addressed to all of our panelists, but I suspect, particularly to add them.

into Sidney, and that is what are the prospect of future anti-Chinese bile is the prospect of future anti-Chinese violence is the result of China's increasing the invisible footprint in the region there's a long history of it in some quarters we've also seen some recent examples.

And maybe you have to take that first.

Adam Burke: Okay, the report doesn't deal at length with international tensions with international relations on the soul.

There have been this report compared to the one four or five years ago did pick out a couple of international incidents, particularly.

Involving India and Pakistan and China, which weren't highlighted four or five years ago, I think, partly because there was an absence of such incidents at the time.

So you do see some international flash points already occurring but they're extremely minor.

In terms of actual numbers of deaths, I think in terms of the political significance diplomatic geopolitical significance of the shifts yes, it's very, very significant whether it's going to lead to.

Actual international armed conflict or whether it's going to stimulate tensions at the local level is a range of.

different issues on the international level it's perfectly possible the implications of armed conflict would be so great that people will avoid them, and that certainly tended to be the trend recently or that I wouldn't want to call that at the local level, you do start seeing.

Tensions where a particular group is associated with forms of economic enterprise which.

Which can be presented by leaders as denying others opportunities absolutely and it's very, very easy for.

leaders to scapegoat and use minorities, particularly when a minority group is a new arrival or CSP new arrivals or a dominant in business and a particularly links to another country.

to drum up support and also to drum up hatred and antagonism and I think that's a new trend on you saw it with in the late 1990s in Indonesia very, very prominently and extremely violently actually.

And you've seen in the past in many countries in the region, so I think it's a continuity, actually, that you are likely to regard as a bigger risk, given the underlying trends of more mature attarian perspective more identity-based politicking.

Sidney Jones: Yes, I think that

Nikola's question is very much aimed at China's belt and road initiative and bringing in Chinese workers as a

consequence of some of this dependence on Chinese financing for infrastructure projects and in Indonesia, there has been a

resentment expressed through in some cases.

Real serious demonstrations by workers who see the Chinese coming in, as taking their jobs.

who see the Chinese coming in, as not just being managerial, but in some cases being fairly menial.

Individuals coming in and it links to the concern that local Chinese have dominated the economy, and this is somehow an alliance of the government with China.

And the local ethnic Chinese to deprive the Muslim pre-boom me or indigenous entrepreneurs of their.

their rightful role in the economy, and this fuels majority Muslim movements, this kind of theme was very clear in some of the statements during the

election campaign, thus far, it hasn't led to any additional violence there have been some.

Terrorist plots that never got very far that were directed against Chinese businesses mainland Chinese operations in Indonesia.

and, interestingly, there is a connection made between the government, the Indonesian Government reliance on China for belt and road initiative project, and this notion by hardline.

Majority Muslim and types that Jacoby is somehow really a closet communist and he's using the workers coming in, as a fifth column to spread communism in Indonesia now of course it's ridiculous.

But the idea that there's still somehow a latent threat of Communism in Indonesia is a very widespread belief, even today.

Kim McQuay: A question comes to you as well, too, and it's from Katrina into sorry and she asks your presentation, you mentioned that, even though we still have terrorist cells.

In Indonesia, the Philippines State efforts to countering Violent extremism, particularly those who support ISIS has been quite successful, do you think that the pandemic is that a role in this declining trend in the region.

Sidney Jones: I'm not convinced that state interventions have been that successful.

I think, where we see it'll qualify that in a moment, I think, where we've seen.

Men and women pull out of extremist movements overwhelmingly this has been at their own initiative, not because of government interventions because of realization that the cost outweighed the benefits.

Concerns over family lots of reasons and there actually is a low recidivism rate relatively low recidivism rate but it's because of this individual awareness, rather than government programs in the Philippines it's slightly different because I think you can make an argument that.

Some of the efforts in Basilan to.

give incentives to people to come out of Abu Sayyaf and then stay out have been reasonably successful, but it also may be too early to judge.

Because one of the issues that others have noted, is the cyclical nature of some of the violence in Mindanao and we are at a relatively low point now, but what happens, for example, if the banks and more autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao.

is increasingly not meeting expectations, is there a possibility that we see some of the MILF fighters.

are frustrated going back to more militant movement and that's always been what fueled some of the.

More extremist of the movements in the Philippines, so I think.

I wouldn't brand everything as success just yet.

Kim McQuay: Thank you, I'll now pose a question to Adam. Adam, as you know, to the third keynote essay in the state of conflict report features, the insights of three individuals on the impact of social media and other technology.

In Asia, Maria Ressa has just been awarded the Nobel Prizes you notice it's helped to focus global attention on this issue.

Can we ask you to expand a bit Adam on the issues relating to social media misinformation and hate speech and I'm going to piggyback a question from Lisa punters NICO.

Any panelists but I'll push you, and that is how can governments, civil society preventer regulate medium manipulators and spreading disinformation that feel confident.

Adam Burke: Okay, thanks Kim it's possible that Sidney or Sofia want to chip in as well here.

By now we've all heard familiar comments about how people and particularly governments in many cases I gaming the system of on the online space.

And, and how that the way in which the actual.

matrix of the online space itself can act approach polarization or extreme views and what you saw coming through the three interviews were words.

A perspective that one might naive you think they're starting to started in developed countries which have had more connectivity and then spread to developing countries or parts of Asia, in fact, it was pretty clear that that that's not the case.

That there is countries in Asia, the Philippines is prominently mentioned and described as having been a petri dish for media manipulation, this is something that came across from Chris Wiley the Cambridge Analytica.

figure controversial figure from several years ago.

And he talked about how companies such as his experimented in the Philippines to see what can be done with manipulating online spaces not recently this this is going back. 386 Adam Burke close to a decade now.

So it's no longer a new phenomenon and in areas with weaker institutions with less oversight of government oversight of social media companies themselves, which are mostly not from the region with a couple of exceptions.

You see a real challenge here in terms of regulation.

And the implications of that often for individuals such as me marry her so not only went has been going through and it's still going through political challenges but there's also experienced mass.

Organized sexist derogatory insults directed at her and indicate the extent of the challenge, what can be done about it.

And again, the report I think provides a range of quotes and perspectives here on how some kind of multi stakeholder responses potentially viable and it's not going to happen overnight regulating.

social media is an extremely complex field involving issues of freedom of speech, as well as issues of clamping down on bad behavior.

So, one of the comments in the report was that, ultimately, it comes down to a global, regional and domestic conversation about responsibility.

Who can act and should act about responsiveness how quickly actions can be taken and transparency and accountability?

So, there's a whole range of extremely challenging and thorny issues to address.

I think, to be honest, a lot of them will not be addressed in this is this issue is not going to be solved social media are going to be driving tensions and pressures for a significant time to come.

But the opportunities are to what all the interviewees said, are to try and build discussion, debate coalitions and alliances that cut across so many of these different sectors from the international environment where norms can be generated.

down to the very local level, where Community figures are trying to deal with address the implications and the national, local levels in between.

were different actors across different sectors private sector government local communities and so on can try and come together at least help raise this discourse raise a discussion or debate and start trying to propose actions that can be taken.

Sofia Shakil: Adam and Kim, if I may just add, I think that you.

know I think like social media, you know and.

In all of its manifestations is here to stay and the point that you made earlier at the beginning, Adam about the closing space, I think, if we look at.

It from the angle of regulation, I mean what can governments or civil society do.

One approach and can be, but I think you know from what we've seen, and we've been doing a lot of programming in.

In in trying to get communities to debunk myths and etc., and you know, together with your group, I think the important thing is to look at it in the long term, is the only solution.

is to build the awareness and capacity among communities and individuals to better understand. issues and being and you know sort of create the space for long term tolerance and create that space for debate, which is shrinking.

And, and so, when we talk about regulation that makes me a bit nervous just because I think regulation is important, but it can be as you've just said, you know big minute it can easily be manipulated in in.

situations where there you know it can be taken in another direction, so I think, while regulation is really important it's also really equally important to raise.

To implement programs that just enhance the awareness, knowledge and you know.

promote you know programs that you know or implement programs that just promote more peace and tolerance, rather than just only looking at from a regulatory perspective.

Sidney Jones: If we can also look at some very interesting initiatives that NGOs across the region have undertaken their various groups that are committed to hoax busting.

A group called hoax busters in in Indonesia that tries to take fake news and false information and.

Correct it online and disseminate it getting it properly disseminated is one of the challenges.

But you also have groups weighing whether or not civil society groups weighing whether or not they should use bots and buzzers the way governments use box and buzzers and, if so, how do they get the technological know-how to be able to do that effectively.

It is interesting that some people are attracted to extremists over YouTube by the popularity of the number of followers they have where the number of likes and so on, that have.

been manifested so by deliberately inflating or the kind of support or followers or likes that you have for more moderate individuals that may be a way of.

Changing perceptions over the Internet, but there are so many ethical issues involved in dealing with this that we haven't even begun to touch the surface.

Thank you we're bumping up against a lot of time, but I'm going to try to squeeze in one more question that's mostly directed to Sidney but Sophie I'm also going to invite you to comment if you'd like, and that is.

Kim McQuay: I'm curious about the state of dialogue among domestic stakeholders and government civil society, academia and perhaps even the private sector and analyzing and reflecting.

On the phenomena and trends, on which Sidney's paper reflects in which our broader conversation this morning is touched.

So, I'm wondering, is there a healthy Asian own discourse among these different stakeholder groups and monitoring trends reflecting on their implications, perhaps, assuming a critical ownership of the kinds of solutions.

Sidney shared and your last slide to send to you first and then Sophie here to come, maybe from the private sector perspective in particular Sofia.

Sidney Jones: I think there, there are a lot of discussions taking place.

across countries within the region, sometimes between regions, especially there's a lot more dialogue than you used to be, for example, between Southeast Asia and South Asia, in a way that's quite interesting but.

I think the challenge is to do a better job of identifying.

Best practices in a way that can be translated out of the region where that particular model was developed by and large I don't think a study tours from one country to another or attempted template from one country to another, work that well.

Unless there's a very clear understanding of what the differences are in the place where you're trying to adapt a particular model but there's still a lot of scope for shared experience, the question is how you actually translate those experiences into useful models and exchanges.

Sofia Shakil: You know I think the private sector, or you know I mean, my view is just that um you know when it comes to raising you know awareness or promoting.

or preventing conflict or promoting work or welfare whatever I think the private sector is an equal partner in terms of in you know topic, I mean I raised this in my discussion my presentation earlier, even when we're talking about social protection programs when or we're talking about.

You know welfare or you know any kind of thing, I think that there has to be a greater participation of the private sector or the employers in in this whole dimension.

Now, when it comes to promoting peace and conflict, I think it comes back to what role can all sorts of institutions play and.

And I think that's really important that we often don't understand, which is that you know I mean I tend to always emphasize that there has to be.

An investment in building long term resilience, which is built upon raising awareness, which is built on shared responsibility, which is about.

You know, promoting more introducing you know compassion and care and how we address whether it's employment conditions or whether it's a whole range of issues and Community you know safety So yes, the private sector has you know, an enabler shared responsibility and.

And unfortunately, if anything, the last 18 months have shown that you know there's been a massive.

I think

It was a time for reckoning, to try to better understand how things could move in a more positive direction but it's been a

You know a bit of a disconnect between what we've seen in public policy leadership and the private sector, and it's not really come together and I think that something has got to be done.

Because otherwise we're going to see all sorts of conflict and violence persist and vulnerabilities just continue to grow.

Kim McQuay: Thank you, Sophia. This was a really interesting session and learning experience, and I know that all of us will on the virtual call

will join me in thanking our three panelists for their thoughtful observations and for coming here in the many questions that were posed today.

As that is mentioned, the report is available online, you can access it from a couple of different points and, as we said we will be.

Very happy and admin team, in particular, to be very glad to receive feedback from all of you as users of the report, this is the second one and future we.

Will be very curious to hear how the report is received, and particularly some of its practical implications for those that are working in this important space, so my thanks to.

Everyone for joining us today and he's for those who are regular subscribers to Asia foundation events we encourage you to continue to join us in these events into and discharge know this is more broadly, so we can expand our audience thanks very much to everyone.