

ISLAM, WOMEN, AND PEACEBUILDING Indonesian Migration and Global Security in Focus

Rosita Tandos | UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta – Indonesia
Aan Ansori | UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten – Indonesia
Corresponding author: rosita.tandos@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract: Islamic peacebuilding faces a contemporary challenge: women are simultaneously affected by conflict, transnational labor vulnerability, and recruitment into violent extremist networks, yet their preventive and peacebuilding capacities remain under examined. This study addresses that gap by examining the experiences and perspectives of former Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) and assessing how religious diplomacy, religious moderation, and gender-responsive P/CVE can strengthen global security. Using a mixed-methods design, the study combines demographic data with closed- and open-ended responses from 104 former FMDWs, including 58 who had worked in the Middle East and 46 in Asian destination countries. Fifty-five participants reported familiarity with radical ideologies or groups. As protective measures, 32 emphasized moderate religious understanding and regular worship, 28 highlighted self-care, 14 stressed family communication, 9 identified critical use of social media, 11 called for stronger government intervention, and 6 recommended agency-led prevention training. The findings show that FMDWs should be understood not only as vulnerable workers but also as potential agents of peace. Gender-responsive migration protection, credible religious guidance, and coordinated P/CVE partnerships are therefore essential to inclusive and sustainable security.

Keywords: Islamic Thoughts, Women, Migration, Peace and Global Security.

Introduction

In contemporary discourse, misconceptions about faiths are mostly caused by the media, which frequently links Islam to violence and conflict. The terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, marked the beginning of the War on Terror, which led to the

invasion of Iraq.¹ In the aftermath, Islamist jihadi groups emerged, fighting to establish Islamic states in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. These conflicts have displaced millions of people. For example, many Iraqis fled to neighboring countries, while female migrant workers (FMWs) crossed into Syria to join jihadist groups. Certainly, digital exposure plays important role in their involvement in many ways.² More recently, the ongoing wars between Hamas in Palestine, supported by Iran's military proxies in Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria, and Israel, backed by the U.S. and its allies, have resulted in widespread casualties and forced displacement. This violence continues to drive refugees from the conflict zones.³

Geopolitical dynamics have significantly shaped the contemporary world, including Muslim-majority countries. In terms of peace, these nations have endured a long history of conflicts and wars, leading to instability, chaos, and widespread damage to their social, religious, and economic structures at the local, national, and international levels. As a result, millions of Muslims have been forced to flee their homes or become victims of ongoing violence. Countries with high numbers of conflicts (Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, and Pakistan) have more cases of attacks. The number of deaths increased in states of war compared to those that are in minor conflict. Sectors of trade, aid, investment, tourism, international security, and development all put significant numbers of citizens, resources, and reputations at risk. The index also shows the data of global economics that impacted terrorism (US\$52 billion in 2017), in which countries with high levels of economic development, factors other than conflict and human rights abuses, are more strongly correlated with the impact of terrorism.⁴

¹ Emrah Aydemir, "Public Diplomacy of the George W. Bush Administration: 9/11 and War on Terror," *İletişim ve Diplomasi*, no. 8 (2022): 25–41.

² JM. Muslimin et.al., "Sextortion, Gender, and Digital Crime: A Socio-Legal Comparison between Positive and Islamic Law," *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 19 (2024), 54.

³ Oguzhan Turkoglu, "Look Who Perpetrates Violence and Where: Explaining Variation in Forced Migration," *Political Geography* 94 (2022); Ümit Seven, "Armed Conflict, Violence, and the Decision to Migrate: Explaining the Determinants of Displacement in Syria," *Migration and Development* 11, no. 3 (2022): 1029–1045.

⁴ Munirul H. Nabin et al., "Terrorism and Uneven Economic Development," *Economic Modelling* 113 (2022); Oluwaseun B Alade et al., "Terrorism, Human Capital Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria," *International Journal of Economics Development Research (IJEDR)* 2, no. 2 (2021): 142–155.

Peace is not an external force to be artificially imposed upon humanity, but it is inherent in the very nature of creation. The system of the universe, established by God, is built upon a foundation of peace. As long as this natural order is not disturbed, it will continue along the path set by the Almighty God. However, the only way to ensure humanity remains on the path of peace is to rid it of corruption. This is why the Quran instructs: “*And do not corrupt the land after it has been set in order*” (*Qur’an* 7:85). For instance, the deepening struggle over the historic city of Jerusalem since ancient time makes it holds profound significance for millions of people from the three major Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). The religious traditions regard the city as their sacred space. As such, Jerusalem is a key place of pilgrimage for all three faiths, and for Muslims, it ranks as the third holiest site of worship.⁵

Nowadays, injustice that is experienced by Palestinians has continuously happened as Israel’s occupation in Gaza and other parts of Palestine. The situation becomes more complicated as it has not yet gained international acknowledgement as an independent nation. Moreover, if access to this sacred site were restricted to only those who held political power, Jerusalem would cease to be a place of peaceful worship and would instead become a battleground. Consequently, this would prevent even the dominant group from practicing their religion in peace, as the city would remain fraught with tension and division.

Furthermore, the escalating conflict between Palestine and Israel following the October 7, 2023, attack, known as *Tufan al-Aqsa*, has led to a broader and more intense war, drawing in other Muslim-majority countries such as Lebanon, Yemen, and Iran. Although sympathy to Muslim causes grows also grows in other segments of Muslim society,⁶ reports indicate a growing number of women actively participating as soldiers and activists in these conflicts.⁷ This shift highlights a changing trend, as more women are now joining the war efforts. Previously,

⁵ Michael Wolffsohn and Michael Wolffsohn, “Where Is the Land Holy? Or: To Whom Does Jerusalem Belong?,” *Whose Holy Land? The Roots of the Conflict Between Jews and Arabs* (2021): 53–93; Daniella Talmon-Heller, “Islamic Pilgrimage in the Middle East: An Overview,” *Pilgrimage through the Ages in Religious and Non-Religious Context* (2022): 48–65.

⁶ Ahmad Subakir and Safii, “Ideological Shifts and Emerging Radicalism: Understanding Identity Contradictions Among Indonesian Madrasah Aliyah Students in East Java,” *QIJS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 12 (2024), 422.

⁷ Sara Al-Mahbshi, “Shebas Reclaiming Spaces: Yemeni Women Political Participation in the Peace Process (2014-2019)” (Canada: University of Lethbridge, 2022).

during the rise of ISIS in Syria, women primarily took on domestic and logistical roles. However, many also became directly involved, with some even sacrificing themselves by marrying jihadists, a practice referred to as ‘sex jihad.’ The term has been criticized as a sensationalist trope, often employed by media outlets to stoke fear and moral panic. In academic discussions, it is frequently analyzed as a product of gendered and orientalist discourses that depict Muslim women either as victims of male oppression or as threats to Western values.⁸

Therefore, the objectives of this study: (1) examining the nature of conflicts and wars in Muslim-majority countries and their disproportionate impacts on women; (2) analyzing the patterns, dynamics, and drivers of women's involvement in violent extremism; and (3) providing a focused examination of Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) in relation to violent extremism. To achieve these objectives, the study employed a mixed-methods approach that integrated quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The quantitative component was used to present the demographic profiles of the informants (former FMDWs) and to analyze their perspectives on strategies for addressing radicalization and violent extremism (VE). The qualitative findings complement these results by highlighting the complex and evolving nature of women's participation in extremist movements, including the social, economic, ideological, and personal factors that shape their engagement. Together, these findings provide a comprehensive understanding of women's roles in violent extremism and offer insights into more effective, gender-responsive approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism.

Indonesian Female Migrant Workers and Violent Extremism

In this study, the term of women refers to former female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs). Although the majority engage in peaceful spiritual activities,⁹ and efforts to foster religious moderation are

⁸ Rakhshanda Saleem et al., “Oppression and Resistance: An Analysis of Muslims’ Experiences of Structural Violence,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 50, no. 1 (2022): 426–444, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jcop.22588>.

⁹ Muhammad Muntahibun Nafis, “Between Work And Spirituality: Exploring Indonesian Female Migrant Workers’ Engagement with Islamic Study Sessions in Taiwan,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 18, no. 2 (2024), 364.

massively conducted,¹⁰ these women groups have gained global concern on the network and the risk to be recruited by extremist groups. The women's involvement in violent extremism often stems from deeply personal experiences, including trauma such as rape, sexual abuse, divorce, domestic violence, or familial conflict. For some, joining extremist groups offers an escape from a monotonous life or an opportunity to rebel against patriarchal societal structures. Additional motivating factors may include desires for retribution, commitments to ideological or relational loyalty, efforts to reclaim personal or familial dignity, attempts to escape oppressive or monotonous living conditions, or conscious resistance to entrenched patriarchal structures.¹¹

Shahla Shahreen and Shafi Md Mostofa¹² identify the diverse roles women play in terrorist activities, ranging from recruitment and spreading jihadist ideology to fundraising and even direct participation in attacks. This troubling trend of female martyrdom and involvement in suicide bombings is not limited to Indonesia but is a global phenomenon.¹³

The concept of "from Mother to Suicide Bomber" has highlighted the changing roles of women in extremist movements, underscoring the

¹⁰ Wasisto Jati et.al., "Reevaluating Approaches to Religious Moderation at the Grassroots Level: The Role of Muslim Youth in Advancing Interfaith Dialogue," *Al-Jami'ab: Journal of Islamic Studies* 62 (2024), 187.

¹¹ Mohammad Masud Noruzi and Joseph Greener, "Bringing Lefebvre into Dialogue with Shariati on Everyday Life: Space and Estehmar," *European Journal of Social Theory* (2025); Yuxin Huang, "The Case of a Crafting Care Workshop in Shenzhen: Considering the Experiences of Middle-Aged Women and Social Order from the Perspective of Confucian Feminism: A Thesis Presented in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand" (Massey University, 2026).

¹² Shahla Shahreen and Shafi Md Mostofa, "Female Radicalisation in Bangladesh: An Investigation of Its Scope, Extent and Key Motivations Behind," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 17, no. 2 (2024): 153–175; Emanuela Bulferetti, "Western Women and Violent Jihad: Analysis of ISIS'gendered Propaganda and UK's Counterterrorism Strategies" (2023).

¹³ Lucy Resnyansky et al., "Reasons behind Reasons: A Communitarian Reading of Women's Radicalization and Family Bombings in Southeast Asia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 11 (2024): 1533–1558; Ratna Damayanti et al., "Women's Involvement in Terrorism in Indonesia (A Study of Nirmilitary Defence Strategies to Counter the Threat of Terrorism by Involving Women)," *Technium Soc. Sci. J.* 56 (2024), 270; Arijani Lasmawati, Adrianus E Meliala, and Ni Made Martini Puteri, "Adolescent, Radicalism, and Terrorism in Indonesia: Experts' View," *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 4, no. 4 (2021).

importance of gender analysis in understanding terrorism and violent extremism.¹⁴ This perspective argues that both men and women possess equal potential to engage in radicalization and terrorism, whether in active or passive roles, utilizing a range of tactics such as marriage, social media, and networks to further their agendas.

On the other hand, transnational domestic work operates as a global network that facilitates the recruitment of workers to meet the labor demands of predominantly affluent nations. This phenomenon is driven by a combination of push factors such as poverty, limited access to education, and scarce employment opportunities and pull factors including the appeal of success stories from former FMDWs. Tandos¹⁵ found that, alongside the attraction of higher wages, religious considerations also play a significant role in the choice of destination country. Many women, for instance, prefer to live in Muslim-majority nations, where they find it easier to adapt culturally and experience less culture shock. Additionally, workers in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries are often motivated by the desire to perform religious pilgrimages and *umrah*.

Some studies found that many transnational workers endure conditions marked by structural vulnerability, social marginalization, and systemic exploitation.¹⁶ These circumstances amplify their susceptibility to processes of radicalization. For instance, in 2017 a 34-year-old Indonesian domestic worker in Hong Kong was identified as the alleged leader of a pro-Islamic State (IS) network, through which she facilitated

¹⁴ Shahreen and Mostofa, “Female Radicalisation in Bangladesh: An Investigation of Its Scope, Extent and Key Motivations Behind”; Olivia Caskey, “The Apex Female Terrorist” (University of Portsmouth, 2024); Reza Montasari, “Understanding and Assessing the Role of Women in Terrorism,” in *Cyberspace, Cyberterrorism and the International Security in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Threats, Assessment and Responses* (Springer, 2024), 51–61.

¹⁵ Rosita Tandos, “Developing a Model for Women Economic Empowerment for Indonesian Former Migrant Workers” (2022).

¹⁶ Roya Derakhshan and Rashedur Chowdhury, “Experience of Marginalization in Noncooperative Spaces: The Case of Undocumented Migrant Workers in Italy,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 197, no. 2 (2025): 231–252; Vivianne Landry et al., “The Systemized Exploitation of Temporary Migrant Agricultural Workers in Canada: Exacerbation of Health Vulnerabilities during the Covid-19 Pandemic and Recommendations for the Future,” *Journal of migration and health* 3 (2021); Serena Tagliacozzo, Lucio Pisacane, and Majella Kilkey, “The Interplay between Structural and Systemic Vulnerability during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Migrant Agricultural Workers in Informal Settlements in Southern Italy,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 9 (2021): 1903–1921.

member recruitment, fundraising activities, and the dissemination of IS propaganda. Then, in September 2019 Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) in Singapore became the first individuals from this demographic to be investigated for potential terrorist financing. They were detained on suspicion of radicalization following their engagement with IS-produced online material and their participation in multiple pro-IS social media groups and communication channels. Reports further indicate that several Indonesian domestic workers employed in East Asian countries have developed romantic relationships linked to these extremist networks.¹⁷

Figure 1 illustrates the multidimensional relationship among state policies that promote the feminization of transnational domestic labor, persistent patriarchal socio-cultural systems, and the economic imperatives of globalization. The convergence of these forces establishes an enabling environment in which radicalism and violent extremism may take root, a dynamic increasingly mediated and intensified by social media, which plays a significant role in shaping the lived experiences of women participating in transnational labor.

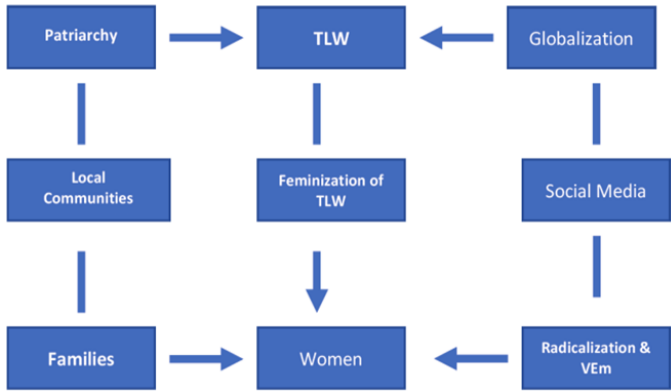


Figure 1. The Interconnectivity of Policy, Systems, and Globalization

A troubling trend of radicalization among Indonesian migrant workers, with some becoming involved in pro-ISIS activities, defying

¹⁷ Noor Huda Ismail, “Online Radicalisation of the Indonesian Diaspora,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 15, no. 3 (2023): 15–20; Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Krittiya Kantachote, and Rachel Silvey, “Soft Violence: Migrant Domestic Worker Precarity and the Management of Unfree Labour in Singapore,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 20 (2021): 4671–4687.

tolerant nature of Indonesian Muslims.¹⁸ This includes financing travel to Syria, engaging in online marriages with fighters, and actively supporting the Islamic State. Reports have also identified female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) in leadership positions within pro-ISIS networks.¹⁹ The involvement of female migrant workers in extremist activities has raised significant concerns, particularly in regions like East Asia.²⁰ The subsequent section presented a discussion of Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs), including their experiences with violent extremism (VE) and the Indonesian government's efforts to mitigate the resulting impacts on both the affected individuals and the broader society.

The Imperative of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

As previously mentioned, individuals labeled as violent extremists and terrorists are often accused of using religious interpretations to justify their radical and destructive actions. This includes Islamist jihadists who claim to "use Islam" as a basis for their organizations. These groups not only engage in violence themselves but also recruit others to support their cause through physical, financial, and psychological means²¹. Women, in particular, become targeted for both passive roles (such as handling logistics and family responsibilities) and active roles (such as participating in attacks). Their involvement is seen

¹⁸ Mustamin Giling et.al., "Sunni Islamic Thought and the Development of Religious Tolerance in North Maluku: Perspective of Sufism and Masalahah," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 10 (2026), 201.

¹⁹ Nadeera Rajapakse, "Women Migrant Workers and Market Forces: Toward an Inter-Disciplinary Representation of Female Labor Migration," in *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology: Including a Selection of Papers Presented at the First History of Economics Diversity Caucus Conference* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023), 3–25; Tatiana Duque, Juan C Aceros, and Virginia Paloma, "Sociopolitical Development of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in Southern Spain: A Qualitative Study of a Pathway against Injustice," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 33, no. 2 (2023): 454–468.

²⁰ Richa Shivakoti, Sophie Henderson, and Matt Withers, "The Migration Ban Policy Cycle: A Comparative Analysis of Restrictions on the Emigration of Women Domestic Workers," *Comparative Migration Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021): 36; Juhi Sonrexa et al., "Perspectives on Violent Extremism from Development–Humanitarian NGO Staff in Southeast Asia," *Third World Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2023): 170–189.

²¹ Zara Akbar, "Why Join ISIS? The Causes of Terrorism from the Muslim Youth Perspective" (University of Huddersfield, 2017); Tawfik Hamid, *Inside Jihad: How Radical Islam Works, Why It Should Terrify Us, How to Defeat It* (D Street Books, 2018).

as a way to maximize the success of these groups, primarily by creating instability in society²².

IPAC (2020) identifies forty-five Indonesian Foreign Migrant Domestic Workers (FMDWs) in Hong Kong who are known to be active supporters of the Islamic State. Their exposure to extremist ideology frequently occurs through informal religious instruction delivered by self-proclaimed teachers whom they encounter during weekend gatherings with other FMDWs. In addition to these face-to-face interactions, online platforms and social media serve as significant vectors for the dissemination and reinforcement of extremist narratives among these women²³.

Despite the fact that the majority of Indonesian Muslims observe moderate understanding of Islam²⁴ and women also highly involve in interfaith dialogs,²⁵ recent developments indicate an increase in the active involvement of women in violent extremist operations. A notable example is the suicide bombing that occurred outside the Makassar Cathedral Church in South Sulawesi on 28 March 2021²⁶. The attack, carried out by a married couple who died at the scene, injured fourteen individuals within the cathedral compound. A subsequent incident on 31 March 2021 took place at the Indonesian National Police Headquarters (Mabes Polri), where a young woman - acting

²² Montasari, "Understanding and Assessing the Role of Women in Terrorism"; Haliza Mohd Zahari, Hilmi Azani Husain, and Nadiah Syafiqah Nasruddin, "Military Women in Logistics and Transportation," in *Women in Logistics and Transport* (Routledge, 2025), 33–43.

²³ Ashok Vaseashta, "Duality of Technology Nexus in Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Support of Gender Mainstreaming," in *Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in the Western Balkans* (IOS Press, 2021), 1–18; Suleyman Ozeren, Suat Cubukcu, and Gabriel Cash, "Exposure to Extremist Content and Public Sympathy for ISIS," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 4 (2024): 345–365.

²⁴ Dewi Khurun Aini, "Resilience and Moderate Values of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah: Key Factors in Enhancing Adolescent Spirituality," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 19 (2024), 60.

²⁵ Arhanuddin Salim, Rahman Mantu, Nur Alfiyani, "Building civic education: The contribution of the interfaith women's movement in Indonesia," *International Journal of Educational Development* (2026), 1.

²⁶ Sidney Jones, "Terrorism and Extremism in Indonesia and the Southeast Asian Region," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2022, no. 1 (2022): 162–174; Muhammad Adlin Sila and Greg Fealy, "Counterterrorism, Civil Society Organisations and Peacebuilding: The Role of Non-State Actors in Deradicalisation in Bima, Indonesia," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (2022): 97–117.

independently but ideologically aligned with ISIS - entered the premises through a rear access point and proceeded toward the main gate before initiating her assault. These cases illustrate the evolving roles of women in extremist networks, shifting from predominantly supportive functions to direct operational participation²⁷.

In addressing violent extremism and the involvement of women, the Indonesian government has developed several initiatives and programs. As part of this effort, Indonesia has emerged as a leading example of a nation implementing targeted programs for women. One such initiative is the "Women as Agents of Peace" program, introduced by BNPT under the Coordinating Ministry of Political, Legal, and Security Affairs in 2019. This nationwide program, active in 32 provinces, aims to raise awareness about the crucial role of women in promoting and sustaining peace. It engages female leaders from community and religious organizations to advance these objectives.

By integrating a gender lens is also essential for generating a more nuanced and inclusive analysis of violent extremism (VEm) and gender-based violence. This approach not only draws attention to the gender-specific impacts of VEm but also contributes to advancing gender equality and protecting women's rights. In addition, the study explores the perspectives and recommendations of female participants regarding the strengthening of prevention and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) initiatives, with a particular focus on Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs).

Proposals for Enhancing Global Security

The concept of peace in Islam extends beyond individual or community relations to the global stage, emphasizing cooperation, mutual understanding, and peaceful conflict resolution. This study examines the concept and implementation of peace in Islam, explores the current challenges faced by the Muslim world, and offers recommendations for enhancing global peace and security through religious diplomacy, religious moderation, and efforts to prevent and

²⁷ Viktoria Roth, "Active Agents in the Private Sphere: A Women-Dominated Radical Support Network in Germany for the Islamic State," in *Der Islamische Fundamentalismus Im 21. Jahrhundert: Analyse Extremistischer Gruppen in Westlichen Gesellschaften* (Springer, 2022), 237–264; Jonathan Kenyon, Jens Binder, and Christopher Baker-Beall, "Understanding the Role of the Internet in the Process of Radicalisation: An Analysis of Convicted Extremists in England and Wales," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 12 (2024): 1747–1771.

counter violent extremism (P/CVE).²⁸ In this context, "Islam" refers to its leadership, teachings, organizations, and congregations—each of which must work more effectively to empower Muslim communities and society at large. Furthermore, P/CVE policies and programs already implemented by various countries need to be strengthened and taken more seriously, with targeted initiatives to address the underlying issues of violent extremism (VE) and radical terrorism.

Religious Diplomacy

Within the framework of Islamic civilization, religious diplomacy developed. The Prophet Muhammad personally used the principles of Islam to mediate peace and settle disputes through diplomatic efforts with nearby tribes and powers. The Islamic practice of *sulh*, or "peace-making," placed a strong emphasis on the role that religious leaders play in mediating disputes between opposing sides. Islamic philosophers like Ibn Khaldun have stressed the value of peace and diplomacy for centuries, arguing that they are fundamental to Islam's message of justice and collaboration.²⁹ If the Quran is consulted with this point in view, we find two main principles on which to hold dialogues. One is derived from this verse of the Quran: *Say: O People of Book, Let us come to a word common to us and you that we will worship none but God.* (3:64).

A common goal of religious diplomacy is to foster an environment of tolerance and understanding across various faith communities so that they can work together to discover a common ground for peaceful coexistence in spite of their differing theologies.³⁰ The religious diplomacy plays a vital role in combating the spread of religious fanaticism by fostering tolerance and mutual respect among diverse faith communities. Initiatives such as the "Religions for Peace" program bring together leaders from Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and

²⁸ Sus Eko Zuhri Ernada, "Moderating Religion for Global Security: Constructivist Insights," *Jisiera: The Journal of Islamic Studies and International Relations* 8, no. 1 (2025): 1–46; Noor Ullah Khan, "Countering Extremism in Pakistani Youth: Effective Strategies for Reform," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1 (2023).

²⁹ Harris Sadik Kirazli, "Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Islam" (n.d.); Aljazi Majid M A Al-Mohannadi, "Mediation as a Peaceful Means of Conflict Resolution: The Experience of the State of Qatar" (Qatar: Hamad Bin Khalifa University, 2024).

³⁰ Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman, "An Islamic Perspective on Peaceful Coexistence," *European Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 1, no. 5 (2021): 29–43; Darren Cronshaw, "Finding Common Ground: Grassroots Dialogue Principles for Interreligious Learning at University," *Journal of Religious Education* 69, no. 1 (2021): 127–144.

Buddhist communities to address common challenges, demonstrating that religious diversity can be a source of unity rather than division.

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) collaborates with community and faith-based organizations to advance these efforts.³¹ One example is the Ulama Cadre Education Program at the Great Mosque of Istiqlal in Jakarta, which offers short courses for master's and doctoral students. This program is designed to enhance students' knowledge, skills, and international experience through partnerships with renowned universities, including Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Egypt), Hartford International University in Connecticut (USA), and the University of Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco.³² By fostering such collaborations, students and program managers can expand their networks, contributing to broader communities, particularly in the regions where they will work after completing their studies. Additionally, international universities benefit from these partnerships by adapting their teaching methods and curricula to better meet the specific needs of international students. This initiative has been replicated by other organizations, including exchanges for Imams and leaders of Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, who collaborate with universities, community-based organizations (CSOs), and foreign governmental institutions to broaden the scope of their religious and diplomatic engagement.

Religious Moderation

Indeed, religious moderation is a concept that developed during the President Joko Widodo held Indonesian government. It has been continuously discussed and translated into policies and programs. Actually, the understanding and practices of religious moderation hold significantly rooted in the realities of Indonesia in forms of acknowledging that differences are inherent to God's will, recognizing diversity as a fundamental aspect of the nation's identity, understanding Pancasila as a reflection of societal values, acknowledging Indonesia as

³¹ Imtiaz Ahmed, A S M Ali Ashraf, and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "Religious Counselling," in *Handbook on Deradicalization and Rehabilitation of Violent Extremist Offenders in Bangladesh* (Springer, 2025), 49–55; Mahara Alena Sleiman Mora and Cristian Sepúlveda-Luarte, "Local Public Management of Religious Diversity: The Case of Municipal Offices in the Araucanía Region of Chile," *International Journal of Latin American Religions* (2026): 1–19.

³² Aslı Alanlı, "An Onto-Epistemological Inquiry into the University Space" (Turkey: Middle East Technical University, 2023).

a religiously inclined nation, and promoting a religion that fosters friendliness, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

Applying an intersectionality between religious moderation and immigration, by integrating gender lens and analysis, this study explained the Indonesian former female migrant workers' (FMDWs) responses on solution for preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). It also employed a combination of closed and open-ended questions to delve into the knowledge and experiences of these women while working abroad. Among the participants, 58 had previous employment in the Middle East (including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar), while the remaining 46 had worked in Southeast Asia (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Malaysia).

Enhancing women's roles and capacities in peacebuilding efforts is imperative, particularly for those employed as overseas domestic workers who face heightened and continuous vulnerabilities. Ensuring their access to adequate protective mechanisms and comprehensive support services is crucial to reducing their exposure to exploitative labor conditions and limiting the likelihood of contact with radical or extremist networks. The cultivation of moderate religious perspectives facilitated through engagement with credible, moderate religious teachers or organizations encountered during their employment abroad - constitutes an additional protective factor. This is especially significant given that a considerable proportion of participants in this study ($n = 55$) reported familiarity with radical ideologies or groups. Participants further articulated several domains requiring coordinated intervention - encompassing the roles of women themselves, their families, community organizations, labor recruitment agencies, and governmental institutions-which are presented in Figure 2 below.

Solutions for Radicalism and Violent Extremism

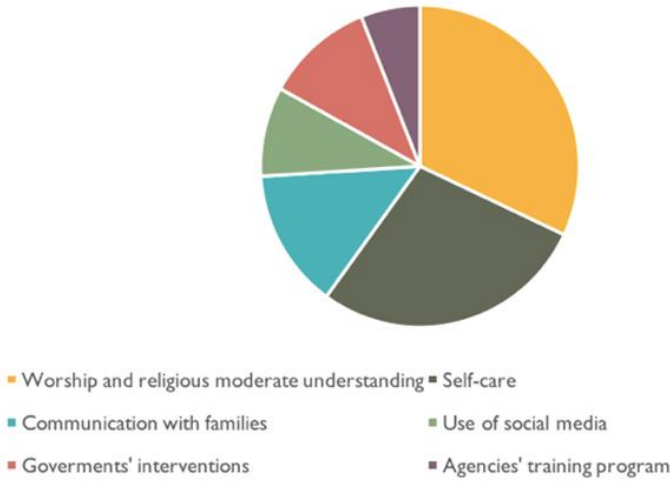


Figure 2. Solutions for Radicalism and VE

At the micro level (individuals, families, and groups), workers play a crucial role in countering radicalism and violent extremism. As shown in figure 2, more than thirty participants ($n=32$) emphasized that maintaining a moderate understanding of religion and engaging in regular worship can serve as a protective factor against radicalization. They also highlighted the importance of staying vigilant in selecting religious teachers and cautioned against relying on Google or websites associated with radical groups for religious knowledge. Additionally, participants stressed the need to be selective in forming friendships, staying alert to the presence of radical groups, and always remembering the primary goal of working abroad-financially supporting their families. These points of self-care were mentioned by twenty-eight participants ($n=28$), while fourteen participants ($n=14$) noted that regular communication with family members and receiving their support can further shield them from the risks of radicalism and violent extremism.

Regarding social media, nine women ($n=9$) explained that it is crucial to filter information from social media to not be easily influenced by the claims of truth conveyed by radical groups that offer many promises of having a better life by joining them. Lastly, efforts such as improving understanding on radicalism and violent extremism could help friends not to be recruited by radical and violent extremist groups.

At the macro level, eleven women (n=11) mentioned that the governments of both sending and destination countries have to be stricter with radical groups and their followers. They also have to pay attention to the lives of the workers, they must make clear rules related to all types of organizations, and dissolve organizations that teach radicalism. For agencies in both countries, six women (n=6) suggested to prepare prospective workers with information and radicalism prevention trainings to counter violent extremism before and during working overseas.

Based on the findings, the solutions that emerged from the women's lenses are firstly in rights to worship and understanding Islamic or religious moderation that emphasizes values of peace, tolerance, and accepting diversity. In addition, they mentioned the use of online media or social media by radical groups to recruit women, especially female migrant workers. Therefore, it is important to communicate or consult with families and friends when unknown people approach them from radical and violent extremist groups. Furthermore, enabling women to take on leadership roles in faith-based organization and more communal settings is crucial to directing their voices, goals, and energies toward VE prevention and counteraction. All other players, including governments (sending and receiving countries), well-known male leaders, communities, and women's organizations themselves, must support these enormous efforts.

Developing Future Works for P/CVE

In order to improve the efficacy of policies and programs aiming at preventing and combating violent extremism (P/CVE), the research makes five important recommendations that integrate intersectional and global peace and gender analysis. Firstly, it highlights how gender analysis must be incorporated into P/CVE initiatives in order to comprehend the variety of roles that women might play, such as those of offenders, warriors or martyrs. As demonstrated by the establishment of UNSC R1325 in 2000, a USAID report (2017) emphasizes the significance of broadening our awareness of women's capabilities for both destructive and peacebuilding efforts.³³ Gender and VE

³³ Marisa O Ensor, "The Meaningful Participation of Women in Solving Our Common Crises: Gendered Perspectives on Climate Change and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 17, no. 3 (2022): 289–303; Lova Simonsson and Matilda Andersson, "The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution and

frameworks must change to reflect the changing roles and capacities of women in extremist organizations. Furthermore, it is imperative to have a thorough awareness of gender dynamics at the local, national, and regional levels as well as the effects of previous and current P/CVE initiatives on men and women. It's also critical to understand how different cultures define masculinity and femininity.

Secondly, in order to develop peace and gender equality the coordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders (e.g. government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the commercial sector, and civil society) - are crucial. Future initiatives need to highlight women's active engagement, gender challenges, and practical solutions for advancing gender equality and justice are essential. In addition, it is critical to empower civil society and organizations to fight violent extremism and radicalism. According to Matteo Vergani,³⁴ nations like Singapore that have thriving civil societies have had more success creating and putting into action counterterrorism or deradicalization initiatives. A vibrant civil society is essential to P/CVE initiatives.

Thirdly, in the complicated world of today, religious diplomacy and moderation are vital instruments for fostering harmony, understanding, and collaboration. According to Jon H Roberts and James Turner,³⁵ finding common ground in secular matters is relatively easier because secularism does not assign sacred status to any issue. In contrast, religion imbues everything with a sense of the sacred, making it far more challenging to reach a consensus in religious matters. Nonetheless, despite these challenges, we must persist in our efforts to engage in dialogue peacefully, regardless of the outcome.

Lastly, inter-religious dialogue and work provide a special means of tackling issues like social injustice, extremism, and human rights abuses by including religious leaders and communities in communication and conflict resolution. In order to create a more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable world for coming generations, it is imperative that world leaders, religious leaders, and civil society organizations keep promoting

Peacebuilding: Examining How Women Have Actively Contributed to Peace Building and Conflict Resolution in Liberia,” 2023.

³⁴ Matteo Vergani, “Community-Centered P/CVE Research in Southeast Asia: Opportunities and Challenges” (2021); Daniel P Aldrich and Raghunath Mahabir, “Countering Violent Extremism in Trinidad and Tobago: An Evaluation,” *Terrorism and political violence* 35, no. 7 (2023): 1486–1501.

³⁵ Jon H Roberts and James Turner, “The Sacred and the Secular University,” Gabriel Vahanian, “Theology and the Secular,” in *Secular Theology* (Routledge, 2021), 10–25.

and bolstering religious diplomacy aiming to keep and maintain peace and security.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that sustainable peace and global security cannot be advanced through counter-extremism measures alone; they require the combined force of religious diplomacy, religious moderation, and the meaningful inclusion of women in prevention and peacebuilding. The experiences of former Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) show why this integration is necessary: women may face intersecting vulnerabilities associated with migration, gender inequality, online radicalization, and extremist recruitment, while also possessing the agency to strengthen resilience within families and communities. Islam's ethical commitments to peace, justice, mercy, compassion, and human dignity provide a normative foundation for this approach. Accordingly, effective P/CVE strategies should connect Islamic peace principles with gender-responsive analysis and protection throughout the migration cycle. Such an integrated framework can strengthen interfaith cooperation, early prevention, and more inclusive security policies in Indonesia and other transnational migration contexts.

Gendering peace requires an integrated analysis of violent extremism and its specific impact on women. This study explores the cases of former Indonesian female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs), a group that has made significant contributions to their families and home country through remittances. The involvement of FMDWs in violent extremist groups raises concerns for families, as well as for both sending and receiving countries, given the potential harm it can cause to the women themselves, their communities, and neighboring nations. Security becomes a central issue, as the shifting roles of women—from mothers and caregivers to potential martyrs—pose serious challenges, transforming them from life-givers to those who may end lives.

Therefore, both existing and future initiatives to empower women must involve the governments of both sending and receiving countries, as well as families, communities, and all stakeholders in the transnational domestic work sector. At this juncture, global P/CVE efforts must foster international understanding and partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of policies, programs, and services, particularly during the

first and second stages: the recruitment and preparation processes before women work abroad, and their reintegration upon returning home. This approach is crucial, as many of the issues related to violent extremism arise while women are working overseas, especially in destination countries. []

Bibliography

- Ahmed, Imtiaz, A S M Ali Ashraf, and Niloy Ranjan Biswas. "Religious Counselling." In *Handbook on Deradicalization and Rehabilitation of Violent Extremist Offenders in Bangladesh*. Springer, 2025.
- Aini, Dewi Khurun. "Resilience and Moderate Values of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah: Key Factors in Enhancing Adolescent Spirituality". *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 19 (2024), p. 60.
- Akbar, Zara. *Why Join ISIS? The Causes of Terrorism from the Muslim Youth Perspective*. University of Huddersfield, 2017.
- Al-Mahbshi, Sara. *Shebas Reclaiming Spaces: Yemeni Women Political Participation in the Peace Process (2014-2019)*. Canada: University of Lethbridge, 2022.
- Al-Mohannadi, Aljazi Majid M A. *Mediation as a Peaceful Means of Conflict Resolution: The Experience of the State of Qatar*. Qatar: Hamad Bin Khalifa University, 2024.
- Alade, Oluwaseun B, M B A Ifeoma, Ebikabowei Biedomo Aduku, and Chika Anayochukwu Ameh. "Terrorism, Human Capital Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria." *International Journal of Economics Development Research (IJEDR)* 2, no. 2 (2021): 142–155.
- Alanlı, Ash. *An Onto-Epistemological Inquiry into the University Space*. Turkey: Middle East Technical University, 2023.
- Aldrich, Daniel P, and Raghunath Mahabir. "Countering Violent Extremism in Trinidad and Tobago: An Evaluation." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 7 (2023).
- Aydemir, Emrah. "Public Diplomacy of the George W. Bush Administration: 9/11 and War on Terror." *İletişim ve Diplomasi*, no. 8 (2022).

- Bulferetti, Emanuela. *Western Women and Violent Jihad: Analysis of ISIS'gendered Propaganda and UK's Counterterrorism Strategies*. (2023).
- Caskey, Olivia. *The Apex Female Terrorist*. University of Portsmouth, 2024.
- Cronshaw, Darren. "Finding Common Ground: Grassroots Dialogue Principles for Interreligious Learning at University." *Journal of Religious Education* 69, no. 1 (2021).
- Damayanti, Ratna, Amany Lubis, Ichsan Malik, Yusuf Ali, and Agus Adriyanto. "Women's Involvement in Terrorism in Indonesia (A Study of Nirmilitary Defence Strategies to Counter the Threat of Terrorism by Involving Women)." *Technium Soc. Sci. J.* 56 (2024): 270.
- Derakhshan, Roya, and Rashedur Chowdhury. "Experience of Marginalization in Noncooperative Spaces: The Case of Undocumented Migrant Workers in Italy." *Journal of Business Ethics* 197, no. 2 (2025).
- Duque, Tatiana, Juan C Aceros, and Virginia Paloma. "Sociopolitical Development of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in Southern Spain: A Qualitative Study of a Pathway against Injustice." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 33, no. 2 (2023).
- Ensor, Marisa O. "The Meaningful Participation of Women in Solving Our Common Crises: Gendered Perspectives on Climate Change and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 17, no. 3 (2022).
- Ernada, Sus Eko Zuhri. "Moderating Religion for Global Security: Constructivist Insights." *Jisiera: The Journal of Islamic Studies and International Relations* 8, no. 1 (2025).
- Giling, Mustamin et.al. "Sunni Islamic Thought and the Development of Religious Tolerance in North Maluku: Perspective of Sufism and Maslahah". *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 10 (2026)
- Hamid, Tawfik. *Inside Jihad: How Radical Islam Works, Why It Should Terrify Us, How to Defeat It*. D Street Books, 2018.
- Huang, Yuxin. *The Case of a Crafting Care Workshop in Shenzhen: Considering the Experiences of Middle-Aged Women and Social Order from the*

Perspective of Confucian Feminism. A Thesis Presented in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand. Massey University, 2026.

- Ismail, Noor Huda. "Online Radicalisation of the Indonesian Diaspora." *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 15, no. 3 (2023).
- Jati, Wasisto et.al. Reevaluating Approaches to Religious Moderation at the Grassroots Level: The Role of Muslim Youth in Advancing Interfaith Dialogue. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 62 (2024).
- Jones, Sidney. "Terrorism and Extremism in Indonesia and the Southeast Asian Region." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2022, no. 1 (2022).
- Kenyon, Jonathan, Jens Binder, and Christopher Baker-Beall. "Understanding the Role of the Internet in the Process of Radicalisation: An Analysis of Convicted Extremists in England and Wales." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 12 (2024).
- Khan, Noor Ullah. "Countering Extremism in Pakistani Youth: Effective Strategies for Reform." *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (FIJMR)* 1 (2023).
- Kirazli, Harris Sadik. *Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Islam*. (n.d.).
- Landry, Vivianne, Koorosh Semsar-Kazerooni, Jessica Tjong, Abla Alj, Alison Darnley, Rachel Lipp, and Guido I Guberman. "The Systemized Exploitation of Temporary Migrant Agricultural Workers in Canada: Exacerbation of Health Vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Recommendations for the Future." *Journal of Migration and Health* 3 (2021).
- Lasmawati, Ariyani, Adrianus E Meliala, and Ni Made Martini Puteri. "Adolescent, Radicalism, and Terrorism in Indonesia: Experts' View." *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 4, no. 4 (2021).
- Montasari, Reza. "Understanding and Assessing the Role of Women in Terrorism." In *Cyberspace, Cyberterrorism and the International Security in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Threats, Assessment and Responses*. Springer, 2024.

- Muslimin, JM. et.al. "Sextortion, Gender, and Digital Crime: A Socio-Legal Comparison between Positive and Islamic Law". *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 19 (2024).
- Nabin, Munirul H, Mohammad Tarekul H Chowdhury, Sukanto Bhattacharya, and Pasquale M Sgro. "Terrorism and Uneven Economic Development." *Economic Modelling* 113 (2022).
- Nafis, Muhammad Muntahibun. "Between Work and Spirituality: Exploring Indonesian Female Migrant Workers' Engagement with Islamic Study Sessions in Taiwan". *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 18, no. 2 (2024).
- Noruzi, Mohammad Masud, and Joseph Greener. "Bringing Lefebvre into Dialogue with Shariati on Everyday Life: Space and Estehmar." *European Journal of Social Theory* (2025).
- Ozeren, Suleyman, Suat Cubukcu, and Gabriel Cash. "Exposure to Extremist Content and Public Sympathy for ISIS." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 4 (2024).
- Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar, Kritiya Kantachote, and Rachel Silvey. "Soft Violence: Migrant Domestic Worker Precarity and the Management of Unfree Labour in Singapore." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 20 (2021).
- Rajapakse, Nadeera. "Women Migrant Workers and Market Forces: Toward an Inter-Disciplinary Representation of Female Labor Migration." In *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology: Including a Selection of Papers Presented at the First History of Economics Diversity Caucus Conference* (2023).
- Resnyansky, Lucy, Claire Smith, Craig Taylor, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, George Merryman, and Mujahiduddin. "Reasons behind Reasons: A Communitarian Reading of Women's Radicalization and Family Bombings in Southeast Asia." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 47, no. 11 (2024).
- Roberts, Jon H, and James Turner. *The Sacred and the Secular University*. (2021).
- Roth, Viktoria. "Active Agents in the Private Sphere: A Women-Dominated Radical Support Network in Germany for the Islamic

- State.” In *Der Islamische Fundamentalismus Im 21. Jahrhundert: Analyse Extremistischer Gruppen in Westlichen Gesellschaften*. Springer, 2022.
- Saleem, Rakhshanda, Zenobia Morrill, Madeline Brodt, and Marta E Pagan-Ortiz. “Oppression and Resistance: An Analysis of Muslims’ Experiences of Structural Violence.” *Journal of Community Psychology* 50, no. 1 (2022).
- Salim, Arhanuddin et.al. “Building Civic Education: The Contribution of the Interfaith Women's Movement in Indonesia”. *International Journal of Educational Development* (2026).
- Seven, Ümit. “Armed Conflict, Violence, and the Decision to Migrate: Explaining the Determinants of Displacement in Syria.” *Migration and Development* 11, no. 3 (2022).
- Shahreen, Shahla, and Shafi Md Mostofa. “Female Radicalisation in Bangladesh: An Investigation of Its Scope, Extent and Key Motivations Behind.” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 17, no. 2 (2024).
- Shivakoti, Richa, Sophie Henderson, and Matt Withers. “The Migration Ban Policy Cycle: A Comparative Analysis of Restrictions on the Emigration of Women Domestic Workers.” *Comparative Migration Studies* 9, no. 1 (2021).
- Sila, Muhammad Adlin, and Greg Fealy. “Counterterrorism, Civil Society Organisations and Peacebuilding: The Role of Non-State Actors in Deradicalisation in Bima, Indonesia.” *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (2022).
- Simonsson, Lova, and Matilda Andersson. *The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: Examining How Women Have Actively Contributed to Peace Building and Conflict Resolution in Liberia*. 2023.
- Sleiman Mora, Mahara Alena, and Cristian Sepúlveda-Luarte. “Local Public Management of Religious Diversity: The Case of Municipal Offices in the Araucanía Region of Chile.” *International Journal of Latin American Religions* (2026).
- Sonrexa, Juhi, Leanne M Kelly, Greg Barton, and Anthony Ware. “Perspectives on Violent Extremism from Development–Humanitarian NGO Staff in Southeast Asia.” *Third World Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2023).

- Subakir, Ahmad and Safii. "Ideological Shifts and Emerging Radicalism: Understanding Identity Contradictions Among Indonesian Madrasah Aliyah Students in East Java". *QIJS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 12 (2024).
- Sulaiman, Kabuye Uthman. "An Islamic Perspective on Peaceful Coexistence." *European Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 1, no. 5 (2021).
- Tagliacozzo, Serena, Lucio Pisacane, and Majella Kilkey. "The Interplay between Structural and Systemic Vulnerability during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Migrant Agricultural Workers in Informal Settlements in Southern Italy." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 9 (2021).
- Talmon-Heller, Daniella. "Islamic Pilgrimage in the Middle East: An Overview." *Pilgrimage through the Ages in Religious and Non-Religious Context* (2022).
- Tandos, Rosita. *Developing A Model for Women Economic Empowerment for Indonesian Former Migrant Workers*. (2022).
- Turkoglu, Oguzhan. "Look Who Perpetrates Violence and Where: Explaining Variation in Forced Migration." *Political Geography* 94 (2022).
- Vahanian, Gabriel. "Theology and the Secular." in *Secular Theology* (2021).
- Vaseashta, Ashok. "Duality of Technology Nexus in Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Support of Gender Mainstreaming." In *Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Efforts in the Western Balkans*. IOS Press, 2021.
- Vergani, Matteo. *Community-Centered P/CVE Research in Southeast Asia: Opportunities and Challenges*. (2021).
- Wolffsohn, Michael, and Michael Wolffsohn. "Where Is the Land Holy? Or: To Whom Does Jerusalem Belong?" *Whose Holy Land? The Roots of the Conflict Between Jews and Arabs* (2021).
- Zahari, Haliza Mohd, Hilmi Azani Husain, and Nadiah Syafiqah Nasruddin. "Military Women in Logistics and Transportation." In *Women in Logistics and Transport*. Routledge, 2025.