SOUTHEAST ASIA REGIONAL
CSO-UN DIALOGUE ON PEACEBUILDING
Bangkok, Thailand | 8 - 9 June 2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We'd like to thank the following **UN agencies and offices**

- UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam
- UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Thailand
- UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Myanmar
- UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Indonesia
- UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Philippines
- UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for Timor Leste
- UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- UNDP in Asia and the Pacific
- UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) for Asia-Pacific
- UN Peacebuilding and Peace Support Office (PBPSO)

and the following **civil society organizations** for participating in this regional dialogue:

- Acehnese Civil Society Task Force (ACSTF) - Indonesia
- Albukhary International University - Malaysia
- Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) - Indonesia/regional
- The Asia Foundation
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS) - Philippines
- Civil Society Assembly for Peace (CAP) - Thailand
- Ichsan Malik Center (IMC) for Peace and Dialogue - Indonesia
- Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) - Philippines/regional
- Open Society Foundation
- People's Empowerment Foundation (PEF) - Thailand
- Southeast Asian Women Peace Mediators - Timor Leste/regional
- Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) - Malaysia
- Tenasserim River and Indigenous People's Network (TRIP NET) - Myanmar

The **first Southeast Asia Regional CSO-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding** took place in Bangkok on 8-9 June 2026. The event was co-organized by Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) and the United Nations Peacebuilding and Peace Support Office (UN PBPSO). The dialogue event serves as **a pilot to regionalize the global CSO-UN Dialogue Initiative on Peacebuilding**. It strengthened exchange and partnership between civil society peacebuilders, Resident Coordinator Offices, and regional actors working on peacebuilding and prevention across Southeast Asia. Through discussions across different country contexts, the dialogue deepened mutual understanding of different perspectives on peacebuilding priorities emerging peacebuilding dynamics in the region and created space for participants to reflect on opportunities for stronger collaborations between civil society and the United Nations at country and regional levels that address the root causes of conflicts and insecurity.

The dialogue underscored several critical themes essential for impactful and sustained peacebuilding efforts. Strengthening the CSO-UN partnership emerged as the central priority, emphasizing strategic, institutionalized dialogue and equal two-way engagement. Against the backdrop of rising militarization and democratic backsliding, participants stressed the urgency of **demilitarization** as well as **accountability and transparency** as foundational to peacebuilding. **Localization and inclusive participation** were identified as key imperatives, with calls for community-based approaches that engage grassroots actors, women, youth, and indigenous communities. Recognizing that conflicts are multi-dimensional and increasingly interconnected, as illustrated by how economic nationalism can deepen fragility and generate transnational peacebuilding needs, participants emphasized the need for coordinated operations across levels and sectors, as well as a forum to advance multilateral partnerships and build trust among and between governments and their peoples. On funding, participants called for **direct investment in grassroots organizations**, with the UN playing a bridging role to help them access funds from financial institutions. Overall, the dialogue reinforced the need for collaborative, inclusive, and locally driven approaches to **address the root causes of conflict beyond diplomatic mediation,** and to build the structures necessary for enduring peace.

The following recommendations emerged from the Dialogue:

Demilitarization

Civil society and UN entities should work together to:

- **Oppose the normalization of militarized responses to social problems;** shift public and state narratives away from surveillance and control toward addressing development root causes of communal tensions and toward transforming conflicts through community-based mediation and conciliation.
- **Challenge securitized framing of development programs** and inter-governmental security collaborations that legitimize rights-violating policies and exacerbate cycles of conflict.
- **Re-allocate resources toward community-led peacebuilding**, recognizing that securitization and militarization crowd out funding for social needs.
- Resist the dependence on state-defined frameworks of security; Instead, **encourage community-led solutions to safety and security** that center people's agencies and needs.
- Acknowledging that funding shapes priorities and behavior, ensure that CSO-UN partnerships **promote and fund genuine peacebuilding objectives rather than security-driven agendas**.
- **Document the costs of militarization**, making visible the direct impact of security overreach on peacebuilding, and **building the evidence base for advocacy toward demilitarization**.

Rethink Resourcing for Peace

- **Re-allocate resources from multilateral and inter-governmental programs directly toward grassroots initiatives** as the foundation of locally-led peacebuilding, recognizing that sustainable peace is built at the community level and that resources must reach those closest to the conflict.
- Position the **UN as a convening and bridging actor**, bringing together grassroots organizations with shared interests and providing fiduciary backstopping mechanisms that help them meet the standards required to access funding from financial institutions.
- **Address the securitizing bias in UN funding and programming**, in which peacebuilding issues framed through security lens attract disproportionate support, while equally critical conflict prevention and transformation work is underfunded.
- Engage multi-donor funds and private sector actors as meaningful partners, **exploring innovative resourcing** such as reparation funds linked to extractive industries and corporate social responsibility commitments, while ensuring financing remains flexible, sustainable, and aligned with peacebuilding priorities.
- **Develop and promote community-based financing models** that embed peacebuilding within local economic structures, such as Islamic financing, social enterprises with peacebuilding mandates, ensuring both social impact and local ownership.

Localization and Inclusive Participation

- **Center community ownership** grounded in context and responsive to culture, identity, and power dynamics.
- **Engage those who are invisible, vulnerable, or systematically excluded**, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups; Apply an intersectional approach, ensuring that diverse voices are not just heard but centered in shaping peacebuilding processes.
- **Shift to co-creation**, involving civil society as genuine partners from the earliest stages of decision-making, not brought in later as implementers, which reinforces power imbalances.
- **Address structural barriers to participation**, including complex bureaucratic language, rigid institutional rules, and competition for funding between civil society and UN entities that fragment collective efforts.
- Reframe the capacity-building model by **creating structured opportunities for governments and UN entities to learn from civil society**, recognizing them as knowledge holders and not merely as recipients of support.

Strengthening CSO-UN Partnership

- **Institutionalize and decentralize CSO-UN coordinations**, ensuring sustained and structured engagement beyond ad hoc convening.
- **Nationalize and localize peacebuilding programming** by meaningfully involving communities directly affected by conflict, aiming for substantive analysis and actionable outputs reflective of regional dynamics.
- **Broaden scope of peacebuilding toward wider struggles for civic space, political support, democracy, and economic justice**, while addressing downstream impacts of armed conflicts including mixed migration and transnational crime.
- Build informal relationships alongside formal ones, managing expectations while creating conditions for **civil society** to be seen and engaged **as genuine partners** rather than implementers or fund-seekers.
- Translate dialogue into action through robust impact **tracking systems that monitor the uptake and implementation of recommendations by the UN and its member states**, ensuring discussions produce measurable change rather than remaining an end in themselves.

Coordinated Regional Programming

- **Strengthen regional approaches to peacebuilding** by transforming regional dialogues into platforms for exchanging experiences, aligning strategies, and collectively deciding on regional peacebuilding approaches.
- **Expand peacebuilding programming** beyond armed conflict-affected countries **toward broader frameworks of violence prevention** amidst rising authoritarianism and militarism across the region.
- **Prioritize trust-building** as a foundation of regional cooperation, among governments and between governments and their peoples, as well as among civil society themselves and across different UN agencies; calling for a commitment for genuine collaborations between UN and civil society as equal partners, as trust is built through shared work, not dialogue alone.
- **Strategically engage regional platforms to tackle transnational issues**, including refugees, transnational crime, and natural resource exploitation, particularly in contexts such as Myanmar where national engagement remains constrained.
- **Support solidarity-building and transnational networking**, creating space for peacebuilders to connect with and learn from each other.
- Counter fragmentation by **reinforcing joint programming and co-created solutions**, ensuring that coordinated approaches do not inadvertently strengthen militarized networks or worsen cycles of conflict.