



Checkpoint Reached:

Gaming and Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia

Background

Online gaming has become one of the most influential cultural spaces today, shaping how billions of people – especially young people – connect, build identities, and develop a sense of belonging. Gaming environments are immersive social systems in which patterns of behaviour, norms, and peer dynamics emerge through interaction.

Recent work by UNCCT–UNOCT and UNICRI has sought to bring this issue into focus. The joint report “Level Up: Gaming and Violent Extremism in Africa”, provided region-specific insight on how violent extremist actors may exploit gaming and gaming-adjacent spaces. While the study raised emerging concerns in this space – in particular the increasing exploitation by malicious actors – a key takeaway was the largely untapped potential of gaming for prevention in the violent extremism space as a way to build resilience and pro-social engagement.

Complementing this, ongoing UNCCT–UNOCT and UNICRI work on violent extremism conducive to terrorism in Southeast Asia, supported by the Department of Home Affairs of the Government of Australia, underscores both the rapid expansion of gaming ecosystems across the region and the opportunity to act early. Together, these findings point to a critical window for preventive engagement, leveraging the positive social dynamics of gaming before harmful exploitation becomes entrenched.

Implementing Entities:

United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)

Geographic Focus:

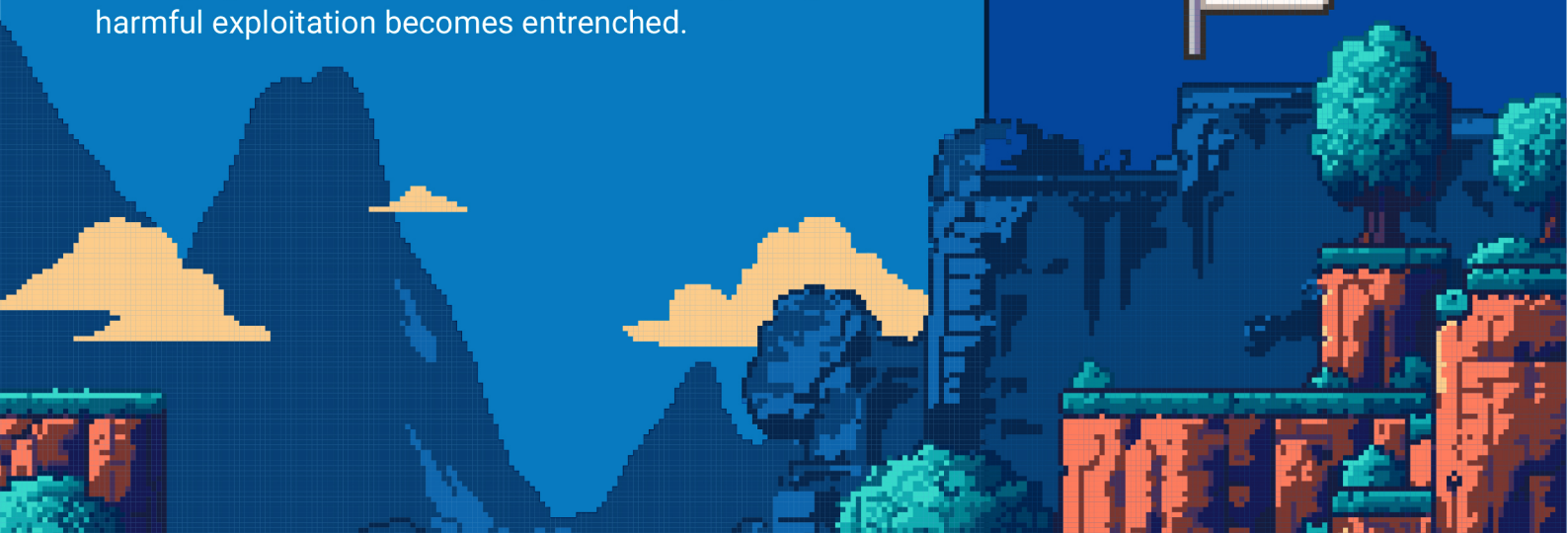
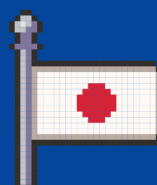
Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore)

Duration:

March 2026 – February 2027

Funded by:

the Government of Japan





Objective

This project seeks to translate evidence into practical, action-oriented approaches for the prevention of violent extremism by supporting pro-social game design and early preventive engagement in Southeast Asia's gaming ecosystems.

Activities and Timeline



Expected Results



Practical design guidance for the integration of violent extremism prevention considerations into games



A portfolio of playable, youth-focused game prototypes developed for Southeast Asia



Strengthened cross-regional links between Southeast Asian developers and Japanese industry actors



Improved awareness among law enforcement of risks and preventive opportunities in gaming ecosystems



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