The Language of Youth Politics in Bangladesh:
Beyond the Secular-Religious Binary

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of findings from the RESOLVE Network's 2016-2017 Bangladesh Research Initiative. As part of the Initiative, RESOLVE Network researchers examined Bangladeshi views on the role of religion in public life. These key findings provide a glimpse into how youth perceive the parameters of Islam in public life. The findings were informed by key stakeholder interviews conducted in Dhaka during May and June 2017, a literature review, and workshops sponsored by the RESOLVE Network and its partners in Bangladesh.

To learn more about the research methodology and longer form findings, please refer to this fact sheet's companion RESOLVE Research Brief: *The Language of Youth Politics in Bangladesh: Beyond the Secular-Religious Binary.*

The Language of Youth Politics in Bangladesh: Beyond the Secular-Religious Binary

The recent spike in political violence across the country signals a turning point in a decades-long struggle between those who consider the state to be secular and those who consider the majority-Muslim country to be associated with the principles of Islam.
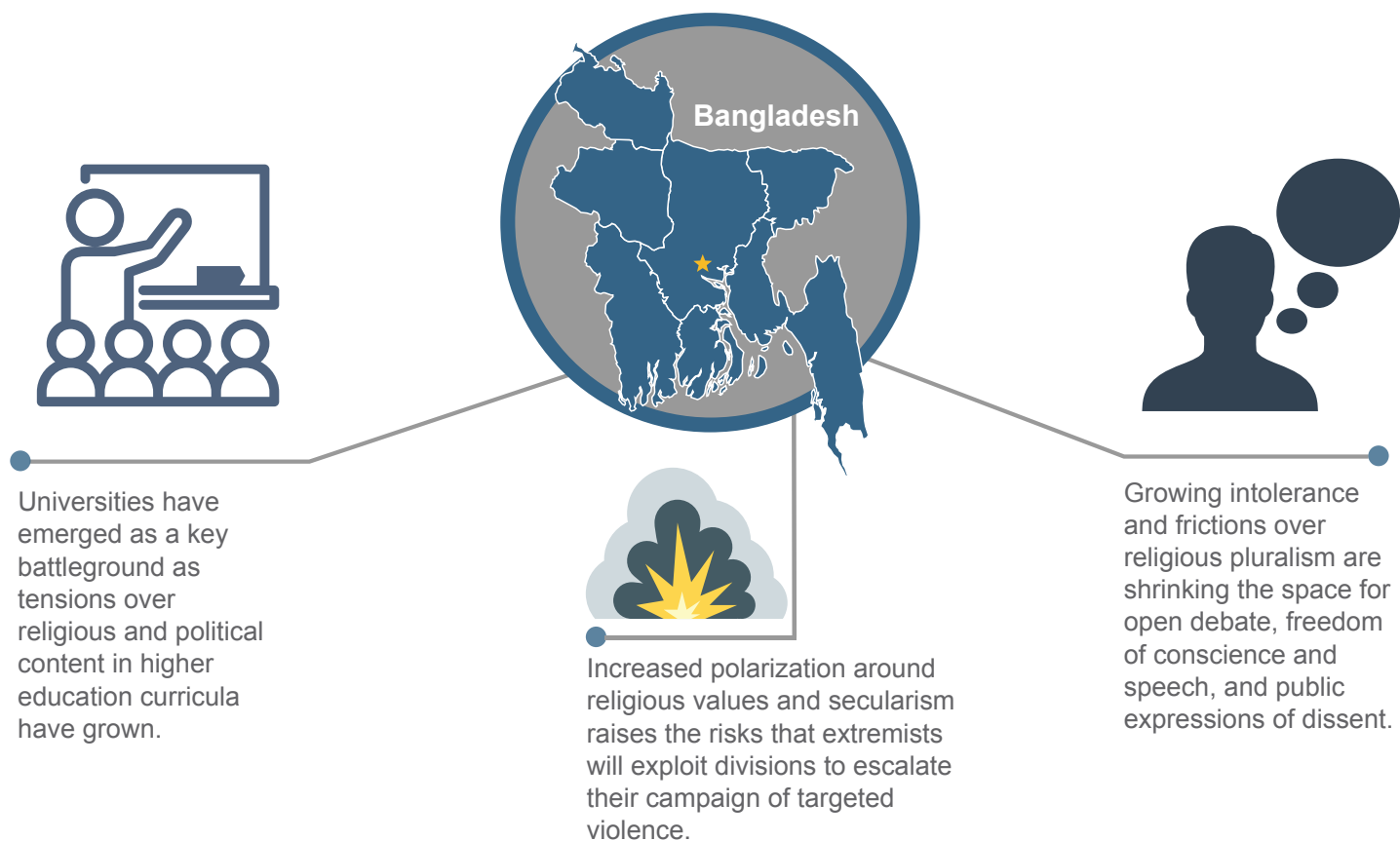

Social polarization over religious values affects nearly every facet of life in Bangladesh, drawing especially sharp lines over cultural and artistic expression.

Bangladesh

There is a growing intra-religious divide between Bangladeshi Muslims over competing claims of piety that appears to fuel religious frictions and heightened social intolerance.

Bangladesh

Universities have emerged as a key battleground as tensions over religious and political content in higher education curricula have grown.

Increased polarization around religious values and secularism raises the risks that extremists will exploit divisions to escalate their campaign of targeted violence.

Growing intolerance and frictions over religious pluralism are shrinking the space for open debate, freedom of conscience and speech, and public expressions of dissent.

Understanding Youth Narratives is Key

Greater attention to the role that narratives surrounding religion, secularism, and public life play in fostering or mitigating social polarization and violent extremism among youth is indispensable to any sustainable effort to address violent extremism. The extent to which alternative narrative campaigns are effective depends, in large part, on the degree to which they are informed by rigorous research and insight into the views driving existing schisms within local Bangladeshi communities. Locally-crafted and delivered counternarrative campaigns can provide the credibility and deep contextual insight local communities and actors already possess to contribute to such efforts.

RESOLVE
NETWORK

The RESOLVE Network is a global consortium of researchers and research organizations committed to delivering fresh insight into the drivers of violent extremism around the world. The Network provides access to open-source data, tools, and curated research to ensure policy responses to violent extremism are evidence based.

RESOLVE's four key themes of focus arose from our text mining literature review of over 3000 articles related to the study of CVE and political violence. For more on our themes of focus, the Network, our partners and how to get involved visit our website, www.resolvenet.org, and follow us on Twitter: @resolvenet.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE   GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY   IDEOLOGY   INTERVENTION DEMOGRAPHICS