



# ICRD Monthly Update

December 22, 2016

Dear Friends of ICRD,

As the year winds to a close, it is time to thank you once again for your encouragement and support, which has facilitated our progress on a number of important fronts:

## **Saudi Arabia**

In the past year, ICRD has made substantial progress in facilitating educational reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Among other gains, our efforts have directly led to an initiative by the Saudi government to begin retrieving their older textbooks from around the world, which include inflammatory content, and replacing them with revised editions that promote tolerance and critical thinking. **The ultimate goal is to purge from both the textbooks and teacher training materials the onerous content that has been inspiring on extremist groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS.**

## **Yemen**

In Yemen, despite a protracted civil war and highly restricted access, ICRD was able to conduct important training for local partners that has enabled them to start **building the capacity of indigenous religious, tribal, and other community leaders in countering violent extremism** by preventing and resolving locally-based tribal conflicts. In 2016, we also completed a field study that determined how previously excluded, marginalized communities in the South could be included in a new national transition process.

## **Pakistan**

In 2016, ICRD launched two additional projects in Pakistan, one to **prevent and mitigate sectarian violence** across the country and another to empower women in countering violent extremism. In the former, ICRD is (1) convening religious and civil society stakeholders in a structured dialogue to develop and disseminate an effective, locally-informed counter-narrative to sectarian divisiveness, and (2) establishing Rapid Response Teams to actively defuse such violence in the future. In the second project, ICRD is increasing the capacity and collaboration of civil society leaders to counter religious extremism by empowering their female members.

## **Jihadi Salafism Research**

Building on a successful pilot project in Pakistan, ICRD is mapping government and civil society strategies to **counter the intrusion of Jihadi-Salafism** and determining how best to engage conservative Salafis in the development and implementation of such counters. Although mainstream Muslims typically have no traction with the extremists, non-violent conservatives do. The next step will be to complete similar research currently underway in Yemen, Tunisia, and Morocco once additional funding becomes available.

## Colombia

In Colombia, ICRD is working with the country's formidable women's networks and with selected religious and indigenous spiritual leaders to **address the social, political and economic challenges of reintegrating former combatants** back into civil society. Toward this end, ICRD conducted multiple workshops over the past year for female peacemakers, religious and spiritual leaders, former combatants, human rights practitioners, and political and business leaders.

**On behalf of our Center and those we serve, please accept our warmest wishes for a deeply meaningful Holy Season.**

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With best wishes,



Douglas Johnston  
President, ICRD



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