

DELIVERING IMPACT IN SOUTH ASIA

In January 2023, the Strong Cities Network launched a South Asia Regional Hub to offer cities a dedicated team of local experts to support city-led approaches to preventing and responding to hate, extremism and polarisation and connect cities across the region with human rights-based and gender-sensitive good practices from across the global network.

Key Figures

371

Individual Stakeholders Engaged

22

Member Cities

40

Mayors/Local Leaders Engaged



“The very first time that I heard the word prevent in the context of radicalisation and militancy was through the Strong Cities Network. We always discuss response and not prevention”

Himayat Ullah Meyer, Mayor of Mardan, Pakistan

Mapping City Needs and Good Practices

The Regional Hub regularly consults mayors and other local government officials to better understand their concerns, the threats they face, any existing approaches and resources, and their key needs when it comes to developing prevention capabilities. The Regional Hub’s work has been shaped by the priorities cities have raised since its launch. These include:

- Strengthening their capacities to develop and operationalise multi-actor prevention mechanisms, including systems for early prevention, in line with local threat profiles.
- Enhancing National-Local Cooperation (NLC) to better reflect perspectives in national frameworks, as well as including cities as key stakeholders in their implementation.
- Supporting participation of and building trust with young people, women and other marginalised groups.



“Our municipal corporation cannot run without citizens’ participation. Learning from global good practices on how to run a responsive and inclusive local government is something I look forward to in our partnership with Strong Cities.”

Dr Shelley Oberoi, Mayor of Delhi Municipal Corporation, India

Strengthening City-Led Prevention

The Regional Hub has supported individual cities to address key gaps in prevention planning, delivery and coordination. This support has included leveraging resources from Strong Cities' Technical Support Fund, guidance from the Hub and advice/learning from peers the Network and through the Strong Cities' Expert Pool.

- The Hub's Inaugural Workshop in February 2023 marked a rare opportunity for a regional dialogue on South Asian cities' role in prevention, convening municipal leaders and practitioners and other stakeholders to catalyse city-led efforts to address hate and extremism.
- In **Mardan** (Pakistan), following a request from the mayor, the Hub supported the establishment of Liaison Committees to investigate hate targeting various communities including Internally Displaced Persons.
- In **New Delhi** (India), the Hub convened 20 mayors and elected councillors for a national mayoral roundtable in May 2023 to discuss the role of cities in building social cohesion and harmony. Several participants shared that this was the first time being asked about their needs on these issues as opposed to being told what to do by higher levels of government in their country.
- In **Trincomalee Town and Gravets** (Sri Lanka), a multi-ethnic city with a history of inter-communal tensions and violence, the Hub supported the local government to establish a local prevention committee tasked with developing a local risk profile and prevention plan based on community consultations. Multi-cultural youth engagement activities were also organised, with Sinhalese coaches coaching Tamil players.

Elevating Local Voices

Strong Cities raises the voices, perspectives and needs of mayors and the cities they represent directly with national government, regional and multilateral partners to inform their prevention policies and programmes.

- At a July 2023 Regional Hub Workshop in Colombo (Sri Lanka), local officials were exposed to international good practices on NLC for the first time and discussed how they could adapt and apply them to their own contexts.
- The Hub has facilitated the involvement of mayors and cities in partner activities, including those organised by the Global Counterterrorism Forum.
- With Hub support, eight mayors and other local government officials from the region participated in the Strong Cities Fourth Global Summit in New York in September 2023.

Contact

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Strong Cities is grateful for the generous support of the European Union, through its STRIVE Cities Initiative, and the U.S. Department of State, which makes possible the work and impact of the South Asia Regional Hub.



Co-funded by
the European Union

