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“Often we mistake stability, in terms of security and economic activity, to mean a country is doing well. We forget the third and important pillar: rule of law and respect for human rights.”

Kofi Annan

 **1615**
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PROMOTION OF PEACE AND TOLERANCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT



A COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE PEACE AND TOLERANCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

President calls for the teaching of authentic Islamic knowledge to promote peace and tolerance:

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has called upon all Islamic scholars, teachers, and educational institutes to instill authentic Islamic knowledge in the hearts of our children, to protect them from making wrong choices in life, and to guide them to the right path. The President made this appeal in his address on the anniversary of the Day Maldives Embraced Islam.

President Solih highlighted that people are led astray; towards other religions and towards extremist religious ideologies, because they are unaware of Islam's message of peace, tolerance, and moderation. President's remarks reiterated that intolerance and violent ideologies in the name of Islam is as bad an influence as the influx of other religious ideologies.

Islamic Minister reiterates the importance of being thankful for our bounties:

Speaking on the momentous occasion of the anniversary of the Day Maldives Embraced Islam, the Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Ahmed Zahir stressed on being thankful to Allah for His abundant bounties. Minister Zahir reminded that God takes away from those not thankful to Him. The Minister's words are a good reminder to appreciate and value our economy and to do everyone's part to better our economy. As the biggest contributor to the economy, tourism and the fisheries



We should remember that our youth get corrupted and lose the righteous path because of irreligious thoughts the same way that many of our youth are seduced by extremist religious ideologies

— His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih



Echoing President Solih's call for peace and tolerance, Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment Hon. Ahmed Mahloof gave commitment to engage with youth to address the growth of violent crimes. He publicly announced his vision to solve gang violence with dialogue, rather than through punitive punishment.

In a country like Maldives, radicalized youth are one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to extremist religious and violent ideologies. The Minister's resolve to promote peace through dialogue is a welcomed positive step towards addressing violent extremism in the country, and will help in the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent actors, and make them important contributing members of the society.

industry is something that should not be taken for granted. Therefore it is in every citizen's interest to respect Maldives' trade partners and to be welcoming and tolerant towards visitors from other countries.

Youth Minister calls for dialogue to address the growth of violent crimes

EXERCISE “JARRAAFAA”, AN EVALUATION OF PREPAREDNESS OF FIRE SERVICES FOR ARSON AS A TOOL OF TERROR

01 December 2018



Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi observed the firefighters in action during Exercise Jarraafaa

MNDF Fire and Rescue Service held their annual fire and rescue exercise “Jarraafaa” from the 29th of November to the 1st of December. This exercise evaluated the preparedness of the firefighters, with special focus on urban firefighting, rescue, and hazardous material (Hazmat) response. Exercise Jarraafaa is held to assess various contingency plans used in the Rescue Service and develop operational planning capabilities of the firefighters. One of the most important aspect of any fire and rescue operation in a heavily urbanized city like Male’ is to mitigate the damage and control the situation as soon as possible. This year’s exercise allowed the fire and rescue service to utilize the newly developed fire hydrant system and the recently unveiled fire fighting motorcycles. These motorcycles allow firefighters to rapidly intervene fires at the earliest stage even during heavy

traffic. The Commander of Fire and Rescue Service, Colonel Abdullah Zuhuree declared the exercise an astounding success.

The importance of such an exercise from a counter-terrorism perspective is that it strengthens the response strand of the national counter-terrorism apparatus. Maldives being a gun free society, arson has been a weapon of choice for anyone seeking to create havoc and terrorize the population.

The use of fire as a weapon of terror is nothing new in the world and in fact, it poses imminent threat in many high risk countries. The global security and counter-terrorism thinktank Stratfor has repeatedly pointed to the use of

fire as a weapon of terror. They site historical evidence of arson attacks against embassies and premises of national and global prominence. Similarly, the Islamic State’s evolution of tactics now includes the use of fire as a weapon. The terror groups cites fire as a useful tool in “lone wolf” terrorism and using everyday flammable devices to “terrorize a nation”.

Exercises like “Jarraafaa”

reassures the safety of the population and the government’s commitment to

“This exercise has given us renewed confidence in our capabilities to respond to fire incidents whether it is domestic or terror related. My firefighters are better prepared as first responders and we will keep on reviewing and revising our plans based on the observations during Exercise Jarraafaa.”

— Colonel Abdullah Zuhuree, Fire & Rescue Service

guarantee security of citizen and their wealth. Furthermore, exercises like this will be vital for Maldivian first responders to stay abreast of arson-based terror attacks and ensure safety of the public sector. By modifying tactics, techniques, and procedures through realistic training and exercises such as Exercise “Jarraafaa”, the Fire and Rescue Service will play one of the most vital roles in rapid intervention.

A DELEGATION FROM MALDIVES PARTICIPATES IN THE WORKSHOP ON “COUNTERING FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION”

04 - 06 December 2018



“This was an opportunity for one of our most important stakeholders; the police and the central bank, to learn about the mechanisms and lessons learned, and the best practices of other nations in countering financing of terrorism”

— BG Zakariyya Mansoor, Director General, NCTC

The delegation from Maldives gave a presentation on the national legal and institutional frameworks for countering the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of WMDs and the freezing of related assets. During this trip, DG met with experts from Singapore and sought various opportunities for cooperation in the future.

A delegation from Maldives participated in the Workshop on “Countering Financing of Terrorism and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction” held in Singapore.

The three-day workshop was sponsored by the UNODC and aimed to exchange national experiences, challenges, approaches, and lessons learned on the implementation of laws and institutional measures for countering the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of WMDs.

The delegation from Maldives comprised of DG of NCTC, a Financial Investigator from Maldives

Police Service, and a Financial Intelligence Analyst from Maldives Monetary Authority.



BILATERAL EXERCISE “EKUVERIN” KICKS OFF WITH EMPHASIS ON INTEROPERABILITY AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

15 December 2018

Bilateral Exercise “Ekuverin” kicked off today in Lh. Maafilafushi. This is the ninth iteration of the annual exercise with the Indian Army and will be held from the 15th till the 27th of this month.

Exercise “Ekuverin” focuses on increasing interoperability between the two militaries and strengthening the relations between the two nations. This year’s exercise will focus on building capacity and capability, and developing interoperability in jointly responding to terrorist incidents. Instructors from both militaries will impart their knowledge and share operational experiences during the exercise.



Exercise “Ekuverin” has been held every year since 2009 and is one of the biggest bilateral CT capacity building opportunities for MNDF marines.

The government’s policy on CT and CVE mandates the security forces to

increase their capacity and capabilities to deter and respond to any terrorist threats. NCTC works closely with all stakeholders to provide capacity building opportunities in their respective fields.

NCTC MEETS WITH WEAM TO DISCUSS ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2019

11 December 2018



NCTC met with the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Maldives (WEAM) to discuss activities planned for the upcoming year. MAJ Ibrahim Naeem met with the team from WEAM in this meeting and discussed how P/CVE can be inculcated into the women empowerment programs planned by WEAM.

The fruitful meeting ended with both parties agreeing to work together to create awareness and MAJ Naeem gave his assurance to WEAM to contribute to the best of NCTC’s capacity in the programs planned by WEAM for 2019.

Earlier this year, NCTC signed an MOU with WEAM to work together for the development and empowerment of women throughout the Maldives.

NGOs like WEAM play a vital role in the promotion of peace and tolerance, building resilience against subversive and extremist ideologies, and assist the state in preventing exploitation of youth. NCTC always welcomes opportunities to collaborate with NGOs and civil society organizations.

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN P/CVE; THE IMPORTANCE OF A FREE PRESS IN PROMOTING PEACE, TOLERANCE, AND RESPECT



“While we celebrate the courage of journalists today, it is also important for us to remember those we have lost; the forcefully disappeared journalist Ahmed Rilwan of Maldives Independent and blogger Yameen Rasheed who was brutally murdered.”

— His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

The media is widely regarded as the fourth branch of the government in the modern world. A professional free press is the best check and balance mechanism in a democracy. A self-regulating and responsible media bridges the gap between the government, the private sector, and the citizens. To put it simply, free media is the biggest and most influential watchdog in the running of a country.

Media is under scrutiny in some countries and a lot of journalists

reporting on crime and terrorism have been targeted across the globe. International NGO Reporters Without



Borders’ (RSF) latest figures show 65 journalists have been killed in connection with provision of news and information in 2017 across the

world. Out of these 65 deaths, RSF reports that 26 were collateral victims of air strikes, artillery bombardments, or a suicide bombing. The remaining 39 journalists were murdered and deliberately targeted according to statistics released by RSF.

Given the media’s pivotal role in providing information to the populace, it is vital for, firstly, the government to establish an environment conducive for a free press, and secondly, the media to be professional.

During his speech to commemorate the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Maldivian Journalism, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih stated the importance of freedom of press and its role in making the government accountable. In his speech, he urged the media to be a self regulatory body

and to set its own limits and its own best practices. President Solih’s promise to ensure freedom of the press and his assurance that the

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government of Maldives will not impede the media's duty to responsibly inform the people will ensure a free press.

Professionalism of media in the context of P/CVE means to play a responsible role in bringing the correct messages to the audience. This entails everything from editorial staff ensuring extremist narratives are counterbalanced to journalists on the ground to ensure the victims' voices

are heard over the message of the perpetrators.

Today's terrorist attacks focuses on sensationalism and putting on a show for their targeted recipients as much, if not more, than causing direct harm.

Today media is also used by terrorists as a recruitment tool. It is the role of the free press is to ensure messages of peace, tolerance and respect reaches the vulnerable population.

As the government practices a whole-of-society approach to P/CVE in the Maldives, it is imperative that the media plays its part.

NCTC has been collaborating with its media partners to help bring the messages and the counter narratives to the citizens. Earlier this year, DG of NCTC met with the President of the Maldives Media Council Uz. Abdul Mueed Hassan to discuss ways to build resilience and promote peace and tolerance by through the media.

DR. KIRKLIN BATEMAN ARRIVES IN MALDIVES AHEAD OF HIS MEETING WITH CT AND P/CVE STAKEHOLDERS

14 December 2018

Chair of the War and Conflict Studies Department of the National Defense University of USA, Dr. Kirklin J. Bateman has arrived in the Maldives for a study tour. DG of NCTC Brig. Gen. Zakariyya Mansoor and MAJ Ibrahim Naeem welcomed Dr. Bateman at Velana International Airport.

During his study tour, Dr. Batman will meet with government officials, NGOs, and civil society organizations involved in the national P/CVE effort. The purpose of Dr. Bateman's visit in Maldives is to gather information for his research on the work done in the Maldives to Prevent and Counter Violent



Extremism. Dr. Bateman's research on the Maldives is a remarkable achievement in NCTC's effort to collaborate with international academicians. The contribution

from his research will be greatly beneficial to the government and the NCTC to develop its P/CVE mechanisms.