



NCTC NEWSLETTER

National Counter Terrorism Centre , Maldives

Volume 19– 16-31 December 2018

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ONE COUNTRY, ONE NATION AS PRESIDENT SOLIH CALLS FOR UNITY AND RESILIENCE

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favour of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favour, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.”

Quran (3:103)

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ONE COUNTRY, ONE NATION AS PRESIDENT SOLIH CALLS FOR UNITY AND RESILIENCE*26 December 2018*

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has called for unity and resilience from all Maldivians on this year's National Unity Day. During his speech on the occasion, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih recounted the harrowing experiences 14 years ago during the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. He

commended the nationwide effort by Maldivians, state institutions, local and foreign organizations, and volunteers. President Solih recalled the words of

encouragement from the international community for the unity and calm following the catastrophe. He stated with pride that compared to some other countries, there was no violence or looting in the Maldives following the tsunami. The President also highlighted the importance of our faith when the tsunami struck, adding that it was our unrelenting trust in God and His mercy that helped us remain calm. As per the words of the President, when we look back on our journey of reconstruction over the past 14 years, one thing stands out: our unity. The exemplary unity and camaraderie showed by Maldivians on that day to help those in need, and most importantly, to bounce back from the tragedy, is a proud moment in the nation's history.

Maldivians are not united just because we are from the same country. We speak the same language, are of the



Even when our own lives were in danger, we prioritized the lives of others. We persevered through our hunger and hastened to feed the other person. On that day, we spent our clothes, wealth, and money to help our brothers and sisters in need.

— His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

same race, share the same culture, and follow the same religion. Regardless of personal beliefs or political divisions, the people have always come together, united, whenever the nation called for solidarity.

The terrorist attack of 1988 November and the 2014 Water Crisis in Male' are also some noteworthy national crises in recent history, during which people showed unity and nothing but platonic love for their neighbors and fellow citizens.

National tragedy isn't the only thing that brings Maldivians together. Moments of national achievements such as the Maldivian national football team's successes in the regional SAFF Championship have seen the people of Maldives come out in numbers, united, to celebrate and take part in the commemorations as a nation.

In addition to all of the aforementioned celebrations and

incidents, the joyous festivities of two of the most important Islamic holidays: the two Eids, *Fitr* and *Adha*, embodies the spirit of togetherness and mutual love and caring for one another. Everything during the Eid is aimed at bringing the community closer together.

From attending Eid prayers in the morning to sharing food with the needy and spreading love is the unity Islam calls for from all humans.

Looking ahead, it is vital to strengthen the disaster

management structure of Maldives for any future disasters. As President Solih stated before concluding his speech, the establishment of the National Disaster Management Authority, the National Disaster Management Council, and the National Disaster Management Steering Committee was underway, as required by the Disaster Management Act, in an effort to reduce the impacts of disasters. He also said that the "National Disaster Management Plan" has been drafted.

These pivotal documents lie in tandem with the national policies, strategies, and actions plans to Counter Terrorism and Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in the Maldives and ensure the country has proper safety and mitigation measures to face any disaster, whether natural or manmade, and respond with efficiency and efficacy to normalize the situation.

NCTC PARTICIPATES IN MALDIVES GUESTHOUSE SYMPOSIUM 2018

29 December 2018

Head of Research and Publications of NCTC LTC Hussain Ibrahim participated in Maldives Guest House Symposium 2018. This year's theme for the symposium is "Towards Sustainable Tourism".

Ministry of Tourism states that the aim of such a symposium is to share challenges faced by guesthouse operators in the Maldives and seek solutions, and to discuss ways to expand guesthouses to identify and ensure best ways for guesthouses to benefit the islands and the community.



Tourism industry is the economic backbone of the nation and any threat, real or perceived poses astronomical losses to the economy.

As such, the tourism sector is closely monitored by NCTC and its partner law enforcement and security agencies, and ensures preventive and

mitigation measures are incorporated into the legislative framework and enforced by guesthouse operators.

THE PROCESS OF REAPPOINTING OF MEMBERS TO CT STEERING COMMITTEE AND COUNTER RADICALIZATION COMMITTEE IS UNDERWAY

Relevant authorities have nominated members for the two executive level committees established at the NCTC. The two committees are the Counter Terrorism Steering Committee and the Counter Radicalization Committee following changes to the Cabinet and various institutions of the government.

Both committees include policy level representatives from across the government ministries and institutions, and facilitates a whole of government approach to CT and P/CVE.

The nominations will be finalized and new members will be reappointed to the respective committees by the first week of January.

The first meeting of the new CT Steering Committee and the Counter Radicalization Committee will also be held this coming January with renewed vigor and effort to formulate national policies and strategies to make Maldives a peaceful and tolerant nation.

DR. KIRKLIN BATEMAN FROM THE U.S. NDU GIVES HIS ASSURANCE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH NCTC TO DEVELOP ITS NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT AND COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM

14-22 December 2018

Chair of the War and Conflict Studies Department of the National Defense University of USA, Dr. Kirklin J. Bateman gave his assurance of continued support to develop NCTC's National Action Plan.

Dr. Bateman was in the Maldives for a study tour from the 14th to the 22nd of December. The purpose of Dr. Bateman's visit in Maldives was to gather information for his research on the work done in the Maldives to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism.



Dr. Bateman's study tour also included visiting K. Himmafushi, where he met with the Island Council and interviewed them on the challenges faced by island communities to include education, unemployment, criminal activity, and the local economy.

Dr. Bateman

commended NCTC's work to foster relationships across the government and within some of the key NGOs in the Maldives and stated that it would help bring greater awareness of the challenges in preventing and countering violent extremism within the Maldivian context. Furthermore, he emphasized that these bonds would also serve the government well in developing and implementing whole of society approaches to ensure the safety and security of the Maldives.

Dr. Bateman will continue to develop his research and work with the NCTC as it develops and finalizes the National Action Plan. He hopes to return in the July timeframe for additional research and assessments of NCTC's ongoing efforts in furthering the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

“It is evident that BG Mansoor and his staff have worked diligently to foster relationships across much of the government and within some of the key NGOs in the Maldives. Such relationships will do much to bring greater awareness of the challenges in preventing and countering violent extremism within the Maldivian context.”

— Dr. Kirklin Bateman

During his tour of the Maldives, Dr. Bateman met with various Government Ministries and Civil Society Actors and discussed about the threat violent extremism poses to the Maldives and how these ministries and NGOs were working to counter these challenges.

In addition to NCTC, Dr. Bateman had fruitful meetings with various government officials to include Minister of Defence, Minister of

Defence Force, Commissioner of Police and senior police officers, senior officials from the Maldives Immigration, and senior officials from the Prosecutor General's Office.

He also met with senior officials from Transparency Maldives and Regional Alliance for Fostering Youth (RAFY) to discuss the role and scope of civil society organizations to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism and to provide counter narratives to prevent at-risk population.

A DELEGATION FROM THE MALDIVES PARTICIPATES IN THE CROSS REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON “PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM LEADING TO TERRORISM AND RETURNING FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS THROUGH RULE OF LAW-BASED CRIMINAL JUSTICE APPROACHES”

17-20 December 2018



A delegation from the Maldives participated in the cross regional workshop on “Preventing Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters

through Rule of Law-Based Criminal Justice Approaches in Tokyo, Japan.

A total of 27 criminal justices officials from 6 countries took part in this cross

regional event, in addition to 9 experts from UNODC and 4 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The four-member delegation from the Maldives comprised of technical level officials from the Maldives National Defence Force, Maldives Police Service, Maldives Correctional Service, and the Prosecutor General’s Office.

This workshop provided a forum for sharing experiences and good practices on P/CVE leading to terrorism and returning FTFs. Participants shared national experience and perspective on the topic and discussions also focused around a review of past strategies and the current legal framework in each country.

Q *What lessons did you learn from the workshop and how can you apply the knowledge gained to tackle Violent Extremism and Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) in your sector?*

A We learned about the international actions to Counter Violent Extremism, Foreign Terrorist Fighters, and Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters, which focused more on the current international legal framework and approaches related to Preventing/

Countering Violent Extremism. Participants shared national experiences and perspectives on violent extremism, criminal justice responses to violent extremism. In addition, countries shared their experiences on the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, Daesh recruitment and exploitation, returning FTFs, and its impact on national and regional security. It also covered dynamics between youth and extremism, narratives and counter narratives of the terrorists, including a brief history of terror attacks in Japan. The workshop also focused on P/CVE in

correctional services and community-based rehabilitation and reintegration, and enhancing local cooperation with the private sector.

Some of the sessions in the workshop focused on rule of law-based criminal justice approaches to aforementioned issues. Rule of law programming most typically entails strengthening the justice sector by providing assistance to investigators, prosecutors, judges, national governments, professional institutions, and civil society organizations involved in expressing demand for judicial transparency, and

accountability. Strong justice institutions, particularly an independent and well-regarded legal profession and judiciary, can be

legal disputes related to local grievances or community marginalization. Another thing we can work on is improving citizens'

narratives.

It was highlighted that along with the prosecution, rehabilitation and prevention was also important. Differentiating between these groups of individuals in rehabilitation and prevention brings many benefits. It provides a pragmatic alternative to deal with individuals who cannot be successfully prosecuted (or do not fall under the criminal justice sector in the first place) but who might still be considered vulnerable to radical ideologies in one way or another. Similarly, rehabilitation-gearred approaches to countering the threat of returnees can be sufficiently flexible to allow for a personality-specific treatment of these offenders, and therefore also help to focus resources on where they are needed most. Rehabilitated foreign fighters can also be a valuable resource for prevention efforts by providing a credible voice in countering extremist narratives, which is very important to our country.

—Public Prosecutor Shazeena Riyaz,
Prosecutor General's Office

critical to building public confidence in the justice system and the government, checking executive branch overreach, and addressing grievances which may otherwise lead to support for violent extremism.

We learned that providing technical training to judicial actors, developing or refining case management systems, and working with governments to make judicial statistics available to citizens can all improve the quality of services available through formal judicial institutions for citizens seeking to exercise their rights. These measures can also help actors in the formal justice system develop the will and the capacity to fairly resolve

access to formal justice, whether by building networks of legal aid clinics or by helping paralegals and Civil Society Actors to raise community awareness about rights, laws, or relevant services. This can further facilitate the rights, freedoms, and dispute resolution mechanisms that bolster state legitimacy and reduce the potential pull of violent extremist



AN OVERVIEW OF THE GLOBAL TERRORISM SPECTRUM AS 2018 ENDS

By First Lieutenant Ahmed Nazwan, Coast Guard

The Syrian and Iraqi conflicts of late led to the rise of two of the most prolific state building terrorist organizations in recent memory. However, over the past two years or so, the fortunes of the “Islamic State” or ISIS group have changed, and they have steadily lost control of their territory and the sources of revenue that came about due to that. The group known as Jabahat al Nusra (the Al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria) and its various successor organizations have also lost a lot of the territory and now are mostly limited to the Idlib province in the north west of Syria.¹

While it appears that the Syrian and Iraqi governments, with their partners in the international community have brought the groups to the cusp of defeat in the physical realm, their ideologies remain a potent threat, resonating across the Middle East and North African region and other parts of the globe. ISIS affiliates have spread beyond the localities of Syria and Iraq into sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia, while Al Qaeda has been resurgent as well. In fact, Al-Qaeda central, while substantively weaker than in their heyday prior to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, have been shown to be very successful in achieving their short-term goals of surviving and rebuilding.²

It should be noted that, despite their loss of territory, the level of membership in ISIS has remained quite steady, with estimates ranging between 20,000 and 30,000. It is of note that with the loss of territory, some of the most effective recruitment narratives employed by ISIS, including that of *Hijrah* have been rendered ineffective. The infiltration of their means of communication has also

meant that they have started to resort to more covert means including a reliance on families and friends for recruitment. Al-Qaeda has also managed to quietly amass upwards of 30,000 fighters throughout the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, being active in 17 or more countries, despite having been eclipsed by ISIS in terms of lethality and media hype. Most notable amongst those are its affiliates in Yemen, Maghreb and the Sahel regions as well as in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, Al-Qaeda capitalized on the chaos left behind by the Arab Spring and also on the failure of many regional governments to combat terrorism to firmly entrench themselves in the region.

With such capacity to wage their war against the west and their supposed agents, but having lost the territories that they gained, ISIS is ever more likely to resort to traditional terrorist tactics. In fact, after the loss of control of the Syrian town of Dabiq to Turkish forces and their local allies, ISIS rebranded their magazine as “Rumiyah”, signaling a focus on the west. The magazines also began to include manuals for lone wolf tactics, which signified that this was the way forward.³ Issues of “Rumiyah” have included procedurals that laid out instructions for correct knife selection, selection of vehicles to attack crowds, and even how to make Molotov cocktails and napalm for perpetrating arson attacks. Target selection procedures were also detailed in these issues.⁴ In addition to this the recent shut down of Gatwick airport due to drone activity highlights the

vulnerability of key critical infrastructure and the simplicity of means required to exploit these weaknesses.

The Global Terrorism Index of 2018 reports that terrorism has been declining for the past 3 years after the number of deaths from terrorist activities peaked in 2014. However, with these new developments, there is a possibility that the activities of terrorist groups across the world may increase in the near future. In addition to the threat of Islamist terrorism, there is a growing trend of far-right extremism in Europe and North America in particular. While this is likely to contribute to terrorism in its own right, reactionary Islamist terror in these regions is not inconceivable. Islamist groups are also likely to hit targets in South East Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and Africa. With the possibility that the world could become less secure vis a vis terrorism in 2019, it is important that intelligence sharing, coordination, and collaborative counter terrorism frameworks with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach are established to cater to a dynamic and ambiguous threat landscape. It is also vital to put an emphasis on preventing and countering violent extremism in all its forms.

1. Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). Global Terrorism Index 2018. MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

2. Hoffman, B. (2018, 03 06). Al-Qaeda's Resurrection. Retrieved from CFR: <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/al-qaeda-resurrection>

3. Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). Global Terrorism Index 2018. MD: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

4. Peter Wignell, S. T. (2017). A Mixed Methods Empirical Examination of Changes in Emphasis and Style in the Extremist Magazines Dabiq and Rumiyah. Perspectives on Terrorism, 11(2)