



NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE, MALDIVES

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Government of Maldives condemns the heinous terrorist attack in Sri Lanka & strengthens security measures

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has condemned the terrorist attack in Sri Lanka and assured the Maldivian public that stringent security measures were being undertaken to maintain the peace and security of the nation. President Solih made these remarks during his address to celebrate the 127th

Anniversary of Maldives National Defence Force.

In his speech, President Solih stated that MNDF, NCTC, and the Maldives Police Service were closely monitoring the security situation in the Maldives and would take appropriate measures based on assessments. The President also stated that the attack was a threat to the whole region

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rather than just our neighbors.

Preceding the President's remarks, the cabinet also convened to discuss the security situation and deliberated on measures to be taken by relevant parties.



Following the terrorist attack, Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi called for vigilance from the security sector and the citizens, and urged everyone to be responsible when sharing information.

Under her guidance, Maldives Immigration also increased border security and investigated possible ties between the perpetrators of the terrorist attack and the Maldives and established, in consultation with local security forces and foreign intelligence, that there were no links as of yet.



Likewise, NCTC, MNDF, and Maldives Police Service held discussions to assess the situation and gave a press briefing to inform the public of the situation.

NCTC urges all to remain alert during these times, and to refrain from sharing unverified reports or information, which could in turn bring needless harm and worry to everyone concerned.

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"So let us persevere. Peace need not be impracticable, and war need not be inevitable. By defining our goal more clearly, by making it seem more manageable and less remote, we can help all peoples to see it, to draw hope from it, and to move irresistibly toward it."

John F. Kennedy

Government holds a High-Level meeting with the Supreme Court of Maldives

4 April 2019

Government held a High-Level meeting with the Supreme Court of Maldives to discuss the growing concerns of threats emerging from Terrorism and Violent Extremism, and the role of Criminal Justice Response to Terrorism and VE.

The Minister of Defence, Chief of Defence Force, Commissioner of Police, Prosecutor General, DG of NCTC, Vice Chief of Defence Force, and senior officials from the Police attended this meeting on behalf of the government to meet with the Chief Justice Honorable Dr. Ahmed Abdulla Didi.

During this meeting, government officials discussed ways and means to alleviate concerns of the government in the Criminal Justice Response to Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

A diligent Criminal Justice Response to Terrorism and Violent Extremism is a vital component of the whole-of-government approach to CT and P/CVE. It ensures effective prosecution of suspects, and the consequent rehabilitation and reintegration of those convicted of acts of terrorism and terrorism related offenses.

Minister of Defence meets the Executive Board of MATI to discuss tourism sector security

15 April 2019

Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi met with the Executive Board of Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) to discuss tourism sector security. The purpose of this meeting was to brief the Executive Board of MATI about the threats of terrorism in the tourism sector.

This meeting was also attended by heads and senior officials from MNDF, Maldives Police Service, Maldives Immigration, NCTC, Aviation Security Command (AVSECOM), and Directorate of Aviation Security Administration (DASA).

During this meeting, NCTC and the Police gave a threat assessment briefing to officials from MATI. Officials also discussed the role of everyone in the tourism sector to remain vigilant and proactive



when it came to security.

Officials from the security agencies and MATI also discussed the way ahead and ways to improve tourism sector security in the Maldives.

Tourism is the biggest industry in the Maldives and a lot of work has been done, at the local level and in collaboration with our international partners, to safeguard the tourism industry.

Prosecutor General's Office and NCTC discusses legal issues pertinent to the CT and P/CVE sector

9 April 2019



Prosecutor General Uza. Aishath Bisham met with Director General BG Zakariyya Mansoor to discuss legal issues pertinent to the work of NCTC. During this meeting, both parties shared

gaps in legislations faced by prosecutors and other various challenges face by law enforcement agencies in the CT and P/CVE sector.

Both PG and DG agreed to cooperate on legal matters discussed in this meeting, and gave commitment to continue support in the future. Even though prosecution of perpetrators involved in Terrorism and Violent Extremism is important, preventive law enforcement, and in turn, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts are just as vital for a peaceful and tolerant community.

NCTC holds consultation meeting on the National Action Plan on P/CVE

15 April 2019



NCTC held the consultation meeting on the National Action Plan on P/CVE in collaboration with UNDP.

During this consultation meeting, NCTC and UNDP shared the latest working draft of the

National Action Plan on Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism and opened it for comments. 50 participants from 22 government and private institutions participated in this one-day session. They included Government Ministries, Independent Institutions, and Civil Society Organizations.

The feedback and remarks by the participants, along with the comments by Counter Radicalization Committee members from the CR Committee meeting held in March, will be shared with the UNDP consultant for the formulation of the final draft of the NAP. NCTC aims to launch the NAP in the second quarter of this year and will be a key milestone in the P/CVE process.

NCTC bids farewell to Ms. Shoko Noda, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives

30 April 2019



Director of NCTC, MAJ Ibrahim Naeem presented a token of appreciation to Ms. Shoko Noda and thanked her for all the assistance to

develop NCTC and especially the P/CVE sector of the Maldives. On this note, MAJ Naeem also expressed his gratitude for the strong partnership she helped to foster between the UN and NCTC.

During her time in office, Ms. Shoko Noda facilitated various capacity building programs on P/CVE including the education sector awareness workshops and UNDP's consultation to develop the National Action Plan on P/CVE.

DG and the staff of NCTC wish Ms. Shoko Noda best of fortunes in her future endeavors and hope to work together with the incoming UN Resident Coordinator to continue our strong partnership with the UN.

U.S. PACOM Augmentation Team meets with NCTC to discuss conducting rehabilitation programs for inmates

14 April 2019

U.S. PACOM Augmentation Team from the U.S. Embassy met with NCTC officials for follow-up discussions about conducting rehabilitation programs for inmates. These programs will be conducted in collaboration with Maldives Correctional Service.

During this meeting, the team from the U.S. outlined the programs and things that could be done. The team also discussed avenues of capacity

building for staff of Maldives Correctional Service.

The Maldives' prison system has undergone a multitude of transformations within the past couple of years, as the prison and everything associated with the whole system shifted to correctional action from punitive action. Along these lines, rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates is one of the most important steps to ensure inmates do not relapse into a life of crime and can become a responsible citizen, who contributes to the betterment of the society and the nation.

Marriott Global Safety & Security - South Asia Area Director and Marriott Maldives Security Council discusses tourism sector security with NCTC

2 April 2019



NCTC officials met with Marriott Global Safety & Security, South Asia Area Director, Hervirender Pal Singh and Marriott Maldives Security Council to discuss tourism sector security. Marriott is an international hospitality company that has resorts or tourist facilities in many countries.

During this meeting, officials from Marriott briefed NCTC on measures taken by the company to combat and safeguard their properties around the world. Marriott officials invited to share their practices and information with everyone involved in the tourism sector. DG welcomed the invitation and assured that NCTC would work closely with the tourism sector to for its safety and security.

As the leading government agency on CT and P/CVE, NCTC seeks to maintain a close partnership with the private sector, and especially the tourism sector to protect the backbone of the Maldivian economy by partnering with its partner agencies.

NCTC conducts an information session in Workshop on "Developing Responsible Citizens" conducted by Ministry of Home Affairs

15 April 2019



MAJ Ibrahim Naeem gave the presentation on NCTC, explaining the roles and responsibilities of NCTC and answered questions from participants.

In addition to NCTC, government ministries and law enforcements agencies also provided about their respective work and how participants can be responsible citizens using the knowledge gained from this workshop.

As one of the leading agencies in P/CVE, Ministry of Home Affairs works closely with NCTC to educate and create vigilant and resilient communities to for a safe and tolerant nation.

NCTC conducted an information session for participants of Workshop on "Developing Responsible Citizens" conducted by Ministry of Home Affairs for government institutions and NGOs of Raa Atoll.

NCTC Conducts Workshop on “Education Sector Awareness on the Threat of Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Maldives” in H.Dh. Kulhudhuffushi

27 April 2019



Minister of State for Education Mr. Ahmed Riyaz inaugurated the workshop. During his address, State Minister Riyaz highlighted the importance of such a program and urged the participants to learn from the workshop. He also reminded the participants of their role in ensuring the safety at schools and the responsibility of being vigilant as leaders in the education sector of the atoll.

The sessions in this workshop were conducted by officials from NCTC and Dr. Ibrahim Zakariyya



Moosa from the Islamic University of Maldives. During this workshop, participants were given the opportunity to develop and discuss ways and means to address the challenges and prevent the spread of extremist ideologies and violent extremism in the Maldives and especially in the schools. 34 participants from 15 schools in Haa Dhaal atoll participated in the workshop. This is the 3rd iteration of this workshop, with the first two workshops being held for schools in Greater Male' Area and Addu City respectively.

NCTC conducted a one-day awareness workshop for Principals, Heads of Schools, and Senior Educators of Haa Dhaal atoll. This workshop was conducted in collaboration with Ministry of Education and UNDP Maldives and with assistance from MNDF Northern Area and Jalaluddin School in Kulhudhuffushi. The aim of the workshop was to educate and enhance the role of education sector in the national efforts to prevent spread of Violent Extremism through enhancing resilience to address the issue of ideological difference, promotion of peace, respect, and tolerance. The workshop focused on addressing the issue of violence and societal divide emanating from ideological differences.



The role of civil society in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

MAJ Amanulla Rasheed, psc, MSc

Introduction

“As with the concept of 'terrorism', there is no universally agreed definition of the term 'violent extremism'; indeed, somewhat confusingly, the terms can sometimes be employed interchangeably¹...” An approach to preventing and countering violent extremism, the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) plays a crucial role in coordination with the government agencies to provide awareness for the society in how to prevent violence-based extremism within the society. Henceforth, the society does have a responsibility in reporting any kind of violence, especially extremist ideas, which have negative impacts on the society.

What can be the society's role in P/CVE? Is the society ready to support the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in P/CVE? These are some questions that must be answered to address this challenge in the Maldivian context. Hence the Maldives is one nation, which has one race, one ethnicity and moreover one religion, Islam. In the globalized world, extremist ideology is not religion based, rather more of the type that a certain group of people who wants to be separated from the rest of the society because of what they believe, and does not want others to be like them or just these separatists want others to believe in their ideologies (may it be a type of human behavior or completely religious).

Diversity of Violent Extremism

“The diversity of what may constitute 'violent extremism' has, to some extent, been shaped by the activities of terrorist groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al Qaeda and Boko Haram,

which spread messages of hate and violence as well as religious, cultural and social intolerance”² Those groups engaged in violent extremism tend to distort and exploit religious beliefs, ethnic differences and political ideologies to legitimize their actions as well as to recruit and retain their followers.

A research conducted by M. Conway (2016)³ highlights the increasing concern on the part of other scholars, and policymakers and publics, about the easy accessibility of violent extremist content online may have violent

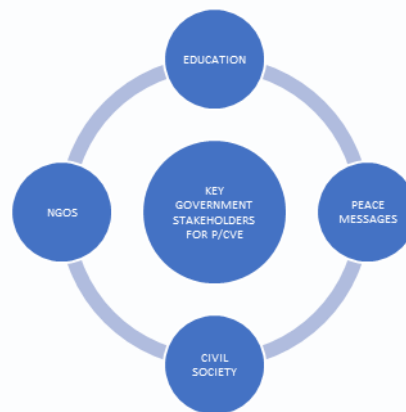


Figure 1: Suggestable P/CVE Model through Education

radicalizing effects. This is a grave concern within the Maldivian society that young children and the youth are greatly in contact with such contents out of supervision of their parents. Internet Service Providers also have a role in controlling such web content from reaching the society beforehand.

It is also mentioned that there is no yet proven connection between consumption of and networking around violent extremist online content and adoption of extremist ideology and/or engagement in violent extremism and terrorism.⁴ The connectivity to the root causes of violent extremism is a crucial area to be studied and how the societal values transform from

norms to personal extremist ideas of practicing any of the religious, ethnic, or cultural values. In the Maldivian context in addition to the above aforementioned values, politically motivated actions related to extreme violence, in most cases, has led to targeted killings of people within the society and has made this peaceful society unsafe.

How much the Maldives society is exposed to violent extremism ideologies are the established links of different religious groups with transnational groups and how they communicate their versions of narratives to target the Maldivian population, especially young children and youth using different methodologies. Spreading of the radical narratives regarding Islam is far riskier to the whole of society and if these issues are not addressed through professional and religious approaches, it is highly likely that more youth might be accepting the beliefs of violent extremist ideologies. The messages of hate and violence as well as religious, cultural and social intolerance is also being preached to some extent so as to confuse the societal values.

Awareness on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: The Societal Role to P/CVE

To enhance P/CVE actions the National Counter Terrorism initiated by the guidance of the Ministry of Defence in launching the formulation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on P/CVE. Furthermore, awareness programs for senior school educators on P/CVE have been conducted in different parts of the island nation. The NAP would be a milestone for a “way forward” how the society would be involved in addressing the P/CVE issued through government organizations and NGOs.

Responsible NGOs also do have a

key role in assisting the society in educating violent extremism by conveying messages of peace for a harmonious country. "... youth are often seen as the most vulnerable to turn to violent acts, but what is habitually left out is their capacity to be agents for change, and their ability of bringing new and innovative ways to address the issues of today..."⁵ Hence, the global shift towards the recognition that a whole-of-society approach and quality education can play a critical role in P/CVE.

A suggestable model for P/CVE as shown in figure 1 describes how the key government stakeholders for P/CVE to be involved in close coordination and collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as the media, law enforcement, educators, researchers and the private sector in educating the civil society, with a significant involvement of the NGOs in the country.

A critical factor which causes people to be more susceptible to a violent extremist narrative is caused by lack of quality education, which are almost same as poverty, bad governance and absence of rule of law. Providing awareness on P/CVE through Heads of Schools and Senior Educators, who directly engage daily with the future generation of the country is a country wide initiative by the NCTC, a program that will enhance the knowledge of the societal role on dealing with violent extremist situations and also to caution and educate the students to avoid being involved in such extremist activities within the society.

It is also vital for the collaboration of mainstream religious scholars with the NGOs particularly faith-based NGOs in spreading the same peace messages rather than narratives of intolerance.

Furthermore, programs in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) are being conducted in the Maldives with great assistance of the NCTC to educate the key personnel/stakeholders who represent the

Maldivian society.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also play an important role in the P/CVE by providing the societies of many countries on strategies and lessons to promote P/CVE. At the organizational level, joint activities and intersectoral cooperation between the Education, Social and Human Sciences, Communication and Culture Sectors are being developed⁶ in the fields of: Education as a tool to prevent violent extremism; Media and online coalitions for the prevention of violent extremism; Youth participation and empowerment; Celebrating cultural diversity.

Furthermore, as a great contribution for the society, a concise and practical reference guide for teachers and educators at the upper primary/lower secondary level,⁷ on how to manage classroom discussions about controversial issues with a view to preventing violent extremism was published. The factual messages in this publication debunks myths and misconceptions enclaving the issues and presents optimistic ideas to engage students in meaningful discussions as to prepare and manage classroom sessions on the subject of P/CVE.

Conclusion

It has been identified that the roles of the society on P/CVE are at a great need than it is seen in a low perspective. Mostly the societal involvement comes through education of the young children and youth of the country.

Secondly the whole of society including the collaboration of government agencies and NGOs would be an ideal model in spreading the peace message by addressing the intolerance ideologies before it is converted to violent extremist actions.

Hence, the awareness for the youth, women and community leaders about P/CVE is a crucial factor in this globalized world because of

their influence and ability to foster social change.

Above all, the civil society's involvement is necessary because civil society actors are often well positioned, credible and experienced in working with specific groups to help identify and address the grievances that make individuals more vulnerable to the influence of violent extremist groups.

1. UNODC (2019), Radicalization and Violent Extremism, at: <https://www.unodc.org/en/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html#top>

2. UNODC (2019), Radicalization and Violent Extremism, at: <https://www.unodc.org/en/terrorism/module-2/key-issues/radicalization-violent-extremism.html#top>

2. M. Conway (2016), Extremism and Terrorism: Six Suggestions for Progressing Research, at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1157408>

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4. P. Crosby (2018), Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Project Officer – Commonwealth Secretariat at: <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/blog-education-approach-preventing-and-countering-violent-extremism>

5. UNESCO. Assistant Director-General for Education, 2010-2018 (Qian Tang). writer of foreword, Preventing violent extremism through education: a guide for policy-makers, at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247764>

6. A Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism (2016), at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244676>

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