



# NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE, MALDIVES

NCTC Newsletter - Volume 26: May 2019



## Government holds high-level meetings to constitute inter-agency security structures and devise efficient National Emergency Response mechanisms

**F**ollowing the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, Maldivian government has been taking multiple measures to strengthen security across the nation. As part of the ongoing measures, government held high-level meetings to constitute inter-agency security structures and devise efficient national

emergency response mechanisms.

Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs, and Minister of Tourism participated in these discussions in addition to Heads of Maldives National Defence Force, Maldives Police Service, Maldives Customs, Immigration Maldives, Aviation Security Command, and NCTC. Officials

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discussed ways to further assess the security environment, and identified measures to strengthen National Emergency Response.



Officials also highlighted the importance of information sharing between the agencies and to be proactive and uncompromising when it came to security.

Two task forces have also been established as part of the national response to assess the regional security situation. These task forces deal with border control measures and security sector response.

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**"As a country predominantly dependent on tourism, we do not take the attacks within our neighbourhood lightly, we are acting on these concerns."**

*Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi*

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Security agencies will continue to work together and monitor security in the region and in the Maldives as the government takes all necessary measures to enhance National Emergency Response efforts and strengthen inter-agency mechanisms.

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"I think what we've learned is that the terrorist threat is serious, but it shifts. You cannot make a single person the sole focus of your counter-terrorism. [...] And the implication of that is if you can deal with this one guy, the threat will go away. The threat doesn't go away; it evolves. What you need to do, and certainly is sort of the central lesson, is you need to have a policy and tools which evolve as the threat evolves. And that's the challenge that we're into right now."

*Paul Bremer*

# A month of enhancing National Emergency Response



## Security forces conduct a series of multi-agency trainings to exercise National Emergency Response

A series of large-scale multi-agency training events were conducted over this month to exercise National Emergency Response. The purpose of these exercises was to enhance joint operational readiness and interoperability of security forces.

Two exercises were held this month. First on the 5th of May and second from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of May. The first exercise was conducted to practice response plans of security agencies and related first responders. It focused on very specific scenarios.

The second exercise was held on a larger scale based on feedback from the first exercise. Security forces across the nation took part in this exercise in their respective Area Commands and covered land-based and maritime security operations. The

exercises concluded successfully on the 23rd as planned and feedback by observers and evaluators will be shared with all relevant agencies.



***Minister of Defence & leadership of MNDF observed the conduct of these exercises to assess performance.***

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# A month of enhancing National Emergency Response

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*In addition to land-based operations, MNDF Coast Guard and Marine Police conducted joint maritime operations in this exercise.*

Training exercises have always been part of the security provision practice in Maldives. However, the series of joint exercises this month was as a precautionary measure following the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka to evaluate the current National Emergency Response plans and revise them as necessary to ensure a coordinated timely response during crises.



The purposes of these activities are to strengthen collaborative mechanisms on internal security matters, and to enhance interoperability and operational readiness of our forces.



Chief of Defence Force MG Abdulla Shamaal

## NCTC briefs President's Office about work done on CT and P/CVE

29 May 2019

NCTC officials met Policy Secretary at the President's Office to brief about the work done on CT and P/CVE.

During this meeting, NCTC officials presented overarching CT and P/CVE strategies, notable projects conducted by NCTC, and challenges and

way ahead to strengthen the CT and P/CVE sector.

DG of NCTC, Director, and Heads of Departments of NCTC participated in this meeting.

# A month of enhancing National Emergency Response



## Multi-Agency delegation visits UK to engage with UK practitioners to develop National Emergency Response capabilities

*5 - 10 May 2019*

A multi-agency delegation from Maldives participated in the Emergency Preparedness Exchange Visit organized by Foreign Office and Home Office of United Kingdom. The purpose of this visit was to increase awareness on resilience planning and joint emergency services interoperability arrangements.

The visit provided opportunities for senior emergency response practitioners from Maldives to engage with their counterparts from the UK. The delegation had the opportunity to study the National Emergency Response setup in the UK and

observe a CT exercise conducted jointly by UK Counter Terrorism Policing and Emergency Response.

The delegation from the Maldives included senior officials from President's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health, Maldives Police Service, Maldives National Defence Force, NCTC, and National Disaster Management Authority.

The modern joint interagency emergency response approach is ideal for Maldives as it allows timely coordinated emergency response and reduces redundancy.

## Attorney General's Office and NCTC discuss legal issues pertinent to the work of NCTC

12 May 2019

NCTC officials met with Attorney General Uz. Ibrahim Riffath to discuss legal issues pertinent to the work of NCTC. During this meeting, both parties shared legal concerns faced by security agencies in the CT and P/CVE sector.

Both parties agreed to cooperate on legal matters discussed in this meeting, and gave commitment to continue support in the future for legal reforms in CT and P/CVE and other related laws and regulations.

## NCTC assures public that any danger to citizens would be promptly shared

22 May 2019

**D**irector General of NCTC, BG Zakariyya

Mansoor assured public that any imminent danger to citizens would be promptly shared. Speaking to Public Service Media News regarding the exercises conducted by security forces this month, DG explained the purpose of these exercises

was to be prepared for any possible situation and that such exercises were necessary for the safety of citizens.

Before concluding his remarks, DG highlighted that terrorist attacks rarely occur with prior detailed knowledge, and that should there be any information about any danger to the people, it will not be withheld from the public and shared with the citizens. He also urged all to refrain from spreading

unfounded rumors, as it may create fear among the masses.

Precautionary measures across the nation have been heightened following the deadly terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka last month, and NCTC and all security agencies have urged everyone to remain vigilant and report any suspicious behavior or information to their respective hotlines and other communication channels.



## British Ambassador to Maldives H.E. James Dauris pays a courtesy call on DG

16 May 2019



British Ambassador to Maldives His Excellency James Dauris paid a courtesy call on Director General of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor. The British Ambassador's call came on another month of close engagements with the UK government to enhance the National Emergency Response of Maldives.

During this call, H.E Dauris highlighted that terrorist attacks by extremists were an

international threat, to people of all faiths and in communities across the globe. H.E Dauris also called for cooperation to deal with the threat of terrorism.

DG briefed the Ambassador about the contemporary security environment in the Maldives and security measures taken in the Maldives following the attacks in Sri Lanka. He also followed-up on the activities conducted in CT and P/CVE sector in Maldives in partnership with the UK government.

Before concluding the meeting, DG thanked the Ambassador for his contributions and the assistance from the Government of the United Kingdom to develop National Emergency Response in Maldives.

## Representatives from EU to Maldives hold a series of meetings with NCTC

**R**epresentatives from European Union to Maldives held a series of meetings with NCTC to discuss areas of cooperation and collaboration. During the first meeting held on the 2nd of May, Head of Operations of EU to Maldives Mr. Frank Hess, the officials discussed the current security environment of the Maldives in light of the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka.



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NCTC officials briefed the team on the current security environment in the Maldives and assured that all precautionary measures were being undertaken. Both officials also discussed areas of collaboration and cooperation between EU and Maldives in the CT and P/CVE sector.

In the follow-up meeting on the 20th of May with Deputy Head of Mission of EU to Maldives, Mr. Thorsten Bargfrede called on DG to further discuss ways to enhance cooperation and collaboration. In this line of thought, Mr. Bargfrede stated that work

was underway to get CT experts from the EU Mission to work with NCTC and the Maldivian government. Officials also discussed security concerns in the nation, especially the tourism sector and about improving information sharing mechanisms.

NCTC's continue engagements with the EU will be greatly beneficial for capacity building in CT and P/CVE and facilitate better information sharing mechanisms between Maldives and the European Union.

## Counsellor of Embassy of Japan meets with NCTC to discuss contemporary security environment

*15 May 2019*

**M**r. Masamichi Abe, Counsellor of Embassy of Japan in Maldives met with NCTC to share security concerns.

During this meeting, Mr. Abe shared security concerns in the tourism sector and inquired about the measures taken by the government in light of the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. Officials further

discussed the present security situation in the Maldives.

DG briefed Mr. Abe on measures taken by the government and assured there was no information about imminent threats to Maldives. He also stated the security forces were working diligently to strengthen the National Emergency Response.

The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to continue cooperation to address concerns and work on areas of collaboration.

# NCTC holds an introductory meeting with Deputy Security Adviser of UNDSS to Sri Lanka and Maldives

23 May 2019



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CTC held an introductory meeting with Mr. Arif Jan, Deputy Security Adviser of UN Department of Safety and Security to Sri Lanka and Maldives.

During this meeting, Mr. Jan shared concerns from UNDSS and the procedures practiced by UN staff working in Maldives during emergencies. He further inquired about the emergency response mechanisms in the Maldives.

DG thanked Mr. Jan for sharing his concerns and briefed about measures government has been taking since the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. DG welcomed UNDSS to share security concerns or information pertaining to Maldives and assured that NCTC and the Maldivian government would take immediate action and keep UNDSS and other concerned agencies in the information loop.

## A delegation from the Ministry of External Affairs of India meets with NCTC to discuss areas of collaboration and cooperation

27 May 2019



A delegation from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India met with NCTC to share security concerns and discuss areas of collaboration and cooperation. The delegation was headed by Mr. Pavan Kumar Rai, Joint Secretary – Security Division of MEA. The Ambassador of India to Maldives and the Defence Attaché of India to Maldives also accompanied the delegation.

During the meeting Indian delegates shared concerns about regional security following the

terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka and inquired about the contemporary security environment in the Maldives.

DG welcomed the delegation and briefed them about the security measures taken by the government. At the same time, he also highlighted the importance of regional cooperation to ensure governments do not get complacent regarding regional and national security.

Before concluding the meeting, Joint Secretary Rai commented on the close relationship between the two countries and stressed on the importance of working together at the operational level in addition to the senior political level. He also welcomed NCTC to continue the collaborative work done thus far with Indian agencies to develop the CT sector in the Maldives.

# Senior officials from Adaaran Resorts - Maldives discusses tourism sector security with NCTC

7 May 2019

**N**CTC 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.

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 for a safe and tolerant nation.

## International order, regional stability and national security

*By Major Hassan Amir*

When it comes to national security, the geo-strategic location of the country and the regional and international geo-political environment are often the most challenging aspects to control; and yet pose persistent and fundamental security challenges. While the academic discipline of international relations and strategic studies have long divided threats that have internal dimensions, as opposed to those with external dimensions, this neat categorization is irrelevant in the current strategic setting. Due to this fact, national security has to

be approached from multiple dimensions, and must factor in the international order or lack of it, regional stability or instability, and finally, internal threats and challenges. Daunting as it may seem, this is what is expected to ensure national survival.

Events around the world, from the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East, rampant drug trafficking in South America, presence of heavily armed warring bands in many parts of the African continent and increased

belligerence and confrontational attitudes of major players in Asia and South China Sea region highlight the volatility and uncertainty that strategic thinkers, statesmen and leaders have to contend with.

There are multiple reasons for this phenomenal increase in volatility and complexity. First is the multi-layered connectivity between states, communities and individuals. Modern transport, telecommunications, cyber technology and the boom in social media have all brought countries, communities and

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individuals together like never before in human history. This connectivity has also increased the permeability of societies and politics, allowing ideas and ideologies alike to penetrate and take hold.

The second reason for increased complexity is the changing nature of the threats themselves. For example, ecological disasters, resource competition and global economic downturns have all been cause for concern among statesmen even centuries ago. The fundamental difference now is the gravity of the situation. Humanity now is poised on the precipice of an unsurpassed ecological catastrophe, with even the best-case scenarios predicting massive inundation of coastal and low-lying areas, widespread famine and species extinction. Similarly, at our present consumption rates, natural resources that seemed infinite at the start of the industrial age are fast running out. As population increases, and our demands rise, the competition for resources get fiercer. Economically, while we have reaped the benefits of connected financial institutions, markets and commodity exchanges, events like the 2008 financial crisis show just how vulnerable the system actually is, and how minor market fluctuations on one country can completely destabilize an entire region.

The rise of non-traditional, and often trans-national threats also create added complexity. International smuggling rings, piracy networks, money laundering enterprises, drug and gun running cartels and cyber-crime organizations exist in almost all regions. Likewise, violent extremist organizations and terrorist groups such as Al-

Qaeda and the Islamic State draws in finances and recruits from all across the globe, while exporting their brand of militant pseudo-religious ideology. Their presence in the international system, and their operations within the regions are some of the most pressing security challenges for nation-states.

Faced with such a bleak strategic setting, what can modern states do to ensure their national security? First, in this complex and uncertain setting, democratic, progressive, inclusive, open and liberal societies would fare better than close, exclusive, insular and brittle regimes, because open and liberal societies are more flexible to change and less regimented. Second, social, political and economic resilience has to be in-built into the current system to withstand challenges and recover rapidly. This not only means social mechanisms and networks, but also political and economic mechanisms to endure business continuity. This would have to be supported by a robust technological backbone.

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**Intelligence needs to be approached from a multi-disciplinary approach, and institutions have to readily push intelligence to other agencies.**

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‘Intelligence’ is very often the go-to solution when dealing with security challenges, but there needs to be a fundamental shift in how intelligence agencies gather, collate and share their intelligence. Intelligence needs to be approached from a multi-disciplinary approach, and institutions have to readily push intelligence to other agencies.

Intelligence should not remain the domain solely of security agencies but should integrate academicians and technocrats and must work much closer to the communities. International intelligence collaboration is key to tackling international threats, and regional and international intelligence platforms must be enhanced and empowered further.

Regional and international collaboration and cooperation are key to ensure national security in the present day. Security is a relative concept, and often times, the more a state feels secure, the more insecure its neighbors feel. This is the classical dilemma at the heart of arms races. In order to mitigate such misunderstanding, there must be open, frank and constructive dialogue at the regional and international level. If regional bodies and mechanism are defunct, new mechanisms must be created, and if the international institutions need reform, reform must be undertaken. That said, these mechanisms and processes are the best tools to deal with the kind of complex threats that states face today.

International order, regional stability and national security are too closely intertwined to be considered in isolation. Rather, states have to let go of the ‘statist’ approach to national security and consider it from a systems point of view. National interest would still remain the driving force behind state actions, but it has to be sought within a collaborative and cooperative regional and international setting, rather than acting unilaterally.

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