



## NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE, MALDIVES

NCTC Newsletter - Volume 27: June 2019



## Government reiterates call for peace and tolerance

Vice President Faisal Naseem emphasized tolerance and conscientiousness as two vital qualities that would help youth succeed in any endeavor of their choosing. He made these remarks at the opening of this year's Youth Leadership Forum organized by Youth Leaders Network in collaboration with Ministry of Home Affairs.

In his speech, Vice President Naseem urged youth

to persevere and tolerate hardships and to remain vigilant and patient. He also highlighted the role of youth in the development of every nation across the globe and advised Maldivian youth to reinvigorate the cultural norms that were slowly disappearing from the society. Vice President concluded his speech repeating his call for youth to be tolerant and peace-loving people.

Echoing Vice President's remarks, Minister of

*...continued on page 2*

Home Affairs Sheikh Imran Abdulla also stated that tolerance at every level was vital to ensure safety and prosperity in society, and that tolerance was a vital character to become a responsible citizen. Home Minister also gave a lecture during this event on the topic “Tolerance in Islam”. Speaking at this session, Minister explored what it meant to be tolerant in Islam and the importance of respecting one another.



As President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih’s government continues to promote peace and tolerance, and enforce a zero-tolerance policy on terrorism and violent extremism, Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi restated the government’s zero-tolerance policy on terrorism while speaking at the “International Meeting of High Level Officials Responsible for Security Matters” in Ufa, Russia. In her speech, she said that Maldives had always been a peace-loving nation and that our ancestors were living examples of tolerance & moderation that Maldivians always strived to emulate well into the 21st century, and that terrorism was never part of the Maldivian way of life. She also stated the need for expanding bilateral & multilateral engagements with existing and new partners.

As the government continues to engage in transparent dialogue with its international partners and local community, the prospect of strengthening Maldives’s standing as a peace-loving and tolerant society holds promise for the future.

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“Indeed, mankind is in loss; except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.”

*Quran (103: 2-3)*

# Meeting of Counter Radicalization Committee held to share information related to work of member agencies

*13 June 2019*

**N**CTC held a meeting of Counter Radicalization Committee to discuss various issues related to the work of member agencies. During this meeting all agencies outlined programs planned for the coming months. Members also discussed the need for inclusivity when selecting participants for the programs with a special focus on involving local governments and policy-makers. Members also discussed ways to incorporate promotion of peace and tolerance in P/CVE related programs.

In addition, agencies discussed areas of focus and the role of each sector in the rehabilitation and reintegration process.

The Counter Radicalization Committee focuses on



routine prevention programs in addition to the de-radicalization process and includes members from all social domains as well as law enforcement agencies with the focus on preventive law enforcement.

## President's Office holds a high-level meeting with the UK Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command

*11 June 2019*

President's Office held a high-level meeting with the UK Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command. Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs, Attorney General, Minister of Tourism, Chief of Defence Force, Commissioner of Police, DG and Director of NCTC, Chief of Staff of President's Office, and Secretary, Policy at the President's Office participated in this meeting in addition to officials from the UK Metropolitan Police CT Command and the UK Embassy.

During this meeting, officials from the UK government covered work done by the UK and the areas UK intends to expand in the future. Officials also discussed aviation security and lessons learned from the Sri Lanka experience.

The government of the United Kingdom has been working closely with the Maldivian government to enhance National Emergency Response, and the effort has been focused across all levels of the government and the private sector.



## Attorney General's Office and NCTC discusses amendments to Anti-Terrorism Legislation



Attorney General's Office and NCTC held multiple discussions to deliberate on amendments to Anti-Terrorism Legislation. Chief of Defence

Force and Vice Chief of Defence Force also participated in these meetings in addition to NCTC officials.

The purpose of the proposed amendments is to revise the legislation to better address contemporary threats and issues and better define roles and responsibilities of government agencies to Counter Terrorism and Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism.

## NCTC discusses future P/CVE programs in collaboration with Islamic Ministry

12 June 2019



the current situation on Violent Extremism and Radicalization and emphasized the importance of religious groups and NGOs to solve the problem.

As a key member of the Counter Radicalization Committee, Ministry of Islamic Affairs plays a vital role in stopping

**N**CTC officials met with Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Ahmed Zahir to discuss future P/CVE programs in collaboration with Islamic Ministry. During this meeting, DG briefed the Minister on

messages of violent misinterpretations of Islam leading to radicalization and violent extremism. The ministry is also the legal authority in enforcing the Religious Unity Act.

# NCTC hosts courtesy calls by distinguished diplomats from friendly countries and partner agencies

## Newly appointed Resident Representative of UNDP Maldives pays a courtesy call on DG

13 June 2019



Newly appointed Resident Representative of UNDP Maldives Ms. Akiko Fujii paid a courtesy call on DG of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor.

During this call, DG welcomed Ms. Akiko Fujii to the Maldives and briefed her on the close relationship between NCTC and UNDP Maldives. DG also gave information about upcoming programs held with assistance from UNDP Maldives.

Ms. Akiko Fujii thanked DG for the warm welcome and gave her assurance that UNDP Maldives would continue to work closely with NCTC and the Maldivian government to develop P/CVE efforts in the country.

## NCTC discusses work done on P/CVE with UNASG and UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific H.E. Haoliang Xu

16 June 2019

H.E. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary General and UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, met with DG during his visit to Maldives.

In this meeting, DG briefed H.E. Haoliang Xu about the work done on P/CVE in Maldives. DG highlighted the role of UN agencies and especially UNDP Maldives in the national P/CVE effort. DG also shared upcoming events and the status of the National Action Plan on P/CVE.

H.E. Haoliang Xu applauded the P/CVE effort in Maldives and stressed on addressing root causes and addressing national priorities. He also highlighted the importance of involving local partners and to

have a strong communication plan to propagate national P/CVE efforts to the populace.

Before concluding the meeting, both officials agreed to continue cooperation on relevant issues, assured continued support, and discussed the way ahead in joint P/CVE efforts in the future.



# NCTC hosts courtesy calls by distinguished diplomats from friendly countries and partner agencies

## Ambassador of Australia to Sri Lanka and Maldives H.E David Holly pays a courtesy call on DG

*16 June 2019*



Ambassador of Australia to Sri Lanka and Maldives H.E. David Holly paid a courtesy call on DG of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor.

During this call, H.E Holly remarked on the long history of bilateral relations between both countries. He also highlighted the need to understand the value of coordination in preventing terrorist incidents, and that the unfortunate attacks in Sri Lanka highlighted the importance of internal coordination and cooperation with the broader community. Ambassador Holly also stressed that it was always imperative to identify root causes and

adopt a P/CVE approach that can be applied to the host nation.

DG also echoed the Ambassador's remarks on the importance of intelligence fusion and information sharing, and the need for inclusiveness in preventive measures; including integrating civil and the private sector in the national effort.

Before concluding the meeting, DG thanked the Ambassador for his invitation to identify areas of collaboration and promised to work closely with the government of Australia to strengthen the P/CVE sector in the Maldives.



# NCTC hosts courtesy calls by distinguished diplomats from friendly countries and partner agencies

## Deputy Head of Mission of Austria to Maldives is briefed on contemporary security environment

16 June 2019



Deputy Head of Mission of Austria to Maldives Mr. Matthias Radosztics met with NCTC and discussed contemporary security environment, the national effort on CT and P/CVE, and areas of cooperation between the two nations.

During this meeting, DG gave an overview of tourism sector security and the contemporary

security environment in Maldives. DG also gave an outline of the rehabilitation and reintegration process planned by the government and emphasized the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in preventive efforts.

Before concluding the meeting, the Deputy Head of Mission discussed areas of cooperation between the two nations. Both parties agreed to explore avenues for collaboration to strengthen preventive measures in the Maldives.

International partnerships and regional alliances with transparent dialogue and two-way communication are essential in the modern world to strengthen the resilience of Maldives, and develop National Emergency Response and preventive measures across the nation.

## PACOM Augmentation Team at the U.S. Embassy updates NCTC & MCS on programs planned for Maldives

16 June 2019

U.S. PACOM Augmentation Team from the U.S. Embassy met with NCTC officials and Maldives Correctional Service for follow-up discussions regarding rehabilitation programs. The team from the U.S. outlined the programs and things that could be done.

Rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates is one of the most important steps to make convicts responsible, productive, and contributing members of society.

This program will also greatly complement the work done to develop a rehabilitation and reintegration program for radicalized individuals.

## NCTC holds an introductory meeting with Journey NGO

2 June 2019



NCTC held an introductory meeting with Journey, a non-governmental organization formed with a mission to help substance users to recover and reintegrate back to society as productive citizens. Journey also works to empower and educate young people and communities for prevention of drug use and HIV.

During this meeting, Journey shared methodologies and approaches developed by the NGO in their 14 years of experience.

NCTC officials discussed ways to integrate P/CVE elements into programs conducted by Journey. Officials also explored approaches and experience of Journey that can be adopted into NCTC's programs.

Journey also works closely with UNDP Maldives, one of the leading partners of NCTC's P/CVE efforts.

Drug abuse and drug-related offences have plagued the nation for decades and is one of the most common crimes; creating a huge population of vulnerable youth that can be exploited by terrorist groups and extremist elements.

## NCTC conducts a session on the role of youth in P/CVE

15 June 2019



**N**CTC conducted a session at Youth Leaders Forum organized by Youth Leaders Network on "Role of Youth in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism". This session was conducted by the Director of NCTC Major Ibrahim Naeem.

In this session, Director covered the role of NCTC, the role of youth in national security, and the

importance of peace and tolerance to maintain harmony in the nation. This event was organized by Youth Leaders Network in collaboration with Ministry of Home Affairs.

As a contributing member of the Counter Radicalization Committee, Ministry of Home Affairs plays a dynamic role in preventive efforts and has the audacious task of implementing the rehabilitation and reintegration process.





# NCTC attends "Asia Counter Terrorism Leaders Forum" conducted by Australian Federal Police in collaboration with Maldives Police Service

17 June 2019

**D**irector of NCTC attended "Asia Counter Terrorism Leaders Forum" conducted by Australian Federal Police in collaboration with Maldives Police Service.

recent terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka.

The 3-day forum brought together 26 CT practitioners from 7 countries. The forum aims at enhancing knowledge and developing a more functional investigative cooperation framework. All participants at the forum discussed the importance of regional cooperation in light of the



# UNODC conducts Regional Technical Training Workshop on "Effective Prevention & Intervention of the use of Internet & Social Media by Young Adults for Terrorist Recruitment in South Asia" in Maldives

18-20 June 2019

**U**NODC conducted Regional Technical Training Workshop on "Effective Prevention & Intervention of the use of Internet & Social Media by Young Adults for Terrorist Recruitment in South Asia" in Maldives.

This workshop brought together 35 practitioners of law enforcement and investigative agencies from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The workshop was aimed at strengthening investigative & analytical capabilities of participants.



Chief of Staff of President's Office Uz. Ali Zahir addressed the participants in the opening session. In his

remarks, Uz. Ali Zahir highlighted the role of law enforcement agencies in preventing youth from the clutches of terrorism.

The workshop introduced participants to digital

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evidence, especially evidence from social media, and the processes to target, analyze, and process social media content. Subject matter experts from leading social media companies conducted the sessions in this workshop and introduced mechanisms and the legal structure in place to seek evidence.

Many programs conducted by UN agencies in Maldives is held with generous assistance from the government and the People of Japan. As such, Ambassador of Japan to Maldives Her Excellency Keiko Yanai spoke to the participants during the closing session and urged everyone to be vigilant.



Maldives will host another regional workshop later this year on electronic evidence collection in CT and other related crimes. These trainings highlight a key requirement: governments, law enforcement agencies, and prosecutors have to adapt to tackle crimes that exploit cyberspace.

## "Rannamaari Hunt": An exercise in enhancing CT response

23-27 June 2019



Maldives National Defence Force's Male' Area Command and Northern Area Command successfully held Exercise "Rannamaari Hunt". This training is aimed at exercising unified command concepts across the full spectrum of military operations, involving both land-based and maritime operations.

The 5-day exercise was held across multiple islands and focused on most recent security threats. Soldiers, sailors, and marines involved in the exercise had a chance to exercise their battle drills and practice their SOPs.

This year's exercise also gave the opportunity to assess the operational readiness of the force and especially the capacity to attend to terrorist attacks.

Following the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka, security forces elevated their readiness level and had already conducted two nation-wide trainings last month to exercise National Emergency Response to terrorism. Every such training is an opportunity to practice, assess, and refine tactics, techniques, and procedures at every level.



# NCTC in collaboration with Hedayah holds workshop on “The Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing & Countering Extremism”

26-27 June 2019



**N**CTC, in collaboration with Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, held the workshop on “The Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing and Countering Extremism. The workshop is the result of the close ties between the Maldivian and UAE governments. In February this year, Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi signed an MoU with Hedayah on behalf of NCTC to expand cooperation and coordination with the government of Maldives to develop effective CVE programs.

The 2-day workshop focused on preventive methodologies, rehabilitation, and CVE through community engagement, role of Imams in P/CVE, and prevention programs. 58 participants from government and Civil Society Organizations attended the workshop.

Minister of Education Dr. Aishath Ali officiated the opening ceremony. In her speech, she called to

make preventive education and awareness a lasting trend. She also spoke about the importance of putting religious leaders and scholars at the forefront of the Counter-Terrorism and Counter Radicalization discourse.



Executive Director of Hedayah H.E. Maqsoud Kruse headed the delegation from Hedayah and also conducted the sessions. H.E. Maqsoud called for peace and love in his opening remarks. He called for a combined inclusive approach to decrease radicalization and extremism.

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Resident Representative of UNDP Maldives Ms.

“There are those who promote a culture of death and destruction. We need to practice a culture of life and construction. We need a different approach for this. We need to include everyone in society as part of the solution.”

H.E. Maqsoud Kursi, ED of Hedayah

This workshop gave a chance for participants to interact with the lecturer and identify ways to tackle the problem of extremism in the Maldives. Participants were also introduced to best practices and experiences from battling extremism across the globe. During the sessions, H.E. Kruse stressed on the importance of taking the lessons-learned elsewhere and finding a solution that was applicable to Maldives, encompassing the uniqueness of Maldives and the Maldivian way of life.



Akiko Fujii also spoke at the ceremony. In her remarks, she stressed on the role of faith-based organizations and Civil Society Organizations in

Preventing and Countering Extremism. She also highlighted the importance of a peaceful tolerant prospect for Maldives' future.

“For us to prevent violence, we need to rebuild our country as a peaceful, tolerant & respectful nation & all of us have a role to play. CSOs are present in every community & can make a huge impact in all prevention efforts.”

Ms. Akiko Fujii, RR of UNDP Maldives



During the closing session, DG called upon participants to choose a life of construction and hope, and that the problem of extremism affected all and required a solution inclusive of everyone.



## Remarks by Guest of Honor Minister of Education Dr. Aishath Ali

*Minister of Defence, Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi,*

*UNDP Resident Representative to the Maldives, Ms Akiko Fujii,*

*Executive Director of Hedayah, Mr Maqsoud Kruse,*

*Director General of National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor, Distinguished guests and attendees,*

*Assalaam alaikum..A very good morning to you all*

*I would like to begin by conveying my sincere gratitude to the Minister of Defence and the Director General of NCTC for inviting me to the opening of this very important workshop.*

*The importance of this workshop is tied to its timing.*

*Certainly, we are living in an era, where the wildfires of extremism and radicalization are swiftly, if not gradually, engulfing communities and societies across the globe. Today, radicalization is too real and too close to home to be ignored. And, the cost of being indifferent to its perils is way too high to be overlooked.*

*Often, these societal plagues find their targets in the youth, who do not necessarily have to be uneducated, unemployed or underprivileged, for that matter.*

*They could be well-educated, gainfully employed and highly privileged. However, at the end of the day, they could just as easily be manipulated, misguided and misinformed by the people they look up to.*

*It is for this specific reason that we need workshops like this, which put religious leaders and scholars' front and center in their aims and goals, as they*

*play a critical role in preventing and countering extremism in all its forms and manifestations.*

*We need them to be at the forefront of the counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization discourse.*

*Through my presence here as the Minister of Education, I wish to reinstate the importance of education and awareness which, if and when done meaningfully, is proven to produce positive results, which are felt in all corners of society.*

*I take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Defence, for her attention and dedication to enforcing President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and radicalization.*

*I wish to thank and congratulate Hedayah and NCTC for this key initiative, their first collaboration, which I am sure, is one of many more to come.*

*I am confident that this interesting partnership between NCTC and Hedayah, as the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, will prove to be immensely fruitful in the future.*

*I also thank UNDP Maldives for being a significant partner and an active contributor in our efforts to develop and improve the socio-economic conditions and general well-being of our people.*

*I would also like to wish all participants of this workshop, all the best in their efforts to make this country, and ultimately, the world at large, a more tolerant, safer and peaceful place for all.*

*Let us all join hands to make preventive education and awareness a lasting trend. Thank you*



# NCTC and Maldives National University holds a public forum on "Global Trends in Confronting Extremism: *Towards a Multidimensional Approach*"

26 June 2019



attended this forum. They include students, religious scholars, Civil Society Organizations, public citizens, and law enforcement personnel.

Participants got the chance to interact with the lecturer and ask questions at the end of the lecture.

**N**CTC and Maldives National University held an open forum on "Global Trends in Confronting Extremism: *Towards a Multidimensional Approach*" at the Maldives National University.

The forum was moderated by DG of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor and Vice Chancellor of MNU Dr. Ali Fawaz Shareef.



Executive Director of Hedayah H.E. Maqsoud Kruse spoke at this forum.

Over 100 people from various backgrounds



As the government steps up its P/CVE efforts, open dialogue and communication is vital to promote government's message of peace and tolerance through dialogue. NCTC will be holding more public forums in partnership with universities and international partners in the future.





# Military Defeat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria: Implications for Regional Security and the Maldives

*By Major Ibrahim Naeem & First Lieutenant Ahmed Nazwan*

On 29 June 2014, the Islamic State (IS) group sent shock waves around the world with its declaration of a “Caliphate”, giving the most brutal terrorist organisation an “Islamic cloak” and an abundance of legitimacy in some circles around the Muslim world. The group successfully attracted more than 30,000 foreign fighters around the globe, including countries such as the Maldives. Consequently, the group cleverly exploited growing sectarian tension between Sunni and Shia sect while continued dominance by controlling communities with fear as they reached the peak of their territorial control in Iraq and Syria, in late 2014. Five years on, much has changed, with the military defeat of the group in its core territories, with the loss of territories once they controlled in Iraq and Syria, effectively rendering them without any territory within Syria and Iraq.

## Rise and expansion of ISIS in Iraq and Syria

The Islamic State (also known as Daesh, ISIL or ISIS) has risen from an Al Qaeda’s franchise, known as Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI), founded by Abu Musab al Zarqawi in 2004. Repeated decapitation strikes against the group, as well as the combined efforts of the Iraqi forces and US troops on the group disrupted and

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**Thus, they started to focus on attacks against targets across the world, showing that they still commanded a global army of volunteers willing to carry out their bidding.**  
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contained the group. However, the evolving sectarian situation meant that they were surreptitiously able to expand their support base amongst the Sunni tribes in the region. Having risen to the leadership of the group in 2010, following the demise of Abu Omar al Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al Misiri in 2010, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi capitalised on the withdrawal of

US forces and the fast emerging sectarian divide. He elevated former Ba’ath party members to positions of power, based on their past experience to create a hybrid terrorist organisation that was capable of controlling communities with fear and appeared unstoppable as they ruthlessly routed all opposition, and gained in terms of territorial holdings.

In 2015, ISIS expanded into a network of affiliates in at least eight other countries. Its branches, affiliates, supporters and inspired lone individuals, though directly not connected with the core leadership, increasingly carried out attacks beyond the borders of its so-called Caliphate. The expansion of the so-called caliphate, the Islamic State’s networks beyond the borders of Iraq and Syria relies on its aspirations to re-establish Sunni dominance in Iraq and attack the West.

As they regained their footing, intense offensive operations against the group were conducted,

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resulting in the dwindling of their territory. The group was compelled to respond as territorial holdings were crucial to their claim to legitimacy as a “Caliphate” and also to the myth of being undefeated which was central to their recruitment drive. Thus, they started to focus on attacks against targets across the world, showing that they still commanded a global army of volunteers willing to carry out their bidding.

Despite this, the so-called “Caliphate” continued to crumble and on December 19, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump declared that ISIS was defeated and signaled his intention to withdraw all 2,000 U.S. troops supporting the SDF in Syria. But the SDF continued its offensive and in February 2019 launched the final siege on ISIS forces in Baghouz (Syria), the last holdout. Baghouz fell on March 23, 2019, formally ending the caliphate’s claim to any territory. For some, the military defeat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria meant an end of a long war in which many thousands have been killed and millions have been displaced leaving an unprepared humanitarian crisis. But for others, military defeat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria means that the brutal group is on the move, expanding the reach and

spreading its ideology and terrorist activities inspired by its ideology. The question at issue for us here is, what it means to South Asia and Maldives.

### **Expansion of ISIS in Asia and Implications on Regional Security**

Despite the demise of its physical caliphate, IS remains a battle-hardened and ideologically motivated force whose “enduring defeat” is not assured. The threats posed by the group persist as the group is capable of inspiring its affiliates and sympathisers around the globe. Additional humanitarian and security challenges are predicted to emerge in various forms since thousands of foreign fighters were forced to leave their families including women and children in the camps in Syria and Iraq.

The group did not take long to show how they were going to respond, as barely a month after the debacle in Baghouz, the group took responsibility for multiple coordinated terrorist attacks targeting three churches and three luxury hotels in Colombo, Sri Lanka and cities of Negombo and Batticaloa that killed more than 250 people.

While the world leaders were condemning these heinous acts of terror, on 29 April 2019, the self-

proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi resurfaced in a

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**It is evident that the group’s foreign fighters, who evaded capture, are on the move, with some travelling to other conflict zones, and others travelling back to their home states.**

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propaganda video on their media channels claiming that the attacks were acts of revenge for the military defeat in Baghouz, Syria and the loss of territories it once controlled. In addition to that, he praised perpetrators behind 92 attacks conducted in eight countries while the group was losing territory in Iraq and Syria. Strikingly, in his first appearance in 2014, he declared that, “our battle today is a war of attrition to harm the enemy, and they should know that jihad will continue until doomsday.”

Currently, the group is focused on expanding in the South Asian region, as evidenced by the focus on their franchises such as Wilayat Khorasan, Wilayat Silani and the declaration of a new “province” in India and Bangladesh. Its military defeat in Iraq and Syria hasn’t meant that the group has lost all its territorial holdings though, and they remain one of the most resilient terrorist

outfits in the world. At the same time, it is evident that the group's foreign fighters, who evaded capture, are on the move, with some travelling to other conflict zones, and others travelling back to their home states. As group transforms from a state building organisation to a more traditional terrorist organisation and is likely to rely on a network of cells build around a core of trained and battle-hardened returnees, with operational units being made up of new recruits. Frustrated affiliates and sympathisers may also be used in recruitment and other support roles.

It is also of note that the Islamic State group has been evolving and very innovative in their development of their tactics and weapons of terror. As they executed conventional warfare with unconventional means, they have developed very sophisticated attack methodologies, including the tactical use of suicide attacks as well as the development of drones and remotely operated vehicles and vessels that can be used in offensive roles.

### **Probable Risks and Threats**

The military defeat of the group also does not spell their defeat in the virtual domain, where they

remain a potent ideological threat. Thus, radicalisation of new followers will continue at least in the medium term. This, combined with the return of foreign fighters

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**The military defeat of the group also does not spell their defeat in the virtual domain, where they remain a potent ideological threat.**  
 .....

and their families, will keep the security establishments of the Maldives and other regional countries occupied for a long time to come. It stands to reason that even the women and children would need to be evaluated and monitored, as some of them have been trained for combat operations. Furthermore, those who have not been trained would have been subjected to extremely harsh conditions and witnessed untold brutality.

It appears that it is only a matter of time before the Islamic State unleashes a major terror attack. As the world braces for that, and wonders where the strike would be next, the humanitarian crisis needs to be dealt with as well. While it would be easy to shy away from accepting the returnees back, it would be extremely irresponsible to do that, given that we are a member of the

international community. It would also be unwise, given the security implications, to allow any of the foreign fighters and their families to integrate in to the society without the appropriate evaluation protocols and programmes being in place to deal with them. In addition to this, it is also important to continue to counter the vile ideology of what is one of the most brutal terrorist organisations the world has seen to date.

### **Staying Ahead of the Threat**

In a complex world, staying ahead of this complex threat in order to sustain peace and stability is challenging. In the face of evolving threats of terrorism, the question of how we stay ahead of these dynamic, highly resilient and adoptable threats remain critical. The key to stay ahead of threat of terrorism is timely intelligence, multi-agency collaboration and sense-making. Sense making encompasses timely collection of intelligence and fusion of data, shared understanding of potential threats with tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) with emerging trends and patterns. It also includes predictive analysis of probable threat activities to enable effective evidence based national responses. In addition to these, the



forces that make up the kinetic element need to be ever ready to respond and eliminate any threat before it makes landfall.

Today, violent extremist groups have the capacity, capability and ability to adopt and are resilient to resurge despite the best efforts of militaries, security and law enforcement agencies. In order to prevent such threats by a multi-agency collaborative effort with combination of security, social, economic and ideological measures are required at the national level. Thus, there is an urgent need to utilise all national instruments of power in a collaborative manner to enable all agencies to synchronize the national efforts. In addition, government agencies and civil society need to collaborate with one another in a whole of society effort.

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