



## NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE, MALDIVES

NCTC Newsletter - Volume 30: September 2019

### President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih Reiterates the Maldives' Commitment to Eliminate the Scourge of Terrorism in the Maldives



President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has pledged the Maldives' support for the Christchurch Call against the use of the internet for violent extremist and terrorist purposes. He made this

pledge while addressing the "Leaders' Dialogue: Strategic Responses to Terrorist and Violent Extremism", held as part of the 74th Annual Session of the United Nations ...continued on page 2

General Assembly (UNGA). This initiative is jointly spearheaded by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern and the President of France, His Excellency Emmanuel Macron.

President Solih expressed that *“conventional security measures are inadequate in the fight against terrorism, as they do not address the root socio-political causes that nourish extremism; racism, xenophobia and hate speech”*. He urged all governments to take steps to curtail them.

“For our part, we are committed to working with the international community, and with companies specializing in digital technology, to prevent the internet being used as a tool to promote hateful agendas,” he added.

“It is one of my Government’s highest obligations to ensure that no other family in the Maldives has to endure such heart-breaking tragedy,” he said.

To relay the proactive measures that the Maldives is taking at the national level to prevent and respond to terrorism, the President alluded to the proposed amendments to the Maldives’ Anti-Terrorism Act, which will strengthen the ability to halt terrorist activity while preserving the fundamental rights and freedoms granted by the Constitution.

“We have now come to understand that terrorism cannot be tackled solely through conventional security means; we need to dig deeper, and address the root causes poisoning young mind and fueling this scourge.”

*President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih*

## **In this issue:**

- **President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih Reiterates the Maldives’ Commitment to Eliminate the Scourge of Terrorism in the Maldives**
- **Vice President meets with relevant authorities in regards to Islamophobia and religious extremism**
- **Minister of Defence & top MNDF officials meet with the Chairman of Commission on Disappearances and Deaths**
- **NCTC briefed the participants of 2019 Capital Providers Symposium held at Soneva Fushi Resort**
- **Government lists organizations deemed terrorist groups**
- **A delegation from Maldives participates in a workshop conducted by UNODC held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**
- **Maldives Police Service in Collaboration with Ministry of Islamic Affairs Conducts “Oagaa Camp” this September**
- **Act of Valor and unity enabled to control the most devastating fire in the capital Male’**
- **NCTC met Foreign Secretary to deliberate on ways to strengthen international relations on CT related matters**
- **NCTC officials conduct a session on Terrorism and Violent Extremism for Aviation Security Basic Course participants**
- **NCTC conducts Workshop on “The Role of Senior Educators in P/CVE” in Baa Eydhafushi**
- **UNCCT conducts capacity building workshop for TVET institutes at Holiday Inn Resort Kan’dooma Maldives**
- **Sustainable Peacebuilding for Small Island Nations: A Maldivian Context**

# Vice President meets with relevant authorities in regards to Islamophobia and religious extremism

19 September 2019



**V**ice President Faisal Naseem met with the Special Committee assembled by the President upon the counsel of the Cabinet to find solutions to the issue of mounting criticism targeted towards the Islamic faith. Topics of discussions included counter-terrorism and challenges in maintaining a religiously tolerant society in the Maldives. Members of the Committee shared information and latest updates on the work carried out by the relevant authorities in this regard.

During the meeting, the VP and the Committee Members highlighted the difficulties faced by

authorities in dealing with suspicious individuals, due to current legal frameworks, thereby pressing on the need to amend the laws in question. The Vice President also emphasized the importance of creating and upholding a tolerant society.



## Minister of Defence & top MNDF officials meet with the Chairman of Commission on Disappearances and Deaths

7 September 2019



**M**inister of Defence, Uza. Mariya Didi, Chief of Defence Force, Major General Abdulla Shamaal, and top officials of Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) have met with the Chairman of the Commission on Disappearances and Deaths, Uz. Husnu Al Suood.

At the meeting held at Ministry of Defence, discussions were held on the findings of the interim report published by the Commission.

The Minister and the MNDF leadership expressed their grave concern over the spread of violent extremism and radicalization in the Maldives, as found by the report.

The Minister of Defence assures all citizens of the Maldives that, the Maldives National Defence Force, and the National Counter Terrorism Centre, together with all relevant state institutions, are standing up to the menaces of violent extremism and radicalization, thereby taking immediate steps to ensure the safety, security and stability of our peaceful nation, in alignment with Commander-in-Chief HEP Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's "zero-tolerance policy against terrorism".

## NCTC briefed the participants of 2019 Capital Providers Symposium held at Soneva Fushi Resort

8 September 2019

**D**uring the session, the Director of NCTC briefed to the participants of 2019 Capital Providers Symposium, on the 'whole-of-society' and 'whole-of-government' approach adopted in the Maldives to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism in the Maldives.

The session provided information on the Maldives' holistic response to terrorism and violent



extremism by a mix of security and preventive

## Government lists organizations deemed terrorist groups

19 September 2019

**A**s part of the government's accelerated efforts to counter the scourge of terrorism, the government listed down organizations deemed to be affiliated with terrorism.

The list comprises of 17 terrorist organizations and the top of the list is jihadist militant group Islamic State (ISIS), followed by Al-Qaeda, one of the most influential terrorist organizations worldwide.

Furthermore, with rebel group Jabhat Al-Nusra or Nusra Front, Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based group primarily battling Indian authority over Jammu and Kashmir as well as Al-Qaeda's subordinate group, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Other organizations include Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Philippine terror group Abu Sayyaf, Boko Haram in Nigeria, militant group Al Shabaab, Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, South Asia-based extremist group Harakat-ul Jihad Islami, Pakistani-based Jaish-e-Mohammed, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Sri Lankan jihadist group National Thawheed Jamaat as well as Jamat-ul-Millat-e-Ibrahim and Wilayat al Selni.

Article 18 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (2015), states that the President will decide which organizations are deemed terrorist groups. The new amendments brought to the act in 2016 states that Maldives Police Service will, under the instruction of the National Security Committee, maintain the list of terrorist groups.

## A delegation from Maldives participates in Workshop conducted by UNODC held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

21 August 2019

**A** total of 7 UN member states participated in the workshop, which was hosted by the Mongolian Central Bank. Maldivian delegates represented the NCTC, Maldives Police Service, Attorney General's Office, Prosecutor General's Office and the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Key areas of discussion included the UN framework for countering the financing of terrorism (CFT) and proliferation (PF) of WMDs

(by non-state actors) and related international standards, UNSCR targeting ISIL/Al Qaida/Taliban, National Legal and Institutional framework for CFPF of WMDs and the freezing of related assets. Furthermore, application of the UNSCR 1540(2004) and related financial obligations by UN member states were discussed and a comprehensive table top exercise was conducted amongst participants.

## Maldives Police Service in Collaboration with Ministry of Islamic Affairs Conducts “Oagaa Camp” this September

19 September 2019

**M**aldives Police Service conducts “Oagaa camp” in 04 islands of Gaaf dhaal Atoll, from the 07th September to 19th of September 2019. Prior to the camp activities in the islands, a briefing was held for the island councils and school leadership to explain and discuss the activities of the camp.

The activities of the camp was focuses on building a diverse and a unified society.

Main events include; School Students Assembly, Island Leader’s Seminar, presentation for senior students, Local Teachers Seminar, Awareness Session for Parents, Counseling, Meeting with Islam and Quran teachers, and Door to Door Sessions. Total of 3519 participants attended the camp.



Scholars from Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Hassan Thaufeeq, Sheikh Ahmed Fahmy Didi and Sheikh Ahmed Maumoon participated in this camp. The contributing officer of the Maldives Police Service was Police Staff Sergeant Mohamed Yamany Jaufar.



“There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lay defeat and death”

Nelson Mandela

## Act of Valor and unity enabled to control the most devastating fire in the capital Male'

20 September 2019



On the 20th of September 2019, Maldivians witnessed the largest and the most catastrophic fire incident ever recorded to occur on Maldivian soil. This incident which occurred at a chemical storage yet again proved that the unity and solidarity of the Maldivian people still remains ever so strong. The unified effort of the emergency services, together with the

cooperation from the general public enabled the fire to be brought under control and extinguished within a matter of hours. On that fateful night, with limited resources and armed with their wits, the responders demonstrated an uncommon valor that is rarely witnessed by mankind.



# NCTC met Foreign Secretary to deliberate on ways to strengthen international relations on CT related matters

*17 September 2019*

**D**uring the discussions with the Foreign Secretary Hon. Abdul Ghafoor, discussions were focused to further strengthen international relations on CT related matters and ongoing engagements with foreign partners and UN organizations. Further discussions were on the necessity of continuing collaborations with international centers of excellence such as the Hedaya of Abu Dhabi, UAE and the Naif Arab University for



Security Sciences of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to further continue the efforts on PVE in the Maldives.

Furthermore, DG highlighted on the ongoing capacity building programs conducted by UNODC and UNCCT, in which both NCTC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs should work together in the coordination efforts.

The foreign Secretary assured that fullest cooperation will be provided to the NCTC in providing assistance in international tours and capacity building in coordinating with international partners and UN organizations.

## NCTC officials conduct a session for Aviation Security Basic Course participants on Terrorism and Violent Extremism

*9 September 2019*

**T**hrough an interactive scenario based exercise, participants brainstormed and discussed on contemporary threat environment of Maldives and evolving threats of terrorism targeting aviation sector. Furthermore, participants were discussed about

trends and changing attack methodologies adopted by terrorist groups.

Training modules of aviation security command have improved significantly over the past years. NCTC in collaboration with AVSECOM, conducts regular awareness sessions on security and threat of terrorism on aviation sector.

# NCTC conducts Workshop on “The Role of Senior Educators in P/CVE” in Baa Eydhafushi

19 September 2019



**N**CTC conducted a one-day awareness workshop for Principals, heads of schools, and senior educators of Baa Atoll. This workshop was conducted in collaboration with Ministry of Education and UNDP Maldives and with assistance from MNDF Northern Area HQ. This iteration of the workshop was held at Baa Atoll Education Centre in Eydhafushi.

The aim of the workshop was to educate and enhance the role of education sector in national efforts to prevent spread of Violent Extremism through enhancing resilience to issues of ideological differences, promotion of peace, respect, and tolerance. The workshop focused on addressing the issues of violence and societal divides emanating from ideological differences.

Senior Executive Director Mr. Hassan Atheef officiated the opening session. In his opening remarks, he highlighted the significance of senior

educators in prevention of the spread of extremism through education.

Director of NCTC also spoke at the opening session, stressing the need to promote peace, tolerance, and societal harmony.

The sessions in this workshop were conducted by officials from NCTC, Maldives Police Service, and Dr. Ibrahim Zakariyya Moosa, the Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Maldives. During this workshop, discussions focused on identifying indicators of extremist ideologies in school environments, and measures taken at school levels for prevention. The session further emphasized the significance of Counter Narratives and messages of peace and tolerance.

23 participants from 12 schools in Baa atoll participated in this one-day workshop. This is the 6th iteration of this workshop, with the previous workshops being held for schools in Greater Male' Area, Addu City, Haa Dhaal atoll, Gaaf Dhaal atoll, and Laamu Atoll respectively.

## UNCCT conducts capacity building workshop for TVET institutes at Holiday Inn Resort Kan'dooma Maldives

29 September 2019



The workshop was conducted as part of the United Nations agreement with countries in the South Asian region, with the aim to bridge the gap between technical training systems and industry needs through inter alia capacity building and strengthening of a selected group of TVET institutions.

In that regard, the UNCCT, in partnership with ILO, had proposed to the Government of Maldives to organize a capacity building workshop on “Youth Engagement, Skills Development and Employment Facilitation in South Asia: Capacity-Building of Principles of Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) Institutes in the Maldives”.

The National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) took the initiative in collaborating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Maldives to implement the project as soon as possible and hence, established the Ministry of Higher

Education of Maldives as the focal point for operationalizing the project. A tremendous coordination efforts of these organizations made this program a success, and also saw the handing over of the first pilot project to Maldives Polytechnic in collaboration with UNCCT.

The idea is that young people in all countries should be considered an asset and helped through investment in key platforms that could help them achieve their potential and safeguard them from falling prey to violent extremism.



*...continued on page 11*

Hon. Minister of Higher Education Dr. Ibrahim Hassan officiated the closing ceremony.

Hon. Minister emphasized that peace and harmony of the society can be enhanced through battling



violent extremism and terrorism in the Maldives. “At risk adolescents who lack proper education have a high risk in drawing towards extremist ideologies,” he added.

Growing extremism is a grave and urgent concern in Maldives, where a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is required to build a resilient community.

Mr Ahmed Nasir, Chief Executive Officer of Maldives Polytechnic, commended the participants for their tremendous contributions.

The program was planned and conducted within a month’s time by the UNOCT and UNCCT in collaboration with Ministry of Higher Education and NCTC.

During the closing event, Mr Adel Sparr from the UNOCT stressed that the knowledge provided through this program, shall assist participants in their work on P/CVE. He urged them to brief their

institutions and continue assisting the government and the Maldivian society.

Participants also provided an overview of what they had learned in the 4-day session and shared their recommendations.

During a separate meeting with the senior officials of NCTC, both parties further extended talks to enhance strategic communications as a critical means to expedite implementation of National Action Plan on P/CVE and CT in Maldives.



“Taken as a whole, a vocation or vocations are the best medium for the all-round development of a boy or a girl and, therefore, the syllabus should be woven round vocational training, primary education thus conceived as a whole is bound to be self-supporting...”

*Mahatma Gandhi*

# Sustainable Peacebuilding for Small Island Nations: A Maldivian Context

*LTC Amanulla Ahmed Rasheed, psc, MSc*

## Introduction

Education plays an imperative role in peacebuilding. Through education, an individual not only attains and understands academic knowledge, but also acquires moral values, norms, etiquettes, proper code of conduct, decency and effective ways of communication. Education will instill tolerant behavior in people, which are a means to resolving different conflicts in an effective manner.<sup>i</sup>

A child's education begins at home. Education is the change what the child experiences in her or his life. Every new experience is new knowledge gained by a person since their birth. Hence, the basic values, etiquette and codes of conduct and discipline begin at home. Therefore, as educators, even parents do have an important role in peacebuilding in a society.

Peacebuilding is a vast subject which explores and contributes to a society's wellbeing and its development in multiple ways. The United Nations has established a new approach in peacebuilding, whereby "the UN has moved beyond its original mandate of helping prevent and end wars between member states and begun to intervene directly within member states..."<sup>ii</sup>. Hence, prevention strategies enable the promotion of peace and tolerance before any conflicts occur in a nation.

## Understanding the Threat Environment Surrounding Terrorism and Extremism

It is crucial to understand the real threats to nations when proceeding with the actions to be taken regarding terrorism and extremism. Looking at recent developments in the Indian Ocean Region,

"the threat of terrorism posed to Maldives increased after the April 21 bombings in Sri Lanka"<sup>iii</sup>. Rather than hardcore terrorist attacks, there is a risk of growing extremism observed within the island communities in Maldives, which may potentially lead to crimes of terrorism.

The movement of a number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) to the conflict zones in Syria and other parts of the world is a clear sign of the radicalisation of innocent people who join the cause of "*Jihad*" (Jihad, Arabic: "struggle" or "effort" also spelled *jehad*, in Islam, a meritorious struggle or effort. The exact meaning of the term *jihad* depends on context; it has often been erroneously translated in the West as "holy war." Jihad, particularly in the religious and ethical realm, primarily refers to the human struggle to promote what is right and to prevent what is wrong.)<sup>iv</sup> movements. To understand the real truth about FTFs, it is essential to know that they were all self-sponsored individuals, who traveled covertly and unlawfully to take part in terrorist movements conducted by non-state terrorist organizations.

## Risk Levels of Violent Extremism in Maldives

A "Baseline Study on Violent Extremism" was conducted to evaluate the characteristics, the extent and severity of Violent Extremism and Terrorism in the islands and communities of Maldives<sup>v</sup>. The assessment identified the high risk, at risk and low risk areas of violent extremism activities within the Maldivian community.

Another evaluation on the topic - the "Youth Vulnerability Assessment" -

*...continued on page 13*

was conducted by UNDP in collaboration with the NCTC in order to get an understanding of the driving factors towards violent extremism in the Maldives. The key findings of the assessment draw light to the main reasons why youth are compelled into believing in extremist ideologies and choose a violent path. Furthermore, it shows that “such vulnerabilities stem from feelings of exclusion, and due to the lack of opportunities available for youth in the Maldives”<sup>vi</sup>.

### **Preventative Strategies for Peacebuilding**

Hence, by understanding the threat environment and risk levels, preparedness is a follow-up to preventive measures taken by the law enforcement and coordination organizations. “Prevention is better than cure”<sup>vii</sup>. It is always better to stop a bad incident from happening rather than to deal with it after it has happened. It is more of a social responsibility to keep the society at peace and further keep it from getting worse. In an island nation like the Maldives, where everyone knows each other, at least as neighbors or islanders, it would never be hard to create awareness in the promotion of peace and prevention efforts of violent extremism (PVE) conducted by responsible agencies.

PVE efforts come with great contribution from the society and government. The main CT coordination agency, the National Counter Terrorism Centre, has formulated the “National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE)”<sup>viii</sup> with a focus on operationalizing activities across 5 main domains. They are Social, Religious, Education, Economic Development and Law Enforcement, where NCTC coordinates with relevant line agencies and ministries in conducting awareness and resilience building programs among

local communities.

International collaboration is one of the main focus areas in conducting capacity building programs in CT and PVE. Hence, a sustainable approach is vital for a small island nation like the Maldives so as to create partnership with regional and international counterparts who work for the same cause. The United Nations and a few other organizations from different nations have shown keen interest in assisting and sustaining P/CVE efforts in Maldives.

### **Measure of Success**

Education is one of the key areas of success for PVE programs conducted in the Maldives. The NCTC has conducted awareness workshops to educate senior educators on the signs and symptoms for driving factors of violence and intolerant behaviors amongst students<sup>ix</sup>.

Furthermore, members of the senior management of island schools were educated on the signs that a teacher may be trying to manipulate students into extremism. Through these programs, schools were encouraged to report on such abnormal behaviors to respective authorities. The measure of success lies in the sustainable engagement of the education sector in PVE efforts.

Civil Society Organizations also play a vital role in building resilience within the youth community for both men and women. This is done by empowering them through technical and vocational educational training (TVET) and reconciliation programs in the island communities of Maldives. The success and sustainability of peacebuilding also rest upon the collective efforts of CSOs and Government Organizations.

### **Conclusion**

Now that the 5 key domains

*...continued on page 14*

for preventing and countering of violent extremism have been established, it is highly recommended to peruse and explore the remaining domains to assist the P/CVE efforts in Maldives. For this to happen, a comprehensive whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach is of utmost importance.

The National Counter Terrorism Centre in collaboration with UNDP Maldives have now formulated the National Action Plan (NAP), which shall play a key role in expediting the process.

With the lessons from the United Nations in peacebuilding, the model for action that Maldives is embracing will ensure sustainability in building peace, along with the formation of a more resilient and tolerant society.

This would ensure the strategic focus of the P/CVE efforts in Maldives through the expansion of P/CVE diplomacy, engagement of civil society organizations, promotion of community-based law enforcement, and conducting of counter messaging activities.

## Reference

- <sup>i</sup> Kapur, Radhika. "The Role of Education in Peace Building". Researchgate, 2018. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323825341\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Education\\_in\\_Peace\\_Building](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323825341_The_Role_of_Education_in_Peace_Building).
- <sup>ii</sup> Von Der Schulenburg, Michael. *Rethinking Peacebuilding: Transforming the UN Approach*. Report. International Peace Institute, 2014. 2-3. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09611.4>.
- <sup>iii</sup> Jalyl, Raif Amyl. "Threat of Terrorism Up After Sri Lanka Attacks: MNDF". The Edition. 2019. <https://edition.mv/news/11270>.
- <sup>iv</sup> Afsaruddin, Asma. "Jihad." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed September 23, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/jihad>.
- <sup>v</sup> NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE. Accessed September 25, 2019. <https://nctc.gov.mv/events/dplmtbrf20.4.17.html>.
- <sup>vi</sup> "Launching of Youth Vulnerability Assessment | UNDP in Maldives". 2019. UNDP. <http://www.mv.undp.org/content/maldives/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2019/LaunchingofYouthVulnerabilityAssessment.html>.
- <sup>vii</sup> Kulkarni, N. *Prevention Better Than Cure: The United Nations, Terrorism and The Concept of Humanitarian Preemption*, Researchgate, 2005, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/27523702\\_Prevention\\_Better\\_Than\\_Cure\\_The\\_United\\_Nations\\_Terrorism\\_and\\_the\\_Concept\\_of\\_Humanitarian\\_Preemption](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/27523702_Prevention_Better_Than_Cure_The_United_Nations_Terrorism_and_the_Concept_of_Humanitarian_Preemption).
- <sup>viii</sup> National Counter Terrorism Centre. 2017. "National Strategy On Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism". Male', Republic of Maldives: National Counter Terrorism Centre.
- <sup>ix</sup> NCTC, 2019

## A Sustainable Peacebuilding Model



Thank you for reading our newsletter

To subscribe please [click here!](#)

Please tell us how we can do better:

**National Counter Terrorism Centre**

Ameer Ahmed Magu  
**phone:** (+960)-331-4670  
**website:** [nctc.gov.mv](http://nctc.gov.mv)

Male', Republic of Maldives  
**email:** [info@nctc.gov.mv](mailto:info@nctc.gov.mv)  
**twitter:** [@nctcmaldives](https://twitter.com/nctcmaldives)



If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter please [click here](#)