



NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE, MALDIVES

NCTC Newsletter - Volume 33: December 2019

Minister of Defence speaks at “Viavathi Raajje” conference



On 16 December, Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Didi spoke at the two-day “Viavathi Raajje” councilors’ conference held at Crossroads Maldives.

Chairing the panel discussion on counterterrorism on Day 2 of the conference, Minister Mariya said the evils of violent extremism and radicalization are alien to the age-old Maldivian values of moderation, peace,

tolerance and respect for the dignity of others’ lives.

She urged all atoll and island councilors to make use of the larger budgets and greater powers guaranteed by recently-amended laws, to provide meaningful opportunities to the youth, to prevent them from falling prey to hardliners.

Further, the Minister shared guidelines published by the National Counter

...continued on page 2

Terrorism Center (NCTC), regarding identification of violent extremists and radical elements in the country.

The Minister of Defence was joined by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Commissioner of Police, the Attorney General and the Chief of Defence Force.

Minister of Defence Commends National PCVE Efforts

27 December 2019

In an exclusive interview with state broadcaster PSM, Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Didi commended ongoing efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism at the national level.

Highlighting the critical nature of the state-led efforts to combat terrorism in the country, the Minister said President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's government attaches great importance to ensuring the public understands the scale and gravity of the issue, and the ensuing risks to national security.

She noted that the government's openness led to the public lending tremendous support to state agencies in advancing the cause of counterterrorism and counter-radicalization. She said Maldivians did not want to watch from the sidelines as the nation's women and children were being mistreated and divested of their rights by violent extremists.

She highlighted the overwhelming support and cooperation extended by religious scholars in the country, to national PCVE

efforts.

The Minister urged the public to be vigilant and to report suspicious elements to authorities immediately.

In this issue:

- Minister of Defence speaks at "Viavathi Raajje" conference
- Minister of Defence commends national PCVE efforts
- New Threats of Terrorism to Asia: The Experience of Sri Lanka in CT
- NCTC conducts training session for AVSECOM Basic Course participants
- NCTC meets with Human Rights Commissioners
- Role of Women in Promoting and Sustaining Peace: Initiatives for the Future

"Violent extremism & radicalization threaten traditional Maldivian values of moderation, peace & tolerance.. Councils must use bigger budget & powers to give meaningful opportunities & prevent youth from falling prey to hardliners"

**Minister
Mariya Ahmed Didi**

New Threats of Terrorism to Asia: A Sri Lankan Experience to Counter Terrorism

By: LTC Amanulla A Rasheed

Introduction

More than 300 lives were brutally taken, and over 500 were injured in the ghastly Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka, early this year. The launch of such simultaneous attacks requires a degree of sophistication, planning, and financing. The blasts share similarities with the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were designed not only to cause high casualties, but to target Western tourists in a manner that would have international consequences.



It is not certain if the country's history played a role in Sunday's attacks, while the fact remains that Sri Lankans had experienced decades of sectarian violence. The formation of an armed insurgent group known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1976, saw a war begin against the SL government. The group was militarily defeated in 2009, in a well-coordinated CT operation conducted by SL government forces.

The Experience of Sri Lanka

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa, in his speech at the graduation ceremony of the Defence Services Command and

Staff College, on 13 December 2019, said many countries in the Asian region will be under threat if Sri Lanka fails to contain the new terror threat. The Easter Sunday bombing this year was the deadliest terrorist attack on civilian targets conducted anywhere in Asia.

"If we don't get on top of the situation, all neighboring countries including India, the Maldives, Bangladesh, and even countries further off like Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia will be under threat. So this new terrorist threat will have to be contained by whatever means necessary" Rajapaksa said.

The Prime Minister added that unlike the war against the LTTE which required ground, sea and air operations, the new threat at this stage requires mainly intelligence operations. Therefore, such threats will have to be dealt meticulously through intelligence operations and cooperation with international partners through comprehensive strategic foreign policy initiatives.

"As a country that suffered three decades of ruthless terrorism, there is a great deal that can be learnt from the Sri Lankan experience with non-state actors." - Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

The threats posed by non-state actors is a growing global concern, considering they could mobilise, maintain and utilize a global network to enhance and coordinate terrorist activities in a sovereign state. This could take place virtually unhindered and therefore, is a threat to global security.

...continued on page 4

“The likelihood that the resources of one non-state actor can be used by other groups for different purposes should not be taken lightly.”-

Gotabaya Rajapaksa

This is an indirect threat to sovereign states posed by non-state actors’ global networks and has to be cautiously considered by security agencies.

Furthermore, in his paper on "Counter-Terrorism: Learning from The Sri Lankan Experience", President of Sri Lanka, Gotabaya Rajapaksa asserted that the primary reason why people seek to leave their countries of origin and migrate, often illegally, to developed nations is poverty. Lack of access to economic activities in their origins force them to seek illegal means such as smuggling and human trafficking, to put food on the table. Organized criminals use this to their advantage, while most of the smuggling activities that took place out of Sri Lanka had involved the LTTE’s international networks. These underworld businesses have grown exponentially through money laundering and the illicit trafficking of narcotics and weapons over time.

Such crimes could easily feed into terrorism and the best solution, therefore, would be to increase cooperation among nations. Increased intelligence-sharing between nations, and enhancing collaborations among law enforcement agencies and the relevant government departments are crucial steps to be taken to counter terrorism-related activities. For that to be achieved, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms need to be established among Asian states.

The President of Sri Lanka also highlighted the country’s efforts to establish a trilateral agreement for cooperation in the maritime domain between Maldives, India and Sri Lanka. This agreement,

which is now being considered for expansion to the Seychelles and Mauritius, allows sharing of information to enhance maritime domain awareness, technical cooperation on the tracking of vessels, and coordination of maritime search and rescue operations.

Conclusion

“Upholding national, regional and global security is a tremendous responsibility, and adequate safeguards are required to curb the threats posed by various non-state actors.” - Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Therefore, international intelligence cooperation in the Asian region is crucial in order to monitor and counter terrorism and organized crimes in the region. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish comprehensive strategic foreign policy initiatives in countering terrorism.

Hence, a senior research associate, Mr Ganeshan Wignaraja advises that internal policy should be made holistically including security, governance and development policy actions, offering lessons to South Asian countries. These include five lessons; Re-establish security, intelligence coordination, and political stability; Continue nation-building efforts and improving governance; Develop a tourism recovery plan and raise quality standards; Pursue prudent macroeconomic management; Promote agriculture and food security.

“We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves.”

- Dalai Lama

NCTC conducts training session for AVSECOM Basic Course participants

29 November 2019



NCTC officials conducted a session on Terrorism and Violent Extremism for Aviation Security Command (AVSECOM)'s Basic Course participants.

During the session, Director of NCTC, LTC Naeem emphasized AVSECOM's significant role in PCVE efforts that have improved significantly through decades. He said, with the development of the tourism industry and rising new threats to civil aviation worldwide, awareness on the new threat spectrum needs to be bolstered in order to ensure customer safety and security.

During the session, the severity of the threat environment of Maldives was demonstrated in an interactive scenario-based exercise. Ways to deal with contemporary challenges in the comprehensive security paradigm were also explained during the session.

"Each and every one of the security measures we implement serves an important goal: providing safe and efficient air travel for the millions of people who rely on our aviation system every day."

- JANET NAPOLITANO

NCTC meets with Human Rights Commissioners

17 December 2019



NCTC officials have met with members of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM).

During the meeting, the officials deliberated on enhancing the working relations and exchange of information among both parties in dealing with issues of violent extremism and terrorism

in the Maldives.

The discussions focused on building capacity of the staff at HRCM in CT and increasing participation in seminars and workshops conducted on PCVE and rehabilitation efforts.

Both institutions agreed on the importance of continued communications in order to ensure growing collaboration in all areas of CT and PCVE efforts.



“Victory is changing the hearts of your opponents by gentleness and kindness.”

- Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi

Role of Women in Promoting and Sustaining Peace: Initiatives for the Future

By: Dr. Mariyam Shahuneeza Naseer

“Peace is not absence of conflict - it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means” - Ronald Reagan,
40th President of United States

Introduction

The term “violent extremism” started to make headlines and became an important point of discussion after the September 11 attacks in the United States. The discussions on countering violent extremism have been largely dominated by men, with little or no participation of women - at least not at a formal level until recently. The result? Not successful. Seemingly, violent extremism is still on the rise and in brand new forms! For those who might argue that world is less violent now, please note that I am not talking about traditional wars here. Having said that, is it not high time that the approach to prevent and counter violence changed?

Women make up about 50% of the global population. Women account for roughly 44% of the population of Maldives. Women know violence. Hudson, Ballif-Spanvill, Caprioli, and Emmett stated in their book *Sex & World Peace*, that more lives are lost from violence against women than were lost during all of the wars and civil strife of 20th century. Contrary to popular belief that violent extremism concerns men only, several researches published since 2013 have reported that there is a long history of women actively participating in terrorist groups and they do play a role in committing or enabling acts of violence. This alone is enough to establish that women know violence. So is there anyone more appropriate to be involved in building and sustaining peace than women? Just like men, women should be equal partners and in fact women are indispensable in building and sustaining peace. This article aims to discuss the role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism and in promoting and sustaining peace.

Why Women?

One might argue that women are involved in promoting peace or preventing and countering violent extremism. In most cases it is to the extent of their participation in awareness programs. Women’s involvement should go beyond awareness. Women should be involved in negotiation, advocacy, and even at policy or political level. According to 2018 statistics of UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, when women are involved in the peace process, not only peace lasts longer but also there is greater long-term political stability. This clearly indicates that women need to be equal partners in preventing and countering violent extremism and promoting peace.

According to the president and CEO of the U.S. Institute of Peace Nancy Lindborg, it was a woman who brought an end to the 14-year war in Liberia; it was a woman who mediated many local cease-fires in Colombia; and People’s Peace Movement in Afghanistan was first sparked by women (published by United States Institute of Peace on 12 December 2019). This strongly indicates that if women are empowered, they would get the job done. However, the unfortunate reality is that even with the evidence that women are key to building lasting peace, between 1992 and 2018, women made up only 3 percent of mediators, 4 percent of signatories, and 13 percent of negotiators (USIP Statistics – December 2019).

We live in a society, particularly in the islands, where in most cases, women are responsible for bringing up children and taking care of the family while men work away from home. So who is in a better position to recognize these problems? Of course, women (who are empowered through education and awareness)! There is no one who knows a community than the women who live in the community.

...continued on page 4

Consequently, women are in a better position to recognize the slightest hint of a threat or emergence of an issue and take remedial actions before the situation escalates to an emergency. Of course, for this to happen, women need to be empowered.

Women in the Maldives

Let me list three possible ways we can increase the involvement of women, thereby making them equal partners in promoting and sustaining peace and in doing so, preventing and countering violent extremism.

1. Education: Educating women and raising their status so that their voices are heard and listened to. In other words, we need to empower women with a particular focus on those who are living in island communities.

2. Capacity Building: Parents can influence the thinking and behavior of their children. As mothers and family people, this is particularly true in island communities, where women are in a position to not only influence their children but also their families, neighbors, and even the community. By building capacity of mothers (or to begin with, parents of school-going children), we could make them actively participate in creating and sustaining peace. After all, research shows that women are highly capable in spotting signs of radicalization and discrediting extremist narratives.

3. Involvement in the Design of Deradicalization Programs: As educators often say, one size does not fit all. Programs designed to promote peace and prevent and counter violent extremism should be tailor-made, data-informed and purpose-driven. Since there is no one who knows the communities better than the women who live there, they could be involved in designing these targeted programs.

Conclusion:

Research indicates that women know about violence as much as men. Thus, it is essential that they are made equal partners in preventing and countering violence, thereby promoting and sustaining peace. Women can play a vital role in this process, particularly in island

communities. Quick-fixes do not work in the long term. Hence, it is essential that the root cause is identified and the programs designed to address the causes are tailor-made, data-informed and purpose-driven. It is highly recommended that proper research is undertaken to identify the root causes, which would inform the remedial actions. Needless to say, there will be no peace in any community unless women are actively involved in the process.

“There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women.”

-Malala Yousafzai-



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

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



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