

National Counter Terrorism Centre



NCTC Newsletter - Volume 36: March 2020

Covid 19: National Unity and Preparedness are Crucial During National Emergencies in order to Contain the Situation



Source: PSMNEWS.MV

His Excellency the President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, during the press conference held at Dharubaaruge, urged the public to heed government advice and work towards containing the virus by striving to staying at home to limit

the risk of further spread.

A collective, selfless effort of the government and the civil society organizations are underway containing the spread of the Covid 19 virus in the Maldives. The public's

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response to the advise and instructions of the Health Protection Agency and other government institutions are taken very seriously. President Solih said these are extremely demanding and challenging times as staying home without daily businesses is difficult for all individuals.

“This is the time to unite and work in harmony. We must take special note at this time to care and support those who are elderly, have mental illnesses, those who depend on others for assistance and, children during these times.”

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

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However, the president applauded the efforts of all stakeholders and the example shown by the public. He further thanked the public for their continued patience during this pressing situation.

President Solih also highlighted the readiness of the administration, and said that the administration has already made plans and preparations for any worst-case scenarios and are working to arrange facilities to cater to an outbreak. The president said the government has also forecast the possible highest critical cases in the Maldives and are taking measures to prepare for such a situation.

Reference: *presidency.gov.mv*; *psmnews.mv*

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Violent Extremism

“Violent extremism is defined as ideologies that radically and violently oppose and advocate against the spirit of the Maldivian Constitution, laws and regulations and social policies, in word and action.”

Violent Extremism

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Maldives Immigration Holds the National Workshop on addressing Border Security and Counter Terrorism

3rd March 2020



Source: immigration.gov.mv

Commissioner of Police, Mohamed Hameed officiated the special ceremony held to open the three-day workshop held at Bandos Island Resort on Tuesday, 3rd March 2020.

The 3 days joint-agency workshop by Maldives Immigration, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) focused on good practices in border security and management in strengthening coordination and capacities to tackle terrorism and transnational organized crimes in the Maldives.



Source: @ImmigrationMV

The intent of this workshop was to promote inter-agency cooperation to identify comprehensive responses to the cross-border crimes. Furthermore, as global threat of terrorism has already been on Maldivian shores, this workshop focused to support government agencies by sharing national and international best practices in order to facilitate policy level and operational decision making to address border security challenges. The workshop sessions were delivered by subject matter experts from International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism, the International Maritime Organization, the World Customs Organization and INTERPOL.

A total of twenty-six representatives from different government stakeholders participated in this workshop.

Source: immigration.gov.mv

Preventing Exploitation of Public Fear Associated with COVID-19 Pandemic by Violent Extremists and Promotion of Extremist Narratives

By: LTC Ibrahim Naeem

The world is currently grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, which the Secretary General of the United Nations describes as a “global health crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations. Indeed, it is one that is spreading human suffering, disrupting the global economy and upending people’s lives”.¹ Despite difficulties in battling against COVID-19 virus, we continue to witness effective leadership enabling coming together of communities from diverse backgrounds and shared voices of hope and unity across the Maldives. However, while we see the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) established by the Government of Maldives, taking necessary precautionary measures and doing a lot to deal effectively with a major health threat the likes of which we have not seen in our lifetime, we continue to face a complex threat emanating from the sharp rise of harmful extremist narratives and online radicalization leading to extremist ideals, which may in turn result in acts of terrorism.

Inadvertently, the COVID-19 pandemic shifts attention as well as resources of security and law enforcement agencies away from the threat of violent extremist groups. This leaves a vacuum that can be exploited as violent extremist groups seek to take advantage of crises and exploit affected societies to recruit, incite

hate and promote their toxic ideologies.² Past instances in the Maldives include the exploitation of the public panic linked with Tsunami in December 2004 by extremist groups, with the escalation of propagation of disinformation and increasing radicalization efforts around Maldives. Now, IS-aligned Maldivian groups appear to be prepared to exploit the public fear associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. They have geared up their propaganda, manipulating online space with increased interactions within their online circles reaching individuals, who are otherwise hard to reach through traditional means, exposing them to a belief system that encourage use of violence against the existing systems, cultural norms and values and disrupt the Maldivian way of life.

An IS-aligned Maldivian group has called for attacks during COVID-19 crisis.³ In addition to the call for direct actions, one of the major themes of their narratives circulating on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Telegram channels revolves around conviction that Coronavirus is a divine reinforcement for their struggle. Significantly, key themes of several narratives circulating on Facebook accounts are narratives urging to contribute for charities, while many other narratives are designed to convince their deluded followers

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that they would receive divine protection from illness if they contribute and engaged in jihad.⁴

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime identifies that terrorist groups often use internet to promote their ideology and support acts of terrorism. One of the key uses of internet by terrorist groups is propaganda (including recruitment, radicalization and incitement to terrorism). Through these online platforms they provide ideological or practical instruction, explanations, justifications or promotion of terrorist activities in the form of virtual messages, presentations, magazines, treatises, audio and video files and video games developed by terrorist organizations or sympathizers.⁵

The complexity of fighting against COVID-19 virus, coupled with the sharp rise of disinformation and hateful extremist narratives demand a deliberate, coordinated and holistic counter-narratives effort to disrupt the process of recruitment and online radicalization of public through exploitation of public fear associated with COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when the security forces and law enforcement agencies are shifting the focus on strengthening restrictive measures to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the country as well as enhancing the role in aid to civil authorities in humanitarian assistance spectrum, greater responsibility to counter extremist narratives lies in the hands of community as well as the public and private sector.

Public-Private Partnership in countering use of internet for terrorist purposes: At a time of enforced social distancing and when routine businesses, cultural and civic life is disrupted, there are numerous potential benefits from establishing public-private partnerships

between internet service providers with security and intelligence community in preventing the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Though content cannot be removed completely, it is important that government, internet service providers and social media companies strengthen monitoring and act against disinformation and prevent circulating extremist narratives that lead to violence and manifestations of terrorist activities. Preventive measures are important to make sure that such harmful rhetoric does not snowball into offline violence and acts.⁶

The role of community: Apart from the role of law enforcement agencies, communities have key actors whose participation are critical to counter extremist narratives and preventing online radicalization.

Role of religious scholars and educators in counter narratives: Educators and religious scholars are not just reliable sources for religious knowledge, but they are also influential community leaders. Since educators and religious scholars in particular are resourceful in addressing social problems, they could be role models within their societies. Given that the degree of religion is being used for motivation and justification of violence by extremist rhetoric, religious scholars have a crucial role in promoting a culture of tolerance, diversity and acceptance of others by setting good examples. Religious scholars could lead the spread of Islamic teachings on peace, harmony and tolerance and also development and dissemination of counter narratives providing true definitions of terms to delegitimize its usage by violent extremist groups. Similarly, there are many potential roles to promote positive narratives that counter

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violent extremist ideologies and promote the principles of nonviolence.⁷

Community awareness: Awareness on both the modalities adopted by extremist groups for recruitment and online radicalization as well as awareness on the community's role would reinforce societies' capability to counter and prevent spread of extremist's poisonous ideology. While we are educating people about washing their hands, encouraging staying at home, more must be done to counter extremists seeking to spread their hateful agendas. Ways to address this would include, creation of informative materials as well as creating new misinformation flags on social media platforms such as You Tube and Facebook to enable users to pinpoint content that are factually incorrect or harmful.

Parenting as an effective tool against online radicalization: Since families are the first line of defence against radicalization leading to violent extremism, effective parenting is another important tool to protect family members from negative influences of extremist rhetoric. Though we continue social distancing and staying home, we are virtually connected through internet and social media. It is important to be vigilant on harmful rhetoric circulating on social media as an effective way to protect family members from slipping in to the networks of violent extremist groups. Effective parenting includes monitoring and parental guidance through credible sources and making sure that family members do not expose to teachings and hateful rhetoric espousing radicalization leading to violent ideologies.

Across the globe, while nations battle against COVID-

19 and people are pondering the long-term effect and economic impact of the crises, a deliberate, holistic and proactive response to counter extremist narratives is essential to ensure that social distancing, staying at home and other restrictive measures do not create space for exploitation of communities by extremist groups to incite hate, violence and promote their harmful ideology. Resist and stand against violent extremism. Be safe while we stay at home!

Reference:

¹ [https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2020-03-19/secretary-general-virtual-press-encounter-covid-19-crisis?](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2020-03-19/secretary-general-virtual-press-encounter-covid-19-crisis?fbclid=IwAR3NAtMtKbdK6hdyCsL6BCXktxHFdxdoiZlsfkSYzzvhmjWSyqgMepVnW5s)

[fbclid=IwAR3NAtMtKbdK6hdyCsL6BCXktxHFdxdoiZlsfkSYzzvhmjWSyqgMepVnW5s](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2020-03-19/secretary-general-virtual-press-encounter-covid-19-crisis?fbclid=IwAR3NAtMtKbdK6hdyCsL6BCXktxHFdxdoiZlsfkSYzzvhmjWSyqgMepVnW5s)

² <https://twitter.com/SawabCenterEN/status/1242856268768763904>

³ <https://twitter.com/siteintelgroup/status/1242151966639296521>, also see <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-ThreatSoutheast-Asia/is-aligned-maldivian-channel-urges-for-attacks-during-covid-19-crisis.html>

⁴ <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-islamic-state-seeks-to-profit-from-pandemic/a-52886753> 5 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012), the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes.

⁶ Nikita Malik, Foreign Policy, (26 March 2020) Self-Isolation Might Stop Coronavirus, but It Will Speed the Spread of Extremism, accessed through <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/26/self-isolation-might-stop-coronavirus-but-spread-extremism/>

⁷ H.E Maqsoud Kruse, Session on the Role of Imams in PCVE (26 June 2019)

Enabling the Power of Quality Education to Prevent Violent Extremism: Workshop for Principals and Senior Educators of Raa. Atoll Schools on the Role of Senior Educators in PCVE

5th March 2020



Quality education through professional educators can act as a barrier to recruitment as well as a critical tool to prevent violent extremism. Education can be effectively leveraged as a means of reducing the risk of radicalization leading to violent extremism. Hence, National Counter Terrorism Centre and Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNDP Maldives, Maldives National Defence Force and Maldives Police Service, conducted a Workshop on the Role of Senior Educators in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

A total 27 participant took part, including school

principals and senior educators of Raa. Atoll, contributed their valuable inputs. This is the 9th program of the series that has reached schools in nine different regions. As the lead facilitator, senior researcher of radicalization and violent extremist narratives, Dr. Saudulla Ali, the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Affairs of the Islamic University of Maldives, familiarized participants with insights of extremist narratives and ways to tackle negative narratives of violent extremist groups.

During this one day workshop, principals and senior educators of Raa. Atoll ...continued on page 8



Schools, deliberated on the role of educators in prevention and countering violent extremism, focusing on the identification of ways and means to ensure that places of learning in Raa. Atoll do not become favorable grounds for radicalization leading to violent extremism. Furthermore, participants of the workshop reflected on developing resilience to violent extremism amongst students.



Senior educators can play a vital role in bridging students, families and communities by engaging parents to reinforce values at home and in the community. During this program, NCTC conducted



a special session for the island community on effective parenting and building community resilience to violent extremism.

In addition to this session, NCTC also conducted a special session on PVE for the parents of Raa Un-goofaaruu. Dr Saudulla Ali lectured at the R.Un-goofaaruu School Hall on preventative measures for school children against radicalization and involving in violent extremism. He elaborated on the motivation factors of radicalization to parents and explained how to educate their children on the correct knowledge of Islam.

This session also was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and R. Un-goofaaruu School.

Jabir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Ask Allah for beneficial knowledge and seek refuge in Allah from knowledge without benefit.”**

Source: Sunan Ibn Mājah 3843



سورۃ-19: تَنْزِيلًا مِّن رَّبِّكَ سُبْحَانَ إِلَٰهِكَ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ۚ ذُرِّيَّتُكَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ۖ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِ مُبَارِكْ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ مَا فِي يَدَيْهِ فَتَكُونُ سَٰمِعًا



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ހިތްވަރު ދެއްވާ ބަޔާން ެވެ. ސިޓީ ގަވާއިދު ހިންގުމުގެ ނިންމުމަކީ ހިތްވަރު ދެއްވާ ބަޔާން ެވެ. ސިޓީ ގަވާއިދު ހިންގުމުގެ ނިންމުމަކީ ހިތްވަރު ދެއްވާ ބަޔާން ެވެ.



“މިއަހަރު 19 ވަނަ ދުވަހު ދިވެހިރާއްޖޭގެ ސަރުކާރުގެ ބަޔާން ެވެ. ސިޓީ ގަވާއިދު ހިންގުމުގެ ނިންމުމަކީ ހިތްވަރު ދެއްވާ ބަޔާން ެވެ.”

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A group of military and civilian officials are seated around a large conference table in a meeting room. The room features a large projection screen at the front and a map on the wall. The participants are engaged in discussion, with some looking at documents and others looking towards the center of the table. The table is set with water bottles, glasses of orange juice, and documents. The officials are dressed in a mix of military uniforms and civilian attire. The text 'nctc.gov.mv' is visible in the top left corner of the image.

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۱. سید الشہداء علیؑ
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 ۱۰. سید الشہداء علیؑ
 ۱۱. سید الشہداء حسنؑ
 ۱۲. سید الشہداء حسینؑ

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1. $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{6}$
 2. $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{5} = \frac{1}{20}$
 3. $\frac{1}{6} \times \frac{1}{7} = \frac{1}{42}$
 4. $\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{1}{9} = \frac{1}{72}$
 5. $\frac{1}{10} \times \frac{1}{11} = \frac{1}{110}$
 6. $\frac{1}{12} \times \frac{1}{13} = \frac{1}{156}$
 7. $\frac{1}{14} \times \frac{1}{15} = \frac{1}{210}$
 8. $\frac{1}{16} \times \frac{1}{17} = \frac{1}{272}$
 9. $\frac{1}{18} \times \frac{1}{19} = \frac{1}{342}$
 10. $\frac{1}{20} \times \frac{1}{21} = \frac{1}{420}$

"بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ" (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ)

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(1) اَرَوُكُرَسُوْ قَحِيْدَتُو اَرَج (اُتَرَلَج س اُتَرَسُو، سَوَدُو
سَوَدُو، حِسِرَسُو س اَرُو اُتَر اُتَرَسُو).

(2) اَرُوَسُو اَرُو اَرُوَرُو قَرُو (وَرَج، حِسِرَسُو س اَرُو رِسُوَرُو
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(3) اَرُوَكُرَسُو رِسُوَرُو رَرُوَرُو (اُتَرَلَج س اُتَرَسُو سَوَدُو،
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(4) اَرُوَكُرَسُو اَرُوَرُو اُتَرَسُو (سِسِرَسُو اُتَرَسُو اُتَرَلَج س،
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මහජන සේවා කොමිෂන් කමිටුවේ 2020 අගෝස්තු 3-5 වන දින පැවැත්වූ රැස්වීමේ සාරාංශය

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خَطِّ مَدَائِیْ رَسْمِیَّاتِ سَرْمَتِ سِرِّ رِسْمِ

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۱. شکر و سپاس خداوندی
 ۲. خدای مهربانی
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