

National Counter Terrorism Centre



NCTC Newsletter - Volume 40: July 2020

His Excellency President Approves the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the Maldives (2020 – 2024)



Consultation meetings and capacity building events



Phases of NAP Development Process

Under the government's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism and violent extremism, His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and the Cabinet approved the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the Maldives. In line with the objectives of the Strategic Action Plan of the Maldives 2019 – 2023, the

National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism lays out the ways in which the Maldives will attempt to prevent terrorism through countering and preventing violent extremism in the Maldives over the next four years (2020 – 2024). National Counter Terrorism Centre and UNDP Maldives led the

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- Actions to prevent violent extremism should be based on research and evidence,
- Inclusive decision making and implementation through a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach to ensure effectiveness, inclusion and coordination,
- Enable and empower communities to resist radicalization,
- Ensure human rights, the dignity of the person, the rule of law and the rights to privacy are maintained.

The government of Maldives is committed to ensure that Maldivians do not fall out of the system in a way that leaves them to engage with violent ideologies and organizations. Hence, the main aim of the National Action Plan on PCVE is to address the conditions that are conducive to radicalization and violent extremism. This involve multi-sectoral activities to address both the push and pull factors that have led men and women to violent extremism. The process by which people come to accept violence as a solution to their perceived problems is complex and individual. Though the evidence base for understanding radicalization is limited, salient findings of the “Youth ...continued on page 3

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14.

سَرِجَ تَرِ! !

Vulnerability Assessment” conducted to identify local push and pull factors and from what we do know from other researches in the Maldives indicate that, various “push” and “pull” factors may have led people towards radicalization or violent extremism.

- **Push factors:** Ways in which people are pushed into radicalization include;
 - ♦ Erosion of traditional national and true Islamic values,
 - ♦ Disengagement from mainstream community and marginalization from civic life that can leave children and young men and women without a sense of dignity and ambition,
 - ♦ Violent crimes such as gang violence, prison overcrowding, and substance abuse appear to heighten vulnerability of young men and women and these conditions represent ready platforms for radicalization for already vulnerable individuals,
 - ♦ The immense difficulties of returning to a more socially acceptable pathway when and if a person somehow drops out of the mainstream. Getting back on the path after being jailed, joining a gang, receiving drug treatment or dropping out of education is a massive challenge that seems to have led some to try to find their idea of redemption in violent extremism.
- **Pull factors:** On the pull side, some of the key factors that pull young Maldivian men and women in to the radicalization and violent extremism include;
 - ♦ The ‘redemption’ narrative in which joining violent groups are portrayed as a pathway

to absolute salvation and sense of purpose where by criminals and gang members are recruited to violent groups using these narratives,

- ♦ Increasing normalization of violence and propagation of violence and intolerance through online depictions and polarizing, intolerant, and hateful rhetoric emphasizing an ‘us Vs them’ narratives.

In light of the above-mentioned factors, the NAP on PCVE is designed to bring together all groups in society including civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector in to the national PCVE efforts. Thus, it combines security approaches with those that address the social issues of identity, mental health, stigmatization and exclusivism which leads to violent extremism. Therefore, the national action plan has the following aims;

- Build community resilience and create cohesive societies, and less vulnerable Maldivian youth through peer, psychosocial, and community support.
- Improve care for young people so that they can thrive in an environment in which they feel safe, comfortable and engaged.
- Enhance education system to improve skills around social cohesion, critical thinking, promote dialogue, communication and on-line literacy.
- Strengthen engagement with shared national and Islamic values to reduce the effect of malign external influences.

Key Focus Areas: The NAP on PCVE recognizes that poverty and lack of education are not the sole or even key drivers of extremism. Some of those who have carried out ...continued on page 4

violence around the world have come from privileged backgrounds but that issues of unfairness, stigmatization, exclusivism from mainstream society and challenges for young people to find means of redemption if they somehow fall out of education or society through crime or substance abuse are driving factors. Therefore, key focus areas of wider prevention efforts of the NAP on PCVE are;

- Emphasis on the well-being of young people as well as ensuring access to better opportunities for education, social engagement and employment,
- Effectively address the issue of hate speech and the use of online space as well as the social media to spread radical ideology,
- Create avenues for effective de-radicalization and reintegration of members of radical and violent extremist organizations,
- Address issues of gender mainstreaming in to violent extremism and radicalization, particularly the role of women in radicalization and their experiences of extremism,
- Improve drug treatment, reduce the prison population and improve conditions in prisons to ensure they are not breeding grounds for radical ideologies,
- Strengthen preventive law enforcement and criminal justice response mechanism through reform of the judicial, policing and correctional systems in a manner that allows for the reduction of crime and in particular gang activities,
- Improve critical thinking, religious teaching and thoughtful engagement with social media to reduce the risks of radicalization,
- Development of a process of evaluation and policy development to ensure the government remains able to address any threats.

Main Outcome Areas: Expected Outcomes of the NAP

Outcome Areas:	Expected Outcomes
Outcome Area 1	Strengthen national PCVE framework through enhanced coordination and cooperation
Outcome Area 2	Enhances public safety and community resilience through stronger systems and strengthened legislative framework
Outcome Area 3	Create a more resilient, connected, and less vulnerable Maldivian youth population
Outcome Area 4	Foster resilience to violent extremism through awareness, counter narrative, digital literacy and critical thinking
Outcome Area 5	Strengthen evidence-based policy making for an effective national PCVE effort

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation:

The National Action Plan on PCVE involves a mix of responses from key government agencies and will build, wherever possible, on existing programs of respective agencies. In most cases, these

actions are expansions or improvements on existing works in order to minimize duplication of resources and efforts.

Under the guidance and close supervision of the high-level NAP Implementa-

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tion Oversight Committee, the National Counter Terrorism Center and the Counter Radicalization Committee will lead the coordination of the government's PCVE effort. Ministries and government institutions will focus on activities that already form part of their work and will be represented in the NCTC and Counter Radicalization Committee. Each ministry will function in its own way but will report on actions regularly to the

NAP Implementation Oversight Committee through NCTC so that it can identify gaps in programming and monitor success.

Formulation and development of the National Action Plan on PCVE is the result of genuine inter-agency collaboration and support of multiple agencies. Particularly, generous contributions and technical assistance of UNDP Maldives and their consultants are noteworthy.

 COVID-19
RESPONSE

WORK SAFE



Sit 3ft apart
from other people



Wear a mask
inside the premise



Avoid socializing with
colleagues, inside or outside



Stagger work
and break hours



Disinfect shared surfaces
before and after use



Work from home
whenever possible

  Ministry of Health
Republic of Maldives  Health
Protection
Agency  World Health
Organization
Maldives  unicef
for every child  Maldivian Red Crescent

The Maldives Hosts a Virtual Regional Meeting on Promoting the development of a regional PVE network in South Asia

15 July 2020



Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor, Director General NCTC gave his opening remarks during the 2 days online regional consultation meeting on "Promoting the development of a regional PVE network in South Asia" (SAN-PVE), which was held from 15th to 16th July 2020. He expressed the Maldives' commitment on PVE, regional cooperation and international collaboration.



Source: nctc.gov.mv

Vision and objectives of the SAN-PVE includes: (i) a tool for practitioners; and (ii) a platform to gather and disseminate relevant regional knowledge, information and good practices, (iii) to foster regional and local cooperation among states, institutions and practitioners, (iv) provision of training tools and resources to feed initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism leading to terrorism

The Maldives extends its sincere appreciations to Government of Germany, UNODC experts team and all regional partners in supporting the joint efforts on the PVE in the region.

Four countries including Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended this important meeting to further their deliberations in assisting and coordinating in the phase one of the development of this regional PVE network.

DG NCTC Made a Courtesy Call on the Commissioner General of the Maldives Customs

23 July 2020

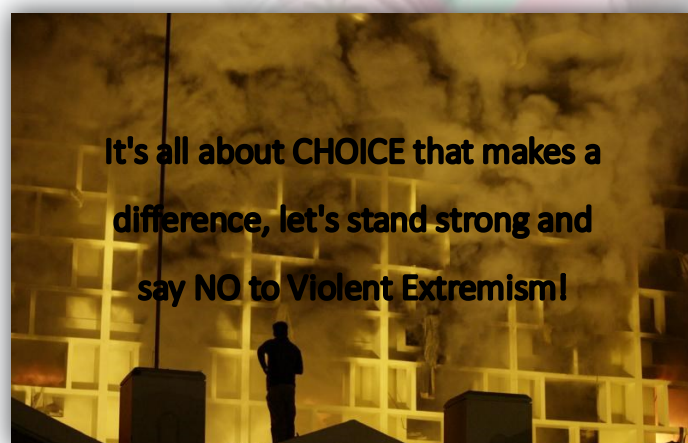


DG NCTC officials made a courtesy call on the Commissioner General of the Maldives Customs on Thursday, 23rd July 2020 at the Customs meeting room. The objective was to further cooperation in matters related to countering terrorism (CT) activities, within the purview of Customs jurisdiction and presence.

During the meeting officials deliberated upon its collaboration in the counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism in the Maldives. Enhancing capacity of personnel of the Customs was a vital discussion point made by the Commissioner General of Customs.

Maldives Customs plays a vital role in collecting information and gathering intelligence data related to terrorism activities coming in to Maldivian borders. Hence, DG NCTC emphasized the necessity of a coordinated effort of all intelligence agencies and law

enforcement agencies of the Maldives in the CT efforts in the Maldives. Especially enhancing monitoring capacity of such activities and personnel carrying out the activities needs to be deliberated sooner.



UN Resident Coordinator to the Maldives Made a Call to Director General of NCTC

14 July 2020



Ms Catherine Haswal, the Resident Coordinator of UN to Maldives made a call to the Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor, Director General of NCTC on 14th July 2020. During the meeting both officials deliberated on enhancing the collaborative efforts in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism in the Maldives.

Further they discussed on how the UN can coordinate in the areas of assistance by those UN bodies already engaged in capacity building and awareness programmes for the stakeholders in the Maldives. The areas of interest includes criminal justice response, handling of electronic evidence across borders, building a cohesive society, rehabilitation and reintegration of returning FTFs, enhancing the TVET sector by providing training and train the trainer programmes in the Maldives, CT and PCVE.

Hence, the officials deliberated upon bringing UN experts to Maldives in order to provide knowledge to the practitioners through trainings and workshops on

CT and PCVE. And DG NCTC highlighted that the threat of terrorism persists in the Maldives, and a whole of government and whole of society approach is being implemented, and the UN's assistance as well as a joint effort of all stakeholders including the most vulnerable tourism sector have to work along with security practitioners in the peacebuilding efforts in the Maldives.

DG also emphasized that providing awareness to the education sector on the signs as symptoms of radicalization is going to be a success for the prevention efforts in the Maldives.

Most importantly National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism was formulated with the assistance of UNDP was also a part of the UN's strategic goals to the Maldives. Hence, as highlighted by the RC, UN shall provide its best assistance in the implementation of the NAP in the Maldives.

National Counter Terrorism Centre Represented the Maldives at the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week 2020

6 July 2020



Source: nctc.gov.mv



During the intervention in the opening session held on 6th July 2020 Brigadier General Zakariyya, Director General of NCTC Mansoor asserted that along the steps taken by the Government of Maldives to accelerate the country's economic recovery from COVID-19, there is a need to address National Security as there is a growing threat of violent extremism in the Maldives.

He further emphasized that the Maldives continues to make progress in bolstering its Counter Terrorism efforts. Furthermore, the Maldivian government also passed amendments strengthening its 2015 Anti-Terrorism Act and designated 17 terrorist organizations, while designating one area as a conflict zone under these amendments in September 2019. The security forces have conducted multiple counter terrorism operations in the aftermath of these legislative changes.

"Government officials participated in and jointly hosted multiple international and regional workshops on CT efforts" He added. "In February 2019, a joint report was issued by the NCTC, UNDP, and the Government of Japan on youth vulnerability in the Maldives, which highlighted concerns about the number of foreign preachers present in the Maldives and their role in recruitment for terrorist organizations" He added. Brigadier General further noted: "In October, CTED conducted a visit to examine issues relating to CVE. The U.S. CT Bureau supported the travel of U.S. and international subject matter experts to Maldives for assisting the rehabilitation and reintegration process of former terrorists as well as ISIS-associated family members".

In conclusion he highlighted that the Maldives has formulated its National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in collaboration with UNDP Maldives and it is to be launched shortly.

NCTC Officials Deliberated on Research and Development in PVE During a Meeting held with the Officials of the Equal Rights Initiatives

5 July 2020



Maldives Equal Rights Initiative (ERI) is an NGO registered in 2019, and works on localizing international human rights standards, with a key focus on women's equality, security and empowerment. The organization envisions a world of equal rights and social inclusion for everyone and has a mission to inspire and create lasting solutions to inequality and social injustice.

During a meeting held on 5th July 2020, officials of NCTC and ERI deliberated on collaborative efforts in the area of preventing and countering violent extremism and building a cohesive society in the Maldives. For that ERI's expertise as a think tank organization, performing research and advocacy concerning topics of social policy, political strategy and culture would be a vital area in the prevention efforts.

ERI also highlighted in its NGOs 2020 - 2022 workplan, has multiple outreach, research, advocacy, and

professional training programmes, all framed with a view to achieve the above identified objectives of the organization.

ERI's core members have been a key part of the NCTC initiatives in formulating the national action plan for PCVE and the numerous training workshops led by NCTC to ensure proper training and awareness amongst the Maldivian stakeholders.

The organization is also a body of legal professionals, human rights specialists and legal academics, which also gives the NGO an added advantage to effectively frame problems, conduct training both for professionals and for civil society members.

Social Cohesion: Key to a Resilient Nation

By: LTC Amanulla A Rasheed



The Maldives gained its independence on the 26th of

The Maldives gained its independence on the 26th of July 1965. The whole process was based on the act of social cohesion, national unity, and national independence working together from the normal citizen to the leaders of the Nation. Social Cohesion is the key to all successful events of the Maldives.

Though the Maldives comprises of geographically separated islands and atolls, people to people connectivity and social interactions were exercised through travel and social gatherings on various religious and national activities. People from the North and South travelled to Male' the capital of Maldives for various reasons and needs, including business, medical, and economical. On these travel routes locals in their stop-overs on various islands have made friends and collaborations.

Social cohesion can be described as “the “glue” that keeps a society together, is influenced by the various sectors or “pillars” of that society-educational institutions, social and religious institutions, business institutions, and government”¹. Hence, a cohesive society becomes resilient in many ways such as the ability of communities as a whole to function economically, socially and politically.

Social cohesion also describes the society's characteristic that indicates the interdependency

amongst individuals of the society² and the absence of any conflict based on wealth, ethnicity, race, and gender, including the presence of civic society, responsive democracy, and impartial law enforcement³. “Social cohesion is the identification of one individual with others that share the same characteristics and provide intense emotional ties” says Freud⁴.

Furthermore, according to UNDP, Social cohesion framework⁵ (UNDP, 2017), “is an important determinant of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous nation. It creates stronger bonds within and different groups, and foster greater trust in the institutions of the government.” Hence reinforcing and promoting social cohesion within the country must be made into an integral part of the government policy and the civil society must be involved fully in making the policies and in the implementation of such policies both the government and the civilians of all traits must be in coherence with each other.

On the other hand, Maxwell describes social cohesion as that involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community⁶.

Whilst identifying these definitions it is imperative to understand why a resilient nation is an outcome of a cohesive society. For the case of this article, being resilient means to have societal values that promote cohesive and engaged communities. These include: Health & Wellbeing; Economy & Society; Infrastructure & Environment; and Leadership & Strategy⁷.

Hence, for a resilient nation social cohesion is vital and it includes building a sense of local identity, social networks, and safe space; promoting features of an inclusive local cultural heritage; and encouraging cultural diversity while

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promoting tolerance and a willingness to accept other cultures.

According to Garroway & Jütting⁸, it has been noted that social cohesion includes three major components. The first being social mobility where welfare services, child care, the education system, career structures and labour-market come into consideration and how such factors are perceived by the civilians. The second being the social exclusion which mainly relates to exclusion of minority groups, religious ideologies, different economic and social classes. Hence, for social cohesion of a nation, this component is very essential as to bring all partakers to a single understanding where no group should feel that they are being overlooked or that its biased to others. Finally the social capital which includes the trust between the government and the civilians and furthermore the civic participation which would ultimately enhance the social cohesion with the nation, as each party was to be responsible for the laws, and regulations made by them and hence gives them a sense of responsibility towards achieving the goals set by the government and the society.

National resilience is hard work performed to maintain its balance to fight against all odds and the components mentioned above, that would hinder the harmony, peace and security of the nation. Henceforth, the Maldives has been able to maintain its resilience by the continued efforts of working together of the government and society as a whole in building its future generations to prevent and counter against both natural and manmade calamities.

By seeing in the Maldivian context the native island is the key factor determining one's sense of identity. Local attachment is the feeling of being attached to the island where one was born. Hence, culturally all islands have formed a social network as different atolls and then the national identity was formed by combining the atolls as one nation. Striving to defend the integrity and sovereignty of the Maldives once again creates oneness of being an independent nation and a safe place for living with the Maldivian national identity, which has its unique heritage, culture, and history.

Most importantly the Maldives needs promoting features of an inclusive local cultural heritage and encouraging cultural diversity while promoting tolerance and a willingness to accept other cultures.

As part of the strategic communication used by the government institutes and civil society organizations of the Maldives, it is imperative to use positive messaging to as an alternative means to promote peace and harmony, which makes a cohesive society. Apparently build resilience among the people to withstand and strive against violence, crimes and natural disasters.

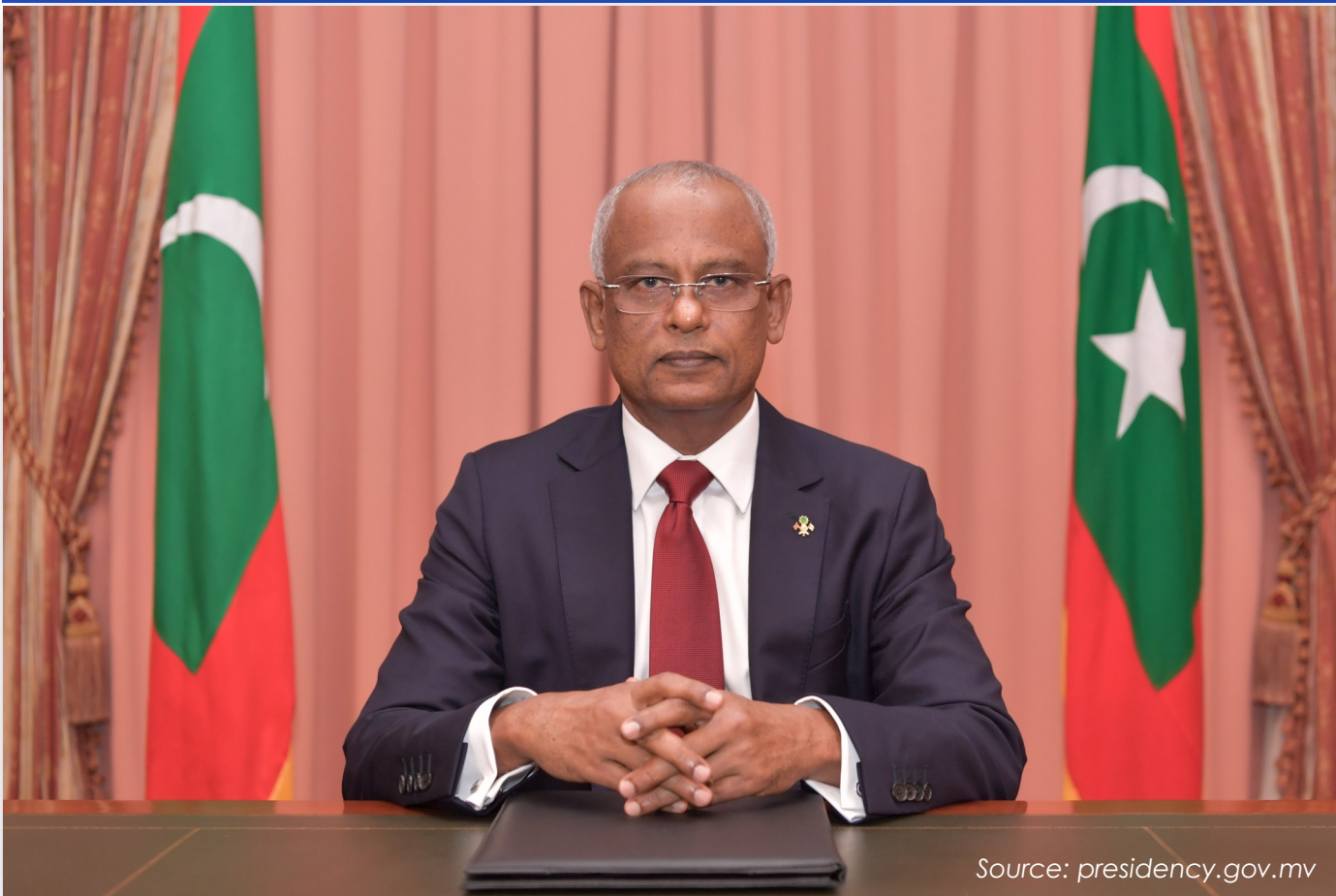
Whole of government has a stake in building social cohesion and sustaining it in corporation with the whole of society. Ultimately it should be a whole of nation to work as one team to maintain its independence, its national identity, integrity and sovereignty by enhancing the education sector with the required curriculum for the future generation of children. They would be the minds who will carry the messages of peace and respect considering all walks of life within the society of the Maldives.

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"Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave."

- Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)



Source: presidency.gov.mv

26 ربيع الثاني 2020

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[https://](https://www.ksars.org/) / www.ksars.org/

[presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/23519](https://www.presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/23519)

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جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل (جے.ٹی.سی.) نے 20 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 21 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 22 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 23 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 24 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

(1) جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 25 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

(2) جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 26 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

(3) جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 27 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

(4) جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 28 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔

جے ٹی سی کے سیکرٹری جنرل نے 29 جولائی 2020 کو ایک تقریب منعقد کی۔



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National Counter
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