

# National Counter Terrorism Centre



**NCTC Newsletter - Volume 47: February 2021**

## Islam in its True Form Leaves No Room For Violent and Abusive Behavior : President Solih

4 February 2021



photo: presidency.gov.mv

In his annual address to the People's Majlis, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih emphasized that the Government will take action to curb terrorism and violent extremism. He highlighted that the Maldives' national identity has long rested on the

practice of Islam in its authentic form, which teaches kindness, generosity and strengthening communal bonds. He made it clear that the Government will take action against individuals who misinterpret the religion and carry out violent

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and abusive behaviors in its name, or promote radical views that contribute to social disharmony.

In delivering these remarks, the President reiterated this Administration's longstanding pledge to strengthen the fundamental, peaceful values of Islam, while leaving no room for anyone to infringe upon or misinterpret the faith for their personal motives. He made clear that abusing women and children, and depriving them of their rights, are actions that have no place in an Islamic society.



The religious-unity and societal harmony that have long prevailed in the Maldives must always endure, for the sake of the country's future peace and well-being. It is the responsibility of the Government, civil society, and other national stakeholders to ensure this outcome.

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“Sports play a pivotal role in driving socially vulnerable youth away from crime.”

*HEP Ibrahim Mohamed Solih*



# NCTC Celebrates its 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## Remarks by Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Didi on NCTC's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

25 February 2021



On behalf of His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and myself, I convey my heartfelt greetings and congratulations to the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) on completing 5 years of service.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the unstinting commitment of President Solih's administration to its Zero Tolerance Policy on Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Ever since the Government took the initiative in November 2018 to publicly acknowledge the threat of Terrorism and Violent Extremism for the first time, many proactive steps have been taken at all levels of governance and policy-making to tackle this difficult challenge. One key milestone is the formulation of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, which is in the process of implementation following Cabinet approval in 2020.

The NCTC's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary comes at a very interesting time. As the world continues to grapple with COVID-19, there is greater conviction in the collective realization that global challenges cannot be solved without international cooperation. The same holds true for tackling Terrorism and Violent Extremism – one of the most pressing challenges in the global security landscape today – a threat that is both transnational and networked in nature.

At home, the NCTC has, undoubtedly, played an instrumental role as our national lead agency for coordinating efforts to prevent Terrorism and Violent Extremism through a 'whole-of government' and a 'whole-of-society' approach. The past 2 years, in particular, has seen the Centre's national footprint expand and evolve, as evidenced by the many seminars, workshops and mobile intervention programs, along with the 2019 Youth Vulnerability Assessment, conducted successfully in various parts of the country, through deep and extensive engagements with international partners such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Hedayah Center in the UAE and the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Saudi Arabia.

It is in this renewed spirit of working closely with our international partners that President Solih's administration in January sent a contingent of soldiers from the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) to be stationed at the Counter Terrorism Centre of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), a willing coalition of 41 countries led by Saudi Arabia in this critical fight against the menace.

I thank and congratulate His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih for his unwavering commitment to this crucial cause. I also thank the energetic team at the NCTC, led by Director General BG Zakariyya Mansoor, for their dedication and dynamism in executing the "softer" dimension of the government's terrorism response.

May Almighty Allah bless our efforts to protect the trademark peace, serenity, harmony and beauty of this island home from the evil of terror. Aameen.

# NCTC Celebrates its 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

NCTC celebrated its 5th anniversary this month. Established in 2016 under a presidential decree, NCTC is the nodal agency for coordinating government's CT and P/CVE efforts. Over the course of 5 years, the organization has adopted an all-inclusive whole-of-nation approach to counter the threat of extremism. NCTC has also formed partnerships with multiple local and international organizations to truly encapsulate best practices and approaches in tackling contemporary threats emanating from violent ideologies.



Over the past 5 years, NCTC has published the National Strategy on P/CVE as well as the Youth Vulnerability Study in partnership with UNDP Maldives. At present NCTC is in the process of implementing the National Action Plan on P/CVE to achieve the strategic objectives outlined in the P/CVE strategy and based on the findings in the Youth Vulnerability Study.



In terms of capacity building, NCTC has trained over 1500 personnel from different government agencies and Civil Society Organizations in programs conducted locally and abroad. Of special note is the Workshop for principals and senior educators on the role of senior educators in P/CVE as well as the program for youth leaders. All programs conducted by NCTC are in partnership with international organizations and local stakeholders and NGOs.



Every milestone NCTC has accomplished over the past years is the hard work of our partner agencies, especially CSOs, international organizations, government stakeholders, and, most importantly, the people of the Maldives. The community has always supported our activities and has been a proactive participant in our efforts to report any delinquency to relevant authorities. We look forward to continuing this strong partnership with all of our partners to promote peace and unity and strengthen our national values.

As part of the anniversary proceedings, NCTC published a public service announcement cautioning citizens to be vigilant against nefarious forces that try to create discord in our society in the name of various extremist ideologies.

*...continued on page 5*



# NCTC Celebrates its 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



In addition, officials from NCTC also appeared on various public media programs to cover the work done by NCTC. DG of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor appeared in local media channel Raajje TV's "Fala Surukhee" program alongside Minister of State for Home Affairs Ali Nazeer. DG and State Minister both covered the work done during the past 5 years to build the capacity of stakeholder institutions and the work ahead to build resilience. A repeat of the program can be viewed at this [link](#).



Similarly, Director of NCTC Lieutenant Colonel appeared in Raajje TV's "Fashaairu" program to give an overview of NCTC's work as well as the evolution of preventive efforts to include society as an active partner of the effort. A repeat of the program can be viewed at this [link](#).



Lieutenant Colonel Naeem also appeared on Public Service Media's "Raajje Miadhu" program alongside NCTC's Head of Programs Lieutenant Colonel Amanulla Rasheed and gave an overview of the NAP on P/CVE. A repeat of the program can be viewed at this [link](#).



Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Didi also joined the staff of NCTC to cut a cake to commemorate the occasion.



NCTC also released a song titled "Dhivehin" produced in collaboration with artists in the Maldives. The song promotes peace and resilience.

# **NCTC Briefs the National Action Plan on P/ CVE to Members of the Parliament**

21 February 2021



NCTC briefed the NAP on P/CVE to members of the Parliament. In an open session held for parliamentarians, officials from NCTC gave a brief overview of work done in P/CVE before outlining the NAP including the “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach to implement the action plan. The very productive session ended with discussions to answer questions and comments presented by the members of the Parliament.

preventive measures to control and counter ideological and violent extremism. Furthermore, the members insisted on the importance of expanding the reach of preventive measures to every island and every person in the Maldives by utilizing CSOs and the local governance system. Before concluding the session, members promised to assist in the implementation process from the legislative sector and also address other challenges that may arise.



Members shared their concerns and that of their constituents and highlighted the need for

Per international best practice, terrorism and violent extremism is a societal problem that needs to be addressed with the inclusion of society. As such, the NAP was designed to be all inclusive and to ensure social grievances and factors that make people vulnerable to nefarious ideologies are addressed at the societal level.



## **CDF Meets With Executive Director of Hedayah Center to Discuss Engagements in Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization**

*23 February 2021*

Chief of Defence Force MG Abdulla Shamaal met with Executive Director of Hedayah Center and his team during CDF's official visit to the UAE.

During this meeting, officials discussed ways to enhance the engagements between Hedayah, MNDF, and NCTC in countering violent extremism and radicalization.



Hedayah is a close partner of NCTC and has already conducted two programs in the Maldives. The Center is currently working on conducting an online webinar for educators and religious scholars.

## **DG Meets With Resident Coordinator of UN Maldives Ms. Catherine Haswell**

*23 February 2021*



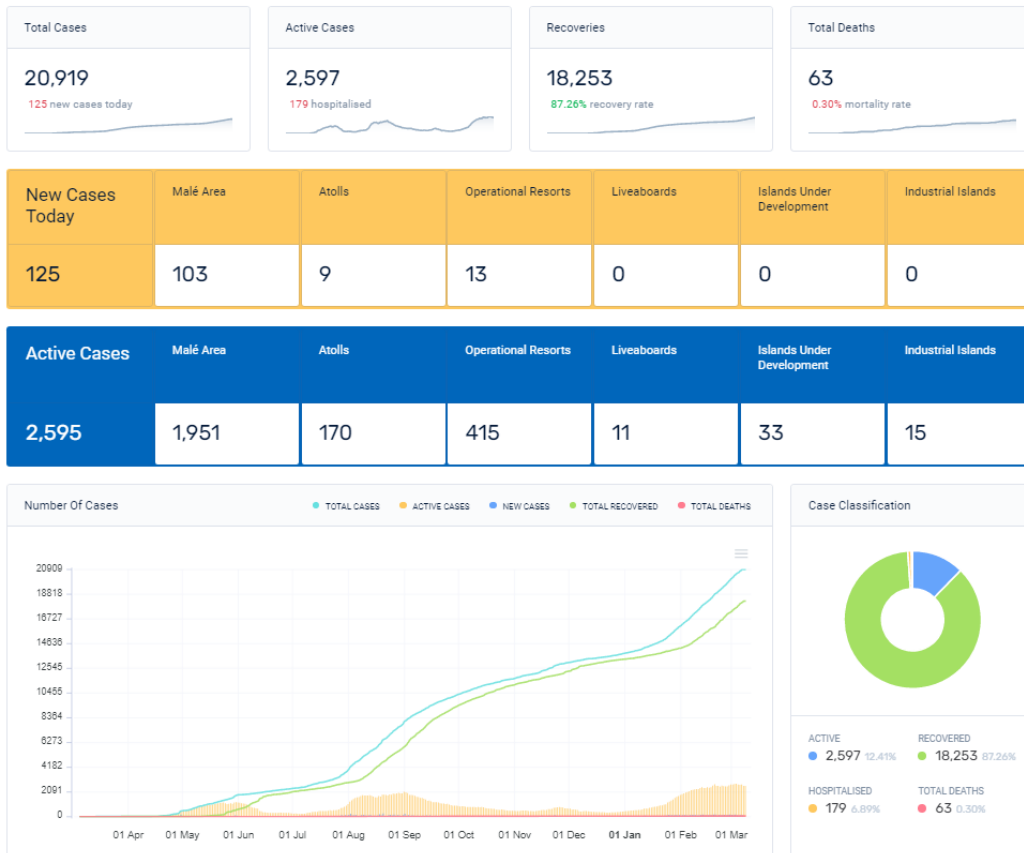
DG of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor met with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Maldives, Ms. Catherine Haswell. During this meeting, discussions were held regarding the

activities and projects conducted in association with the UN bodies. BG Mansoor thanked Ms. Haswell for the continuous support and close partnership between the two organizations. The officials also discussed the ongoing social cohesion project.

The UN and their agencies are key partners for the NCTC, especially in preventing and countering violent extremist ideologies. As P/CVE is beyond the scope of a single nation, NCTC always welcomes opportunities to work with international organizations to promote tolerance and peace and creating community resilience.

## COVID-19 LOCAL UPDATES

09 March 2021 - 18:14  
 This dashboard will be updated within 2 hours of any new live updates.  
 For live updates follow us @hpa\_mv.



Source: covid19.health.gov.mv



There is no greater achievement or nobler goal than to lead our young people away from the paths of hatred and dangers of extremist ideologies: Let's protect our children from the ideological poisons that terrorists spread online.

#YourFamilyIsYourLife

**PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN FROM ONLINE DANGERS**

photo: @SawabCenterEN





# **Working Together To Build a Safe and Resilient Maldives**

*This newly introduced recurring column will highlight work done by partner agencies and CSOs across a multitude of sectors to prevent and counter violent extremism over the years. This month's column will highlight the work done across 3 key sectors: youth, women, and criminal justice response to terrorism.*

“Under the leadership of the President of Maldives His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Minister of Youth Sports, Community Empowerment Mahloof, National Youth Council and entire team of Ministry, we have established a mechanism whereby policies and programs relating to young women and men can be identified, formalized, coordinated, implemented and evaluated.

The National Youth Policy of Maldives promotes the development of a number of personnel, cultural and community values, and good habits including youth peace.

Our main focus is to prioritize young people's needs and help them to become resilient individuals. According to the census 2014, nearly half of the Maldivian population is under 35 years of age and nearly 15% are between 18 to 24 years. It is the prime responsibility of the relevant authorities to make sure that the majority of these young people attain a meaningful and productive life.

Maldives being a dispersed country, we have had difficulties carrying out programs to all islands with the limited budget and it has been our major setback. However, the PVE Efforts for youth has been a key focus. There has been numerous works that has taken place with youth across Maldives.

UNODC, UN Offices along with NCTC and other line ministries have done an excellent job over the past few days. The COVID 19 pandemic highlights the importance of multisectoral efforts to promote wellness and world peace. This is the ideal time to promote social cohesion building resilience and prevention of violent extremism. To cater to the matter, online programs were launched to provide participatory opportunities for young people to be engaged in meaningful discussions and to cater to the physical and psychological well-being of youth across the nation.

We have been working with CSOs and other community-based support groups in implementing planned activities which has led us to find less expensive means to deliver and execute programs and other activities.

Our future policies and long terms plans will definitely be molded to create resilient communities and integrate youth in decision-making process will continue. We will also focus on assist “Youth-based community development programs” to support island communities focusing on youth empowerment, volunteerism, supporting vulnerable groups, reducing violence against children and women. Furthermore, we will design the programs in a holistic approach to ensure equal opportunities to all young people in making sure Youth Peace and Security as the main focus.

A good networking system between our international partners including UN offices can help strengthen crisis resilience and maximize available resources.” – **Ahmed Irash, Senior Policy Director, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment**

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# **Working Together To Build a Safe and Resilient Maldives**

As National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) marks its fifth anniversary, the institution has developed to be an example on the importance of inclusivity, diversity, and the significance of collaborative efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services (MoGFSS) is a permanent representative of Counter Radicalization Committee (CR Committee), which focuses mainly on preventive measures in an advisory level. MoGFSS's presence in CR Committee has assured the representation of the vulnerable groups in the society—which includes women and children—who are the most affected by the activities related to terrorism and radicalization.

Statistics of MoGFSS has shown 38 cases related to religious extremist ideology in 2020, and the victims are mainly women and children. In 2020, MoGFSS has provided psychosocial support to 28 women and 24 children in cases related to religious extremist ideology, and additionally four children were relocated to safe environments.

The official records also show that there are scores of Maldivian women and children stranded in Al-Hawl refugee camp in northern Syria, which manifests the involvement of women and children in these unpleasant events.

During a time where terrorist and radical groups advance their strategies to exploit women and children, it is high time the need to take the same approach to counter the issue arises.

Formulation of National Action Plan on P/CVE (NAP), which was endorsed by the cabinet on 7 July 2021, is an exemplary initiative of NCTC which comprises of all the sectors. It covers two principal

outcomes and collaborative seven outcomes that are related to MoGFSS on vulnerable groups, especially that are related to wellbeing of women and children. Furthermore, NCTC has provided MoGFSS the privilege to partake in the Maldives delegation which endorsed the “Bali Call for Action,” a political declaration which endorses the UNODC Roadmap and commits to translate it into action at national level.

NCTC's initiative with whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches have provided a platform for collaborative efforts by all stakeholders to collectively counter the issue to minimize the impact on the society and prosper together in this journey.” – **Ibrahim Mohamed, Director of Communication, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services.**

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“With generous funding from the European Union and in partnership with the Government of Maldives’ the Ministry of Home Affairs, Maldives Correctional Service and in consultation with the National Counter Terrorism Centre and the relevant units of Maldives Police Service, UNODC provided extensive technical support and guidance to the Maldivian Correctional Service and related stakeholders. UNODC engagement included assessing and strengthening national capacities in key areas such as prisoners rehabilitation, countering and preventing violent extremism in prisons, and dynamic security. Through the development of assistance tools such as a Manual for the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners in Maldives, a Specialized Prisoner Classification and Risks Assessment Tool for violent extremist prisoners, and a Standard Operating Procedure for

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# Working Together To Build a Safe and Resilient Maldives

the Operations of the Special Management Unit for violent extremist prisoners, UNODC ensured a long-term and sustainable impact of its actions. In 2020, UNODC conducted the first in-prison training mission in the Maldives and trained over a 183 prison officers to address the spread of radicalization and violent extremism in prison settings.

UNODC was instrumental in the Maldives in advancing the expertise of judges, prosecutors, police, and other criminal justice actors engaged in preventing and countering terrorism. By involving them in a wide range of national and cross-border activities, UNODC facilitated an experience-gathering process and created networks of experts among different States. Considerable efforts were also dedicated to set up the basis for a

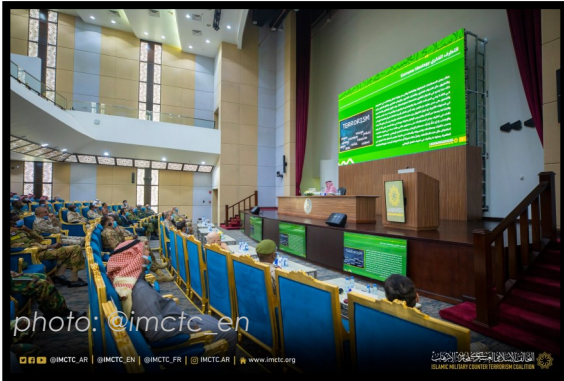
longstanding collaboration with local counterparts, such as the National Counter Terrorism Centre and the Department of Judicial Administration. With the participation of UN CTED, UNODC sought strengthening the capacities of Maldivian judges to adjudicate terrorism cases by tailoring UN CTED's South Asia Regional Toolkit for Judges to the local context, and develop a Train-the-Trainer for judges on its basis."

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, UNODC in close collaboration with the Government continued to deliver technical support in addressing and countering the threat of violent extremism, through hybrid engagements and remote consultations. UNODC looks forward to a continued partnership with the Government of Maldives." – Information Obtained from UNODC

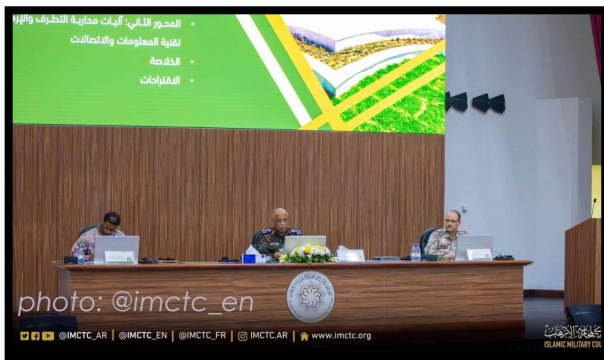


# Activities of the MNDF Contingent at IMCTC in Saudi Arabia

الائتلاف الإسلامي العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب  
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION



MNDF delegation attended a presentation entitled "Terrorism between Thought and Belief", delivered by Dr. Zayed Al-Harthi, Delegate of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to IMCTC in the Ideology Domain, where he discussed concepts of ideological extremism and terrorist beliefs. This presentation was held at IMCTC headquarters on 1 February 2021.



The Maldivian delegation attended a symposium entitled "The Role of Information and Communication Technology in Spreading Extremism and Terrorism and Counter Measures", presented by delegates of UAE and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to IMCTC and moderated by delegate of the State of Libya to IMCTC. The symposium was held on 3 February 2021.



MNDF delegates attended a presentation entitled "Security of Mobile Smart Phones" presented by Dr. Ihab Al-Rasn, a faculty member at King Saud University. He addressed several themes regarding information security of smart phones. The presentation was held on 23 February 2021.



## **NCTC Officials Participate in the Virtual Capacity Building Event on “Children Associated With Terrorist and VE Groups in the Republic of Maldives: An Emerging Phenomenon”**

*22-23 February 2021*

NCTC officials participated in the online capacity building program on “Children Associated with Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups in the Republic of Maldives: An Emerging Phenomenon.” The two-day program conducted by the UNODC focused on analyzing the phenomenon of child association with terrorist and violent extremist groups; exploring strategies tools and promising practices in key areas; and encouraging a multi-disciplinary dialogue in addressing the issue.

According to the UNODC, the sessions covered the unique challenges of stakeholders that are faced with the situation of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups. It also

helped gain insight into the current situation in Maldives and the importance of collective action on prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration, as well as juvenile justice, with a view to protect and improve the lives of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups.

Criminal justice response to terrorism and violent extremism is a process beyond the scope of a single legal entity. Therefore, given the volatility of the phenomenon, it is vital that capacity building programs include all instruments of the government as well as civil society to address cross-cutting areas and ensure victims and perpetrators get justice.

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## **A Team of Experts Participates in Training Session on “Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism for Bangladesh and the Republic of Maldives”**

*24-25 February 2021*

A team of experts from the Maldives participated in the Online Joint Training Session on “Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism for Bangladesh and the Republic of Maldives.” The two-day session conducted by the UNODC was attended by 45 participants from government ministries, law enforcement agencies, and universities in the Maldives.

The sessions covered focused on gender aspects of terrorism related offenses as well as incorporating gender dimensions into the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of terrorism related

offences. Through discussions with their counterparts from Bangladesh, Maldivian participants were able to compare and contrast the strengths and areas of improvement in the existing criminal justice framework.

Gender dimensions are a vital aspect of the criminal justice response to terrorism as an ever-increasing number of women fall victim to extremist ideologies and therefore, is one of the most vital aspects of CT response in the Maldives.

*photo: UNODC\_ROSA*

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
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**UNODC**  
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From  
the People of Japan

GLOBAL PROGRAMME  
TO END VIOLENCE  
AGAINST CHILDREN

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**ENDVAC**



## CAPACITY-BUILDING EVENT

### CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORIST AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES: *AN EMERGING PHENOMENON*

22 – 23 February 2021  
TEAMS PLATFORM

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National Counter  
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