

National Counter Terrorism Centre



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“Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives” Report Launched

9 March 2021



A new report released today titled, “Women as Peace Builders and Agents of Change in the Maldives”, alludes to how applying a gender perspective in peace and political processes can mitigate bias, prevent further undermining of women’s rights, and ensure inclusive and sustainable peacemaking and peace-building.

The report is based on a study conducted by the

National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Maldives, with the generous support of the Government of Japan. The report launching was held at the Ministry of Defence, with attendance of the Minister of Defence, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Ambassador of Japan to Maldives, UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives, and

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representatives from Counter Terrorism Steering Committee, Counter Radicalization Committee and NCTC, with the rest of the delegation joining virtually.



Speaking at the event, Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Did stated that violent extremism isolates a group from the mainstream, using religion as a shield of convenience, to break apart a well-functioning society.

The study successfully identifies essential steps to meaningfully engage women in the decision-making that frames and impacts their lives at all levels. It seeks to understand the role and influence of women in radicalization, de-radicalization, violent extremism and disengagement, and as PVE advocates. The findings of the research will contribute to knowledge generation and insight into potential interventions, including possible narratives and micro-narratives based on literature review and data collection. The findings will also support the government in designing and implementation of interventions focusing on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in the Maldives.

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- "وَدُّوا أَنْ يُدْعُوا بِأَسْمَاءِ آبَائِهِمْ دُونَ دُعَاؤِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُدْعَى اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّمَا أُسَمِّيَ بِالْأَسْمَاءِ الَّتِي دُعِيتُ بِهَا صَبْرًا ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ" سوره اعراف: 18
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- "قُلْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ بَشَرٌ ۚ لِّمِثْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَوْمِ جَزَاءٌ ۚ يَوْمَ تُبْعَثُونَ ۚ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ اللَّهِ هُمْ كَاذِبُونَ" سوره اعراف: 21

“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Launching of “Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives”



Aishath Mohamed Didi, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, also spoke at the event. She highlighted that it was a proven fact that involvement of women in formal peace-making processes and negotiations, had reduced the risk of violence and rather contributed to achieving sustainable peace.



Speaking along similar lines, Ambassador of Japan to Maldives, H.E. Keiko Yanai reiterated that gender equality and empowerment of women were indispensable for promoting human security. She also went on to state that inclusion of women could and must take many forms; one that includes women could play more pivotal roles from the bottom up as well as from the top down, while engaging multiple stakeholders.

As the partner agency of NCTC in this study, Ms. Akiko Fuji, UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives remarked on the importance of Sustainable Development Goals. She stated that each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals recognized critical roles that women play and that the report findings provided a clear evidence that it was also the case in Maldives. She also expressed her wishes that the findings from the study would assist the government in implementing the NAP on P/CVE 2020 – 2024 with accelerated participation and leadership by women at all levels, and support the government to achieve SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions for all.

The study paves way for future-looking strategies that would ensure women’s participation and leadership in PVE, to ensure they are included in processes, policymaking, and interventions, and serve as advisors in PVE. The report can be accessed on the NCTC [website](#).

Launching of “Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives”

Remarks by Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Didi

Bismillah.

Honourable Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, Her Excellency Ms Aishah Didi,

Ambassador of Japan to Maldives, Her Excellency Ms. Keiko Yanai, Resident Representative of UNDP to the Maldives, Her Excellency Ms Akiko Fuji, CDF Shamaal, VCDF Abdul Raheem Abdul Latheef, Members of the very energetic team at the National Counter Terrorism Centre,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Assalaam Alaikum, Konichiwa and a very good afternoon to you all.

First of all, let me thank Minister Aisha for accepting our invitation at such short notice and joining us in launching this study, despite the numerous prior commitments she must have had.

I have known Minister Aisha all my life and have tremendous respect for her. Her commitment to the cause she champions under her portfolio is second to none.

Let me also thank Ambassador Yanai-san and UNDP Resident Representative Akiko-san for their passion and sincere contributions to our P.C.V.E efforts.

Back in July 2019, I fondly recall launching the Youth Vulnerability Assessment which has helped us understand why youth are being drawn to extremist ideologies. This was also done with the assistance of Japan and UNDP.

I further thank each one of you, including those with us virtually, for joining us for the launch of this very important study.

The first thing I noticed when I saw the title of the report was the language used in reference to women. It is not very often that the words – “peace”, “agents” and “change”, are associated with women.

Indeed, it was both refreshing and empowering to read the title itself, as it finally gives women the focus they rightfully deserve, which is at the center of the peace and security debate.

As I was reading the report, I was deeply touched by the content on pages 8 and 9, under the heading “What Women Say”. The page features speech bubbles containing select quotes by women from all walks of life and around the country, who lent their real and raw voices to this study, for which I thank them wholeheartedly.

One of them said and I quote, “When you grow up and you hear things, you ask “Why didn’t I learn this before?” In schools, there is not enough open thinking and questioning.”

Another of them said and I quote, “There is less mixing of people. There is less initiative among people. People used to come together to tackle problems. Now everyone just waits for the government to solve it. We need more local initiative.”

Some of them also noted how women are reluctant to run for office, as they are often targeted for their looks or clothing, and accused of neglecting their family.

Meanwhile, men are criticized for supporting women and being too nice to them, which makes them reluctant to help women.

A common thread running through these views is the existence of a socio-cultural structure that does not help women realize their full potential.

It is a structure that also punishes men who try to help women.

As someone who has spent over 21 years in public life, as a Member of Parliament first and now as a Cabinet Minister, I can say I have quite literally “lived” these quotes, through and through.

During this time, my exposure to a spectrum of grassroots voices, both male and female, unveiled the unsettling reality of an “Us versus Them”, a “Male versus Female” mentality.

It is a mentality that not only pits men against women but also pits women against women.

It is this mentality which is also at play in the realms of violent extremist ideologies.

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Launching of “Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives”

Violent extremism isolates a group from the mainstream, using religion as a shield of convenience, to break apart a well-functioning society.

Let me pause to remind ourselves that these problems are not, by any means, unique to the Maldives.

I am sure Honourable Minister Aishah, Ambassador Yanai-san and Akiko-san, and other fellow women leaders, will agree with me on this, that we women have always had to work longer and harder to earn our seat at the table. But this fight is a good fight, and as this study has shown, the fight is still on, not just on the gender front.

While the recommendations in the report are most helpful, going forward, it is high time we called a spade a spade. Recent media reports of a 13-year-old girl getting pregnant as a result of an “out-of-court marriage” not recognized by law is an instance where radical elements have inflicted sexual, psychological and emotional abuse on a child.

There is a deep-rooted reluctance, even on the part of NGOs and civil society groups, to address such issues, due to threats and criticism from hardline elements.

However, we must join forces to overcome this reluctance and openly call out the perpetrators of such atrocities, instead of resorting to sanitized descriptions, indifference or worse, concealment.

While the Religious Unity Act of the Maldives stipulates the establishment of a Fatwa Council to deliberate and issue Fatwas on contentious religious matters, to promote clarity, harmony and consensus on such matters, their silence and ineffectiveness in addressing the hot-button issues of religion, have created a void which is filled by a cacophony of contradictory voices, vying for legitimacy in the eyes of the public. This only adds to the confusion, and ultimately, disunity.

As the report has pointed out, and I quote, “Women in the Maldives have made great strides in education and employment, but at the same time there is a sense of frustration that they are limited by traditional, cultural and social ideas. For women to become an important force against extremism, they must be shown the full respect and benefits they deserve from the state.”

At this point, allow me to reiterate President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih’s commitment to creating a peaceful, safe, moderate, tolerant and gender-equal nation.

It is this commitment that is reflected in the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 2020 – 2024, passed by the Cabinet in July last year, which places special emphasis on harnessing the energy and potential of women in keeping terrorism and violent extremism at bay.

It is also this commitment that is reflected in the landmark steps of reserving 33 percent of council seats for women and appointing two female Justices to the Supreme Court, among others.

As we find ourselves at the intersection of two global challenges in the form of gender and violent extremism, I thank our international partners for their continued assistance in helping us achieve our development targets and priorities.

On this note, let me thank the Government and friendly people of Japan for funding this important study, whose recommendations will surely inform policy outcomes for decades to come.

The warm and cordial friendship between Maldives and Japan needs no introduction or explanation. Japan has been one of our dearest partners in development, and even a pandemic has not changed this vital fact of history.

It is truly a bond that rooted in our hearts, and one that I can’t describe better than Ambassador Yanai-san, who speaks from her heart so beautifully, that the last time it happened, I found myself at a loss for words.

I would like to sincerely thank Ms. Akiko-san and your team at UNDP for your unwavering commitment to the socio-economic development of the Maldives, through many useful and timely endeavors such as this.

Let me also express my appreciation to Director General of NCTC Brigadier General Mansoor, LTC Naeem, LTC Amanulla and the rest of the very energetic team at the NCTC, for the difficult work they do in executing the “softer” dimension of the government’s terrorism response, captured by President Solih’s policy of Zero Tolerance.

Once again, thank you all for your wonderful efforts. Arigatoa Gozaimaas!

Launching of "Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives"

Remarks by Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services Aishath Mohamed Didi

Minister of Defence Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi, Ambassador of Japan to Maldives, Your Excellency Yanai Keiko, UNDP Resident Representative for Maldives Ms. Akiko Fujii, Director of National Counter Terrorism Centre, Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Naeem, Members of Counter Terrorism and Counter Radicalization Committees, esteemed guests present here with us today; both physically and virtually;

Assalaam Alaikum and a very good evening!

I am honoured and delighted to be here on this very special event. Let me begin my remarks by thanking NCTC and UNDP, as well as the Government of Japan for taking initiative to conduct a study on this important topic, "Women as Peace Builders and Agents of Change in the Maldives". It is undeniable that this publication will enlighten us more on the role of women in achieving and sustaining peace and security in the country.

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has displayed how crisis situations can exacerbate the existing inequalities in our society. Fragile healthcare systems, political and economic systems can easily crash. Its aftermath, is mostly on women and children.

Esteemed guests,

Gender inequality, gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence are the results of patriarchy and power imbalance within the system. Gendered prejudices and social norms which discriminate against women define the role and status of women in the societies.

Women, as primary caregivers in the households, often find their capacities confined to domestic spheres. They are left behind and mostly side-lined from peacebuilding discussions and decision-making opportunities in community. Even in given opportunities to partake in such discussions, women are stereotyped as 'vulnerable' or as a 'victim'. Mostly, their roles as change makers are undermined and

overlooked thus their potential go unrecognized.

At a time where achievements over decades on gender equality are threatened to be reversed, it is imperative to have women play a leading role in the building of peaceful and tolerant communities.

The Maldives is no exception to growing radicalization and violent extremism ideologies. Normalization of extremist and terrorist ideologies within our communities, pose a threat to years of work on empowering women. It also risks the measures established to ensure the human rights of not just women and girls, but the entire population of the country. The statistics has shown that the cases of terrorism are increasing. According to available statistics 188 cases related to religious extremism were reported from the year 2014 to 2019. The 2020 records of Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services has shown 38 reported cases related to religious extremist ideology.

These are the reasons why it is important to ensure equal representation of women in all areas of public administration. We need to share and learn from lived experiences of women, into the process of negotiation, development of policies and plans. The UN Secretary-General has singled out women as 'drivers of solutions' when they are empowered.

It is a proven fact that, involvement of women in formal peace-making processes and negotiations, had reduced the risk of violence and rather contributed to achieving sustainable peace.

The tolerance and perseverance towards violence and conflict differ for men and women. When women act as peace makers, they are provided with the opportunity to utilize conflict management methods centred on people's engagement with violence and promoting conflict transformative approaches.

This is evident from our response to the current pandemic as well. Female leaders like the Minister of

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Launching of "Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives"

Defence, Director General of Public Health, Secretary General of Maldivian Red- Crescent, spokespersons of the Health Emergency Operation Centre, to highlight a few, are of the many strong women who have been leading the recovery efforts in the Maldives.

The Maldives has made much progress in ensuring representation of women in decision making levels. Two female judges are serving in the apex court of the country, the Supreme Court. The President of the Judicial Service Commission is a woman, and we are proud to have a female Deputy Speaker of the Parliament. More recently, two female officers have also been appointed to the National Advisory Board of MNDF. These are the first of many steps to come, on our road to achieving a gender neutralized leadership.

Equal contribution, will pave way for a more harmonious and equitable community. It allows sound decision making, and the formation of solid plans and frameworks.

During a time when we are struggling to recover from the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to safeguard the progress Maldives has made on achieving gender equality. Accelerated efforts have to be made at a national level, to remove the socio-economic barriers, and to improve the position of women in our communities. We must empower women, to fulfil their roles as the agents of social change, to create an inclusive and just society.

Before I conclude my remarks, once again, I would like to thank NCTC, UNDP and the Government of Japan for giving me the opportunity to be here and to say a few words on "Women as Peace Builders and Agents of Change in the Maldives". I believe that the recommendations and findings of the study released today would definitely contribute to our efforts in empowering women and ensuring equal representation at leadership positions in the public administration of the country.

Thank you very much.

Recommendations from the Study:

1. Establish safe spaces and platforms for the effective engagement of women in planning and policymaking processes at local and national levels. Ensure programmes are designed in consultation with women and take into account the existing gender norms.
2. Online abuse and worsening misogyny must be tackled with digital literacy programs, new reliable sources of information and a much more proactive campaign to tackle extremist content and the abuse of women.
3. Many changes are underway in key areas: judicial reform is vital; more women should be recruited to the police; those who are violent towards women or children should face prosecution; social services must live up to their legal obligations to protect families; and a third of all positions on local councils will be reserved for women. All of these policies must be fully implemented with sufficient funding.
4. Justice sector reform efforts need to strengthen the implementation of the legislative framework, to ensure the rights of women and families are guaranteed.
5. Recognize that issues of gender, particularly the problems of masculinity and misogyny, must be central in addressing the problems that underlie extremism.
6. Address structural violence starting with a critical analysis of the national budget to see how women are underserved in terms of protection and policing. This will aid women in taking their place in the public sphere.

Launching of “Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives”

Remarks by Ambassador of Japan to Maldives H.E Keiko Yanai

Minister of Defence, Her Excellency Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, Her Excellency Aishath Mohamed Didi, UNDP Maldives Resident Representative, Ms. Akiko Fujii, Director of the National Counter Terrorism Centre, Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Naeem, Distinguished members of the Counter Terrorism and Counter Radicalization Committee, Distinguished Officials and Representatives from esteemed Government entities, affiliated international organizations and civil society organizations attending online today;

Good Evening.

I am delighted to join you for today's launching of the study *‘Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives.’*

I would like to congratulate UNDP Maldives and the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) for this imperative study as part of the project called “Partnership for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh and Maldives” funded by the Government of Japan.

The launching today is indeed very timely as we marked the International Women's Day yesterday. This year's theme is: “Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future on a COVID-19 World.” It celebrates the tremendous efforts by women around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID -19 pandemic.

Recently I read an excellent online article entitled: “Women lead Maldives' COVID-19 response to hopeful shore of immunization.” It talked about the strong leadership shown by the then Health Minister Moomina Haleem during the Cholera outbreak in 1978, who empowered women to learn, rise and lead within the health sector.

Today as I look into the Maldivian society especially during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, I see women stand at the frontlines of pandemic response as advisors, health care workers, caregivers, law enforcement officers, and humanitarians.

The article I just referred to said: “Women leaders in the sectors of public health and governance in Maldives deserve unquestioned credit for the Maldives' COVID-19 success story.” I concur one hundred percent on this

statement and would like to pay my utmost respect to Maldivian women and all of you here today who play instrumental roles at home and workplace.

Maldives—and the world—has embarked on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underpinned by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The world has made unprecedented advances, yet progress still falls short on commitment made towards the goal of gender equality. We must seize every opportunity to anchor gender equality and women's empowerment. And we must focus on what needs to be done to create a conducive environment for all of us to achieve the goals.

This UNDP study sets out essential steps to engage women in the decision-making that frames and impacts their lives at all levels. In particular, the study identifies areas where integrating a gender perspective can best strengthen responses to violent extremism.

Let me quote one sentence from the report which I found insightful: “For women to become an important force against extremism, they must be shown the full respect and benefits they deserve from the state.”

Currently, approaches to countering terrorism and violent extremism are moving beyond security strategies to focus on prevention. And attention is increasingly turning to the roles of women – one that is crucial is their role in promoting social cohesion at the community level as peacemakers.

I am very encouraged to see many representatives from various government entities and civil societies joining with us today. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a crosscutting issue and calls for strong commitment and combined efforts of government institutions as well as the society and community as a whole.

I am confident that with our collective approach and efforts to engage women as peacemakers, we can work towards building more peaceful and inclusive societies. I encourage all of you to take note of the observations and findings of the study and consider them for policy direction and planning.

Thank you very much.

Launching of “Women as Peacebuilders and Agents of Change in the Maldives”

Remarks by UNDP Resident Representative in the Maldives Ms. Akiko Fuji

Greetings

Honorable Minister of Defense, H.E. Mariya Didi
Honorable Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, H.E. Aishath Mohamad Didi
Japanese Ambassador, H.E. Keiko Yanai

Good evening. I am delighted to join you at the launch of this important report. Not only is this the week of International Women’s Day, but we also stand at a critical moment in the history of Maldives’ political development. Maldives is about to implement an historic 33% of seats reserved for women in the forthcoming local elections. I believe this year will be a momentous year for women’s leadership in Maldives.

Women are key to achieving sustainable peace and development solutions to many of society’s problems. Yet women remain largely excluded from decision-making processes. One of the fundamental challenges is simple bias, as evidenced by UNDP’s Gender Social Norms Index, released in 2020, which showed that worldwide, nine out of ten people have a bias and prejudice against women’s involvement in political leadership.

This important study, ‘Women as Peace Builders and Agents of Change in the Maldives’, shows how applying a gender perspective in peace and political processes can reduce bias, prevent further undermining of women’s rights, and ensure inclusive and sustainable peacemaking and peace-building. In particular, the report’s outline for a gendered analysis of radicalization and violent extremism is critical and timely.

Building a just, inclusive, and peaceful nation requires a whole-of-society effort. Everyone has to be in it. UNDP continues our support to our partners such as the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), along with other stakeholders, in order to engage with women as social agents and drivers of positive change.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our

wonderful partners. It is heartening to see our partnerships bring to fruition initiatives such as this study, conducted under the leadership of the Government of Maldives, with generous support from the Government of Japan.

Gender equality is an enabler and accelerator for the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP stands ready to support the Government of Maldives as it embraces a gender responsive approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This will create a sustainable pathway towards a better economy, and peaceful and tolerant communities, as we Build Forward Better.

NCTC Discusses Areas of Cooperation to Promote Peace and Resilience With Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage

8 March 2021

NCTC officials met with Honorable Yumna Maumoon, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage, and senior officials from the ministry to explore possible areas of collaboration to promote and revive Maldivian arts, culture, and heritage to promote peace and tolerance in the nation.

During this meeting, officials highlighted the peace and tranquility Maldives enjoyed over the years thanks to the rich culture and heritage the forefathers gave to the latter generations.

Officials discussed the importance of arts and culture as tools to promote national unity and national values and the ways it increases resilience of the population.

NCTC officials also gave a brief overview of the NAP on P/CVE and the need for the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage to be a partner agency in implementing activities in the cultural and arts



domain.

The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to collaborate in future projects and utilize local arts and our rich culture and heritage to create responsible citizens who are proud to be Maldivians.

If you see
Something,
Say
Something!
Silence is
Negligence.

photo: @imctc_en

At the push of a button

You contribute to countering cyberterrorism

If the materials contain:

- Inappropriate or fraudulent content involving a violation of privacy.
- Content containing a threat or blackmail.
- Content that encourages violence and hatred in general.

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NCTC Discusses Possible Areas of Cooperation with India To Build Resilience Among Religious Scholars

8 March 2021

NCTC officials met with Defence Attaché of India to Maldives Captain Mahesh Moudgil to explore possible areas of cooperation with India. During this meeting, officials discussed the possibilities of holding joint programs to promote peace and social cohesion in the Maldives. Captain Moudgil assured that India would work closely with the Maldives to help formulate a program and aid in

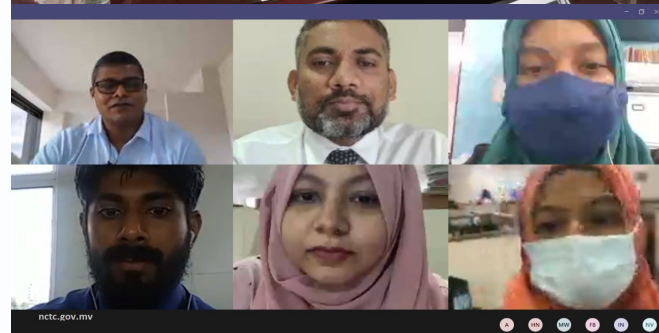
strengthening unity of the nation through PVE efforts.

India has always been a close ally of the Maldives and provides various capacity building opportunities to the Maldivian security sector to strengthen national emergency response and enhance overall national defence and security of the nation.

NCTC Conducted Working Sessions with Partner Agencies for the Implementation of the NAP on P/CVE

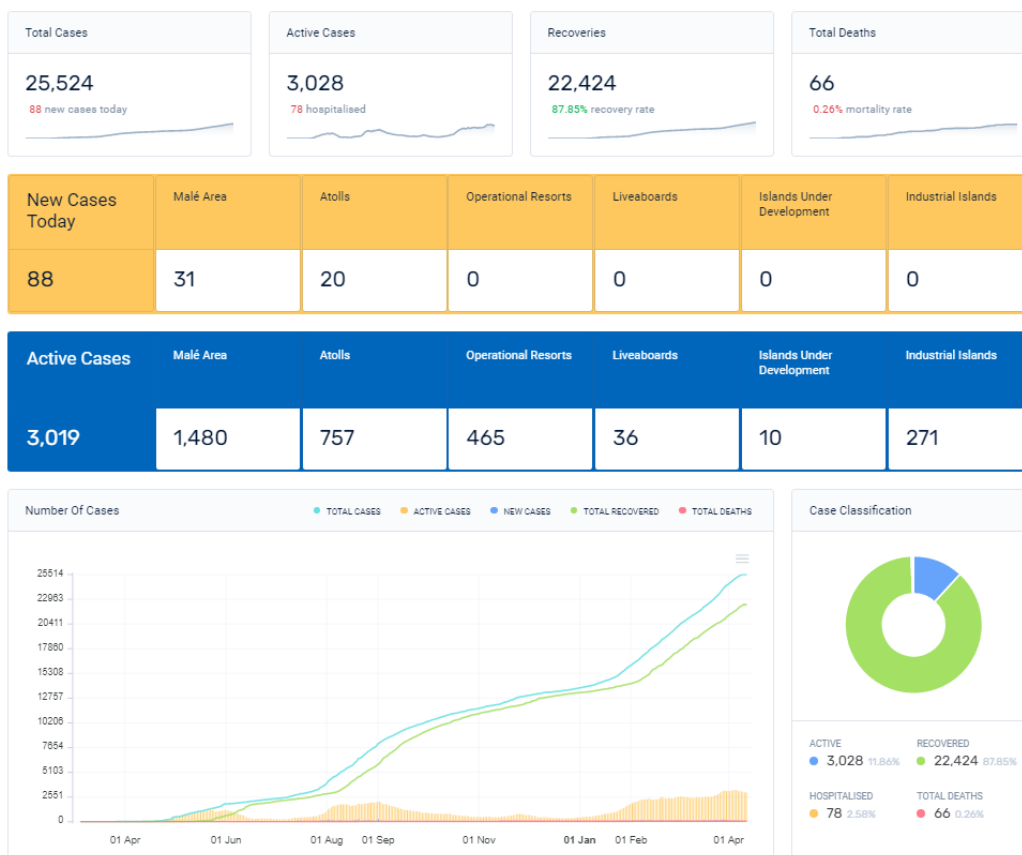
NCTC conducted working sessions with partner agencies for the implementation of the National Action Plan on P/CVE. This month's discussions were held with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment; Ministry of Islamic Affairs; Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services; and Ministry of Education.

During these meetings, officials held discussions about the programs in progress and immediate actions for 2021 in their respective sectors.



COVID-19 LOCAL UPDATES

11 April 2021 - 20:32
 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

LET'S ARM THE GENERATION
OF TOMORROW WITH VALUES,
KNOWLEDGE AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS



photo: @SawabCenterEN

Working Together To Build a Safe and Resilient Maldives

This 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: education, homeland security, and civil society organizations.

“Education and violence, and extremism are juxtapositions; they do not go together as education is for peace, harmony and nation building. Therefore, the role of education is not to necessarily identify individuals who may become violent extremists, but to create the conditions within learners a mentality and equip learners to deal with violent extremism and strengthen learners’ commitment to non-violent means of problem solving and a love for peaceful ways to deal with ideological and other differences. Hence, the education system becomes one of the major drivers of preventing violent extremism, more so in the Maldivian context as our net enrollment rate is near universal and through the system, we can potentially reach all children between 2.5-17 years of age.

According to UNESCO (2017)¹, for effective impact, education policies and practices must, directly and indirectly address the specific drivers of violent extremism. Therefore, key action areas include; policies for inclusion and diversity; pedagogies that strengthen resilience and constructive engagement; safe and supportive school environments; targeted measures for learners at risk and stakeholder cooperation.

The National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP)² is a ‘whole of government’ response to the prevention efforts and targets these key action areas mentioned above. Education is a key partner in the NAP and implementation of NAP is underway. In this regard, our teachers are being trained on pedagogies that would help them to better engage with the students and build their critical thinking

skills as well as a mentality that would help nurture respect for diversity and differences and a love for peace and security. In line with NAP and with the ratification of the Education Act (Act 24/2020), safety and health and wellbeing of our learners is one of the major areas of provision. Further, expertise from both national and international organizations are being sought to help create a sound policy base that would be a platform for future reform of the system.

Our children, both boys and girls, deserve a future that is hopeful, a future filled with opportunities, and most importantly a future that is safe, secure and a future where they can live their dreams with confidence and without fear of disruption from violence.” – **Fathimath Azza, Director General, Ministry of Education**

1. UNESCO (2017) Preventing Violent Extremism through Education – a guide to policy makers
2. NCTC (2021) National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

“Our social fabric, our way of life and our unity is under threat from violent extremist ideology like we have never experienced before. The waves of violent extremism have touched each and every island in Maldives. Maldives’ prisons have become a breeding ground for violent extremism far too long. Covid-19 has had an impact on terrorist propaganda. However, it is the adaptation to technology by extremists that gives them access to a wider audience.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is given the mandate to rehabilitate and reintegrate of foreign terrorist fighter returnees (FTFR’s) and violent extremist prisoners (VEP’s). Our rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, therefore, is important to mitigate the spread of extremism and to provide critical support for victims.

The National Reintegration Centre (NRC) is built to rehabilitate and reintegrate FTF’s and their families. The centre will provide support for victims

...continued on page 14

Working Together To Build a Safe and Resilient Maldives

– women and children (and men in some cases) – to deal with the trauma and other abuses they may have encountered.

The Special Management Unit (SMU) to house violent extremist prisoners (VEP's) has now been established in Maafushi Prison. With the generous assistance from UNODC, a risk assessment manual has been developed and training for prison officers is currently underway.

The ministry conducts programs which promote social cohesion and media awareness on violent extremism with assistance from donor agencies. These programs help us to get closer to people and build resilient communities. Community engagement is a key area we are seeking to develop and improve with our partners.

The issue of FTF's and VEP's cannot be dealt single handedly by the government. I take great pride in the assistance provided by our international partners. We also acknowledge the role of other government stakeholders and civil societies in Maldives and other NGOs who are assisting us.

The number of young people turning to violent extremism reminds us of the dangers of this toxic ideology to our country.” – **Tholath Raufuddeen, Director General – Monitoring, Rehabilitation and Security Department, Ministry of Home Affairs**

“Countering Violent Extremism Through Youth Empowerment or ConVEYE Maldives is a very young an NGO registered in the Maldives with the aim to counter violent extremism through youth empowerment. The vision of this youth-led NGO is “Unity in Diversity”. The mission is “to promote peace, tolerance, harmony, and respect for diversity through education and awareness, research and survey, advocacy and policy engagement, and public campaign”. ConVEYE Maldives was at its infancy stage just breaking into the world when COVID-19 took us by surprise which pushed to cancel all the activities and events

planned for 2020 due to travel restrictions. The very first event and one of the highlights of ConVEYE Maldives since its inception was the “Community Development and Leadership Training” which was conducted in HA. Atoll in collaboration with HA. Atoll Council in February 2020. The aim of this workshop included increasing women and youth participation in local government and community development; empowering women and building their confidence through education and encouraging them to be equal partners in community development. “Community Development and Leadership Training” covered three major areas, namely, leadership skills for workplace success, sustainable development and strategic planning, and social issues, rights, and responsibilities. ConVEYE Maldives takes pride in announcing that this training workshop was very well received by the candidates contesting in the Local Council and Women's Development Committee elections in 2021. ConVEYE Maldives also partnered with ERI in organizing “The First National CSO Conference on Collaborating in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the Maldives” and gave a Keynote address on the “Role of Youth, Women and Community Leaders in PCVE Efforts”. ConVEYE Maldives was invited to the “Religious Radicalism and the Security of South Asian Minorities” Webinar organized by the South Asia Research Institute for Minorities (SARIM) to deliver a as a Keynote address on the “Impact of Radicalization on Minority Women”. In addition, ConVEYE Maldives has participated in various national and international forums.” – **Dr. Mariyam Shahuneeza Naseer, Founding President, ConVEYE Maldives**

Activities of the MNDF Contingent at IMCTC

in Saudi Arabia



MNDF delegation attended a symposium entitled “Guerrilla Warfare and its Relationship to Terrorism”, on Thursday, 11 March 2021, at IMCTC’s headquarters in Riyadh. Brigadier General Yahya Mohammed Asiri, Delegate of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to IMCTC, and Lieutenant Colonel Zaki Yahya Al-Rawahi, Delegate of the Sultanate of Oman to IMCTC presented the sessions. Brig. Gen. Asiri defined and discussed guerrilla warfare, its relationship with terrorism and its link to the 4 CT domains (ideology, communications, counter-terrorist financing and military). In addition, Lt. Col. Al-Rawahi highlighted how these groups were dangerous as they threatened security, stability and peace at local, regional, and international levels.



The Maldivian delegation also attended a roundtable discussion “ISIS and its Media Means for Disseminating Terrorist Messages”, on Wednesday, 17 March 2021, at IMCTC headquarters in Riyadh. The roundtable discussion was delivered by Col. Ali Mohammad Mahmoud, Delegate of the Kingdom of Bahrain to IMCTC. Col. Ali Mahmoud noted that media work in extremist groups is linked to other areas of terrorism as they support each other. He also stressed that extremist groups exploit media as a soft power to threaten security, stability and peace at the local, regional and international levels



Members of the Maldivian delegation participated in a workshop titled “Discussion of the Updates in the Counter Terrorist Financing Domain” presented by Mr. Abdullah Al-Mudaifer, Director of the Counter Terrorist Financing Department at IMCTC. The workshop was held on 23 March 2021. As terrorism financing and money laundering is a huge component of terrorism and organized criminal networks, CT practitioners need to be vigilant to counter such nefarious acts.

NCTC Conducts Webinar for Educational Leaders: “The Role of Senior Educators in a Cohesive Community”

17-18 March 2021

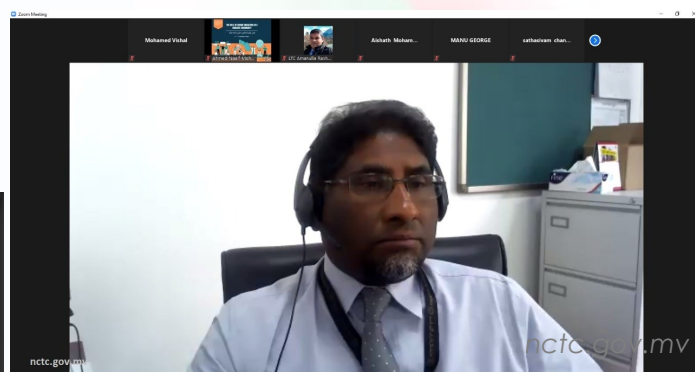


NCTC conducted a webinar for educational leaders titled “The Role of Senior Educators in a Cohesive Community.” The 2-day webinar conducted jointly with the Ministry of Education with assistance from UNDP Maldives aims to build the capacities of educational leaders to develop and implement educational interventions and approaches that contribute, effectively and appropriately, to the prevention and countering violent extremism through resilience building and the promotion of global citizenship, tolerance and respect for diversity. Over 230 senior educators participated in the webinar from across the Maldives.

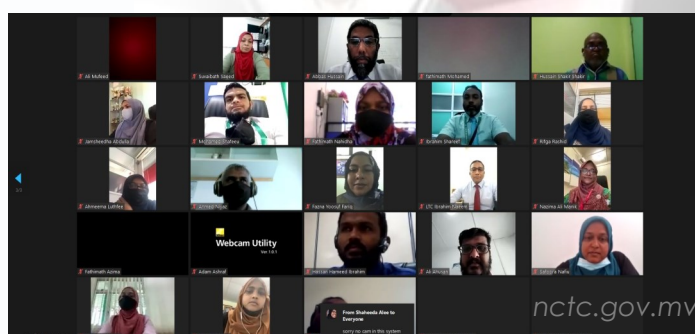
UNDP Consultant Mr. Robert Templer and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) of Islamic University of Maldives Dr. Saudhulla Ali conducted the sessions during the webinar. The webinar concluded with remarks from Minister of State for Education Fathimath Naseer. In her speech, she reiterated the parental responsibilities of teachers and urged the need for increasing awareness among parents in addition to schools.



DG of NCTC Brigadier General Zakariyya Mansoor addressed the participants on the opening day. He highlighted the role of educational leaders to prevent violent extremism at schools and urged participants to be proactive in curbing threats emanating from violent ideologies.



The webinar is a continuation of the serial workshops conducted for senior educators across different atolls since 2019.



NCTC Officials Participate in Online Training “Workshop on Crises and Major Incident Communications” Conducted by the President’s Office in Partnership with The UK Government

22 March 2021

NCTC officials participated in the online training on “Workshop on Crises and Major Incident Communications.”

The one-day event conducted by the President’s Office in partnership with the UK government explored how the Metropolitan Police has developed and evolved its communications response to major incidents and crises over the past 10 years, particularly looking at the response to several terrorist attacks that took place in London over this period. The program also covered best practices in communication strategies and the importance of being visible across the mediascape in emergency response.

Given the contemporary security environment and terrorist organizations’ communication network, decisive strategic communication is a vital component of government’s emergency response.

NCTC Officials Participates in “Maritime Domain Awareness Interagency Workshop” Conducted by UNODC

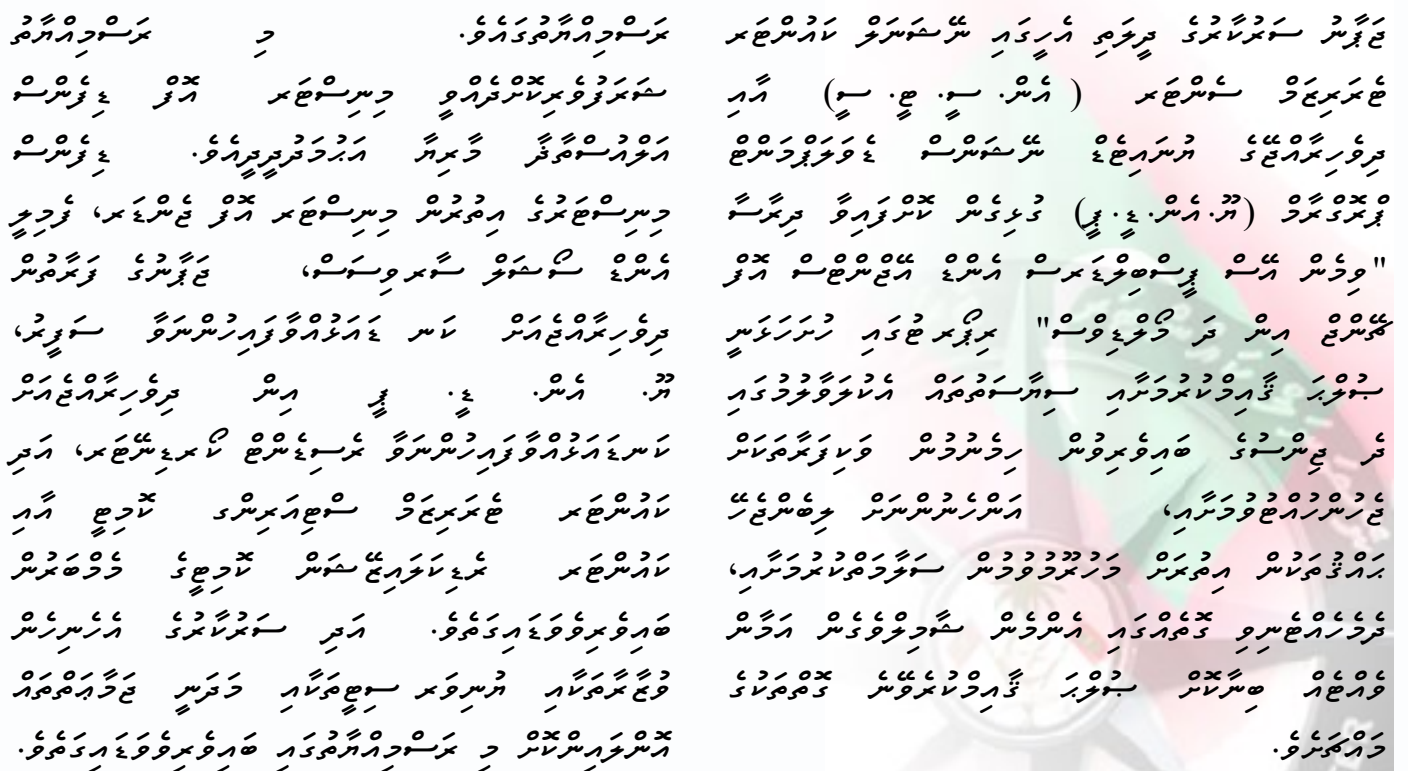
29-31 March 2021

NCTC officials participated in “Maritime Domain Awareness Interagency Workshop” conducted by UNODC. The 3-day workshop aims to promote interagency cooperation on maritime domain awareness (MDA). During this workshop, participants from multiple agencies contributed to understanding challenges and formulating solutions for pro-active interagency responses to maritime threats such as illegal fishing, smuggling, maritime-related terrorism, and environmental disasters.

Archipelagos such as Maldives cannot ignore the maritime domain when it comes to national



security and territorial integrity. As such, interagency coordination and cooperation among stakeholder agencies is important for timely response to maritime security incidents.

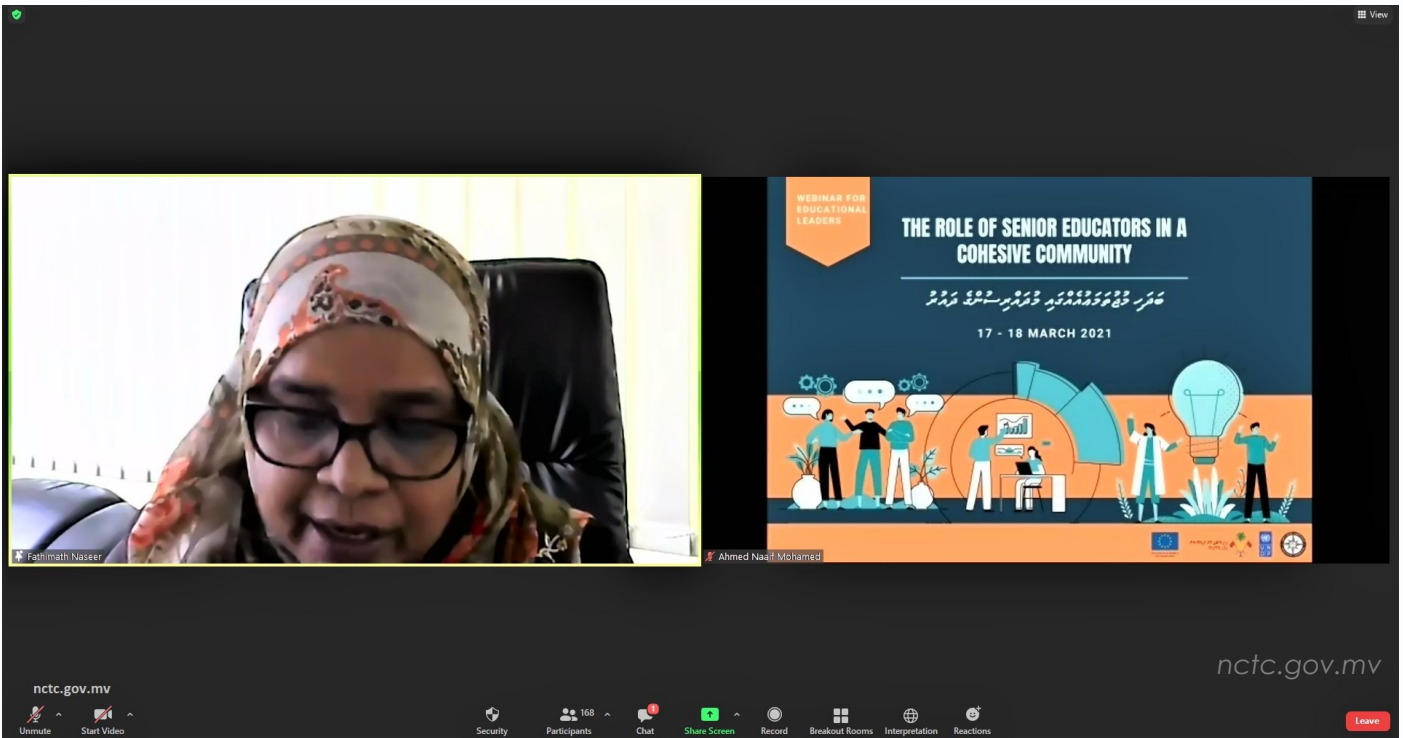
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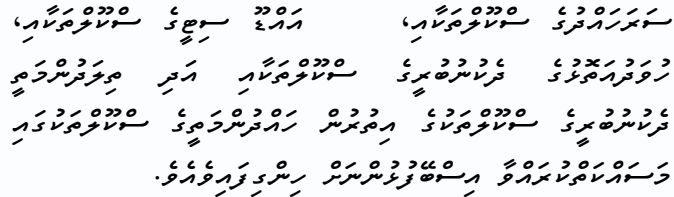
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