

# Countering Radicalisation and Extremism: Initiatives and Strategies

## Strategies: Current Practices

- **Security agencies**
  - police, military, immigration, and etc.
- **Legal approach**
  - Internal Security Act 1960, Security Offences (Special Measures) 2012, Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015, Penal Codes, Prevention of Crime Act 2013.

- **Government agencies/departments**
  - Ministries, JAKIM, religious departments at the Federal and state level, Office of Mufti, IKIM, and other government agencies
- **Civil societies**
  - GMM, ABIM, student bodies, universities, schools, private companies, and other non-governmental organisations.



- **Media**
  - TV stations, newspapers, magazines, new media, blogs, twitters, Facebook, etc.
- **Rehabilitation program**
  - Initiated by Special Branch, Royal Malaysia Police, Counter-Terrorism Department.
  - Participated by academicians, religious scholars, psychologist, police officers.

- Each agencies play different roles
  - *prevention*
  - *awareness*
  - *punitive*
  - *rehabilitative*

# Weaknesses

- No coordinating body to manage countering extremism initiatives. It is individual-driven effort.
- We do not benefit from “returning foreign fighters” to share their experience in order to dissuade people from joining IS.
- Need more inter-agencies/inter-ministries cooperation
- Lacking "cybertroopers" to engage with extremist messages posted online. Need more CVE initiatives.
- Lack of funding to initiate CVE projects.

# ISIS Threats

- ISIS propagates its ideology faster using new media
- online mass recruitment vs. one-on-one recruitment in 1990s.
- ideology more virulent and dangerous
- ISIS is a popular "brand name" among Muslim youths especially.
- It provides vision for future(s); either in this world and hereafter.
- In Malaysia, ISIS attracts people of wide spectrum including government servants.



- Potential Threats
- Residual Threats
- Actual Threats

emerging domestic  
challenges

- Apart from ISIS (religious extremist group), we also face domestic challenges, residual threats.
  - social extremist movements
  - attempt to influence national discourse (promoting ideas *contrary* to national agenda of unity, peaceful coexistence, mutual respectability)

- using the "freedom of expression", "human rights" as pretext and condemning others who disagree with them.
- The emerging threats not necessarily religious, but also secular in nature (liberal values contrary to Islam).
- It undermines the foundation of unity, national stability, peace and harmony that are needed by a plural nation.
- our challenge is how to manage plural society in the age of extremism
- society as a whole need to learn the art of negotiating differences in order to sustain national unity and peace.



- If we fail to address and manage these residual threats, it may escalate to open and physical conflict (racial and sectarian conflict, etc)
- there is built-up and undercurrent tension in society vis-a-vis liberal versus Islamist values that potentially pose actual threats to the nation.

## Future strategies and recommendations

- Coordination at national level to confront terrorism threats (ideological/physical)
- Capitalizing on “returning foreign fighters” or “the repented individuals” to share their experiences in the media.

- Close cooperation by intergovernment agencies
- Intensify the use of new media to promote countering violent extremism messages
- More funding is needed to ensure the success of CT initiatives
- Serious research institute dedicated to study the trend of extremism and terrorism in Malaysia.

- True success in fighting terrorism or extremism is to prevent it before it threatens us.



*“bad things happen when good men do nothing.”*

**–Edmund Burke**

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