

# Terrorist Narratives and the Internet: A Southeast Asia Perspective

---

Open Meeting of the CTC on Countering Terrorist Narratives and  
Preventing Terrorist Use of the Internet

29 May 2018  
UN, New York

# Content

---

- Overview of Terrorist Use of the Internet
- Why the Internet?
- Internet and the Spread of Terrorist Narratives
- Terrorists and Their Narratives
- Radicalisation and Recruitment via the Internet
- Examples: Malaysia's Experience
- Developing Counter Narratives: Challenges
- Conclusion

# Overview of Terrorist Use of the Internet

---



# Why the Internet?

---

- Anonymity
- Easy Access
- Large Network
- “Cherry Picking” Information
- More Profitable/Lucrative
  - – Online Credit Card Fraud Vs. Bank Heist
- Speed in Facilitating Online Terrorist Activities
  - Online Propaganda Vs. Pamphlets

# Internet and the Spread of Terrorist Narratives

---

- Who is spreading terrorist narratives?
  - Members/sympathisers/supporters
- How terrorists are spreading their narratives?
  - Social media platforms
  - Online Communication Apps
  - *Offline*
- What are they saying?
  - The West vs Asia
    - Overlapping issues
    - Increased focus on particular issue(s)



# Terrorists and Their Narratives

---

## ▪ Religious-based

- Atonement
- Finding the meaning of life – “filling in the void”
- Divine Law (Shari’a): the only law
- Jihad/Martyrdom
- Khilafah as the only system of governance
- The End of Time Prophecy

## ▪ Politics/Governance

- Secular governments
- Corruption
- Anti-Democracy

## ▪ Social

- Marriage
- Sense of Belonging -> brotherhood/sisterhood
- Loneliness

## ▪ Plight of Muslims

- Oppression
- Violence
- Humanitarian

# Example: Gagak Hitam (Black Crow)

- **Leader:** Muhammad Wanndy Mohamed Jedi (killed April 29, Raqqa)
- **Recruitment method:** Facebook and Telegram
- **Communication:** Telegram - to plan attacks
- **Targets:** Government complexes, Royal Malaysia Police HQ , entertainment outlets
- **Members:** > 15
- **Attack(s):** Movidia Nightclub ( June 28, 2016)



# Developing Counter-Narratives: Challenges

---

- **Getting the right voices to speak (the messengers)**
  - Target audience may not view governments favourably
  - Choosing messengers who resonate well with target audience
- **Matching the rate and speed of narratives produced by terrorists and supporters**
  - Disseminators not only members of a terrorist group
  - Bureaucracy
- **Reaching the right target audience**
  - Finding the right concerns that would trigger action
  - Baseline study or mapping of social network in a country
  - Overlapping of identities
    - National identities, ethnic identities, etc
- **Inspiring passion in countering the narratives of terrorists**
  - Terrorists are good at stirring passion → bonds of brotherhood, etc



# Conclusion

---

- Developing counter and alternative narratives is a new field
  - May not succeed the first time
  - The need to experiment
  - Learning from failures and improve
- Enhance Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)
- Empowering “Gate-Keepers” (e.g. parents, teachers, peers)
- The need for a Whole-of-Nation approach to address the issue.