



**SEARCCT'S
ANNUAL
REVIEW**

2023

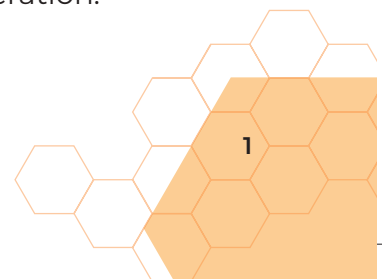
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, the global terrorism and violent extremism landscape is characterised by a complex and evolving array of threats, spanning multiple regions and ideologies. Various factors contribute to the proliferation of terrorism, including political instability, socio-economic grievances, religious radicalisation, and the exploitation of technology and social media platforms for recruitment and propaganda purposes. Terrorist organisations such as Daesh and al-Qaeda continue to pose significant threats, operating across multiple continents and inspiring attacks worldwide. Additionally, lone wolf attackers, radicalised individuals, and small cells further contribute to the decentralised nature of the threat, making it difficult to predict and prevent. Moreover, the rise of far-right extremism, fuelled by xenophobia, racism, and nationalist sentiments, presents another dimension to the landscape, contributing to hate crimes, violence, and domestic terrorism in various parts of the world.

The Sahel region for examples faces a significant and multifaceted threat from terrorism, characterised by porous borders, weak governance, and the presence of terrorist organisations such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP), and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). These groups operate with relative impunity amid failed states and ungoverned spaces, exploiting the region's vulnerabilities to expand their influence and carry out attacks. JNIM, in particular, stands out as one of the most potent al-Qaeda-linked affiliates, actively seeking to extend its reach from the Sahel into coastal West Africa. Additionally, the persistent presence of al-Shabaab in Somalia further compounds the security challenges facing the region, highlighting the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the root causes of terrorism and strengthen regional security cooperation.

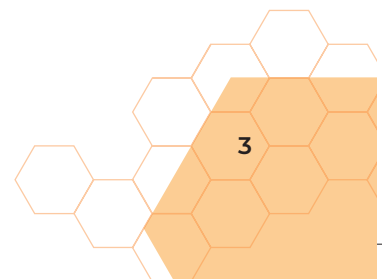


Meanwhile, the current threat of lone wolf attacks and the concept of “salad bar” terrorism underscore the dynamic nature of contemporary security challenges. Lone wolf attacks, perpetrated by individuals radicalised and motivated by extremist ideologies, pose a significant risk due to their ability to operate independently and often evade traditional intelligence detection methods. These individuals may draw inspiration from various sources, including online propaganda, personal grievances, or ideological beliefs, making them difficult to detect and prevent. Concurrently, “salad bar” terrorism represents a concerning trend where extremists adopt a hybrid approach, drawing from disparate ideologies and tactics to advance their objectives. This adaptive strategy allows terrorists to cherry-pick elements from different ideologies, blending them in ways that suit their agenda, thereby presenting a complex challenge for counter-terrorism efforts. Addressing the threat of lone wolf attacks and “salad bar” terrorism necessitates holistic approaches that involve community engagement, intelligence sharing, effective surveillance, and targeted intervention strategies.

Amidst these formidable challenges, the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) made significant strides in 2023. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Centre expanded its global footprint by organising the inaugural SEARCCT International Conference (S.I.C. 2023) themed “Building Digital Resilience in PCVE.” The conference aimed to drive forward discussions on the evolving landscape of violent extremism, particularly in the digital sphere, and to explore effective strategies for response. Positive feedback from participants has spurred considerations for establishing S.I.C. as a flagship programme with biennial recurrence, reflecting its growing significance in shaping global discourse and action on countering terrorism and violent extremism.

SEARCCT's commitment transcended the conference as it delved into cutting-edge research and outlined prospective core themes for upcoming events. The centre proactively tackled the complex interplay between violent extremist messaging, hate speech, and mis/disinformation online. Advocating for a comprehensive approach encompassing both government and society, SEARCCT actively collaborated with a diverse range of stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organisations, community leaders, media practitioners, private enterprises, and youth. This collaborative effort aimed to foster a nuanced understanding of the challenges at hand and to develop context-specific initiatives for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE).

Overall last year, SEARCCT successfully conducted 25 programmes, encompassing a wide array of activities such as conference, forum, training courses, workshops and public lectures and awareness initiatives. These efforts collectively engaged 1,447 participants, of which 152 were international participants and 1,295 local participants. By expanding its network of collaborators, SEARCCT reaffirmed its commitment to a multi-stakeholder approach in countering terrorism and PCVE. This strategic positioning also underscores SEARCCT's role as a diplomatic asset in advancing Malaysia's strategic interests and foreign policy objectives, involving collaborations with both domestic and international partners. Looking ahead, SEARCCT will continue to foster innovation, strengthen partnerships, and maintain its leadership in addressing terrorism and PCVE in Malaysia and the region.



SEARCCT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (S.I.C) 2023

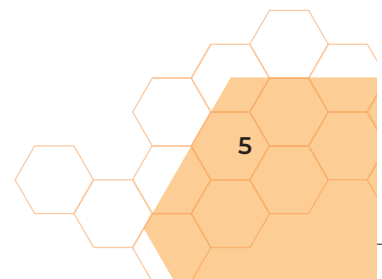
The inaugural SEARCCT International Conference (S.I.C. 2023) was held from 13-15 June 2023, at the Hilton Kuala Lumpur, focusing on “Building Digital Resilience in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE).” The conference featured a comprehensive agenda, including an opening session, five panel discussions, a luncheon talk, and a closing session. Throughout the event, diverse topics were explored, ranging from strategies to prevent terrorist internet usage and promote multistakeholder approaches to PCVE, to discussions on digital strategic communication, the influential role of media and influencers in PCVE, and the development of effective digital resilience strategies.

The opening session of the conference was honored by the presence of the YB Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM), who delivered the keynote address on behalf of the Foreign Minister (FM). During this address, the Digital Resilience Initiative (DRI) was introduced, highlighting its four strategic pillars: (1) Awareness and Knowledge, (2) Support and Empowerment, (3) Regulation and Accountability, and (4) Cooperation and Collaboration. Additionally, the Director-General of SEARCCT underscored the Center’s accomplishments over the past two decades and outlined the conference objectives, which coincided with SEARCCT’s 20th anniversary celebrations.

The opening session attracted 228 attendees, including conference participants, moderators, speakers, Wisma Putra officials, foreign diplomatic representatives, and members of the media. Among the participants were 158 individuals, with 62 international delegates hailing from countries such as Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, and Qatar. The local contingent comprised speakers, moderators, and stakeholders from various sectors, including government ministries, agencies, universities, the private sector, and civil society organisations (CSOs).

Each panel discussion offered profound insights into various facets of PCVE and digital resilience. Delving into the challenges posed by online terrorist activities, the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration was underscored, alongside the pivotal role of digital strategic communication in countering extremist narratives. Additionally, discussions shed light on the influential role of media and influencers, advocating for the integration of digital resilience into PCVE frameworks. Noteworthy concepts explored encompassed the utilisation of AI technology, the Inoculation Theory, the Frame Alignment Theory, and the significance of gender narratives in PCVE efforts. The luncheon talk, titled “Articulating a Madani Framework for Counter-Extremism,” delved into the concept of ‘middleness’ as an effective antidote to extremism, advocating for its applicability across diverse cultures and religions to foster a civilised and moderate society.

The conference served as a pivotal platform for engaging policymakers, government officials, security practitioners, experts, researchers, industry players, and CSOs, highlighting the Digital Resilience Initiative (DRI) as a guiding framework for building digital resilience. It emphasized the importance of contextual adaptation to local needs and circumstances, facilitating robust discussions and knowledge exchange on critical issues related to PCVE and digital resilience.





YEAR IN NUMBERS



STAFFS

50



DIVISIONS

4 DIVISIONS



Planning and
Training
Division



Research and
Publications
Division



Digital Strategic
Communications
Division



Administration
and Finance
Division



TOTAL ALLOCATION FOR 2023

RM7,717,000.00



TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR 2023 (ENDED 31 DECEMBER)

RM6,604,864.34

(92.80%)



TOTAL
PROGRAMMES

25

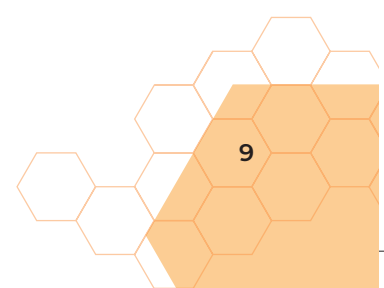
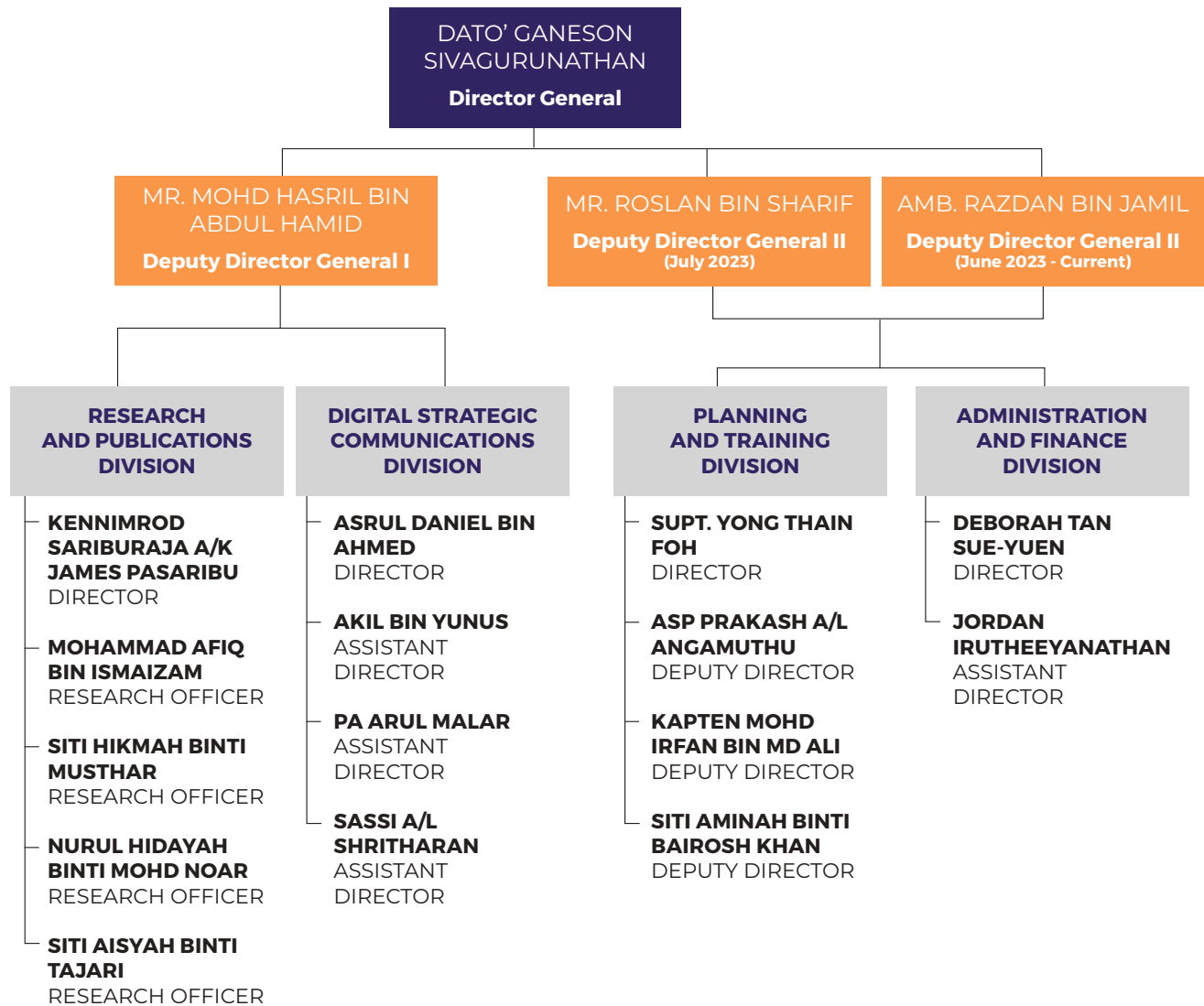


TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

1,447

(98 INTERNATIONAL
PARTICIPANTS)

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE





PLANNING AND TRAINING DIVISION

To develop and organise comprehensive capacity-building programmes on preventing and countering terrorism

INTRODUCTION

The core objective of the Planning and Training Division is to develop and organise comprehensive capacity-building programs. The goal of this division is to improve the knowledge and skills of government officers and law enforcement on counter-terrorism measures through partnerships with established think tanks, related institutions, and international organisations.

In 2023, SEARCCT began introducing a range of physical programmes for various ministries and agencies in Malaysia. The plan was based on the understanding that a comprehensive programme of partnerships and cooperation is the most effective way to combat terrorist threats.

To ensure that its capacity-building and training programmes achieved their intended objectives, the division, with the support of its local and international collaborators, held extensive discussions to produce the best modules and programs. In 2023, a total of 364 participants successfully attended nine (9) capacity-building and training programmes. Of these nine programmes, five were organised with foreign collaborators, two with local partners, and two were an 'in-house' programme run by SEARCCT trainers. In terms of SEARCCT's areas of interest, the Centre continued to focus its programmes on five flagship areas: 'Legal and Investigation', 'CBRNe and Crisis Management', 'Terrorism Financing', 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)', and 'Critical Infrastructure Protection'.

SEARCCT also conducted one high-demand programme for CBRNe and crisis management. To strengthen its partnerships with first responder agencies, SEARCCT conducted a total of nine CBRNe sessions, which were well-received by participating agencies.

LOCAL SUPPORT AND COLLABORATORS

The Planning and Training Division of SEARCCT will continue to receive strong support from local collaborators and strategic partners in 2023. These include the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health, the National Security Council, the Office of the Chief Government Security Officer of the Prime Minister's Department, the Attorney General Chambers, the Royal Malaysian Police, the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Fire & Rescue Department, the Immigration Department, the Royal Customs & Excise Department, the Civil Defence Department, the Department of Civil Aviation, the Chemistry Department, the Atomic Energy Licencing Board (AELB), Petroliam Nasional Berhad (PETRONAS), and the Central Bank of Malaysia (BNM).

The solid support, commitment, and cooperation from both the government and private sectors have undoubtedly contributed to the successful organisation of SEARCCT's capacity-building and training programmes throughout the year. SEARCCT is grateful for all parties' support and anticipates its continuation in the upcoming years.

FOREIGN SUPPORT AND COLLABORATORS

In 2023, SEARCCT received strong support from its foreign collaborators and successfully conducted training programmes with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United States' Department of War on Mass Destruction and Terrorism (WMDT).

CYBER-ENABLED INVESTIGATIONS TO COUNTER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION TERRORISM (WMDT)

SEARCCT has successfully concluded “Cyber-Enabled Investigations to Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism (WMDT)” at the Intercontinental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur from 13 to 17, 2023. The five-day fully sponsored programme was organised by SEARCCT in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State’s Office of WMD Terrorism (WMDT). This programme was attended by a total of seven participants from Malaysia and eight participants from the Philippines. Participants from Malaysia were from the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP), Attorney General’s Chambers (AGC), and National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA).

The programme began with an opening speech by Mr. Roslan bin Sharif, Deputy Director-General II of SEARCCT. Experts were invited by the U.S. Department of State’s Office of WMD Terrorism (WMDT) from Cybervance, Inc.

The objectives of the training were to establish or strengthen understanding of potential WMD terrorism threats, practice tools and methods to safely and securely conduct comprehensive internet, social media, and dark web investigations, apply these tools and methods to efforts to identify, detect, and disrupt potential WMD terrorism threats, facilitate the sharing of experiences and expertise, and enable the integration of lessons learned into institutional processes and procedures.



In addition, this programme included presentations, interactive discussions, and practical exercises. The participants were introduced to the current trends and threats of WMD terrorism, the role of the internet, social media, and dark web in supporting terrorist activities, and the legal and ethical considerations in conducting cyber-enabled investigations. The participants were also introduced to the tools and techniques for collecting, analysing, and preserving digital evidence, as well as the methods for identifying and infiltrating terrorist networks.

All the participants displayed great interest and participation throughout the programme. At the end of the programme, participants from both countries were able to build good working relations and networks. Participants provided positive feedback and were impressed with the content and the quality of the speakers, noting that the programme exceeded their expectations. Moving forward, SEARCCT is currently exploring ways to meet the stakeholders for programmes in the future.



FUNDAMENTAL OF CLANDESTINE LABORATORY IDENTIFICATION COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

SEARCCT has successfully concluded “Fundamental Clandestine Laboratory Identification Course and Instructor Training for Law Enforcement Officers” at The Ritz-Carlton, Kuala Lumpur, from March 6 to 10, 2023. The five-day programme was co-organised by SEARCCT and the U.S. Department of State Office of WMD Terrorism (WMDT).

This programme was attended by sixteen (16) Malaysian participants. The participants comprise officers from the Attorney General’s Chambers of Malaysia, the National Public Health Laboratory, the Department of Atomic Energy (AELB), the Judicial and Legal Training Institute (ILKAP), the Department of Chemistry Malaysia, the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), the Malaysian National Security Council (MKN), the Malaysian Defence Intelligence Organisation (MDIO), the Office of the Chief Registrar Federal Court of Malaysia, the Science & Technology Research Institute for Defence (STRIDE), and the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP).



The objectives of the training were to explore the threat posed by chemical and biological terrorism as well as the various types of clandestine laboratories. The U.S. Department of State Office of WMD Terrorism (WMDT) invited experts from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. Additionally, it is to examine and learn about the challenges associated with hazardous environments, to identify technical and sustainability support areas, and to evaluate the various stages of clandestine laboratory development. The course concludes with hands-on, walkthrough demonstrations of configuration techniques and simulated laboratory exercises.

The programme concluded with the closing remarks by Mr. Roslan bin Sharif, Deputy Director-General II of SEARCCT. All the participants displayed great interest and participation throughout the programme. At the end of the programme, participants from various agencies exchange and share their knowledge and build extensive networks. Participants provided positive feedback and were impressed with the content and the quality of the speakers, noting that the programme exceeded their expectations. Moving forward, SEARCCT is currently exploring ways to meet the stakeholders for programmes in the near future.



COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR MALAYSIA: ADVANCED CTF COURSE (SERIES 2)

The Countering the Financing of Terrorism Training Programme for Malaysia: Advanced CTF Course (Series 2) was held from May 9 to May 11, 2023, in Kota Kinabalu. The three-day programme was co-organised by SEARCCT and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The programme aimed to enhance the knowledge and technical capacity of government officials in preventing, detecting, and disrupting terrorist financing. The course covered various modules, including financial analysis and investigations, trends in virtual currencies, advanced open-source investigation techniques, cooperation with the private sector, business modelling, financial auditing of terrorist networks, and case studies.

This programme was attended by 24 Malaysian participants from various ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Defence, Royal Malaysia Police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and others.

The training programme provided participants with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in countering the financing of terrorism. The module on financial analysis and investigations focused on tracking and disrupting terrorist financing networks, while the module on trends in virtual currencies explored the implications of cryptocurrencies for terrorist financing. The module on advanced open-source investigation techniques equipped participants with tools to leverage open-source intelligence, and the case study exercises allowed them to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios.



Participants commended the trainers for their expertise, facilitation of interactive discussions, and ability to share practical insights. The collaborative learning environment facilitated active participation and peer learning. The training was tailored to the local context, enabling participants to address country-specific challenges and contribute effectively to countering terrorism financing efforts. At the end of the programme, participants developed working relationships and networks while expressing satisfaction with the content and quality of the speakers.



INTEGRATING TECHNICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS TO COUNTER BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS THREATS

The Integrating Technical and Legal Frameworks to Counter Biological Weapons Threats programme was held at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, from July 10 to 13, 2023. The four-day programme was co-organised by SEARCCT and the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism (WMDT), in cooperation with subject matter experts from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).

This programme was attended by twelve (12) participants, including officers from the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP), National Security Council (NSC), Attorney General's Chambers (AGC), Department of Chemistry, Academy of Sciences, Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, Fire and Rescue, SEARCCT, and Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Malaysia (MOSTI). Mr. Yong Thain Foh, the Director of the Planning and Training Division of SEARCCT, delivered the closing remarks, expressing his heartfelt gratitude to WMDT and PNNL for their collaboration.



The 4-day programme consisted of four main themes, namely introduction and overview, current technologies for CTCP investigations, implementation of technology, and policies to maximise the benefits of technology. The workshop provided participants with comprehensive knowledge in terms of technical and legal perspectives to counter the threat of biological weapons. Participants appreciated the organisers' efforts to tailor the training to the local context. This approach allowed participants to explore country-specific challenges and develop strategies relevant to their own contexts. By providing the flexibility to adapt course materials, the training empowered participants to address the unique dynamics of technical and legal frameworks in their respective agencies and contribute effectively to national and international efforts to counter biological weapons threats. At the end of the programme, participants developed working relationships and networks. They expressed satisfaction with the content and quality of the speakers and expressed their anticipation for a regional workshop in the near future.



CBRNe TERRORISM AWARENESS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCY CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

SEARCCT, in collaboration with Sarawak General Hospital and Hospital Selayang, Alor Setar, with support from the Sarawak State Health Department, had successfully organised the "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNe) Terrorism Awareness and Medical Emergency Consequence Management Workshop." The workshop was held at the UNIMAS City Campus from 25-27 July 2023.

The workshop was aimed at creating awareness among medical practitioners about the use of CBRNE elements as weapons and preparing the practitioners to respond to such casualties. 100 medical practitioners from Sarawak's hospitals and clinics attended this workshop.

The speakers who lectured in this workshop were SEARCCT's established local trainers from the Malaysian Armed Forces, Royal Malaysia Police, Ministry of Health, Department of Chemistry Malaysia, Fire and Rescue Department, and Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB). The workshop began with opening remarks by Dr. Ngain Hie Ung, Director of Sarawak General Hospital.



During the three-day workshop, participants were exposed to various CBRNe subjects ranging from the basics of CBRNe, modes of dispersal, and managing post-attack situations to emergency decontamination. The workshop provided them with an insight into the significance of understanding the roles of other agencies in the event of CBRNe incidents.

The workshop concluded with a full demonstration of the CBRNe First Response Operation by the Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) Team of the Fire and Rescue Department and Medical Team from Sarawak General Hospital, followed by Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) usage. The closing ceremony was concluded by Ambassador Mohamad Razdan Jamil, Deputy Director-General II of SEARCCT, followed by the presentation of certificates to all participants.



SEARCCT - MTCP CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR AND EXPLOSIVES (CBRNe) - FIRST RESPONDER

Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) successfully organised the “SEARCCT-MTCP Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNe)—First Responder” programme. The workshop was held at the Melia Hotel, Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 27 September 2023. The workshop was conducted under the ambit of the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), which SEARCCT has been conducting since 2012. The workshop had a total of 12 participants, with four (4) from Indonesia, and two (2) from Sri Lanka, Jordan, Timor-Leste, and Pakistan, respectively.

The training features a lineup of distinguished speakers and facilitators who are experts in their respective fields. These include DSP Rayner bin Jaunis from the Bomb Unit of the Royal Malaysia Police, Prof. Dr. Rashidi bin Ahmad from KPJ Healthcare University, Wan Ahmad Fikri bin Wan Ali and Hafidz bin Attan from the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), Mohd Faris bin Ismai (ret.) from the Malaysian Armed Forces, and Assistant Fire Commissioner Murugiah Muthusamy from the Fire and Rescue Department.



The programme is structured to cover a wide range of topics essential for first responders dealing with CBRNe incidents. These include sessions on explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), biological agents, radiological agents, and chemical agents. Participants learn about personal protective equipment (PPE), decontamination procedures, hazard assessment, and emergency response strategies.



AVIATION SECURITY (AVSEC) - BASIC

The Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) successfully organised the “Aviation Security (AVSEC) – Basic” programme. The workshop was held at the Pullman Hotel Kuching, Sarawak, from October 9 to 11 2023.

The workshop aimed to raise participants' awareness about the issues of terrorism involving civil aviation and the measures taken by the Malaysian government to prevent it. This workshop was attended by 22 participants, comprising Malaysian civil aviation officials and the private sector. The speakers included established practitioners from the Civil Aviation Authority Malaysia, the Royal Malaysia Police, Kargo Xpress, Malaysia Airport Holdings Berhad, the Malaysian Immigration Department, the Royal Malaysian Customs Department, and Malaysia Airlines Holdings Berhad.

The three-day workshop exposed participants to cases of aviation terrorism and preventative measures such as aviation legal frameworks, internal procedures of aircraft companies, Malaysian government civil aviation responses, and Table Top Exercise (TTX). Overall, this workshop provided insight on the importance of public-private agencies in aviation terrorism. The workshop concluded with a field exercise during the security tour at Kuching International Airport.



TERRORISM 101 COURSE

SEARCCT, in collaboration with the 21 Gerup Gerak Khas (21 GGK) Armed Forces, successfully concluded the Terrorism 101 Course at Kem Sungai Udang, Melaka, on 18 and 19, 2023.

This programme was aimed at creating exposure and enhancing the participants' understanding of issues and challenges related to the threat of terrorism in Malaysia. The 70 attendees consisted of 21 GGK officers and under-ranked officers. The speakers were established practitioners from the Malaysia Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS), E8 Special Branch, Malaysia Armed Forces, and SEARCCT.

Throughout the two-day course, participants were exposed to many terrorism and counter-terrorism topics, including legal frameworks, Malaysian cases, and terrorists' perspectives on information technology. The workshop highlighted the significance of counter-terrorism efforts and awareness among public authorities.

The final session ended with a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) activity involving five groups. Major General Adi Ridzwan bin Abdullah, Panglima 21 GGK, concluded the closing ceremony and then presented the certificates.



COLLABORATORS' MEETING FOR THE YEAR OF 2024

SEARCCT successfully concluded the Collaborators' Meeting 2024 at the Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, on 21 to 22 November 2023. The objectives of this meeting were to showcase SEARCCT's activities and explore potential areas of cooperation for the year 2024 and beyond. The 180 attendees were 60 government officials, civil society and tertiary education institutions, and diplomatic consulates, respectively, divided into three sessions.

The presenters were SEARCCT's officers from the Planning and Training Division, Research and Publications Division, and Digital Strategic Communications Division. The meetings began with an introduction by the moderator, Ambassador Mohamad Razdan bin Jamil, the Deputy Director II of SEARCCT. Q&A and discussions were held at the end of each session on future programme plans.

Participants also expressed their organisation's interest in collaborating within SEARCCT's five flagships. The programme ended smoothly, paving the way for SEARCCT's upcoming programmes, future collaboration, and diplomatic ties.





RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

To conduct research, implement public awareness programmes, deliver lectures, and produce publications.

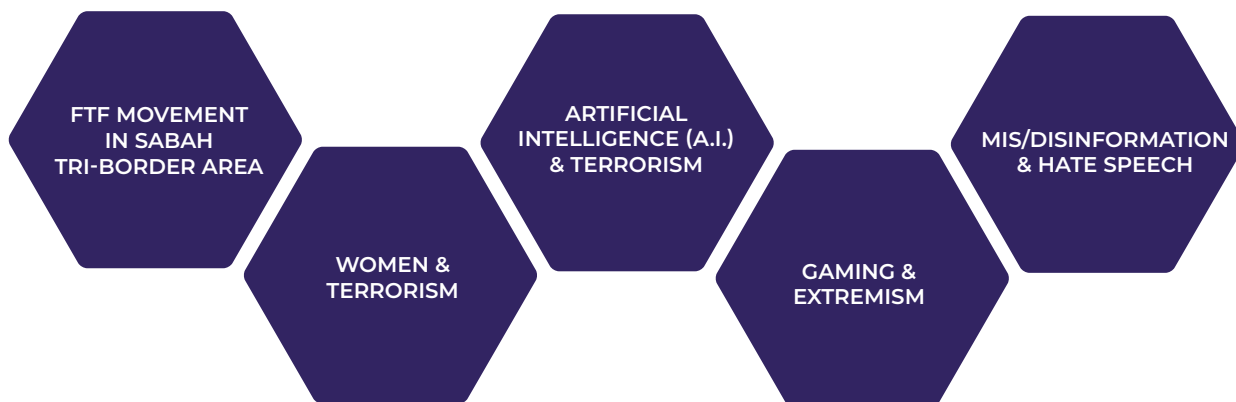
INTRODUCTION

The Division fulfils an important role in conducting targeted research and producing a variety of publications, including monographs, articles, journals, and analytical papers, distributed both in hard copy and online to SEARCCT's partners and participants in capacity-building programmes.

Moreover, the Division actively engages in disseminating its research findings and sharing lessons learned from diverse research endeavors, locally and internationally, through presentations and talks.

Additionally, the Division plays a pivotal role in organizing public awareness programs, notably through the 'University Lecture Series' (ULS) and Forum Kenegaraan, which aims to educate and engage students on the perils of extremism and terrorism.

Key research areas of focus for the Division encompass of 'Gaming and Extremism', 'Artificial Intelligence and Terrorism', 'Women and Terrorism', 'Mis/Disinformation and Hate Speech', as well as 'Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) Movement in Sabah Tri-Border Area'.



RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN 2023

>> GAMING AND EXTREMISM

The objective of the research project is to delve into the realm of gaming and its intersection with extremism in Malaysia. Through this exploration, the study aims to understand the extent to which violent extremists exploit gaming spaces and the potential role of gaming in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) efforts. By examining the scope and nature of this phenomenon, the research seeks to uncover insights that can inform strategies for addressing extremism within gaming communities and utilising gaming platforms as tools for promoting resilience against radicalisation.

>> ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND TERRORISM

The objective of this research project is to investigate the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and terrorism, with a particular emphasis on understanding the implications and identifying potential countermeasures linked to the utilisation of AI in terrorist operations. By delving into this intersection, the research aims to uncover insights that can inform strategies for detecting, preventing, and mitigating the risks posed by the adoption of AI technologies by terrorist groups. Through rigorous analysis and research, the study seeks to enhance our understanding of the evolving nature of threats in the digital age and develop effective responses to safeguard against AI-enabled terrorism.

>> WOMEN AND TERRORISM

The objective of this research project is to enhance our comprehension of the role of women in countering terrorism and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE). By delving into this aspect, the study aims to uncover insights into the diverse contributions and experiences of women in efforts to combat terrorism and extremism. Through comprehensive analysis and research, the research seeks to

identify effective strategies and approaches for leveraging the unique perspectives, capabilities, and networks of women in promoting peace, resilience, and community cohesion. Ultimately, the goal is to strengthen the involvement of women in PCVE initiatives and empower them as agents of positive change in the fight against terrorism.

»» **MIS/DISINFORMATION AND HATE SPEECH**

The objective of this project research is to comprehend and define the driving factors behind hate speech and violent extremism. Through rigorous analysis and research, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and motivations underlying the dissemination of misinformation and the propagation of hate speech. By examining these phenomena, the study seeks to uncover insights into the root causes and dynamics that fuel extremist ideologies and contribute to social discord. Through this understanding, the research aims to develop effective strategies and interventions to counteract the spread of misinformation and hate speech, thereby promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and social cohesion.

»» **FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTER MOVEMENT IN SABAH TRI-BORDER AREA**

The objective of this research project is to explore the factors that have facilitated the crime-terror nexus in the Sabah Tri-Border Area. Through in-depth analysis and research, the study aims to understand the complex interplay between terrorist activities and criminal networks in this region. By examining these factors, the research seeks to uncover insights into the root causes and dynamics driving the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and the proliferation of illicit activities in the Sabah Eastern Seaboard. Through this understanding, the research goal is to develop comprehensive strategies and interventions to disrupt and dismantle these networks, mitigate security risks, and promote stability in the region.

UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES (ULS)

The University Lecture Series (ULS) program was launched in 2011 to foster public awareness of terrorism-related issues and to cultivate a "mental firewall" against the influence of violent extremism among youth enrolled in higher education institutions. In 2023, four (4) ULS were held at the following institutions:

1 SMART COLLEGE

On 8 May 2023, Mr. Kennimrod Sariburaja, Director of SEARCCT's Research and Publications Division, delivered a lecture titled 'Understanding the History of Terrorism and Identifying Discernible Patterns in Counter-Terrorism Strategies' at SMART College Kuala Lumpur. The lecture, held in conjunction with the college's Occupational Safety and Health Day, attracted an audience of 50 students. During the session, the speaker elucidated on both national and international terrorism threats, emphasising their implications for Malaysia's security landscape.

UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES (ULS): UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY OF TERRORISM AND IDENTIFYING ANY DISCERNIBLE PATTERNS IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES

Speakers

Mr. Kennimrod Sariburaja, Director of Research and Publications, SEARCCT

Participants

50 Participants



2 UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

SEARCCT was invited by the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University Malaya, to provide expertise on terrorism issues in the region. Mr. Akil Yunus, Assistant Director of Digital Strategic Communications, delivered a lecture titled ‘Understanding Terrorism in Southeast Asia’ on 18 May 2023. The session was attended by 26 undergraduate students from the department. During the lecture, the audience gained insights into the multifaceted threat of terrorism, both at the national and regional levels, and its implications for Malaysian security. Additionally, the lecture delved into the intricate processes of radicalisation involved in recruiting and radicalising youths in Southeast Asia.

UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES (ULS): UNDERSTANDING TERRORISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Speakers	Mr. Akil Yunus, Assistant Director, Digital Strategic Communications, SEARCCT
Participants	26 Participants



3 UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UITM) SABAH

On 27 October 2023, a collaborative lecture was organised with the University Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sabah campus. The lecture, titled 'Introduction to Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Malaysia', was delivered by Mr. Kennimrod Sariburaja, Director of the Research and Publications Division at SEARCCT. The speaker's presentation delved into the multifaceted challenges encountered in combating terrorism, as well as the ongoing efforts in preventing and countering violent extremism. Attended by approximately 120 students from both diploma and degree programs, alongside UiTM Sabah faculty members, the lecture provided valuable insights into the historical context of terrorism and the broader implications for Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Key themes addressed included the evolution of terrorism, its impact on society, and future directions in the ongoing fight against terrorism in the region.

UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES (ULS): INTRODUCTION TO TERRORISM AND COUNTER-TERRORISM IN MALAYSIA

Speakers	Mr. Kennimrod Sariburaja, Director of Research and Publications, SEARCCT
Participants	120 Participants



4 TAYLOR'S UNIVERSITY

SEARCCT, in collaboration with the School of Media and Communication (SOMAC) and Impact Lab 3 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions at Taylor's University, organised a ULS on 3 November 2023. Ms. Mediha Mahmood, Chief Executive Officer of the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF), delivered a compelling lecture titled 'Countering Extremism and Harmful Content on Social Media'. Attended by 50 students from SOMAC, the lecture aimed to shed light on the prevalent risks and harms associated with social media platforms. Furthermore, it sought to promote digital literacy skills among attendees to bolster resilience against extremism and other harmful content disseminated online.

UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES (ULS): COUNTERING EXTREMISM AND HARMFUL CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA	
Speakers	Ms. Mediha Mahmood, Chief Executive Officer of the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF)
Participants	50 Participants



FORUM KENEGARAAN

PENGHAYATAN MALAYSIA MADANI: MEMBENDUNG UCAPAN KEBENCIAN DALAM KONTEKS MASYARAKAT MAJMUK

(MALAYSIA MADANI APPROACH: CURBING HATE SPEECH IN THE CONTEXT OF A PLURAL SOCIETY)

The forum was organised in collaboration with the Faculty of Human Ecology at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in conjunction with the national month. The forum promoted the values and principles of Malaysia Madani in curbing issues related to hate speech. Panellists of the forum were Prof. Madya Dr. Mohd Mahadee Ismail (Universiti Putra Malaysia), Mr. Khairul Arifin Mohd Munir (Institut Darul Ehsan), Mr. Syed Mokhsien Syed Mansor (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission), and Mr. Kevin Thomas (Akar Umbi Society), while Assoc. Prof. Ts. Dr. Jessica Ong Hai Liaw moderated the session. Around 110 participants from government and non-governmental organisations, as well as higher education institutions, attended the forum that took place at the Auditorium Rashdan Baba, UPM, on 7 September 2023.

This theme builds upon the presentation by Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar titled *Articulating a Madani Framework for Counter-Extremism* at SEARCCT's International Conference on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), held in June last year. The concept of 'Malaysia Madani' is seen as having the potential to serve as a unifying framework for the diverse society in Malaysia based on six core values: sustainability, prosperity, creativity, respect, faith, and benevolence. In addition to serving as a unifying framework, these values are the foundation for strengthening community resilience against the influence of extremism in various forms today and have the potential to become a reference point for practitioners in the field of PCVE.

**Forum Kenegaraan: Penghayatan Malaysia Madani:
Membendung Ucapan Kebencian dalam Konteks Masyarakat Majmuk (Malaysia Madani
Approach: Curbing Hate Speech in the Context of
A Plural Society)**

**Moderators and
Speakers**

- 1** Assoc. Prof. Ts. Dr. Jessica Ong Hai Liaw,
National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM)
- 2** Prof. Madya Dr. Mohd Mahadee Ismail,
Universiti Putra Malaysia
- 3** Mr. Khairul Arifin Mohd Munir,
Institut Darul Ehsan
- 4** Mr. Syed Mokhsien Syed Mansor,
Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC)
- 5** Mr. Kevin Thomas,
Akar Umbi Society

Participants

110 participants from government and non-governmental organisations



THE NO-BOOK BOOK CLUB PODCAST

»» GAMING AND PCVE

In this two-part episode, Mr. Asrul Daniel, Director of Digital Strategic Communications, explored potential PCVE interventions, which include working with the gaming community and industry players to build digital resilience against violent extremism.

»» COUNTERING HATE SPEECH THROUGH EDUCATION

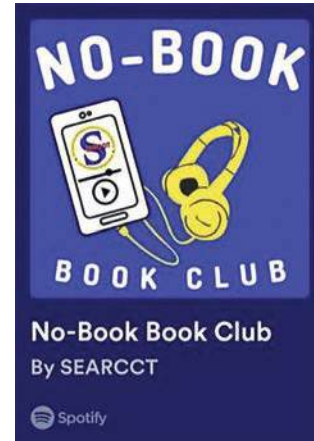
The focus of this episode was on the necessity of developing counter-speech initiatives, which included a tailored educational module for the prevention of hate speech at various levels of society. Dr. Murni Wan Mohd Nor highlighted ways in which peace-loving Malaysians could play a role in these initiatives.

»» PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF RADICALISATION

Dr. Nurul Miza Mohd Rashid provided insights on the psychological aspect of the radicalisation process, push and pull risk factors, and the violent and non-violent outcomes of this process. Also shared were the skills required to make oneself less susceptible to the influence of violent extremism.

»» PARTNERING WITH YOUTH IN BUILDING RESILIENCE

This two-part episode explored the role of youth in building community resilience. The episode featured Ms. PA Arul Malar, in which she spoke about her experiences working with youth in various youth programmes and her observations of the relationship between youth and the media.



COLLABORATION WITH THE SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION (SOMAC), TAYLOR'S UNIVERSITY

On 5 July 2023, the Division collaborated with the School of Media and Communication (SoMAC) at Taylor's University, where SEARCCT acted as a 'mock client' for final-year students. The partnership aimed to provide students with practical experience in real-world communication projects while also offering SEARCCT valuable insights and creative solutions tailored to its needs.

As part of the collaboration, students worked on a project that involved branding exercises, marketing campaigns, and strategic communication plans, all centred around SEARCCT's objectives and brand identity. SEARCCT served as a platform for students to apply their academic knowledge to practical scenarios, gaining hands-on experience and valuable skills in the process.

Through this collaboration, students had the opportunity to work closely with SEARCCT, gaining industry exposure and mentorship. At the same time, SEARCCT benefited from the fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and creative solutions provided by the students, helping to enhance its communication strategies and brand positioning.





SEARCCT'S SELECTION OF ARTICLES (SOA) 2023 SPECIAL ISSUE: BUILDING DIGITAL RESILIENCE IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

SEARCCT's Selection of Articles (SOA) is an annual publication that sheds light on critical topics related to terrorism and counter-terrorism. In conjunction with SEARCCT's International Conference (S.I.C. 2023), a special issue of SOA 2023 has been unveiled, focusing on the theme of 'Building Digital Resilience in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.'

This special edition of SOA 2023 encapsulates a wealth of insights and recommendations originating from the inaugural conference held in June 2023, under the same theme. It includes speeches delivered during the conference, a comprehensive summation report, detailed rapporteur's reports, and thoughtprovoking articles contributed by both conference presenters and other esteemed subject-matter experts.



Together, these diverse contributions form a valuable repository of discussions, offering multifaceted perspectives on addressing the challenges posed by violent extremism in the digital age. By capturing the collective wisdom and expertise shared during the event, this edition enriches the discourse surrounding counter-terrorism efforts, paving the way for informed strategies and effective interventions in combating extremism.

SEARCCT'S SELECTION OF ARTICLES (SOA) 2023 SPECIAL ISSUE: BUILDING DIGITAL RESILIENCE IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM		
Author/ Contributors	SIC Speakers and Moderators	1 Dr. Cátia Moreira de Calvalho
		2 Ms. Farlina Said
		3 Prof. Kamarulnizam Abdullah
		4 Dr. Murni Wan Mohd Nor
		5 Dr. Nicole Matejic
		6 Prof. Emeritus Osman Bakar
		7 Ms. Tiffany Jane Pery Buena
	Other Subject-Matter Experts	1 Mr. Ho Kian Wei
		2 Mr. Kennimrod Sariburaja
		3 Prof. Dr. Mohd Mizan Mohammad Aslam and Ms. Sinduja Umandi Wickramasinghe Jayaratne
Book Review	4 Mr. Muhammad Afiq Ismaizam	
	5 Ms. Nurul Hidayah Mohd Noar	
		1 Mrs. Siti Hikmah Musthar
		2 Ms. Siti Aisyah Tajari



DIGITAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

To produce and disseminate counter-narratives, curate positive messaging and embark on collaborative initiatives

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2016 to address the rising threat of terrorist and violent extremist messaging online, the Digital Strategic Communications Division (DSCD) has been developing and executing comprehensive initiatives to mitigate the impact of extremist narratives across both online and offline domains, adapting strategies to address the evolving landscape of terrorism and violent extremism.

In 2023, the Division pursued a range of programmes and initiatives, which included exploring new areas such as sports and PVE, online gaming, and generative AI. This expanded focus signifies the division's proactive stance in anticipating and responding to evolving trends in the digital realm.

In doing so, the Division has engaged in collaborative endeavours with a diverse range of stakeholders from national, regional, and international communities, fostering partnerships that amplify the impact of the initiatives. Moreover, our concerted efforts have involved active collaboration with youth leaders, both local and regional, and recognising the pivotal role they play in shaping the discourse and dynamics of the digital landscape while leveraging their peer-to-peer networks.

Through proactive response to the dynamic landscape and investigation of cutting-edge solutions that appeal to modern audiences, the division expanded its scope and adopted a comprehensive methodology for digital communications.

EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE (EWER)

SEARCCT jointly embarked on the Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) initiative in 2021 together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) as part of the EU STRIVE ASIA project. The aim of this initiative was to develop a guide on the early indicators of violent radicalisation for the use of law enforcement and other relevant sectors. As a follow up to this initiative, an Intervention and Rehabilitation Group (IRG) was established in 2022, consisting of SEARCCT officers, academicians, experts, and PCVE practitioners who have undergone capacity building programmes to further understand the radicalisation process, pre-radicalisation signs, and related matters.

In February 2023, a follow-up roundtable was organised with government and civil society stakeholders to gather their input on an EWER mechanism for Malaysia. The participants also brainstormed suggestions to develop a Community Awareness Training Manual (CATM) to guide community-based actors in conducting early interventions against radicalisation. The CATM, which is based on an Australian model, will be adapted to the Malaysian context.



SOUTHEAST ASIA NETWORK OF PVE PRACTITIONERS (SEAN-PVE)

SEARCCT is a member of the SEAN-PVE network that was established in 2022 to promote multi-agency and multi-disciplinary collaboration as well as a whole-of-society approach in tackling the complex challenges posed by violent extremism. The network was initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Government of Japan, with the support of the Southeast Asian countries (excluding Myanmar).

The network aims to connect regional practitioners working in PVE-related areas to share information and knowledge on best practices, counter/alternative products to counter radicalisation and other related matters. SEAN-PVE is made up of seven (7) thematic working groups (TWGs):

- » **TWG 1:** Strengthening Human Rights and the Rule of Law Approaches by Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement
- » **TWG 2:** Engaging Communities and Strengthening Their Resilience to Violent Extremism;
- » **TWG 3:** Empowering Youth and Enhancing Their Involvement in PVE;
- » **TWG 4:** Gender Equality and Empowering Women Enhancing Their Engagement in PVE;
- » **TWG 5:** Education, Critical thinking, Skill Development, and Employment Facilitation;
- » **TWG 6:** Strategic Communications, the Internet, and Social Media; and
- » **TWG 7:** Rehabilitation and Reintegration

As an active member of the network, SEARCCT has taken on the role of regional lead for TWG 6 and co-lead for TWG 3. In that regard, UNODC and SEARCCT co-organised an inaugural meeting of the thematic

working groups on Youth Engagement and Empowerment and Strategic Communications, the Internet and Social Media in Kuala Lumpur from March 28 to 29, 2023. The meeting, which was attended by representatives from nine ASEAN countries, aimed to discuss effective approaches in involving young people in resilience-building initiatives, and to brainstorm the development of tailored communication campaigns to counter violent extremist messaging. Among the guests of honour who delivered remarks during the opening ceremony were Japanese Ambassador to Malaysia H.E. Katsuhiko Takahashi, SEARCCT Deputy Director-General Mr. Mohd Hasril Abdul Hamid, and Head of the UNODC Programme Office in Malaysia, Ms. Asma Sainkoudje.

SEARCCT will assume the role of Administrative Office of the SEAN-PVE network in 2024, taking over from BNPT Indonesia, which became the first Secretariat upon the network's inception in 2022. SEARCCT's role as the Secretariat will include organising meetings of the network's Advisory Board and coordinating other activities under the various thematic areas. The SEAN-PVE initiative and SEARCCT's leading role in its operations aim to bolster and enhance Malaysia's overall leadership in PCVE efforts.



PERSPECTIVES IN UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION AS THE PURSUIT OF SIGNIFICANCE LEADING TO EXTREMISM (PURPOSE)

PURPOSE was a collaborative initiative between SEARCCT, UNDP Malaysia, and the Malaysian Prisons Department aimed at conducting preliminary research on the role of the 'pursuit of significance' (PoS) as a catalyst for radicalisation among local detainees convicted of terrorism offenses. This research endeavor entailed conducting in-depth interviews with radical inmates to assess the extent to which PoS influenced their support and engagement in terrorism-related activities.



PARTNERING WITH ONLINE GAMING GROUPS TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE (POGGER 2.0)

In response to the dynamic internet gaming landscape and the potential for extremist influences, SEARCCT sought to better understand the issues and concerns, and possibly enhance the resilience of Malaysia's gaming community. The initial phase involved a roundtable discussion among key gaming industry experts, cybersecurity specialists, and regulatory officials.

Following this, a three-day workshop for the online gaming community was conducted, aiming to empower and raise awareness among them.



The programme harnessed the enthusiasm of these young gamers, encouraging actionable commitments to safeguard their gaming spaces and fortify Malaysia's gaming platforms against extremism. The programme was a collaborative effort between the Johor Darul Takzim Esports Association and SEARCCT, where experts from KBS, E-sports Integrated (ESI), as well as game developers and management agencies like Todak and Moonton Games, and notable E-sports personality Ikuto, were also invited to share their experiences and best practices. Overall, the workshop sought to educate youths on values and best practices to prevent violent extremist influences.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN BUILDING & ENHANCING RESILIENCE (TIBER 2.0)

After the promising response to the pilot TIBER programme in 2021, a second iteration of the workshop was conducted in Ipoh, Perak. TIBER 2.0 was a three-day programme that brought together 30 students from institutions of higher learning across the state. In some ways similar to the STORY workshop, it aimed to engage local youths in harnessing the power of generative AI to craft compelling counter narratives to counter online extremist ideologies. The objective of the workshop was to raise awareness, enhance digital resilience, and counter radicalization in the digital space by partnering with the youth participants to empower them to play a crucial role in sharing what they learned with their peers and community.



Panellists, Insp. Chear Soon Keong from PDRM Special Branch (Counter Terrorism) and Mr. Muzaffar Mustaffa from MCMC, provided insights on enforcement strategies, digital law, and security. SEARCCT speakers, Mr. Akil Yunus and Mr. Afiq Ismaizam, highlighted the essence of violent extremism and shared internal insights on enhancing digital resilience through AI. Mr. Zan Azlee from Fat Bidin Media, a PCVE expert, provided perspectives on the influential power of narratives.

SEARCCT Director-General Dato' Ganeson Sivagurunathan and Mr. Muhammad Puhaz Salleh of Majlis Belia Perak concluded the programme by giving away prizes and certificates to all the participants. They commended the participants for fostering positive online narratives, emphasising the vital role of empowered youth in PCVE efforts.



SHARING TOGETHER FOR ONLINE RESILIENCE AMONG YOUTH (STORY) REGIONAL YOUTH WORKSHOP

As a precursor to the SEARCCT International Conference (SIC 2023), the 'Sharing Together for Online Resilience among Youth (STORY)' Regional Youth Workshop was held from 10 to 12 June 2023, featuring a total of 28 youth participants from Malaysia and Southeast Asian countries, ranging in age from 18 to 25 years.

The composition of participants included 12 from ASEAN countries and 16 from local universities or youth organisations. The workshop focused on promoting awareness of digital resilience and PVE, training the participants to explore generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Image Creator, Dall-E, and more in creating content centred around the theme of digital resilience. The workshop featured substantive contributions and presentations from local subject matter experts such as Asrul Daniel Ahmed (SEARCCT), Thomas K Samuel (PCVE expert, Malaysia), Najwa Farahah Nazri (National Democratic Institute, Malaysia), Dr Aqsa Isa (Linguist, University Malaya), Dr Miza Rashid (Psychologist, IIUM), and Zan Azlee (Director, Fat Bidin Media) as well as international experts such as Malina Enlund (META), Rebecca Visser (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism), Cameron Sumpter



(ESIWA), Tiffany Jane Buena (Department of National Defence, Philippines), and Mohamed Hoodh Ibrahim (Youth Leader, Republic of Maldives).

STORY has the potential to become an ASEAN or regional project and is planned to be conducted on a yearly basis. In the long run, it is also envisaged that an informal network of youth messengers and content creators could be developed within the ASEAN region.



SPORTS AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

As part of the Division's efforts to tap into new areas, two programmes - SERASI and SEPADU - were initiated in 2023 to explore the role of sports in PVE and to promote sports as a powerful platform to encourage prosocial values in a diverse and multicultural environment.

THE SPORTS IN ENHANCING RESILIENCE AND AMPLIFYING SOCIAL INCLUSION (SERASI)

The Sports in Enhancing Resilience and Amplifying Social Inclusion (SERASI) was co-organised with UNDP Malaysia and European Union Delegation to Malaysia (EU), bringing together 48 young people from local tertiary



education institutions and youth organisations for a three-day programme in Puchong, Selangor, with sessions featuring national sports celebrities Johnathan Wong and Nora Lyana, local subject matter experts, an interfaith forum, breakout activities, and a futsal friendly match.

The distinguished dignitaries who graced the event included UNDP Resident Representative Niloy Banerjee and EU Ambassador to Malaysia H.E. Michalis Rokas, together with Ministry of Youth and Sports Secretary-General Dr. Nagulendran Kangayatkarasu and SEARCCT Director-General Dato' Ganeson Sivagurunathan. The guests of honour also delivered opening remarks that spotlighted the workshop's role in tackling evolving social challenges and promoting resilience among young people.

The SERASI workshop demonstrated the power of sports in building resilience, unity, and social inclusion among Malaysian youth. The collaboration between SEARCCT, UNDP Malaysia and EU, with the strategic partnership of local non-governmental actors such as Majlis Belia Malaysia, Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism as well as Azzumaar Operators, showcased the importance of cross-sector partnerships in nurturing resilient and inclusive future leaders.



THE SPORTS IN ENHANCING AND PROMOTING AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY FOR UNITY (SEPADU)

The Sports in Enhancing and Promoting Authentic Diversity for Unity (SEPADU) programme was a collaborative effort between SEARCCT, the US Embassy in KL and the US Sports Diplomacy Office. The five-day event was headlined by celebrity sports envoys from the US, comprising former WNBA player Chiny Nwagbo, as well as Scooter Christensen and Cheryl George from the world-famous Harlem Globetrotters.

The programme began with a launch ceremony in KL that was officiated by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, YB Datuk Muhammad Haji Alamin. This was followed by activities such as basketball clinics, youth dialogues, and community engagement sessions that were organised across two locations - the Klang Valley and Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

The objective of the SEPADU programme was to promote sports as a tool for unity and social cohesion. It was also aimed at enhancing the participation of youths, especially young women, in sports like basketball as a way to cultivate pro-social values and steer them away from negative influences, including violent extremism.



More than 350 participants benefited from the combination of educational and recreational activities under this sports diplomacy programme. The US sports envoys also had the chance to engage with local sporting icons like Datuk Nicol David and Farah Ann Abdul Hadi.





MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION

The Management Services Division (MSD) consist of three units, each responsible for overseeing SEARCCT's human capital, administrative and financial performances. These units play a crucial role in providing essential support to the other divisions in the organisation.

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ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCE UNIT

The Administrative and Finance Unit is a component within MSD responsible for overseeing and ensuring the coordination of administrative processes, financial transactions, and budgetary matters to facilitate the efficient performance of its organisation.

SEARCCT received an operating budget of RM7,717,000.00 in 2023. The organisation's total expenditure for the year amounted to RM6,604,864.34, representing 92.80% of its pool and, in return, a savings of RM512,135.66, equivalent to 7.20%. Substantial portions were allocated to salaries and emoluments, capacity-building and training programmes, counter-narrative workshops, publications, and research work, as well as mandatory contractual payments.

Year	Operating Budget Allocation (RM)	Actual Expenses (RM)	Expenses in percentage (%)
2021	4,561,500.00	3,977,157.84	87.19
2022	4,757,600.00	4,667,861.97	98.11
2023	7,717,000.00	6,604,864.34	92.80

Table 1: SEARCCT's Financial Performance Year Comparison

SEARCCT'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE BREAKDOWN

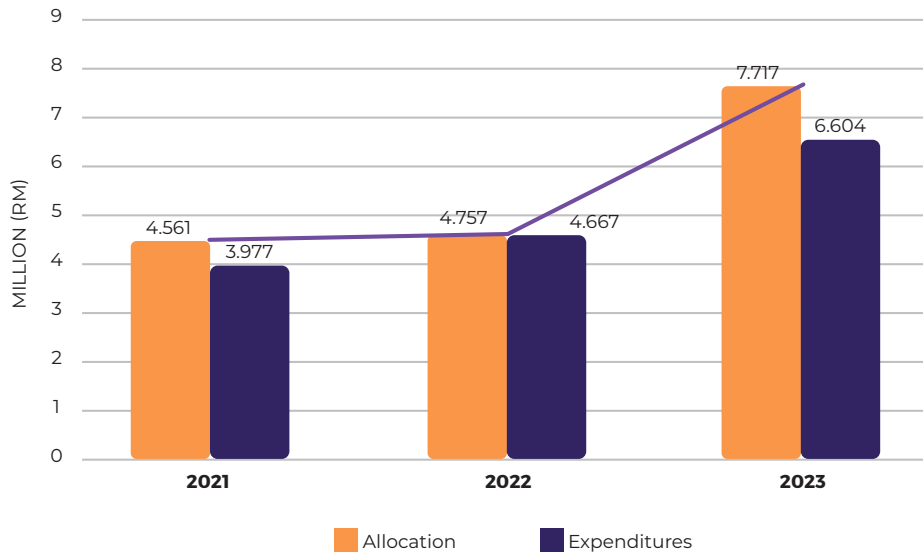


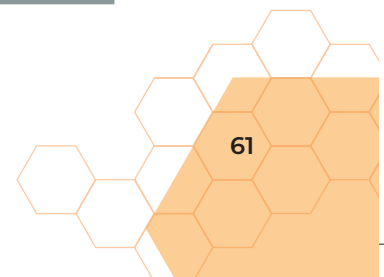
Figure 1: Performance Breakdown

HUMAN RESOURCE AND SECURITY UNIT

The Human Resource and Security Unit is another supplementary component of MSD. It is tasked with managing and addressing personnel-related and security-related matters and ensuring the organisation's workforce is effectively utilised and supported.

In general, SEARCCT maintains a total of 54 positions, supplemented by an additional four (4) administrative posts allocated by the Ministry to support the organisation's operations. By the end of 2023, the organisation had filled 50 positions, while seven (7) positions remained vacant. In addition, the Centre benefits from officers on secondment from the uniformed services, including two (2) from the Royal Malaysia Police and one (1) from the Malaysian Armed Forces. The breakdown of SEARCCT's staffing is outlined as follows:

Position/Grade	Posts	Staffing	Percentage Filled (%)
TOP MANAGEMENT			
Director General Grade B	1	1	100
Deputy Director General I Grade 54	1	0	0
Deputy Director General II Grade 54	1	1	100
PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGEMENT GROUP			
Grade 48	1	1	100
Grade 48 (T)	3	3	100
Grade 44 (T)	8	6	75
Grade 41	2	2	100
Grade 41/44 (T)	4	4	100
SUPPORT GROUP			
Grade 29/32	5	5	100
Grade 22	1	1	100
Grade 19	10	7	70
Grade 14	1	0	0
Grade 11	19	19	100
Total	57	50	87.72



EXCELLENCE SERVICE AWARD 2022

In 2023, En. Mohd Faizal Mohd Said from the SEARCCT's Security Unit received the Excellence Service Award 2022 from the Ministry. The certificate presentation ceremony took place at the Ministry's Excellent Service Award Ceremony on October 23, 2023.



HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

For the year 2023, the Division coordinated eight (8) training sessions and activities with the focus on optimising, enhancing, and refining the officers' and staff's development. These initiatives were undertaken to boost productivity and achieve better results. The following are SEARCCT's training and activities:

No	Training & Activities	Total Days	Total Participants
1	<i>Persidangan Pegawai Kumpulan Pengurusan & Profesional Bersama Kumpulan Pelaksana Tahun 2023, SEARCCT</i>	3	48
2	<i>Program Kesedaran Tentang Kepentingan Pengurusan Emosi & Kesihatan Mental Di Tempat Kerja</i>	1	25
3	<i>Taklimat Penerangan Program Takaful Khas Penjawat Awam Bersama Cuepacscare Dan CUEPACS PA SEARCCT</i>	1	20
4	<i>Kursus Pengurusan Aset Alih dan Pengurusan Stor</i>	3	20
5	<i>Kursus Kewangan Peribadi</i>	1	34
6	<i>SEARCCT International Conference (SIC) 2023</i>	3	46
7	<i>Kursus Pengurusan Fail Dan Rekod Serta Keselamatan Rahsia Rasmi</i>	3	31
8	<i>Kursus e-Perolehan</i>	2	17

PERSIDANGAN PEGAWAI KUMPULAN PENGURUSAN DAN PROFESIONAL BERSAMA KUMPULAN PELAKSANA TAHUN 2023, SEARCCT

The programme took place at Hatten Hotel, Melaka, from 13-15 January 2023. This strategic initiative was crafted to encourage reflection, collaboration, and long-term planning for the organisation. The retreat served as a dedicated platform for key stakeholders, staff members, and decision-makers to break away from their routine environments and participate in focused discussions, team-building activities, and strategic planning exercises.

The program aims to achieve several objectives:

>> REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Participants took the time to reflect on past achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement. They evaluate the organisation's performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and learn from past experiences.



>> TEAM BUILDING AND COLLABORATION



Through interactive workshops, team-building exercises, and group discussions, participants strengthen interpersonal relationships, foster teamwork, and enhance collaboration among different departments and teams within SEARCCT.

»» STRATEGIC PLANNING

The retreat provided an opportunity for in-depth strategic planning sessions. Participants analyse trends, set future goals, outline action plans, and define strategies to advance SEARCCT's mission and objectives.



»» INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY



The programme encouraged creativity and innovation by engaging participants in brainstorming sessions and activities aimed at generating new ideas, exploring unconventional approaches, and identifying innovative solutions to challenges faced.

»» REJUVENATION AND MOTIVATION

The retreat also focused on rejuvenating participants' spirits, boosting motivation, and fostering a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to SEARCCT's mission and values.

By bringing together diverse perspectives, fostering collaboration between officers and staff, and aligning efforts towards a common vision, the SEARCCT Retreat Programme was aimed to equip the organisation to thrive and achieve its objectives effectively for the upcoming year.



PROGRAM KESEDARAN TENTANG KEPENTINGAN PENGURUSAN EMOSI DAN KESIHATAN MENTAL DI TEMPAT KERJA

The program, which took place at SEARCCT on 2 February 2023, is a crucial initiative that aims to promote mental wellness and foster understanding among employees within the workplace. This initiative emphasises the significance of emotional well-being and mental health in a professional setting.

Throughout the programme, participants engaged in discussions and activities aimed at recognising the importance of effectively managing emotions and practicing good mental health habits. Topics covered included stress management techniques, the cultivation of a supportive workplace culture, the identification of signs related to mental health challenges, and access to available resources for support.

The primary objective of this awareness programme is to destigmatize discussions surrounding mental health, encourage open dialogue, and equip employees with practical tools and strategies to manage their emotions while prioritising mental well-being in the workplace. By fostering a supportive environment and empowering individuals with essential knowledge and skills, the programme aspires to create a healthier and more resilient workforce.

TAKLIMAT PENERANGAN PROGRAM TAKAFUL KHAS PENJAWAT AWAM BERSAMA CUEPACSCARE DAN CUEPACS PA SEARCCT

The briefing took place at SEARCCT on March 2, 2023, and aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the Special Takaful Programme for Civil Servants in collaboration with Cuepacscare and CUEPACS PA SEARCCT. The session designed to provide deep insights into the unique Takaful coverage for government employees.

During the briefing, participants received detailed information and explanations about the unique benefits, coverage options, and terms associated with this Takaful programme exclusively designed for civil servants. The session covered the scope of coverage, eligibility criteria, claims procedures, and the overall advantages of this specialised Takaful scheme.

The objective of this briefing by Cuepacscare and CUEPACS PA SEARCCT was to ensure that civil servants have a thorough understanding of the Takaful programme, enabling them to make well-informed decisions about their insurance coverage. The session aimed to address any queries, provide insights into the programme's intricacies, and underscore the importance of this specialised Takaful scheme for the well-being and security of government employees.

KURSUS PENGURUSAN ASET ALIH DAN PENGURUSAN STOR

The training was held in Kuantan, Pahang from 16-18 March 2023. The training is a comprehensive program designed to impart participants with essential knowledge and skills in effectively handling assets and optimising store operations. This course aims to equip individuals with practical strategies and techniques necessary for proficient asset management and efficient store administration.



Throughout this course, participants were able to explore diverse facets of asset management, including asset tracking, valuation methods, maintenance protocols, and strategies for managing the entire asset lifecycle. Additionally, the programme covers store management aspects such as inventory control, logistics, space utilisation, and operational optimisation.



By offering a blend of theoretical insights and practical applications, this course endeavours to enhance participants' proficiency in strategic asset management and streamlined store administration. Participants will gain the expertise required to ensure optimal asset utilisation, minimise operational costs, and elevate overall efficiency within their organisation's asset and store management frameworks.

KURSUS KEWANGAN PERIBADI

The training was held at the IDEAS Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, on 11 April 2023. The training is a comprehensive program designed to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their finances effectively. This course provides participants with practical insights into various aspects of personal finance, including budgeting, savings, investments, debt management, and financial planning.



Throughout the course, participants will gain a deeper understanding of creating and maintaining budgets tailored to their lifestyles, learning techniques to save and invest wisely, and exploring strategies to manage and eliminate debt efficiently. Additionally, they will delve into the fundamentals of financial planning, including setting goals, building emergency funds, understanding insurance, and planning for retirement.

By offering practical tools, real-life examples, and interactive sessions, this course aims to equip individuals with the confidence and expertise needed to make informed financial decisions. Whether it's understanding the basics of money management or planning for long-term financial security, this course empowers participants to take control of their finances and work towards achieving their financial goals.



KURSUS PENGURUSAN FAIL DAN REKOD SERTA KESELAMATAN RAHSIA RASMI

The training was held in Grand Lexis, Port Dickson from 28-30 August 2023. The training meticulously equips participants with comprehensive expertise in the efficient administration and maintenance of records. This course is tailored to impart essential knowledge regarding effective file management processes, systematic record organisation, and the critical measures required to ensure the security of official secrets.

Participants will delve into crucial aspects such as legal guidelines and relevant procedures, emphasising the significance of reliability in safeguarding sensitive information. The course is crafted to fortify participants' skills in file and record management while ensuring strict adherence to the confidentiality and security requirements associated with official secrets within their respective organisations.

Through engaging modules and practical insights, this course aims to empower attendees to navigate the complexities of record-keeping, implement robust security measures, and maintain compliance with stringent regulations governing official secrets. Ultimately, it enables participants to become proficient custodians of confidential information within their organisational framework.



KURSUS E-PEROLEHAN

The training session took place at SEARCCT from 17-18 October 2023, with the primary objective of equipping participants with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills for effectively utilising the e-Perolehan system. This course provides attendees with the necessary tools to proficiently navigate the system, comprehend its functionalities, and efficiently manage procurement processes.

Central to the training is the enhancement of participants' abilities to conduct seamless transactions, ensuring adherence to regulations, and optimising the system to streamline procurement activities. Ultimately, the course aims to empower individuals to leverage e-Perolehan as a potent tool for promoting efficient and transparent procurement practices within their respective organisations.

In essence, the Management and Support Division (MSD) serves as the anchor, ensuring the organisation remains afloat. Through effective resource management and support provided to other divisions, the Division ensures the seamless functioning of SEARCCT. By maintaining a balanced approach to budget allocation and expenditure, MSD significantly contributes to the overall efficiency and success of SEARCCT in fulfilling its mission and objectives.

Looking ahead, continued emphasis on strategic planning, efficient resource utilisation, and proactive management will further bolster the impact and effectiveness of MSD in supporting SEARCCT's endeavours.

ANNEXES

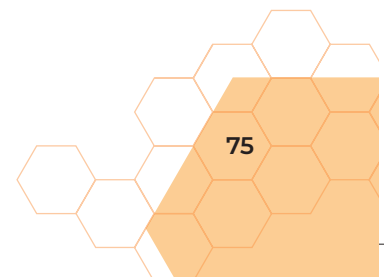
ANNEX A

SEARCCT PROGRAMMES IN 2023

No	PROGRAMMES	DATE START	DATE END	COLLABORATORS	VENUE	PARTICIPANTS	FLAGSHIPS
1	Focus Group Discussion #1 On Gaming and Extremism	09/02/23	09/02/23		SEARCCT	5 Locals (gov't)	PCVE
2	Cyber-Enabled Investigations to Counter WMD Terrorism	13/02/23	17/02/23	WMDT, USA	Intercontinental Hotel, KL	7 Locals (gov't), 8 Internationals (ASEANS)	Investigation and Legal Aspects
3	Sesi Konsultasi Bersama Pihak Berkepentingan Bagi Mewujudkan Mekanisme Early Warning Early Response di Malaysia	28/2/23	01/03/23	UNODC		20 Locals (gov't+ academicians +CSOs)	PCVE
4	Fundamental Clandestine Laboratory Identification Course and Instructor Training for Law Enforcement Officers	06/03/23	10/03/23	WMDT, USA	Ritz-Carlton, KL	16 Locals (gov't)	Investigation and Legal Aspects
5	Sports For Enhancing Resilience and Amplifying Social Inclusion (SERASI)	19/03/23	21/03/23	UNDP Malaysia & EU	Puchong, Selangor	48 Locals (Youth)	PCVE
6	Regional Meeting of Thematic Working Groups (TWGS) on Empowering Youth and on Strategic Communications Under the Framework of The Preparatory Working Group of PVE Practitioners of Southeast Asia (PWG-PVE)	28/03/23	29/03/23	UNODC		14 Locals (gov't + CSOs), 29 Internationals (ASEAN)	PCVE
7	University Lecture Series – Smart College	01/05/23	01/05/23	Smart College	Smart College	50 Locals	PCVE
8	Sports In Enhancing and Promoting Authentic Diversity for Unity (SEPADU)	08/05/23	12/05/23	US Embassy		350 Locals (gov't + CSOs)	PCVE

9	Countering The Financing of Terrorism Training Programme for Malaysia: Advanced CFT Course	09/05/23	11/05/23	UNODC	Kota Kinabalu, Sabah	24 Locals (gov't)	Terrorism Financing
10	University Lecture Series – University Malaya	19/05/23	19/05/23	University Malaya	University Malaya	30 Locals	PCVE
11	Sharing Together for Online Resilience Among Youth (STORY) Regional Workshop	10/06/23	12/06/23	International Centre for Counter-Terrorism/ ESIWA - One Speaker, META-One Speaker (Virtual)	Hilton Hotel, KL	16 Locals (Youth), 12 Internationals (ASEAN)	PCVE
12	SEARCCT's International Conference on Building Digital Resilience in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism	13/06/23	15/06/23			90 Locals (gov't+ academicians + CSOs), 68 Internationals (6 ASEAN)	PCVE
13	Integrating Technical and Legal Frameworks to Counter Biological Weapons Threats	10/07/23	13/07/23	WMDT, USA	Sheraton Imperial Hotel, KL	13 Locals (gov't)	Investigation and Legal Aspects
14	CBRNE Terrorism Awareness and Medical Emergency Consequence Management	25/07/23	27/07/23	Hospital Umum Sarawak, Hospital Selayang	UNIMAS City Campus, Kuching, Sarawak	100 Locals (gov't)	CBRNE and Crisis Management
15	Roundtable 'Leveraging Educators Against Violent Extremism' (LEAVE)	24/08/23	24/08/23	UNDP Malaysia, Ministry of Education		17 Locals (gov't+ academicians + stakeholders)	PCVE
16	Roundtable On 'Partnering with Online Gaming Groups to Enhance Resilience' (POGGER)	05/09/23	05/09/23	SEARCCT		20 Locals (game developers + gov't experts + E-sports managers)	PCVE
17	Forum Kenegaraan 'Penghayatan Malaysia Madani: Membendung Ucapan Kebencian Dalam Konteks Masyarakat Majmuk	07/09/23	07/09/23	UPM	UPM	110 Locals (gov't + academicians + CSOs+ students)	PCVE

18	SEARCCT-MTCP Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) - First Responder Training Programme	18/09/23	27/09/23	MTCP	Melia Hotel, Kuala Lumpur	12 Internationals (4 ASEAN)	CBRNE and Crisis Management
19	Workshop On 'Partnering with Online Gaming Groups Enhance Resilience' (POGGER)	24/09/23	27/09/23	Johor Darul Takzim E-Sports Association (JDTEA)		25 Locals (young gamers aged 18- 35 years)	PCVE
20	Aviation Security Workshop (AVSEC) - Basic	9/10/23	10/10/23		Pullman Hotel, Kuching, Sarawak	22 Locals (gov't)	Critical Infrastructure Protection
21	Terrorism 101	18/10/23	19/10/23	Grup Gerak Khas (GGK)	Sungai Udang Camp, Melaka	70 Locals (gov't)	Terrorism Financing
22	University Lecture Series - UiTM Sabah	27/10/23	27/10/23	UiTM Sabah	UiTM Sabah	100 Locals (academicians + students)	PCVE
23	Workshop On Technology and Innovation in Building and Enhancing Resilience (TIBER 2.0)	30/10/23	2/11/23	Majlis Belia Perak Dan Jabatan Belia Dan Sukan, Perak	Ipoh, Perak	29 Locals (Youth)	PCVE
24	University Lecture Series - Taylor's University	03/11/23	03/11/23	Taylor's University	Taylor's University	50 Locals (academicians + students)	PCVE
25	SEARCCT's Collaborators Meeting For 2024	21/11/23	22/11/23		Berjaya Times Square Hotel, KL	69 Locals (gov't + CSOs), 23 Internationals	PCVE



ANNEX B

SEARCCT PARTICIPANTS BY PROGRAMMES

YEAR	TOTAL OF PROGRAMMES	TOTAL OF PARTICIPANTS	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	
			LOCAL	FOREIGN
2003	1	63	20	43
2004	11	490	205	285
2005	12	383	223	160
2006	11	318	229	89
2007	11	357	183	174
2008	11	281	220	61
2009	14	420	351	69
2010	11	331	245	86
2011	14	388	265	123
2012	16	443	365	78
2013	17	432	359	73
2014	17	681	602	79
2015	24	924	681	243
2016	27	1,657	1,490	167
2017	21	1,056	938	118
2018	23	1,207	1,083	124
2019	23	847	724	123
2020	14	414	414	0
2021	14	283	270	13
2022	28	1,235	1,151	84
2023	25	1,447	1,295	152
Total	345	15,219	9,604	5,616

ANNEX C

SEARCC PROGRAMMES BY FLAGSHIPS

YEAR	INVESTIGATION AND LEGAL ASPECTS	CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION	CBRNE AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT	TERRORISM FINANCING	PCVE	TOTAL
2003	0	0	0	1	0	1
2004	1	1	3	1	5	11
2005	2	3	4	1	2	12
2006	1	2	6	2	0	11
2007	4	1	3	2	1	11
2008	4	2	3	0	2	11
2009	3	3	3	1	4	14
2010	0	2	4	3	2	11
2011	1	1	7	3	2	14
2012	2	3	5	0	6	16
2013	1	3	5	1	7	17
2014	0	4	6	1	6	17
2015	1	3	6	1	13	24
2016	0	3	5	0	19	27
2017	2	2	4	2	11	21
2018	0	1	5	1	16	23
2019	2	3	6	2	10	23
2020	1	2	2	1	8	14
2021	2	0	0	1	11	14
2022	1	1	1	1	24	28
2023	3	1	2	2	17	28
Total	31	41	80	27	166	345

