



The 2018 Southeast Asia Counter-Terrorism Symposium: A Collective Approach

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NEWS RELEASE

The threat of terrorism remains a key challenge in Southeast Asia. Notwithstanding its military defeat in 2017, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has continued to expand its reach to other parts of the world – including Southeast Asia – by establishing links with regional militant groups and through ideological influence. This strategic confluence of ISIS' propaganda, funds, and returning foreign fighters means that the magnitude and complexity of the terror threat in the region will continue to grow.

As ASEAN Chair this year, Singapore is hosting the 2018 Southeast Asia Counter-Terrorism (CT) Symposium from 4 to 5 October 2018 to foster regional cooperation in tackling this transnational threat. The Symposium is organised by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, with support from the Ministries of Culture, Community and Youth; Defence; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; and the National Security Coordination Secretariat.

Anchored on the theme “A Collective Approach”, the Symposium brings together senior government officials from the region, practitioners as well as representatives from academia and the private sector to exchange ideas and best practices on CT-related issues.

Indonesia Minister for Defence General (Retired) Ryamizard Ryacudu delivered the opening address, followed by keynote speeches from Malaysia Deputy Minister for Defence Liew Chin Tong, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Political-Security Community Hoang Anh Tuan and Philippines Undersecretary for National Defense Cardozo Luna.

Over the next two days, the Symposium will discuss four key topics: (a) building societal resilience against terrorism; (b) enhancing the region's ability to tackle the increasingly militarised terror networks; (c) tapping technological advancements for CT; and (d) exploring areas of cooperation to enhance ASEAN's collective CT capacity.

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As part of the Symposium, the participants will be visiting the Singapore Armed Forces' Island Defence Training Institute and the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) Resource and Counselling Centre. They will learn how Singapore's national security agencies cooperate in homeland security and how the RRG leaders and counsellors reach out to the community on Singapore's religious rehabilitation efforts. Senior Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman will also host the participants to an official dinner on 4 October 2018.

Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS Ambassador Ong Keng Yong said in his opening remarks at the Symposium that it was important to share best practices on de-radicalisation, with countries learning and adapting as the needs of their own local context dictated. This was why Track 1.5 mechanisms like the Symposium mattered.

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About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education and networking, it produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Terrorism Studies.

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