

Adopting the Recommended Good Practices to Address Violent Extremism in Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka has experienced various extremist activities since its independence due to the inability of creating a common identity as Sri Lankans. Competition over nation-building and problems in power-sharing arrangements among communities have fuelled these extremist activities and created a challenge for nation-building. Majoritarian decision-making, long-standing unresolved representation issues, political and linguistic differences, access to employment, access to state power, and state resource allocation are some of the major issues that influenced extremism from time to time. The Easter Sunday Attack on the 21st of April 2019 has revealed the need for a concerted, national-level intervention to address the emergence of violent extremism and the threat it poses to the security and pluralist character of the country. After the conclusion of the war, a number of policies and programs are introduced aiming to foster peace, tolerance, and reconciliation towards preventing violent extremism. However, these initiatives have yet to deliver their promises since most of the initiatives tried to focus on extremism rather than addressing the root causes of the issue. This research aimed to analyse the new trends in existing violent extremism activities at both political and cultural levels in Sri Lanka and provide recommended good practices for the government and policymakers to adopt and counter violent extremism activities without escalating to a security challenge to the country. The research used both primary and secondary methods to collect data such as a literature survey to identify and define violent extremism and focus group discussions and experts' comments to draft recommended good practices to address violent extremism in Sri Lanka. The research found that the current economic downturn, pandemic impacts, and social polarization adversely affected for emerging extremist elements in physically, on social media platforms, through hate speeches, economic arena, cultural practices and religious practices etc.

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