

# **An Overview of the Policy Actors and their Functions in Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Policy Implementation in Malaysia**

**Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman, Raja Muhammad Khairul Akhtar Raja M. Naguib, Rabi'ah Aminudin, Danial Mohd Yusof, Sharifah Norzehan Syed Yusof, Salwa Zolkafli**

## **ABSTRACT**

Terrorism has continuously become a global security issue as it has resulted in the loss of innocent lives and has heavy global financial impacts. International terrorism is an ongoing global risk that threatens Malaysia as it will lead to chaos and jeopardize national security. This paper explores the implementation of the Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) policy in Malaysia, focusing on the actors, their functions, and their challenges. This paper adopts a top-down approach analysis to identify the flow of policy implementation of CVE in Malaysia and the actors involved in each stage of the policy implementation. This study utilizes a qualitative method through elite interviews and document analysis. This study conducted seven interviews with policymakers from the Malaysian Royal Police Force, Ministry of Defense, and academic experts. Apart from that, official government documents such as the Defense Whitepaper and government agencies' websites were analyzed to identify the actors and their roles in implementing CVE. The findings show that CVE implementation often relies heavily on delegation from the top (legislative and executive body) to the bottom (government agencies and society involvement). This study also finds that the heavy top-down approach led to a lack of coordination and monitoring guidelines of the diverse actors in the implementation of CVE. Hence, the policymakers should establish a national coordination committee and national action plan specifically for CVE. This paper informs the policymakers on the emerging issues that need to be considered in the efforts to establish a comprehensive CVE national action plan, as mentioned in the 11th ASEAN-United Nations Summit.

**Keywords:** *Counter Violent Extremism (CVE), Policy Implementation, Policy actors, Terrorism, Violent Extremism, Radicalization, Think tanks, Delegated legislation, The regulatory bodies.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11<sup>th</sup>. 2001 governments' awareness of terrorist movements was elevated globally. This scenario has pushed governments worldwide to include terrorist attacks as threats to their national security, including Malaysia. Malaysia has taken the initiative to address these non-traditional security threats at the domestic level and enhance international cooperation with other actors to mitigate terrorist threats. This effort requires the involvement of actors from the highest position of government to policy implementers at the grassroots level to manage the threat of violent extremism. As such, it is crucial to identify the actors involved and their functions in the implementation of CVE policy in Malaysia.

The Policy is defined as a course of action or a program of operations chosen from several alternatives by certain actors in response to specific problems (Popoola, 2016). In carrying out the policy to address specific issues, policy actors must play an essential role in all policy cycle stages. It started from the formulation to policy evaluation stages as they supervise and coordinate other actors involved, consisting of entities from governments, politicians, businesses, and private agencies. At times, the diverse actors in policy stages resulted in confusion and conflicting interests that need to be managed to find the best alternative for the issue it seeks to resolve. Knoepfel, Corinne, Varone, and Hill (2011) find that actors in the policy process develop strategies and tactics or even adopt 'goal-oriented behaviour' to achieve their objectives.

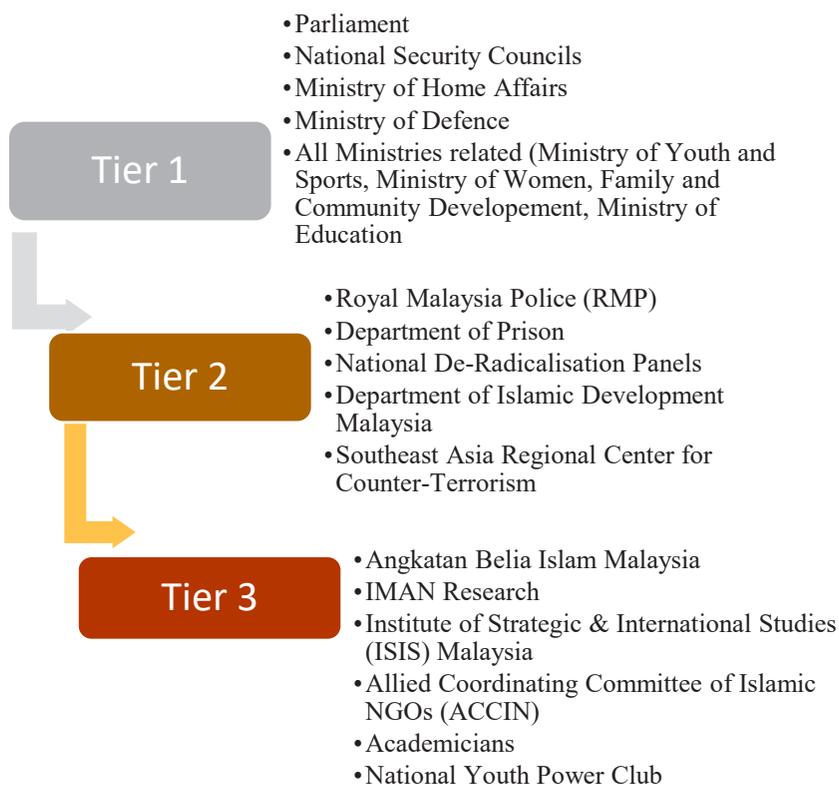
Public policies are created by linking several actors from various ministries and institutions involved including non-

governmental organizations (Marques, 2013). These policy actors serve as the bridge between the government, the private sector, and the public. The evaluation of the effectiveness of governments' policy implementations is assessed using the following criteria: 1) have a clear and consistent goal, 2) to limit the extent of change necessary, and 3) to place the responsibility for implementation with an agency sympathetic to the policy's goals (Signé, 2017).

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

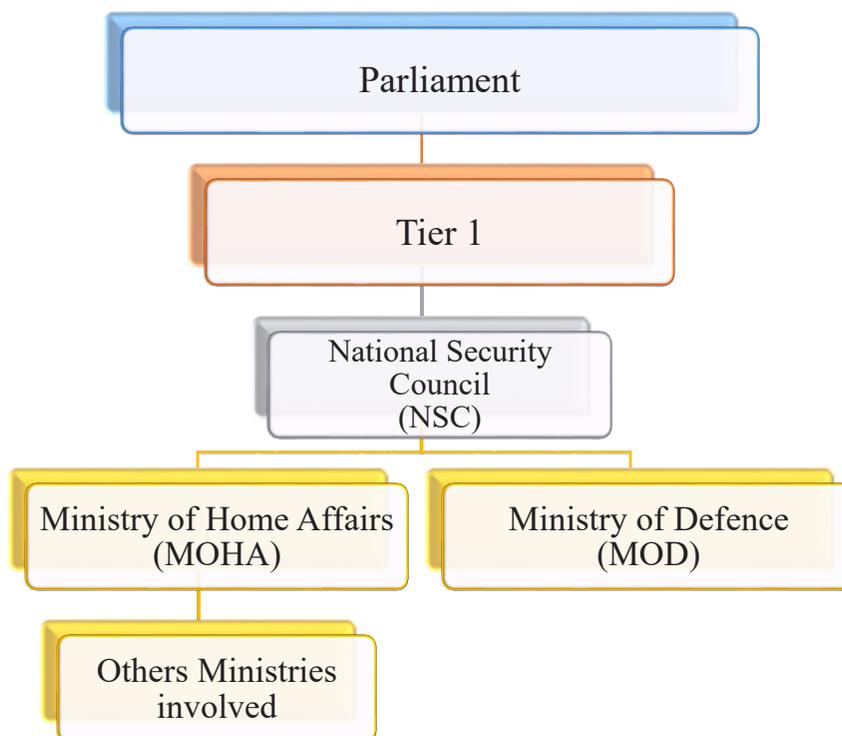
This study identifies three levels of actors involved in the implementation of the CVE as outlined in Figure 1. This study categorizes the group based on their level of hierarchy in the policy implementation. Tier 1 refers to the delegated legislation (executive and legislature branches), Tier 2 refers to the relevant regulatory bodies, and Tier 3 refers to civil societies (Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Think Tanks, and Academic Institutions). Actors from Tier 1, 2, and 3 represent the different levels of actors located in CVE policy implementation in Malaysia. This depicts the flow of power from the top executive position in the government who formulate the CVE policies to the lower levels of entities who execute these policies.

**Figure 1: Actors involved in the CVE implementation based on tiers**



Source: Author's analysis based on document analysis and interviews.

Figure 2: Tier 1 actors (the delegated legislation)



Source: Author's analysis based on document analysis and interviews

As shown in Figure 2, the actors involved in Tier 1 are the key players in the formulation stage of policies through parliamentary debates. The legislature branch especially both houses of the Parliament is the first platform for approval of CVE policy, especially as it concerns national security as stipulated

*“Parliament is the legislative authority for the Federation, and it enacts laws to be enforced nationwide. Parliament passes Federal laws, makes amendments to existing Federal laws, examines the government’s policies, approves the government’s expenditures, and approves new taxes” (The Official Portal of Parliament of Malaysia, 2019).*

The Ninth Schedule of the Federal Constitution stipulates the areas of jurisdiction of the legislative branch of the government (refer to Appendix 2). The Ninth Schedule lists issues related to the security and defence of this country are under the authority of the Parliament.

As Malaysia adopts a parliamentary system, there is an overlapping power between the executive and the legislature (Moten & Islam, 2015; Mohd Yaakop, Hasnul, & Suratman, 2016). Moten and Islam (2015) stated that the executive functions include the legislative role in the executive branch. The executive is responsible for performing delegated legislation duty by providing and creating bills before they are debated in the Parliament. This study categorizes Tier 1 policy actors as the group of actors involved during the implementation of CVE at the highest position in the decision-making process in the country after the Parliament that initiates, passes, and monitors the policies and laws at the federal level.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC)**

The first factor identified by this study as Tier 1 actor in CVE implementation is the National Security Council (NSC). Historically, the NSC initially was established as the National Movement Council (MAGERAN) in 1969 under Article 150 of the Federal Constitution to curb the 1969's racial riot. The function of MAGERAN was to assist the Prime Minister as the Director of the National Movement to strengthen public security, national defence, and safeguarding public order, supplies, and essential services to restore the country and gain peace and harmony. It was dissolved in 1971 and later replaced by the National Security Council (NSC), in the same year with a similar function which is to protect national security.

*“Since the future racial peace in this country depends on how well the government handles the sensitive issues, it is suggested that the NSC shall be the body to look into the matter”* (National Security Council, 2020).

Hence, the NSC is considered the highest body that oversees all matters related to security and defence in Malaysia. They mainly create and regulate policies related to national security and delegate the execution tasks to the related ministries, such as the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and Ministry of Defence (MOD).

*“National Security Council is our big brother. They just like an umbrella when we talk about related to national security and national defence.”* (Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2, October 31, 2019).

The jurisdiction of the National Security Council is stated in the National Security Council Act (NSCA), 2016. Section 3(2) states that the NSC shall be the Government’s central authority for matters concerning national security. Three of the main functions of this council are found under Section 4, National Security Council Act 2016. Firstly, it formulates policies and strategic measures on national security, including sovereignty, territorial integrity, defence, socio-political stability, economic stability, strategic resources, national unity, and other interests relating to national security. Secondly, it monitors the implementation of the policies and strategic measures on national security and advice about the declaration on security areas. Lastly, it performs any other functions relating to national security to ensure the proper implementation of this Act.

Section 5 of the National Security Council Act 2016 highlights that the council has the power to do all things necessary or expedient for, or in, connection with the performance of its function, including to control and coordinate government entities on operations concerning national security and to issue directives to

any government entity on matters concerning national security. Several essential government entities receive mandates from the council to ensure any matters related to security and defence can be implemented. The main policy actors involved in the NSC are the Prime Minister who is the head of government as the chairperson, the Deputy Prime Minister acts as a Deputy Chairperson, and other ministries in charge are Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, the Chief Secretary of the government, and the Inspector General of the Police (Section 6, National Security Council). This shows that National Security Council is led by the highest leadership of the government and the council receives the highest priority to take charge of any security and defence matters, and delegate the power to other ministries to ensure security and defence policy have clear and consistent goals while placing the responsibility for implementation to agencies that are relevant to achieve the national security policy's goals.

### **MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (MOHA)**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) is the Ministry that is responsible for home affairs such as law enforcement, ensuring the protection of public security and public order. The Ministry also monitors population registry, immigration, foreign workers, human trafficking, and regulating drug-related issues. Other fields that fall under its jurisdiction include regulation of printed materials, film control, and management of volunteers, rehabilitation, and implementation of criminal punishments. Therefore, the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for counterterrorism measures as it is categorised under public security and public order. The Ministry established two inter-related units and divisions in the Ministry, specializing in matters related to terrorism. The Ministry of Home Affairs has a specific division responsible for formulating bills related to counterterrorism measures, namely the Security Division. This division preserve, maintain, and enhances domestic and border security and enhances the effectiveness of the relevant law enforcement. The bill of law formulated by this division was named The Prevention of Terrorism Bill 2015 (passed by the Parliament

and became an Act (The Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2015).

The National Security Council Act 2016 under clauses 5(a) and (b) states about the council's members under section 6. The Ministry of Home Affairs is one of the important delegated legislation bodies in Tier 1 policy actors that are responsible to ensure matters related to national security will be implemented properly.

*“If you talk about this CVE, I am the one in charge together with my partner from Crime and Terrorism Unit.”* Interviewee 1, October 31, 2019

A unit that also focuses on terrorism matters is the Prevention of Terrorism Board Unit under the Deputy Secretary-General (Security) of the Ministry of Home Affairs. This secretariat is responsible as the coordinating secretariat to the Prevention of Terrorism Board. According to interviewee 2 (personal interview, October 31, 2019), the special meeting of the National Security Council on October 14, 2014, has decided for the draft paper to be prepared to explain to the people the threats of the Islamic State (I.S.) militant group involving Malaysians, with the paper, then tabled in the House of Representatives. The drafting of this preventive law is the government's proactive measure to other punitive laws. It is intended to prevent commission or support to terrorist acts involving listed terrorist organizations in a foreign country or any part of a foreign country. This Act is to ensure safety and guarantees the country's peace for the welfare of all Malaysians (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020).

*“I am from the crime and terrorism unit. If you want to know why we are in MoHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) has created a PCVE which is as a soft approach, even if it involves the U.N., military action cannot be used for this time around. In the past, we could shoot people and kill them, but too risky, it was better to finish it in the early stages, before becoming the terrorism issue. So, we can*

*prevent the ideology from spreading” Interviewee 2 (October 31st, 2019),*

The method of fighting terrorists today is not only via the hard approach of counter-terrorism which commonly involves physical aggression. Instead, Malaysia adopts a soft approach that is more comprehensive and renamed it as counter violent extremism that prevents the spread of terrorist ideology by tackling it from the grassroots level.

Malaysia is not the only country to undertake this effort. Rather, it is a regional effort that involves collaboration and cooperation from other neighbouring countries, following the footsteps of Indonesia and the Philippines. Through the work plan of the ASEAN plan of action to prevent and counter the rise of radicalisation and violent extremism (2019-2025), ASEAN members discussed in detail the rise of extremism and suitable prevention methods to be applied in the region (13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crimes, 2019).

*If you talk about this CVE, there are some overseas regional conferences, which I have attended before, but this is the ASEAN level because ASEAN is now in the process of developing a plan of action on CVE at the ASEAN level. This recommendation came from the United Nations itself to come up with a Plan of Action. So, the conferences I attended has led by Indonesia, I have presented the country paper during the conference, in terms of Malaysia’s effort, in formulating policies under CVE briefly (Interviewee 1, personal interview, October 31, 2019).*

Currently, the effort that has been made by MOHA is formulating the National Action Plan to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism since June 2019 which was expected to be tabled by the end of 2020 or early 2021 (Interviewee 1 and interviewee 2, personal interview, October 31, 2019).

## MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MOD)

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is another entity classified as Tier 1 actor by this study. The establishment of MOD is mainly to defend and protect Malaysia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, strategic interests, and integrity from any external security threats efficiently and effectively (Ministry of Defence, 2020). MOD is considered as the defence mechanism to protect Malaysia from external terrorist threats as domestic terror threats are mainly handled by MOHA through the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP). The military comes into the picture only in combat situations or hand-to-hand war with terrorist groups if it is needed, and also when the NSC is using Section 18 under National Security Council Act 2016, of the declaration of an emergency area, through which the military will be on the ground. Based on interviews conducted, policy implementers have the opinion that MOD through the army has less engagement in actions taken related to terrorism in the domestic region. This is because MOD will not have direct contact with civilians as the MoHA through the RMP, engage with domestic crimes that threaten civilians.

*In facing terrorism, MOHA is playing an important role together with its agency like RMP, it can be considered as we are frontline in fighting domestic crimes such as in terrorism issue. MOD? They will be called for the last resolution later. (Interviewee 1, personal interview, October 31, 2019).*

*"... Less engaged in actions taken related to terrorism in the domestic region as the MOD will not have direct contact with civilians" (interviewee 5, personal interview, December 5, 2019).*

MOD utilises hard-approach to counter-terrorism which focuses more on tactical and strategic planning and actions to curb terrorism using force. The Policy and Strategic Planning Division of the ministry are responsible for formulating and regulating

policies related to violent extremism matters which includes researching for that purpose. This shows that terrorism is under the radar of MOD. Moreover, MOD is responsible for foreign policies that have impacts on national defence and national security policies.

*“One of my desks is a non-traditional security unit. So, in my unit with another friend, we are basically in charge of non-traditional security threats; terrorism, maritime security, also cybersecurity is the latest one. Not to forget Chemical, Biological, and Explosive (CBRE) and Weapon of Mass destruction (WMD). So, in MOD itself, we are managing the policies, which involve us internally, we have engagement with agencies within the State, including NSC as its big brother, and also in the form of multilateral and bilateral in counterterrorism”* (Interviewee 5, personal interview, December 5, 2019).

According to Interviewee 5 (personal interview, December 5, 2019), counter violent extremism measures are implemented internally among civilians’ members of the ministry as well as the military through the KAGAT (Kor Agama Angkatan Tentera) or The Military Religious Corps, a Muslim chaplain service of the Malaysian Army, and the Perisai Wira Unit (PWU). The measures taken include conducting programmes such as talks and seminars related to violent extremism and training staff trainers to counter extremist narratives. The CVE implementation in MOD focuses on the prevention of extremism among members of the military arm especially.

MOD efforts to counter violent extremism are not limited to internal efforts among the ministry’s staff and the military. It also focuses on external measures to secure borders and territories from foreign extremist threats. The MOD works with neighbouring countries in the region such as Indonesia and Thailand to improve Malaysia’s defence. The effort can be seen through the Defence White Paper that was, in the Parliament in 2019. From the strategic perspective of MOD, they recognise terrorism and extremism as

national security threats as presented in the Defence White Paper.

*“Cross-border threats require cross-border solutions. Terrorist threat and extremism in Southeast Asia can be mitigated through the collection of information effective through close cooperation among ASEAN member countries. To improve the intelligence sharing mechanism for activities militants in the region, ASEAN has launched the ASEAN Our Eyes initiative, as a one strategic information-sharing platform aimed at enhancing international cooperation ASEAN members to fight terrorism”* (Defence White Paper, 2019)

These are the three main policy actors that play the role of the delegated legislation in executing CVE policy; the National Security Council (NSC), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). On the other hand, other ministries are also involved and put in efforts to counter violent extremism according to their respective job scopes. All their efforts are basically at the stage of preventive measures.

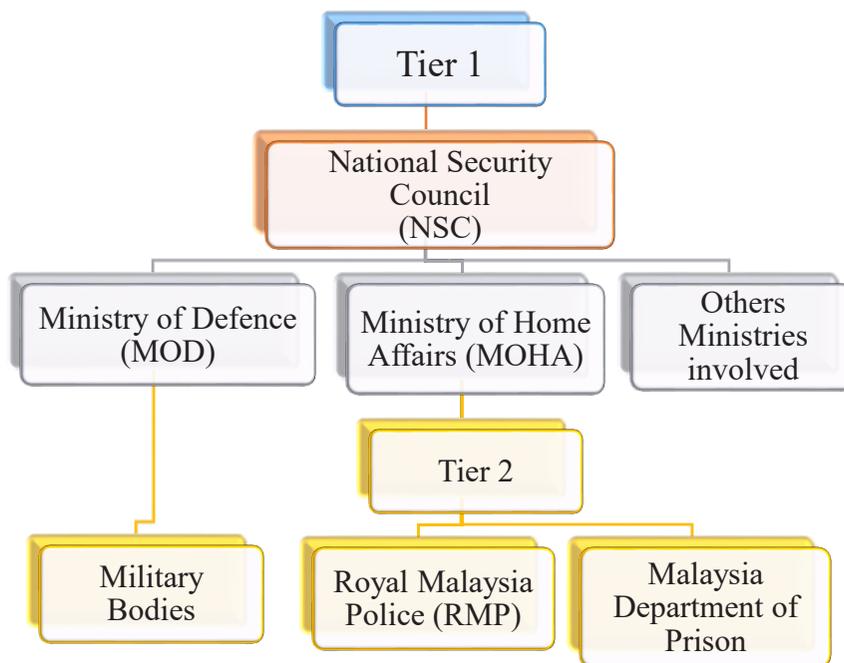
### **Other Ministries Involved**

Even though the responsibility of security and defence of Malaysia are mainly under the government agencies responsible for the security and defence-related portfolios, there are still several ministries involved in CVE policy implementation. Some government agencies take their initiatives due to their moral obligation to protect the country from extremist threats. Their involvement in CVE policy on their own has positive impacts. Among other ministries involved in the CVE are the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS), and Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD).

*After we presented a paper on Malaysia's initiative during the ministerial meeting on PCVE, in front of the United Nations Development Program, we were shocked because some of the ministries have their plan related to PCVE. It can be seen, such as The Ministry of Higher Education, focusing on tertiary education and students in universities. The Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development focuses on women's involvement direct and indirectly in countering violent extremism efforts. Ministry of Youth and Sport under the portfolio of Sahsiah Unit focuses more on youth and behaviour towards radical ideology, while the Department of National Unity and Integration under the Prime Minister Office, which focuses on the involvement of the neighbourhood committee in countering any radical behaviour amongst society. (Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2, personal interview, October 31, 2019),*

However, it is worth noting that some government agencies involved in the CVE implementation are based on volunteerism rather than formalized. It has been stated by interviewee 3 (personal interview, November 18, 2019) that a National Action Plan on counter violent extremism is important, which is illustrated with the involvement of actors are from different levels and categories. However, the real concern is about the sustainability of the task force and allocation of adequate resources to handle and implement the national action plan for counter violent extremism. After all, every effort and initiative during the policy implementation phase must consider the sustainability concerns of counter-violent extremism efforts, not just one-off efforts once a year.

**Figure 3: Tier 2 policy actors (the regulatory bodies)**



Source: Author's analysis based on document analysis and interviews

This study identifies the policy actors in the Second Tier. Tier 2 policy actors refer to relevant regulatory bodies that execute policies made by the Tier 1 policy actors. These are mainly agencies under each relevant ministry, such as the Ministry of Home Affairs. The primary function of these relevant regulatory bodies is to implement any policy and law related to CVE. Levi-Faur (2010) describes the function of regulatory bodies in policy implementation as

*“.....is the promulgation of prescriptive rules as well as the monitoring and enforcement of these rules by social, business, and political actors on other social, business, and political actors. These rules will be considered as regulations as long as they are not formulated directly by the legislature (primary law) or the courts (verdict, judgment, ruling, and adjudication). In other words, regulation is about bureaucratic and administrative rulemaking and not about legislative or judicial rulemaking” (p. 9).*

In this context, the Ministry of Home Affairs and its agencies will be majorly focused on as they are the main authority in implementing the CVE policy in society. The agencies under the Ministry of Home Affairs that are directly responsible for CVE policy implementation are the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) and the Prison Department of Malaysia (PDM).

## **THE ROYAL MALAYSIA POLICE (RMP)**

RMP is one of the agencies under The Ministry of Home Affairs which is responsible for the protection of public security and order. Mohammad Hassan (1999) defines the function of the RMP in detail.

*“The functions of the Police and other law enforcement agencies are to investigate any act or omission that is contrary to law. These can be summarized into three categories, namely: (1) the discovery that a crime has been committed, (2) the identification of the person/ persons suspected of committing the offence, and (3) the collection of sufficient evidence to prosecute the suspect before the court” (p. 251).*

The police force has established two specific units to deal with terrorism and extremism; the Department of Criminal Investigation and the Special Branch Unit. The Police Act 1967, Section 3 (3) of Police Act 1967 states that among the duties of the police force is to prevent, detect crime, arrest, and prosecute offenders. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is responsible for handling crime issues including human trafficking and terrorism. The CID is headed by a director, who is the Commissioner of Police, and assisted by four Deputy Directors, namely the Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation (Intelligence / Operations), Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation (Investigation / Legal), Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation (Organized Crime), and Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation (Forensics / Databank / DNA / Strategic Planning). Issues related to

organized crime is under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation (Organized Crime) which includes terrorism, human trafficking and drug smuggling (Royal Malaysia Police, 2016).

Apart from the Organized Crime Unit, The Special Branch is another unit under the RMP responsible for collecting and processing security intelligence to safeguard law and order and maintain Malaysia's security and peace. This unit also produces security intelligence by analysing the threat dimension, advising the country's leadership on security threats, and implementing practical enforcement actions in maintaining national security and peace (Mohamad Yasid, 2016). The RMP the highly secreti and does not have extensive coverage about their role to the public. Mohamad Yasid (2016) highlights that the public considers the Special Branch unit as political as they are tasked to keep the left, extremist, and reformist groups in check. However, the tasks of the Special Branch unit to maintain security and order also covers monitoring terrorist and extremist groups and individuals' activities. According to Mohamad Yasid (2016), the special branch unit houses several special units using 'E' as code and followed by numbers 1 to 8. The specific special unit that handles terrorism is the E8 Unit representing which area of specialization these people will cover, and according to a private document noted by Datuk Dr Leong Chee Woh (as cited in Mohamad Yasid, 2016), "This unit is assigned to prevent movement of the nature terrorism or terrorist groups other than communist organization" (p. 26). According to interviewee 7 (personal interview, January 3, 2020) "counter violent extremism (CVE) implementation happened during detention and after released or towards former detainee," while the RMP, especially the Special Branch unit, also exchange information with other countries (interviewee 4, personal interview, November 28, 2019). This process shows that the involvement of the RMP in Tier 2 is significant in implementing the CVE policy in Malaysia.

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF PRISON**

Apart from the RMP, the implementation of CVE involves the Department of Prison, which is also under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. There are three functions of the department; 1) Carries out restraining orders by the court or authority over inmates until they are released, 2) provide control over the inmates while they are serving a sentence or detention with humane treatment, and 3) implement rehabilitation programs for inmates through a variety of approaches (Malaysia Department of Prison, 2012).

In dealing with the terrorism issue, the department of prison has a special division formed specifically to supervise detainees involved in extremist activities. This division is called the Division of Inmates or Radicals and High-Risk Detainees. Wan Yaman elaborates further on the function of the division

*“Here, the detainees [detained] for radical crimes will be isolated from other prisoners and also among themselves. Then, they will have their thoughts and behaviour evaluated throughout the detention process”* (Wan Yaman, 2020).

In addition, this division will conduct self-enhancement programs for the prisoners, and the detainees are taught vocational skills for them to generate income after their release.

## **OTHER RELEVANT REGULATORY BODIES**

In the implementation of counter-violent extremism policy, the RMP and Department of Prison are often assisted by other bodies such as the National De-Radicalization Panel which was established by the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide input and expertise needed in handling issues related to terrorism and extremism in Malaysia. The panel members consist mainly of academia who are considered subject matter experts in terrorism and extremism at both national and international platforms.

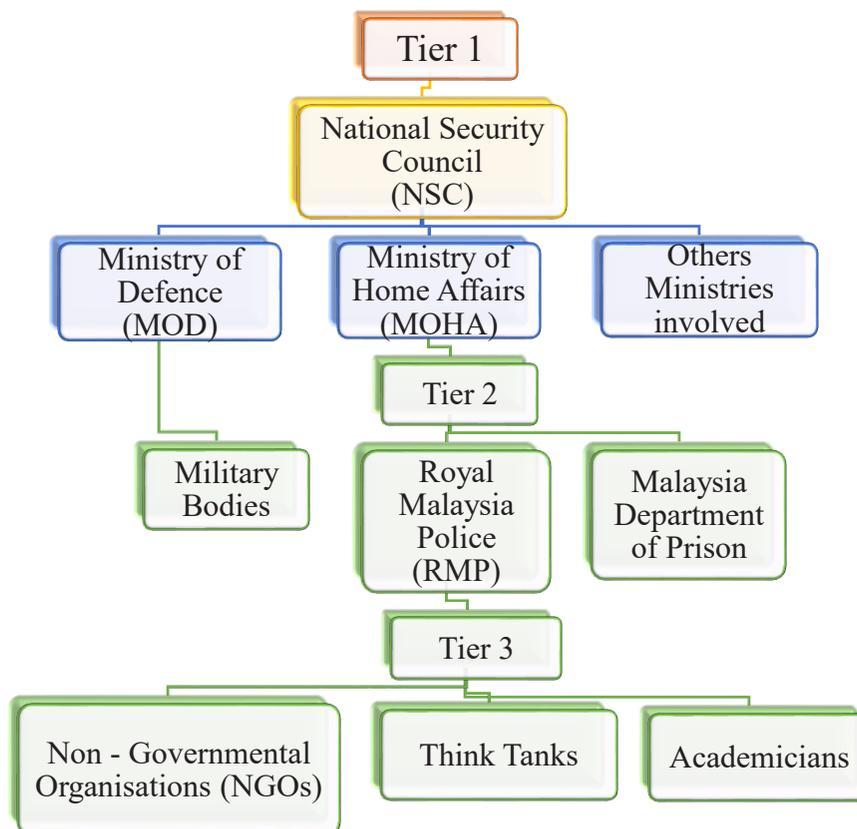
*We invite experts of the area to assist us in the recovery process and rehabilitation, formulate early plans to identify patterns of terrorists. So, for information from others and from our intelligence unit (interviewee 7, personal interview, January 3, 2020)*

Another government agency that is involved in monitoring the development of terrorist activities in organizations is the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT), a government think tank under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). It analyses and delivers information and intelligence related to the development of terrorism and extremism to MOFA. The Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) conducts training of trainers among government servants from various ministries and also produces several books on security including terrorism and extremism (Interviewee 6, December 12, 2019). The MOFA formed SEARCCT as a regional centre to advocate for Malaysia's CVE initiatives at the regional level (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020)

As extremism, at present, is mostly associated with the expression of religious extremism, the RMP also includes the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia in its CVE policy implementation. In many ways, religious extremism acts are often justified based on the strictly literal interpretations of religious tenets while rejecting responses to modern developments through reasoning and logical interpretations (Jaafar & Akhmetova, 2020). Although the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia is under the Prime Minister's Department, they are actively involved in the de-radicalization process of detainees as well as providing the right narratives of religious practices to the public in the effort to prevent radicalization and extremism (interviewee 1 and interviewee 2, personal interview, October 31, 2019).

### Tier 3: Civil Societies (Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Think Tanks and Academic Institutions)

Figure 4: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), Think Tanks and Academic Institutions (Civil Societies)



Source: Author's analysis based on document analysis and interviews

This study identifies the third tier of actors involved in the implementation of CVE. It defines actors in the third tier as organisations and agencies that are not considered government agencies, but are critical in providing support in terms of resources needed by actors at the two tiers discussed earlier. Therefore, this study categorizes three types of policy actors in this tier, namely; 1) NGOs, 2) think tanks and 3) academic institutions. The grassroots

level institutions are crucial to CVE efforts and initiatives. Civil society is neither associated with power nor profit; it is the third sector of society, complementing government and businesses (Cooper, 2018; European Union, 2020).

The government of Malaysia does not work in isolation since they involve the third sector of society inclusive of think tanks and academia. Moten and Islam (2015) forward that civil society has a positive impact on the quality of governance especially in improving government's effectiveness and efficiency. Three main benefits of the civil society establishment. Firstly, civil society can instil in its members' the goodness of collaboration vital for public affairs. Secondly, it plays a vital role in spreading public information activities, and lastly, civil society could help create relationships between the public and the government (Moten and Islam,2015).

As mentioned above, these are several types of civil society organizations, such as non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academicians that have contributed in the form of increasing the level of knowledge and awareness on extremism and terrorism through the creation of knowledge through research and publication as well as the development of a database on extremism and terrorism. Moreover, they are allowed to cooperate with government bodies to address the issue of extremism and terrorism through strategic partnership and collaboration with government agencies to reach out to the target group in the population.

**Table1: List of Civil Society actors involved in the implementation of CVE policy**

No.	Civil Society	Type of Civil Society	Functions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMAN Research</li> <li>• Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia</li> <li>• Institutes for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES)</li> </ul>	Think Tank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research &amp; Publications</li> <li>• Assist and collaborate with Government Agencies</li> <li>• Spread awareness and information</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM)</li> <li>• Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs (ACCIN)</li> <li>• National Youth Power Club (NYPC)</li> </ul>	Non-governmental Organization (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread awareness and information among society</li> <li>• Assist and guide society through the campaign and talk</li> <li>• Collaborate with government agencies as necessary</li> </ul>
3	Academicians	Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research &amp; Publications</li> <li>• Assist and collaborate with Government Agencies</li> <li>• Spread awareness and information</li> </ul> <p>Some of them are helping in the de-radicalization and rehabilitation process towards detainees of extremism during and after detention.</p>

Source: Author's analysis based on interviews and document analysis

As shown in Table 1, this study identifies the civil societies that are involved in the implementation of CVE in Malaysia. One of the think tank groups is IMAN Research which specifically focuses on “areas of prevention/counter violent extremism, ethnic-religious issues, social policy and community resilience and engagement such as participatory approach in urban policy and research and psycho-social intervention with communities in or from conflict zones” (Iman Research website, 2021). IMAN Research provides ground realities and engages with various actors including academics, journalists, activists, and policymakers. The data and information are shared with government agencies, private sectors, academia and researchers working in similar areas in security, economy, and socio-cultural issues (IMAN Research 2020). They have also published works as part of CVE initiatives such as “Believing in Extremism: What Drives Our Youths” and “Women and Radicalisation.”

Another think tank group in civil society that is actively researching and publishing related to violent extremism is the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, a non-profit research organization. ISIS Malaysia has a diverse research focus, including economics, foreign policy, security studies, nation-building, social policy, technology, innovation, and environmental studies. It also undertakes research collaboration with national and international organizations in important areas such as national development and international affairs (Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia 2018). It also published pieces of research related to violent extremism such as “A ‘New’ Terrorism Threat in ‘New Malaysia’” and “Tackling Radical Messages”.

Furthermore, there is also a think tank related to counter violent extremism that is established under the Ministry of Youth and Sports which is the Institute for Youths Research Malaysia (IYRES). The establishment of IYRES serves as a centre to develop Malaysian youths while establishing and maintaining relationships with youth-oriented organisations nationwide and worldwide.

IYRES organises educational and awareness programmes to enhance youth development whilst cooperating, coordinating, and participating in such programmes related to the research conducted by multinational organisations and performing beneficial acts, enabling efficient functions in line with the IYRES functions (IYRES 2020).

Since the tendency of recruitment among youths as members of terrorist groups is high through multiple platforms including social media and study circles in local schools, colleges and universities (Mohd Sani 2016), IYRES has stepped in and taken proactive measures by publishing “Guidelines: Prevention Of Extremism & Radical Ideology Among The Youth And Community” as a move to prevent the spread of radical and terrorist ideologies among youths (IYRES 2020).

The National Youth Power Club (NYPC) collaborated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports by encouraging the members from various backgrounds to join their activities, which usually involve engaging with society, such as community service, e.g., disaster aid, welfare, and charity aid throughout the nation. NYPC focuses on building youths’ potentials from all levels by utilizing leadership skills, volunteerism, entrepreneurship, and life skills. The cornerstone in the founding of NYPC is the encouragement and realization of high-impact activities in line with youths’ aspirations by engaging and promoting inclusive youth participation in developing a dynamic and innovative nation. (National Youth Power Club, 2020).

In the implementation of counter violent extremism policy in Malaysia, NYPC is involved by collaborating with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and academic experts to spread awareness on the perils of extremism and terrorism among Malaysian youths by conducting youth conventions across the country as part of CVE initiatives.

Religious-based groups are also involved, such as the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia or commonly known as ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia), a religious civil society focusing on Malay Muslim youths in Malaysia. Their responsibility is to spread awareness among Malay Muslim youth, with the enhancement of religious understanding as one of its agendas via talks and forums related to CVE throughout the nation. They conduct motivational programmes with underlying topics on counter-terrorism and extremism to boost individual resistance towards extremism and terrorism. However, ABIM also conduct programmes that focus clearly on CVE, such as “Round Table: Role of Faith-based Organization in Countering Violent Extremism” on 28 October 2016, at Shah Alam, Selangor, “Youth Against Extremism: Content Creator Workshop” at the headquarters of Google Malaysia that collaborated with ABIM, on 22 May 2017, and “International Seminar on Religious value in Counter Violent Extremism” at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Gombak, on 26 August 2019.

ABIM utilises two approaches in its CVE initiatives. First, they focus on instilling strong family values to strengthen the sense of belonging of youths in society. Second, ABIM provides a platform for youths to express their political voices through volunteering activities with the refugees’ community. They collaborate with various government agencies and non-governmental organizations. ABIM is a knowledge-oriented organisation that uphold an attitude of “openness and moderation” based on the realities of the public communities’ while being true to the Islamic principles of consolidating knowledge, faith, and charity – all in the framework of sustainable human development.

Another non-governmental organisation that is involved in the implementation of counter violent extremism is the Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs (ACCIN). ACCIN is the primary organization that gathers all Islamic non-governmental organizations in Malaysia. ACCIN is active in spreading awareness to society about the peace of Islam. Also, they are often being

invited to collaborate with other agencies in any event that will discuss Islamic knowledge. ACCIN promotes multi faiths dialogues and activities to cultivate acceptance and tolerance in multi-cultural society as part of their CVE initiative. For example, ACCIN was invited to share and give talks about religious peace “Leading Islamic issues and inter-religious relations and delivering preaching and understanding among the people” in the Youth Empowerment on Counter Violent Extremism programme (ACCIN 2020).

Another entity under Tier 3 policy actor is the Academic institutions. Academics provide in-depth knowledge on terrorism and extremism that they gained from their research activities. Academics such as Ahmad El-Muhammady, Mohd Mizan Aslam, and Danial Yusof are considered subject matter experts by government agencies in implementing CVE initiatives. RMP invites academics to assist extremists’ deradicalization programmes. Government agencies also collaborate with academic institutions by establishing Extremism Analytical Research Unit (EARU) in the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). EARU has developed a research project with the National Consortium for The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the University of Maryland, from 2018 until 2021. This collaboration is done with the knowledge of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA). In addition, academics are also appointed as consultants to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in conducting research related to conflict resolution, radicalism, and extremism in Southeast Asia.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this paper identified that based on Dunn’s top-down approach, the actors in the top level are Tier 1, then delegated their power to Tier 2 and then to Tier 3 at the lowest level. This hierarchy shows the concentration of power in Tier 1 policy actors and how they delegate some of their authority to the Tier 2 policy actors. Generally, Tier 3 actors do not have power and jurisdiction but they come into the picture by assisting Tier 2 actors to implement the

CVE initiatives more effectively and reach and society members. Tier 1 actors formulate and drive the CVE initiative by delegating the implementation part to the Tier 2 actors. As regulatory bodies, Tier 2 actors need to reach out to the grassroots level for society. As Tier 2 actors need additional resources to ensure they reach the targeted segments of the population, they engage with Tier 3 actors to conduct programmes and activities at the grassroots level

The study finds that there are diverse policy actors involved in every stage of the CVE policy cycle. However, this poses another challenge to effective policy implementation as it may lead to desynchronization of policy implementation due to a lack of synergy among the different actors in the different stages. In the absence of proper planning, frictions between actors involved are also highly likely to occur (Raja Ariffin and Zahari, 2012). In the absence of a strong leader that can synchronise and mobilise all actors involved. This shows how important a specific framework be developed to provide a clear demarcation of policy actors involved and responsibilities between themselves. Due to the lack of a unified framework, policy actors often work in a silo and are detached from actors in different tiers or similar tiers as they are. There is a lack of integration and coordination among the local agencies in CVE efforts. This lessens the effectiveness of CVE initiatives. For example, The MOD is in charge of the counter-terrorism (CT) at the borders and territories and they have tabled in the Parliament, the Defence White Paper which includes CVE and CT initiatives will be joined together in the phase of implementation (Defence White Paper, 2019). However, it is not comprehensive because it covers areas under the jurisdiction of the MOD. This study finds that CVE initiatives do not have a proper framework or a national action plan to consolidate all relevant actors. Another issue is the lack of monitoring in the post-detention phase, where Tier 3 actors' involvement in the process is not properly managed. On the other hand, this may be indicators of other challenges faced by the actors such as scarcity of resources. Hence, there is a need to improve the level of national coordination in implementing and monitoring the national CVE initiatives.

In addition to establishing a CVE national coordination committee or task force, there is also a need to develop a national action plan to counter violent extremism, as a guideline for all agencies involved in countering violent extremism which will clarify the role and task of each agency involved. As for now, there is willingness from various actors who volunteer to contribute to these efforts, but the most worrying thing that can happen would be the sustainability of CVE.

Hence, the implementation must be accompanied by monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure the initiative is successful. Hence, this study recommends need one national action plan related to preventing and countering violent extremism, and a national coordination committee to oversee the whole initiative in line with the Prime Minister's commitment to develop and prepare an action plan to prevent and counter violent extremism in the 11th ASEAN-United Nations (UN) Summit, 2020.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**THE LIST OF INTERVIEWEES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date of interviews</b>	<b>Name of positions</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>
1	31 October 2019	A represent from the Ministry of Home Affairs Representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs	Interviewee 1	Ministry of Home Affairs
2	18 November 2019	Expert-Academician	Interviewee 2 Interviewee 3	ISTAC-IIUM
3	28 November 2019	Expert-Academician	Interviewee 4	Dome Restaurant, KLCC
4	5 December 2019	Representative from the Ministry of Defence	Interviewee 5	Restoran Memori Santai, Setiawangsa
5	12 December 2019	Senior Analyst	Interviewee 6	SEARCCT
6	3 January 2020	Representative from the Royal Malaysia Police (E8)	Interviewee 7	Hornbill Restaurant & Café, Kuala Lumpur

## APPENDIX 2

# THE NINTH SCHEDULE OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

FOR REFERENCE ONLY (September 2012)

## FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

### NINTH SCHEDULE

[Articles 74, 77]

The Ninth Schedule to the Federal Constitution sets out the Federal and State Lists containing the subjects on which the Federal and State Governments can legislate. In addition, there is a Concurrent List of subjects on which both the Federal and State Governments can legislate. These lists are reproduced as follows:

#### *List I-Federal List*

1. External affairs, including –
  - (a) Treaties, agreements and conventions with other countries and all matters which bring the Federation into relations with any other country;
  - (b) Implementations of treaties, agreements and conventions with other countries;
  - (c) Diplomatic, consular and trade representation;
  - (d) International organizations; participation in international bodies and implementation of decisions taken thereat;
  - (e) Extradition; fugitive offenders; admission into, and emigration and expulsion from, the Federation;
  - (f) Passports; visas; permits of entry or other certificates; quarantine;
  - (g) Foreign and extra-territorial jurisdiction; and
  - (h) Pilgrimages to places outside Malaysia.
2. Defence of the Federation or any part thereof, including –
  - (a) Naval, military and air forces and other armed forces;

- (b) Any armed forces attached to or operating with any of the armed forces of the Federation; visiting forces;
  - (c) Defence works; military and protected areas; naval, military and air force bases; barracks, aerodromes and other works;
  - (d) Manoeuvres;
  - (e) War and peace; alien enemies and enemy aliens; enemy property; trading with an enemy; war damage; war risk insurance;
  - (f) Arms, fire-arms, ammunition and explosives;
  - (g) National service; and
  - (h) Civil defence.
3. Internal security, including –
- (a) Police; criminal investigation; registration of criminals; public order;
  - (b) Prisons; reformatories; remand homes; places of detention; probation of offenders; juvenile offenders;
  - (c) Preventive detention; restriction of residence;
  - (d) Intelligence services; and
  - (e) National registration.
4. Civil and criminal law and procedure and the administration of justice, including –
- (a) Constitution and organization of all courts other than Syariah Courts;
  - (b) Jurisdiction and powers of all such courts;
  - (c) Remuneration and other privileges of the judges and officers presiding over such courts;
  - (d) Persons entitled to practice before such courts;