

Singapore Releases Terrorist Detainees

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The Singapore authorities have released about 40 or two-thirds of the terrorist detainees arrested since 2001 following their rehabilitation.

The republic's Law Minister and Second Minister for Home Affairs K. Shanmugam said today that so far, those released had not strayed back into terrorism and had re-integrated well into society.

"But we are still closely monitoring (them)," he said when opening the inaugural Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation jointly organised by the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) and the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) at a hotel here.

The detainees here are mostly connected to the Jemaah Islamiah terrorist network operating in the Southeast Asia region.

The minister said terrorist detainees in Singapore were put through a holistic programme that incorporated psychological, social, and religious aspects of rehabilitation.

He said the rehabilitation programme continued even after their release from detention to ensure that "they remain inoculated against radical ideas".

Shanmugam said apart from putting in place deterrence measures and carrying out security and intelligence operations to curb terrorism, rehabilitation was also critical once terrorists were caught.

Acknowledging that putting into practice an effective rehabilitation strategy was not easy, he said the rehabilitation of terrorists had yet to receive the necessary attention internationally.

He said it would not be easy to wean the deeply indoctrinated terrorists away from their radical beliefs.

The minister later launched an online portal named P4Peace.com that will act as a repository and one-stop-shop for information and resources relating to terrorism as well as those that promote peace and harmony.

The aim of the portal is to circumvent the spread of terrorist ideas on the internet by developing a counter-movement through providing a platform for discourse on pro-social and peaceful alternatives to terrorism.