

International Centre for Political Violence
and Terrorism Research

A Decade of
Counter-Terrorism
Research and Education
(2002 - 2012)



**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University

Origins and Evolution

In the wake of Al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks and al Jemaah al Islamiyah's plot to attack Singapore in December 2001, the Government of Singapore reassessed the growing terrorism threat it was facing. To better understand the threat, Singapore saw the need to initiate a counter-terrorism research and training capability. In July 2002, a terrorism research programme was established within the Institute for Defence and Security Studies (IDSS), now S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University. Dr. Rohan Gunaratna of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at Scotland's University of St. Andrews was appointed to head the programme.



Mr. Wong Kan Seng (left), Singapore's former Minister for Home Affairs, who inaugurated ICPVTR on 20 February 2004

The programme subsequently developed into the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) on 20 February 2004 and became a specialist centre within RSIS. The Centre seeks to integrate academic theory with practical knowledge, which is essential for a complete and comprehensive understanding of threats from politically-motivated groups. The staff comprises functional and regional analysts from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Oceania, Africa, Europe, North America and the Middle East. The Centre also draws faculty from academia, international institutions, government agencies and religious organisations. While ICPVTR seeks to maintain its unique cultural and linguistic diversity, it has a strong Muslim representation (more than fifty percent) among its staff which enables it to put into context Islamic concepts misrepresented in radical propaganda espoused by terrorist ideologues.

The mission of ICPVTR is research, training and outreach. The Centre's programmes are:

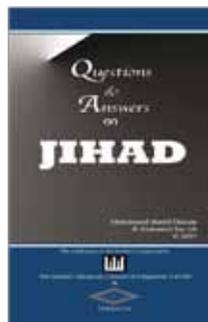


Key Achievements

As a research centre, ICPVTR pioneered a number of projects and programmes for a better understanding of the terrorism threat and the best way to respond to it. Three of ICPVTR's projects - Ideological Response (Countering Radical Ideology), Financial Response (Countering the Financing of Terrorism) and Education & Capacity Building - have now come to be recognised as models for strategic counter-terrorism policy for governments grappling with increasing threats of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.

Ideological Response

Since its inception, ICPVTR has invested in building non-kinetic capabilities to counter terrorism and extremism. The Ideological Response Project is based on the premise that terrorism is a by-product of extremism. It is neither poverty nor the lack of education, but ideological indoctrination that spawns and sustains extremism and terrorism. To reduce the threat of terrorism at a strategic level, the Centre seeks to formulate appropriate responses to challenge radical ideas.



Counter-Ideology

The Centre's counter-ideology desk works on mapping the ideology of extremist and terrorist groups in order to develop correct understanding of concepts such as *jihad*, *fatwa*, *shariah*, *ijtihad* etc. Mapping the ideology of these groups also aids in understanding issues involving the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the establishment of Islamic states. To this end, the counter-ideology team comprises religious scholars who provide interpretations of religious texts that are misused by radical extremists to further their propaganda. These interpretations are then disseminated among the wider community through appropriate channels.



Rehabilitation

ICPVTR supports community initiatives and promotes programmes that educate communities about extremism. For example, ICPVTR had organised a special counter-terrorism and counter-extremism programme for members of the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) so that they have an overview of the geopolitical and strategic issues affecting their work.



Members of the Religious Rehabilitation Group, Singapore who participated in a workshop conducted by ICPVTR, 20 August 2008

ICPVTR and the RRG organised the International Conference on Terrorist Rehabilitation (ICTR) in Singapore from 24 to 26 February 2009. The conference hosted 200 participants from 22 different countries. It was at this conference that the website P4Peace was launched. The web portal www.p4peace.com aims to counter terrorism and terrorist ideologies by promoting peace and tolerance. The website is monitored and updated by the Centre's staff.

The Centre organised its first Workshop on Terrorist Rehabilitation Implementation (WTRI) in Singapore from 25 to 30 November 2009. This workshop brought together researchers, active frontline rehabilitation practitioners and psychologists for a discussion on the findings and practices of terrorist rehabilitation initiatives around the world.

The success of Singapore's de-radicalisation programme has attracted global interest. The specialist staff at ICPVTR have shared their knowledge and literature on counter-ideology and de-radicalisation with numerous countries. The inception of Iraq's religious rehabilitation programme was partly based on knowledge gained from the Centre. ICPVTR conducted the first Strategic Workshop on Rehabilitation and De-radicalisation of Militants and Extremists in Peshawar, Pakistan from 18 to 19 May 2010. On behalf of the US Department of Justice, ICPVTR conducted a workshop in Prison Management and Rehabilitation in Indonesia from 12 to 13 June 2012. The Centre is also actively involved in capacity-building projects focused on terrorist rehabilitation in the region and beyond. It has sent staff to the Philippines, Indonesia, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya and Saudi Arabia to understand rehabilitation efforts as well as assist in rehabilitation training in these countries.

Community Engagement

ICPVTR supports the Community Engagement Programme (CEP) in Singapore which is spearheaded by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). CEP seeks to strengthen the understanding and ties between people of different races and religions, and to build society's skills and knowledge in coping with emergencies. Since terrorists and extremists emerge from the community in which they live, ICPVTR promoted the phrase "Communities Defeat Terrorism". As part of the Centre's community engagement and outreach efforts to educational institutions and grassroots organisations, staff from the Centre brief students and educators in various schools, and grassroots personnel on issues related to terrorism and counter-terrorism measures. Separately, the Centre continues to conduct numerous other briefings on specific topics to governments, ministries, academia and the private sector.



Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean inaugurated ICCE in Singapore, 21 September 2011. Dean Barry Desker presenting a memento to DPM Teo

ICPVTR organised its first Terrorist Rehabilitation and Community Engagement workshop from 1 to 2 July 2010 for officials and practitioners from Indonesia's National Counter-Terrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme or BNPT). The Centre also organised the International Conference on Community Engagement (ICCE) from 21 to 22 September 2011. The conference brought together leaders in the field of community engagement to develop the tools to engage communities to counter extremism and build community resilience. ICCE was attended by more than 20 internationally renowned speakers and practitioners from countries with community engagement programmes or programmes that aim to counter extremism through various channels of engagement with the community. Security specialists, psychologists, non-government organisations and scholars active in both research and community engagement also participated in the conference.

ICCE was an ideal platform to share community engagement methodologies and concepts developed by practitioners and research by scholars. It acknowledged the importance of developing meaningful programmes by fostering a sense of ownership among all stakeholders, both in the community and government.

Financial Response

ICPVTR works with a number of agencies worldwide in Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT). Together with the Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS), ICPVTR supervised the ABS Fellows project dedicated to developing indicators for the detection of terrorist financing and to identifying global best practices to counter money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The Centre has worked with the National Terrorist Financial Investigation Unit (NTFIU), New Scotland Yard Special Branch, and United Kingdom and Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) to run workshops and training programmes on AML and CFT.



CFT seminar on "Building Capacity and Understanding the Obstacles" organised by CCFT and ABS in Singapore, 5 March 2009

As part of its Financial Response project, ICPVTR started the Consortium for Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CCFT) in February 2008. The establishment of the consortium, which is supported by ABS, MHA and RSIS, was endorsed by the President of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). CCFT aims to establish trust-based partnerships between the public and private sectors which is the key to dealing with money laundering and terrorist financing.

Through CCFT, ICPVTR is involved in providing training, seminars and workshops to a number of stakeholders in various countries in South, Southeast and Central Asia. CCFT resource persons are actively engaged in policy-relevant research and continue to brief various stakeholders including government agencies and intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on matters relating to AML and CFT.

Education & Capacity Building

Graduate Courses

ICPVTR contributes to RSIS graduate and doctoral programmes by offering counter-terrorism modules. Students specialising in Counter-Terrorism and Homeland Security are supervised by the Centre's staff, while courses are taught by experts and visiting faculty like Professor Bruce Hoffman and Dr. Gerard Chaliand. Students specialising in counter-terrorism receive a Certificate in Counter-Terrorism Studies in addition to their Masters of Science degree from RSIS at the end of their MSc programme. Terrorism Analyst Study Awards are offered to selected students enrolled in MSc programmes at RSIS. These student analysts conduct research at the Centre while studying for their degree.



Malaysia's Special Task Force Director of Operations Dato Ayob Khan with Professor Gunaratna, Singapore, 17 January 2012

Terrorism Analysts Training Course

ICPVTR annually conducts a Terrorism Analysts Training Course (TATC) for security personnel from various countries in the Asia-Pacific. TATC covers a number of broad areas such as Introduction to Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism, Global and Regional Threat Analysis, Counter-Terrorism Response, and Research and Methodology. Topics include cyber-terrorism, terrorist financing, maritime terrorism, terrorism threat to the hospitality industry, threat to critical infrastructure and crime-terror nexus among others.

Counter-Terrorism Leadership Programme

ICPVTR offers a Counter-Terrorism Leadership Programme (CTLP) that allows counter-terrorism officials to work with and receive training and education from the Centre while they share their professional experience and domain knowledge with its staff. CTLP participants are drawn from the counter-terrorism services of local and foreign government ministries and agencies. During their three-month attachment, the participants attend all the classes offered during a given trimester on the Counter-Terrorism Certificate track in addition to working on assignments.

Home Team Academy Training Programmes

ICPVTR has conducted several training programmes for the Home Team Academy (HTA) and its specialty training centres. HTA provides centralised training to the seven departments of MHA responsible for the security of Singapore. ICPVTR has conducted courses for officers involved in counter-terrorism work from the police, immigration, customs, prisons, narcotics and intelligence services.

From 12 to 21 October 2011, ICPVTR conducted an inaugural run of the "Contemporary Security Studies Programme" in the HTA's Home Team APEX Course for Senior Officers. The programme aimed to equip participants with broad-based knowledge of security and geo-political issues within the region and beyond. It included an overseas component in Semarang and Jakarta in Indonesia. Overall, the presentations, lectures and field visits offered during the programme provided learning points and discussions which enabled the participants to draw out possible tactics, strategies and measures which could be applied in the local context.



Singapore's former Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. Wong Kan Seng, 20 February 2004

ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Executive Programme

In collaboration with MHA, ICPVTR organised an ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Executive Programme from 26 to 30 March 2012 for counter-terrorism leaders and practitioners from ASEAN countries. Lecture topics covered trends and analysis of situations in South and Southeast Asia, case studies of past terrorist attacks, various approaches in tackling terrorism and the prevention of extremism in affected societies. Staff from the Centre also gave presentations on their areas of expertise in the sessions. The programme was generously supported and sponsored by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund. Due to its success, the programme may be offered on an annual basis to benefit more counter-terrorism practitioners within ASEAN.



Counter-terrorism leaders and practitioners from ASEAN countries at the ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Executive Programme, 30 March 2012

Pre-Deployment Training & Dari Language Courses

The Centre provides pre-deployment training (PDT) and Dari language courses for Singapore Armed Forces troops before they are deployed in Afghanistan. The PDT courses are designed to build awareness of political and cultural sensitivities of Afghans among the participants. Additionally, the courses cover the history of Afghanistan, updates on the political situation and terrorism threat there, and cultural and religious practices in Afghan society. Participants also attend Dari language courses to enable them to interact with their counterparts and the locals during their stint in Afghanistan.

Supporting Like-Minded Centres

As part of ICPVTR's efforts in education and capacity building, it has given support and assistance to like-minded centres in other countries dealing with counter-terrorism and conflict issues. One such partner is the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) in Kabul, Afghanistan which was established in July 2006. It is headed by Mr. Hekmat Karzai, a former Risk Management Solutions (RMS) Fellow of the Centre and alumnus of RSIS. CAPS is an independent research centre that conducts action-oriented research, bringing together world-class specialists in international development and conflict management to manage current conflicts and prevent future conflicts in Afghanistan and its surrounding region. Over the years, ICPVTR staff members have conducted courses in both Kabul and Singapore for CAPS staff.

Counter-Terrorism Trends and Analysis

In September 2009, ICPVTR launched a new publication titled Counter-Terrorism Trends and Analysis (CTTA). This monthly publication provides ICPVTR researchers the opportunity to offer insights on trends and other issues emerging in their areas of research. CTTA also accepts contributions from researchers and analysts outside the Centre. As an example of CTTA's offerings, its inaugural issue focusing on threats to the hospitality industry was a culmination of an extended historical analysis on attacks against the industry since the late 1960s. To date, CTTA reaches over 12,000 subscribers and regularly attracts very positive feedback.



ICPVTR Knowledge Repository

One of ICPVTR's signature projects is its Global Pathfinder Database. The current database was built in-house in collaboration with the School of Computer Engineering in Nanyang Technological University. It is a one-stop repository of information on current and emerging threats related to political violence and terrorism. The integrated database contains comprehensive profiles on terrorist groups and key terrorist personalities, as well as detailed analysis of significant terrorist incidents. It also contains field reports and materials collected from various conflict zones such as training videos and original documents recovered from Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. The database has been described by Professor Bruce Hoffman, a renowned counter-terrorism specialist, as the "best counter-terrorism research database available." The database is available for subscription by local and overseas organisations.

The Centre continues to build on the Global Pathfinder by adding SSNetViz which enables users to visualise entities (terrorist groups, persons, incidents or news) in the database and links between them. This tool allows users to integrate information from external sources and see the difference in links among entities compared to the external data sources. The Centre has also initiated a database for extremist publications of security interest known as VIPER. This database aims to be the first of its kind to identify and analyse such publications.

In 2003, ICPVTR was commissioned by the Monitoring Group, the Committee established under Resolution 1267 (1999) of the Security Council of the United Nations, to build a database on Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Associated Individuals and Entities to support global efforts to reduce the terrorist threat. Michael Chandler, then Chairman of the Monitoring Group, remarked that ICPVTR had the most comprehensive database on threat groups.

Making ICPVTR Proud

Adam Dolnik

Professor Adam Dolnik formerly served as Manager for Training at ICPVTR and was the first Ph.D. graduate based in the Centre. Before joining the Centre, he was a researcher with the Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Project at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California. Professor Dolnik has lectured for various governmental and non-governmental organisations and agencies in more than 40 countries, and has also conducted field research on terrorist networks in conflict zones. He was the director of terrorism studies and professorial fellow at the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention at the University of Wollongong in Australia, and is currently a Professor of counter-terrorism at the Marshall Centre for European Security Studies.

Tito Karnavian

Major General Tito Karnavian is the Deputy Director of the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme or BNPT) in Indonesia. He was previously Director of Detachment 88 (Densus 88), Indonesia's elite counter-terrorism unit. He has investigated terrorist cases in Indonesia since 2000 including the bombings against the Philippines Ambassador in Jakarta and the Christmas Eve attacks in 2000, the Makassar bombings in 2002, the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, and the Jakarta Hotel bombings in 2003 and 2009. General Tito is currently a Ph.D. candidate at RSIS.

Hekmat Karzai

Mr. Hekmat Karzai served as a RMS Fellow at ICPVTR, where his primary focus was the South and Central Asian regions. While studying at RSIS, he conducted research in development, security and conflict issues, and learned from Professor Gunaratna how to set up a research and training centre. After leaving the Centre, Mr. Karzai founded and became Director of the Centre for Conflict And Peace Studies (CAPS), which has developed into one of the leading research centres in Afghanistan. He is a frequent commentator on Afghanistan and has served as Head of the Political Department at the Afghan embassy in the US. He also teaches various courses on conflict and security and serves as non-resident Senior Fellow at the East West Institute in Brussels.

Noor Huda Ismail

Mr. Noor Huda Ismail was a research analyst at ICPVTR in 2005 and also has a Masters degree in International Security from the University of St. Andrews. He established a private Indonesia-based think tank called the Institute of International Peace Building in 2008. It is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that deals with peace-building and conflict resolution issues. Mr. Ismail conducted extensive research on jihadist networks and religious extremism. He has published extensively and is widely quoted by prominent news networks and print media. Mr. Ismail also gives briefings at important conferences and seminars internationally. He pioneered a disengagement initiative by providing support for start-up businesses by former militants in Indonesia.

S Premjith

Ambassador S Premjith was on three months' sabbatical leave from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs when he joined ICPVTR as Professor Gunaratna's teaching assistant and to assist in establishing a counter-terrorism programme within IDSS. Amb Premjith had joined the Singapore Foreign Service in 1994 and was awarded the Chevening Scholarship by the British government to pursue a Master of Philosophy degree in Development Studies at Cambridge University in 2001. Upon his return to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he served in the Southeast Asia Directorate and subsequently in the South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa Directorate. Amb Premjith is currently Singapore's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Sujoyini Mandal

Miss Sujoyini Mandal spent two years as an Associate Research Fellow at ICPVTR, where she had the chance to present her research in a number of conferences and workshops around the world. The focus of her work was on South Asia, counter-terrorism financing, radicalisation on the Internet, and gender issues. Miss Mandal is working on her Masters degree in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School in the US. She is also a regular contributor to "The Citizen" which is the official student newspaper at the Harvard Kennedy School. Currently, Miss Mandal is a Consultant (Intern) at the Ministry of Gender and Development, Liberia.

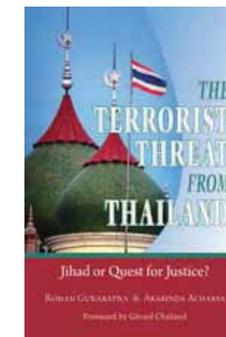
Muhammad Amir Rana

Mr. Muhammad Amir Rana is a founding member and Director of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). As a former ICPVTR visiting fellow, he forged a partnership programme between PIPS and ICPVTR for an exchange of scholars. He has worked extensively on issues related to counter-terrorism, counter-extremism, and internal and regional security and politics. Mr. Amir has given lectures at several universities and security institutes in Pakistan and abroad. He has written several books and has been published widely in national and international journals, professional publications and magazines. He has also been invited to share his expertise in appearances on news networks such as CNN, BBC World, Al Jazeera English and many others.

Maria Ressa

Miss Maria Ressa's upcoming book "From Bin Laden to Facebook" is part of her work as an Author-in-Residence and Senior Fellow at ICPVTR. Before joining the Centre, she was the Managing Director of ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs Division, the largest multi-platform news operation in the Philippines. She has been a journalist in Asia for more than 25 years, most of them as CNN's bureau chief in Manila and subsequently Jakarta. Miss Ressa became CNN's lead investigative reporter focusing on terrorism in Southeast Asia and published "Seeds of Terror: An Eyewitness Account of Al Qaeda's Newest Centre of Operations in Southeast Asia" in 2003. She has taught courses in politics and media for her alma mater, Princeton University, as well as in broadcasting at the University of the Philippines. Miss Ressa also held the Ferris Professorship of Journalism at Princeton University in 2001. She is currently CEO and Executive Editor of social news network Rappler.

Distinguished Staff Publications



The Terrorist Threat from Thailand: Jihad or Quest for Justice?

Rohan Gunaratna & Arabinda Acharya, Foreword by Gérard Chaliand

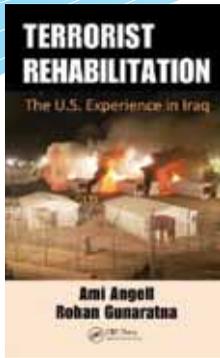
Potomac Books Inc. 2012



Decade Of Combating Radical Ideology, A: Learning From The Singapore Experience (2001-2011) (RSIS Mono. No. 20)

Muhammad Haniff Hassan & Tuty Raihanah Mostarom

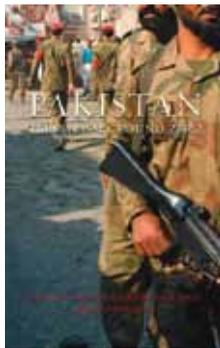
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies 2011



Terrorist Rehabilitation: The U.S. Experience in Iraq

Ami Angell & Rohan Gunaratna

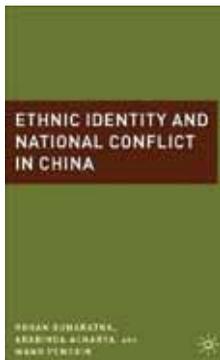
CRC Press 2011



Pakistan: Terrorism Ground Zero

Rohan Gunaratna & Khuram Iqbal

Reaktion Books 2011



Ethnic Identity and National Conflict in China

Arabinda Acharya, Rohan Gunaratna & Wang Pengxin

Palgrave Macmillan 2010



Targeting Terrorist Financing: International Cooperation and New Regimes

Arabinda Acharya

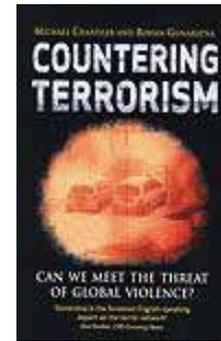
Routledge 2009



International Aviation and Terrorism: Evolving Threats, Evolving Security

John Harrison

Routledge 2009



Countering Terrorism: Can We Meet the Threat of Global Violence?

Michael Chandler & Rohan Gunaratna

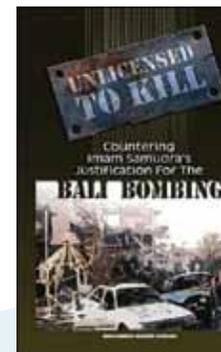
Reaktion Books 2007



Understanding Terrorist Innovation: Technologies, Tactics, and Global Trends

Adam Dolnik

Routledge 2007



Unlicensed to Kill: Countering Imam Samudra's Justification for the Bali Bombing

Muhammad Haniff Hassan

Peace Matters 2006

What They Say About ICPVTR

President S R Nathan (Singapore 6th President) – “Visited ICPTVR today and learnt of the excellent work the institute has undertaken in studying the problems of terrorism and the search for solutions.” (Comment made on 7 April 2008 during a visit to commemorate ICPTVR’s fourth anniversary.)

Graham Aston (Head, International Investigation Team, Bali Bombing 2002) – “ICPVTR’s counter-terrorism database has assisted us to gain better understanding of terrorism. The Bali attack in October 2002 was the first suicide attack by Southeast Asian terrorists. The timely provision of images of suicide attacks from outside the region by Professor Gunaratna enabled us to draw a comparison and more quickly conclude that the Bali attack was indeed a suicide attack.”

Colonel Thomas Hammes (US Army; Retired) – “The Counter-Terrorism Leadership Programme is on the cutting edge of warfare. The training is superb but the opportunity to network with the finest minds in the CT business places this course in a class of its own.”

Hemant H. Shah (President and CEO of Risk Management Solutions) – “It continues to be a privilege to be affiliated with your Centre. The quality of your work and analysis is truly world class, and I look forward to a continuation of our relation.”

Dr. Gil Ariely (Chief Knowledge Officer, Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya, Israel) – “One of the world’s extraordinary knowledge Centres; I am honoured to have visited.”

Prashant Sukumaran (Intern) – “My internship at ICPVTR has given me great knowledge in areas of terrorism, and Dr. Rohan and his staff ensured that I was able to get the maximum exposure possible during the short period of time I was there. It is truly a top notch centre for terrorism research.”

Tuty Raihanah Bte Mostarom (Associate Research Fellow) – “I was able to meet and interact with key experts and scholars in strategic studies and counter-terrorism, including field trips to the Philippines and Saudi Arabia to gain insights into rehabilitation...I feel that my time as a student at RSIS and a staff of ICPVTR has been highly beneficial to me and has prepared me well for the next step of my career as I embark on my Ph.D.”

Muh Taufiqurrohman (Senior Analyst) – “The Centre is well organised and everyone always knows what their job is and when it needs to be completed by. Something else that impressed me about ICPVTR was that it had given me a well tailored counter-terrorism analysis training.”

Rebecca C. Lunnon (Research Analyst) – “Working at ICPVTR is a great way to learn about other people, other cultures and other experiences. The Centre’s multi-cultural makeup allows students and analysts the opportunity to interact with and learn from individuals from countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines.”

Diane Russel Ong Junio (Associate Research Fellow) – “Working at the Centre honed my research skills and gave me the chance to interact with top researchers and analysts in the field of political violence and terrorism. The Centre gave me a broader understanding of global events and enabled me to see and analyse political truths and realities that were not very visible when one looks at them from a purely Filipino perspective.”

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