

HON ANDREW LITTLE, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Proposal To Participate In The Counter Terrorism Information Facility In Singapore

May 2023

This publication provides documents on Cabinet's 16 March 2021 agreement to attach one New Zealand Defence Force analyst to the Counter Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore for a period of fifteen months, from April 2021 to June 2022.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the Cabinet minute: Counter Terrorism Information Facility in Singapore: Proposal to Participate [ERS-21-MIN-0004]
- the Cabinet paper: Proposal To Participate In The Counter Terrorism Information Facility In Singapore

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at: www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document. Where information has been withheld in accordance with section 9(2) of the Act, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence by the Government of any other country [section 6(b)(i)]
- the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on the basis of confidence provided by other international organisations [section 6(b)(ii)].

Information is also withheld in order to:

- maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect collective and individual ministerial responsibility [section 9(2)(f)(ii)]
- confidentiality of advice tendered by ministers and officials [s9(2)(f)(iv)]
- free and frank advice provided by Defence [s9(2)(g)(i)]
- maintain legal professional privilege [section 9(2)(h)].



Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Counter Terrorism Information Facility in Singapore: Proposal to Participate

Portfolio Defence

On 16 March 2021, the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee:

- 1 **noted** that the threat from terrorism in South East Asia is persistent, continues to pose a risk to New Zealanders in the region, and remains a topic of concern in security discussions with regional partners;
- 2 **noted** that the Counter Terrorism Information Facility (the Facility) in Singapore is the first open source counter-terrorism information sharing and collaboration facility in South East Asia, providing an opportunity to enhance regional counter terrorism cooperation;
- 3 [REDACTED] s6(a)
- 4 **noted** that a contribution to the Facility would reinforce New Zealand's bilateral relationship with Singapore and provide the opportunity for further practical military-to-military and counter-terrorism engagement with other key regional partners, [REDACTED] s6(a)
- 5 [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(h)
- 6 **agreed** that New Zealand attach one New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Analyst to the Facility in Singapore for a period of fifteen months, from April 2021 to June 2022;
- 7 **noted** that the NZDF will meet this commitment by rotating Analysts through the Facility at intervals of approximately four months, with the flexibility to adjust the duration of these assignments where appropriate;
- 8 **directed** the NZDF, NZSIS and Police to:
 - 8.1 review the New Zealand commitment to the Facility [REDACTED] s9(2)(f)(iv)
 - 8.2 [REDACTED] s9(2)(f)(iv)

- 9 **noted** that the financial implications for the NZDF commitment from April 2021 to June 2022 (NZ\$180,000 excluding salaries) will be provided from within NZDF's existing baselines.

Janine Harvey
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Nanaia Mahuta (Chair)
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Damien O'Connor
Hon Kris Faafoi
Hon Peeni Henare
Hon Kiri Allan
Hon Dr David Clark

Hard-copy distribution:

Minister of Defence

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for ERS

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PROPOSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNTER TERRORISM INFORMATION FACILITY IN SINGAPORE

Proposal

1. To seek agreement to attach one New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Analyst to the Counter Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore for an initial period from April 2021 to June 2022.

Relation to Government priorities

2. The proposed contribution to the CTIF would contribute to keeping New Zealanders safe and lays the foundation for the future by supporting New Zealand's Counter Terrorism Strategy and the National Security and Intelligence Priorities (NSIPs). Additionally, it aligns with New Zealand's *Engagement Strategy for Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in South East Asia 2018-22* (SEA CT Strategy), which includes enhancing regional Counter Terrorism (CT) frameworks by supporting groupings and initiatives to encourage greater coordination and focus.

Executive Summary

3. This paper seeks Cabinet's agreement to attach one New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Analyst to the newly established Counter Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) in Singapore from approximately April 2021 until June 2022. [REDACTED] s6(a)

4. The Singapore Armed Forces established the CTIF [REDACTED] s6(b)(i) to respond to an enduring and increasingly multifaceted threat of terrorism in South East Asia. The CTIF is the first open source counter-terrorism information sharing and collaboration facility in South East Asia. It aims to enable regional militaries and law enforcement agencies to work together to achieve better early warning of terrorist threats to the region.

5. [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

6. [REDACTED] s6(a)

7. From a defence and bilateral relationship perspective, New Zealand's contribution would enhance New Zealand's relationship with Singapore, [redacted] s6(a)

[redacted] New Zealand's contribution would also further serve to reinforce our reputation as a contributor to countering violent extremism efforts in South East Asia.

8. Defence, in consultation with other agencies, would review the New Zealand commitment to the CTIF [redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv)

9. The NZDF has developed a framework to assess the human rights risk associated with a contribution to the CTIF. [redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

10. Costs associated with this attachment would be met within existing baseline for Vote Defence Force by reprioritising activities within the international commitments programme.

Problem definition: the South East Asia region presents a persistent threat of terrorism and violent extremism to New Zealand

11. Terrorism in South East Asia continues to evolve and poses an ongoing threat in the region, including to New Zealanders and New Zealand's interests. Notable events over the last decade include multiple terrorist attacks in the Philippines and Indonesia. **Annex A** lists terrorist events in South East Asia from 2017-2020.

12. Drivers of terrorist activity include the spread of global extremist ideology (especially through social media) [redacted] s6(a)
A number of groups operating in the region maintain connections well beyond South East Asia, including to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Regional responses to Counter Terrorism

13. South East Asian partners continue to work through [redacted] s6(a)
mechanisms to cooperate on CT. [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

14. [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(i)

15. [redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

CTIF provides an additional option to promote enhanced CT cooperation in the region

16. Singapore established a new sub-regional CT information sharing initiative for South East Asia, the CTIF, [REDACTED] s6(a)

[REDACTED] While the CTIF is primarily a military initiative, its mission is to enhance the region's operational-level CT monitoring capabilities by providing a facility for regional militaries, law enforcement and intelligence agencies to work together to achieve better early warning of terrorism threats to the region.

17. The CTIF is intended to complement other regional CT initiatives through its unique focus on open source information¹ relating to terrorist activities in the region, as well as threats from outside the region that target South East Asia. [REDACTED] s6(a)

18. [REDACTED] s6(a)

Who is invited to the CTIF?

19. The CTIF will involve a sub-regional grouping of [REDACTED] s6(b)(1), s6(c) partner nations [REDACTED] who have been invited to contribute personnel from Defence, Police and Intelligence agencies. [REDACTED] s6(a)

20. [REDACTED] s6(a)

21. [REDACTED] s6(a)

¹ Open source information is obtained from overt, publicly available sources. While open source information is unclassified, when aggregated and analysed, the resulting open source intelligence (OSINT) may require classification.

[REDACTED] s6(a)

The rationale for New Zealand involvement

The CTIF contributes to New Zealand's national and international security interests

22. For New Zealand, the South East Asia region presents a persistent threat of terrorism and violent extremism and is therefore of considerable interest for CT engagement. Terrorist attacks in South East Asia pose a risk to New Zealanders working in or travelling through the region. Disruption in the region would also affect New Zealand's commercial interests and supply chains. New Zealand seeks to reduce South East Asia being a target or source of terrorism by helping invigorate mechanisms that promote coherence and coordination of CT policy and practice across the region.

23. [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Participating in the CTIF would complement New Zealand's contribution to Operation Gallant Phoenix (OGP) should its mandate be renewed. OGP has a broad focus in terms of its membership and intelligence collection efforts. By contrast, the CTIF is primarily focussed on South East Asia. [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

24. [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] it is promising that the facility has now been established with contributions from a number of South East Asian member states. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Contributing to the CTIF would enhance our partnership with Singapore...

[REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Singapore's strategic location, our common interests as small advanced economies, and our shared reliance on international rules, make it an important partner for New Zealand.

26. New Zealand has a long-standing and well regarded defence and security relationship with Singapore and has played an active role in Singapore's national security since independence. Involvement with the CTIF would be positively received by Singapore, and would demonstrate New Zealand's commitment to the enhanced defence and security cooperation pillar agreed under the Singapore-New Zealand Enhanced Partnership.

And it would enhance our regional relationships

27. Participation in the CTIF also provides opportunities for New Zealand to strengthen our bilateral security relationships with the other regional security partners contributing to the CTIF. The CTIF brings together a unique grouping of countries, with whom New Zealand has very few opportunities to collaborate on CT, [REDACTED] s6(b)(i) and provides opportunities for further practical military-to-military and counter-terrorism engagement with other key regional partners, [REDACTED] s6(b)(i) [REDACTED] The mix of participating South East Asian states, [REDACTED] s6(b)(i) [REDACTED] is novel and consistent with the form of regional security cooperation that New Zealand encourages.

Proposed initial commitment

28. The proposed initial contribution is for one NZDF Analyst to the CTIF for a period of fifteen months, from April 2021 to June 2022. [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] NZDF would meet this commitment through a series of short-term assignments of around four months each, allowing the NZDF to manage its human resources effectively. NZDF would retain the flexibility to adjust the duration of these assignments, where appropriate.

29. [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] This legal support will be provided from New Zealand, with provision for up to two visits to the CTIF by NZDF legal staff.

30. [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s6(a) *review*

31. Defence would lead a review of this commitment [REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The review will be submitted to relevant Ministers (the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Police) for consideration [REDACTED] s9(2)(f)(ii) Any proposals for further contribution will be submitted to Cabinet.

[REDACTED] s6(a) [REDACTED]

Royal Commission of Inquiry Report into the terrorist attack Christchurch masjidain

33. In August 2020, Cabinet decided to defer consideration of the Proposal to participate in the CTIF in Singapore to ensure advice to Ministers could reflect the *Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCOI) into the Terrorist Attack on the Christchurch Mosques* and the Government's response [CAB-20-SUB-0361]. The RCOI report has now been released and a staged Government response is currently under development. Recommendations in that Report did not directly reference the CTIF. However, the Report noted that sharing information is well recognised as fundamental to countering terrorism and highlighted the value of New Zealand's involvement in Operation Gallant Phoenix, which, like the CTIF, operates as an intelligence fusion centre.

Implications should Cabinet not approve the proposal

34. [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

35. [REDACTED] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Financial implications

36. The estimated cost of the attachment for one NZDF Analyst to the CTIF in Singapore for periods of three to six months, on a continuous basis from April 2021 to June 2022 (a period of fifteen months), is NZ\$180,000 (excluding salaries).

37. This includes costs for travel, internal transport, daily allowances, and accommodation. This cost also includes legal support [REDACTED] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)
[REDACTED] The costs for the initial commitment from April 2021 to June 2022 will be charged against the Vote Defence Force appropriation *Defence International Engagement*, a sub-category of the *Protection of New Zealand and New Zealanders* multi-category appropriation. The costs can be met within existing baselines by reprioritising activities within the international commitments programme.

38. This tour of service does not amount to "qualifying operational service" under the Veterans' Support Act 2014, and therefore it has no impact on the Veterans' Support Entitlement Liability.

The impact of COVID-19

39. [REDACTED] s6(b)(i), s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

40. Officials continue to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on missions in which the NZDF personnel are deployed and will advise the Minister of Defence of any significant developments or changes to scheduling.

Legal considerations

41. **Bilateral Arrangement.** If approved, the NZDF would initially participate in the CTIF under the auspices of the Arrangement between the Government of New Zealand and the Government of the Republic of Singapore concerning Defence Cooperation, dated 27 May 2009. [Redacted] s9(2)(h)

[Redacted] Other NZDF personnel based in Singapore operate under this arrangement.

42. **Defence Act.** The NZDF would obtain information in two ways while participating in the CTIF: through open source intelligence [Redacted] s6(a), s6(b)(ii)

43. [Redacted] s9(2)(h)

Information pertaining to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents

44. NZDF will not conduct deliberate collection against New Zealand citizens or permanent residents. There is a possibility that while participating in the CTIF NZDF personnel may inadvertently collect or receive information on New Zealand citizens or permanent residents. Any information that is inadvertently collected or received on New Zealand citizens or permanent residents would be returned to New Zealand via the chain of command for review. NZDF officials at the Tier 3 level, with legal advice, would then determine whether to dispose of the information or refer it to the appropriate government agency. This process will be revised as part of the [Redacted] s9(2)(f)(iv) review.

Human Rights

45. New Zealand has a long standing record of upholding the international rules-based-order which includes complying with the international obligation to which it is a signatory. A key portion of these international obligations include those that relate to international humanitarian law and human rights law. [Redacted] s9(2)(h)

46. [Redacted] s6(a)

s6(a)

47. The NZDF has undertaken a Human Rights Risk Assessment (HRRRA) to assess the risks of contributing to the CTIF. The HRRRA was informed by a report from the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security⁴ that considered the legal standards for complicity in an internationally wrongful act, s9(2)(h)

48. s9(2)(g)(i)

Mitigations

49. s6(a)

s6(a)

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⁴ Cheryl Gwyn Inquiry into possible New Zealand intelligence and security agencies' engagement with the CIA detention and interrogation programme 2001-2009, (Inspector General of Intelligence and Security, 31 July 2019)

s6(a)

Consultation

50. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), MFAT, the New Zealand Police, the NZSIS and the New Zealand Treasury have been consulted.

51. MFAT and DPMC (The National Security Policy Directorate) support this recommendation. The NZSIS [redacted] s6(a) have no objections to NZDF's proposed deployment. [redacted] s9(2)(g)(i)

[redacted]
[redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i), s9(2)(f)(iv)
[redacted]

Communications

52. No proactive publicity is proposed. The CTIF is limited to invited partner nations only and has not at this time been formally announced by Singapore, although other nations have mentioned it publicly. Media points acknowledging New Zealand's contribution have been prepared if needed.

Proactive release

53. A redacted version of this Cabinet paper will be proactively released if and when there is a public announcement by Singapore on the CTIF.

RECOMMENDATIONS

54. The Minister of Defence recommends that the Committee:

1. **Note** that the threat from terrorism in South East Asia is persistent, continues to pose a risk to New Zealanders in the region, and remains a topic of concern in security discussions with regional partners;

2. **Note** that the Counter Terrorism Information Facility is the first open source counter-terrorism information sharing and collaboration facility in South East Asia, providing an opportunity to enhance regional counter terrorism cooperation;

3. [redacted] s6(a)
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

4. **Note** that a contribution to the Counter Terrorism Information Facility would reinforce New Zealand's bilateral relationship with Singapore and provide opportunity for further practical military-to-military and counter-terrorism engagement with other key regional partners, [redacted] s6(a)
[redacted]

5. [redacted] s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
[redacted]
[redacted]

6. **Agree** that New Zealand attach one New Zealand Defence Force Analyst to the Counter Terrorism Information Facility in Singapore for an initial commitment period of fifteen months, from April 2021 to June 2022;
7. **Note** that the New Zealand Defence Force will meet this initial commitment by rotating analysts through the facility at intervals of approximately four months, with the flexibility to adjust the duration of these assignments where appropriate;
8. **Note** that if approved, Defence would review the New Zealand commitment to the Counter Terrorism Information Facility [REDACTED] s9(2)(f)(ii) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
9. **Note** the financial implications for the initial New Zealand Defence Force commitment from April 2021 to June 2022 (NZ\$180,000 excluding salaries) will be provided from within the New Zealand Defence Force's existing baselines.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Peeni Henare
Minister for Defence

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Annex A

Table of notable extremist events and planned activities in South East Asia 2017-2020

A range of notable extremist events 2017-2020		
Year	Location	Extremist Event/ planned activity
2017	Philippines	Occupation of the city of Marawi for five months
May 2018	Indonesia	Series of attacks targeting three churches and a local police headquarters
July 2018	Philippines	Vehicle borne improvised explosive device attack on military checkpoint
January 2019	Philippines	Suicide bombing on a church by two Indonesians who had attempted to travel to Syria
March 2019	Philippines	Two attacks to mark group's 50 th anniversary
May 2019	Malaysia	Malaysian police successfully foiled a series of attacks against VIPs and places of worship
June 2019	Philippines	Suicide bombing by local militants – the first of its kind according to Philippine security officials
August 2019	Thailand	Series of blasts across Bangkok, during ASEAN event
October 2019	Indonesia	Bladed-weapon attack on Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security
April 2020	Philippines	Ambush attack on security forces kill 12 soldiers and wound 13 others
June 2020	Philippines	Security forces kill four suspected militants in a pre-dawn raid in Metro Manila
August 2020	Philippines	Two successive suicide bombings by suspected females, killing 14 and wounding 75, including security force personnel and civilians
November 2020	Indonesia	Attack on a remote village including arson and decapitation, killing four
December 2020	Singapore	16 year old Singaporean teen detained in Singapore after making detailed plans and preparations to attack Muslims. Teen allegedly inspired by the 2019 terror attacks on the Christchurch Mosques.

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s6(b)(ii)

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Annex C

Agency views

<p><i>MFAT</i></p>	<p>MFAT support the recommendations.</p>
<p><i>DPMC</i></p>	<p>DPMC (The National Security Policy Directorate) support the recommendations.</p> <p>s6(a)</p>
<p><i>NZSIS</i></p>	<p>NZSIS does not have any objections to NZDF's proposed commitment to CTIF.</p> <p>NZSIS s6(a) acknowledges that the CTIF's focus on open source information sharing and collaboration may provide useful information and support regional CT information sharing. NZSIS will not contribute personnel to CTIF s6(a)</p> <p>s6(a)</p>
<p><i>NZ Police</i></p>	<p>s9(2)(f)(iv), s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a)</p>

⁷ As New Zealand's central coordinator for CT, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will lead this dialogue for New Zealand, with the inaugural meeting to take place when the global COVID-19 situation permits.