



Threat Lens

“Combating the National Security Issues Emanating from Illegal Narcotics Trade in Sri Lanka”

13th August 2021 from 100hrs – 1130 hrs

Organized by Institute of National Security Studies



Institute of National Security Studies, the premier think tank on National Security established under the Ministry of Defence organized a Threat Lens titled “Combating the national security issues emanating from illegal narcotics trade in Sri Lanka” which was held on 13th August 2021 from 1000 hrs – 1130 hrs (IST) via zoom. The guest speaker for the event was Dr. Priyangi Amarabandu, Chairperson of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board. Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Director General of INSS, moderated the event. The participants were welcomed by Mr. Asel Ariyaperuma, Intern (Research), at INSS. Thereafter the Director-General welcomed and introduced the Guest Speaker and opened the floor to a comprehensive dialogue on illegal narcotics trade in the country. The audience was comprised of representatives from international organizations, Ministries, tri forces, intelligence services, and academics.

Guest speaker of the event Dr. Priyangi Amarabandu, Chairperson of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board outlined the speech with national security narcotics and illicit drugs, the extent of narco-terrorism in Sri Lanka, the impact of the illegal narcotics trade, trafficking and abuse, drug trafficking threat to security and the stability of the country and recommendations. She emphasized the laws that are introduced by the parliament and ministries in countering these dangerous drugs in Sri Lanka. She further stated it operates as narco-terrorism, drug-related organized crimes, drug trafficking flights, civil wars, human trafficking, maritime security issues, being an island drug problem, jeopardize the health and welfare of people throughout the country. It as a developing country, it affects us in a very grievous way, a threat to the economic and social development of the country. She further stated that drug trafficking undermines

human development and disrupts the political, cultural, social, and economic structure. Therefore it reduces the working force of our country, a threat to the stability and the security of entire regions not only to our country. Moreover, when it comes to security and stability of the country, illegal narcotic trade cause several issues like narco-terrorism, drug-related organized crimes, drug use disorders, physical and mental health share on the healthcare system, psychological distress harm from domestic violence, loss of productivity and employment and employment generations and many more issues. She pointed out that drug-related money laundering impacts on macroeconomic of the country as well as income distribution, inflation, impact on domestic savings and investments, which then will result in the impact country's savings and investments. The issue is directly related to corruption social consequences related to family and community prison and criminal justice system. Since the 1980s, Sri Lanka has become a major transit hub for drug trafficking originated from the Golden Crescent which comprises Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. Sri Lanka, unfortunately, being in ideal geographical proximity, for both good and bad, is used as a transit hub by traffickers for their narcotic trade and organized crimes. Imagine trends reveal that Sri Lanka is no longer just a transit route or hub. It is also becoming a final destination.

Mr. Troels Vester, Head of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime made some comprehensive remarks during the discussion. He stated that transnational organized crimes study is required for Sri Lanka to be carried out by the government institutions as they possess all the data. He also stated that UNODC could show how their institutions have successfully carried out in other countries. He stated that it can function as a secretariat in support. He also stated the authorities' effort in recognizing the health issues from these drugs that affect national security. He also pointed the importance of working with the Ministry of Education and recommended all law enforcement agencies not stop any investigations until authorities find the assets. He also iterated that there is no drug production in Sri Lanka at present, therefore the country should focus on chemicals coming in to avoid future production.

Thereafter Ms. Thyagie Jaywardena, Intern (Research) at INSS delivered the vote of thanks, and the meeting concluded with a very informative and insightful discussion session and the hope of meeting again for another gathering.