

## Global Situation

Against the backdrop of polarisation and growing geopolitical tensions and instability, the global terrorism landscape remains dynamic and complex. Religious extremism continues posing threat worldwide, with international terrorist groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) exploiting social media platforms for recruitment and propaganda purposes. They continue calling for violence targeting festivals and large-scale events.



Novel forms of extremist ideologies, including “Misogyny”, “Involuntary Celibacy (Incel)” and “Nihilism”, are also emerging. The growing number of individuals radicalised by mixed ideologies is a cause for concern. In September 2025, a 14-year-old boy in Singapore became the country’s first case of self-radicalisation based on a mix of various extremist ideologies as he simultaneously embraced religious, far-right, far-left and Incel ideas.

Ongoing geopolitical conflicts, particularly Israel’s military operations in Gaza, attract intense international attention and fuel outcry, creating opportunities for extremists to incite violence. Anti-Semitic hate crimes have persisted, the most poignant examples being the Manchester synagogue vehicle-ramming and stabbing attack in October 2025, and the Sydney Bondi Beach shooting during Hanukkah celebrations in December 2025. Vigilance should be maintained against individuals fascinated by such mass violence.



Following the regime change in Syria, some “East Turkestan Islamic Movement” (ETIM) extremists have been integrated into the Syrian army. ETIM has also taken advantage of regional instability to expand its influence as it drives its resurgence through actively recruiting members and forging links with other terrorist groups. Besides ETIM, other international terrorist groups such as ISIL, Al-Qaeda and their affiliates have also shown an increasing intent to target Chinese interests.

## Local Situation

Locally, the overall counter-terrorism (CT) situation remains under control. However, a small number of local radicals operate covertly. Through disseminating fake news and false messages on social media platforms, they seek to instigate division and hatred. The Internet serves as an enabling platform for amplifying negative sentiments and driving self-radicalisation.



Furthermore, in light of the ongoing geopolitical tensions, Hong Kong must guard against potential spillover effects triggered by contentious events such as the conflicts between Palestine and Israel, as well as between Russia and Ukraine, and prevent intercommunal strife and targeted violence from breaking out.

## Three-tier Prevention Framework

Under the Three-tier Prevention Framework (Framework), the Chief Executive (CE) CT Steering Group at the first tier steers and formulates CT policies and directions; the Secretary for Security (S for S) CT Co-ordinating Group at the second tier co-ordinates different policy bureaux and departments’ co-operation on CT matters; and inter-departmental working groups at the third tier follow up on specific studies and carry out CT work. All the tiers already convened their respective meetings in 2025.



Under the Framework, Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU) performs a key role in assisting the CE and the S for S in co-ordinating CT works of disciplined services as well as other government departments, including intelligence gathering, inter-departmental drills and CT publicity education, etc., in order to enhance the prevention and response capabilities of Hong Kong. In August 2025, ICTU conducted the first large-scale CT exercise under the Framework, codenamed “BRAVELIGHT”, at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. It aimed at strengthening the city’s prevention and emergency response capabilities, while enhancing the public’s CT awareness.

In sum, the overall terrorist threat level of Hong Kong remains “MODERATE”, meaning that there is the possibility of an attack, but there is no specific intelligence suggesting that Hong Kong is likely to be a target.