

## Criminal Justice Platform Europe

### Criminal Justice Summer Course Barcelona, 3rd to 6th July 2018

#### WORKSHOP REPORT

<b>Workshop Title:</b>	<b>Characteristics of Violent Extremist Offenders</b>
<b>Moderator:</b>	John Scott, United Kingdom
<b>Leader 1:</b>	David Hansen, Norway
<b>Leader 2:</b>	Liesbeth van der Heide, Holland
<b>Leader 3:</b>	Maarten van Leyenhorst, Holland
<b>Topic Speaker:</b>	Pedro das Neves, Portugal
<b>Participants:</b>	22 people from 10 different countries
<b>Notes:</b>	John Scott

**Impression:** The workshop was participative from the very beginning with the introductory exercise revealing a very wide range of backgrounds, interests and skills. Concentration levels during the presentations were consistently high. The atmosphere was one of learning and a willingness to share issues, doubts and problems as well as solutions. Surprisingly, there were also many opportunities for laughter. The exercises in small groups led to lively discussions of definitions and of the many differences between countries. The presentations were well received and worked for participants new to the subject and for those with high levels of experience in the field because the material was relevant and provided illustrations from many different jurisdictions and cultures.

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#### Introduction

The workshop leaders' different roles enabled them to bring a wide range of research and experience to the workshop. David Hansen currently works as Associate Professor at the University College of Norwegian correctional Service (KRUS) and conducts research relating to Muslims in Norwegian Prisons. He teaches and supervises about radicalization in prisons and works to prevent offenders being radicalized. Maarten van Leyenhorst works as a trainer on violent extremism and risk assessment for the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Safety. He is involved with two EU funded projects and is actively involved in the further development of VERA-2R, the risk assessment instrument for violent extremism. He has been an advisor for the Dutch probation service. Liesbeth van der Heide is from the University of Leiden and is a Research Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague, where she is co-ordinator of ICCT's work on rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders. Her responsibilities include the development and implementation of a modular training course for prison officials and policymakers. As a former Chief Probation Officer, John Scott had been Head Of Public Protection in the UK's Home Office and was able to contribute different perspectives. Radicalisation and the

impact of violent extremism were examined across the full range of motivations from political, religious and other motivations.

### **Workshop Methods**

- Semi-structured, flexible and interactive curriculum
- Trainer presentations, questions
- Case study exercises, discussion starters and observations to facilitate learning
- Small group and large group exercises and discussions
- Examination of the range and scope of risk assessment instruments in prisons and probation, indicators and drawbacks
- Participants to play a key role in sharing their national issues, experiences, knowledge and ideas.

### **Summary of Presentations**

**Session 1** - David Hansen focussed upon: Sharing the expertise and roles in the group. An introduction to radicalisation in prisons – the importance of definitions of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. Potential for prisons to represent conducive environments for radicalisation. Implications of return of 'foreign terrorist fighters'. Factors for radicalisation in prisons. Religiosity, conversion or radicalisation?

**Session 2** - Liesbeth Van der Heide covered: Returnees and the phenomenon of contemporary radicalisation – the evolution of the threat of terrorism in recent years. The motivation of terrorists. The scale of the current problems in different countries. The five stages of intervention and rehabilitation work in prisons and probation settings.

**Session 3** - Liesbeth Van der Heide led on: Understanding ideology and extremism – posing questions about whether all terrorists are ideologically driven in an historical context. Factors in terrorist incidents – psychological disorder, drugs, alcohol and personality traits. Needs, narrative and network related to different types of terrorist and implications for intervening in prisons and rehabilitation after release.

**Session 4** - Maarten Van Leyenhorst's session was: How to deal with and communicate with VEOS – what inhibits communication, polarisation and beliefs. Experience was exchanged about interviewing terrorists, the role of Imams/religious leaders and the challenges of communicating with returning foreign fighters.

**Session 5** - Maarten Van Leyenhorst presented on: Range and Scope of Risk Assessments in prison and probation: indicators, risks and instruments. Implementation of VERA-2R in the Netherlands. The need to assess the risk of radicalisation in the prison context. Relevant risk factors.

**Session 6a** - Pedro das Neves led a session on: the R2PRIS project, its tools and progression.

**Session 6b** - David Hansen concluded the presentations by: A look at best practice, manuals, and programmes. Specific subtopics included:

- Management of radical inmates
- FTFs in prison
- De-radicalization and dis-engagement principles

## Summary of Group Outcomes

The case, system comparisons and scenario exercises were very important to the process of understanding definitions and attitudes. The confidentiality and sensitivity of the materials and presentations mean that the details of the presentations and outcomes of the exercises cannot be shared publicly.

## Key Learning Points

The workshop's key learning points were:

1. To avoid confusing religiosity with radicalisation.
2. In the prison context radicalisation is often about power and operates in the same way as gangs.
3. Staff need to work with religion rather than against it – a danger is that staff are frightened by radicalisation and become frozen.
4. Clear understanding of definitions are the starting point for assessment and being balanced in weighing up the factors.
5. Risk assessment is vital at each stage of decision making and needs to be structured, sound and sensible. Avoid binary thinking. 'Most people who are radical do not commit violence – most people who commit terrorist acts are not radical'. Able to assess low and high categories.
6. It is important to understand the evolving nature of the threat of extremist violence and to differentiate the radical and the criminal. The threat is currently diffuse – foreign fighters and returnees – home grown terrorist groups – lone action and sympathisers – polarisation process (far right and migration/refugees).
7. The different reasons for becoming terrorists are to be seen in dimensions:
  - Ideological <> Apolitical
  - Leader/recruiter high status <> Follower
  - Socially well adapted <> Marginalised – weak social development, delinquent
  - High on sensation seeking <> Low
8. The propaganda of extremists is effective across the dimensions above – 'Sometimes people with the worst past create the best future'. The Zero to Hero phenomenon.
9. The 5 stages of intervention (not reproduced for confidentiality reasons).
10. The scale of the problem – the FBI estimate that 100,000 terrorists are held in prisons around the world.
11. Prison can be the 'Incubator of Change' or 'University of Terrorism' or 'Deep Freeze'.
12. Right wing extremism poses severe problems for prison authorities e.g. Anders Breivik in Norway.
13. Goals of rehabilitation vary in different jurisdictions – to eliminate the ideological legitimacy of violence; to de-radicalise and to disengage (belief and behaviour); to prevent recidivism; to prevent involvement in further attacks and engagement with other terrorists; to comply with conditions of parole or probation supervision; to promote good citizenship. It is important to remember that some offenders are convicted of 'fringe' terrorist offences

(receiving relatively short sentences) and avoidance of escalation is a legitimate supervisory goal.

14. Only a coherent programme will succeed and 80% of internations will be the same as for other offender types – NB the parallels with gangs and gang violence.
15. The 'three N approach' – Needs Narrative Network - is helpful to understand the search/quest for psychological significance.
16. The RRAP Tool set introduced by Pedro das Neves – provides a helicopter view for managers; a frontline Behavioural Observation guide for practitioners; Individual Radicalisation Screening tool and a Critical Incidents Resources Assessment for institutions.

### **Key Practice Issues for the Future**

1. Combatting the fear that many staff feel about working with extremist violence offenders and their lack of confidence in working with Muslim inmates. Tip toeing around offenders because of the fear of litigation.
2. The need to have understanding of different forms of the Muslim religion and a balanced approach to recruiting spiritual leaders into projects and/prisons.
3. Begin planning for the implications of the end of the Caliphate during 2018 and the possible resurgence of Al Qaeda.
4. The far-right links to populist movements across Europe threaten an increased pool of activists prepared to move to the extremist position – trends to be monitored by prison and probation practitioners.
5. Evaluation of the rehabilitation programmes is an urgent need for investment. The lack of evidence (other than small scale internal evaluation) restricts development.
6. Main challenges for rehabilitation are – motivation, working in groups may increase status, separating radicalised individuals from vulnerable inmates and 'game playing' by intelligent radicals.
7. Consideration to be given to the role of restorative justice in re-entry programmes, using a mediator to support accountability, engage with testimony of victims, set up family group conferences, and demonstrate that the community cares and has a stake in combating extremism.
8. Using group expertise to advise on how to communicate, avoid manipulation and practice face to face skills to build relationships and involve relevant Imams e.g. France experience.
9. Continued development of assessment tools to help prison managers and practitioners assess risk – share outcomes and data to improve profiling and understanding of complex risk factors.
10. There is a desire amongst practitioners to go deeper into the issues and learn from each other.

### **References - provided by the workshop leaders - for additional reading**

#### **Session 1**

Hansen, David (2018). 'Radicalization in Norwegian Prisons: The Story of 'Zubair'', in Overland, G.; Salomonsen, J.; Andersen, A. (2018). *Processes of Violent Radicalisation in the 21st Century*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. (In press).

Neumann, P. R. (2010). *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*. London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

Silke, A. (ed.) (2014). *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*. London: Routledge.

## **Session 2**

Liesbeth van der Heide, and Jip Geenen, "Children of the Caliphate: Young IS Returnees and the Reintegration Challenge", *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague* 8, no. 10 (2017), <https://icct.nl/publication/children-of-the-caliphate-young-is-returnees-and-the-reintegration-challenge/>

Charles Lister, "Al-Qaeda versus ISIS: Competing Jihadist Brands in the Middle East", *Middle East Institute*, November 7, 2017, <http://www.mei.edu/content/al-qaeda-versus-isis-competing-jihadist-brands-middle-east-1>.

Lorne L. Dawson, "The Demise of the Islamic State and the Fate of Its Western Foreign Fighters: Six Things to Consider", *ICCT Policy Brief*, <https://icct.nl/publication/the-demise-of-the-islamic-state-and-the-fate-of-its-western-foreign-fighters-six-things-to-consider/>

## **Session 3**

J.M. Berger, "Defeating IS Ideology" Sounds Good, But What Does It Really Mean?, *ICCT Op-Ed*, 6 June 2017, <https://icct.nl/publication/defeating-is-ideology-sounds-good-but-what-does-it-really-mean/>.

Rohan Gunaratna, "The Battlefield of the Mind: Rehabilitating Muslim Terrorists", October 2009, *UNISCI Discussion Papers* No 21, <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/media/www/pag72507/UNISCI%20DP%2021%20-%20ROHAN.pdf>

Liesbeth van der Heide, "Ideology matters: Why we cannot afford to ignore the role of ideology in dealing with terrorism", *Penal Reform International*, 3 April 2018, <https://www.penalreform.org/blog/ideology-matters-why-we-cannot-afford-to-ignore/>.

## **Session 4**

Barrett, R. (2017): *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees*. The Soufan Centre.

Leyenhorst, van M. and A. Andreas (2017). Dutch Suspects of Terrorist Activity: A Study of Their Biographical Backgrounds Based on Primary Sources. *Journal for Deradicalization*, autumn 2017.

Renard, T and R. Coolsaet (2018). *Returnees: who are they, why are they (not) coming back and how should we deal with them? Assessing Policies on Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands*. Edgmont Papers.

## **Session 5**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE HANDBOOK FOR PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICES REGARDING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM <https://rm.coe.int/16806f9aa9>

RAN practitioners paper (2016). Dealing with radicalization in a prison and probation context. [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-news/docs/ran\\_p\\_and\\_p\\_practitioners\\_working\\_paper\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-news/docs/ran_p_and_p_practitioners_working_paper_en.pdf)

RAN Conference Paper DG-Just. EU Conference on Radicalisation in Prisons Event Report 27 February 2018 Brussels, Belgium

## **Session 6a**

R2PRIS toolkit. Online material available at: <http://www.r2pris.org/>

## **Session 6b**

Neumann, P. R. (2010). Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries. London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR).

RAN (2017). *Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families*. RAN report, July 2017.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2016). Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons. Criminal Justice Handbook Series. New York: United Nations