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**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS**  
**(CDPC)**

**COUNCIL FOR PENOLOGICAL CO-OPERATION**  
**(PC-CP)**

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE HANDBOOK  
FOR PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICES  
REGARDING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

Directorate General I - Human Rights and Rule of Law

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## Background

1. Concern has been expressed over the fact that prisons may be used as a breeding ground for radicalised violent extremists and that radicalised offenders scheduled for release from prison or those on probation are not being appropriately rehabilitated. Apprehension increased following a number of terrorist acts committed in Europe in 2015 and in 2016 as a number of the major perpetrators had passed through the criminal justice system.
2. The need for clarity regarding the role that prison and probation services can and should play in preventing and dealing with radicalisation to violent extremism has led to the Committee of Ministers' of the Council of Europe' adoption of "Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism"<sup>1</sup>. This work is part of the actions taken by the Council of Europe member states as agreed at the 125th Session of the Committee of Ministers (Brussels, 19 May 2015)<sup>2</sup>.
3. The Guidelines are intended to provide a general legal and ethical framework for devising appropriate policies and responses which conform to the Council of Europe standards and principles related to the rule of law and protection of human rights. They uphold the importance of investing in good prison and probation management and the need to train staff to high professional and ethical standards in order to effectively counter radicalisation leading to violent extremism. They also emphasise that prison and probation work should be seen as part of a comprehensive multi-agency strategy to combat violent extremism.
4. In addition, it was decided that a Handbook for the prison and probation services of the Council of Europe member states would be compiled to build upon and further develop the set of standards and principles contained in the Guidelines. The objective of the "Handbook", which is to be used and read together with the Guidelines and in accordance with national law and international human rights standards, is to provide practical advice to prison and probation services, identify a list of indicators of radicalisation, provide examples of possible tools and methods to prevent and deal with radicalisation leading to violent extremism and identify some recommended practices in this respect.
5. The Handbook is intended to be consistent with the Council of Europe values and standards, in particular, the European Prison Rules and the Council of Europe Probation Rules and it should be used in conjunction with these texts. National authorities should be aware that juveniles need special attention and different methods of intervention from adults. This takes into account their developing personality and specific needs. The present Handbook should be adapted accordingly when applied to juveniles and follow the European Rules for juvenile offenders, subject to sanctions or measures.
6. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)<sup>3</sup>, as well as the EU funded Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) are also working actively in this area. Representatives of the Radicalisation Awareness Network and other experts have joined efforts to work on the present Handbook in order to communicate international knowledge and expertise available in this area. The present Handbook is a result of these joint efforts which aim at assisting the national authorities and society in general to more effectively deal with radicalisation to violent extremism.
7. The work was carried out by the Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP) between January 2015 and October 2016. Members of the PC-CP Working Group at that time were (in alphabetical order): Nathalie BOISSOU (France); Annie DEVOS (Belgium); Vivian GEIRAN, PC-CP Chair (Ireland); Antanas JATKEVIČIUS (Lithuania); Jörg JESSE, PC-CP Vice-Chair (Germany); Attila JUHÁSZ (Hungary); Dominik LEHNER (Switzerland); Nikolaos KOULOURIS (Greece); Nadya RADKOVSKA (Bulgaria). The draft text was prepared by the three external scientific experts Christopher DEAN (UK); Merel MOLENKAMP (The Netherlands) and D. Elaine PRESSMAN (The Netherlands/Canada).

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016, at the 1249th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies).

<sup>2</sup> Doc. CM (2015)74: Action Plan "The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism".

<sup>3</sup> UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf)

# CHAPTER ONE: SCOPE AND MAIN ISSUES

## Scope

8. The purpose of this Handbook is to provide specific directions and suggested recommendations to achieve good practises in the risk assessment, management and re integration of radicalised offenders. The present document provides practical information consistent with the importance of tailored risk assessments and interventions and the use of good prison and probation management principles pertaining to violent extremist offenders. The long term strategy of both prison and probation services should be the prevention of violent extremist offenders reoffending, the prevention of radicalisation in prison and probation settings and the establishment of a long term preventative strategy within the criminal justice system.
9. The Handbook is addressed to managers and prison and probation staff. In particular, frontline prison and probation staff should find the key points and information provided in this Handbook to be of use in their professional interactions with this special population under their responsibility. It should also be relevant to those working with offenders who may be radicalised in prison. This may include psychologists, probation officers, social workers and other professionals and partner organisations. This Handbook is a first step in developing practice and working methods that can be recommended both nationally in the member states of the Council of Europe and internationally. It should be seen as a living document which should be reviewed over time (ideally annually) in order to incorporate new developments in the collective knowledge and expertise in this relatively new area.

## Main issues and challenges

### Protecting human rights and prison safety

10. Prisons are intended to confine offenders in secure and humane conditions. The purpose of prisons includes retribution, rehabilitation and protection of society. Rehabilitation and intervention programs both in prisons and for offenders under probation have the objective of supporting the eventual re-integration of offenders back into society. Independent monitoring of prison and probation practices and appropriate complaint mechanisms will prevent mismanagement of the services and abuse of rights and freedoms.
11. In order to facilitate rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders into society, prisons shall protect the human rights of inmates and maintain a safe and humane environment that supports prisoner engagement in everyday prison life in a constructive manner. Overcrowding should be avoided due to its negative effects on offenders and on prison security. More time allowed for prison visits, prison leaves, and a variety of out- of-cell activities should be accommodated to counteract these negative effects and to serve as incentives for facilitating positive changes in inmates. In order to create trust and understanding among staff and prisoners, prison policies should be transparent and implemented in a just and fair manner.

### Understanding the process of radicalisation

12. Good prison and probation management should apply to all offenders including violent extremist offenders and should support rehabilitation efforts for everyone. Recruitment and training of prison and probation staff members who are empathetic and engage with offenders in a constructive and positive manner will facilitate understanding of violent extremist inmates including their ideology and their personal motivations. Such information is relevant to both an accurate analysis of their unique needs as well as their risk status. It also facilitates a positive environment with other inmates and can facilitate engagement in broader positive aspects of prison life.
13. Rewarding individuals for good behaviour is intended to encourage participation in counter-radicalisation programs for violent extremist offenders and those at risk of radicalisation to violence. Equitable disciplinary sanctions together with positive incentives can serve to facilitate trust, the perception of justice in the prison environment and can support a cognitive opening to change that is essential to all offenders and may be particularly relevant to those who are violent extremists

### **Need for allocation and management of adequate staff and resources**

14. Authorities have the duty to provide support, resources, training, safety and supervision to staff at all levels who are working with violent extremists and those radicalising. Conditions of work should reflect the complexity and significance of their role in this respect. This will allow the retention of professionally qualified staff and will facilitate the good management and the provision of appropriate and targeted assessments and interventions.

### **Identification of violent extremist and radicalising offenders**

15. It is important to identify all individuals in prison or probation who may be violent extremist offenders and those who are at risk of being radicalised. Those individuals who are in the process of radicalising to violence but who have been convicted of an offence unrelated to terrorism or violent extremism should be identified. Offenders who were motivated to act violently by an ideology but ultimately convicted of a more general violent offence, should also be identified.
16. Identification of motivation is important because there are characteristics pertinent to this population that differ significantly from other offenders or groups of offenders. These characteristics and differences have implications for both the radicalisation potential of individuals within the prison, their successful integration into society during probation, and for individualised and relevant risk assessments and intervention programs. Equally, the general rehabilitation approaches used with other offenders may have little or no impact in countering radicalisation to violence or on the violent extremist ideologies and intentions related to this particular group of offenders. Although there are some general approaches that will be beneficial with both violent extremist offenders and other offenders, an awareness of the specific characteristics of violent extremists and their distinctive differences from other offenders will facilitate the provision of accurate assessments, appropriate targeted interventions and effective probation strategies and processes.

### **Differing characteristics of violent extremist offenders**

17. Important differences have been identified in terms of the personal needs, motivations, political and ideological perspectives, grievances, values, attitudes, personal characteristics and history of violent extremists as compared to other “ordinary” criminal actors. Elements pertaining to the individual’s continuing intention and capacity should be considered as well as any present or potential “protective” or risk mitigating factors. Such details are important in making risk related decisions pertaining to violent extremists and those who may be radicalising to violence. These elements are also important to the identification of future individualised intervention program goals and intervention strategies to be used to counter violent extremism. They will be addressed in detail in this Handbook in the following sections.
18. It is generally accepted that there is no one single profile that applies to violent extremists in terms of age, sex, educational achievements, upbringing, mental health, nationality, ethnicity and personal background. Many violent extremists are otherwise ‘normal’ functioning individuals who have a commitment to a specific ideology and are willing to use unlawful violence to further their goals. Although not intrinsic to this population, some violent extremists and those radicalising to violence do possess mental health vulnerabilities. Some offenders are young adults, others are older adults and some are juvenile offenders. Offenders in the past have been more notably male but increasing numbers of women are becoming involved in violent extremist offences. Many offenders come from stable intact families. Others do not. There are highly trained professionals such as doctors and engineers who are known violent extremists. Others have limited education or have been school drop-outs. Some are leaders and others are followers or even criminal opportunists. Despite these differences, there are indicators that can be identified and constructed into a protocol to identify these individual characteristics, to identify and describe the risk presented by an individual, and to provide pertinent information that will assist in the management of violent offenders in the prison and those who are on probation.
19. Poorly managed and overcrowded prisons can be a factor leading to increased radicalisation. The grievances, moral outrage and frustration resulting from inhumane treatment may exacerbate the influence of violent extremist recruiters in the prison setting. Extremist ideologies may be easier to transfer in a hostile and overcrowded environment. As it is known that some of the perpetrators of major terrorist acts in Europe have passed through the prison and probation systems, it is important to address issues that could be contributing elements to risk and to include approaches intended to counter the risk of violent extremism while being cognizant of the costs.

## Specialised procedures for violent extremist offenders

20. The need for specialised procedures including risk and other assessment and intervention procedures for violent extremist prisoners has been identified in documents international organizations and agencies charged with addressing the problem of violent extremism. These agencies and documents are identified in the sections of this document which address risk assessment of violent extremists and management approaches with this population. The need to prevent prisoner radicalisation and to support prisoner rehabilitation and re-integration into society has also been identified.

### Key points:

- Good prison and probation management is important for all offenders and facilitates constructive intervention with violent extremist offenders.
- Independent monitoring of prison and probation practices and complaint mechanisms will prevent mismanagement of the services and abuse of rights and freedoms.
- Violent extremist offenders should be identified within the prison or probation population as soon as possible in order to address their specific characteristics and needs.
- Sufficient staff, resources and specialised training should be provided at all levels by the responsible authorities in order to ensure that relevant and effective procedures and practices are used with violent extremist offenders.
- Special attention should be given to individuals who may be susceptible to radicalisation within prison and probation settings.
- The provision of specific and relevant assessments for violent extremist offenders and the provision of related effective individualised intervention programs to counter radicalisation and violent extremism are fundamental objectives in the prison and probation systems.
- There is no one profile to describe violent extremists or those who will radicalise to violence. Individualised approaches with this population will provide the optimal chance for successful outcomes in countering violent extremism.

### References / further reading:

- Council of Europe Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism (2016) (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016).
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- Handbook on the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons, chapter 2; available at: [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Handbook\\_on\\_VEPs.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_VEPs.pdf)

- FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) : Criminal detention and alternatives: fundamental rights aspects in EU cross-border Transfers at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/criminal-detention-and-alternatives-fundamental-rights-aspects-eu-cross-border>



## **CHAPTER TWO: VIOLENT EXTREMIST OFFENDERS AND THE RADICALISATION PROCESS**

### **The spectrum of violent extremism**

21. There are many types of violent extremism. European nations and other countries around the world have been subjected to the spectrum of violent extremism. This includes right-wing violence, left-wing violence and other political, social, religious or other ideological related violence. The common element in this spectrum of violent action is that the unlawful violence is intended to further ideological-based objectives.
22. Although the greatest threat currently identified by Europol is that of the so-called “Islamic State” (IS) or Al-Qaeda inspired violent extremism, all violent extremists in the prison and probation setting require special attention and specific approaches. It is known that individuals motivated by ideological drivers represent a different type of threat than other violent offenders and exhibit different characteristics.

### **What is violent extremism?**

23. There are many offenders who are charged or convicted of offences that involve violence. A relatively small percentage of these are related to ideologically motivated violence. The Council of Europe “Guidelines for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism” defines violent extremism as behaviour promoting, supporting or committing acts which may lead to terrorism and which are aimed at defending an ideology advocating racial, national, ethnic or religious supremacy. This may include the violent opposition to core democratic principles or values. Radicalisation to violence is the dynamic process whereby an individual increasingly accepts and supports violent extremism. Indicators of violent extremism exist. These are evidence-based behaviours that reveal an increasing commitment to an ideology that supports the use of violence, the increasing intention to act in a violent manner to achieve ideological goals and/or actual participation in unlawful violent action in support of political, religious, social or other ideological objectives.
24. There are indicators associated with the process of radicalisation to violence that can be identified and in some cases observed. Not all indicators are necessarily present in all individuals radicalising to violence and not all violent extremists are associated with a group. Some may be those who are referred to as “lone wolves”.
25. The process of radicalisation to violent extremism has been described by some experts in terms of different phases. Not all offenders progress through all phases or reach the final phase of acts of violence. The process of radicalisation through these phases can occupy a short time line or an extended period. People can enter, exit and re-enter the radicalisation process at different phases.
26. Indicators of the process of radicalising to violence may include the following:
  - a. the motivation for the violent action by the individual has a political, religious, social or other significant ideological component;
  - b. the individual has accepted an ideology that supports the use of violence to obtain the desired goals and is engaged in a process supporting his own belief that it is necessary to use violence to achieve the desired ideological objectives;
  - c. the individual has the intention to act, has acted or plans to act in an unlawful violent manner to promote the ideology and its objectives.
27. Other identifiable Indicators may include but are not restricted to the following:
  - changes in attitudes and values that reflect increasing intolerance and inflexibility;
  - an increasing commitment to the ideology or narrative that supports the use of violence,
  - an increasing willingness to use violence to achieve ideological goals,
  - increasing engagement with physical or virtual (cyber) networks supporting the use of violence to support the adopted narrative;

- the development of friendships, connections with family members and/or associations with others who are supportive of the ideology;
  - changes in personal behaviour patterns, interest in or development of new skills and capacities that enable the use of violent action.
28. Although lone-wolves may not have the inter-personal direct associations, the ideological component and motivation is equally present and indirect associations or cyber connections are often discovered.
29. These indicators apply to the spectrum of violent extremists and relate to the support of different ideologies and objectives. They can be divided into three categories that are related to 1) the ideology or the narrative that is accepted or in the process of being adopted; 2) the personal, cyber and other associations and networks that support the individual and the ideology; 3) the personal needs and motivations of the individual to further the adopted ideological goals.

## **Classification of violent extremists**

30. Not all violent extremists have the same characteristics. As noted above, some may have been lone actors, while others may have been members of an extremist group. Some may have had a history of previous training and engagement in violent extremist acts while others may have been arrested due to planning to engage in some violent action at home or abroad, having had no prior experience or capacity in terms of violent actions. Some violent extremists are charismatic leaders. Others are followers. Some have the capacity to recruit while others are vulnerable to such recruitment activity. Some violent extremists have previously been criminal offenders; others have no known criminal past. Understanding these individual characteristics is important for effectively responding to individual violent extremist offenders.
31. In the prison and probation systems, violent extremists should be identified according to at least three categories: (1) those who are ideologues and leaders and who may be radicalising agents; (2) those who are followers and are vulnerable to increasing radicalisation; (3) those who are criminal opportunists and interested in self-gain and affiliate with violent extremists in order to personally benefit in some way. Such distinctions are identified from the risk assessment process for violent extremists and are described in Chapter 3 of this Handbook. This classification is different from the classification related to the risk posed by each individual, such as low, moderate or high risk. There are different classifications for different purposes. Although the definition of violent extremism includes adherence to ideological goals, some individuals are more motivated by the search for meaning in their lives, are coerced by others to become involved, may have a need for social belonging
32. Prison and probation staff should be trained to recognise an individual's association with any known extremist network or group. This information should be considered when making placement and intervention decisions for the individual in the prison setting and when a person is managed in the community. If disengagement from a group is an objective, continued proximity to leadership of the group and other members will likely inhibit this objective. Limited or minimal contact with other group members and the group's leader can mitigate the group's influence and facilitate disengagement. Such placement should be revised at regular intervals depending on different factors, including the advancement of the disengagement of that person from radicalisation and the preparation for release.
33. It is advisable to avoid placing individuals in close proximity to those susceptible to the influence and authority of charismatic leader's intent on radicalisation and recruitment or example in the prison setting. Knowledge of individual characteristics (categorisation) is likely to result in better intervention planning and identifying risks during the probation process. These issues are elaborated in Chapter 4.
34. Knowledge of the different types (classification) of violent extremist offenders and their associations have important implications for the placement of offenders, for the individualised interventions identified for them when available, for the positive outcome of intervention and for probation decisions designed to promote successful management in the community, including reintegration.

## **Identifying violent extremists in the general prison and probation population**

35. It is important to note that not all convictions clearly identify when the motivation of the offence was ideological. While some individuals are convicted of violent extremist offences, others motivated by the

same ideological concerns may be convicted of other offences. This will result in “unknown violent extremists” in prison or probation settings as well as “known” violent extremists.

36. Proper identification will ensure that those who are extremists are properly assessed in terms of the level of risk they represent both while in prison and/or on probation. Less comprehensive assessments such as specialised screening protocols can be used in some settings to identify those detained or imprisoned with radicalised views but who were not identified as violent extremists by the courts or by the offence committed. This is to ensure that further radicalisation of these individuals does not occur while in prison. This is also to ensure that intervention programs are sufficiently comprehensive and relevant to both the general criminality represented by the offender as well as the concomitant violent extremism elements present.
37. It is important to identify those offenders who are already radicalised to violent extremism and whose offenses had an ideological component or for which ideology was the primary motive. Covert violent extremists can radicalise others in their proximity and they may have capabilities that can be transferred to previously un-radicalised offenders. The combination of experienced violent actors who are newly radicalised can prove lethal upon release. It is recommended that all prisoners be monitored within the prison environment for signs of violent extremism. Prison staff should pay particular attention to a prisoner’s significant support for violent extremist ideologies and/or affiliation with violent extremist networks inside or outside of the prison.
38. Prison and probation staff should be adequately trained to carry out their work efficiently and humanely. Staff should be trained and helped to differentiate between radicalised offenders and offenders who simply practice their religion, culture or traditions. There is a danger of erroneous conclusions when staff cannot distinguish between different cultures and traditions and the aggressive expression of frustration and stress. It is possible for offenders to voice extremist views on political or other issues without supporting, inciting or committing violence.

### **A disproportionate threat**

39. Although the number of violent extremist offenders in prisons and on probation is low compared to the general prison and probation population, the threat posed by this group to the safety and security of society requires serious attention. Many individuals convicted of terrorism related offences who are imprisoned will eventually be released back into society. When this occurs, the individuals may have retained their ideological goals and commitment to violence to further their political, social or religious objectives. They may also retain while in prison, their intention to use indiscriminate and widespread violence upon release.
40. These offenders are often compliant prisoners. They may not exhibit any personality or behavioural problems and may be well-behaved in terms of prison rules and procedures. They may engage with prison staff and others in a rational and non-aggressive manner. Upon release from prison, if there has been no ideological change or moderation of strategies or objectives, the threat posed by these individuals remains high. While on probation and in particular under electronic monitoring they may still continue to be compliant and well-behaved but some can retain their capacity to engage in violent extremist acts as well as their intention and ability to reconnect to networks and access resources. The threat posed may remain undiminished. This supports prioritization of this population for focused and individualised interventions during incarceration and/or if managed by probation in the community. It also supports the need for initiatives to prevent radicalisation in both prison and probation settings.
41. Prison and probation settings provide a critical opportunity to mitigate the risk that these individuals pose to society. This requires the sufficient allocation of resources to develop and provide effective and targeted approaches designed to mitigate risk. In addition to good prison and probation practices, specialised initiatives are advised despite the relatively low numbers of offenders in prison. The population warrants meticulous follow-up upon release from prison or when on probation.

### **Prospective foreign terrorist fighters**

42. In some jurisdictions, the intention to leave a country to fight abroad in a proscribed conflict zone is unlawful while others make a distinction depending on which side a person has intended to fight. Such offences may result in prison sentences or probation controls. Attention should be paid to the characteristics of these individuals. Motivations and risk can vary within the same group of persons. Even in cases where there are proven prospective foreign fighters within a group, individuals may

represent significantly different levels of motivation and threat. Inappropriate placement in the prison setting and proximity to radicalising elements can exacerbate the risk posed by these prospective foreign terrorist fighters. When they return to the community, they may be more dangerous, more extreme and more committed to violence than prior to their conviction and incarceration.

## Returning foreign terrorist fighters

43. The large numbers of foreign terrorist fighters who have returned from conflict areas with the capability, intention and resources to undertake attacks represents a threat to the national security of the States to which they return. This security threat is identified in the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196). The Additional Protocol (No. 217) was created to supplement CETS No. 196 and respond to Resolution 2178 of the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSCR 2178) on “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts”. UNSCR 2178 called upon member States of the United Nations to take measures aimed at preventing and curbing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) to conflict zones. It also called upon member States to ensure that domestic laws and regulations are enacted to establish serious criminal offences that permit the prosecution and penalisation of those travelling abroad for the purpose of planning, preparation of, or participation in terrorist acts. The resulting legislation by member States of the United Nations, consistent with UNSCR 2178, resulted in the criminalisation of those travelling abroad to engage with proscribed groups in conflict zones in many countries. Returning terrorist fighters have been prosecuted and convicted and are part of the population of violent extremists in prisons, in the probation system and are included in the management of re-integration back into the community. This population represents a radicalising threat within all these sectors. The majority of the arrests and convictions for terrorism offences in Europe in recent years have been related to so-called ISIL/ISIS or Al-Qaeda inspired terrorism. The potential for increasing numbers of returning foreign terrorist fighters may result in augmented numbers of violent extremists in prison and probation settings.

### Key points

- Violent extremist offenders are differentiated from other offenders by their ideological motivation (political, social, religious or other) to coerce change and their legitimisation of violence to further these objectives.
- Although there is no one profile for violent extremists, indicators exist that differentiate individual characteristics of offenders and assist in determining individualised risk and program decisions.
- One useful categorisation system differentiates violent extremists into ideologues (leaders), followers and criminal opportunists.
- Frontline prison and probation staff need to receive training enabling them to interact with offenders in a manner sensitive to their cultural traditions and also in a manner which is vigilant to any signs of existing problems, including radicalisation and inciting to acts of violence.
- Despite low population numbers, adequate resources should be made available to support specialised programs and assessments for this population due to the threat they pose to society upon release.
- Radicalisation in prisons should be prevented through good management and good prison conditions which are indispensable for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of all detainees.

## References / further reading:

- The Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196).
- The Additional Protocol No.217 to the CETS No. 196 was created to supplement CETS No. 196
- Resolution 2178 of the Security Council of the United Nations (UNSCR 2178) on “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused By Terrorist Acts”.
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## **CHAPTER THREE: RISK ASSESSMENT OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST OFFENDERS AND RADICALISATION**

### **The role of risk assessment of violent extremism for the work of prison and probation services**

44. Risk assessments are intended to provide an estimate of the risk presented by an individual, its nature and the degree of seriousness. This information assists decisions as to how to best intervene with the individual in order to minimise risks and maximise the potential for positive change while responding to the individual needs of the inmate or the person on probation.
45. Risk assessments will identify the specific violent extremism elements that are of concern and measure their severity. This will include elements pertaining to (a) beliefs and attitudes (ideology-narrative), (b) the social context and intention of the individual and includes family connections and kinship, groups and networks with whom the individual is associated that can influence intention and promote ideological violence, (c) the capacity of the individual in terms of background and training and skills) and (d) the personal and ideological needs that are driving the violent extremism. In addition, best practice risk assessments include elements pertaining to risk mitigating factors. Risk mitigating factors may be present, developed or strengthened to support disengagement from violent extremist groups and de-radicalisation including a shift away from a rigid and absolute ideology. Such an analytical approach, referred to as risk assessment, can provide a differential analysis of the needs, networks and ideological commitments of radicalising individuals and those who are convicted violent extremists. Specialised risk assessment approaches identify the motivations and elements that are push factors for the individual to engage in violent extremism or progress in the process of radicalisation to violence and are able to identify the type of threat that individuals represent and any risk mitigating elements that are present.
46. Risk assessments are used in the prison and probation system to support decisions pertaining to classification, placement, interventions and re-classification when required. Risk factors have been restructured into systematic protocols for the assessment of violent offenders. Structured assessments are generally considered to be better practice than non-structured or semi-structured assessments.

### **The need for specialised risk assessment tools for violent extremism**

47. Over the past several decades, there has been an evolution in approaches for risk assessment. New information has resulted in specialised tools for specific types of violence. Prior to 2009<sup>4</sup>, no risk assessment tool for violent extremism was formally available. The need for a specialised risk assessment tool and approach for making risk decisions for violent political extremism was documented at this time. The potential limitation of the use of risk assessment tools designed for general violent offenders and exclusively applied to violent extremists was identified at this time. The significant differences in the characteristics of violent extremists compared to “ordinary” violent offenders highlighted the need for a specialised and relevant tool for this population. Risk assessment tools with relevant and sensitive risk and protective indicators for ideologically motivated violence and the radicalisation process should among the tools available to assess the risks posed by violent extremist offenders. Other tools in a battery can help assess concomitant problems in violent extremists such as mental health or other risk related issues.
48. It is recommended that specialised risk assessment tools be used whenever possible in order to assess violent extremists, potential violent extremists and those radicalising to violence. Such tools are relevant for youth and adults, men and women and for the spectrum of violent extremist ideologies.
49. Although risk assessment tools for violent extremism address ideological violence and the associated indicators, they do not assume that mental health vulnerabilities or disorders are fundamental to ideologically driven violence. Many violent extremists and terrorists are considered cognitively normal, intact individuals without mental health disorders. Risk assessment tools are used with other mental health approaches to assess the impact of mental health in radicalising individuals and those who are convicted of violent extremist offences.

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<sup>4</sup> Pressman, D.E. (2009) *Risk assessment decisions for violent political extremism* (2009-02). Public safety, Canada, Government of Canada, PS3-1/2009-2-1EPDF.

50. In recent years, the presence of mental health vulnerability in some individuals radicalising to violence has been noted with increasing frequency. As a result, some risk assessment tools for violent extremism now include an addendum that allows for a review of indicators pertinent to personal history, personality traits, psychiatric disorders, the radicalisation process and criminal history. This allows for a multi-modal risk assessment tool for violent extremism. This risk assessment approach for violent extremism enables a comprehensive, relevant and broad analysis.

### **Suggested methodology for risk assessment of violent extremism**

51. Risk assessment experts have identified the structured professional judgment methodology as the optimal approach for violent extremism risk assessment. This approach is recommended as it allows for a consistent, structured and reliable methodology. The approach is appropriate for the complexity of the relevant dynamic indicators and the need to retain a role for professional judgment. Structured professional judgment is a well-designed, systematic and rigorous approach that is evidence-based. The approach employs a comprehensive set of transparent indicators that are appropriate for the nature of the individuals to be assessed, in this case those exhibiting radicalisation or who have demonstrated violent extremism actions. It is recommended that such specialised tools be used in the prison and probation settings with personnel specifically trained in their proper administration and interpretation.
52. Risk assessments are generally undertaken by designated staff. Staff which are multi-disciplinary in background can be trained in the use and interpretation of risk assessment protocols for violent extremists and for individuals where there is concern about the process of radicalisation. When there is uncertainty in the assessment or limited information available, collaborative risk assessments are recommended using two or more designated users. The risk assessment consensus provided by agreement of multiple assessors provides a more robust evaluation of risk and threat and status.

### **Differences in risk assessment objectives for violent extremism and radicalisation**

53. Risk assessments designed for violent extremism differ from those developed for general and other specific types of violence due to the dynamic nature of radicalisation to violence and ideologically motivated violence. The indicators for the risk assessment of violent extremism and radicalisation are not static in nature. The process of radicalisation is a dynamic process and as such, the indicators for risk and threat should be dynamic. Beliefs and attitudes, the acceptance of ideological elements, friendships and associations and volitional intention can and often do change over time.
54. Such dynamic elements differ from the mostly static elements used in many general violence risk assessment tools. This characteristic precludes the full prediction of intention and future violence of violent extremist offenders. The systematic evidence and analysis of violent extremist and radicalisation elements does allow for a defensible and reasoned estimation of risk at specified points in time. The nature of the risk is also identified.

### **Risk trajectories and measureable change in violent extremism indicators over time**

55. The systematic and consistent protocols and the relevant indicators in selected risk assessment tools for violent extremism have demonstrated both reliability and content validity in independent research undertaken by respected scientists. The reliable nature of these protocols allows for the repeated measurement of risk over time on each of the included indicators. It also allows for the identification and adjudicated level on objective indicators of the overall radicalisation in those monitored in prison and probation settings at the times of assessment.
56. Measurements and judgments obtained over time based on a comprehensive set of risk indicators can provide evidence of the outcome and effectiveness of intervention programs. The nature of this effect (positive, negative or no change) can be observed objectively over time. The results can indicate the success of current interventions, the need for a change of focus, or a change to intervention objectives.

## **Control of bias in risk assessments**

57. Unstructured and subjective risk assessments of violent extremists and those in the process of being radicalised may be subject to bias. Such bias may occur when assessors fear personal repercussions if the individual reoffends, when assessors are sympathetic to the offender's motives, when cultural influences are not fully understood and/or when political and social contexts are overlooked. The use of a controlled, standardised, transparent and structured protocol assists in controlling assessor bias and supports just and fair assessments that supports non-discrimination. In addition, tools that are designed to apply to the spectrum of violent extremists rather than only one ideology are bias-neutral and non-discriminatory. Structured professional judgment risk assessment protocols for the spectrum of violent extremism and radicalisation and that are therefore non-discriminatory in nature are most appropriate for use in the prison and probation settings.

## **Assessment timelines in the prison and probation context**

58. Where appropriate risk assessments should be undertaken at an early stage of detention (at induction) and at an early stage when under probation supervision. In some cases, the initial assessment may be delayed in order to permit an offender to habituate to the prison environment before being prepared to contribute to the risk assessments. Where appropriate this initial assessment will provide a baseline from which changes, both positive and negative, can be measured and determined. This baseline can apply to both individuals in the process of radicalisation, those who have already been radicalised to violence and those who have committed acts of violent extremism. Additional information may also become available after the baseline assessment is established which will provide increased accuracy in the assessment.
59. Determining the recommended interval between assessments is dependent upon the individual, the purpose of the risk assessment and the established practice and guidelines of the specific prison or probation organisation. It is recommended that a review of inmates' needs and the status of the risk indicators for violent extremism be undertaken on an annual basis as a minimum. This will allow for timely changes in management to respond to the outcome of the assessment. The assessment and re-assessment schedules may be dependent on staff availability, staff expertise, established rules and procedures of the service or agency and other factors. The assessments should be repeated as and when indicated. This may be when significant change is noted in an offender, when early release decisions are to be determined, when a new placement may be warranted to reduce the potential for radicalisation and when signs of increasing radicalisation or de-radicalisation are observed.

## **Screening assessments**

60. Screening tools for risk assessment of violent extremists have been developed and are in use. These protocols require less time and training than comprehensive risk assessment protocols. They are able to provide useful information and an overview of the status of the individual. They can be used with individuals suspected of radicalisation within the general population and when a less formal and less comprehensive risk assessment is required. Following a screening, a full scale risk assessment can be requested or undertaken when concerns result from the screening assessment. A screening risk assessment tool can also be used with a specific group of inmates considered to be vulnerable to violent extremism. Other adaptations of comprehensive risk assessment protocols can be developed to produce screening assessment tools that respond to the needs of the agency or service.

## **Need for information sharing**

61. Risk assessments are undertaken using a variety of information sources and as much evidence, intelligence and other observations and reports as available. This can include prison documentation, intelligence, court records, pre-sentence reports, and other information provided by prison staff, those involved in interventions and others who are in contact with the offender. The quality and accuracy of the risk assessment is dependent on the amount and the quality of the information available. The accuracy and the credibility of the sources of the information are equally important. Evidence-based risk assessments require supportable information and behavioural evidence. This necessitates the sharing of information between agencies and services. This is often dependent on the rules and accepted practices of such agencies. Even with sharing of information between agencies, there may be significant missing information. When this is the case, specific information can be requested from related agencies or services. This knowledge of information that is required to evaluate specific risk



indicators may facilitate sharing and communication between agencies and permits the assessor to establish what is known and what is unknown in terms of the contributing indicators to risk and threat pertinent to the individual assessed. Whenever possible, attempts to obtain missing information should be undertaken.

## **Benefits and caveats of risk assessment for violent extremism**

62. Risk assessments for violent extremism using structured professional judgment do not replace the human judgment of the assessor. They support the assessor's judgment via the rigorous and standardised analytical protocol. Risk assessments are intended to provide relevant and timely information about the prisoner or person on probation. They are not infallible. The risk assessment is dependent on the amount of information available and its accuracy as noted above as well as on the training and expertise of those undertaking the assessment. They support but do not replace professional judgement and experience. Staff requires training in the use of r risk assessment tools for violent extremists.
63. The risk assessment will not predict who in the prison system or on probation will reoffend with statistical accuracy. It cannot identify who will become a terrorist or violent extremist from within a general prison population. When information is obtained from the inmate by the assessor, the latter must be aware of the potential for deception.
64. The risk assessment will identify indicators of violent extremism that are of concern and can help staff monitor these indicators in terms of severity over time. Risk assessments can provide useful information to assist in the appropriate and sensitive management of offenders. The details provided can assist in classification, placement, programs, and general management of the individual. It is also useful to identify changes in risk over time.
65. Standardisation of risk assessment terminology within and across countries should be a long-term objective. This will assist the sharing of data and information between nations and services. The use of a common tool and terminology will also facilitate communication.

### **Key points:**

- Risk assessments should be undertaken with violent extremists as soon as possible after admission to prison or when identified for probation where indicated and appropriate.
- Regular scheduled re-assessments should be undertaken on a pre-established timetable or as required.
- The optimal method for risk assessments of violent extremism is the structured professional judgment approach.
- Risk assessment protocols for violent extremism should apply to the spectrum of violent extremist ideologies and be flexible enough to add additional indicators that are considered relevant.
- Potential mental health problems should be investigated in any comprehensive risk assessment protocol for violent extremists.
- Risk assessments for violent extremists should be undertaken with analytical tools specifically designed for this population. Special care and attention is needed for risk assessments of youth.
- Risk assessments should be controlled for assessor bias and be non-discriminatory in nature.
- Risk assessments should be undertaken by personnel properly trained in the specialised protocols for violent extremists.
- Risk assessments are to be based on evidence and require comprehensive and accurate information. This information should be obtained from multiple sources.
- Risk assessments contain multiple elements related to violent extremism such as the narrative adopted, the networks of the offender and the needs driving the action. In addition, elements related

to intention and capacity should be included as well as protective or risk mitigating factors.

- Risk assessments can be carried out with or without the co-operation and engagement of the person concerned or with a direct interview.
- Individualised goals for intervention should follow from the information obtained from the risk assessment and be measurable.
- Risk assessments benefit from being undertaken with multi-disciplinary teams or in collaboration with a team of assessors.

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# CHAPTER FOUR: MANAGING REHABILITATION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISTS IN PRISON AND PROBATION

## Interventions

### The nature of interventions

66. The term intervention here generally refers to any actions or activities which directly or indirectly contribute to the rehabilitation of violent extremists or which prevent offenders from committing extremist offences. The emphasis here is on interventions which require human interaction in correctional settings and personal change in the offender, such as to their actions, beliefs, identity and relationships. Interventions may range from specialist, targeted programs, to more general activities (such as education, employment or occupational activities) through to conversations between staff members and offenders. Interventions may vary depending on a multitude of factors including the extent to which they are delivered to purposefully address extremist offending, the time-span over which they're delivered, who delivers these, how they are delivered and their intended aims and outcomes etc. Interventions are considered to be most effective when they are embedded and delivered within a holistic approach that addresses psychological, social (including familial) and practical issues associated with effective disengagement and reintegration efforts. Practitioners should be aware that as with interventions with other offenders, the context in which interventions are delivered is likely to be crucial to their effectiveness. Contexts which provide a safe, secure, supportive environment which acknowledge and reward personal change and pro-social behaviour are more likely to be conducive to effective interventions than those which are not.

### The purpose of interventions

67. Interventions to counter extremism and extremist offending may require a different focus from those used to address other forms of offending behaviour. Interventions may need to focus on: 1) Preventing individuals from committing (extremist) offences for which they have no prior history of committing 2) Preventing individuals from developing an interest in or involvement with particular groups, causes or ideologies and 3) Changing an individual's relationship with a particular group, cause or ideology. Interventions should be developed and designed to accommodate the specific differences and issues presented by extremism and extremist offending, which can complement more conventional interventions available. It is acknowledged that these differences in focus may also be relevant to preventing other forms of offending behaviour, such as gang-related offending.

### Deployment of interventions

68. Staff should identify how they can best deploy available resources to have the most impact on both preventing interest and involvement in extremism and to prevent further offending by those already convicted of extremist offences. To achieve these aims, services and staff need to consider the extent to which resources and efforts should be focussed on targeted approaches to address these specific issues e.g. specialised assessments for measuring involvement in extremist groups, specialist programmes, or dedicated processes for monitoring extremist offenders. This has to be considered against the impact general approaches such as good conditions, policies, processes or activities may have on these issues such as dynamic security, minimising staff corruption and staff treating offenders with decency and respect. Implementing both general and targeted approaches to prevent extremism and extremist offending is likely to be most effective and appropriate, but the balance of how these are deployed is likely to depend on the local circumstances of each prison or probation service.

### Intervention goals

69. All interventions and management actions should set out to achieve clear and specific objectives to prevent extremist offending. Interventions should not be delivered without a clear understanding of their intended goals or outcomes and the changes they are intended to bring about. Based on evolving knowledge and understanding in this area, a number of key objectives and goals appear important to prevent extremist offending. These include: 1) Preventing individuals from becoming or remaining engaged with extremist groups, causes or ideologies 2) Preventing individuals from becoming or remaining willing or prepared to commit offences on behalf of an extremist group, cause or ideology and 3) Preventing individuals from having or retaining the capacity to commit violent extremism.

70. To achieve these objectives and help to mitigate or protect against risk factors and circumstances, interventions may need to: 1) Facilitate opportunities and activities to fulfil individual needs (such as for belonging, purpose, significance) which individuals may otherwise seek through involvement in extremism, 2) Empower and enable individuals to pursue (political) goals and objectives through legitimate means rather than through illegitimate, illegal means, 3) Strengthen an individual's sense of personal agency over their own decisions and behaviour, including their ability to reflect on and question the ideas, beliefs and actions of others, 4) Strengthen beliefs, perceptions and ways of thinking which can protect individuals from being willing and prepared to commit abusive and harmful extremist acts, 5) Encourage and enable individuals to express their values, beliefs and emotions in pro-social ways rather than through anti-social, extremist acts, 6) Prevent individuals from being capable of committing extremist offences, including disrupting relationships, networks and communications which promote extremism and facilitate extremist offences.

### **Targeted programs**

71. Targeted interventions or programs have been specifically developed to prevent and address violent extremism. Essentially, these are programs designed to help manage risk and promote desistance from further offending. These goals are no different than those for programs or interventions used to prevent other types offending. However, programs to prevent violent extremism are typically divided into so-called: 1) disengagement and 2) deradicalisation interventions.
72. Disengagement interventions are typically identified as those which seek to prevent or change an offender's relationship with a violent extremist group, cause or ideology. This includes preventing or changing an individual's identification with a particular group, cause or ideology which supports and uses violence as a method for achieving its goals. Changing this relationship is intended to promote desistance. This provides a different emphasis to conventional offending behaviour interventions which typically focus on developing pro-social skills to prevent reoffending. However, for some offenders, especially those who have engaged with extremist groups for conventional criminal motives - such as to make money or as an opportunity to be violent - conventional interventions may be more appropriate to address their risks and needs (or may require both conventional and disengagement type interventions).
73. Deradicalisation interventions are typically identified as those which seek to prevent or change an individual's ideological convictions, attitudes or ways of thinking which motivate and/or justify extremist offending. These usually counter specific interpretations, positions or arguments (based on political doctrine, scripture or mythology) which inform beliefs and attitudes legitimising extremist violence. Many interventions delivered to prevent other forms of offending also seek to challenge and undermine attitudes and ways of thinking in this way; so this is not unique to these programs. However, the basis for such attitudes and ways of thinking can be different for this group of offenders and thus require an appropriate and tailored approach. As with programs to prevent other forms of offending, changing these convictions, attitudes or ways of thinking is intended to promote desistance.
74. Disengagement can be observed through behaviours. These behaviours can be related, for example, to ceasing contact with radicalized individuals or discontinuing association with violent extremist groups. Other behavioural indicators may include improved social integration and changes in style of living. Evidence of success of deradicalisation interventions is often difficult to determine objectively. Signs of deradicalisation include a decrease or abandonment of violent extremist ideology and convictions, changes in behaviour towards those perceived previously as enemies or openly opposing groups (etc.) that justify violent extremism. This is more difficult to measure as it typically involves internal changes which are not always obvious in changes to behaviour. Indicators may also include less attitudinal rigidity, less inflexibility in terms of convictions and decreased rejection of others with a different value system.
75. In correctional services, interventions are typically considered from a risk management and rehabilitation perspective and this equally applies for those intended to prevent violent extremism. Intervening to change problematic or harmful relationships, behaviour and ways of thinking should be typically embedded in everyday correctional practice. So-called deradicalisation and disengagement interventions are therefore entirely consistent with typical correctional policy and practice. Whilst interventions have been typically divided in this way, some may incorporate both approaches and practitioners should be aware that these approaches are not mutually exclusive. For example, for some individuals, changes in their relationship with an extremist group, cause or ideology may also contribute to changes in their attitudes or ways of thinking that motivate or justify offending (i.e. deradicalisation). For other individuals, changes in their attitudes or ways of thinking may

contribute to changes in their relationship with an extremist group, cause or ideology (e.g. disengagement).

76. Our knowledge and understanding of how processes of disengagement and deradicalisation interact and contribute to desistance continues to evolve. What this means in practice is that practitioners should identify (via assessment) the specific changes they consider most important to facilitate for each offender. Interventions may need to accommodate aspects of both disengagement and deradicalisation approaches to promote desistance and manage individual risk. For example, offenders who are personally identified with extremist groups, causes or ideologies may require programs to primarily focus on their relationship with this group, cause or ideology. However, where disengagement is considered unfeasible or unlikely, emphasis may need to be placed on challenging and changing extremist attitudes and ways of thinking which may support offending as well as reducing their capability to offend.

### **General interventions and activities**

77. As far as practicable, meaningful education, employment, sports, religious and cultural activities should be provided to develop resilience against becoming involved in extremism and to encourage and support desistance. . The specific focus and benefits of these activities and the changes they are intended to bring about should be identified and considered carefully. Understanding the role that these approaches may play and the changes they may facilitate is important in recognising their relevance and value to individual offenders. For example, education may help to broaden perspectives, develop critical thinking and open-mindedness and empower individuals to seek new alternatives in their lives. Employment may help to facilitate new relationships, build self-worth and purpose and provide hope. Sports may provide excitement and fun, opportunities to develop skills in teamwork, discipline and leadership and a sense of personal agency. Cultural activities may help to develop self-reflection, contentment and belonging.
78. It should not be assumed that all such activities will be beneficial or positive for every individual at particular points in their sentence. For example, some individuals may have used sports such as football to actively identify and recruit individuals previously and may seek to do so again; individuals may seek to use education in specific discipline to further their ability to indoctrinate others, whilst others may seek to use particular work activities to further their capacity to commit particular extremist offences. Activities are most likely to be beneficial when they meet the same needs that individuals may look to extremism to fulfil e.g. a sense of belonging, excitement, significance, meaning etc. Such activities may be particularly beneficial when delivered during or following targeted programs which can help incentivise offenders participate, partly through helping them to understand why participation maybe important to their lives. For example, recognising and understanding how involvement in new social groups may reduce dependency on extremist groups for a sense of belonging and purpose etc.
79. All staff should be aware that their day-to-day interactions with offenders - and the policies, processes and principles which inform these - are critical intervention opportunities. Everyday conversations and actions can all potentially assist in achieving the same goals as targeted specialist programs or other activities etc. For example, enabling an offender to find employment that is meaningful to their lives, expressing compassion or concern for an offender's welfare even though they may see staff as 'the enemy', taking time to listen to an offender who is troubled by their involvement in extremism or simply asking an offender to query whether life can be seen so simplistically in black and white terms. Emerging anecdotal evidence suggests that small actions may have strong effects, often initiating steps to disengage or to reconsider harmful attitudes and perceptions of other groups. Supportive human interactions on an everyday basis between staff and offenders, such as respectful communication and providing positive role models to offenders may play a crucial in facilitating constructive changes and developing resilience against being drawn into violent extremism.
80. Where possible, services should seek to incorporate specialist knowledge and learning - typically utilised in targeted programs - into training that can inform general interventions and activities. For example, practitioners delivering specialist interventions with extremist offenders may be educated about how to model attitudes and behaviour which may counter those associated with extremism, such as being open-minded, questioning, reflective and seeing others in considered and non-stereotypical ways. Sharing this knowledge and experience with colleagues who can then also use this in their day-to-day working lives may help to build general resilience in offenders from becoming interested or involved in extremism. Similarly, learning and understanding about effective practices in general activities and interventions should inform specialist, targeted programs.

## **Intervention principles**

81. There is a lack of robust outcome studies to identify which interventions - such as so-called disengagement or deradicalisation interventions - are most effective at preventing extremist offending. There is also a lack of evidence regarding which types of intervention may be most effective and appropriate with whom, when and under what circumstances. Therefore, all staff must be cautious about assuming the effectiveness of certain interventions for specific individuals in specific circumstances. There is still much to learn. However, there is evolving knowledge on 'good practice' principles which should be considered when implementing interventions. This includes the finding that the general 'What Works' principles for effective interventions to prevent other forms of offending also appear to be important for interventions to prevent violent extremism. For example, interventions which directly address factors and circumstances contributing to extremist offending that are of appropriate intensity and duration, responsive to individual differences and supported organisationally may also work with radicalised offenders. It also recognises the potential significance that individuals in a variety of roles may contribute to intervention attempts e.g. psychologists, probation officers, religious experts, mentors, family members and peers. For disengagement-type interventions, evolving knowledge suggests that these should respond to identity-related issues which may contribute to: 1) involvement in extremism (including indoctrination and emotions such as threat and grievance) 2) a mind-set which supports extremist offending and 3) that can support disengagement and desistance. For deradicalisation-type interventions, evolving knowledge suggests that these should address ways of thinking, beliefs and perceptions of other groups which make individuals prepared to support or commit violent extremism e.g. "us and them" thinking, demonization and dehumanisation of others and a lack of compassion and empathy.
82. Further specific guidance about principles for intervention, types of interventions and the contribution of specific professionals in this process can be found in the recommended reading section.

## **Tailoring interventions**

83. Interventions need to be responsive to specific individual needs and circumstances. This is to encourage their participation and to optimise their learning and the potential impact of interventions on personal change. There are specific issues that interventions should be responsive to, which include: 1) An individual's current level of engagement or disengagement 2) The motives and circumstances contributing to their interest and involvement i.e. are they involved for opportunistic reasons or identified for more personally meaningful reasons 3) Their religious and cultural background (where appropriate) and 4) Peer and group influence. Whilst the literature has more recently emphasised the 'normality' of those who commit extremist offences, emerging evidence indicates that for some individuals, mental health conditions may play a role in their engagement and offending and their response to interventions. Interventions should be tailored to individual circumstances based on their assessed risks and needs including what, when, how and by whom interventions are delivered.

## **Interventions and religion**

84. Violent extremism has occurred across the world, throughout history and on-behalf of many different groups, causes and ideologies. Where possible correctional services should develop and implement policies, processes, interventions and practices that can address any form of violent extremism relevant to their jurisdiction. However, at this particular time, there are particular groups, causes and ideologies that present such a level of threat to the security of nations in Europe and globally that demand particular attention and action. This includes the direct or indirect influence of such groups both in prison and probation settings. So called IS, Al-Qaida and allied groups are deemed to present such threat. Approaches to address and correct misinterpretations and misconceptions of Islamic scripture, argument and values are considered an important component of many international deradicalisation programs. Similarly, classes are also used to try and ensure offenders receive an appropriate religious education (free from misinterpretation or misconception) in order to make them resilient against such extremism in the future.
85. There is little empirical evidence regarding which theologically-informed deradicalisation interventions are effective, although components have been cautiously proposed. These include features such as interventions being delivered within a holistic approach that address psychological, social (including familial) and practical issues associated with effective disengagement and reintegration; tutors of courses well-educated, informed, credible, competent, wise and compassionate with the confidence to rebut beliefs that permit violence; intervention should challenge ways of thinking which

support violence, including 'us and them' mentalities and dialogue should be meaningful, focussed, tailored and cover critical themes over a sufficient duration.

86. Practitioners should be aware that religious practice and identity has been found to promote the rehabilitation of many offenders and support desistance. In addition, opportunities to develop and express religious identity may be particularly valuable in developing and maintaining a positive sense of self and navigating life successfully (including coping with imprisonment and coming to terms with having committed offences). Considerable care and sensitivity should be taken to ensure that religious practice, devotion and commitment are not equated per se with interest or involvement in violent extremism. Respect, interest in and support for religious identity in everyday interactions may also play an important role in promoting rehabilitation and developing resilience to violent extremism. Equally, staff should be confident to question and challenge behaviour which is inappropriate, potentially harmful or against prison rules and policy; even if offenders believe they are justified by their religion to behave in such a manner. Staff should be empowered to interact positively with all offenders, regardless of differences in identity e.g. gender, race, religion, class etc. Such interactions can play an important role in preventing significant 'us and them' divisions between staff and offenders and the problematic attitudes and behaviour this can encourage. Issues regarding attitudes of some offenders towards female staff members, gender equality and the laws and values of society should be openly, promptly and appropriately addressed.

### **Intervention format and delivery**

87. Practitioners should carefully consider how interventions are delivered to be most effective. Currently there is little empirical evidence to suggest whether targeted programs should be delivered in a one-to-one or group setting. There are a number of reasons why delivering targeted programs in a one-to-one setting maybe more appropriate than delivery in a group setting such as reducing the potential negative impact of group dynamics (including peer pressure and intimidation) in preventing disengagement; seeking to reconnect individuals with their personal identity (and reducing the influence of their group-identity) and increasing their confidence to disclose about their involvement or actions. However, there are also reasons why group-based interventions maybe potentially more beneficial such as the potential for other group participants to be more effective - than facilitators - in challenging each other's harmful views and beliefs; peer support can help facilitate personal change and group participants can model pro-social thinking and behaviour. Practitioners and managers need to think carefully about the potential pros and cons of delivery format in relation to potential participants and the program's intended outcomes.
88. Who delivers interventions will depend on the nature, aims and intended outcomes of the intervention as well as the offender's circumstances, including where they are located. Specialist, targeted programs are more likely to require the input of those with specialist knowledge, skills or experience (including credibility) such as psychologists, probation officers, religious scholars or former violent extremists (see points 160 -162). The input of such knowledge may also be beneficial in helping to equip staff in delivering more general intervention activities including day-to-day interactions with offenders. Specific attention should be given to ensuring those involved in interventions are appropriately vetted and supported in remaining resilient to corruption, to self-radicalisation and intimidation from extremist offenders. This may include holding regular supervision or support sessions to monitor resilience issues.
89. Where possible, those conducting interventions with individuals should not also be preparing risk assessments on them. This is to help minimise role conflict and optimise trust and progress in interventions. However, those conducting interventions should be provided with support and supervision and should be accountable for their actions and decisions and report intervention progress and issues clearly to help inform risk assessment and other decision-making. Confidentiality during the intervention process should be respected to the extent that it does not interfere with security and crime prevention.
90. It is acknowledged that knowledge and evidence is also limited regarding effective interventions intended to target groups rather than individuals. This may include those which seek to empower groups to collectively take steps to reduce their commitment to using violence to achieve their political goals. Such approaches may have particular value and more significant outcomes than interventions focussed on individuals. However, such interventions should only be delivered with particular caution and care and informed by any appropriate research, experience and knowledge available.

## Probation supervision

91. Among other widely accepted principal probation goals public protection and risk reduction/promoting desistance are considered as important with violent extremist offenders as with other types of offender. Probation staff should fully utilise multi-agency co-operation arrangements to manage risk, deal with licence breaches effectively (including appropriately using recall to custody) and seek to ensure attendance and compliance with licence restrictions. It is acknowledged that stringent licence conditions may compromise other intended goals such as encouraging employment and restoring family relationships. In order to manage risk, probation staff should develop constructive relationships with probationers and motivate probationers to engage with the supervision process. Regarding the focus of supervision sessions, promising practice indicates that encouraging probationers to be more open-minded and develop their critical thinking (regarding how they interpret information and form their world views); develop a more balanced identity (not identifying exclusively with an extremist group, cause and/or ideology); reject the legitimacy of violence to resolve grievance and address denial/minimisation of their offences may all assist with effective risk and case management. With regards to managing probationer's circumstances to achieve this same goal, assisting probationers to develop positive social networks and disengage from anti-social networks; strengthening/repairing family relationships (when appropriate) and supporting them with training, employment and education have all been identified as helpful approaches.

## General management of violent extremist offenders

### Information sharing

#### *Information sharing arrangements*

92. With due regard to existing data protection laws existing information sharing agreements should be used to facilitate the exchange of information or intelligence between agencies and organisations including law enforcement agencies. Where these are deemed inadequate for the specific purposes of preventing extremist offending and counter-terrorism, new agreements should be established.

#### *Management of information*

93. Information and intelligence should be shared in a safe, managed way with regular and appropriate intelligence submissions made to police and relevant partner agencies. Intelligence should be stored, shared and managed appropriately on case files. Information sharing arrangements may require some classified information to be brought to a sufficient level of abstraction (sanitised) to reduce their classification or to be declassified. Information can then be shared with other recipients, without compromising data sensitivity. The limits of confidentiality should be made explicit to all offenders who choose to disclose information during assessment, intervention or other related-activities.

#### *Recipients*

94. Information should be shared - in accordance with national law and international human rights standards - with and by relevant partner agencies and organisations to inform risk, sentence and release planning decisions and actions. Triangulating information and intelligence from different sources, contexts and methods is crucial in building a comprehensive and accurate picture to fully inform decision making. This may include sharing of information (including, when appropriate, classified information) with non-statutory organisations from the private or not-for-profit sectors that may have key roles in the on-going management of offenders. This includes information about convicted extremist offenders as well as those not convicted for extremist offences but who are considered by one or more of the partners to be radicalised, based on evidence. Regular meetings, briefings and awareness bulletins should be used to ensure effective information exchange. In order to develop trust clear rules regarding confidentiality as well as well-defined roles of all partners in the process are indispensable.
95. The threat and consequences of terrorism and violent extremism is not limited to one state or nation but it is international and global. Therefore, all member states should seek to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination in information and intelligence sharing with each other. Prisons and probation service staff with specific roles and responsibilities in intelligence sharing should seek to strengthen arrangements for sharing information when prisoners are transferred to other states.



### *Use of intelligence*

96. Information and intelligence should be used sensitively, appropriately and proportionately for its intended purpose. Often intelligence cannot be (easily) used within processes (e.g. professional assessments), despite informing decision-making. This often leads to some ambiguity in the system, when information which cannot be shared officially is shared via more informal means (i.e. orally). Guidelines on how intelligence should be used for different purposes should be established to minimise ambiguity and strengthen confidence in its appropriate use. This may require close cooperation between staff members who may have different but complimentary roles.

### *Communicating concerns*

97. All prison and probation staff should know how to communicate information, intelligence or personal concerns about particular offenders with regards to extremism-related issues. They should know where, how and who to pass this information on to through clear channels such as referral systems, information/intelligence reporting systems and staff meetings. Services may choose to have dedicated systems for this or to have clear policies about how this can be achieved through existing systems. Where possible, 'live' systems should be developed and maintained to monitor individuals deemed 'of concern' i.e. those interested or involved in extremism and extremist activities.

### *Information sharing to educate other stakeholders*

98. It is important to recognise that there may be additional stakeholders who would benefit from information sharing. For example, during remand and trials it is important to share information in order to have a well-informed public prosecution and judges with knowledge about radicalisation processes, extremism and risk. This is also important in view of decisions whether and where to detain, whether to use alternative sanctions and measures and what services should be involved in dealing with the execution of the sanctions and measures.

### *Gathering information and intelligence*

99. Services should use all available legal means and intelligence resources to obtain information pertinent to violent extremist activities and offenders. This includes terrorist action planning, information on radicalisation of offenders and other activities and plans. This includes the collection and evaluation of information obtained from prisoner communications, the analysis of observed behaviours in prisons or in the community and the sharing of the information between relevant staff and agencies. Information can be obtained from pre-trial, from trial evidence, from post-trial, prison behaviour, from attitudes and actions and from pre-release programmes. Such information is essential to decision making processes and subsequent management actions taken such as risk screening, risk assessment, interventions, supervision and surveillance activities.

## **Multi-agency cooperation and arrangements**

100. The responsibility to prevent extremist offending, manage extremist offenders and integrate them successfully into society is not just the responsibility of correctional services, or statutory services, but of various agencies and organisations. These may include private and charitable organisations, police, intelligence services, housing associations, employment agencies, social workers, local authorities/municipalities, religious representatives etc. Given that preventing violent extremism is a priority for many agencies and organisations, multi-agency cooperation is fundamental to managing this issue. There should be an onus for the agencies to clarify what information they need from other agencies to successfully complete their work.
101. Effective intervention requires the maintenance of integrated case files to permit the assessment of progress and to ensure continuity of treatment, to provide supervision as necessary. The access to and use of such files will facilitate communication and cooperation between the different agencies.

### **Structure of multi-agency arrangements**

102. When possible, multi-agency arrangements for managing extremist offenders or radicalised offenders should adopt existing, effective multi-agency arrangements for managing other types of offender (such as sex offenders or those involved in organised crime or gangs). This may be more efficient, economical and prudent than developing new structures that agencies are less familiar with the issue

of radicalisation. There is no “one-size-fits all” model for multi-agency cooperation and the structure chosen needs to fit with the local context.

### **Objectives**

103. All partners should be clear about the shared objectives of a multi-agency group and take ownership over their particular roles and responsibilities. Prison and probation services in particular need to work cooperatively together and collaboratively with other organisations and agencies.

### **Focus**

104. Multi-agency arrangements should focus on both security and rehabilitation concerns. These are complimentary rather than conflicting concerns. Opportunities to facilitate or maintain disengagement and desistance must be balanced alongside security considerations. Whilst opportunities may be limited in certain contexts, staff may need to think creatively about how to use existing or develop new opportunities. If individuals are not given freedom to establish new pro-social relationships, interests or occupations it is unlikely that their engagement or identification with extremist groups, causes or ideologies will change or reduce. Indeed, draconian restrictions on liberty may exacerbate engagement through fuelling grievance, ‘us and them’ perceptions and reinforcing their extremist identity.
105. When offenders are serving sentences in the community, probation staff (or equivalent) are likely to be the key officials involved in co-ordinating and securing both opportunities and practical arrangements. The specific circumstances of extremist offenders may hinder their access to basic living arrangements, such as access to a bank account or housing. Strategic and senior level support may be necessary to support probation officers (or equivalent) in seeking to negotiate workable arrangements that can reassure organisations and give them confidence to provide opportunities for this offender group.

### **Shared language and approaches**

106. Probation and prison services and where possible, other agencies and organisations, should seek to use the same definitions, language, knowledge and understanding and tools (assessments, interventions) to address these issues. There are many benefits that this can achieve including continuity of intervention approaches between prisons and the community, joined-up assessments and interventions, better communication and understanding between agencies and organisations, improved information sharing and consistent and defensible decision making.

### **Multi-agency co-operation**

107. Trust is a key component of effective multi-agency cooperation including overcoming obstacles relating to information sharing. Simple practical steps may help to facilitate trust and therefore co-operation between individuals, agencies and organisations. These include having staff from different agencies and organisations located together (e.g. probation officers in police stations), ensuring reciprocal exchange of information (for mutual benefit), in accordance with national law and international human rights standards communicating clearly how other parties can assist each other to achieve their shared goal and actively helping each other when requested. Multi-agency co-operation should be established at different levels of authority. The accountability is very important as the different partners may not be operating in the same manner.

## **Consideration of specific groups**

### **Juveniles and Young Adults**

108. There are specific rules and regulations that govern how juveniles’ and young adults’ status and needs should be considered in criminal justice settings, for example the United Nation’s Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the Council of Europe’s European Rules for juvenile offenders subject to sanctions and measures. Most of the points in this guidance are also considered applicable for young people. It is acknowledged that often, juveniles and young adults are still in the process of developing their personality and identity and have particular needs, vulnerabilities or circumstances which need to be considered carefully in relation to extremism-related issues. For instance, certain factors may make some young people particularly susceptible to indoctrination

and radicalisation such as their level of maturity, a tendency to want to 'fit-in' with their peers and belong, a desire to oppose authority and also to explore and experiment with different roles and identities. In addition, young people may be more inclined to become involved with extremist groups because they provide other forms of support, such as protection and money, and young people's behaviour may be particularly influenced by their on-line activities and engagement with social media. Such circumstances and issues can apply to adults but these may be particularly pertinent for young people.

109. These issues may need to be considered more carefully with regards to sentencing recommendations, the location of young adults, intervention options and risk assessment. For example, particular consideration should be given to their location and communication with other adult offenders - especially with known violent extremist offenders; interventions may need to be particularly sensitive to their interest in extremism being a 'developmental phase', with caution not to label young adults as extremists or reinforce their extremist identity and risk assessment may need to accommodate the specific features and circumstances of young adults in understanding their past and future behaviour. Young adults are also likely to be first-time offenders or foreign-terrorist fighters for whom specific guidance is provided within this section.

### **Female offenders**

110. Knowledge about female extremist or radicalised offenders is growing although specific knowledge on how they should be managed compared with other female offenders in correctional settings remains limited. Whilst there may be distinct reasons and motivations for why some women become involved in extremist activities (such as the appeal of sisterhood and religious freedom) many also appear to become involved for the same reasons as men. As with men, the motives for their involvement and offending as well as the roles they may adopt in extremist groups appear complex and varied with no simple profiles. Staff should recognise and appreciate the active and participatory role and agency that female offenders may contribute to violent extremism. As with other female offenders, approaches should be appropriately responsive to their particular needs, perspectives and priorities. For example, using female staff members or male and female staff members together may assist in building rapport and cooperation in intervention attempts. Seeking assistance from their families, communities, improving relations with their children and their social skills and using mentors may also be very beneficial for helping disengagement and de-radicalisation. It should also be recognised that women may play a distinct and crucial role in countering violent extremism through a variety of roles, not just in personal or private roles as mothers, sisters and friends but also through influencing policy, process and practice across correctional services. Finally, it should be recognised that many female offenders are also both young people, first-time offenders, and/or foreign-terrorist fighters.

### **First-time offenders**

111. Many individuals convicted of extremist offences may have no previous or significant criminal history. There are specific circumstances for this group where probation staff may need to be extra vigilant about the most appropriate sentencing recommendations. Where such individuals have had peripheral involvement with extremist groups or causes, their offences are considered to be less serious or they demonstrate significant disillusionment with their involvement (i.e. they are disengaged) recommendations for community sentences, where legally possible, may be more appropriate.
112. Some first-time offenders may also be so-called 'Foreign-Terrorist Fighters' i.e. individuals who travel abroad to a state other than their states of residence or nationality to engage in, undertake, plan, prepare, carry-out or otherwise support terrorist activity or to provide or receive training to do so. There are specific concerns that such individuals (many of whom are young people) will present an increased threat of committing terrorist activities when returning to their home countries or transit countries. Sufficient measures should be in place to be vigilant of and to identify foreign-terrorist fighters who enter prison or probation services. Such individuals may not be convicted or have been previously suspected of being involved in such activities. Effective information sharing between member states and drawing on information from other agencies (such as Interpol) may assist with such identification, notably when individuals are being deported between states. As with any first-time offender, risk assessment with this group is crucial to identify appropriate and proportionate responses to the risk/threat posed by each individual and do not further radicalise, re-radicalise or reinforce extremist identities. Understanding the motives, reasons and circumstances for individuals becoming engaged, remaining engaged and returning to their states is crucial in this process. Risk management and reintegration programs need to be responsive to these particular circumstances, including responding to disillusionment with involvement and trauma where appropriate. Staff need to be vigilant

to false statements (of disillusionment for example) being used to deceive authorities from attending to those who may present an on-going threat. Particular consideration may also need to be given to the knowledge, training and skills individuals may have learned abroad that may enhance their capacity to support or commit violent extremism (including the use of sophisticated weaponry, technology and counter-surveillance techniques). Services also need to build capacity to deal with the potential numbers of foreign-terrorist fighters who may return in coming years.

#### **Key points:**

- Targeted interventions for violent extremists should be adapted to the specific circumstances of a given prison and/or region and should build upon the expertise and outcomes sought by general approaches in managing offenders.
- Opportunities for rehabilitation should complement security arrangements in order to empower individuals to meet their needs in pro-social, legitimate and legal ways and disengage from violent extremism.
- Targeted interventions should be delivered based on individually assessed risks and needs and have clear, justifiable objectives and outcomes.
- Accountability, monitoring and recording of progress are crucial parts of delivering interventions.
- Interventions should be based on evolving knowledge and understanding about current best practices and principles for effective interventions.
- Interventions should focus on affecting change in the nature of an individual's relationship/identification with a cause, an ideology or an extremist group as well as on challenging beliefs and perceptions which may justify violence.
- The principal goals of public protection and risk reduction/promoting desistance should direct the work of probation officers supervising violent extremist offenders under license in the community.
- Various measures should be implemented to facilitate the exchange of information and intelligence including formal agreements, regular meetings between partners, "real-time" systems to monitor individuals of concern and clear processes for staff members to communicate concerns.
- Multi-agency arrangements should utilise existing arrangements as far as possible, have clear shared objectives and responsibilities and roles, and as far as possible share similar language, knowledge and tools.
- Multi-agency arrangements should focus on both security and rehabilitation efforts and facilitate opportunities that can help to change an individual's interest and involvement in extremism.
- Where possible, agencies and organisations should share understanding and use the same language, concepts and tools to manage extremist offenders and prevent violent extremism.
- Special attention should be given to the management of specific groups such as young people, female offenders and first-time offenders.

#### **Further Reading**

##### General Reading & Resources

- Global Counterterrorism Forum (2012). *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders*.  
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- International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (2012). Roundtable Expert Meeting & Conference on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders: Core Principles & Good Practices. <http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Background-Paper-Rehab-Core-Principles-Good-Practices.pdf>
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- Bjørgo, T. & Horgan, J. (2009) *Leaving Terrorism Behind*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Ramalingham, V. (2014) *On the Front-Line: A Guide to Countering Far-Right Extremism*. Institute of Strategic Dialogue.
- TerRa Toolkit - Community resources: Manual for Prison Officers - <http://terratoolkit.eu/>

### Specific Reading & Resources

#### **Development and Delivery of Programs and Interventions**

- Global Counter Terrorism Forum and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (2013) *Building on the GCTF's Rome Memorandum: Additional Guidance on the Role of Psychologists/Psychology in Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs*.
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- El-Said, H. (2012). *Deradicalising Islamists: Programmes and their Impact in Muslim Majority States*. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.
- German Länder Working Party "Dealing with radical Islamist prisoners", Final report, 18 April 2016 : <http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/PRISONS/PCCP%20documents%202016/Final%20report%20L%C3%A4nder%20Working%20Party.pdf>
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- Ferguson, Neil (2015) Northern Irish ex-prisoners: the impact of imprisonment on prisoners and the peace process in Northern Ireland. In A.Silke (ed) *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*. Oxon: Routledge.

#### **Young Offenders**

- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2012). *Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism*. Report on Findings and Recommendations.

## Foreign Terrorist Fighters

- Global Counter Terrorism Forum (2014) Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FFT) Initiative, The Hague - Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for A More Effective Response to the FFT Phenomenon.  
<https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/A/GCTF-The-Hague-Marrakech-Memorandum-ENG.pdf>
- Radicalisation Awareness Network (2013). *Declaration of and Good Practices for Engagement with Foreign Fighters for Prevention, Outreach, Rehabilitation and Reintegration*  
<http://www.icct.nl/download/file/RAN-Declaration-Good-Practices-for-Engagement-with-Foreign-Fighters.pdf>
- Entenmann, E., Van der Heide, L., Weggemans, D. and J. Dorsey “*Rehabilitation for Foreign Fighters? Relevance, Challenges and Opportunities for the Criminal Justice Sector*”, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague 6, no. 5 (2015).

## Female Extremist Offenders

- Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Liat Shetre (2013) *The Roles of Women in Terrorism, Conflict, and Violent Extremism: Lessons for the United Nations and International Actors*. Center on Global Counterterrorism Co-operation  
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- Global Counter Terrorism Forum (2014) *Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism*  
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## CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGING SAFETY AND SECURITY OF VIOLENT EXTREMISTS IN PRISON AND PROBATION

### Introduction

113. The challenge of balancing security measures with rehabilitation is not one particular to violent extremist offenders but some features and risks related to this group of offenders do warrant separate consideration. Safety and security in this Handbook are defined as the measures taken in the physical environment and in relation to contact with others to ensure that the following risks violent extremist offenders might pose are minimised:
- Risk of harming themselves, other offenders, staff members or outside visitors (general risk concerning most offenders);
  - Risk of escape (general risk concerning most offenders);
  - Risk of recruiting others within prison/outside prison (particular risk for violent extremist offenders and gangs/organised crime offenders);
  - Risk of continued planning of attacks with groups inside/outside prison (particular risk for violent extremist offenders and gangs/organised crime offenders).
114. It is acknowledged that interventions aimed at rehabilitation of violent extremist offenders will also have an effect on minimising safety and security risks. This has been discussed extensively in the previous chapter. It is important to stress that processes to protect the safety and welfare of practitioners and participants should be developed within these interventions. For example, safety and welfare should be a routine topic for discussion, offenders should be asked whether they are experiencing threats and steps taken to improve their safety when noted. Whenever appropriate, protection should be provided to offenders when they are perceived to be under threat.

### Dynamic security

115. Many prisons have already adopted the approach of dynamic security. The Council of Europe Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism provide a definition of this term. Dynamic security is a concept and a working method by which staff prioritise the creation and maintenance of everyday communication and interaction with prisoners based on professional ethics. It aims at better understanding prisoners and assessing the risks they may pose as well as ensuring safety, security and good order, contributing to rehabilitation and preparation for release. This concept should be understood within a broader notion of security which also comprises structural organisational and static security (walls, barriers, locks, lighting and equipment used to restrain prisoners when necessary).
116. In addition to structural, organisational and static security, dynamic security is based on:
- Positive relationships, communication and interaction between the staff and prisoners;
  - Professionalism;
  - Collecting relevant information;
  - Insight into and improving the social climate of the penal institution;
  - Firmness and fairness;
  - Understanding personal situation of the prisoner;
  - Communication, positive relations and exchange of the information among all employees.
117. The principles behind dynamic security, as well as its use, are extensively explained in the UNODC Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence from December 2015<sup>5</sup>.
118. With regards to violent extremist offenders, effective dynamic security might be of even greater importance. Driven by ideas and ideology, violent extremist offenders might be especially sensitive to treatment by staff (confirming or conflicting with their views of the world). On the other hand, some violent extremist offenders are highly educated and can be manipulative. Staff members might be lured into an extremist mind-set by these skilled offenders. Having knowledge and awareness about

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UNODC\\_Handbook\\_on\\_Dynamic\\_Security\\_and\\_Prison\\_Intelligence.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UNODC_Handbook_on_Dynamic_Security_and_Prison_Intelligence.pdf)

radicalisation and the potential risk of recruitment is important to avoid inappropriate offender-staff relationships and staff corruption and radicalisation.

## **Human rights and public opinion**

119. With regard to designing safety and security measures related to violent extremist offenders, it is important that these be based on the rule of law and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The rule of law and human rights are at the bedrock of the democratic worldview and system. This worldview is challenged by extremists who ultimately want to replace it with their own system and rules. Extremist groups will try to attack democratic values by exposing situations in which these values (the rule of law and human rights) are breached. This exposure has the objective of delegitimizing the foundations of democratic societies. As a result, it is important to protect these values on every level.
120. Safety and security measures will be monitored by public agencies and human rights organisations. Any signals of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment should be dealt with efficiently and promptly. Staff and offenders should be aware that such behaviour is prohibited and will be punished without exception. Staff should respect all human rights and especially freedom of expression and freedom of religion of prisoners and probationers. Staff should also be aware of the need to respect cultural and religious traditions.
121. Public opinion and perception play an important role when it comes to putting security measures in place for violent extremist offenders. By nature, terrorist attacks are targeted towards a random group of citizens making everyone a possible victim. In addition, the aim is usually to kill random citizens. It is the fear that this generates that makes the general public more afraid of violent extremist offenders compared to other types of offenders. Sentencing and security measures for violent extremist offenders are more often in the public spotlight and under scrutiny.

## **Prison safety and security**

122. When an offender is on remand for, or convicted of terrorist or terrorist related crimes and is sentenced to prison, or has been observed to display extremist behaviour in prison, it will depend on the regime in place to determine how security measures are able to be implemented. There are a number of ways in which criminal justice and prison authorities can develop and implement a specific set of security measures for violent extremist offenders. These are identified below.

## **Development of a specific strategy and policy package for violent extremist offenders**

123. It is important for government and criminal justice authorities to establish, in law and policy, regime/treatment guidance for violent extremist offenders. This will require clear definitions and guidelines as to who is to be 'identified' as a violent extremist with an indication of the individual's level of involvement in violent extremism. This may or may not be limited to those convicted of terrorist-related crimes. The designated strategy and policy will form the basis for security measures to be implemented. These should be consistent with Rule 53 of the European Prison Rules, regulating the use of special high security or safety measures. Furthermore, as stated in Rule 70 of the European Prison Rules, any prisoner subjected to such measures shall have a right of complaint and appeal to an independent authority. Many European countries have such policies already in place. Based on the changing nature of extremism and terrorism, it is recommended that these policies be regularly evaluated and updated.

## **Segregation in special prisons and special wings for violent extremist offenders**

124. A second step (based on policy measures and the existing national practices) is for authorities to choose which prisons will be dedicated for placement of violent extremist offenders. This will depend on a number of relevant factors. Such factors may include the location of the prison, whether a maximum security facility is required for the individual or some other level of prison security, the availability of desired interventions at a given prison facility and the availability of prison places. The separation or placement in high security prisons should only be considered for those prisoners who



present a particular and persistent risk of planning, facilitating, or committing violent extremist acts or who represent the risk of recruiting other prisoners or staff to commit such acts. Separation does not refer to solitary confinement in any form. In accordance with human rights law, prison rules and well documented psychological, emotional and physical negative effects, solitary confinement should not be an option for placement of violent extremist offenders. The objective of separation of violent extremist offenders in specific prisons or wings is to monitor changes in their behaviour and attitudes and implement targeted interventions which would allow them to return back to the general prison community. This return to the general prison community will facilitate their adjustment to their future release after they have completed their prison term. It is also possible to use many prison locations and to disperse violent extremist offenders as much as possible.

125. Within prisons a decision should be taken whether violent extremist offenders will be part of the regular population and regime or whether they will be placed in a separate unit/wing within the prison(s). This concerns the physical place that offenders will be held in and to what extent they will be able to have contact with other prisoners who are not in this unit/wing. There currently is much debate about this topic and there is no long-term evidence available that suggests one approach is more effective than the other. To offer guidance in decision making, the Radicalisation Awareness Network Prison and Probation Working Group has developed the following useful overview of considerations:

Regime choice	Potential advantages	Potential disadvantages
<p>A) <i>Dispersed:</i> People suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts are placed among other prisoners and fall under the same general regime. This does not mean that offenders are placed in an ordinary unit; placement of each violent extremist offender is based on risk assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prisoners are less likely to regard themselves as marginalised because of their beliefs. They will, to some extent, be treated as other prisoners.</li> <li>- Prisoners might be positively influenced because of being around different groups of prisoners with different mind-sets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dealt with by non-specialist staff members instead of specialists.</li> <li>- Risk of radicalising other prisoners.</li> <li>- Both the prisoner and his/her environment require close monitoring to identify any negative influences.</li> <li>- Risk of extremists mingling with criminal networks.</li> <li>- Risk for staff being radicalised or intimidated</li> </ul>
<p><i>Segregated/placed together:</i> People suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts are placed together in a separate wing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All the prisoners on a wing can be completely monitored in their contacts within the wing.</li> <li>- Limited opportunity to influence other prisoners.</li> <li>- Individual and group work with prisoners on de-radicalisation/disengagement and other interventions.</li> <li>- Staff on a wing become experts because they work with radicalised prisoners on a daily basis; only a small group of staff members must be trained.</li> <li>- This approach may reassure the public that real and powerful measures are being taken to safeguard society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The wing can facilitate further radicalisation/extremist acts. New bonds between extremist prisoners can be formed and this can increase the risk when they leave prison.</li> <li>- Lack of contact with others can cause difficulties when socialising someone after their release.</li> <li>- Perceptions of unfairness could lead to further radicalisation of the prisoner, but also of supporters outside the prison.</li> <li>- Such facilities are expensive and need some free capacity for urgent situations.</li> <li>- Prisoners might feel stigmatised by being in a separate wing, yet others see it as a sign of raised status or credibility as an extremist. It could therefore lead to greater cohesion within the group</li> <li>- De-radicalisation/disengagement interventions could be hampered because of negative feelings and mistrust towards staff.</li> <li>- The approach risks establishing a group with great symbolic power.</li> </ul>
<p>B) <i>Combination:</i> Based on risk assessment, it is decided whether to place a person suspected or convicted of violent extremist acts in a separate or in an ordinary regime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tailor-made approach that fits the risk and needs of the prisoner.</li> <li>- After screening and assessment, the detainee can be placed in the most appropriate regime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both regimes need to be available.</li> <li>- Need for robust assessment tools.</li> <li>- Need for investing in training of larger group of staff</li> </ul>

126. It should be underlined that there is a need for clear criteria by which offenders are or are not placed on a special wing. It should also be possible to transfer to a lighter regime in terms of security, should assessment show decreased risk.

## **Placement tools and decision mechanisms**

127. Criminal justice and prison authorities should identify a consistent method using developed tools or processes to decide how an offender will be managed, including what type of security regime should be designated and the types of interventions are most suitable. It is important to ascertain whether the violent extremist behaviour is the primary element of the criminal actions of an offender or whether other aspects of the offender's behaviour are more important. Services need to be cautious about placing offenders in specific regimes (or recommending interventions) as a result of political or public pressure rather than on decisions based on the appropriateness of the management. Political pressure to implement interventions visible to the public may be significant with this population.
128. When violent extremist offenders are seen as a separate group that have a specific security regime and distinctive rehabilitation programmes. It follows that an individual charged with or convicted of a terrorism-related action or assessed as a violent extremist (even if the crime was not related to violent extremism) will be placed in that specific regime. It is important to consider every violent extremist offender as unique and requiring individualized or tailored attention. Violent extremist offenders should not be seen as a homogenous group. Individual differences should be taken into account including elements of motivation, risk elements and needs. If there is no specific regime in place for violent extremist offenders, placement and the regime into which the offender will be placed will depend on the outcome of regular risk assessment and related tools.

## **Safety and security measures within the prison unit**

129. In addition to the choice around creating a physically separated wing/unit for violent extremist offenders or not, there might be a specific security regime in place for violent extremist offenders. Considerations related to this regime can be for example:

Measure	Considerations for violent extremist offenders
i) Contact with other offenders	One of the key risks related to violent extremist offenders is that they might recruit or be triggered to use violence for the ideological cause. The opportunity and advisability of contact with other offenders is therefore of key importance.
ii) Restrictions around visitors and vetting of visitors	- Risk of continuing extremist activities through networks outside prison
iii) Opportunity for outside activities / numbers of hours a day in the cell	- how much and what kind of activities to be allowed
iv) Groups size for activities	Since the group is an important part of the violent extremist offender's circle of influence, and group dynamics may also have security risks, the size and composition of groups of violent extremist offenders doing activities together should be considered
v) Intimate searches	- This is a measure which needs to be carried out only if strictly necessary for safety and security reasons and in conformity with the national legislation and with Rule 54 of the European Prison Rules (including the rule that only a medical practitioner should carry out intimate searches).
vi) Recording of calls and conversations, reading of letters and emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Upholding a 'fan base' outside of prison</li> <li>- Being able to influence extremist groups inside and outside of prison</li> <li>- Planning attacks</li> <li>- This will also depend on national rules and regulations</li> </ul>
vii) Use of internet and other communication instruments	- The same considerations as above
viii) Access to work or other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can help in the rehabilitative process</li> <li>- Being bored may trigger negative behaviour</li> </ul>
ix) Access to religious and spiritual care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Should be available to all prisoners</li> <li>- Might have positive effects on violent extremist offenders</li> <li>- Strong ideologically driven violent extremist offenders might not want to interact with prison chaplains</li> </ul>
x) Use transfers to avoid group development	The CPT has continuously warned about the negative effects regular transfers of prisoners can cause. <sup>6</sup> In some countries prisoners sentenced for terrorist-related crimes are often transferred from one prison to another. The need for such transfers must be carefully evaluated on an individual basis against the risk posed by such prisoners, for example in terms of recruitment and group forming
xi) A reference staff member	Someone to whom staff members can report safety and security concerns. Members of staff who are specialised in radicalisation leading to violence. This will build staff confidence, may help avoid staff stress and inappropriate stigmatisation of prisoners and detect serious warning signs at an early stage.
xii) Rotating staff	When working specifically with violent extremist offenders or on a terrorist wing, it is advisable to rotate staff. After a period of time staff may develop "tunnel vision" or be emotionally burdened. Temporarily working on a different unit can help build professional confidence and resilience to influence from violent extremist offenders. This will also extend the pool of staff with experience working with violent extremist offenders.

<sup>6</sup> CPT/Inf/E (2002) 1 - Rev. 2015, para. 57, "The transfer of troublesome prisoners is another practice of interest to the CPT. Certain prisoners are extremely difficult to handle, and the transfer of such a prisoner to another establishment can sometimes prove necessary. However, the continuous moving of a prisoner from one establishment to another can have very harmful effects on his psychological and physical well-being. Moreover, a prisoner in such a position will have difficulty in maintaining appropriate contacts with his family and lawyer. The overall effect on the prisoner of successive transfers could under certain circumstances amount to inhuman and degrading treatment."

## **Preconditions for special security regimes for violent extremist offenders**

130. Consistent with dynamic security, the availability of well trained, knowledgeable, competent and resilient staff is the most important precondition when a specific security regime is in place for violent extremist offenders. This is especially important when such offenders are concentrated into a separate unit or wing. In a separate unit, new group dynamics are likely to emerge and staff should be prepared to:
- Detect early warning signals that disturbances are likely to occur;
  - Prevent and detect plotting and group conspiracies;
  - Prevent and detect recruitment or further radicalizing efforts between leaders and followers;
  - Diffuse tense situations;
  - Build relationships to gain the trust of offenders in order to encourage rehabilitation efforts;
  - Model pro-social behaviours and attitudes which challenge those associated with extremism;
  - Be able to detect manipulative efforts by offenders to influence staff members and their mind-set.

## **Safety and security in probation**

131. Safety and security in an open environment, such as when an offender is on probation or on conditional release, presents different challenge. This is because there is much less opportunity to know what the offender is doing or to influence his/her activities. Usually a system of sanctions and support is in place that has the objective of reducing the risk of reoffending. In general, more organisations will be involved in this compared to when the offender is incarcerated.
132. In many countries, the probation officer is usually the main point of contact responsible to oversee and support the offender in a reintegration process. Other important actors are police, security services, local authorities, welfare organisations, religious representatives, family members, volunteers, civil society organisations and local communities.
133. There are several conditions which can be put in place to restrict a violent extremist offender (including those who have served their sentence) in his/her activities or to encourage taking part in particular pro-social activities. In terms of restrictive measures, there may be:
- reporting obligations;
  - electronic monitoring to register the offender's movements;
  - prohibition to leave the country (withdrawal of travel documents)
  - restraining orders to avoid having contacts with certain persons or to go to certain areas;
  - restricting contacts with the media;
  - In some cases violent extremist offenders, including those who have served their sentence, are not allowed to have bank accounts or insurance accounts
134. In terms of measures to support rehabilitation and reintegration, options may be:
- Individual (one-to-one) interventions such as psychological support and use of mentors
  - Group interventions such as support groups, exit work in groups etc.
  - In some cases, taking part in these activities may be ordered by the court as a condition of supervision. In other cases it will be on a voluntary basis.
135. Some of the challenges facing probation officers are of a different nature than those confronting prison officers. The multi-agency frameworks that are built around the violent extremist offender on probation typically include many more partner organisations. The different interests and objectives of these organisations can lead to unnecessary and counter-productive actions. A forum, in which different stakeholders coordinate cases, can foster cooperation. It is recommended that a statutory agency be tasked with taking the lead in co-ordinating this process. Such coordination can facilitate communication on cases, approaches and interventions being implemented.
136. As probation officers do not see their clients on a daily basis, it may be difficult to assess the extent to which a probationer is communicating with an extremist network or contacting associates either physically or online. Many probation services in Europe do not have the resources, access or knowledge to keep track of online contacts, conversations or activity on the "dark web".

Although multi-agency co-operation may not be able to solve this limitation, it may assist in providing a more comprehensive picture of the status of probation activities.

137. With regard to violent extremist offenders, probation services often have to deal with groups and networks that know and communicate with each other. These groups often attempt to influence the probation officer or obtain valuable information on working methods. Close collaboration between probation officers and other agency staff who work with the same probationers can support staff resilience. Developing specific probation teams to work with violent extremist offenders or those who are suspected of becoming interested and involved in violent extremism can be helpful. Working in pairs also assists with the connection of information.
138. All staff should be vigilant to the potential danger that violent extremist offenders may present to staff and their families. There are many examples of offenders using blackmail, threats, intimidation, attempted corruption, favours and violence in order to influence staff to serve their own objectives. Such groups may seek to recruit and radicalise vulnerable staff members. All services should implement policies and processes to mitigate against such actions and encourage staff to report any actions being used against them or their colleagues. Assigning a reference staff member in the probation team, who is responsible for support of the probation officers and setting up effective reporting lines, is a practice that is being developed in several European countries.
139. Working closely together with the local community and civil society organisations is a key factor when it comes to safety and security around offenders on probation. The next chapter will provide information about how to connect with communities.

#### **Key points:**

- The use of dynamic security measures is key in dealing with violent extremist offenders.
- Security and safety measures in relation to violent extremist offenders may be under more public scrutiny compared to other offenders due to the general threat to society from terrorist attacks. On the other hand, there is also more risk of stigmatisation, and organisations monitoring human rights violations will need to be involved.
- It is important to develop both a national security and local security strategy and framework for violent extremist offenders which offer guidance on 1) criteria for defining violent extremist offenders 2) placement of violent extremist offenders within the correctional environment 3) particular safety and security measures.
- There is no consensus about the best regime in terms of a concentrated or dispersed model. It is advisable to consider what is the best suited prison policy depending on factors like numbers, cultural traditions, risk factors, types of intervention packages, resources available etc.
- Safety and security issues pose a different challenge when violent extremist offenders are on probation in society. A combination of restrictive and supporting conditions is needed to manage the risk of reoffending. Multi-agency cooperation is critical in this process and requires specific attention.
- Restrictions placed on persons deprived of their liberty should be the minimum necessary and proportionate to the legitimate objective for which they are imposed. (Rule 3, EPR).
- Disengagement opportunities should be supported and balanced against restrictions on activities due to security concerns.

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## **CHAPTER SIX: CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

### **The importance of societal events and context**

140. In most cases, violent extremist offenders will come back into society after serving their sentence. Maintaining and developing relationships with the family, with broader social networks and with the community of the offender is important to support reintegration. Also in cases where violent extremist offenders are not imprisoned but serve their sentence in the community, connections between probation and family and community members are important for a number of reasons.
141. The influence of events and circumstances in wider society and local communities are particularly important for managers and staff to be aware of and sensitive to when managing extremism- related issues in correctional or probation settings. Such events may significantly impact on offenders, officials and families and how they respond to each other and to their wider communities. Particular issues that managers and staff may need to be aware of include:
- a. The additional scrutiny of their professional practice by others (from solicitors, ministers, inspectorates, the general public);
  - b. The level of organisational risk that may be attached to extremist offenders and the effective management of extremism;
  - c. The ability to minimise prejudice and bias in processes, practices and decision making when terrorist attacks in the societies or communities of correctional officials may provoke strong negative feelings;
  - d. The additional influence that political decision-makers may have in directing correctional policy and practice in this area (which may run counter to approaches that correctional services may wish to make);
  - e. How broader political and social approaches to addressing and preventing extremism may impact on how individuals and families respond to approaches in correctional settings.
142. The impact and influence of events in wider society (social, economic, political etc.) may directly impact on whether and how individuals respond to interventions seeking to address extremism. This is not a typical consideration when working with other offender groups. For example, high profile events in foreign and national policy which are perceived to be addressed against a particular group (ethnic, religious or other) may strengthen an individual's commitment to a group, cause or ideology. This may increase personal resistance to intervention attempts or make aspects of such work more problematic. Similarly, such events may create opportunities or conditions in which individuals may be more receptive or open to intervention. In some cases, political or social changes in themselves may facilitate changes in individual behaviour which may encourage disengagement and reduce the likelihood of individuals committing future extremist offences.
143. Changes in an offender's circumstances (e.g. regime or security measures) may trigger a response in the offender's community. They may feel stigmatised by (perceived) special treatment and act upon this through, for example, demonstrations. In turn, the community response may fuel responses within the prison (e.g. hunger strikes, destroying of property). The possible ripple effects in the community need to be taken into account during decision making processes around violent extremist offenders.

### **Co-operating with families and peers**

144. Family, friends and local communities can play a unique role in how participants choose to approach, participate and progress on interventions. When carefully chosen, involvement of the above can contribute positively in a number of ways, which include:
- a. Discouraging continued interest and involvement in violent extremism;
  - b. Providing meaningful opportunities to encourage disengagement;



- c. Providing alternative, pro-social relationships and providing important voices which challenge justifications or perceptions in support of extremism. These individuals and groups may provide trust, credibility, opportunities and incentives for change, which state officials may be unable to provide.
145. Promoting, sustaining and maintaining disengagement and desistance is expected to be more likely when state officials, families, friends and community groups are working cooperatively together to achieve these ends. In addition, being involved from an early stage and at every stage will help family members to deal with grief about their loved ones being in prison and give them an opportunity to help and support them.
  146. Family members, friends and local communities may also contribute negatively to this process by supporting involvement in and offending on behalf of extremist groups, causes or ideologies. In these circumstances they may discourage participation, particularly in interventions or sabotage progress (through threatening exclusion or severing of ties for example). They may continue to encourage and strengthen involvement and relationships with other extremists, as well as reaffirm arguments which justify support of extremism. Careful consideration, therefore, should be given to whom offenders can have contact with whilst in custody and in the community. This can present significant and complex challenges with regard to human rights, and especially if other direct family members also support or are involved with extremist groups, causes or ideologies. Government policies may also determine whether certain groups should have contact or not with extremist offenders.
  147. To determine whether family, friends and/or local community members will be able to help in the rehabilitation process, it is important during the assessment process to gather information about the family and social network of the offender. The case file of the offender should include information about family ties, circumstances and developments, as well as information regarding the wider social network and community. Information may come from intelligence services, police, prison staff, probation staff, psychologists and other relevant staff. Rule 5 of the Guidelines for prison and probation staff regarding radicalisation and violent extremism applies in this case. Through case analysis and observation of behaviour, prison staff, probation staff, psychologists and others can develop an idea of the interaction between the offender and his/her family, friends or community contacts. The depth of these analyses will depend on each particular country's rules and regulations on recording calls, reading letters, listening in on conversations and other monitoring actions.

## **Children and violent extremist offenders**

148. All children of incarcerated parents/family members or parents who are on probation have increased vulnerability. These children may be subjected to stigma, social isolation, shame and/or fear. As explained by the NGO "Children of Prisoners Europe": "Children of offenders may suffer instability and disruption of the vital parent-child bond; they may witness their parent's violent arrest or be bullied at school".
149. With regard to violent extremist offenders, a primary concern is that children are protected from any influences towards radicalisation. There are challenges in striking a fair balance between the potentially competing interests at stake, especially the right of children to be protected, the right of children to maintain contact with their parents, the right of the parents to have access to their children and the interests of public order. These rights should be respected within established legal boundaries, taking into account however that the best interests of the child must be of primary consideration, according to Art. 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.
150. One particular challenge is responding to attempts by radicalised offenders to radicalise and recruit children. This can involve complex issues such as the risk of disrupting on-going investigations and interference with the role of intelligence services. In some cases such offenders should have restricted contact with children. The contacts should be managed appropriately and proportionately to the rights of the child and shall be informed by documented evidence which may justify any such restrictions on access or communications.

## **Involving non-state practitioners in the rehabilitation process**

151. Which actors are involved in the rehabilitation process will have a significant impact on the effectiveness of this process. With regard to violent extremist offenders, perhaps even more so compared to ordinary prisoners, also having non-state practitioners involved is of importance because:
- a. Offenders may identify correctional services officials as members of the 'out group' or 'enemy' because they are representatives of the state (above and beyond typical staff/offender divisions);
  - b. Religious or cultural aspects related to these issues may mean that non-state practitioners have been viewed as more credible or competent to address these issues;
  - c. Non-state practitioners may feel a responsibility to engage in the process of deradicalisation.
152. The potential benefits of interventions delivered by non-state practitioners include:
- a. They may gain the trust of participants more quickly or develop a stronger level of trust;
  - b. They may more successfully engage with those opposed to the state;
  - c. They may have more specific knowledge and appreciation for specific issues underlying involvement (e.g. grievances, marginalisation);
  - d. They may communicate more from shared experience to challenge continued involvement (especially if 'former' extremists are used).
153. The potential benefits of interventions being delivered by state practitioners include:
- a. That state authorities are more confident about practitioner's backgrounds as they may present fewer organisational and reputational risks;
  - b. The content of interventions may be more transparent and aligned with government policy (joined-up approaches);
  - c. Practitioners may have more formal skills and knowledge in behavioural change and they may have more experience working in correctional settings (and be less open to manipulation and conditioning).
154. When working with non-state actors, structures of funding should be carefully considered. Since an important advantage of a non-state actor over a state actor is legitimacy in the eyes of the violent extremist offender, being funded by the state might diminish this advantage. The non-state actor might be perceived as an extension of the state.

## **Non-governmental and civil society organisations**

155. Many non-state practitioners will be working for a non-governmental organisation - such as charities or foundations, a civil society organisation - such as community clubs, sports organisations or as independent professionals. Often these organisations have developed particular experience and expertise that has much added value in the prison and probation setting. Not all countries have these types of organisations which possess knowledge about radicalisation and violent extremism. However, there may be organisations with experience in related areas, such as working with gangs or cults. These groups have similar dynamics to extremist groups. With the related experience, these organisations can be valuable in terms of involvement in interventions with violent extremist offenders. Their engagement with violent extremists can serve as a foundation from which they are able to develop more in-depth experience on extremism. Consulting with such organisations in other countries that may provide additional expertise. When selecting such organisations or individual practitioners, it is important to consider their track record, their network and reputation within the community as well as with other institutional partners (e.g. police and intelligence) and the funding structure.

## **Mentors**

156. Working with mentors can take many different forms but the key element is that it is a one-to-one intervention where a mentor and the offender as a mentee interact over a specific course of time. There is no single best profile for a mentor. It may be a peer, a well-respected member of the community or even a fellow inmate. It is key that the offender accepts his/her mentor and is willing to start a conversation.
157. Lessons from existing mentor schemes include:
  - a. Screening, training and continuous support of mentors is important;
  - b. Mentors of violent extremist offenders should be able to offer different perspectives to the offender and be able to have an open, non-judgmental attitude;
  - c. Building a relationship takes time and a mentoring relationship should therefore have enough time to develop;
  - d. Continuation of mentoring after release will increase the positive effects and will provide the offender with some stability;
  - e. Offering some (financial) compensation to mentors may ensure their long term commitment.

## **Religious representatives**

158. Across Europe the importance of religious and spiritual care for offenders is gaining renewed attention especially in light of violent extremist offenders who are religiously inspired and adhere to a religiously based ideology.
159. First of all, the positive effect of religious and spiritual care has been well researched throughout the world. Especially for first time offenders, adopting a (new) belief system can help them cope with prison circumstances. Having religious and spiritual care in place for all prisoners is an important first step that still needs to be taken in many European countries. With the changing cultural and religious diversity in society and therefore also in prisons, there is also a need for flexibility and adaptability to these changes when it comes to prison chaplaincy.
160. Experience has shown that many violent extremists have either limited knowledge of religion or a very particular interpretation of it based on the ideology spread by an extremist group. One of the key roles of chaplains is to increase their religious knowledge and understanding and to make offenders more critical in terms of the extremist and ideological interpretation. This can be accomplished by introducing the offender to other theological sources and scholars. In addition, chaplains have a role as confidants; people who can be trusted to confide in and with whom they can share personal emotions, frustrations and grievances. This may help to relieve tensions and pressures with which violent extremist offenders may be struggling.
161. The main considerations for working with religious representatives in rehabilitation interventions with violent extremist offenders are:
  - a. Selection: careful selection of chaplains is one of the key components of providing effective religious care.
    - As there are many schools of thought within each religion, this should be taken into account when looking at the prison population background and recruiting and selecting chaplains.
    - When chaplains also have a positive status in and connection with the outside community, this is likely to enhance their credibility and impact within prison. This would favour a local recruitment approach.
    - They should be willing to go through a screening process if they want to work in the criminal justice sector.
    - All religious services should be conducted in the language spoken by the host country.

- b. Organisational status: some countries employ chaplains who then become part of the correctional staff where others hire chaplains to deliver specific services. For the first category there is a risk that they become less credible or are considered 'state agents' in the eyes of violent extremist offenders. However as this is sometimes also prescribed by law, the organisational options will differ for each country.
- c. It is important for chaplains to receive training on how to work in a prison environment with violent extremists or with such offenders on probation in addition to their work with other types of offenders. Specific information on the radicalisation process is recommended.
- d. Agreements around sensitive information: Conversations of offenders with chaplains are generally confidential and bound by privacy agreements. However, chaplains might hear things or pick up signals that can be an indication of radicalisation, recruitment or even violent activities. It will differ for each country as to how such information will be handled but it is important to make agreements with the chaplains that delineate when they are obliged to report worrying signals to the prison/ probation authority.
- e. Co-operation between chaplains and other prison/ probation staff: to work effectively, it is important that trust is in place between chaplains and other staff members. In cases where staff are not very culturally/religiously sensitive or not aware of radicalisation processes, they might be distrusting and suspicious towards chaplains. This in turn makes it more difficult for chaplains to do their work as the staff often have much more interaction with the offenders and because it creates tensions that may be noticed and used by offenders.
- f. In the European context, there is a lack of standardization or agreement on the educational or training requirements of chaplains and religious teachers who work in prisons. Prison administrations should be aware of the issue of the lack of established standards in the recruitment, education and training of chaplains and religious representatives who propose to work in prisons, and take steps to reduce the risk of misuse of their position for promoting radicalisation to violent extremism.

## **Former violent extremists**

- 162. Involving former violent extremists in interventions such as one-to-one or group programmes and mentoring initiatives can be a very powerful tool as they provide counter- and alternative narratives, including their first-hand experience of leaving extremist groups and ideologies. Having experienced being part of an extremist group and having had an extremist mind-set themselves, former extremists usually have strong credibility. They are also well placed to understand and empathize with the struggles and conflicting thoughts and feelings violent extremist offenders may have. In many cases former extremists have left the violent extremist groups many years ago, have developed a more open mind-set and are intrinsically motivated to help others do the same. If former violent extremists have been in prison previously, they will also be able to relate to the experience of being in prison.
- 163. When working with former violent extremists, the following considerations are important:
  - a. It is very important to establish that a former has really left the extremist violent mind-set and distanced him or herself from the extremist group. One way of looking into this is whether the former has associated him or herself openly with a registered organisation engaged with reintegration work;
  - b. There is a risk of hidden agendas when working with former violent extremists. Structural evaluation of the activities and actions of the former offender and careful observation of his responses, may help in avoiding this risk;
  - c. In some cases, being perceived as working for the state may impair the credibility of former violent extremists in the eyes of violent extremist offenders. They may be seen as traitors and this may also affect their safety.
  - d. It is important to select former violent extremists with the right qualities and competences to work with violent extremist offenders.

## Victims

164. There are different ways to include victims of extremist violence and terrorist attacks in rehabilitation and restorative interventions for violent extremist offenders and for the victims themselves. The sensitivities surrounding the involvement of victims cannot be overemphasised. Many victims are traumatised by the events they or their loved ones have incurred. A careful selection of who is willing and emotionally able to give a testimony or even meet an offender is of great importance.
165. Different ways in which victims (or their stories) can be involved in interventions:
- a. In personal encounters between offenders and victims. This can be in the form of one-to-one encounters with a mediator/counsellor present or in a group setting where one or multiple victims talk to/with multiple offenders. Personal encounters require a long and careful preparation time. There should be 'safe words' that victims can use to indicate they want to stop the encounter and there should not be any pressure to reach an objective (e.g. forgiveness, agreement and understanding);
  - b. Through video, taped or written stories in which victims tell their story. In this case interaction with the victim is not possible but it may offer a different perspective to violent extremist offenders and it is less confronting for the victim;
  - c. Through stories and role playing used by experienced practitioners - this is used in restorative justice interventions where focus lies on the harm done by violence rather than on the offender him/herself or on the ideology.
166. The restorative justice approach can be applied in cases of violent extremist offenders. As indicated by the European Forum for Restorative Justice, "restorative justice" is seen as *a broad approach oriented towards repairing, as far as possible, the harm caused by crime or other transgressions*. A core element of restorative justice is active participation by the victim, offender and possibly other parties such as the community. Different forms of restorative justice practices exist and have been used successfully in some countries.

### Key points:

- Be aware of and seek to minimise the potential for bias and prejudice due to factors such as the profile of this issue, the reputational risk involved and the impact of external events, such as terrorist attacks, on decision making.
- Be aware of and responsive to external events which may impact on individual participation in interventions and disengagement decisions etc. and likewise on events in prison which may have a ripple effect in the community.
- Processes to ensure the background of family, friends and local community members can be appropriately vetted and people concerned know that vetting is involved.
- Maintain appropriate contact between family members and violent extremist offenders which balance human rights alongside security considerations even when family members are also detained.
- Clear processes for how family, friends or NGOs can contribute to interventions and disengagement and desistance efforts.
- Policy and processes which establish and clarify the roles and responsibilities of state and non-state practitioners in intervention efforts.
- Recruit a range of persons (from non-governmental organisations, religious representatives, mentors, former violent extremists and victims) to deliver interventions on the basis of transparent skills and competencies related to effectively working with violent extremist offenders.

- Be open to work in an innovative way, using civil society, families, peers, former offenders as this helps with reintegration into or acceptance within society.

**References / further reading:**

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- Website European Forum for Restorative Justice;
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- Conference report: Criminal Justice Platform Europe, Radicalisation and Violent Extremism - Barcelona 26th April 2016;
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## CHAPTER SEVEN: CAPACITY BUILDING IN PRISON AND PROBATION

### Introduction

167. In order to be able to implement the suggested practices in the preceding chapters, it is essential to invest in capacity building within the criminal justice system. Although a complete transformation of a prison or probation system is very complex, small steps and incremental changes can make a significant positive difference. There is great diversity in the prison and probation systems in European countries, and in terms of capacity building in these institutions there is no one-size-fits-all strategy or programme. Strengthening the foundation of prison and probation services is often a precondition to the implementation of successful targeted programmes to prevent and counter radicalisation.

### Cost-effectiveness

168. In terms of capacity building, financial resources are often the first challenge that needs to be tackled. Financial frameworks and funding circumstances differ in each Member State. Nevertheless effective measures, such as positive staff-offender interactions need not be costly.
169. It is important to highlight that although it is beneficial to use specific approaches with violent extremist offenders, existing structures that work well with gangs or organised crime groups can be very effective and applied successfully to this target group.
170. A first step in capacity building is to map efforts which are already in place. This includes determining the status of staff training in the area of radicalisation and extremism, identifying whether specific processes are in place to manage this issue, and examining if counter extremism processes are in place. Investigation can also determine if signals of radicalisation are being reported by staff and whether there is a system in place to deal with these reports. The mapping effort will provide an overview of the activities that are taking place and identify any gaps. Current activities can be reviewed and decisions can be taken in terms of the priorities for the establishment of new activities and processes. In European countries, the group of violent offenders is very small in terms of absolute numbers and relative to the overall offender population. Activities and interventions for this population should be proportionate to the numbers and the risk represented by the offenders involved.
171. There are potential funders in addition to national authorities. European programmes may have funding available to support the development of training, to support or conduct research or to implement interventions.

### Relevant skills and competences

172. Currently knowledge continues to evolve about specific practitioner competencies, qualities and skills which may be effective with this group. It is likely that the general competencies and qualities of staff which appear to be effective in delivering other offender behaviour programmes are also relevant for this group. Important skills for practitioners include the ability to develop a collaborative relationship with the offender, to be able to model pro-social behaviour and to challenge problematic thinking in a supportive rather than in a confrontational manner.
173. Evolving knowledge suggests that certain specific qualities and competencies may be particularly important working with this group. These include:
- a. Modelling anti-extremist attitudes and behaviour e.g. being flexible, questioning, being open-minded, tolerant and inclusive;
  - b. Adopting a style which is resilient, collaborative, empathetic and sensitive to the values, beliefs and background of others (identity sensitive);
  - c. An ability to engage individuals on a personal rather than on a political or academic level;
  - d. An ability to empower individuals to re-examine and take steps to change their relationship with an extremist group, cause or ideology;

- e. Being confident and competent to discuss issues related to seeking political change and human rights (such as freedom of expression) while recognizing and being assertive when behaviours to bring about change are problematic and warrant intervention.

## **Staff training**

174. Both from the rehabilitative as well as from the security perspective, staff are a key element in dealing with violent extremist offenders. Investing in the development of both basic and specialized staff knowledge and competences is important in order to build capacity. The importance of dynamic security and the use of current knowledge and competences in a targeted manner should be stressed in staff training. Recruitment of a diverse staff (in terms of language, religion, culture, gender, ethnic background) is important to reflect and deal with the diversity in the offender population.
175. In terms of training, different training schemes should be offered to different groups of staff:
- a. In general, staff should be trained (either within the basic staff training programme or education or in addition to basic staff training) on cultural sensitivity, tolerance and non-discriminatory behaviour;
- b. It is recommended that all staff receive general awareness training on radicalisation including basic identification techniques. This training package should consist of:
- General knowledge about the phenomenon of radicalisation and why this is a problem in the prison and probation context and for staff members themselves;
  - Information concerning definitions that are used within the relevant member state and how to use these terms;
  - General knowledge of different ideologies and extremist worldviews;
  - General knowledge about images, symbols, words/phrases, slogans and other visible or verbal expressions relating to these ideologies;
  - Information related to the difference between moderate religious behaviour and indications of radicalisation;
  - Indicators of specific or deviant behaviour that may indicate radicalisation;
  - Case studies to support the understanding of different scenarios and situations in order to practice appropriate responses to these situations;
  - Information about regulations and processes to follow when radicalisation and/or extremist behaviours have been observed, including the professional mandate of the staff member, lines of reporting and processes for feedback on the reporting;
  - Information about the approaches staff can use in their day-to-day roles to help develop offender resilience against violent extremism.
176. For specially designated staff such as those professionals who are working on special units, (psychologists, team leaders, others) and who will work directly with violent extremist offenders, additional training should be provided and related to the role and background of the professionals. Training should include:
- In depth knowledge about different ideologies, groups and causes;
  - General and targeted interventions;
  - How to deliver and correctly interpret risk assessment approaches specifically pertinent to violent extremism;
  - information sharing and use of appropriate sharing/reporting structures;
  - Techniques that can be used for difficult conversations in order to facilitate disengagement and de-radicalisation;
  - Additional skill development for engagement;
  - Delivery of specific de-radicalisation and disengagement interventions.

## **Training of interveners and assessors**

177. Anyone delivering interventions with violent extremist offenders should have access to additional levels of management, support and supervision in order to deliver specialised interventions necessary for violent extremist offenders. As with other offending behaviour programmes, effective interventions are likely to be those which are well managed, delivered as intended and provide appropriate levels of



support and supervision. However, there are a number of reasons why additional management, support and supervision may be required by those delivering interventions to prevent extremism:

- a. Those delivering interventions, by virtue of their roles, may become targets for conditioning, manipulation, corruption and intimidation.
- b. Given that interventions may be more specifically focussed on helping individuals to renegotiate relationships, the boundaries of working relationships should be more clearly defined and managed.
- c. As our knowledge of effective interventions is less established with this group, there may be more professional discretion within the limits of the law used by practitioners who may require also more support and supervision to try and achieve intended outcomes.
- d. Practitioners may find it more difficult to build practice experience in working with such individuals, given that there may not be many of these individuals in prisons or on probation.
- e. Practitioners may be perceived as members of an offenders 'out-group' which may bring both challenges and opportunities but which either way requires close support and supervision.

## **Staff empowerment**

178. Radicalisation and violent extremism are often high on the political and organisational agenda. As a result, staff members might feel pressure and insecurity about their competences to deal with violent extremist offenders. It is important to maintain confident staff with trust in their skills and knowledge in dealing with these offenders. In addition, they should be offered ways (as described in the training section above) to enhance their knowledge and skills.
179. Working with violent extremist offenders can be a very intensive job as they can put psychological pressure on staff members. Some violent extremist offenders may be in the public spotlight which puts staff behaviour and decisions under more scrutiny. Good support systems for staff dealing with violent extremist offenders are important. This support may include:
  - Debriefing.
  - Stress management.
  - Mentoring (e.g. from a peer staff member or an external mentor).
  - Creating a safety net (clear procedures, fall back options and supportive management).

## **Creating co-operation and knowledge, sharing networks**

180. Creating local, national and international networks in which knowledge is shared between policy-makers, researchers and practitioners can offer added value in terms of capacity building.
  - Examples of European networks: Council of Europe [Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER), Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP)]; Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN); European Organisation of Prison of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris); Confederation of European Probation (CEP); European Platform for Restorative Justice (EPRJ).
  - Examples of International networks: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF).
181. A need for increased communication between governments and government agencies is essential. The success of the management and assessment of violent extremists and radicalised offenders is dependent on the timely sharing of information between and within agencies and within and between governments. Violent extremism does not stop at national borders, and the security of both the prison community and the communities in which extremists live are dependent upon the full communication of pertinent information on individuals who may present a threat to one or many nations. The sharing of such information is critical to the safety and security of the citizens in multiple nations into which a former prisoner or probationer can transit without difficulty.

## **Research and evaluation**

182. There is a need for increased investment by government agencies and international bodies in research pertaining to (1) increased validation of the available risk assessment protocols for violent extremism, (2) determining the effectiveness and optimal principles of disengagement and de-radicalisation programs, (3) obtaining information on the effectiveness of radicalisation prevention programmes, (4) researching and reporting on optimal strategies observed for successful re-integration of former violent extremists.
183. Investment in research is essential to provide more evidence-based information on desistance, disengagement and de-radicalisation programmes that are providing the best outcomes. Rehabilitation programmes in prisons require robust evaluation in order to improve effectiveness and provide the best opportunities for offenders to desist from violent extremism and re-engage with civil society upon release. This will require a willingness of prisons to be open and transparent in their approaches and a willingness to modify their programmes based on new research and outcome evaluations.
184. There is a need for inter-governmental collaboration and for the establishment of a multinational data base for risk assessment protocols and to determine violent extremist intervention programmes outcome data. Increased knowledge of violent extremism and the methods to address the risk and threat posed by released prisoners and those on probation or detained on remand is dependent on developing more scientific data. Violent extremism is a low base rate problem despite its catastrophic nature and casualties caused by terrorist attacks. Governments are attempting to establish databases for the collection of information that will provide more knowledge of efficient protocols and management. These initiatives require support to succeed. There are issues related to the national protection of data that may impact inter-governmental collaboration. The need is urgent for such co-operation and collaboration.
185. There is a need for policy-relevant and evidence-based research that supports management of prisoners in the correctional setting and subsequent to release or probation. This will include the foreign - fighter phenomenon which is a criminal offence in many jurisdictions today.

## **Communication and the media**

186. There should be a clear and defined strategy for all communication between prison officials and staff with the media or with the general public. The strategy and communications policy should be sensitive to confidentiality issues relating to offenders and staff. These established strategies and procedures for dealing with media and for the transmission of information during both crisis and in non-emergency situations should be communicated to all staff. Staff should not be permitted to communicate any information regarding offenders via social media or other informal methods and the identity of professionals working with violent offenders should be protected.
187. With regard to violent extremist and terrorist offenders, both prison and probation should be alert that some cases are highly media sensitive. Through a number of communication means (especially on the internet), both the offender as well as his/her lawyer, family, friends may communicate with the media about situations related to the prison or probation sentence and circumstances. The general communication strategy should take into account the nature of these high profile cases. Staff should be aware that - unlike most other offenders - groups in the community may actively seek to use the circumstances of violent extremist offenders (in prison and probation) to promote their cause and challenge the authorities. How such offenders are treated in prison (in particular) may be exploited by such groups for their own purposes. Influencing communication to force political change is a significant tool used by extremist groups and therefore staff must remain alert to the agendas of such groups and how any communication with the wider community could be manipulated. Staff should take steps to mitigate the misuse of information through, for example, co-ordinating communications about specific issues through a central press office, proactively releasing information about policies and procedures (rather than just doing this reactively) and pre-empting how information could be exploited if communicated without due consideration and care. In order to ensure public reassurance and understanding, regular work with the media shall be carried out.

**Key points:**

- Use existing structures, competences and funds to build an approach to deal with violent extremist offenders (especially if resources are limited).
- Provide adequate training to staff in terms of awareness of the indicators of violent extremism and the radicalisation to violence processes.
- Provide specialist training for staff dealing directly with violent extremist offenders.
- Ensure that staffing policies promote diversification in terms of ethnic background, language, gender, religion and culture.
- Have appropriate training, management and supervision structures to support practitioners delivering interventions (including social workers, educators, psychologists, religious representatives).
- Connect with networks nationally and internationally to increase the relevant knowledge base and best practice awareness amongst prison and probation professionals.
- Investment in research and evaluation is recommended while ensuring the protection of the identities of those researched.
- Create clear rules for communication with media and work are advised to gain public support.
- Violent extremist offenders should be engaged with and monitored in a cooperation network with other agencies such as police, intelligence services and other related professionals using shared language, information and understanding.
- Staff should fully understand the particular and distinct issues violent extremist offenders may present and how supervision should be used to address and manage these.
- Staff should consider the specific issues which may be more significant with this group of offenders, such as managing conditioning, establishing boundaries, and modelling behaviour to challenge and undermine stereotypical perceptions.
- Policies and processes should be developed to assist front-line staff in seeking support from community agencies and organisations in allowing offenders access to basic needs and wider opportunities that may support disengagement and desistance from offending.

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