08-09/05/2019

EX POST PAPER
RAN POL – Reintegration and risk management of released former violent extremist and terrorism offenders
Marseille, France

What role do police play in the resocialisation and risk management of released former terrorist offenders?

Member States will be confronted with the release of detainees who were convicted for violent extremism or even terrorism. This brings challenges for society in terms of risk management and resocialisation. Police across Europe need to be aware of these challenges and need to be prepared to play a matching role. This paper identifies potential roles and contributions for police, before and after the release.

Introduction

This ex post paper has been written for first-line police and law enforcement practitioners. The objective is twofold: first, to raise awareness of the important role police play in responding to the potential risks posed by released former violent extremist offenders re-entering society; and second, to encourage police to reflect on their own level of engagement and preparedness when it comes to the resocialisation and risk management of these released prisoners. By no means does this paper suggest that police are alone in responding to the potential threats that may be posed by released prisoners with an Islamist extremist profile. Police are only one actor in a multi-agency setting, and this paper illustrates that there are wide variations across the EU in the way police engage this issue and work together with other relevant actors. In detailing these different approaches, this paper also serves an informative purpose for police practitioners and demonstrates the importance of including police as one of the key partners in dealing with this issue.

There is a sense of urgency to this topic. The Islamist extremist prison population in Europe has grown since 2011, and many are expected to be released in upcoming years. In France alone, there are currently estimated to be some 2 300 radicalised prisoners and probationers, including 500 terrorist offenders in prison and 1 000 common law detainees who radicalised inside prison ([1]). The UK police raised concerns too ([2]). This prognosis gives rise to the question if these prisoners, upon release, will (re-)establish links with other Islamist extremist groups in Europe, (re-)engage in violence and form a threat to society. This potential threat transgresses the national borders of a country, something we have already seen in previous attacks in, for example, Belgium and France.

An adequate response to this threat begins with awareness: awareness of what the threat entails, of the different actors and their corresponding roles and responsibilities, and of existing barriers and limitations that may thwart a successful response. Raising awareness is a necessary precursor for being prepared. This paper concludes with a list of suggestions for enhancing the level of police awareness and preparedness.

What needs to be done?

Mitigating the potential future risks of a released former violent extremist offender begins during their detention period, and broadly speaking involves two interrelated — but sometimes seen as separate — subjects: risk management and resocialisation.

Risk management

The management of risks can be split into monitoring, risk assessment, and risk mitigating measures and interventions. The first and lowest level is monitoring and information gathering; there should always be some sort of monitoring mechanism in place. Risk assessment is the word used to describe the act of assessing someone by using a tool, collecting intel and weighing the information. Known risk assessment tools are, for instance, ERG 22+ and the Violent Extremist Risk Assessment 2 Revised (VERA-2R) ([3]).

Risk management involves both monitoring and risk assessment, followed by actions and interventions to reduce risks. This should be organised in either the prison or the local multi-agency set-up that incorporates the different stakeholders, including police. Most of the measures directly target the subject and those interacting with the subject. Successful reintegration and resocialisation can contribute to risk reduction and improve the chances for successfully monitoring someone and gathering information. Risk management is the whole package of positive or promotive measures of resocialisation, in combination with more security-oriented measures.

Resocialisation

Preparing a prisoner for resocialisation already begins in prison (disengagement programmes) and falls under the responsibility of prison management. After release, continuing exit/disengagement programmes may be a condition of probation. Successful disengagement, however, can be further encouraged by helping the subject succeed in other aspects of their resocialisation. This can include, but is not limited to, finding a new job, enrolling in a new educational course, finding an apartment, getting a subscription to the gym or attending a new mosque.

([1]) Presentation Francois Toutain.
([2]) Grierson, J., & Barr, C., Police facing surge in extremists released from jail, analysis finds. The Guardian, 3 June 2018.
([3]) Cornwall, S., & Molenkamp, M., Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders, Ex Post Paper. Brussels, Belgium: Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2018.

Risk management and resocialisation may not fall under the core responsibility of police, especially not when the subject is still in prison. In fact, resocialisation activities often do not fall under the domain of police, even after release. Nevertheless, given the unique position police hold in the community, they do have a role to play and can contribute to the success of both risk management and resocialisation. The table below lists the different factors that come into play before and after a subject is released from prison. Police can use this as a checklist to map out the activities in which they are already involved, and as a reminder of other aspects that could benefit from police involvement or, at the very least, police awareness. The next section will further delve into what makes police a relevant actor in the multi-agency setting and what their responsibilities could entail.

Table 1: Checklist that police can use to map out involvement in relevant activities before and after release

Check the police actions before release	Check the police actions after release
Risk management	**Risk management**
[ ] How and when are local authorities informed of release?	[ ] By whom and how is risk management organised?
	[ ] Who informs the authorities about probation measures?
	[ ] Will the local police be given the in-prison risk assessment?
	[ ] What is the role of (local?) police in risk management?
Risk assessment	**Risk assessment**
[ ] Who does the risk assessment?	[ ] Who does the risk assessment?
[ ] Role and contribution of police?	[ ] Role and contribution of police?
[ ] Police feeding into the risk assessment?	[ ] Local police feeding into the risk assessment?
[ ] Will the police be given the in-prison risk assessment?	[ ] Cooperation between police, probation and local authority?
Exit: deradicalisation/disengagement	**Exit: deradicalisation/disengagement**
[ ] Who will do this?	[ ] Who will do this?
[ ] What is the role of local police?	[ ] What is the role of local police?
Resocialisation – reintegration	**Resocialisation – reintegration**
[ ] Who supports successful reintegration?	[ ] Who supports successful reintegration?
[ ] Is there a role for police?	[ ] Is there a role for police?
[ ] Who is in contact with the subject's family?	[ ] Who is in contact with the subject's family?
	[ ] Who engages with societal actors (such as school, community)?
Police preparation	**Police organisation**
[ ] How are police prepared / informed / trained?	[ ] How are police informed / trained?

Multi-agency approach: What role can police play?

Police hold a unique position in society due to their proximity to the local community and their responsibility for establishing a safe and secure environment. In this sense, police have the ability to influence, or establish, public trust. Moreover, their responsibility to create a safe and secure environment on a daily basis means that police are well connected to other key local players in the domain of safety and security. In short, they are well informed of underlying issues that could influence the status quo, are well connected, and have the ability to access and engage with all different levels of the community. These factors place police in a strong position to fulfil an important role in the risk management and resocialisation of released former violent extremist offenders.

POTENTIAL ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Before release

Before release of the subject in question, there are a number of important activities geared to facilitating the post-release transition. Three of these are: risk assessment and resocialisation; engaging with the subject's family; and organising a multi-agency working (MAW) group for when the prisoner is released.

Risk assessment and resocialisation: Risk assessment and resocialisation fall under the responsibility of the penitentiary services, and deradicalisation or exit programmes can be carried out by NGOs or other civil society organisations that carry out activities inside detention centres. In most cases, police will not be involved at this stage. The exception seems to be Aarhus, Denmark, where it is not uncommon for someone from the local police to visit the subject while in detention. This allows the police to begin establishing a relationship of trust at a very early stage, which can then be further developed after release. Moreover, it gives the police a significant amount of information regarding the subject, some of which can, under legal code 115 in Denmark, be shared with social workers likely to engage with the subject after release. This may further facilitate the process of resocialisation. There is a twofold benefit from involving the community police at this early stage, namely increasing the offender's trust in police authorities and preventing him/her from reoffending [4]. In addition, this kind of proximity to the subject gives police a unique position to acquire information, which they can subsequently use in their risk assessment.

The example of France

Risk assessment: There are special radicalisation assessment units in which inmates follow a 15-week programme to assess the extent of their radicalisation and their risk level. These assessments are jointly carried out by the penitentiary affairs department and probation services, and no inmate should be transferred or released without having followed this programme. The results can be shared with local domestic intelligence. The assessment also helps determine how an individual should be accompanied throughout their prison sentence to prepare them for resocialisation.

Resocialisation: After the risk assessment, probation specialists come in to work with these prisoners in an attempt to deconstruct their ideology and to support their resocialisation. The penitentiary affairs department also cooperates with theologians from universities who can help formulate counter- or alternative narratives. During a probation period the probation services can also work with projects like PAIRS, which support detainees in their resocialisation.

Engaging with the subject's family and local community: There are two notable examples of where local police work closely with the subject's family throughout their imprisonment: Aarhus, Denmark and Munich, Germany. The police in both Munich and Aarhus try to build a close relationship with a subject's family. In the example of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), their work begins the moment the FTF has left for Syria. Police reach out to the family and take on a coaching role; they give advice on how the family should communicate in case

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[4] Molenkamp, M., & Wouterse, L., Triple P: Coordination and collaboration between police, prison and probation services in dealing with violent extremist and terrorist offenders, Ex Post Paper. Prague, Czech Republic: Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2018.

they contact them, how they can motivate them to stay in touch and how they can convince them that they have a safe haven to which they can return. If the FTF returns and is arrested, the police maintain a relationship with the family throughout the subject's detention. In some cases, they also visit the subject in prison. This means that from the very beginning, the police are often well-informed about the case. Moreover, engaging with the family offers police a more holistic understanding of the situation with which they are dealing.

> "*It is important to take a systemic approach to the family, to look at families as a whole and the dynamics between family members. Solely focusing on the individual at risk or one of the family members is often not enough to understand the influences and pressures that exist and form one's behaviour. The social environment or community of the family also affect attitudes and behaviour.*" ([5])

Working closely with the families of extremist offenders is also a way for police to engage in effective prevention work. Extending this to the community as a whole, and establishing a strong police relationship with the family and community, can facilitate (future) investigations while simultaneously fostering greater community resilience that could prevent re-engagement. One of the responsibilities of police that comes out of this line of reasoning could be to prepare the community for release by reassuring those institutions and practitioners that will play a role in the resocialisation process after they return to the community.

Organising or informing a multi-agency working (MAW) group: An alternative role for police can be more process related. Instead of engaging directly with the subject or subject's family, and being an integrated aspect of the subject's resocialisation, police contribute by facilitating the exchange of information between the different agencies involved, or by acting as their main point of contact. In the case of Lower Saxony, Germany, police become involved the moment a release date is known. All relevant actors then come together to exchange information and to decide on an individual measure plan after release. The police then use the information exchanged at these multi-agency meetings to carry out a risk assessment. Police may also screen the subject prior to release using a screening tool that gives a high or low risk outcome.

It also happens that there is no distinctive role for police before release. At the very least, however, police must be informed of an upcoming release date.

After Release

MAW case management: This can be a chosen mechanism for dealing with the potential risks posed by a released former violent extremist offender. Sometimes the police coordinate MAW, acting as the main point of contact for all agencies, and sometimes MAW is headed by a local government council with police and other actors involved as equal partners.

In the examples of Belgium and the Netherlands, existing structures are used that are adapted to deal with the fairly recent cases of released terrorist offenders. In safety house in the Netherlands, one partner is selected per case to take the lead. That said, police will automatically take the lead when there is a new case for which no risk assessment has been done. In general, however, the set-up of the safety house can be adapted according to the particularities of the case in question. In Amsterdam, for example, the lead agency will be the agency with the best relationship with the family. Police in Belgium and in the Netherlands reiterate the added value of establishing a relationship of trust between them and the subject's family, and they are not alone. There are different examples of police continuing to invest in their relationship with a subject's family, and sometimes even the subject themself after release. This approach characterises the Danish police in Aarhus and sets the police in Munich apart from other police forces in Bavaria.

The success of MAW depends on the willingness of the actors involved to share information. Not all countries have a legal basis like Denmark to share information between the different agencies. Without a legal basis, it becomes all the more important to have a strong relationship built on trust to encourage cooperation and sharing of information (perhaps in an anonymous way).

There is a positive role police can play in encouraging coordination between the different actors. Given the police's unique position in the community, it makes sense for local police to be involved in the resocialisation of released former terrorist offenders.

([5]) Lenos, S., & Haanstra, W., Police, families and family workers, Ex Post Paper. Lisbon, Portugal: Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2018, pp. 4.

Risk Assessment used by Info-house in Aarhus, Denmark

Aarhus police carry out a special type of risk assessment in the Info-house, known as *Signs of Safety*. The idea behind this risk assessment is that it focuses on strengths, instead of on weaknesses alone. The assessment tries to deduce how the subject's skills and positive motivations can be used in a more constructive context to reduce the risks and concerns.

An example

Starting point is: *Ayman wants to be a carpenter*

Worries | Strengths | Actions

-   Who is in his network?
-   Try to list the strengths and worries on a scale: this allows you to see what you can work with to change the situation for the better.
-   Use of social-psychological tools (also available to police).

Challenges after release: Police are not always legally permitted to play a role after release. In other cases, police can be informed and involved during the probation period, but their role will dissipate the moment probation time ends. End of probation time, however, does not always coincide with complete deradicalisation or successful resocialisation of an individual. It is still unclear what will happen then given the relatively few past cases that fit this description.

For police and other security partners, like counterterrorism and intelligence, the challenge is to find a way of information sharing and cooperation that optimises the needs and qualities of the different law enforcement agencies.

Are your police prepared?

In the next few years, many radicalised prisoners and FTFs are expected to be released from prisons across Europe. Some will have been deradicalised and (successfully) completed an exit programme during their time in detention, while some will not yet have disengaged completely. Then there is the group of common law prisoners who may have radicalised inside prison, and may not even be on anyone's radar. According to French estimates, there are approximately 1 000 common law detainees who they know have radicalised. How many are there across Europe? And, to what extent are these prisoners incorporated in a strategy of risk management and resocialisation?

Police are inclined to think that released prisoners with this profile pose a threat to society. The moment there is a potential threat to society, police are expected to step in and re-establish a safe and secure environment. With the prospect of so many upcoming releases so also comes the moment to assess the level of police preparedness.

It is important to mention here that working with radicalised individuals or former violent extremist offenders can give rise to feelings of resistance and antipathy. Moreover, very often there exists a lack of knowledge of the target group; what motivated them to join an extremist movement and why is it so difficult to disengage them? These are obstacles that need to be overcome if an individual or organisation has a role to play in the risk management and resocialisation of released former violent extremist offenders.

A number of actions can be taken that can help assess how prepared your police force is, and subsequently heighten that level of preparedness. The actions are as follows:

Key recommendations for police preparation

Raise awareness of the urgency of the topic: Begin by asking how many prisoners who match this profile are expected to be released in your country (and perhaps in neighbouring countries).

As police, be aware of your own role and responsibilities: What do these entail and how do they determine your daily working activities? Answer this question also with different police departments in mind. Which police can meet local challenges best?

Do a simulation to test procedures in place and to check whether all parties understand their roles and responsibilities: Ideally, a simulation would be carried out with all agencies involved in the resocialisation and risk management of the subject in question. Sharing information and cooperation between different agencies and institutions are vital for successful resocialisation. However, actors must be aware of the legal framework and the codes of conduct that limit an agency's ability to share information. A simulation will allow all the different actors to witness first-hand how they would respond and to identify possible gaps or areas for improvement.

Organise a training on dealing with radicalised and former extremists: The training should help foster understanding of the target group and raise awareness of one's own role and attitude towards radicalised individuals. It is important to be aware of personal biases and emotions that may influence a professional relationship or negatively impact the quality of work. In addition, a training also helps visualise and translate a procedure or plan of action into something more concrete. Finally, it offers a platform for posing questions and getting support, both important for creating a sense of empowerment and strengthening the capacity of the team.