

Preventing of violent radicalisation

From understanding
to preventing the phenomenon

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LIAISE 2 (Local Institutions Against Extremism)

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Index

Introduction 5

Construction and deconstruction of a phenomenon..... 6

Attempt at a definition 6

Violent radicalisation: a question of ends and means 7

The process..... 8

The Case profiles 9

Motivation 11

The role of the cleric..... 12

The question of identity 14

The indicators 14

Exit strategies and success factors. 16

Institutional approaches 16

The approach of social intervention 17

What kind of care is needed? 19

The individual approach..... 19

The preventive approach 21

Primary prevention 21

Secondary prevention 22

Tertiary prevention 23

The religious and ideological approach..... 23

The prison environment..... 23

Voice, Exit, Loyalty 24

Annex 1 - Barometer of the Center for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (CPRMV - Quebec) 27

Bibliography 30

Foreword

The Generalitat (Department of Justice justicia.gencat.cat), CEP (Confederation of European Probation www.cep-probation.org) and Efus (European Forum for Urban Security www.efus.eu) are pleased to publish one of the products generated within the framework of the European project LIAISE 2 (Local Institutions Against Extremism). It consists of a rigorous and sensible exercise carried out by Olivier Vanderhaeghen, an expert in community prevention projects in the municipality of Molenbeek (Brussels): the elaboration of a document containing the essential things that any professional in the area of penal enforcement needs to know about radicalisation. We would like to express our gratitude for his dedication and enthusiasm, as well as that of Saliha Ben Ali from S.A.V.E. Belgium (www.savebelgium.org), who offered us her testimony, displaying her great courage by transforming past experiences into seeds for future generations.

The project developed by the Generalitat and CEP is titled "**Preventing Vulnerability to Radicalisation through Families**". It addresses two essential elements: prevention and the social environments of the individuals. The first element denotes the importance of creating a healthy environment in the area of penal enforcement, which allows for acting with a preventative approach, meeting people's needs and improving protective factors. The second element indicates that social networks can be key elements of protection and influence, in a positive way. To combine both elements it is necessary to offer, on the one hand, training for professionals so that they are capable of discriminating between cultural or religious aspects typical of a social group or other factors which promote violent extremism, and, on the other hand, strategies to facilitate the building of a mutual bond of trust between the families and professionals, to detect their needs and address them appropriately.

Without a doubt, Efus's initiative, started in September 2014 with the financial support of the European Commission, has been an excellent platform for establishing contact with experts on the subject matter. It has generated greater knowledge of radicalisation (a total of 168 professionals trained, among social workers and probation workers) and involved external community entities (such as AIS - Attention and Research on Social Addictions www.ais-info.org), thus generating a rich fabric that is permeable to joint collaboration and growth, to create an integrated model for prevention which develops a context which not only doesn't

LIAISE 2 (Local Institutions Against Extremism)

encourage radicalisation, but can also favourably influence avoidance of this type of processes.

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Introduction

Since 2012, Europe countries have witnessed the departure of numerous individuals to combat zones, especially Syria and Iraq. Although the phenomenon of foreign fighters is not new (there were such combatants in the Spanish Civil War from 1936, in Afghanistan in the late 1970s and early 2000s and in Bosnia in the 1990s), it should be acknowledged that it is particularly relevant nowadays, given that what is known as “violent radicalism” constitutes one of the most widely-debated issues in recent years at both national and international level. This interest increases inasmuch as it is linked to the terrifying figure of Islamic terrorism.

For more than a decade, the contours of the terrorist threat have highlighted “new” concepts which, although already theorized by the past, have been largely reinterpreted in the light of the current-day international scene and the extremely mediatic nature of certain events. Thus, the words *radicalism*, *radicalisation*, *deradicalization*, *jihadism*, *foreign terrorist fighters*, *countering violent extremism* and so on, have come to establish themselves within our semantic fields and constitute the outlines of a global sensation, a kind of “new worldwide social phenomenon” which incorporates within it a series of social relations in terms of its consequences on society (polarization, prison, mediatization, education, social cohesion, etc.).

Within an exacerbated politico-mediatic context, social workers are charged with working and constructing tools to prevent and fight against this phenomenon. However, the latter have often become the main vector of public policies approved by the authorities, making violent radicalisation the new paradigm of social work. Thus, debate regarding this phenomenon, particularly in the prison world, has often been limited to analysing its symptoms rather than its root causes. This “new paradigm” has an impact on the working methods and ethics of social workers. At the same time, they also have to intervene in a climate which foments social polarization, shifting the limits of their framework of intervention. Social workers are, more than ever, tested by a series of paradoxical injunctions. The requirements for non-discrimination and high-quality objectivity in the relationship with all users should be in conjunction with guidelines on surveillance, control and research into problematic behaviours. Responsible for detecting visible signs and participating, covertly or otherwise, in intelligence service missions, they may find themselves in uncomfortable ethical situations and even come across insurmountable dilemmas. Caught between legitimate security imperatives in the wake of the different waves of attacks on European countries, from Charlie Hebdo to Barcelona, and support for people who are vulnerable or with problematic cases, professionals in the field should be able to forge paths where they will be able to construct their own legitimacy in the view of their audience.

Violent radicalisation, in its most contemporary manifestation, is an evolutionary phenomenon which requires constant adaptation on the part of the authorities, the sharing of expertise and a multi-disciplinary approach, which links socio-preventive initiatives and public safety policy. Away from emotive pronouncements and pressure from the media and public opinion, policies to combat violent radicalisation should necessarily make the reinsertion of individuals a priority, while taking into account the potential long-term

consequences of terrorist acts, including social polarization. This booklet seeks to increase understanding of a complex phenomenon, in order to try to prevent it and support the participants in the field of the development of effective strategies.

Construction and deconstruction of a phenomenon

Attempt at a definition

It is important to make a distinction between terrorism and radicalism. The two concepts are not synonymous. Common consensus defines terrorism as a series of acts of violence committed by an organization to create a climate of insecurity or to overthrow the established government. In recent years, the very concept of radicalism has undergone a specific semantic change and now has a range of connotations. However, the definition of radicalism is more complex, given that it essentially depends on the societal context in which it is used and the rules in place to control certain types of behaviour and attitudes. No one can deny that radical postures in contemporary history have led to subsequent social progress, without necessarily legitimizing the recourse to violent action (the abolition of slavery, the prohibition of child labour, the emergence of trade unions, etc.). Nevertheless, some events in the 20th century have highlighted resorting to violence as an application of the principle of civil disobedience or the fight against totalitarian regimes. Finally, we should recall that the European Convention on Human Rights, among other fundamental documents, is applicable to European states and lays down certain basic rights, such as freedom of expression (article 10), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 9) and freedom of assembly and association (article 11), framing their limitations within very specific motives.

Terrorism and radicalism constitute not so much doctrines as methods involving objectives, participants and networks, as well as propaganda techniques, which are superimposed onto an ideological basis. Means and meaning are therefore closely linked (Bauer and Bruguière, 2016). Terrorism can thus be understood as a consequence of radicalism, but on no account does it constitute an automatic and necessary outcome. In this regard, any individual seeking to modify social order will not necessarily postulate or legitimize the violent overthrow of the established legal order.

Therefore, the issue in question appears to be that of the changing nature of radicalism towards extremism, making violence the most legitimate means of action to achieve its ends. Understanding this transition brings us to question the process leading to the extremism we today refer to as violent radicalization. There is no universal definition which enables us to define the concept. However, in the academic world, the definition employed by the sociologist F. Khosrokhavar seems to achieve a consensus of opinion. He defines it as “*a process whereby an individual or a group adopts a violent form of action, directly linked to an extremist ideology with a political, social or religious content which challenges the established political, social or cultural order*” (Khosrokhavar, 2015). However, this concept of violent radicalism has not been used for very long at an international level. At most, it dates back to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and has been used more frequently

following the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005. Unlike the attacks on the World Trade Center, the latter were committed by home-grown terrorists, individuals born in the home nation who, at a given moment, decided to carry out terrorist acts against their fellow citizens. Radicalisation can thus be understood as a process whereby individuals gradually embrace radical ideas, become progressively indoctrinated and allow themselves to be recruited by foreign extremist groups, which may lead them to commit terrorist acts (Coolsaet, 2016).

More fundamentally, it is essential not to limit understanding of the phenomenon merely to the individuals who carry out these acts. One of the major obstacles for public policy is taking into account those who, by whatever means, legitimize, facilitate or encourage resorting to violent action. Indeed, within an increasingly polarized social context, the social environment can prove to be particularly conducive to the development of the radicalisation of a sector of the population, in which antagonism between groups may lead to tensions or even conflicts.

Violent radicalisation: a question of ends and means

Radicalism? Violent radicalism? What separates, or allows us to separate, an extremist ideology which poses a danger to society from another which falls within the bounds of freedom of thought and expression, without representing a threat to the established order? When does extremist ideology become a danger to society? It is difficult to reply in a conclusive manner for all extremist movements, which may be related to obedience, political-religious or ideology. Similarly, the development of certain movements (the PLO, ETA, Hezbollah) has clearly highlighted the historical context in which violent action may be legitimized or rejected. Studying the relationship between ideology and violent action requires nuance and thorough analysis. However, it is possible to assess the potential risks of an extremist or fundamentalist ideology to society by contrasting two scales of values with regard to the social project postulated by a group and the means they legitimise to achieve them.

In terms of social project, all ideology may be positioned between two extremes, the first of which considers that any ideology must break away from society in its current form (a rejection of modernity and progress, a return to one's roots and a certain purified or mythical vision of one's origins). The second extreme asserts that the ideology in question may conform to modern society but must inflect it to transform it. A whole host of stances and nuances lie between these two extremes. In terms of the means used, the core philosophy will vary between the trends which categorically reject the use of violence ("there is no compulsion in religion", the pacifist ideal, proselytism, etc.) and others which advocate the imposition of their vision of society by force (mandatory conversion, the imposition of the truth, a reign of terror, aggression, terrorist attacks, etc.). These two scales cannot be contemplated in isolation and one group may very well be regarded as extremist in one dimension but not in the other. Other influences can certainly be found within the extreme stances on the two scales. This interpretation grid is particularly relevant when analysing current-day Islamic movements, as demonstrated by A. Grignard, whereby small groups

clearly assert that they belong to the far right. This type of analysis becomes even more relevant when we transfer it to the field of democratic nature of the means used or inclusion in the political sphere (movements linked to what is currently called the “radical left”).

The process

The escalation towards violent action or terrorism has been analysed by numerous scientists who have attempted to conceptualize the process. The most famous approach is the one advocated by American psychologist Moghaddam, better known as the *Staircase to Terrorism*. We have deliberately chosen to present it in the form of a pyramid, in order to underline that each level crossed reduces the number of individuals in question and above all makes turning back much more difficult. Terrorism is not innate and is subject to social and psychological processes which take place in stages. This model can be compared to the sequential process of insertion into a life of crime developed by the sociologist H. Becker.



An individual involved in such a process will not irrevocably move on to violent action. According to Moghaddam, each level reached presents opportunities or “routes” for exiting and, conversely, further obstacles which will mean moving on to a higher level. Everything depends on the way in which the individual perceives the prospects offered to them. The process means that the more individuals rise, the fewer opportunities they will have, and the more violence will appear to them as the only solution within the framework of the group’s closed horizons.

Much has been spoken about “lightning radicalisation”, which is undoubtedly proven by reaching the final levels. However, such a process is more related to the length. It is not necessarily perceived as such by the participants themselves and consists of a succession of choices in which each phase consists of a specific rationality (Bronner, 2013).

There is no decisive social or psychological factor which predisposes to radicalism or terrorism. The process also incorporates both cognitive and behavioural factors. In cognitive terms, the process seeks to isolate individuals from society and develop their sense of victimization, up to a point at which a certain kind of social paranoia or paranoid vision of the world takes over. The rejection of the real world is replaced by the ideals of the new group. The primacy of the latter reinforces distrust of the outside world and creates strict boundaries between the members of the group and Others. This separation is usually accompanied by a dehumanization of the Other and “otherness” and of Others in general. This dehumanization is reinforced by the feeling of victimhood which makes them increasingly insensitive to the suffering of the Other. This cognitive process is also reflected in behavioural terms. The behavioural modifications lie close to sectarian excesses and their aim is for the individuals to break away from life as it is.

In behavioural terms, breaking away from the world and joining a new group results in several cut off points which the professionals can clearly observe in the field: the first cut off point concerns the individual’s secondary network. They break away from their friends or drop out of school or sporting activities. This stage is not necessarily reflected in a change of clothing or eating habits, for example, but testifies to the initial interactions with a recruiter or group. The second cut off point concerns disappearance from public life. Individuals who have been capable of socialising in the streets with their peers suddenly disappear. At this moment the internet and social media occupy a prominent place in the process, introducing the new recruit to videos, texts and interpretations of the doctrine entailing a new vision of the world. D. Bouzar has expertly demonstrated the similarities with sectarian excesses: the use of subliminal images and conspiracy videos, recourse to iconography from the world of young people, a call to avenge humiliated Muslims, etc. Lastly, the final cut off point concerns that of the primary network, especially parents and family. Radicalized individuals stigmatize their own parents, question practices within the family, increasingly isolate themselves and become progressively intolerant towards certain ideas and practices. It is at this point that families often become aware that a process is being played out and alert social services or even the police. This step is often critical, as it lies at the end of a previously initiated process whose root causes may date back to traumas experienced several years before.

The Case profiles

All the experts agree that a typical case profile does not exist! A multi-faceted phenomenon, the process of radicalisation cannot be understood or explained by means of a single factor. In the same way, the internationalization of terrorism through what is referred to as *Global Jihad*, presents us with a nebula which is extremely complex to analyse. In short, it appears that the factors promoting or making it possible to explain this kind of process are also conditioned by issues which are strictly national or even local (precariousness, sociology). The cartography of individuals who have left to fight in Iraq or Syria or to achieve Jihad by means of terrorist action actually testifies to great disparities, varying from one country to

another, or even from one region to another, leading some to regard it as a local phenomenon (*All radicalisation is local* - Coolsaet, 2016).

The study of cases of individuals who have left to fight in Syria and Iraq in recent years underlines their disparity: the youth from the suburbs, the graduate, the convert, the pious ideologue, the psychopath or those suffering from mental health problems; these are all cases, which must lead to caution. Indeed, there is never a decisive factor and analysis of the situations demonstrates a mixture of micro-sociological and macro-sociological factors. No variable can act alone and they are all related to the individual's background. The factors facilitating the radicalisation process are the result of a problematic or even chaotic individual journey or the position of the individual in society. In fact, motivation may be singular or collective. They may also be combined: individual motivations, born of a personal sense of injustice or individual frustration, can become crystallized and find meaning in grievances concerning their belonging to groups regarded as discriminated against.

We may thus diagnose several types of factors:

- Family: many of them have been raised in unstructured or with completely absent families. A point common to many cases concerns the question of the father. Many individuals, adopting a violent radical course, have been faced with the loss of their father, abandonment, actual death or a symbolic absence. In the absence of the paternal figure, the group may fill an existential void or even reassure the individual.
- Moral: Many cases have experienced narcissistic injuries, combined with a feeling of indignation and revenge, which becomes the driving force of the action. The recourse to violent action is thus a way of overcoming cognitive dissonance and finding internal coherence.
- Psycho-emotional: Most of the cases have been educated in environments which leave little room for expressing emotions and verbalization of problems or failures they have experienced. Many have had setbacks in relationships. These elements are likely to promote narcissistic rage and facilitate adoption of the stance of the vengeful hero, without any reassessment. Similarly, background traumas, such as the death of a loved one, the breakup with a partner, a family conflict, a situation of domestic violence and harassment are often common points in the paths of the cases under analysis. These elements will, at some point in the process, lead to a lack of ability to distinguish between reality and utopia.
- Ideological: Intense religious fervour is present in very few cases. Most of them are individuals who have never asked themselves spiritual questions before the process begins. Most of them have even engaged in social practices far removed from certain religious principles. It is therefore, instead, the absence of a spiritual practice developed from an early age which may constitute bear witness to the process.

- Socialization: certain factors related to the socialization of individuals may facilitate the swing to violent radicalism. The neighbourhood rationale, street culture, involvement in petty crime or even criminality and tense relations with the police in certain regions are likely to strengthen the process further along the line upstream.
- Criminogenic: many radicalised individuals are already known to the police for their criminal acts. Some have been taken into care by youth protection services. Others have been in prison for common crimes.
- Penitentiary: Prison has a fundamental role to play to prevent the radicalization process and preventing the recidivism. The penitentiary institution could constitute a determining factor in the trajectory of individuals. Prisons and penal institutions in general have to set the focus on the Human Rights and promote a non-stigmatizing vision, attending to the needs of the most vulnerable subjects. Facilitate the social network or the links outside the prison (family, work, among others) and integrate people in a proposer rehabilitation plan are two keys factors or push factors to avoid extremism behaviour in prison.

Motivation

Motivations for resorting to violent action are different to those which condition insertion into a radicalisation process. The phenomenon of leaving for Syria has undergone several phases between 2012 and 2017, during which we can perceive different types of motivation at play: humanitarian work, ideological motives, altruism, search for adventure, escape from a possible conviction, the wish to set up a family, family regrouping, etc. Although it is impossible to go through all these motivations, it seems pertinent to underline certain points:

- The question of territory: the attraction of DAESH among some young people lies in the fact that it proposes a real homeland. First of all, a physical territory, by means of the construction of the Caliphate and a real state. Next, a symbolic territory, offering them the chance to construct a positive identity and to be accepted as they are. Finally, a virtual territory, where they are persuaded to join a universal community, namely the Ummah (Muslim community). This territorial perspective offsets the deep sense of displacement of some young people, lost between multiple senses of belonging and identity assignments which confine them to stigmatization or social marginalisation.
- The denial of recognition: It seems that the phenomenon of violent radicalism can be understood within the pattern of a struggle for recognition, as developed by the philosopher A. Honneth. Situations of social contempt, unfair treatment and emotional deprivation lead, in the minds of certain individuals, to negative moral experiences preventing the development of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. This question of the denial of recognition may engender moral identity-based injuries and explain the processes of major social breakdown.

LIAISE 2 (Local Institutions Against Extremism)

- The sense of revenge: The breakdown of the social contract triggers hatred for our society and its values in some people. As O. Roy has shown, there is a nihilistic dimension to the terrorist acts European countries have witnessed since 2014. It would be pointless to look for political revindication , as there are no utopian aspirations or links to the actual suffering and challenges of Muslims throughout the world. This purely nihilistic hatred simply views violence as a form of execution.
- The question of violence: violence as a means of action has been conceptualized by numerous sociologists in order to understand its dynamics. One of the best-known approaches is that of Gurr, who believes that violence stems from the distance created between the expectations of a group and the possibilities of satisfying them. Violence thus arises when this distance becomes untenable. Others link violence to subjectivity. In this regard, Wieviorka considers that contemporary violence is linked to a loss of sense of meaning and social expectations which are not transformed into debate or social conflicts. This sociologist proposes a nomenclature of “subjectivities” linked to violence:
 - *Floating subjects*, who cannot attain the role of participants in society and construct their existence upon violence
 - *Hyper-subjects*, who, out of a loss of sense of meaning, over-invest in the search for a new meaning through an ideology or religion
 - *Non-subjects*, for whom violence constitutes a form of obedience to an authority
 - *Anti-subjects*, who construct themselves upon the negation of humanity
 - *Subjects in survival*, who feel threatened within their existence and act violently to ensure their survival.

This nomenclature which, as Wieviorka himself admits, needs to be refined, does, however, enable us to understand that the multiplicity of case profiles of radicalised individuals is due to the wide range of motivations, making the processes extremely complex to analyse. The attraction to violence is clearly a parameter which has been used by recruiters, who offer certain young people specific combat areas. In the same way, this ideal of violence forms part of a competition between the extremist groups which, ultimately, bears witness to the value of the faith.

The role of the cleric

Although responsibility for the latest terrorist attacks is clearly claimed in the name of Islam, the role of the cleric in the radicalisation process should be examined. Beyond the quarrels of intellectuals seeking to settle the matter of radical Islamism or the islamization of radicalism (cf. the debate between G. Kepel and O. Roy), it can be seen that clerics do not constitute the driving force of the process, but rather an “ideological varnish” or “catalyst” which gives

meaning to an intra-psychoic or specific existential experience. Religious radicalisation thus seems to be an appropriate remedy for repairing a question of identity, humiliation experienced or a denial of recognition within society.

Several authors (Roy, Khosrokhavar) have brought to the fore the true generational breakdown in the minds of the terrorists of the DAESH era. This generation is “de-islamized”, in other words, without the cultural and religious references of their parents and a nearly non-existent degree of religion (no visits to places of worship, practices contrary to religious rules, etc.). This lack of culture or ignorance of their own culture reinforces the potential for credulity which, in the case of Islam, leads them to adhere to a simplified or adulterated version of the sacred texts and the dogmatic corpus. Converts find themselves in the same situation, uncritically, abiding by a body of doctrine imposed on them, whose apparent simplicity removes the essence of the spiritual message and its complexity from a theological point of view.

The religious factor, as a catalyst for individual and collective frustrations, transforms the interpretation of the world of the individuals introduced into the process, who now consider Islam as the religion of the *oppressed* (Khosrokhavar). The rigorous, decontextualized and even twisted interpretation of the Qur’anic corpus or Hadiths implies the idea that Muslims have gradually turned their backs on true Islam. This return to true Islam entails applying strict hermeneutics to the text, the rejection of deviant interpretations of the classical theologians and any contextualization. The reappropriation of certain powerful symbols of Muslim tradition by the religious leaders of DAESH is clearly used to express this feeling of frustration or rejection by society within a dialectic which legitimises violent action. It would, indeed, be simplistic to perceive only a fanatical discourse devoid of rationality in DAESH’s propaganda. There is a genuine narrative whose sources lie in Islamic tradition, seeking to produce a specific historicity within this tradition. The doctrine is based on a traditional Islamic corpus, with its warrior myths and conquering attitudes, which can easily be underpinned by certain models in our own societies (video games, the cinema) and be articulated with the archetype of the apocalypse. The recovery of certain symbols leaves no doubt as to this strategy: the use of the black flag, the proclamation of the Caliphate ninety years after the end of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 by Atatürk, the definition of boundaries of the Caliphate upon the basis of the first Abbasid Caliphate, the interpretation of the Qur’anic verses referring to the Apocalypse and engagement in the final battle by means of global Jihad and the headlines in the Dabiq propaganda magazine; these are all powerful symbols which are clearly not neutral in Islamic semantics (Guidère, 2017). We will focus at this point on two specific concepts which are of particular importance for our purpose:

- The theologians of DAESH have recovered the concept of *Hijra* (*Hegira*) for their ends. Literally meaning “emigration”, it is interpreted in its original meaning, which refers to the Prophet Muhammad’s departure from Mecca to Medina in 622. Capitalizing on the consequences of the Arab Spring and the return of numerous exiles to the countries of the Maghreb, DAESH theologians give a denominational and

militant dimension to the return of Muslims to the *House of Islam* (Guidère, 2017). Accordingly, this emigration is mandatory for any Muslim who feels persecuted in the West. Linked to the reinterpretation of the concept of Jihad, this obligation constitutes a moral duty.

- Taqiyya is a Qur'anic concept (3:28 and 16:106) which means the art of concealment of the faith, permitting the first Muslims to hide their belonging to Islam or to deny their faith in situations of persecution. This principle has been widely revived and twisted by DAESH, enabling radicalised individuals living in the West to conceal their true belonging to a radical group. This means that they never overtly display the signs of their radicalism, with the aim of infiltrating targeted societies or going unnoticed.

The question of identity

Several authors, including Khosrokhavar, have analysed the European model of radicalisation, which concerns individuals aged between 15 and 40, mostly men and generally sons of immigrants, particularly of the second generation. They highlight the significant and decisive identity deficit of these individuals in society. These are essentially young people who have little or no bonds with society. They come from marginalized areas and live in fragile social environments, where a sense of discrimination or oppression predominates. They suffer from social invisibility. The multiple negative experiences they come up with condition the degraded image they have of themselves. We can observe the sociological phenomenon of the internalization of stigma described by E. Goffman. This fragile and unstructured social environment is built upon a deep feeling of uprootedness; they are lost between several cultures and senses of belongings they do not identify with: they do not regard themselves as fully-fledged citizens and do not feel accepted in the country they live in (second-class citizenship). Similarly, they regard themselves as foreigners in the country their parents come from. This uprootedness or absence of a stable homeland leads to the dilemma of dual identity, which they reject *en masse* and take refuge in a fantasy identity.

The violent radicalisation process will be built upon this emptiness, transforming a negative identity linked to the lack of prospects society offers and mutating it into a positive and uni-dimensional identity. As is the case of delinquency, radicalisation makes it possible to “go over an impassable horizon” (Khosrokhavar). Assuming a new identity is combined with a reversal of the stigma which have been internalized: the multiple identities are transcended by a uni-dimensional identity, the feeling of being dominated gives way to the role of the vengeful hero, terror supersedes the humiliation suffered, narcissistic postures replace the lack of self-esteem and the lack of belonging is subsumed in the belonging to the radical group.

The indicators

Radicalisation does not necessarily lead to violent action. This involves a further leap and does not involve the same participants as terrorism. The question of tools and indicators of “radicalism” are therefore essential when distinguishing between the two. These vary and may also be largely conditioned by social polarization at a given moment within a society. The

external signs of radicalisation are shaped by the propaganda of extremist groups, which encourage their followers to display them as a means of provocation (far right, tattoos, etc.) or to use the art of concealment (e.g. *Taqiyya*) to make them a major element of psychological warfare: not saying anything, not showing anything, lying, showing cunning and adapting are elements taken from tradition, particularly Islamic tradition, and twisted to achieve their objectives, without being unmasked or denying their ideals or faith (Guidère, 2017). Within this context, the external signs should therefore be interpreted with the utmost caution.

In most European countries there are training courses for police officers in the field, teaching them to recognize visible signs of radicalisation (e.g. COPPRA - *Community Policing and Prevention of Radicalisation*, framed within the Prevention pillar of the European Union action plan against radicalisation). However, beyond the visible signs, which are often difficult to interpret and subject to controversy, the participants in the field should be able to analyse certain changes in behaviour or breakdown in the lifestyles of radicalised individuals. One of the most pragmatic approaches has been developed by the *Quebec Center for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence* (CPRMV), which proposes a behavioural barometer designed for the general public and professionals in the field. This barometer presents early signs we should pay attention to, dividing them into four categories (reproduced in Annex 1): Non-significant, worrying, disturbing and alarming. Certain attitudes can thus constitute serious indications of an ongoing process of radicalisation. For example,

- Breaking away from a network, distrust of “old” friends and the emergence of a new network (proximity to potential radicalised individuals).
- Breaking away from school, work, the cultural environment (giving up music, the cinema, etc.) and sporting activity.
- Rejection of the family and questioning of cultural and religious practices.
- Reassessment of other supporters/believers as corrupt or impure (for Islam) and loss of common or socially accepted moral bearings.
- Development of a kind of semantics which legitimises or justifies violence as a means of action and the dehumanization of the Other.
- Changes in eating and clothing habits (even if this may testify to a more important faith).
- Concealment of a specific lifestyle or a new sense of belonging.
- Modification of social habits and disappearance from public life.
- Frequently visiting extremist sites and the development of a certain paranoia, as well as sympathy for conspiracy theories (e.g. an obsession with the end of the world).

Semantic changes (discourse, content, advanced theses, justifications) generally leading to congruence with certain observed behaviours. Thus, within their ideological and argumentative stances, individuals will be increasingly hostile to compromise, claiming to act as if they are in possession of the truth. Justification of and recourse to violence to achieve certain goals regularly become authoritative arguments, reinforced by ever-growing intolerance of difference and dissent. Ultimately, these semantics are usually accompanied by support for conspiracy theories and an uncompromising posture of victimhood, demonizing the Other as an incarnation of evil and thereby reinforcing the conviction or certainty that violence is a moral means of action.

Exit strategies and success factors.

Institutional approaches

The phenomenon of violent radicalisation, although it is not new, has, for at least a decade, carried with it other concepts related to its institutional and social treatment, such as deindoctrination, disengagement, “desisting” and deradicalization. This latter concept possesses a high added mediatic value, making it a kind of *pot pourri* of a whole set of measures which are sparse and difficult to evaluate (Coolsaet, 2016). What is meant by these new exit strategies? Caution is again required as to the critical success factors related to these strategies.

We can generally distinguish between the doctrinal approach (deindoctrination), focusing on the ideology (doctrine), that of the radical group which must be rectified, from the behavioural approach (disengagement). The former is more developed in countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen but may also find meaning in secularized societies. Within a pluralistic framework, the objective is not necessarily to condemn the ideology in question but to undo certain beliefs and to interpret the instructions for doctrinal obedience within a meaning which encourages the insertion of individuals into society or diminishes their antisocial character. This approach allows the progressive empowerment of the individual but encounters many obstacles; the exposure of the individual to extremist theories on the internet and social media, for example, constitutes a difficulty which can thwart the strategy for the ideology. More fundamentally, the main criticisms of this approach lie in the reduction of the process to psychological factors and the personality of the subjects, ignoring the interactive approach (factors which condition involvement in a deviant group, secondary socialization, etc.), exogenous factors and the context in which the individual has developed (discrimination, social polarization, international events and conflicts, degree of access to the media, etc.) (Guidère, 2014 and 2017).

Conversely, the behavioural approach is based on the analysis of behaviour, without attacking the ideology underlying the deviant attitude. It can be likened to a process of disengagement from violent action, without renouncing its ideology. Instead, it focuses on an actuarial approach, which analyses identity behaviours and stances, as well as the development of warning indicators, the main vector for calculating the risks of violent radicalisation. This

approach, which gives pride of place to social psychology, ultimately seeks to develop specific measures to destroy the effects of problematic behaviour. These measures may target the socio-preventive aspect (development of social behaviour, development of a new network, etc.) or the repressive aspect (isolation, deprivation of liberty, probation, etc.). This approach, far from constituting a universal panacea, provokes criticism linked to the fact that it is related to the consequences of a deviant action rather than working on the causes of the process itself.

A third way, known as a mixed approach, seeks to break away from the first two, targeting the individual and the group and placing importance on counter-discourse, individual management and involvement of families into the process, as well as the strengthening of the legal arsenal. The approach seeks to highlight the constants in the cases and to distinguish between radical conceptions, radical perceptions and radical intentions by means of precise and objective indicators (Guidère, 2014 and 2017).

The approach of social intervention

In many situations, social workers will have to implement certain strategies. Several fundamental principles appear essential for developing this kind of approach:

- Taking into account the evolution of the phenomenon and the legal arsenal set up by the authorities;
- Considering the local and national context within which the individual has been radicalised;
- Envisaging individual, customized measures.
- Integrating measures into an inter-disciplinary perspective, in order to work on the multiple dimensions of the process (a biographical breakup, an ideological and cognitive approach, group dynamics, social reinsertion, the emotional and psychological dimension, etc.) within a unique and identifiable exit process.

As for insertion within a violent radicalisation process, there are specific factors (Push and Pull factors) which make it possible to understand the exit processes. For several years, by means of analysis of individual cases, studies have highlighted the reasons for defection (desisting) or withdrawal from certain forms of criminality. We can distinguish factors which postulate cognitive change from those which entail a behavioural change.

In cognitive terms (Van der Heide, Porges), the age of engagement in violence appears to be fundamental, as interest in violence appears to wane with age (after 20 years). In the same way, individuals may become aware of the reality of their situation (a transformation in the understanding of what they are doing) and wish to become masters of their own destiny again by leaving the group. Other factors are related to what is known as the *Life course transition* (Loub and Sampson), whereby certain events (marriage, work, family, etc.) may lead to gradual withdrawal from radical groups. The withdrawal process is therefore linked to individual acts and determined by a specific context.

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Other factors influence behaviour without necessarily implying any cognitive change (Horgan). We can thus distinguish between the personal elements which encourage the leaving of a criminal group (Push factors) (Van der Heide, Sommer) and deviations, such as:

- Unfulfilled hopes and expectations, as well as disillusionment with regard to the group's promises and the reality.
- Cognitive dissonance, entailing awareness of the mismatch between theory and action and disillusionment with the action strategies, or even poor leadership. This factor may also exacerbate the process and lead to even deeper seated and clandestine radicalisation, as demonstrated by the cases of Anders Breivik and Timothy McVeigh.
- The difficulty of adapting to an underground existence or even the rejection of clandestinity or the obligation to achieve forbidden things.
- The prospect of (violent) death
- Difficulty in coping with the psychological/physiological effects of violence (barbaric practices, hanging, torture, gratuitous violence, etc.), often in contradiction to the ideology.
- Loss of faith in the ideology or the use of the ideology as an instrument or religion, or the absence of succession within the group.
- The desire for normality, a conflict of loyalties, burnout or nostalgia for their "old life" (homesickness, former network, family, etc.).

Other factors are external to the individuals themselves (Pull factors), such as:

- Positive interaction with moderates.
- The opportunity of stable, rewarding employment or education.
- The possibility of marriage or having a family.
- Financial incentives.
- Amnesty in their country of origin or, in general terms, the impact of repression.
- An event in the family to which the individual is linked.

Individual factors may combine and play a decisive role in the exit process, while external factors only be of a limited nature (Van der Heide). In any case, the exit process should always be analysed in relation to the entry process, given that the former is only the mirror of the reasons leading an individual to join an extremist group (Horgan). Ultimately, certain motivations, such as attraction to violence or psychopathic behaviour traits, are almost impossible to reverse.

What kind of care is needed?

Care for individuals renowned for violent radicalisation has not yet been the subject of great debate within the psycho-social field. Like many other phenomena, this supervision must form part of the fundamentals of social work and the relationship of help and trust which may be formed between any professional and the user. It is essential for social workers to determine which remit they should respond to when providing care in matters of violent radicalisation. The remit of the institution they work for (deradicalisation)? The remit of the public authorities (ensuring public safety)? The remit they receive from the user? The remit they receive as field professionals (methodology, morals, ethics)? The remit they place on themselves in the exercise of their duties? This exercise is fundamental. Similarly, it is not always easy to define who is the subject of the supervision: the subject restrained by the legal institution (prison, probation)? A family member who comes for a loved one? The radicalised individual who has not necessarily made the request? The conjunction of these imperatives and challenges may lead to numerous professional dilemmas and paradoxical situations, which should lead social workers to act with great caution. Between Considering safety requirements, the essential purposes of the institution, the quality of the intervention, respect for fundamental rights and the code of professional ethics, professionals in the field are often forced to make choices which are all the more crucial when the phenomenon involves current-day events in the politico-mediatic debate.

The following supervision models seek to create a transparent and operational framework and to respond to this kinds of dilemma.

The individual approach

The approach, whatever it is, should at least abide by the following principles:

- Be inter-disciplinary, in other words, able to combine professional experiences but also to go beyond them and achieve a holistic point of view.
- Be realistic, that is to say, define specific objectives and possible to be put into practice with the individual.
- Be personalised (focusing on the individual), taking into account the individual's resources (psychological and cognitive).
- Be established and implemented over time.
- Be respectful towards ethical frameworks, principally with respect to professional secrecy.
- Be inter-institutional/multi-agency, within the framework of partnership agreements.
- Promote a voluntary approach, as opposed to working under duress.
- Be agile and flexible;

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- Encourage interaction;
- Be non-judgemental, without stigmatising or appointing blame;

Specifically, this individual approach may take on several forms:

Individual Coaching	Administrative support	Family support	Psychological support	Ideological support
Working on building self-esteem	Helping with job searching/training	Renewing contact with the family	Displaying empathy	Providing an ideological counter-discourse
Generating a sense of responsibility	Helping to look for accommodation	Establishing psycho-emotional links	Adopting a non-judgemental stance (neutrality)	Deconstructing the ideological stance
Highlighting the significance of inter-personal relationships	Developing competences	Reconstructing the biographical journey	Working on expression of emotions	Proposing specific solutions for spiritual practice (reconciliation)
Defining a lifetime project	Providing support in administrative procedures	Detecting and analysing conflicts	Learning to (re-)build relationships	Facilitating access to sources of knowledge
Delimiting personal resources available	Restoring links with institutions	Mobilizing the family's resources	Learning to express needs and expectations	Working on the positive values of the ideology in relation to society

The individual supervision of violent radicals may also come up against numerous obstacles to be overcome or bypassed by other means or by activating other procedures:

Family obstacles	Biographical obstacles	Psychological obstacles	Sociological obstacles
Absence of transmitted family values	Inability to resolve areas of conflict	Inability to verbalise	Existence of networks harmful to the individual

Complete deconstruction of the primary network	Absence of individual investment	Inability to cope with feelings	Different attitudes during interviews and with the reference group
Existence of taboos	Aid under constraint	Absence of moral feelings	Release conditions impairing the individual monitoring
Siblings with a wide range of problems	Emotional fragility/social vulnerability with the risk of recidivism	Lying/concealing of the truth	Judicial proceedings in progress

The preventive approach

The prevention of violent radicalisation may also fall within the fundamental theories which distinguish primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. The following preventive approach is inspired by that developed by the Center for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (CPRMV) in Quebec, which has undoubtedly gone furthest in terms of expertise on the subject.

Primary prevention

Primary prevention seeks to act before the commencement of any recourse to violence or radicalisation process. It focuses on the development of the individual within society. This type of prevention targets multiple factors which may lead individuals towards breaking away from society or a radicalisation process. Evidently both socio-political issues and emotional may orientate individuals or strengthen their social malaise or feeling of frustration. This stage examines negative experiences of discrimination, perceived injustices and stigmatization of identity which are likely to breakdown the social contract and drive individuals towards a rationale of social disengagement. This rationale is not specific to violent radicalisation, nor is it alone sufficient to lead to it. Several orientations may influence the potential process at the primary level:

- Working on exposure to conspiracy theories to persuade individuals that they are intellectually capable of understanding things differently (access to hidden meanings) and to seek to make sense of negative experiences or feelings.
- Raising awareness of the dangers of exposure to the plethora of mediatic propositions on the market, without the necessary critical analysis or stepping back.

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- Placing emphasis on culture or cultural practices (traditions, local customs, etc.) which extremists tend to reject, in order to promote an interpretation which can be classified as authentic.
- Highlighting the wide range of stances within different religions and spiritualities, in order to generate debate and identify common points and differences.
- Asserting the multi-belief nature of our societies, encouraging understanding between different spiritualities and convictions.
- Promoting reinforcement of a wide ranging senses of belonging and identity, in order to deconstruct the “Them” against “Us” discourse which forms the basis of the propaganda of extremist groups (pure-impure, believers-unbelievers, nationals-foreigners, etc.).

Primary prevention should be able to focus its efforts on information channels vulnerable individuals come into contact with. The combination of personal frustrations and the search for solutions creates fertile soil in which extremist ideologies may take root. Within this context, the general preventive approach should promote access to knowledge, diversity of lifestyles and the wealth of solutions in place to transcend existential vulnerability.

Secondary prevention

This type of prevention targets specific audiences and specific situations. Its aim is to act upon the conditions in which moving on to an act of violence can occur, namely the social environment. This approach examines the direct sphere of the individual and identifies vulnerability risk factors. For example, the CPRMV’s model proposes the following:

Examining the direct environment	Identifying vulnerability factors
Family	Problematic life episodes
Friends (and social media)	Precariousness of social and/or emotional bonds
School environment	Intolerance towards ambiguity
Mentors and the <i>socialization model</i>	Impulsiveness
Internet and social media	Weak sense of objectivity
Cultural and sporting environment	Isolation from relationships
Workplace	Participation in a radical network

This type of analysis should be reflected in indicators designed to measure:

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- degree of engagement with an extremist ideology
- legitimization of violence (not the recourse)
- existence or otherwise of a criminogenic environment or one conducive to violent radicalisation.
- Peer socialization and the degree of involvement in sub-cultures.

Tertiary prevention

Traditionally, this involves the prevention of recidivism, specifically reflected in supervision of or monitoring deradicalization and disengagement. It seeks to reduce the effects of violence on the individual and society.

The religious and ideological approach

Together with the work on deradicalization explained above (cf. exit strategies), we should include the ideological and religious question in individual supervision. Within this context, the involvement of religious dignitaries may clearly constitute a way out, from the moment at which they occupy a place of choice in the definition of orthodoxy set against the emergence of new “legitimized” figures (the internet, preachers of all kinds). The religious dignitaries should be able to present themselves as the primary channels to sources of knowledge, with the sole condition that they should be legitimate and have an important sociological base within the community and civil society. Nevertheless, it is essential for this work on doctrine to be linked to a reflection on the social situation of the individual conditioning the process. Religious radicalisation is attractive because it makes it possible to revalue a stigmatized identity or a denial of social recognition. It is therefore vital not to avoid certain topics and to identify alternative ways of action forming part of an “authentic” religious practice (promotion of solidarity and selflessness, ethical exemplarity, a legal way of fighting against discrimination, etc.) (Sèze, 2014).

The prison environment

By definition, prison is a place for the prevention of recidivism. Radical extremists do not form a homogeneous group in prison, which means that no approach can provide an optimal solution in the prison environment or a method which works everywhere. The matter of whether to separate or mix radicals among other prisoners has not been settled. Promoting a mix allows recruiters to actively proselytize all kinds of prisoners. On the other hand, segregation is likely to maintain certain existing networks by reinforcing the hierarchical organization and way of operating. Similarly, the establishment of specific wings for radicals may lead to the creation of new criminogenic networks.

More than anywhere else, deradicalization in prison should be customized (Porges). Several approaches seem appropriate:

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- Improving detention conditions and respecting rights appears to be fundamental for renewing links between the prisoner and the prison authorities and, in turn, the State.
- The approach of the social worker should be combined with work on ideology, even though official religious dignitaries are mostly disparaged as accomplices of the prison authorities.
- Strengthening links with the family; facilitating visits of loved ones, sharing meals, holding parties and celebrating birthdays all assist in the rehabilitation process.
- Links with the outside must be created in order to ensure support after release. This involves creating a social network which ensures the stability which guarantees rehabilitation.
- Fostering good relations between prisoners and prison staff.

Voice, Exit, Loyalty

We propose reviving the model developed in 1970 by Albert Hirschman in his book titled *Exit, Voice, Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms*, in which he sets about analysing the behaviour of consumers who are dissatisfied with the products they find on the market. He explains that the latter essentially have three possible choices: to respond silently (exit), to remain faithful (loyalty) or to make their voices heard (voice). This approach may similarly be applied within the context of prevention of violent radicalism. If the process is rooted in a breakdown of identity essentially questioning an individual's place in society, the prospects offered to him are the same as the consumer's. These individuals may be marginalised and become involved in counter-models (exit), remain faithful to society by remaining within the institutional system as it operates (loyalty) or attempt to change society from within (voice). The latter path should be shaped to ensure that speaking out and a desire for change are not reflected in a deviant process. This model means that supervising an overtly radicalised individual should necessarily involve positive speaking. Places for speaking, either individual or collective, should be created, where individuals may express their points of view, their expectations and their needs. The aim is to enable them to verbalise their emotions, establishing a link between present experiences and traumas from the past (discrimination, denial of recognition, biographical disruption, etc.). One success factor will consist of the opening up of the working environment so as not to standardize procedures and to ensure that the individual does not have the impression of being used as an instrument. Even more than in other situations, the prevention of violent radicalism requires us to humanise the relationship with individuals and their loved ones. Within the context of disengagement from a process, several paths may be proposed:

- Confronting victims of terrorist attacks or parents of victims who have lost a radicalised child;

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- Meetings with “repentants” or individuals who have withdrawn from a sectarian or deviant process;
- Debate on the place of legitimate violence in society in order to empower the participant;
- The shaping of the participants ’s testimony by means of writing, art, culture - anything permitting the verbalization of negative emotions;
- Freedom of expression in both one-to-one situations and in collective debates;
- Involvement in the community and, at the end of the disengagement process, in civil society or the political sphere in its broadest sense;
- Meetings with role models or legitimate figures in the eyes of the radicalised individuals;
- Meetings with individuals from their past network, within a context in which individuals can explain and justify their actions;

These proposals are only indications, given that the measures defined at this level should necessarily form part of a personalised project, taking into account all the aspects of the situation. The most important factor is the concern for re-establishing the conditions of the social contract and the links binding individuals to society. Field professionals will thus favour the following levers:

Procedure to be adopted	Positive Stance	Negative Stance
Sense of belonging	Selflessness/Solidarity - Inclusive	Exclusive - Them against Us
Identity	Multiple	One dimensional
Self-esteem	Integration	Negative heroism
Esteem of Others	Engagement	Revenge
Recognition	Emotional, legal and social recognition	Social contempt and social superiority

Social workers should have modest expectations with regard to the impact of their work. They should not be convinced that they will be able to transform the individuals or sway their opinions. They should work aware of the risk of being used as an instrument or merely constituting a cog in a process whose implications go far beyond them. Only their

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determination and sense of morals will enable them to attempt to form a relationship of trust based upon the ethics of the debate and the quality of the relationship they establish.

Annex 1 - Barometer of the Center for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (CPRMV - Quebec)

(Reproduced in full from www.info-radical.org)

Non-significant behaviour

This category includes patterns of behaviour associated with different forms of political, religious and community engagement, characterized by peaceful means of action and democratic methods of expression.

- Enthusiastically arguing to defend convictions with loved ones
- Sporting visible signs (traditional clothing, a beard, a shaved head, religious symbols, specific tattoos, etc.) in order to express identity or sense of belonging
- Having an active presence in social media
- Making a stand and campaigning peacefully to defend a cause related to a community, group or individual
- Showing a keen interest in current national or international events
- Expressing a desire to reintegrate or further a religious practice or an identity-based or political engagement
- Converting to new religious beliefs or adopting new ideological or political beliefs
- Requesting a specific diet dictated by political or religious convictions
- Expressing a need for extreme experiences and adventures
- Displaying a desire to correct social injustices

Worrying behaviour

This category includes behaviour which attest to an individual's ill ease. It also includes behaviour which reflect the individuals' growing, and increasingly sustained, identification with a cause or ideology, leading them to profound changes in their behaviour.

Examples:

- Expressing a polarizing discourse of absolute faith, paranoia or extreme distrust
- Adopting behaviour which is at odds with family practices

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- ▶ Developing sympathies towards conspiracy discourses and theories
- ▶ Beginning to shun acquaintances
- ▶ Suddenly changing habits

Disturbing behaviour

This category encompasses types of behaviour which may indicate the start of an individual's engagement in radical courses of action. This behaviour is manifested by an increased distrust of the outside world and a preponderance of discourses legitimizing recourse to violence, as a means to an ends or to achieve victory for the cause endorsed by the individual.

Examples:

- ▶ Breaking away from loved ones and retreating exclusively to association with new friends or circles of acquaintances
- ▶ Legitimizing the use of violence to defend a cause or ideology
- ▶ Concealing their lifestyle, allegiance or beliefs (in the real or virtual world) from loved ones
- ▶ Bonding with individuals or groups known to be violent extremists
- ▶ Sudden loss of interest in educational or professional activities
- ▶ Sporting symbols of belonging and support associated with groups known to be violent extremists
- ▶ Becoming obsessed with the end of the world and messianic discourses
- ▶ Using hate speech with regard to other individuals or groups

Alarming behaviour

This category includes patterns of behaviour which attest to an exclusive and sectarian allegiance to an ideology or cause, leading the individual to perceive violence as the sole legitimate and effective means of action.

Examples:

- ▶ Participating in any way (materially, financially or physically) in the activities of violent extremist groups
- ▶ Recruiting individuals on behalf of a violent extremist cause (or encouraging their participation in this cause)

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- ▶ Socialising, in the real or virtual world, with a group or a network of individuals known to be violent radicals
- ▶ Consolidating beliefs by regularly visiting violent extremist forums or websites on the internet
- ▶ Committing or planning violent or hate crimes motivated by an ideology or a violent extremist cause
- ▶ Enquiring about, seeking to acquire or training to handle weapons (firearms, explosives, etc.) outside a regulated context
- ▶ Planning journeys to conflict zones or regions known to be fields of action by violent extremist groups

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