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CONCLUSION PAPER
RAN Small Scale Expert Meeting
27 May 2021, Online

P/CVE in Prison and Dynamic Security

Key outcomes

Previous RAN Meetings have shown that daily interactions and relations between prison staff and inmates can contribute to the monitoring and assessing of cases, and can be a valuable addition to risk and needs assessment tools. In the RAN Small Scale Expert Meeting, practitioner experts who either have experiences with implementing Dynamic Security in prison, either experiences with radicalised and terrorist offenders, discussed the opportunities of Dynamic Security in the context of P/CVE in prison. Some of the main outcomes are presented below.

• The implementation of Dynamic Security with radicalised and terrorist offenders or other high-risk inmates is possible. Facing violence with non-reactive approaches can help to create a cognitive opening that enables other ways to express anger or other emotions.

• Dynamic Security is not only possible but also a potentially beneficial approach. Practitioners reported it can be a contribution to the risk and needs assessment, while at the same time offering a way of dealing with false compliance and non-compliance, due to improved knowledge of the inmates and their needs.

• Practitioners' understanding of their role is key to implementing Dynamic Security. They take on more responsibility, and they need appropriate training and understanding of their tasks. Since this cannot and should not be enforced, there needs to be a certain degree of intrinsic motivation.

• Dynamic Security can be implemented in almost all contexts and does not necessarily depend on large amounts of resources. Pragmatic solutions can be found to implement a system that is more focused on the relations between staff and inmates.

This paper captures the outcomes of the RAN Small Scale Meeting on the role of Dynamic Security in prison in the context of P/CVE. It will present the highlights of the discussion, sharing the main lessons learned and key challenges. It will also summarise the main recommendations tabled during the meeting.

Highlights of the discussion

The concept of Dynamic Security was discussed in light of the main challenges practitioners face when addressing P/CVE in prisons. These include better risk and needs assessment; improving effectiveness of programmes for disengagement, deradicalisation and resocialisation (DDR); false compliance and non-compliance; optimising the prison-exit continuum; prevention of attacks on staff; and the safeguarding of prisoners who are targeted by radicalising fellow prisoners and the mitigation of proliferation of extremist influences in prison.

How can Dynamic Security support P/CVE measures conducted in prisons? What are the necessary requirements for its implementation, and can the approach also be used when dealing with high-risk inmates? To address these questions, the discussion among first-line practitioners in the field was prompted by brief inputs from expert practitioners working with Dynamic Security in Norway, Germany and Portugal.

- The Norwegian approach (where the concept has been implemented nationwide since the 1970s) raises questions about prerequisites for the application of Dynamic Security, as in Norway for example the ratio of correctional officers to inmates is very low. In addition, there is regular data exchange with other relevant actors, such as the police. This is not always feasible in other countries. However, even without the Norwegian prerequisites, elements of Dynamic Security can still be implemented in any prison regime.

- The German approach heavily emphasised the need to redesign staff selection processes and training to facilitate a shift from previous methods to a Dynamic Security approach. It was highlighted that what is ultimately required from correctional officers interacting with inmates is to *be* dynamic.

- The Portuguese approach underlined that implementation is possible despite differences in the availability of resources across different MSs and prisons. There, community policing has served as a blueprint to be adapted to and implemented within prisons. Knowing the 'community' and being 'close' and accessible is important. It was stressed that in Portugal Dynamic Security is practiced especially with high-risk inmates.

Dynamic Security can be understood as part of a holistic case management where daily reflections on the emotional state of an inmate allow for observations relating to changes in their behaviour. The overall idea is that when controlling inmates through fear, the information required to understand changes in their behaviour is not as easily accessible. Force can still be used if needed, but Dynamic Security is more about preventing instead of reacting.

While the daily observations made through the Dynamic Security approach can support early recognition of changes in attitude or behaviour such as radicalisation, it can likewise be used to monitor and support positive behaviour. Fellow inmates can be involved to gain additional information about a particular inmate or tell sceptical inmates about their positive experiences and interactions with prison staff in order to encourage them to open up to prison staff.

When it comes to the relationship between correctional officers and extremist or terrorist inmates, the latter might strive for an ideology where the government is the enemy and prison staff and police are oppressors, making them all legitimate targets. Concerning this matter, correctional officers working with a Dynamic Security approach were advised to always put first their own security. However, keeping in close contact and knowing individuals can help to detect early signals of concerning developments.

One guiding principle suggested along these lines was to humanise the relationship between correctional officers and inmates. Ideological debates have been successfully circumvented when the correctional officers aimed at building a relation. Dynamic security offers the officer an opportunity to setting an example of being "a good person", despite ideological differences.

On the other hand, a close relationship between correction officer and inmate might obstruct the correction officer's professional judgement when it comes to the assessment of the inmate's behaviour and progress. Another risk is

the manipulation by inmates. It was discussed how this can be counter-balanced with collegial exchange and appropriate training.

It emerged that many prisons already implement Dynamic Security or elements of it, without necessarily being aware of it. By the same token it was pointed out that there might be a false impression that only incoming young correctional officers would want to utilize Dynamic Security. In fact, veteran prison staff might have been utilising elements of Dynamic Security for years, without any official framework in place.

Challenges of Dynamic Security

- One of the key challenges is preventing **possible manipulation**. Dynamic Security goes both ways. More meaningful interactions between prison staff and inmates means that inmates themselves are also assessing the behaviour of prisons staff. This might enable inmates to realise quite quickly when prison staff is sceptical or worried about a certain development. This challenge can be addressed with **appropriate training and regular supervision**.

- Practical experience has shown it can be extremely useful to **share information** with actors from outside the prison, such as the police. Approaches such as the 'info-flow' in Norway can help create a holistic picture of a person. However, in many cases, due to **data protection regulations**, this is not possible. Practitioners also raised the point that **too much (irrelevant) information** can hinder a clear vision on the case.

Motivating staff can be a challenge and the implementation of Dynamic Security needs to be in line with **how prison staff perceive and understand their job**. Practical experiences have shown that the different professions involved in processes of rehabilitation (e.g. prison staff and probation staff) perceive their roles differently. It is important to create joint forces and to work towards the same goal. Moreover, it is crucial not to lecture prison staff on how they should do their job and introduce a sudden change in their daily work, but to explain in detail how Dynamic Security can contribute to their work and, ultimately, also to their safety.

Dynamic Security: Opportunities and Recommendations

The participants agreed that Dynamic Security could contribute to several elements in the prison P/CVE challenges.

Dynamic Security has benefits for the target group of radicalising, extremist and terrorist prisoners

- Radicalising or extremist and terrorist prisoners can be particularly problematic and hostile. They have also attacked prison staff in the past. Dynamic Security's de-escalating and non-aggressive approach might be a good response to prisoners who are apt to be hostile against 'the system' and the prison staff.

- The humane approach can be a living alternative or even counter narrative to the intolerant extremist ideology with a strong 'us-and-them' dichotomy.

- The precondition is that the two security dimensions, physical and organisational security, are present and the staff members put their own safety first.

- The de-escalating approach could prevent growing polarisation between staff and prisoners and help prevent attacks on staff.

Implementation of Dynamic Security in Prisons

- 'Correctional officer or contact officer'? Implementation of Dynamic Security starts with agreed roles and tasks for prison staff. An appropriate name for the role can support Dynamic Security. In Finland, for instance, the profession of Prison Security Officers was renamed to Criminal Sanctions Officers in order to highlight their holistic tasks in dealing with inmates[1].

- Closer relations and daily interactions result in the better understanding of individual prisoners, the prisoner groups and the dynamics in the prison community.

- Sometimes 'older' staff is already implementing elements of Dynamic Security, like relationship building, without knowing that this is actually part of Dynamic Security.

- Dynamic Security is based on relations and activities, which can be an asset for organising the release and the prison-exit continuum. As inmates are getting used to regular exchanges as outlined above, this dynamic can extend to their rehabilitation outside of prison.

Training of prison staff

- Invest in recruitment, initial training and training-on-the-job for existing staff, including supervisions.

- During the training of staff, it is necessary they are trained with knowledge and skills, as well as the right attitude to help them understand the prisoners and their cultural and religious backgrounds.

- Training should focus on the agreed role and task definition of their work incorporating Dynamic Security's crucial elements: everyday contact and interaction and purposeful and meaningful activities for prisoners.

Follow up

RAN PRISONS WG Meeting: In the fourth quarter of 2021, the RAN PRISONS Working Group will organise a two-day meeting on the topic of training of prison staff. During the meeting, practitioners and experts will elaborate on the most important skills prison staff need in order to do their job successfully. Together, participants will create an overview about the type of trainings that are useful for prison staff.

Further reading

Participants highlighted the **UNODC online course on the Nelson Mandela Rules** "Become a champion of the Nelson Mandela Rules. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners".

If you are interested in exchanging with coordinators of best practices, check the EPTA Handbook on Best Practices in Dynamic Security. The handbook describes different practices from Norway, Finland, Estonia, Belgium, Spain and France.

If you are interested in how to train prison staff on Dynamic Security, the Council of Europe has published an intensive training manual: Council of Europe, Trainers' Manual on Dynamic Security. Strengthening the protection of the rights of sentenced persons, Skopje 2018.

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[1] European Penitentiary Training Academy, Best Practices in Dynamic Security Training, 2021.