

RAN POL

27/01/2022

CONCLUSION PAPER

RAN POL meeting 'Workshop for in-depth case diagnosis'

16-17 December 2021, online

Workshop for in-depth case diagnosis

Key outcomes

On the mornings of 16 and 17 December 2021, a group of experienced police officers gathered online to diagnose and discuss four different real-life cases. The cases varied in type of extremism and came from different regions and countries: a young boy returning from Deash territory; a prison officer who was prevented from carrying out right-wing extremist attacks; a released terrorist enrolled in a re-socialisation programme who kills two persons; a Salafist-Jihadist convert convicted of robbery who after release re-engaged with his old Salafi-jihadist friends.

The case of the child returnee focused on social diagnosis, which is an important method to decide on preventive measures for long term comprehensive programmes and short-term actions. The other cases were a diagnosis of police interventions to decide with a debriefing what the police did right and what could they have done better. The diagnosis and discussions aimed at understanding how a holistic diagnosis can support police in achieving their goals, what the lessons learned are from their approach, and how cases with a potential risk should be managed.

The main lessons learned from these four cases are that there is a need for a **methodological approach** that combines:

- **Thorough diagnosis:** The aim is to really get to know the subject/individual and try to make the difference. For this holistic approach, police need partner organisations.
- **Systemic working:** In addition to an individual-centred approach, there is also a need to work with the networks surrounding the individual such as families and communities.
- **Mitigating risks and prevent future violence:** The cases demonstrated that it is not enough to diagnose and monitor, it is also necessary to combine with interventions aimed at mitigating risks and prevent future violence. A tailor-made approach based on the risks, needs and strengths is important. Once again, police cannot do it alone.

This paper summarises the main conclusions following the four real-life cases diagnosed during the meeting. The paper also describes the reoccurring approaches to the cases and its challenges. Recommendations about methodology and the role of police in the multi-agency approach are also presented. Follow-up and inspiring practices are outlined.

Highlights of the discussion

Case 1: Returning minor

In a Southern-European country a minor from an Albanian migrant background was kidnapped by his mother and taken to Daesh. After several years and as a young teenager, his mother died, and he is brought back to his home country to live with his father. After two years, the police professionals started with a methodological approach focusing on psychosocial assessment and investigation.

- This first case was the start of developing a new methodological approach, including a training of a multi-disciplinary police team, and systemise a tailored intervention protocol on secondary prevention, which is a 5-year plan.
- After the first two years, the juvenile judicial authority assessed that the social services lacked specialised knowledge to manage a child returnee. They intervened with the multi-disciplinary police team to support the local level.
- The police team coordinates the social services, healthcare, school, local authorities, interventions on the minor and the family. In other countries, police would also build a network of local partners, including the returnee's local society and community.
- Information sharing and trust are potential obstacles in multi-agency approaches for cases like these.
- There is a lack in risk assessment tools, support and specialised treatment for minors.
- For returnee cases there are four phases: preparation of the return, the arrival at the airport, the assessment phase, and the reintegration phase (including monitoring). Police should be involved in all four phases.

Case 2: Released terrorist

A male jihadist was convicted of plotting a terrorist attack in the UK in 2012. Following Khan's release in 2018, he participated in a Desistance and Disengagement Programme and was invited to the Fish Mongers' Hall to talk about this programme. Probation gave him permission to attend the event. The day before the event he prepared an attack resulting in the death of two participants and injuring three others in a knife attack.

- In this case there was a growing isolation of the subject after release and there was no follow-up for promoting positive changes in resocialisation and purposeful daily activity. Hirschi's social control theory asserts that weak connections to family, friends and society increase the risk of crime and radicalisation¹.
- It shows that when someone is under restrictions and is being monitored after release, he/she will show behaviour matching the "system".
- The participants discussed restricting internet for reintegrating prisoners after release. This could make reintegration more difficult, but at the same time the use of internet can cause serious concerns about malicious contacts.
- There was discussion on the pros and cons of separating terrorist prisoners from other prisoners. On one side it could be a breeding and training ground for further radicalisation, but on the other side it could safeguard other prisoners from extremist influences.
- This case illustrates the risk of recidivism of even seemingly cooperative released prisoners.
 - The Dutch Care and Safety Houses and LIVC (local integrated security councils/cells) in Belgium were mentioned as a platform for these kinds of cases.

¹ Hirschi, T. (1969). Key idea: Hirschi's social bond/social control theory. Key Ideas in Criminology and Criminal Justice, p. 55-69. Retrieved from: https://in.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/36812_5.pdf.

Case 3: Right-wing extremist prison officer

Worries on the well-being of a lone introverted prison officer by his colleagues. The prison officer has a firearm license and weapons for hunting purpose. During a police patrol on the road, he shows suspicious behaviour. After searching his car, his home and electronics, suspicious materials have been found, which looked like he was planning an attack. After his arrest he claimed he wanted to kill himself.

- In some cases, there are, even in hindsight, not many clear indications of political grievances and radicalisation leading to violent extremism
- The discussion on this case mainly concerned the self-chosen isolation of the subject. This has been manifested very clearly when a co-worker expressed concern that he might do harm to himself or someone else.
- There were no clear signals that the man was radicalising, but there were some indicators of a lone actor influenced by different ideologies.
- His statements and acts looked more like suicide than a planned attack, based on a process of radicalisation grounded in a violent extremist ideology. The man fitted the profile of school shooters and confused persons where acts of violence are the outcome mental instability.
- Following his release, a specialised police team holds risk-reducing talks with him. He participates on a voluntary basis.
- It was suggested that monitoring the internet and dark web can also help identify persons of concern.

Case 4: Salafist-Jihadist convert convicted of robbery

A young man, talented in football and breakdancing, applies without success for an elite military unit. He is also turned down as a police officer (fails the assessment). Jobless, he meets an old peer and joins a local Salafi-jihadist group. While preparing to join ISIS in Syria, he commits a robbery and physical assault and receives a 3-year prison sentence. He shows good behaviour in prison and cooperates with probation services after release. Suddenly after two years, he reconnects with individuals from the Salafi community (former friends).

- The 5-step methodical approach for behavioural analysis of the Center for Deradicalisation, Bayern Police (DE) was presented to the participants and well received. Looking at actual behaviour they try to understand the person (see below "relevant practices").
- Police can analyse existing data on actual behaviour (e.g., criminal records).
- The behavioural analysis feeds into a plan to approach and intervene. Currently, this is done by police after release from prison, but they are planning to start early during the detention period.
- Sharing information between agencies is not easy due to strict regulations on privacy.
- In cases like these perhaps someone should sit with the individual and engage in a conversation about his dreams, frustrations, and ambitions. This can be supplementary to working with data.
- Systemic working was suggested to get a holistic vision on someone and the options for interventions. Systemic working includes not only the subject but also his family, friends and others who play an important role in the person's life.
- In the discussion different personality types were mentioned to identify potential interventions.

Recommendations

Each case differed from one another in the types of P/CVE. However, the group discussion produced recommendations for police in developing a methodological approach to diagnose cases and deliver interventions. This meeting showcased inspiring cases of methodological working within the police available in Europe already.

- The cases made clear that the **police cannot do it alone** in P/CVE. The police, cannot monitor someone for 20 years. Therefore, the approach should not be only security-driven. The police should approach it as a centre point in the multi-agency network.
-
- A **social diagnosis** provides opportunities to change the situation. Police should not only work on monitoring but should carry out a diagnosis together with other partners in a multi-agency setting. During the diagnosis, it is important to build a personal relationship with the individual to grasp what is going on in his/her life and to take action with different actors.
- Within a methodological approach, start with a document analysis on the primary and secondary investigation by **looking into the family and social structures**. After the analysis, it could be useful to produce a 5-year plan and conduct an annual evaluation.
 - Systemic working: individual centred approaches are important, but it's also crucial to focus on the structures around the individual such as the family and community.
 - Combine intelligence data with the subject's personal history.
- During the **case assessment** focus on **risk factors** based on the combination of intelligence information and the personal history of the individual, **but also** focus on **protective factors** and alternative measures.
 - Police officers are only conducting risk assessments, but in the analysis, there should also be a focus on needs assessments.
- The reintegration of the subject should begin in prison.
- When dealing with disengagement, police need to try to reintegrate the subjects into society together with the network of practitioners. One of the cases showed that the chance of reoffending is high if this is missing.
 - Monitoring and being concerned is not enough. There should be interventions planned to change the situation. Be aware that too much surveillance and restrictions could risk to push people towards re-radicalisation.
 - The police should do an ongoing risk assessment to tackle threats of radicalisation and reoffending.
 - However, some cases also show **false compliance**. Therefore, it is important that the police are not naïve. Successful reintegration also means that the police have strategies and approaches to deal with false compliance.
- The cases showed that there is a need for an influencer and/or charismatic person to reinforce the subject's talents (e.g., a psychologist, police, religious leader, key figure, etc.)
- Police should in their approach look at adjacent fields such as domestic violence. There are helpful experiences and approaches in the field of domestic violence that can be of help for P/CVE cases.

- Debriefing and looking at lessons learned is important to avoid future mistakes, especially now that there will be a high number of released terrorist convicts. It's important to share this information with practitioners working in other EU Member States within a European debriefing structure.

Relevant practices

1. Redex, Sweden. The Swedish police have regional teams tasked to reduce extremism. They are intelligence-oriented and have a prevention perspective on extremism.
2. A case assessment to understand the inner logic by the Bavarian State Criminal Police office, Germany.
It follows a 5-step approach:
 1. Gathering existing information on behaviour
 2. Visualisation (Social Contacts, Family, Education, Job, Intelligence on extremist background, stabilising and destabilising issues, personality-related aspects)
 3. Chronological order of events (Biography & The process of radicalisation)
 4. Interpretation of data in sequential order
 5. Output/Report (Structured Report covering several issues, among them possible stabilising and destabilizing aspects, recommendations for further proceedings)
3. The psycho-social intervention on a child returnee, Italy. A methodological approach based on a document analysis, primary and secondary victimisation, analysis of risk factors and psychosocial investigation. The police team does the coordination of the partners such as family, social services, school and healthcare. This is a 5-year programme with annual evaluations.

Follow up

- RAN POL has planned a meeting in 2022 on 'police role and contribution in the multi-agency case diagnosis of at-risk individuals'. In this meeting, we can focus on the approaches in the three practices and other successful approaches focusing on lessons learned, information sharing, implementation and evaluation. This is a logical follow-up to this meeting on 16 and 17 December, during which the focus was more on discussing the real-life cases.
- There is a need to further develop approaches for false compliance in programmes for disengagement, deradicalisation and reintegration. In a RAN small-scale meeting different multi-agency partners can discuss insights and best practices in how best to be alert and tackle false compliance. This can be further researched. For instance, it could be explored how Member States are dealing with false compliance.

Further reading

- [RAN Issue paper, Lessons from crime prevention in preventing violent extremism by police, January 2020.](#)
- [RAN POL The role for police officers in multi-agency working and information sharing, Utrecht 21 December 2016.](#)
- [RAN P&P and RAN YF&C Radicalised and terrorist offenders released from prison: Community and family acceptance, Prague 06-07 June 2019.](#)
- [RAN Policy and Practice Dealing with radicalised individuals during and after imprisonment, Vienna 06 November 2018.](#)
- [RAN Small Scale Meeting Radicalised police, military and prison staff, online meeting 16 December 2020.](#)
- [RAN PRISONS Practitioners' questions and needs for the future, based on experiences in dealing with Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Violent Extremist or Terrorist Offenders, online meeting 23-24 June 2021.](#)