

# Prevention of violent extremism in third countries

Measures to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones

## Executive Summary

Magnus Ranstorp  
Peder Hyllengren

**CATS**  
Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies



Title: Prevention of violent extremism in third countries: Measures to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones

Authors: Magnus Ranstorp and Peder Hyllengren

Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS), Swedish National Defence College

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**“However beautiful the strategy,  
you should occasionally look at the results”**

**- Sir Winston Churchill**

# **Foreword**

This report on the prevention of violent extremism in conflict zones is the result of the government commission given to the Swedish National Defence College in December 2011. The problem of young men travelling to conflict zones such as Somalia, Pakistan – and now recently Syria – to engage in combat has become an increasingly apparent security issue in several European countries. The task of this report was to identify and assess methods and initiatives in some selected countries to prevent individuals from traveling to conflict zones and to see which of these responses can offer transferable lessons to a Swedish context.

The recommendations made are well in line with the earlier report presented in 2009 by SNDC/CATS to the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (“Threats to democracy and fundamental values – a picture of the situation in Malmö” (*Hot mot demokrati och värdegrund – en lägesbild från Malmö*)). The most important recommendation – then as now – is to try to address the bureaucratic ‘gap’ between the central government and the municipal level by designating a national actor to coordinate and harmonise preventative actions. For example, as the report points out the Swedish Security Service, which should normally be the last resort, becomes the first resort and the only response since there are no other bodies to contact in cases of concern. A number of other non-judicial ‘air bags’ that can be used primarily at municipal level and in cooperation with civil society should therefore be designed and implemented at the local level.

This unique and large-scale report is based in part on 111 interviews with those working on a daily basis with these issues in Sweden and in four other countries (Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands). This summary provides a good picture of the main content of the report and is concluded with recommendations concerning the situation in Sweden and its response.

The work on this report has been conducted at the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS) at the Swedish National Defence College under the leadership of Dr. Magnus Ranstorp and with the support of University Lecturer Peder Hyllengren and Research Assistant Linus Gustafsson.

Lars Nicander

Director, Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS)

# Executive Summary

## Introduction and structure

This is a summary of the 300 page report *Prevention of violent extremism in third countries: Measures to stop individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones*. This summary begins with a brief summary of the commission and this is then followed by a limited selection from each chapter of the entire report.

The Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS) at the Swedish National Defence College has long experience in the area and has broad expertise concerning research and policy issues with respect to violent extremism. This has attracted international attention on the publication of its reports and in connection with the role played by the Center in several international bodies, for example in the context of the EU Expert Groups on Radicalisation, and its involvement in the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN).

In addition CATS previously contributed to a study commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) on countering radicalisation and terrorism in Indonesia. This contributed to a visit to the Swedish National Defence College by the leader of one of the world's largest Muslim organisations, Nahdlatul Ulama, to strengthen cross-border dialogue on preventive action against extremism.<sup>1</sup>

## Commission

In December 2011 the Government commissioned the Swedish National Defence College to conduct a study that sheds light on examples of successful work on preventing extremism in other countries, focusing on action intended to prevent individuals from joining extremist groups in conflict zones. The study was also to identify good examples of how this work can be carried out by civil society actors at local level.

This report is intended to provide a fact-based and nuanced contribution to the understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing EU Member States when they try to deal with the problem of the recruitment of foreign fighters, returnees and the endeavours of the different Member States to establish and develop cooperation with civil society actors and different groups living in the diaspora. The task is to:

1. Shed light on good examples from relevant EU countries of preventive work to address violent extremism in third countries, focusing on measures intended to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones;
2. Shed light on how diaspora groups can be involved in work to prevent violent extremism in third countries, and especially in activities intended to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in third countries; and
3. Propose suitable measures to strengthen preventive work to address violent extremism in third countries.

Countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Denmark have long been engaged in long-term preventive work, which is intended both to prevent their own citizens participating in

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<sup>1</sup> "Islam and terrorism on the agenda for Indonesian visit" (Islam och terrorism på agendan vid indonesiskt besök"), Swedish National Defence College  
<https://www.fhs.se/sv/nyheter/2010/islam-och-terrorism-pa-agendan-vid-indonesiskt-besok/>

activities characterised by violent extremism or resulting in acts of terror abroad, and to do preventive work on the ground in third countries by seeking suitable local partners. The German experience has also been included in this study since Germany has considerable experience of individuals resident in the country being recruited and making their way to conflict areas, especially to Pakistan. When these individuals return to Germany (or to other EU countries) they often constitute real threats to security.

This report deals with experience and lessons learned from Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany regarding the preventive work these countries undertake to address violent Islamic extremism – both at home and abroad. Particular emphasis is placed on lessons learned regarding recruitment to conflict zones. As regards countries outside the EU, particular attention is given to preventive measures in Pakistan and Somalia.

## **Terms, scope and methodology**

### **Foreign fighters**

There is an on-going discussion about what term to use for extremists who travel to conflict zones. In English they are generally called ‘foreign fighters’. In this context foreign fighters are defined as “noncitizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Scope**

The scope of this report is limited in a number of ways. The subject is extensive and involves a number of interdisciplinary research areas that have not yet been systematised or combined to a relevant degree. In a study from 2006, Lum, Lesley and Sherley examined evaluations conducted of various counter-terrorism measures, and their results show that out of 20 000 academic evaluations conducted dealing with effectiveness, only seven were deemed to have been conducted in a scientific manner.<sup>3</sup>

Extensive research is necessary in thematic and interdisciplinary areas where research results, government publications and interviews with officials are combined in order to obtain adequate understanding and knowledge. Handling these issues in the best possible way is a massive undertaking and, for a number of reasons, it is not possible to deal with every aspect of the literature available in the area.

Another difficulty is the lack of a systematic overview of foreign fighters who travel to conflict zones. Government authorities are often unwilling to release information about any on-going investigations. They are cautious about stating the exact number of individuals who have travelled, what background they have or what conflict area they are interested in.

There are natural reasons for this caution, not least the risk that this information may harm and influence minorities and religious communities, which may then result in xenophobia and an unnecessarily exaggerated threat level. Moreover, how many individuals actually do return and to what extent this will create a problem is extremely uncertain.

It is important not to view radicalisation processes as a linear process and to realise that it can vary depending on the local context and various individual factors. There is a danger in viewing the process as a predetermined escalator passing predetermined stages at the same speed.

It is also important to have an understanding of the special character of the radicalisation processes and the experiences that shape the diaspora. These features mean that caution should be observed with

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<sup>2</sup> Millets, David (2013) *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civic Conflicts*, Oxford University Press p. 9

<sup>3</sup> Lum, Cynthia, Kennedy, Leslie & Sherley, Alison (2006) *The Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism Strategies: A Campbell Systematic Review*.

respect to trying to identify specific features that are then used for generalisations. The radicalisation processes varies between member states since the underlying processes and their direction are extremely varied all the way down to the individual level.

Moreover, member states have approached the problem from different operational contexts both in regard to legislation and intelligence services and in terms of their involvement in various CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) programmes outside the EU. Therefore the contexts and the character of the problem are changing continuously.

This study does not involve an in-depth analysis of the organisational dynamics in neither al-Shabaab nor the more important Pakistani groups; nor is the dynamic status of al-Qaida considered in detail. The prime purpose of this report is not to give the reader a deeper understanding of extremist groups in Somalia or Pakistan or the historical, political or socioeconomic context. These factors are weighed in to some extent but are not described in detail.

It should also be borne in mind that there are considerable differences in the scale of violent Islamic extremism between Europe, Somalia and Pakistan. In individual EU countries there are generally around a dozen or several dozens of individuals who are potential threats while the scale is much larger in Somalia and Pakistan.

Caution should be observed concerning the lessons learned in connection with the implementation of various measures and programmes; they cannot automatically be transferred from one local context to another. Local conditions may very well be completely different. It is also apparent that CVE programmes and projects differ in terms of visibility, possibly in the light of competing agendas and the need to protect local partners and their credibility.

Moreover, the knowledge base from which individual and collective lessons could be learned is deficient. This is due to a range of circumstances, such as the projects being new, lacking access to data and using deficient evaluation methods.

Research concerning radicalisation and extremism is far from uncomplicated and can, in certain cases, be politically sensitive. As mentioned above, the terminology available suffers from a number of weaknesses, which can reinforce these problems in combination with the sensitive cooperation between government authorities and civil society.

It is also important to emphasize that the role of the diaspora is not something solely to be described as negative and problematic. This language has a tendency to hide the hugely positive contributions that the diaspora can provide in terms of conflict resolution, governance and local capacity building.

It should be stressed that there is no research showing that the diaspora as such contributes to radicalisation, extremism or terrorism. In fact, it is the other way round; the diaspora is an important partner and can help to protect society from radicalisation and violent Islamic extremism.

A list of references and interviews can be found in the full version of the report. Finally, it should be made clear that this report is to be viewed as an investigation report. However, we have endeavoured to follow scientific practice concerning investigative methods.

## **Methodology**

This report takes a qualitative approach. Interviews and discussions have been conducted with relevant individuals in the countries studied – for example, government officials, police and security services, local authorities and civil society organisations.

A total of 83 interviews and discussions have been conducted with international representatives ranging from all these categories. Interviews and discussions have also been held with 28 officials working in Sweden, for example SSP (school, social services and police) employees, a representative

of the Prosecution Office for Security Court Cases, the Swedish Security Service, academics, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, NGOs and a former head of the National Centre for Terrorist Threat Assessment (NCT).

The international interviews have mainly been about terrorism threat level and extremist environment as well as preventive measures. The Swedish interviews have, for example, dealt with the problems in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö and the forms for inter-agency cooperation. Interviews with the Swedish Security Service have mainly dealt with threat assessments of violent Islamic extremism and travellers to conflict zones and the Service's dialogue and forms for cooperation with civil society.

## Threats

To begin with it should be noted that, in general, the number of foreign fighters coming from EU countries and travelling to conflict zones is limited compared with the number coming from neighbouring and nearby states surrounding the conflict area.

Even if it appears obvious that the recruitment of volunteers has increased, it is relevant to ask why training in conflict zones is important. Sageman found in a study of global jihadists between 1993 and 2008 that if they had access to training by al-Qaida or any of its sub-organisations, the probability of a terrorist attack succeeding increased two to four times.<sup>4</sup>

Cruickshank conducted a study of 32 serious jihadi terror plans aimed at the West in the period 2004–2011. In 53 per cent of the cases it could be shown that training and operational preparations had been carried out in cooperation with established jihadist groups in Pakistan; in six per cent of the cases it could be substantiated that training and operational preparations had been carried out in Yemen, with three per cent being carried out in Iraq.<sup>5</sup>

In a study by Clutterbuck and Warnes, at RAND, showed similar results. In the period 2004–2007 serious plans to carry out terror acts in the UK were discovered on six occasions. In five of these cases it could be shown that 38 individuals – so-called ‘core individuals’ – had links to terrorist training camps in Pakistan and another individual had links to a similar training camp in Iraq. These links were not just present in the form of a link or contact; they were to a very high degree an important part of the planning and implementation of the various plans.<sup>6</sup>

Bellow follows a brief presentation of the threats to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark.

## United Kingdom

The UK experienced more than twenty major terror plans in the period 2000–2010<sup>7</sup> and more than 235 individuals have been convicted of and imprisoned for terrorist crimes.<sup>8</sup> No other country in the EU has been as exposed to plans for terrorist attacks planned or inspired by al-Qaida, and there are several reasons for this.

For example, the UK has close relations with the US, and the American ‘war on terrorism’ has been used as a principal motive. The invasion of Iraq made the country even more exposed as al-Qaida

<sup>4</sup> Sageman, Marc “Confronting al-Qaida: Understanding the Threat in Afghanistan and Beyond”, Testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 7 October, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Cruickshank, Paul (2011). *The Militant Pipeline: Between the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region and the West*. Second Edition. Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper. New America Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> Clutterbuck, Lindsay and Warnes, Richard. “Exploring Patterns of Behaviour in Violent Jihadi Terrorists: an analysis of six significant terrorist conspiracies in the UK”, RAND, July 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Clarke, Michael & Soria, Valentina ”Terrorism: The New Wave”, *RUSI Journal*, Vol.4, 2010, pp. 24-31.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

increasingly focused on Britain as a potential target. The large Pakistani diaspora in the UK (which receives an estimated 400 000 visits each year from relatives and friends in Pakistan) and the large Somali diaspora (around 100 000 living in the UK) are also regarded as a possible factor in these contexts that is used and exploited by terrorists.

The question of homegrown terrorism was raised by the terrorist attacks in London in 2005, where 52 people were killed and more than 700 injured. Initially this was a misjudgement since there turned out to be well-established contacts with the individuals who had planned the attacks; they belonged or were intimately connected to al-Qaida in Pakistan. The investigation of the four synchronised bomb attacks provided an important insight into the group dynamics of the perpetrators and how four of the perpetrators had made many trips to Pakistan.

In 2008 UK authorities stated that about 75 per cent of the terror plans investigated in the UK had links to Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> The scale and scope of the training received by UK citizens in terrorist training camps emerged in July 2005 when Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, stressed that around 3000 Britons had been trained in various training camps linked to al-Qaida in the last decade.<sup>10</sup>

In November 2008 the British Security Service revised that figure and stated that "more than 4, 000 British Muslims have passed through terrorist in training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan."<sup>11</sup>

In 2012 it was estimated that around 50 Britons with ethnic or family roots in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Bangladesh or North Africa had travelled to and joined al-Shabaab.<sup>12</sup>

Recently Deputy Metropolitan Police Commissioner Stuart Osborne described how the threat of terror in the UK is so great that every year the police along with the Security Service (MI5) have foiled terror plots on the same scale as the terror attacks of 7 July 2005.<sup>13</sup> One of these terrorist plots involved three leaders from Birmingham who were arrested in 2011 for planning to blow up eight backpacks in a synchronised terrorist operation. Two of the three received their terrorist training in the Waziristan area of Pakistan.<sup>14</sup>

In connection with the subsequent trial it also emerged that al-Qaida had started to advocate a new strategy for terrorism training on account of the clear threat from drones, which has made terrorism training much harder and more dangerous to carry out. The new strategy appears to be a "train the trainer" model in which a few selected individuals from countries in the West are trained in manufacturing bombs and other aspects of terrorism in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Their task is then to travel back to their country of origin so as to spread their knowledge to other violent Islamist extremists.<sup>15</sup>

An unconfirmed figure from UK authorities claims that about 100 individuals have travelled from the UK in the past year in order to join armed groups in Syria that are affiliated to Jabhat al-Nusra, a unit with links to al-Qaida. The total number of Westerners who have travelled to Syria in the past year (2013) to fight is put at around 1000 individuals. This is also an unconfirmed figure from UK authorities and some uncertainty is associated with it.

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<sup>9</sup> Cruikshank, Paul (2011) p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> "Radical Muslim youth who aspired to be UK's first suicide bombers: British connection", *Guardian*, 13 July 2005.

<sup>11</sup> "British Muslims have become a mainstay of the global "jihad", *The Independent*, 29 November 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Laing, Aislinn & Flood, Zoe "Al-Shabaab: the growing menace of the al-Qaida affiliate", *The Telegraph*, 4 April 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Whitehead, Tom "Major terror attack on scale of 7/7 foiled every year in UK, police reveal", *The Telegraph*, 21 March 2013.

<sup>14</sup> "Birmingham men guilty of mass bomb plot", *BBC News*, 21 February 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Cruikshank, Paul. "UK trial reveals new al-Qaida strategy to hit the West" *CNN*, 21 Feb 2013  
<http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2013/02/21/uk-trial-reveals-new-al-Qaida-strategy-to-hit-west/>

## The Netherlands

In 2011 Dutch researchers examined (with support from the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice) twelve investigations of jihadist activities gathered by the police and the Dutch Public Prosecution Service. The twelve investigations contained a total of 113 different individuals who were suspected of various crimes linked to jihadism.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the study demonstrated strong local contacts with international jihadi networks since face-to-face meetings were preferable to phone calls or email and one of the main activities of these networks seems to be facilitating travel to and from training camps for terrorists. A relatively large number of individuals were involved in various criminal activities such as “forging of documents, document fraud, burglary and robbery and – to a lesser degree – drugs trafficking and production, and credit card fraud.”<sup>17</sup>

As regards the targets of terrorism it was noted that little or no distinction was made between international and national targets; this was largely because the selection of targets was governed by improvisation and opportunism, i.e. the fact that when a suitable target was discovered attempts to carry out an attack began.

Illegal immigrants were found in all jihadist contexts. One reason held was that jihadist groups could provide them with necessities in the form of correct or forged documents, work, support, respect, social status and meaning.

In the Netherlands the ‘Hofstad Group’ has accounted for a considerable share of the terror acts in the country. For instance, it has been stressed that “six of the eight incidents, including the assassination of film director Theo Van Gogh, involved members of the Hofstad group and were perpetrated in 2004–2005. Terrorist activity in the country is therefore confined largely to the history of this group.”<sup>18</sup>

A few arrests have been made of individuals suspected of having worked on facilitating travel to join al-Shabaab.

The increase in travel to Syria in the past year has also been noticed in the Netherlands. On 13 March 2013 the level of the terror threat in the country was raised, and one reason given was the increasing number of people who had recently travelled to Syria to fight there.<sup>19</sup> The Dutch Security Service makes the assessment that recently more than 100 people have left the country in order to fight in armed extremist groups in other countries, especially Syria.<sup>20</sup>

## Germany

The situation in Germany is dramatically different from that in most other EU countries as regards the number of foreign fighters; a considerable number of German citizens have travelled to tribal areas in Pakistan. There they have often made contact with al-Qaida’s core or some kind of subsidiary organisation to al-Qaida, especially the Islamic Jihad Union or the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

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<sup>16</sup> de Poot, C.J. & Sonnenschein, A. (2011) *Jihadi terrorism in the Netherlands: a description based on closed criminal investigations*, Boom Juridische uitgevers.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Jordan, Javier “Analysis of Jihadi Terrorism Incidents in Western Europe – 2001-2010”, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 35, No 5, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> “Dutch raise terrorism alert level to "substantial"" Reuters, 13 March 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

German authorities estimate that at least 220 German residents have travelled to Pakistan; it has been confirmed that 70 of them have been in terrorist training camps and that more than 40 have participated in battle against ISAF and NATO forces in Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup>

The size of the German contingent is demonstrated, not least, by the German Taliban divisions set up for the production of propaganda and recruitment of Germans.<sup>22</sup> German intelligence sources assert that “in 2010 and 2011 an average of five militants left Germany every month to try to receive training in the tribal areas of Pakistan.”<sup>23</sup>

Below follows an overview picture obtained from the German security service concerning data on those who have travelled abroad or have intended to do so but have been stopped before leaving. Representatives of the German security service state in interviews that they estimate that the number of Islamists with German citizenship who have travelled abroad to take part in terror-related activities at about 260 individuals since the early 1990s. As regards about 100 individuals the German authorities consider that they have evidence that they have participated in terror training abroad.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, it was stated that at the time of one interview (February 2013) more than 40 Germans were at terror training camps abroad. The estimate made is that between 50 and 150 individuals who have participated in training or fighting abroad have returned to Germany.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of 170 individuals who have travelled or had the ambition of travelling, more detailed data has been obtained from the German security service. As regards their ages the data show that 65 per cent were between 20 and 30 years, 35 per cent were between 10 and 20 years and those who were older than 30 years represented 30 per cent. Out of these 170 individuals it is stated that 28 per cent were stopped from leaving Germany, 12 per cent were stopped abroad, 23 per cent have returned to Germany, 11 per cent were arrested in Germany after their arrival and 15 per cent are still in Afghanistan/Pakistan. There are no data about the remaining 11 per cent.<sup>26</sup>

According to the German security service, the number travelling from Germany between 2007 and 2008 to undergo training or take part in fighting abroad per year has been as follows: ca 5 individuals in 2007; 6 individuals in 2008; 42 individuals in 2009; 31 individuals in 2010; and 3 individuals in 2011. The Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND) describes the development as showing a high share around 2009 with a clear decrease in subsequent years, partly attributed to specific preventive measures presented later in this report.

It is also stated that around 1200 violent Islamists in Germany are placed under supervision/surveillance as they are deemed to be potential terrorists. They are structured in various 'compartments' depending on their roles. One such role involves individuals who have undergone training/participated in fighting abroad and then returned to Germany to act as recruiters. These individuals are described as particularly problematic since they are given the status of heroes in these groups and are often good at recruiting new individuals.

According to an internal document from the Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) which was reproduced in an article in Der Spiegel in March 2013, the assessment made is that 900 people in Germany have an 'Islamic terrorism potential' around that around 250 of them have undergone terrorism training abroad.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Cilluffo, Frank, Cozzens, Jeffrey B. & Ranstorp, Magnus (2010) *Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones*. George Washington University: Homeland Security Policy Institute.

<sup>22</sup> “German Taliban video” posted on al-Qaida’s website/homepage (2010) The Telegraph, 5 October.

<sup>23</sup> Crucikshank, Paul (2010) op.cit.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with German Security Service, August 2012

<sup>25</sup> Interview with German Security Service, October 2012

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> “Call to war. German-Language Video Promotes ‘Jihad’ in Syria.” Spiegel, 12 March 2013  
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/german-language-propaganda-video-calls-for-holy-war-in-syria-a-888394.html>

Most individuals who travel go to Afghanistan/Pakistan and it is estimated that around ten have gone to Somalia.

## Denmark

The threats from terrorism in Denmark have been very high since the publication of the Muhammed cartoons in 2005. They generated worldwide protests in the Islamic world and led to several internal and external plans, terror conspiracies and threats. Since 2005 Denmark has been the subject of six major terror plans which have all been stopped by the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (DSIS) and they have all resulted in those involved being convicted of various terror-related crimes.

Travel activities to camps for terrorist training were revealed in the ‘Glasvej case’ in 2007, in which Hammad Khürshid had visited the Red Mosque where he had been given manuals for manufacturing bombs; later this person went to a terrorist training camp in Waziristan. Khürshid was in direct contact with Abu Nasir al-Qahtani, al-Qaida’s commander in eastern Afghanistan.<sup>28</sup>

The four Swedes who were arrested in December 2010 and convicted in July 2012 for planning a terror attack on the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten had made extensive trips to Pakistan in three cases and to Somalia in one case. One of the terrorists convicted, Mounir Dhahri, spent a lot of time in Waziristan, probably in one of al-Qaida’s training camps.

The plans to attack Jyllands-Posten were very similar to the earlier thwarted plans of David Headley in 2009. Headley had carried out extensive reconnaissance of the newspaper and had talks concerning operational aspects of the attack with Ilyas Kashmiri, the leader of the 313th brigade in the Pakistani organisation Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI).<sup>29</sup>

One attempt to attack Jyllands-Posten took place in September 2010 when a letter bomb attack failed. The bomb detonated early in a hotel room in Copenhagen where a certain Lors Dukajev, a Belgian citizen with Czech origin, was found injured. Interestingly the security service was only able to establish his identity much later since Dukajev did not have any ID documents or credit cards and had filed off the serial number of his artificial leg.

As the last case shows, most terror plans originate outside Denmark. In April 2008 the core of the al-Qaida leadership, and Ayman al-Zawahiri in particular, issued a directive urging cells to exploit this type of metaphorical conflict with specific Western nations. This was seen as an ideal way of bringing about conflicts between civilisations, which can then result in the mobilisation of support in those countries on account of polarisation, xenophobia and Islamophobia.<sup>30</sup>

The bomb attacks on the Danish Embassy in June 2008 were carried out as revenge for a republication of the Danish Cartoon and in fact Ayman al-Zawahiri highlighted four specific countries as targets: the Netherlands (on account of Geert Wilders and the controversial film Submission), Denmark, Sweden and Norway.<sup>31</sup>

There are two other known cases of terrorism in Denmark. In December 2009, 24-year old Abdi Rahman Mohamed travelled from Denmark to Somalia where he carried out a suicide attack during a graduation ceremony for Somali doctors being held in Hotel Shamo in Mogadishu; 25 people were

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<sup>28</sup> Skjoldager, Morten (2009) *Truslen Indefra – de danske terrorister* (*The homegrown threats the Danish terrorists* ), Lindhardt og Ringhof

<sup>29</sup> “Confessed American Terrorist Details Plans for Chilling Plot” PBS, 24 May, 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/2011/05/confessed-american-terrorist-details-plans-for-chilling-plot.html>

<sup>30</sup> See for example: ”Selected Questions and Answers from Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri - Part 2”, NEFA Foundation, 17 April, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with a Dutch counter-terrorism analyst in AIVD

killed and more than 60 injured in the attack. This terror attack shook the Somali diaspora and created a backlash and support for al-Shabaab fell.

However, the DSIS estimates that a total of 25–40 Danes have been to training camps belonging to al-Shabaab in Somalia.<sup>32</sup> The head of the DSIS, Jacob Scharf, confirms that Syria has now become a destination for foreign fighters. He stated at the end of March 2013, that in the past six months at least 45 individuals, i.e. about 2 individuals per week, had left Denmark to join armed groups in Syria. "It is not like anything we have seen before. It is very violent," says Scharf.<sup>33</sup> The youngest person to travel was only 16 years old and much of the recruitment is thought to take place in social media, such as Facebook. The DSIS warns that when they return home the terror threat to Denmark will increase.<sup>34</sup> It also stresses that there are links between foreign fighters and criminal gangs.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Borg, Orla, Vestergaard, Morten and Ellegaard, Carsten "PET: Mange i traeningslejr i Somalia" (*DSIS: Many training camps in Somalia*), Jyllands-Posten, 29 May 2012

<sup>33</sup> Seidelin, Mattias and Ellegaard, Carsten "PET: Aldrig før er så mange fra Danmark draget i hellig krig" (*DSIS: Never have so many from Denmark gone out in a holy war*), Jyllands-Posten, 24 March 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Ny PET-rapport: Bandemedlemmer drager i krig i Syrien" (*New DSIS report: Gang members go to war in Syria*) <http://ekstrabladet.dk/112/article1869235.ece>

## **Preventive measures**

The following is an overview of preventive measures and projects at both national and local level in the EU countries studied (the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark). The focus is on successful projects in cooperation with the diaspora and civil society. The problems concerning foreign fighters are embedded in society in many ways.

It is in diasporas radicalised individuals are recruited and networks formed, and it is also there they are urged to travel abroad. These diaspora communities also contain individuals who have previously taken part in armed struggle or training camps and then groom or reinforce extremism and find new recruits. Establishing dialogue with civil society initiatives that serve to prevent extremism is a priority.

### **United Kingdom**

The drafting of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST), which had begun before the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, came about in the light of a number of potential disasters such as the 'millennium bug', foot and mouth disease, floods and fuel crises. This led to the establishment of a Secretariat for Civil Contingencies and the gathering of emergency planning, crisis management and counter-terrorism that were united under one doctrine. This was in order to prevent the failure of national infrastructure during a major crisis.

The architect of the CONTEST strategy was Prime Minister Tony Blair's Security and Intelligence Coordinator Sir David Omand. The terror attacks in London on 7 July 2005 heightened concern that radicalisation in the direction of violent Islamic extremism was a serious problem, which meant that CONTEST became an important general strategy.

The strategy covers 16 government departments, the three intelligence services and the police. The preventive part of the strategy consists of five main objectives with the overall objective of preventing people from supporting or becoming terrorists.

The five objectives are:

- Challenging the ideology behind violent extremism
- Disrupting those who promote violent extremism
- Supporting individuals who are at risk of recruitment, or have already been recruited by violent extremists
- Increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism
- Addressing grievances.<sup>36</sup>

The United Kingdom has a number of projects intended to prevent radicalisation and people being attracted to violent extremism. One of them is the Channel programme, whose referral process is a broad community-based mechanism that tailors action by identifying individuals in the risk zone for radicalisation – in common with referrals in crime prevention.

The approach adopted here is to use existing cooperation between local authorities, the police, statutory partners and representatives of local communities. This panel, which consists of cooperation between a range of authorities, makes extensive risk assessments of referrals of individuals and tailors action that provides for focused and sustainable support.

Channel was established by the Home Office as a pilot project and was implemented in two police districts. Since then the project has grown to cover large parts of England and Wales with more than

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<sup>36</sup> 'Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare', HM Government Annual Report, March 2010.  
<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm78/7833/7833.pdf>

1120 referrals from implementation to December 2010. Out of the 1120 referrals only 286 (26 per cent) have been assessed as cases where individuals are at risk of being drawn into violent extremism.

While Channel has focused on Islamic extremism, it has been tailored to also suit the growing level of right-wing extremism. One advantage of the programme is that it is not expensive in financial terms as the bulk of the costs are generated through existing departmental structures and there are clear criteria for judging the effectiveness of specific actions.

## Netherlands

The murders of Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and Theo van Gogh in 2004 shocked the country and resulted in social unrest and polarisation in Dutch society. This continued until the threat from international terrorism was eventually seen as a much smaller problem in the Netherlands.

The fact that Muhammed Bouyari, who brutally knifed van Gogh on the street, was born in Amsterdam led many people to stress that the main threat came from within and not from outside. As a result the Cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam were urged to take a leading role in the development of local action to counter violent Islamic extremism.

In 2004 Wij Amsterdammers (We Amsterdammers) was launched, and this led to policies promoting contact with marginalised young people and intended to strengthen the resilience of religious institutions and promote social inclusion. A special unit, Gemeentelijke Informatiehuishouding Radicalisering, was set up in the City of Amsterdam to identify early signs of individuals at risk of radicalisation and to put in place suitable action to counter this.<sup>37</sup>

In 2005 Rotterdam developed its own programme – ‘Participate or be left behind’ (Meedoen of achterblijven) – which focused on soft and hard force/power, encouraging active participation by citizens and excluding those who opposed integration with the City Administration.<sup>38</sup> The administration also set up a central information point on radicalisation, the Information Switch Point Radicalisation (InformatieSchakelPunt Radicalisering, ISPR).

The focus is also on identification, intervention at an early stage, control and dispersal of extreme polarised and radicalised manifestations.<sup>39</sup>

During the period 2007–2011 more than 82 local projects were co-financed and initiated through a 'confetti strategy' (support for many micro projects) with the support relatively evenly distributed to Islamic extremism (mainly large cities), right-wing extremism (mainly suburbs and rural areas) and polarisation (evenly distributed)<sup>40</sup> and the training of more than 4000 community workers. An annual award as introduced for the 'best project' in the Netherlands with a prize of 15 000 Euro.

There are a number of focused projects in the country; one example is Slotervart. The project in Slotervaart, which is in the outskirts of Amsterdam, was locally based and became one of the first to be implemented. This occurred due to a research report showing Muslim youths in Slotervaart susceptible of radical indoctrination.

<sup>37</sup> Mellis, C. (2007) *Amsterdam and radicalization: The municipal approach*, [www.nuansa.nl/uploads/.../nctb-bundel-ed.doc](http://www.nuansa.nl/uploads/.../nctb-bundel-ed.doc)

<sup>38</sup> Rabasa, Angel, Pettyjohn, Stacie L., Ghez, Jeremy J. & Boucek, Christopher (2010) *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists*, RAND Corporation, p.146.

<sup>39</sup> Briefing by NCTb officials, June 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Tempelman, Saskia “Caring and daring: seven years of countering extremism in the Netherlands”, December 2012 unpublished manuscript.

Slotervaart's action plan consists of seven substantial measures:

- Create awareness among young Muslims and their social environment of the risks of the radicalisation process.
- Facilitate the development of competencies that can help to increase the resilience of young people and parents.
- Support parents in the role as teachers.
- Support mosques and imams in their work to deal with radicalised young people and counter radicalisation.
- Ensure that systems designed to discover radicalisation are functioning effectively (Municipal Radicalisation Information Management System).
- Facilitate cooperation between schools and youth centres.
- Promote interaction between community groups and religious groups.<sup>41</sup>

Other examples include:

- A knowledge and advice centre concerning polarisation and radicalisation.
- Training for young Muslims regarding identifying problems, skills in critical thinking, intercultural conflicts and social participation.
- A women's project in The Hague intended to discover and address the social and psychological problems of young women. This also includes women who have experience of extremism and family members of convicted and imprisoned terrorists.

The scale of the Dutch national action programme and the 'confetti strategy' includes more than one hundred local community projects associated with combating extremism and polarisation and creating social cohesion. Naturally the content of these projects varies, but they are a rich source of positive and negative experience and lessons learned.

## **Germany**

As Germany is a federal state with 16 Länder that have considerable autonomy, a large part of CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) work takes place at Länder level and not federal level. The various Länder have developed their own programmes of varying size to prevent violent Islamic extremism.

The threats from violent Islamic extremism are also very different in different parts of the country, the five largest Länder in eastern Germany have a very low level of Islamic activity.

Germany has a number of laws related to this study that are worth mentioning. In August 2009 new legislation to prevent terrorism was introduced; one measure taken was to criminalise participation in terrorist training abroad.

Another measure has been obligation to report to police on a regular basis or to seize the passport of a person who is suspected of being on their way to travel abroad for terror training or to fight. The German security service describes this preventive action as effective and has made it more difficult to leave Germany for training or to be a foreign fighter.<sup>42</sup>

In addition, some foreign Salafi extremists have been deported and a number of club premises and mosques have been closed by the police since 2001 on account of Salafist links. Organisations that have wanted to change society in an aggressively militant way and sought to replace democracy with Sharia laws have also been banned to some extent.

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<sup>41</sup> [www.nuansa.nl/.../Slotervaart-plan-English.doc](http://www.nuansa.nl/.../Slotervaart-plan-English.doc)

<sup>42</sup> Interview with German Security Service, 29 January 2013.

At federal level there are a number of projects related to the prevention of Islamic extremism. They include a relatively recently formed Security Partnership formed as an alliance between federal and Länder security services and six different Muslim organisations and intended to strengthen cooperation through regular meetings between the parties within the framework of various projects.<sup>43</sup> The idea is to have permanent communication channels so that threats can be communicated correctly and not lead to misunderstandings or overreactions.

More prominent projects include a recently formed advice centre against radicalisation and a network doing work to prevent violence with prisoners. However, the cooperation with Muslim organisations has been seriously hampered as four out of the six organisations left the partnership after a controversy,<sup>44</sup> and in March 2013 only one Muslim organisation is listed as participating.<sup>45</sup>

Germany has various projects offering phone helplines in order to help leave radical Islamic environments. The one regarded as most successful is the Hayat ('life') project run by Zentrum Demokratische Kultur, an umbrella organisation that also includes EXIT Deutschland. Hayat is a helpline linked to a national family counselling programme in a larger project that also contains two regional programmes in Bremen and Bochum.

The helpline is described as a way for individuals to establish contact, and the first conversation may sometimes have the character of emergency advice. Then the work continues in the form of background research, analysis and advice. However, defector activities targeting radical Islamists are still relatively unusual.

Their office in Berlin says that it is common for concerned parents to contact them because their children have changed in a radical Islamic direction. The programme they offer consists of advice to parents and close relatives, primarily to ensure that they do not feel lost and alone. They support them on an emotional level and give them advice about what to do and how to talk with their children.

They underline that the parents seldom become experts on Islam and have difficulty arguing with their children on theological grounds, and that the point is instead to enable parents to understand what they have to argue against. They try to coach the parents to ask and be curious instead of being judgmental.<sup>46</sup>

In attempts to get the children to distance themselves from radical ideas mediators are used instead; they are often religious leaders who keep in touch with the person in danger or at risk of radicalisation. The mediator tries to build trust and to use good examples in order to get the individual to reject radical ideas. In February 2013, it was stated that at present they are working with some 30 cases, a majority of which have backgrounds as foreign fighters. Their work complements the security service and the programme was directly linked to the first jihadi defectors who are currently receiving support and advice.<sup>47</sup>

At Länder level it can be mentioned that there are a number of initiatives to prevent Islamic radicalisation, examples include Team meX in Baden-Württemberg. This project is intended to prevent Islamic extremism among young people. This is mainly done by arranging training and lectures in order to inform teachers and leaders of youth organisations about how to recognise and prevent anti-democratic and Islamic convictions among young people, but without questioning their religion.

Munich has training and meetings between imams, the police and officials. About 30 imams have taken part in these meetings that have, for instance, dealt with Salafism, which is described as a

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<sup>43</sup> Initiative Sicherheitspartnerschaft, <http://www.initiative-sicherheitspartnerschaft.de>

<sup>44</sup> For a more detailed description see the full body of point 5.3 of the report.

<sup>45</sup> "Muslimische Verbände" Initiative Sicherheitspartnerschaft <http://www.initiative-sicherheitspartnerschaft.de/SPS/DE/Partner/Verbaende/verbaende-node.html>. Retrieved on 1 March 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with representatives of EXIT Deutschland and Zentrum Demokratische Kultur, 29 August 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Personal communication with a representative of EXIT Deutschland, 26 February 2013.

growing problem among young, ‘born again Muslims’. In connection with the training the imams have been asked to be observant in their own mosques and to contact Salafists and ask questions, why they are drawn to this and so on. The imams have also been encouraged to give the police information about suspected terrorism and to be attentive about Salafism.

Another example is in Bavaria where social workers in areas with social exclusion have been trained and educated on radicalisation processes. Hamburg and Bremen have joint projects involving imams and the police establishing communication channels in various areas and not just security matters.

One substantial challenge for Germany will be to limit and push back the Salafist scene which has grown stronger in the past decade. As previously pointed out, the country’s foreign fighters have mainly been drawn from this pool.

## **Denmark**

Denmark’s stance regarding countering extremism should be viewed in the light of the publication of the Muhammed cartoons in 2005, which resulted in local reactions and international protests from several Muslim countries. The overall framework used by Danish authorities is the ‘SSP model’, which involves close integrated cooperation at local level between schools, social services and the police. The purpose is to identify and support individuals risking entering criminal environments, adopting an extremist or anti-social behaviour.

The integrated SSP model, which is already used in crime prevention work, can also be used to develop sustainable, tailored and more targeted action against individuals in the risk zone for extremism. The Danish work focuses primarily on developing mentorship programmes in order to support professionals working to prevent terrorism. The main purpose of this is to communicate knowledge about methods to those who are in direct contact with young people aged 14 to 20 years.

In several of the previous major information campaigns organised by the Ministry of Integration and the DSIS, local community leaders, social workers, teachers and police officers presented their opinions and experience concerning challenges and action to combat terrorism at local level. In 2010, this extensive consultation process resulted in the adoption of the new Danish Action Plan. The Action Plan included seven focus areas, 22 initiatives and 40 concrete actions. A possible review of the Action Plan is scheduled for 2013, when the evaluation work will also be finished.

The Danish Action Plan ‘A common and safe future’ was published on 1 January 2009. The Action Plan contained 22 specific initiatives ranging over seven focus areas. These areas are: (1) direct contact with young people; (2) inclusion based on rights and obligations; (3) dialogue and information; (4) democratic cohesion; (5) efforts in vulnerable residential areas; (6) special initiatives in prisons; and (7) knowledge, cooperation and partnerships.<sup>48</sup>

Copenhagen has local programmes focusing in identifying and countering radicalisation. Examples are the projects ‘Knowledge Integration – Copenhagen’ (VINK) and ‘We Copenhagers’ (VI’KBH’R’) that have been directly inspired by local action plans in Amsterdam. Other Danish examples include de-radicalisation projects, the production of manuals for social workers to prevent and address radicalisation and extremism and a dialogue forum with imams and minority groups led by the DSIS.

There are several challenges that influence involvement with the diaspora, particularly with regard to the Somali groups. Unlike what has happened to other groups in the community, individuals from the Somali groups have been involved in terrorist crimes in several occasions. The most noted cases are the attempted murder of the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard in January 2012; the suicide bomb at the Shamo Hotel in Mogadishu and the arrest of two Somali brothers in Århus in 2012.

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<sup>48</sup> ”A Common and Safe Future – an action plan to prevent extremist views and radicalisation among young people” Government of Denmark, Jan 2009 [http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/58D048E7-0482-4AE8-99EB-928753EFC1F8/0/a\\_common\\_and\\_safe\\_future\\_danish\\_action\\_plan\\_to\\_prevent\\_extremism.pdf](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/58D048E7-0482-4AE8-99EB-928753EFC1F8/0/a_common_and_safe_future_danish_action_plan_to_prevent_extremism.pdf)

## **Preventive measures in Somalia and Pakistan**

The following section begins by looking at underlying contexts and breeding grounds for extremism and terrorism in Somalia and Pakistan. This is followed by a closer look at initiatives and good examples emanating from civil society.

The underlying causes of violent Islamic extremism vary contextually depending on the cultural and political dynamic at both local and regional level. The causes are also influenced by the emergence of, among other factors, a specific extremist group, group dynamics, the decision-maker's leadership, the concentration of violence, and recruitment practices. This then necessitates a tailored, local and contextualised approach in each individual case, as there is no universal template for use in different contexts.

However, there are several good examples and inspiring models of how civil society can counter violent Islamic extremism. This can be done through, for example, initiatives led and governed by women, strengthening youth initiatives or through innovative ways through the use of popular and local culture and by crafting and deploying specific messages to counter the narrative of extremism.

The task of identifying suitable measures to be taken by civil society is very challenging in countries like Somalia and Pakistan. This is because civil society organisations in Somalia have been a crucial factor promoting socioeconomic development, reconciliation and peace, while Pakistani civil society consists of more than 100 000 organisations.

All actions taken by the organisations studied have been recommended by local experts in Somalia and Pakistan as they are thought to have credible action programmes. The great majority of them are embedded in larger programmes that promote gender equality and skills among young people rather than being single, stand-alone counter-extremism activities. Women and young people are not just the groups most vulnerable to extremism and violence but are also best placed to combat extremism in the community.

### **The drivers of violent Islamic extremism in Somalia and Pakistan**

It is obvious that many of the breeding grounds of extremism and conflict differ from radicalisation in diaspora communities in the EU. The diaspora is more subjected to the global 'jihad discourse' with greater vulnerability for exclusion and identity problems and has a more romanticised and extreme position in Somalia.<sup>49</sup>

For Somalis, in both Somalia and Kenya, unemployment, group dynamics and various social factors can generate a gradual movement towards extremism. As illustrated in the case of al-Shabaab the issues of unemployment can be a driver.

The Somali Human Development Report from 2012, which is published by UNDP, stresses that the unemployment rate for young Somalis is among the highest in the world, with 67 per cent of individuals aged between 14 and 29 years not having a job.<sup>50</sup> About 40 per cent of young people are looking actively for work while 21 per cent neither work nor are in education.

In Somalia individuals under 30 years of age account for about 70 per cent of the population and two-thirds of them have a wish to leave Somalia on account of the poverty and high unemployment rate that characterise the country. It is also evident that Somalia "ranks as one of the worst countries

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<sup>49</sup> "Violent Islamic Extremism Risk in South-Central Somalia", USAID (January 2010).

<sup>50</sup> "Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering youth for peace and development", UNDP <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/Somalia-human-development-report-2012/>

worldwide for women. Gender-based violence and discrimination against Somali women is widespread.”<sup>51</sup>

Somalis have also been deeply affected by migration from rural areas to larger cities and the disintegration of the traditional family and social structure.<sup>52</sup> The problems concerning discrimination against Somalis in Kenya is one of the factors contributing to extremism.

The discriminatory treatment of ethnic Somalis in Kenya is on the way to becoming a ‘pull factor’ for radicalisation as they are often bullied and have great difficulty obtaining identity documents.<sup>53</sup> The Kenyan police have long been held to be a force that takes the law into its own hands – as was also exemplified in a report from 2009 by Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial summary or arbitrary executions.<sup>54</sup>

Somali refugees living in Eastleigh, Kenya, have testified that they were stopped on a virtually daily basis and were threatened with expulsion while others have been blackmailed and exploited verbally, physically or sexually.<sup>55</sup> This is over and above the difficulties experienced by a large part of Eastleigh’s population since at night the district is becoming increasingly dangerous and is run by gangs and crime is rampant.

A study by the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation about violent Islamic extremism, which includes field studies with interviews in Kenya and Somaliland, reports that they saw the drivers of violent Islamic extremism in Kenya as mainly repression by the security forces, economic losses, socioeconomic and political marginalisation of young people and marginalisation of the Muslim community.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast to this, studies in Somaliland show, for instance, that the view of the local community centres on the limited capacity of the police to prevent crime, tribe- and resource-based conflict and unemployed young people being a source of insecurity.<sup>57</sup>

The drivers of violent Islamic extremism in Pakistan are complex and multi-faceted, as the state stands astride complex “multiple fault lines – including governance, sectarianism, terrorism/insurgency, and the rule of law – each of which can be further exacerbated by violent extremism.”<sup>58</sup>

The porous national borders and the substantial number of Afghan refugees complicate the security situation of the country. For more than three decades people in Balochistan, the federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhuwa, which are located on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, have witnessed foreign invasion and military interventions, tribal conflicts, militant Islamism, large refugee flows and American drone attacks.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Preventing Youth Radicalization in Eastern Africa” Program Report, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 22-27 January 2012, <http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/PreventingYouthRadicalizationProgramReport-2012.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> Rabasa, Angel, “Radical Islam in East Africa”, RAND, 2009, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND\\_MG782.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG782.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Chonghaile, Clair Ni, “Kenyan Muslims fear the worst over proposals to boost police powers”, The Guardian, 27 September 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/27/kenya-muslims-fear-anti-terrorism-bill>

<sup>55</sup> Pavanello, Sara , Elhawary, Samir & Pantuliano, Sara (2010) *Hidden and exposed: Urban refugees in Nairobi, Kenya*, Overseas Development Institute, p.18

<sup>56</sup> Shetret, Liat, Schwartz, Matthew & Cotter, Danielle *Mapping Perceptions of Violent Extremism: Pilot Study of Community Attitudes in Kenya and Somaliland*, Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, January 2013

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> “EU Workshop on Effective Programming for Countering Violent Extremism – Background Note”, Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 26-27 November 2012

Moreover, many of these remote rural areas have very deficient infrastructure. The number of victims of violent Islamic extremism and terrorism in Pakistan is tremendously high and between 2006 and 2011 more than 35 000 civilians and 3500 security officers died on account of terrorism.<sup>59</sup>

The war in Afghanistan and its aftermath, combined with the rise of the Taliban and the fauna of domestic Pakistani extremist groups, has made the region extremely vulnerable to extremism. A study by the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) of suicide bombers in Pakistan and Afghanistan shows that “the backdrop to the emergence of suicide bombings consists of multiple and persistent crises in the security, political and economic areas, which have stretched the social fabric close to breaking point.”<sup>60</sup>

On the contrary Pakistani military operations put the local population under stress when they ruthlessly eliminate suspected militants. At the same time, the Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Terik-e-Taliban, Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), Hizb-i-Islami, Laskar-e-Jhangvi, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Harakat-ul-Mujahedin and the Haqqani-network are operating with impunity and show collectively that these groups are a strategic threat, not only to the local population but also to the Pakistani State.<sup>61</sup>

It is clear that young people and women will be placed in the firing line of these multiple conflicts and pressures. Young people, and even children, have been specifically recruited and trained as suicide bombers by several of these factions. Others have been influenced by radical madrassas advocating hate and intolerance.<sup>62</sup>

Hate of the West is one of the militant Islamists' regular propaganda campaigns and also influences the public debate. This is being intensified as a result of the consequences of the increasing number of drone attacks on suspected terrorists by the US, but also the corresponding increase in civilian victims.<sup>63</sup>

According to a study from 2012 by Pew Research Center, an opinion pollster, 74 per cent of the Pakistani population have a hostile attitude to the US and 54 per cent fear that extremists may assume power over Pakistan.<sup>64</sup>

The drivers behind violent Islamic extremism and recruitment to militant groups in Pakistan operate simultaneously over three overlapping levels and in various ways.

Firstly, among lower classes, mainly in poorly governed areas includes tribal and its adjourned areas, South Punjab and interior Sindh, where the drivers to radicalisation and terrorism are poverty, inequality and loose administrative structures, and motives are religious (Madrassas, religious and militant organizations' role is important), and manifestation is sectarian violence. In tribal areas it can furthermore contribute to the on-going insurgency.

Secondly, among middle classes, mainly in urban- or semi-urban areas, includes central and North Punjab, Karachi, Hyderabad in Sindh, settled areas in Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa and Kashmir, the drivers are political (influence of internal and external political developments and radical narrative promoting by radical groups and media) and manifestation is jihadism. (Militant organisations like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Al-Qaeda affiliates' terrorist cell, and Hizb-e-Islami mainly depend on this core of radicalization).

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<sup>59</sup> A Safe World for Women <http://www.asafeworldforwomen.org/conflict/cp-pakistan.html>

<sup>60</sup> Wilkens, Ann, *Suicide Bombers and Society – A Study on Suicide Bombers in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, (Stockholm: FOI-R-3058-SE, February 2011) p. 4

<sup>61</sup> “South Asia still beset by violent extremism”, Strategic Comment, IISS, 7 March 2011, London

<sup>62</sup> “Pakistani Women Unite to Battle Religious Extremism” *Huffington Post*, 30 April 2012 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/malik-siraj-akbar/pakistani-women-peace\\_b\\_1463493.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/malik-siraj-akbar/pakistani-women-peace_b_1463493.html)

<sup>63</sup> New America Foundation <http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/drones>

<sup>64</sup> “Pakistani Public Opinion Ever More Critical of U.S.” Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project, 27 June 2012, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/06/27/pakistani-public-opinion-ever-more-critical-of-u-s/>

Finally, among upper middle class and elites in the country, major driver is alienation and separation from the society.<sup>65</sup>

### **Government deradicalisation programmes in Somalia and Pakistan**

There are a handful of state-run de-radicalisation programmes in both Somalia and Pakistan, however the projects in both countries suffer from serious problems. With the exception of an initiative in Mogadishu, which does not focus directly on de-radicalisation but is focused on vocational training, most Somali de-radicalisation programmes include the internment of defected al-Shabaab members in camps where they are very inactive and where several are addicted to the drug Khat. There are also a number of small rudimentary programmes in Kenya that are being developed.

Pakistan has state-run de-radicalisation programmes. The Mashal Center and Saboon School concentrate on young people recruited by the Taliban and offer the young people a mixture of psychological counselling, religious retraining and vocation training.<sup>66</sup>

The Mashal Center has been run since 2010 and focuses on offering three-month courses in psychosocial, religious and vocational education in order to de-radicalise individuals who have been influenced by the opinions of the Taliban and al-Qaida extremists. Most participants are under 30 years of age. According to the Center's own assessment more than 1000 individuals have 'graduated' from the programme with only 10 per cent failing.<sup>67</sup>

The Saboon Center focuses on rehabilitation and readjustment of child recruits who were to be suicide bombers. At present the Center is looking after 85 boys and has about 100 successful rehabilitation cases.<sup>68</sup>

As most formal de-radicalisation measures are led by the government and focus on rehabilitating convicted perpetrators, civil society plays a critical role here as a source of support but also as a function to address long-term preventive measures to counter extremism.<sup>69</sup> NGOs at grassroot level, that include parents, women, teachers, mentors, coaches and religious leaders in this work, are essential components in preventing and discovering different forms of violent Islamic extremism.

It is also important to point out that the organisations operating in Somalia and with the Somali diaspora in Kenya are dealing with families influenced by al-Shabaab. The scale of sectarian violence and terrorism in Pakistan is on the increase, which is drowning the country in many ways.

### **Civil society initiatives in Somalia and Pakistan**

#### *Women's projects*

Women can hold a crucial role in preventing extremism, especially since in Somalia they have an early role as mothers in the home and are close to their children and young individuals, and can therefore see worrying changes of behaviour at an early stage. Women are often affected by violent Islamic extremism, either as victims or as parents of the children drawn into extremism.

<sup>65</sup> "Research, Radicalization and Religious Extremism: The work of PIPS in Pakistan" *Insights on Conflict*, June 17 2010, <http://www.insightonconflict.org/2010/06/research-radicalization-and-religious-extremism-the-work-of-pips-in-pakistan/>

<sup>66</sup> Mirahmadi, Hedieh, Farooq, Mehreen and Ziad, Waled, *Pakistan's Civil Society: Alternative Channels to Countering Violent Extremism*, October 2012, p.22, <http://www.worde.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/WORDE-Report-Pakistan-Civil-Society-Alternative-Channels-to-CVE.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> "Army introduces de-radicalisation centre in Swat" *Dawn/Reuters*, April 25 2012, <http://dawn.com/2012/04/25/mashal-de-radicalisation-centre/>

<sup>68</sup> Siddiqi, Taha "Deradicalizing Boys in Pakistan", *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 May 2012

<sup>69</sup> Chowdhury Fink, Naureen and El-Said, Hamed, "Transforming Terrorists: Examining International Efforts to Address Violent Extremism" *International Peace Institute*, May 2011

Even though they seldom suffer shame in the community, women can be important advocates to “demystify the life of a terrorist: to speak openly about the hardships of separation, insecurity, loss of income, anxiety about a covert life.”<sup>70</sup> In contrast to the idea of Muslim women as silent victims, women should be seen as influential advocates of anti-extremist measures.

Women have traditionally had a marginal role in the patriarchal tribal structure and are generally excluded from participation in decision-making. As women may belong to several tribes they have a very important role as brokers and can mobilise civil society, and “their position within the clan system gives them the ability to bridge clan divisions and to act as a first channel for dialogue between parties in conflict.”<sup>71</sup>

‘Traditional’ mothers have limited influence on their Somali sons as sons enjoy a great deal of freedom in relation to mothers. These restrictions have not prevented Somali women from mobilising and taking on an active parental role. Somali women’s groups have been very sensitive regarding al-Shabaab’s recruitment of their children and have also been opposed to al-Qaida’s advocacy of martyrdom. This was exemplified well when the wife of al-Qaida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri called on mothers to bring up their children to support jihad and martyrdom.

The Somali women’s opposition was steadfast and very vocal in its opposition to this advice: “The way in which al-Zawahiri’s wife urges mothers to raise their children on violence and terrorism is unrelated to Islam,” she said. “We call on Somali mothers to raise their children on tolerance and fraternity and to teach them Islam’s righteous path, far from extremism and violence. Al-Qaeda’s ideology does not represent the true path of Islam and for this reason we urge Somali mothers not to listen to the wife of al-Qaeda’s leader.”<sup>72</sup>

Even if Somali women have an active role, it is important to stress that preventive measures must be targeted directly at this group since there are sympathisers and girl recruits in al-Shabaab who provide support with, for example, food preparation, cleaning and intelligence operations in the community. In some cases they are the wives of al-Shabaab members.

The role of women in Pakistani society is varied – depending on class, region, and urban or rural area. Pakistani women face considerable problems when it comes to gender equality and they are a target of extremist violence, which includes sexual exploitation and rape, honour killings, punitive acid attacks in the face, prostitution, human trafficking and forced labour. Women’s CSOs (civil society organisations) have an important opportunity to influence issues relating to counter-extremism and have organised to draw attention to gender issues, which are often included in large women’s projects in order to counter extremism at local level.

### *Youth projects*

Many projects that are strongly supported by the US and EU Member States have a youth-focus and youth-led CSOs that provide a series of inter-related life skills from education and training to career advice and leadership of youth-led community projects.

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<sup>70</sup> EU Workshop on Effective Programming for Countering Violent Extremism, Final Summary Report, *Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation*, December 2012.

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/documents/20121217\\_eu\\_cve\\_workshop\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/documents/20121217_eu_cve_workshop_summary_report.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Jama, Faiza “Somali women and peacebuilding” in “Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacemaking” *Accord: an international review of peace initiatives*, Issue 21, 2010.

[http://www.xildhibanpublications.com/21\\_Somalia.pdf](http://www.xildhibanpublications.com/21_Somalia.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Mohamed, Mahmoud “Somali activists condemn ‘love of martyrdom’ message from al-Zawahiri’s wife”, *Sabahi*, 25 June 2012.

[http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/06/25/feature-02](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/06/25/feature-02)

These efforts, which are targeted on young people aged between 15 and 25 years focus on education and training, leadership development, vocational training, peaceful conflict resolution, critical thinking and problem-solving, networking and positive civic contributions. Embedded in this are measures to deal with extremist narratives, recruitment, reverse marginalisation and dissatisfaction among young people. In certain areas, such as Eastleigh, it is important to focus specifically on street children.

Most recruits to extremism in Pakistan are young individuals, and even children, when they are recruited to the Taliban but also to other extremist groups. Pakistani youth organisations are very active, especially those operating in urban areas. Their activities include campaigns to create awareness among the general public, public debates and efforts to promote sound education, including vocational education.

Young individuals in Pakistan are a group that is at risk of radicalisation and recruitment to extremism and many young people are restless and “disillusioned by their country’s leadership, disheartened by the economic outlook and desperate for a radical change”.<sup>73</sup>

### *Sports and cultural projects*

Music, drama and art can attract young people if delivered in a credible and powerful way. Somalia has a culture characterised by a very strong oral tradition and Somali songs have a strong poetic rhythm. In addition, media, as a channel for the spoken word, are an important vehicle for reaching out to young people. Also debates, poetry and drama are alternative strong means of communication. Even folklore and crafts can be useful means of expression.

Culture and sports activities have the potential to play a major role in countering extremism. The fact is that al-Shabaab banned all types of recreational activity such as sport, film and music. Indeed, in January 2011 Al-Shabaab threatened severe punishments for playing video and computer games while even Ramadan TV series were banned. Somali youth listen much more to the radio than they use other media.

Somali athletes, such as Mo Farah who won an Olympic gold medal in 2012 and is based in the UK and the footballer Abdisalam Ibrahim in the football club Manchester United, are examples of good role models for young people. Sport can in many ways be a powerful tool for social change.

Popular culture has an important role in Pakistan. Traditional cultural activities, oral tradition, music and theatre can play a powerful role as a driver to get a message out and generate social change. Public mass meetings and debates are popular features, but, as is clear from media campaigns and role models from the entertainment and music industry, this can also be used in several ways to counter violent Islamic extremism.

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<sup>73</sup> Suhaib, Muhammed, “Special report: Outlook & attitudes of Pakistan's youth”, *The Express Tribune*, 7 December 2012. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/476348/special-report-outlook-attitudes-of-pakistans-youth/>

# Conclusions and recommendations

The preventive work done by the Swedish Security Service builds on contact activities with strategically important actors at local level such as community police services, district committees in cities and community associations. It is considered important to establish good relations with faith communities in the country in particular. These contact activities were set up in 2003 and their main purpose is the dissemination of knowledge, trust-building measures and a better understanding of the role and work of the Swedish Security Service. There are also good examples of Muslim faith communities conducting preventive work to counter violent radicalisation by, for example, supporting and talking to young people and parents.

The Swedish Security Service has previously pointed out that 40 foreign fighters have been active travelling to conflict zones since 2006. Out of these, around 30 have gone to Somalia and around ten to Afghanistan/Pakistan. There are also isolated cases to both Iraq and Yemen. For the most part the travellers have been under 30 years of age.

Foreign fighters going to Syria are a new challenge for the Swedish Security Service. The assessment made by the Security Service is that the problem of people travelling to Syria has developed in a very worrying way in a relatively short period of time and that this travel is probably going to be greater than to the other destinations in total. The Security Service is completely certain that at least 30 individuals have travelled to Syria to fight in al-Qaida-inspired groups or to train for fighting in the past 18 months.<sup>74</sup> This means that the figure is on the low side, the true number is probably higher. The individuals who have travelled to Syria until now include both individuals identified among the violent Islamists that the Security Service wrote a report about in 2010, but also individuals unknown to the Security Service. At present, up to 10 individuals have died in battle or suicide attacks. There is a geographical concentration of foreign fighters coming from two Gothenburg suburbs, and the current recruitment of Swedish foreign fighters to Syria does not seem to have stagnated.

Nevertheless the assessment of the Security Service is that there has not been any significant change in the number of violent Islamic extremists in Sweden. However, here there is a risk of ‘hidden cases’ of individuals who are not known. In addition, many of those who have travelled to Syria have not yet returned to Sweden.

## Legal tools

The consequences of terrorism often force the Police and Security Service to act at an early stage so as to avoid the risk of innocent victims. To a certain degree, there is an inbuilt conflict between preventing terrorist crimes at an early stage and collecting sufficient evidence to secure a conviction at the same time.

In some of the countries studied in this report, more repressive legal tools are used to address the problem in comparison to Swedish jurisdiction and practise. In Germany it is, for example, possible to seize passports, introduce travel restrictions or require regular visits to a police station in the event of strong suspicion that a person is on their way to leaving the country in order to undergo terrorism training or fight abroad.

In certain EU countries it is also possible to revoke citizenship on terror-related grounds. This has, for example, recently been done in the UK, making it very difficult for British foreign fighters to return to the UK from a conflict zone.

Over and above this, it is for example in Germany possible to expel foreign extremists who enter the country. The UK has legislation that criminalises both the possession of propaganda material and

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<sup>74</sup> Swedish Security Service Yearbook 2012

terrorism manuals, and the glorification of terrorism. But relying solely on tougher terror legislation and applying repressive measures is a risky and probably counter-productive strategy. A good balance is required between the possible preventive measures in order to address the problem in the long term.

### **Preventive action in Sweden and deficiencies at local level**

Unlike many other countries Sweden does not have a national counter-radicalisation strategy. This has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is having the possibility, through this study for example, of looking at how other countries have designed their strategies and measures and seeing whether they can be viewed as adequate. Even though many measures in other countries are still relatively new, Sweden has the possibility of learning lessons from, and being inspired by, successful measures taken by other countries.

The report produced by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) in 2010 concluded that “today there is a lack of/are no activities with a specific focus on addressing or dealing with violent Islamic extremism; instead action focuses on preventive work and the success factors are networks and relations-building”. This is a picture that still seems to be true.

In work on this report, interviews were also conducted with local-level representatives in school education, social services and the police in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The information obtained indicates that this is not a set of problems that neither schools, social services nor the police are working to address specifically. Instead specific measures to counter Islamic radicalisation and foreign fighters generally become a task for the Security Service. At the same time, the Security Service considers that there are both cost and efficiency reasons for focusing on general prevention work since the radicalisation process displays considerable similarities.

The following description of Swedish conditions does not aspire to provide a complete picture of the situation or to be a representative account of the problems of violent Islamic extremism in Sweden’s three metropolitan areas. Instead, it should be seen as partial pictures where professionals depict their work. It should also be added that the picture of the problems is highly dependent on the current local situation. In some cases the scale of these problems was described as very limited and in other places it was more noticeable.

One head of a social service said that she had been contacted on 15 occasions by mothers who were concerned that their sons would join al-Shabaab. She had then suggested that they contact the police, but they had been unwilling to do so. One community worker with many years of experience in a suburb describes how she has been contacted on several occasions by mothers who were concerned that their children had been radicalised and feared that they were going to leave Sweden to join an extremist group operating in a conflict zone abroad, especially as they had recently obtained passports. The only alternative of relevance that is then available to her is to give the mother a phone number for the Security Service, which can then offer to hold an advisory conversation with the family.

It appears that at present a conversation with the Security Service is the only measure that neither Swedish authorities nor civil society can offer a family with a son or daughter who has been radicalised and who may travel to a conflict zone (as a rule this always involves sons). The community worker does not know to what extent families contact the Security Service, but in general people who come from countries with a tradition of a lack of democracy and human rights have very low confidence in the security services.

One community worker described the problem with individuals going to conflict zones as very sensitive and difficult to discuss with close relatives. This worker says that in cases where young people take the step of travelling, this is often shameful for mothers and in most cases they have isolated themselves in their homes while their son was away. Those who have returned from conflict zones often get higher status in their own group, not in the community as a whole but in more radical groupings. One person says that in the area where he works he has seen more and more young people being radicalised and that a drive to get recruits to radical groups is under way. One head of social

service said that in spring 2012 open recruitment was taking place in the centre of a suburb through the distribution of leaflets calling for a jihad; the campaign was reminiscent of traditional party work ahead of a parliamentary election.

Some SSP staff underlined the problems of radicalisation, extremism and travel to conflict zones and said that they felt there were no tools to address this. Specifically they wanted to see training for community workers and also felt that some form of knowledge or advice centre could create the conditions for dialogue and advice regarding these problems. One SSP employee thought that the climate for public debate in Sweden makes it more difficult to discuss these issues in a constructive and problem-solving way. Anyone raising these issues ran an imminent risk of being negatively labelled, which deters many with knowledge from taking part in a creative discussion. This was felt to be very frustrating.

It seems as if the suspicions of the Police and Security Service are not abated by the prevailing debate on violent Islamic extremism and counter-terrorism, the effect of which can be to polarise and create myths and generate xenophobia and conspiracy theories about the work of the Security Service – which then impacts on the resilience of the community. When there is largely no middle ground in the debate, this creates a vacuum that is filled with loud extremist voices.

Another problem highlighted by a head of a preventive unit in a municipality was the lack of cooperation between city districts in order to make it more difficult for Islamic groups to gain a foothold locally. There was said to be a lack of information sharing between city districts on these issues. Community workers have said that this problem has never been discussed in SSP contexts even though the problem does exist. It is not clear why this is so.

One interviewee is critical of how SSP services function in relation to this since this work is dealt with at the individual level in SSP services and is thought not to work well as a way of addressing these problems. He adds that “we can even have five criminal sons in one family, and then they are treated as five silos in SSP services, the guidelines need changing.”

One police officer interviewed describes how work has been started to train police in extremism: the autonomous left, white power and Islamic extremism. The Security Service has given some officers special training in this area, and they then hold training sessions for police at local level. The training is based on the COPPRA manual and material from the Security Service’s own lectures. A training session for local police officers lasts about three hours and deals with the three types of extremism mentioned above, what the radicalisation process can be like and learning to recognise indicators or signs of radicalisation. Indicators can be both at the individual level and also to discover imminent attacks.

Indicators at individual level can include finding weapons and propaganda material linked to violent Islamic extremism in searches of premises. The training also includes a film called *Conviction*, which is about a real incident concerning the radicalisation of a young British Muslim and his path into violent Islamic extremism and how close he was to succeeding in a suicide attack in Bristol in 2009.

One idea behind the training is for police officers that see indicators of violent Islamic extremism to report this to the police criminal intelligence service. Tips received are screened and those assessed as relevant are forwarded to the Security Service. In its present form the training is geared to police officers as its principal target group. With minor adjustments it ought to be able to suit community workers or a police officer holding the training at local level, for instance.

Several police officers stress the importance of having well-established contacts with imams in local mosques. In several cases good cooperation has been of importance in the case of disturbances and unrest locally. For example, imams can use their influence to defuse tensions and communicate calming messages at Friday prayers, for example.

Establishing more structured forms of collaboration between the police and faith communities is described by one community police commander as something he is currently considering. It has also

been said that when disturbances occur in suburbs, radical individuals try to exploit the disturbances for recruitment so as to advance religious extremism. This can involve trying to provoke the police and then trying to convince young people of the radical path and depicting how oppressed Muslims are. They have played on angry feelings and offered a radical solution.

One police officer in the ‘integration group’ of the Gothenburg police who has long experience of working in socially excluded areas thinks that Sweden is a worthwhile place for extremist groupings and that society has mediocre supervision of these groups. He thought that neither politicians nor the police understand properly that, in addition to socioeconomic problems, segregated areas in Sweden can be breeding grounds for crime and religious extremism.

Like gang formation, radicalisation is described as being easier to stop at the start of the process and being much harder to stop when it has become embedded. He also stressed the difficulty the police have in reaching people; in general there is very little trust in the police in segregated suburbs, and this results in difficulties in getting people to give evidence or to report crimes.

The Security Police was felt to be too secretive both by a community police commander and the head of a preventive unit in a municipality. Instead they would like to see a more structured exchange of information that could create a win-win situation.

### **Recommendations for measures in and outside Sweden**

The commission underlying this report states that the report is to “propose suitable measures to strengthen preventive work to address violent extremism in third countries”.

This report has identified a large number of preventive measures, both in individual EU countries and in countries outside the EU. There is a need for measures that complement the work of the Swedish Security Service. The last resort should not also need to be the first resort. Regrettably, this is the way things often are today - there is a real need of complementary measures.

#### *Better inter-agency collaboration*

- A national actor should be a coordinating node between central government and municipalities and provide training and act as a knowledge broker between municipalities and central government with regard to preventive measures and knowledge about violent extremism.

Two previous government commissions<sup>75</sup> on preventive measures against violent extremism also brought out the importance of clarifying the division of roles between central government and municipalities with regard to preventive work.

- The national actor should set up a national network of practitioners affected who can, in turn, communicate expertise to and from the EU's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) about good examples of preventive measures. The RAN is a cross-sectorial network consisting of eight working groups of practitioners with broad knowledge of the prevention of violent extremism at local level.
- Sweden should take the lead in the EU in establishing an EU CVE Centre of Excellence – a knowledge centre that collects proven methods and measures. In this EU CVE Centre of Excellence the Forum for Living History could be an important integral part of the dissemination of knowledge.

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<sup>75</sup> Ranstorp, Magnus & Dos Santos, Josephine (2009) *Threats to democracy and fundamental values – a picture of the situation in Malmö, (Hot mot demokrati och värdegrund – en lägesbild från Malmö)* Swedish National Defence College; and *Local action against violent extremism. Examples* (2010) (*Lokala insatser mot våldsbejakande politisk extremism. En exempelskrift*), Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

As part of the development of the EU's RAN network, whose mandate expires in 2105, there is currently great demand for and a strong need of a central EU node for practitioners and knowledge development of evidence-based methods and measures to counter all forms of violent extremism. Such an EU centre combines national action and strengthens the focus on worrying trends in the EU. Sweden, which already has a strong knowledge base in right-wing extremism, should have a clear leading role in the development of such an EU CVE Centre of Excellence.

#### *Education and training*

- With minor effort it should also be possible to adapt the training on radicalisation and violent extremism recently introduced in the police to staff in the remaining parts of SSP cooperation.

Community workers have asked for training and this could be an important measure to raise awareness and enhance knowledge. Key persons trained by the Swedish Security Service can arrange internal training courses in their organisation that are geared to needs.

- It should be possible to develop training material for young people that promotes critical thinking, especially in relation to anti-democratic and violent messages via the internet.
- Constructive conversations: Films shows followed by discussions aimed at civil society have proved to be an effective tool for creating structured discussion in other countries.

Films like *Broken Dreams* about Somalis who leave Minneapolis to join al-Shabaab and the British film *My Brother the Islamist*, which was produced by a man whose brother had gradually become increasingly radical. These films present pictures of reality and provide scope for after-discussions about risks and solutions. In other countries this has been used as a tool to stimulate discussion and critical thinking.

Another example of a measure that can be taken at local level is holding discussion meetings about how individuals from Sweden can assist the civilian population in the current armed conflict in Syria. There are alternative possibilities of supporting the country that can be discussed, which do not include going there personally. Then it is also possible to shed light on the risks associated with such a trip.

- School and cultural projects. One example of an interesting cultural project developed by UNDP in consultation with Hargeisha University in Somalia is a 22-page manual for interactive youth theatre that deals with aspects of joining an armed group. This manual is an example of a source of inspiration and a useful educational tool for interactively examining different problems linked to conflicts and violent extremism.
- Establish cooperation with the network Against Violent Extremism (AVE) so as to be able to invite defectors from violent extremism groups and that is currently doing preventive work with young people.

There are four main reasons for establishing such cooperation and inviting individuals with this background: 1) training of young people about violent extremism; 2) assisting community workers with a credible dialogue with young people in the risk zone to prevent them joining extremist groups or with those who are already in such groups; 3) training of SSP employees to make them more effective in their work; and 4) advice to decision-makers about what works when designing measures to prevent and address violent extremism.

Defectors from extremist environments often have particular credibility for talking with young people about these issues. In January this year, a Swedish national resource centre was set up

for all forms of defector activities and it ought also to be broadened to include help to individuals wishing to leave violent Islamic environments. Until individuals who have left violent Islamic extremism come forward in Sweden, individuals with this experience should be invited from other countries in cooperation with AVE.

- Reports by established international human rights organisations (for example Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International) about violations of human rights by groups designated as terrorists can be used in suitable contexts to counter the narratives of these groups, thereby reducing their attractiveness.

#### *Cooperation with civil society*

- Trust-building cooperation with faith communities should be established over the long term without a security agenda. Trust takes time to build and should be developed in a long-term and genuine way about issues that affect the local population. Mutual trust and established contacts have had a calming effect in times of social unrest. At present the Swedish Commission for State Support to Faith Communities (SST) is conducting an in-depth dialogue in human rights with the faith communities.

Cooperation should be structured in such a way that it is not dependent on individual voluntary contributions or enthusiasts. In Denmark for example, the Muslim Council plays a very important and constructive role with the authorities in various issues.

- A catalogue of ideas should be drawn up of possible preventive measures that include the SSP and actors in civil society. This will enable local actors to shape and dimension their own preventive work to suit their local context. One successful example of this is the Danish ideas catalogue that was developed and anchored in close cooperation between local actors.

In Sweden, Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg could, for example, show the way, and each city develop their own ideas catalogue of positive measures to strengthen contacts with civil society. This should not only be designed around extremism but should have a broader social approach in which preventive work to address extremism is only one of several aspects.

- Intelligence and security services have an important public information task of regularly communicating analyses of issues linked to violent extremism to the general public. This is done to a greater extent by, for example, agencies in both Denmark and Norway.
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) should consider participation within the framework of the programme that the EU's Instrument for Stability is designing in the Horn of Africa and in Pakistan/Afghanistan as regards action to prevent violent extremism. Such action could deepen the dialogue on democracy and human rights with local partners. An integral part of this work should be action targeted on women and young people.
- More resources are required for staff for war and torture victims in youth psychiatry.

#### *Knowledge and advice centre*

- A national knowledge and advice centre should be set up that has special knowledge about preventing and dealing with violent extremism.

Such advice could be given in an integrated way at three levels: macro (institutional advice at local level to the SSP sector), meso (advisory programmes and support for close relatives) and

micro (individual intervention and support to leave violent radical environments and opinions).

Many in the SSP staff feel that these issues are sensitive and difficult to discuss. Such a centre could play an important role in establishing a constructive and problem-solving dialogue at local and national level on these issues.

#### *Legal measures*

- Consideration should be given to whether Sweden needs to change its terror legislation to criminalise participation in terrorism training abroad. Under the latest amendment to Swedish terrorist legislation based on EU's framework decision, the following behaviour was made criminal: a) public provocation of terrorist crimes; b) recruitment for terrorist purposes; and c) training for terrorist purposes. Point c, training for terrorist purposes, only criminalises providing training.

Thus, today it is not a crime under Swedish legislation to participate in terrorism training. According to the Government's inquiry chair in this matter, Professor Petter Asp, making participation in terrorist training a criminal offence would probably pick up some cases not picked up by the present wording.

According to Professor Asp, when the legislation on training for terrorist purposes that criminalised the provision of training was introduced in 2010, the alternative of also criminalising participation in terrorist training was never discussed. This was because the introduction of the legislation was based on integrating a framework decision in the EU into Swedish legislation. A number of EU countries, and Norway, are considering criminalising or have criminalised participation in terrorism training. This has also been advocated by the EU's counter-terrorism coordinator.

- *Measures to increase competence in the judicial system (training in the courts system)*

Almost all the terror-related prosecutions in Sweden have resulted in acquittals and the police and prosecutors have been criticised for not having a sufficient basis for their prosecutions. Others have argued that the laws are drafted too narrowly and do not permit the flexibility available in other countries for this type of crime. A third view is that these laws may very well allow this type of crime to be punished but that there is a lack of competence in the courts system concerning this specific set of problems. It is therefore important that there is competence in this area throughout the legal system.

Today there are, for example, specialist prosecutors for security cases, including terrorist cases, but there is no equivalent in the courts system for security cases. One viable approach could be to take greater account of external expertise in terrorist cases. When it comes to the handling of violations of international law, for example, these cases are steered (as has happened in all of them to date) by the Swedish Prosecution Authority via the possibility that the Government has of assigning this type of case to Stockholm City Court irrespective of what would have applied under the normal forum rules.

The City Court hears these cases at a division (division 4) that has built up a special competence for the subject area. If a terrorist crime had been committed abroad it ought to be possible to assign the case in the same way to Stockholm City Court, which is the court that has most experience of security cases through, for example, its handling of investigatory measures. These cases are undoubtedly complicated and demand detailed knowledge of, for example, threats, modus operandi and trends that characterise the type of crime.

This strongly suggests that special competence should be built up. Legislation should therefore be considered that gives Stockholm City Court (the court that is in the best position to build up such competence) general jurisdiction in this type of case.

*Further research*

- There is a need for fact-based, interdisciplinary research linked to the foreign fighter problems. More knowledge is, for example, needed about which factors influence and drive individuals who travel abroad as well as research about society's capacity to reintegrate these individuals.
- More behavioural and social science research is needed on the role of civil society in preventing violent extremism and the link between the diaspora and civil society in countries outside the EU. Above all, ideas should be developed about how women and young people can be strengthened in preventive work.

## **Prevention of violent extremism in third countries: Measures to prevent individuals joining armed extremist groups in conflict zones**

This report of the prevention of violent extremism in conflict zones is the result of the government commission given to the Swedish National Defence College in December 2011. The problem of young men travelling to conflict zones such as Somalia, Pakistan – and now recently Syria – to fight has become increasingly apparent in several European countries.

The report deals with experience and lessons from, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark as regards the preventive work these countries undertake to address violent Islamic extremism – both at home and abroad. Particular emphasis is placed on lessons learned regarding recruitment to conflict zones. In respect to countries outside the EU, particular attention is given to preventive measures in Pakistan, Somalia and Kenya.

The report also considers consequences for the situation in Sweden and provides recommendations for consideration in Sweden.

### **Executive Summary**



**CATS**  
Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies

Försvarshögskolan  
Box 27805  
115 93 Stockholm  
[www.fhs.se](http://www.fhs.se)