

# Violent Political Extremism

**Are our prisons prepared?**

# Political, religious and ideological violence

- Growing threat across the world
- Home-grown and imported violent extremists
- Right-wing extremists
- Left-wing
- Single cause extremism e.g. ecological concerns motivate violent incidents
- Religious motivated extremism

# Violence generated by extremism

- Generates several questions - dangerousness of these persons
- What risk do individuals convicted of violent extremism or terrorist offences pose to society?
- Is terrorist violence substantially different from other criminal violence and is a terrorist merely a criminal?
- Are available risk assessment protocols appropriate to criminals convicted of violent extremism and terrorist offences?
- Are prisons prepared and trained to handle these criminals?

# Comprehensive review of terrorists

- imprudent to regard the violent extremist/terrorist as merely a criminal
- terrorists and violent extremists do not show
  - exhibit mental illnesses
  - personality disorders
- Different motivations & background factors exist
  - **Specific training is necessary!**

# Defining and agreeing on terms

- **The terms:**
- **“radicalization”**
- **“radicals”**
- **“extremists”**
- **“extremist violence” and**
- **“terrorism”**

# Radicalization

- “Radicalization” - the process of adopting an extremist belief system (Precht, 2007; Silber & Bhatt, 2007).
- The “radical” - the person who has adopted this extremist belief system.
- Not all who begin the process progress through to the end stage of violence
  - having or expressing radical views is a protected right and not legally problematic
- **When radicalization includes violence as a component, it is illegal**

# Who will become a violent extremist?

- may not be possible to predict with accuracy
- it may be possible to construct a tool to assess the dangerousness of radical extremists.
- radicalization is a dynamic process.
- If sufficient characteristics are understood
  - the motivation and factors leading to ideological violence
- It would be possible to assess if de-radicalization or disengagement has occurred.

Are prisons trained?



# To get an idea

- We asked our partners
- What do you understand by the term radicalisation?
- Has there been any specialised training with regards to radicalisation?
  - If YES....ask what type of training
- Does the prison have any type of policy with regards to radicalisation?
- Are there any courses in the prison that address radicalisation? If YES...can you describe them?

# Spain

- Sent the question to prison and schools in prison
- Answers from:
  - Almeria
  - Barcelona
  - Madrid
  - Murgi
  - Santander

# 25 persons involved

- Programme manager - (1)
- School headmasters - (2)
- Prison guards - (11)
- Service managers - (2)
- Professors - (1)
- School secretary - (1)
- Surveillance staff - (2)
- Teachers - (4)
- Counsellor (1)

# Radicalisation

- “Push an idea to extremes”
- Extreme religious, cultural (among other) ideas
- Intolerance that leads to fanaticism
- Intolerance
- Lack of empathy
- Extremist position in ideas, actions or behaviour
- Excluding other views (Closing oneself)
- Acting in an intolerant way

# Barcelona

## School headmaster

- Extremist and unique way of thinking, which does not consider other alternatives rather than one's own, which **involves violent actions and behaviour** derived from lack of respect, responsibility and empathy towards the rest of society, other beliefs or cultures

# Any specialised training with regards to radicalisation

- ‘No’ and ‘Don’t know’ – (22 of 25)
- No answer – (1 of 25)
- Other – (1 of 25)
- **Require training “Especially in terms of Islamic radicalisation”**

# Prison policies addressing radicalisation

- 'No' and 'Don't know' – (15 of 25)
- Yes – focusing on
  - Islamic radicalisation
  - Preventive measures implemented
  - Detecting and analysing radicalised inmates
  - Isolate the prisoners from the rest of the inmates
  - Specialised staff

# Courses in prisons address radicalisation

- ‘No’ and ‘Don’t know’ – (23 of 25)
- Training staff who already work on equity programmes
- Respect to other religious denominations.
  - Inter-culturally, empathy and conflict management



# The respondent want to know...

- What kind of radicalisation are we referring to?
- How to detect radicalisation cases?
- How to approach inmates that are radicalised?
- A study and intervention on addressed youngsters and dealing with emotional intelligence and assertiveness
- Guidelines in radicalisation processes (if existing) and chances of action/prevention during the different stages of the process - If they have been successfully applied
- **“I would like training courses to deal with real situations and give solutions, rather than theory”**

# Lessons learnt

- Difficulties in defining the problem – radicalisation!
- No specialised training!
- Prison policies
  - Islamic radicalisation
  - Preventive measures implemented
  - Detecting and analysing radicalised inmates
  - Isolate the prisoners from the rest of the inmates
  - Specialised staff
- Most of the staff does not know of any courses that address radicalisation within prisons
- The need for focus and practical training courses and guidelines

Thank you

Any questions?

Dr Trevor Calafato  
trevor.calafato@um.edu.mt