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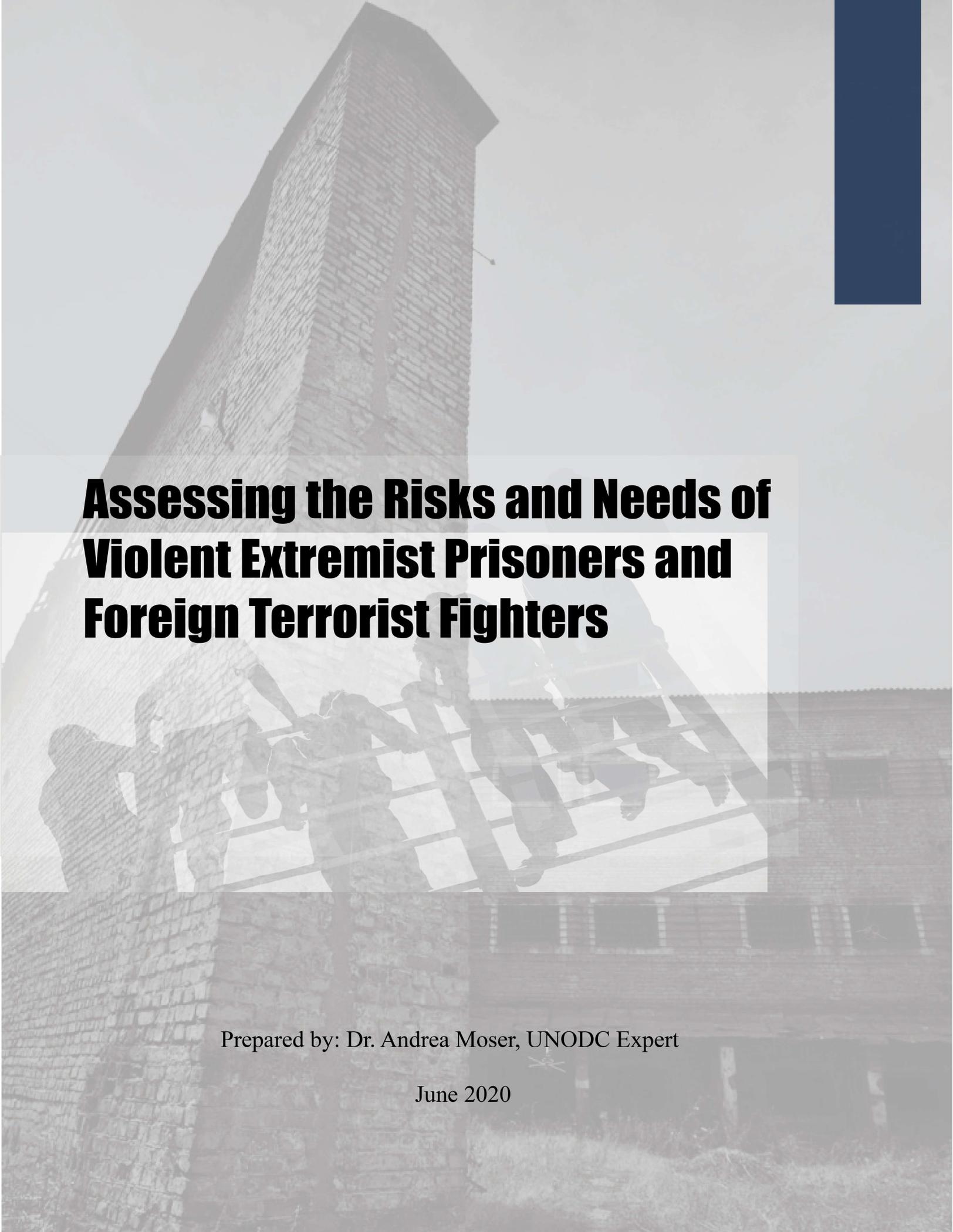
Assessing the Risks and Needs of Violent Extremist Prisoners and Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Background Paper

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The background of the cover is a grayscale photograph of a tall, multi-story brick tower. In the foreground, there is a structure with a grid-like metal framework, possibly a staircase or a walkway, where several people are silhouetted against the light. The overall scene suggests a prison or a secure facility. A solid dark blue vertical bar is located on the right side of the page.

Assessing the Risks and Needs of Violent Extremist Prisoners and Foreign Terrorist Fighters

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INTRODUCTION

As countries around the world examine ways to effectively manage individuals convicted of terrorism-related/extremist offences or those suspected of being radicalized in an effort to prevent future terrorist attacks, the demand for specialized risk assessment tools for this population has become increasingly prominent. In recent years, this has also included a specific focus on approaches and strategies to address the unique challenge presented by returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and their families.

The purpose of this paper is to examine key issues and the current state of knowledge with respect to assessing the risks and needs of radicalized and violent extremist¹ prisoners (VEPs) including FTFs. Topics to be discussed include:

- A brief history of assessment approaches for VEPs
- Main issues and challenges in the assessment of VEPs
- Research on risk factors and indicators of violent extremism
- Special considerations for foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)
- An overview of current tools available for the assessment of VEPs (including FTFs)
- factors to consider when selecting or designing a risk and needs assessment tool for VEPs

¹ It should be noted that, for the purposes of this paper, the definition of *violent extremist* is consistent with that outlined in the UNODC Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization in Prisons (2016), specifically “*Someone who promotes, supports, facilitates or commits acts of violence to achieve ideological, religious, political goals or social change*”.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ASSESSMENT APPROACHES FOR VEPS

Risk assessment, in its most fundamental form, involves collecting information about an individual in order to assist with predicting the likelihood of an outcome or behaviour. With respect to prisoners, the outcome of interest is usually risk of reoffending, and particularly violence. A great deal of research in the criminal justice field over the past 40 years has led to the development of a number of risk assessment tools that have been shown to be effective in predicting the risk of both general and violent reoffending among prisoner populations.

Specific approaches to the assessment of prisoners to assist in criminal justice decision-making have evolved over time. Initial efforts focused on *unstructured clinical judgement*, which refers to an informal and subjective approach based primarily on professional opinion, intuition, and clinical experience where assessors have absolute discretion in terms of selecting risk factors to consider and how to interpret this information to make predictions and render decisions. However, research that consistently demonstrated the poor accuracy and consistency of this method led to the development of evidence-based actuarial (i.e., statistical) and/or structured professional judgement² tools. Numerous studies have supported the validity of these latter two approaches in terms of risk prediction among correctional populations.

With respect to VEPs, while some early writers suggested that tools developed and used successfully to predict violence for other forensic populations (e.g., HCR-20, PCL-R) could potentially be helpful for assessing the risk of VEPs³, subsequent work challenged the usefulness of such instruments for the assessment of terrorism, extremism and radicalization risk. Specifically, studies found that the personal backgrounds of those involved in terrorist activities seemed to be distinct from those involved in other forms of criminal violence. In addition, psychological factors that predisposed certain people to engage in extremist activity seemed to differ from those that predispose some individuals to act violently in other ways. Finally, existing tools for general violence assume a cumulative risk model that implies that the more risk factors that are present, the higher the chance of engaging in violence⁴. However, with respect to VEs, this assumption does not seem to apply. Specifically, one of the features of violent extremism is that sometimes only a few risk indicators can lead to an overall high risk. For example, if someone is highly committed to an ideology, has determined a target for a terrorist act and has already obtained the means to commit the attack, all

² An approach that considers factors that are theoretically and empirically associated with outcomes of interest to make predictions about future behaviour. Rather than provide a specific scoring and categorization system, assessment instruments based on an SPJ approach provide guidance to those completing assessments on a set number of factors to estimate risk or need level.

³ See discussion by Silke, A. (2014). Risk assessment of terrorist and extremist prisoners. In A. Silke (Ed.), *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*, pp. 108-121. London: Routledge.

⁴ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner's Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

other indicators are likely irrelevant.⁵ For these reasons, the utility of tools developed to predict risk of violence among general prisoner populations to predict future terrorist acts was found to be limited. This was the impetus for the development of specialized instruments to effectively capture extremism-related risk. At the present time, there are several tools which have been specifically designed for use with VEPs. It should be noted that none are based on an actuarial approach due to the low numbers of these prisoners in many jurisdictions relative to general prisoner populations as well as their generally low rates of reoffending, which prevent the creation and examination of the very large samples of individuals required to develop a statistically-based prediction tool. Furthermore, as actuarial tools only allow consideration of a set of specific and typically static predetermined risk factors, they do not permit examination of individual and dynamic situational issues which appear to be particularly important in the context of violent extremism and also permit the assessment of change over time. Consequently, the majority of the existing VEP tools employ a Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) approach which, while considering a set of factors in a standardized way, has the flexibility to consider individual factors. Although research has demonstrated that the reliability and predictive validity of SPJ instruments may be comparable to that of an actuarial approach⁶, it should be noted that, to date, very little research has been conducted regarding the reliability and validity (including the predictive validity) of specific SPJ assessment measures for VEPs, although research on the topic is becoming more prevalent. The most commonly used tools for VEPs, including the advantages and disadvantages of each and how they apply to special subpopulations such as FTFs, will be described later in this paper.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF VEPS

When discussing the risk assessment of VEPs, there are several key issues and challenges that are important to consider. This section will describe some of the main considerations including the heterogeneity of VEPs, the identification of radicalized individuals in criminal justice settings, the need for accurate and verified information, the role of prison infrastructure and staff resources, the importance of realistic expectations about the predictive ability of assessment activities and human rights considerations.

⁵ Pressman, E, Duits, N., Rinne, T. & Flockton, J. (2018) *VERA2-R: A Structured Professional Judgement Approach*. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/node/11702_en.

⁶ Hart, S.D., Douglas, K.S. and Guy, L.S. (2016). The structured professional judgement approach to violence risk assessment: Origins, nature, and advances. In L. Craig & M. Rettenberger (Eds), *The Wiley Handbook on the Theories, Assessment, Treatment of Sexual Offender, Volume II*, (pp. 643-666). New Jersey: Wiley Publishers.

1) Heterogeneity of VEPs

In addition to research indicating that many VEPs have characteristics that are distinct from the general prisoner population, it is also important to note that, as a group, those convicted of terrorist offences are surprisingly heterogeneous and therefore defy simple categorization into one type or profile⁷. Specifically, research has shown that VEPs vary with respect to factors such as the motivation for their involvement with terrorist-related activity (i.e., ideological, criminal or both), whether they belong to an organized group or are lone actors, their role or function if they belong to group, their level of commitment to an ideology, the presence of mental health issues and a variety of personal factors which will influence their potential risk for future violence. This heterogeneity supports the need for assessment tools that focus on a consideration of how criminogenic risk, needs, responsivity, vulnerabilities and protective factors interact with specific indicators shown to be relevant for violent extremism such as the nature of the extremist ideology, the justification of the use of violence to achieve desired goals, the intentions to engage in violence and the capacity of the individual to plan and act at a given time.⁸

2) Identification of VEPs and radicalized prisoners

It is important to keep in mind that not all VEPs in a prison or probation setting will have been convicted of a terrorist-related offence. Others who were motivated by similar ideological beliefs may have been convicted of other offences or the crime they committed was unrelated to their ideology. This will result in what is referred to as “known” and “unknown” violent extremists in criminal justice settings⁹. In addition, in a prison context, there are those who have no previous history of extremism who may be recruited and radicalized while incarcerated. Consequently, in addition to assessment tools specific for VEPs, other assessments including specialized screening protocols (discussed below) can be useful to identify those detained or imprisoned with radical views that promote violence, who may not have been identified as VEs by the courts or by the offence committed¹⁰. Finally, the ongoing monitoring of all prisoners within the prison environment for signs of radicalisation is also important and can be facilitated by staff training to enable them to recognize indicators that could suggest the need for screening or further assessment.

⁷ Silke, A. (2014). Risk assessment of terrorist and extremist prisoners. In A. Silke (Ed.), *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*, pp. 108-121. London: Routledge.

⁸ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner's Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

⁹ Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2016)

¹⁰ Ibid

3) Risk Assessment vs Risk Screening

When discussing the evaluation of risk, it is important to distinguish between *risk assessment* and *risk screening*. *Risk assessment* refers to the specialised, individualised and comprehensive assessment of the risk of radicalisation, extremism and/or terrorism. By contrast, *risk screening*, often performed through a less comprehensive tool, focuses mainly on behaviour that might indicate radicalisation or involvement with extremist or terrorist ideology, but without necessarily analysing its extent, driving factors or likelihood to result in criminal behaviour.¹¹ Specifically, screening is focused on collecting information on a more basic level to determine individuals' suitability or the necessity for a more detailed assessment or measures such as increased monitoring or assessment. The use of screening tools can help save time and resources and may be particularly important in settings where there are high numbers of individuals of interest and/or limited resources so that more detailed assessment efforts can be focused on those of greatest potential concern.

4) The availability of accurate information

To be useful, risk assessments require accurate information from a variety of information sources. This can include court records, pre-sentence reports, prison documentation, information provided by prison staff and those involved with the prisoner and any relevant intelligence information. As noted in the Council of Europe Handbook for Prison and Probation Services Regarding Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2016, p. 16), “*The quality and accuracy of the risk assessment is dependent on the amount and the quality of the information available*”. Obviously, this is enhanced in settings where there are good mechanisms in place for the sharing of information between different criminal justice agencies but can be a particular challenge in developing and particularly, post-conflict, settings. When information is obtained from the prisoner, the staff member completing the assessment must be aware of the potential for deception and, where possible, independently verify the prisoner’s version of events.

5) Infrastructure and resources

In addition to the need for accurate and validated information, the successful implementation and management of a system to facilitate the accurate assessment of VEPs and to be able to act upon the findings with respect to activities such as classification, supervision and appropriate interventions is dependent on several infrastructure requirements, specifically those related to physical structure (i.e., prison facilities) and staff resources.

With respect to infrastructure, individualized assessment results for VEPs need to be considered when making placement and intervention decisions for the person in a prison setting or for management strategies when he/she is supervised in the community. In a prison setting, this may involve the ability

¹¹ *Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders*. RAN EX Post Paper, RAN P&P Working Group, 2018, Brussels.

to separate the prisoner from other radicalised individuals as continued proximity may hinder disengagement efforts. In the community, it may include specific conditions and monitoring. Furthermore, it is well recognized that poorly managed and overcrowded prisons can be a factor leading to increased radicalisation.

Regarding staff resources, many of the prominent risk assessment tools for VEPs require the availability of adequate staff resources to complete assessments, record the results and to not only utilize the information to develop management and intervention plans, but also to ensure adequate record-keeping and appropriate sharing of information. In addition, there is typically the requirement for staff to undergo varying degrees of training and quality review in order to use the assessment tools. Finally, as noted earlier, prison staff with the appropriate training can be an important source of information regarding behavioural observations of those in custody as well as being able to recognize those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

6) The importance of realistic expectations

There are multiple benefits to the specialized assessment of VEPs including identifying the presence of risk factors for violent extremism to assist in the classification, placement, intervention strategy and general management of prisoners and probationers as well as to identify changes in risk over time. However, while these assessments are meant to provide relevant and timely information about the prisoner or probationer to inform decision-making it is important to recognize that no risk prediction tool, including those for violent extremists or radicalised individuals, is infallible.¹² Specifically, these instruments cannot predict with 100% accuracy who will or will not reoffend, nor can they completely predict who within a general prison population will become a terrorist or violent extremist. However, these instruments and approaches do enable more accurate and reliable decision-making than an unstructured approach not informed by research evidence and best practices provided that they are based on reliable information and completed by assessors who have been well-trained to undertake the assessment.

7) Human rights considerations

A key element of ensuring the humane care and custody of prisoners in prison systems that is consistent with international standards and norms, is the use of the lowest security category or level consistent with the requirements of safety and control of the individual for the protection of prisoners, prison officers and the general public. Research findings indicate that subjective approaches to prisoner assessment often result in what is called “over-classification”, which exposes individuals to harsher conditions of confinement than necessary and hinders reintegration efforts. In addition, the

¹² Ibid

lack of a consistent and clearly articulated approach to classification can be susceptible to unfair practices in assigning security level and prison placement and be open to the influence of corruption. Therefore, an objective and evidence-based classification system with clear processes and procedures should be considered a significant factor in protecting the human rights of prisoners and in ensuring transparent and accountable prison management overall. This is particularly relevant for those convicted of terrorist or extremism-related offences who may be subjected to very high security levels as a default in the absence of a structured and valid assessment of their risks and needs.

RESEARCH ON RISK FACTORS AND INDICATORS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

In the context of terrorism prevention, the process of risk assessment typically focuses on identifying the likelihood for future violence based on the presence of characteristics that have been noted in a significant proportion of VEPs and therefore appear to be associated with outcomes of interest (i.e., further terrorist acts)¹³. These characteristics are often referred to as risk factors. While risk *factors* increase the likelihood of a given outcome, risk *indicators* help signal the presence of the outcome. For example, high blood pressure is a risk *factor* for heart attacks as it increases the likelihood of the outcome in the future. However, chest pain is an *indicator* of a heart attack as it signals that the event may currently be present.¹⁴ Research has identified both potential risk factors for radicalizing to violent extremism such as experiencing identity conflict, exposure to VE groups or individuals and having an “us vs them” world view as well as indicators that an individual is radicalizing including seeking information on violent extremist ideology and joining a violent extremist organization. More detailed information regarding evidence-based risk factors and indicators are provided in Annex A. Many of the existing risk tools for VEPs include many of these factors and indicators. It is important to note that, in isolation, any one risk factor or indicator in and of itself is not necessarily predictive of future radicalization or violence.

In contrast, variables that function in the opposite direction of risk factors are known as *protective* factors. In the context of violent extremism, these can serve to increase someone’s resilience to radicalization or terrorist related violence or assist with disengagement efforts. With respect to protective factors, these have been generally less well-researched, but promising variables appear to be considerations such as high self-esteem, strong family and community ties and exposure to nonviolent belief systems¹⁵. Again, many of these evidence-based factors are included in the most widely used risk assessment tools for VEPs.

¹³ *Countering Violent Extremism: The Application of Risk Assessment Tools in the Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation Process*. 2018. RTI International: North Carolina, USA.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS (FTFS)

Similar to VEPs in general, there is no single or unique profile to describe foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). As noted in 2017 RAN Network report “Responses to Returnees: Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their Families”¹⁶:

“There are multiple reasons for individuals joining violent extremist groups such as Daesh and HTS. This means there is no single psychological profile for FTFs. They also cover multiple nationalities, ethnicities, ages and both genders” (p. 16).

Furthermore, *“(t)here are many reasons why recruits are attracted to this destructive ideology and motivated to join. For some it offers excitement and status, looting opportunities, wages, housing, and the option to keep women as slaves; for others it is an opportunity to offer humanitarian support. For some it offers an escape from their ordinary, depressing and problem-filled lives. Others seek belonging, a sense of purpose and a higher calling. It can offer excitement and action, or strict rules on how to live within a clear moral framework. Some are recruited from within their families and friendship circles. Using grooming techniques, Daesh recruiters identify individual psychological weaknesses and skilfully exploit these through online and offline techniques” (p. 17).*

There can also be differences related to reasons for FTFs returning to their home countries. Some writers have discussed different “generations” of returnees, with the initial generation being predominantly men who were motivated by humanitarian reasons or to fight a specific regime who more quickly became disillusioned and were arguably less violent and a second generation that is more battle-hardened and ideologically committed and may be returning with violent motives such as to harm citizens in countries. However, it is important to note that many male returnees have likely been involved in war crimes such as murder, rape and slavery, taken part in atrocities and are also likely to have witnessed extreme violence. Furthermore, mere disillusionment with a terrorist cause does not necessarily translate into a rejection of violent ideology once back in the home country¹⁷.

There are additional considerations with respect to women and child returnees. Specifically, while some examinations of the women returnees have depicted them as victims, the reality appears that many Western women who joined or became affiliated with jihadist groups were motivated by ideology, utopian ideals and/or a need for excitement or meaning. Children, depending on their age, may also have been recruited for combat purposes and been exposed to extreme violence¹⁸.

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

In comparison with VEPs in general, FTF returnees represent a major security concern because of their combat experience, weapons training and direct connection to international terrorist networks.

“Desensitisation to the use of violence, combined with the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that often accompanies combat experience, and potential involvement in atrocities such as those that Daesh proudly publicises, further increases the potential threat posed by returnees. The combined effect of this can be further radicalisation, fighting skills and a lower threshold for violence and killing as well as a combat mindset. Many FTFs suffer from asocial psychological disorders, which manifest themselves in low impulse control, anger management issues, aggression and violence in social relations. FTFs often return to their previous radical milieus or criminal gangs, having an adverse effect on social dynamics”. (p.23)¹⁹

As a result, some have questioned whether existing tools for VEs are suitable for the particular challenge of FTFs. This has led to the development of at least one investigative risk tool specific for returnees – the RAN CoE Returnee 45 – which will be discussed in more detail in the section, below, that reviews a number of current tools available for the assessment of VEPs.

AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF VEPs

A recent review of existing risk assessment tools for violent extremism was completed in 2019 by the van der Heide and her colleagues at the International Centre for Counterterrorism (ICCT) in the Hague.²⁰ As described in their paper, after cataloguing the tools that they were already familiar with through their work on the topic of violent extremism, they also conducted a survey of the academic literature to find other existing VE measures. Through this process they were able to identify a total of fifteen assessment tools for VEs. From these, they selected seven that met certain criteria (i.e., being specifically designed to assess the risk of violent extremism, containing a number of indicators to determine risk level or extent of radicalization, having been developed or received an update since 2010) and for which there was adequate relevant information to complete a review. Of these seven tools, four (the VERA-2R, the ERG22+, the RRAP and the SQAT) are either intended or suitable for use within a prison and probation context specifically and are, therefore, the focus of discussion, below. In addition, a fifth tool, the RAN CoE Returnee 45, is described, given its direct relevance to the topic of FTFs.

¹⁹ Responses to Returnees: Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their Families (2017) Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf

²⁰ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner’s Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

1) The Violent Extremism Risk Assessment – Version 2 Revised (VERA-2R)

The VERA-2R is an updated version of the original Violent Extremist Risk Assessment (VERA) tool published in 2009 by Dr. Elaine Pressman. It was essentially the first formalized assessment tool specifically developed for violent extremism risk. It uses an SPJ approach to assess key indicators for risk of violent extremism that are grounded in the existing research literature regarding VEs and terrorists. Based on user feedback, the original VERA tool was updated in 2012 to the VERA-2. In 2018, a further update resulted in the VERA-2R.

The current tool focuses on all forms of violent extremism and examines five domains: beliefs, attitudes and ideology; social context and intent; history, actions and capability; commitments and motivations; and protective/risk mitigating indicators. As a result of the revision, additional motivational indicators demonstrated to be relevant to the radicalization to violence process including status, fear and a search for significance were included. Furthermore, indicators related to non-violent criminal history, personal history and mental disorders were added (see Annex B for a list of VERA-2R domains and indicators). The VERA-2R manual provides extensive explanations based on the research literature for each indicator and notes that the additional indicators added to the current version of the tool makes it suitable for use not only with men but also women and youth.²¹ According to the authors it also has applicability to assess the risk of FTFs and their family members and is currently being used with this group by police services in some jurisdictions in Europe and South East Asia as well as Canada and Australia.²² Although the tool has been used to screen vulnerable prisoners, it does not specifically have a screening portion, nor is it designed specifically for screening in its current form.²³

The target user audience of the VERA-2R varies by jurisdiction. In some countries, the tool is used to assess the risks for conditional release, while in others it is used for pre-trial assessment of risk. It is also suitable for use in prison settings and can assist in correctional decision making in areas including placement, the development of targeted programs and interventions and the justification of movement to different security classifications or the appropriateness for early release. It can also be utilized to identify strategies for the management of these individuals in prisons and the community. VERA-2R users are required to undergo training from either the developers or certified trainers. The training includes background information on the tool, the knowledge base concerning VEs, terrorism and radicalization. The training also provides users with experience in applying the indicators to case studies.

²¹ Pressman, E., Duits, N., Rinne, T. & Flockton, J. (2018). *The Violent Extremism Risk Assessment – Version 2 Revised: A Structured Professional Judgement Approach*.

²² Personal Communication – Dr. Elaine Pressman, March 23, 2020

²³ *Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders*. RAN EX Post Paper, RAN P&P Working Group, 2018, Brussels.

With respect to the information required to complete the VERA-2R assessment, it “relies on the evidence-base obtained from court records, other professional reports, documents relating to the individual in prison, observations and other information from other prisons and agencies and reports and observations concerning the individual of interest by persons who come into interaction with her or him”.²⁴

Advantages of the VERA-2R are that it is an empirically based tool with wide applicability to different criminal justice contexts including pre-trial assessments, community supervision and prison settings. In addition, it is suitable for use with not only men but also women, youth and FTFs. The inclusion of protective and risk mitigating indicators is also very helpful from an intervention and case management planning perspective. Disadvantages are that it requires specific training from the developers or recognized trainers, relies on detailed and verified information for accurate completion that may not always be readily available in certain jurisdictions and can be time consuming to complete, which may limit its use in settings with a high number of VEPs and limited resources. In addition, it is only designed as an assessment and not a screening tool. However, the developers of the VERA have designed short versions for specific jurisdictions for purposes such as screening and triage upon request and remain open to continuing such work.²⁵

2) Extremist Risk Guidelines 22+ (ERG22+) and Extremist Risk Screening (ERS)

The ERG22+ was developed by Monica Lloyd and Christopher Dean of Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)²⁶ in the United Kingdom.²⁷ All extremist offenders convicted under terrorist legislation in England and Wales have been subject to the ERG22+ since 2011.²⁸ The tool is intended to be completed by qualified forensic professionals (psychologists or probation officers) who have received training in its administration and used with those who have been convicted of any extremist or extremist-related offence. Like the VERA-2R, it utilizes a SPJ approach to examine the personal and contextual factors and circumstances that contributed to an individual’s engagement in an extremist group or cause. However, in contrast to the VERA-2R, the ERG22+ was developed from an analysis of the cases of terrorist-convicted prisoners in the U.K. rather than the academic literature.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Personal communication, Dr. Elaine Pressman, March 23, 2020

²⁶ Formerly the National Offender Management Service (NOMS)

²⁷ Lloyd, M. and Dean, C. (2015). The development of structured guidelines for assessing risk in extremist offenders. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 2(1), p. 40.

²⁸ Powis, B., Randhawa-Horne, K. & Bishopp, D. (2019). *The Structural Properties of the Extremist Risk Guidelines (ERG22+): A structured formulation tool for extremist offenders*. Ministry of Justice Analytic Series. United Kingdom.

Some writers have noted that the ERG22+ has a simpler structure and requires less classified information in order to complete the tool than the VERA-2R.²⁹

The 22 factors of the ERG22+ are organized into three domains: engagement, intent and capability. Engagement refers to the factors related to a person's involvement with an extremist group or ideology. Intent examines factors which may indicate an individual's readiness to support or use illegal means or violence to further the goals of an extremist group or ideology. Finally, capability refers to considerations that would enable a person to cause harm or perpetrate violence on behalf of a group or ideology. The "+" suffix of the tool refers to other factors that the assessor thinks may be relevant and have a significant influence. Assessors examine the presence and significance of the 22 factors, their impact on risk and needs and how these should be addressed as part of their management.³⁰ Each factor and domain is assessed and recorded either as being "strongly present", "partly present" and "not present". There is also consideration of whether and how any of the factors could have a protective or risk mitigation effect. The results of the assessment are intended to inform risk management strategies and decision-making related to VEPs. The developers of the tool have indicated that it is suitable for use with women. Annex C provides a list of the factors and domains assessed by the ERG22+.

In addition, a screening tool - the Extremism Risk Screen (ERS) - has been derived from the ERG22+. It is intended to be used with vulnerable prisoners that have not been convicted of a terrorist offence but where there are concerns that they are becoming, or are already engaged or involved in, extremism.^{31 32} The ERS considers five rather than three dimensions. Specifically, in addition to engagement, intent and capability, it also examines identification and context. It is not a risk assessment, but rather is aimed at identifying those who are at risk or vulnerable to becoming involved in extremism and assist in decision-making based on this analysis.³³

Advantages of the ERG22+ are that it is an empirically based tool with applicability to prison and community supervision settings and appears suitable for use with both men and women. It may also be simpler to use than the VERA-2R.

Finally, there is a screening version that has been derived from the tool to assess those who may be vulnerable to radicalization. Disadvantages of the ERG22+ are that it has been used primarily in the UK and was developed specifically from terrorist-convicted cases in that jurisdiction. Additionally, a requirement of the tool is that it needs to be administered by forensic specialists who have specific

²⁹ Herzog-Evans, M. (2018). A comparison of two structured professional judgement tools for violent extremism and their relevance in the French context. *European Journal of Probation*, 10(1), pp. 3-27.

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ *Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders*. RAN EX Post Paper, RAN P&P Working Group, 2018, Brussels.

³² Keane, C. *Provisions for Extremist Offenders and Those of Concern; Facilitating Desistance and Disengagement*. https://www.era-comm.eu/radicalisation/kiosk/pdf/seminar_2/317DT47_11_Keane.pdf

³³ Ibid

training. Finally, although it has been noted that it may require less classified information than the VERA-2R, it still relies on detailed and verified information regarding the prisoner and, as an SPJ tool, also requires time and resources to complete.

3) Radicalisation Risk Assessment in Prisons (RRAP) Tools Set

The RRAP was developed by Radicalisation Prevention in Prisons (R2PRIS) with support from the European Union. The specific goals of the project were to: create awareness of the broad picture of terrorism, particularly as it applies to prison settings; develop tools for prison administration and front-line staff to recognize signs of radicalization; provide common, consistent and effective instruments to help staff report their observations to the appropriate intelligence staff; provide model procedures for intelligence staff to vet the data received from prison staff and appropriately interpret it, and; establish a series of training programmes and tools for all staff within a prison to respond appropriately to potential vulnerable individuals at risk of radicalization.³⁴

The RRAP approach consists of three risk assessment instruments based on an SPJ approach – the Helicopter View, the Frontline Behavioural Observation Guidelines (FBOG) and the Individual Radicalisation Screening (IRS).³⁵ The Helicopter View (HV) is an organizational risk assessment tool that “*aims to raise awareness and support prison governors/prison system administrators to reflect and assess situational dimensions in preventing radicalisation – factors related to prison/prison service and those present among inmates – and to identify strategies and action plans that need to be implemented. The tool is to be used in a facilitated session by prison system administrators, prison governors and their management teams to assess radicalisation situational risk factors*”.³⁶

The Frontline Behavioural Observation Guidelines (FBOG) is a tool intended to raise awareness regarding radicalization in prisons and support frontline staff such as prison officers, educators and social workers in recognizing behaviours that can indicate radicalization in prison inmates. The third RRAP risk tool, the Individual Radicalisation Screening (IRS), is for technical staff such as psychologists and aims to assess prisoners’ risk of radicalization ranging from vulnerabilities that may be present to more extreme involvement with radical groups.³⁷ It consists of 39 items across 9 dimensions (emotional uncertainty, self-esteem, radicalism, distance and societal disconnection, need to belong, legitimization of terrorism, perceived in-group superiority, identity fusion and identification and activism). Each dimension must be supported by evidence and is scored on a scale

³⁴ <http://www.r2pris.org/objectives--results.html>

³⁵ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner’s Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

³⁶ p. 4 - *Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders*. RAN EX Post Paper, RAN P&P Working Group, 2018, Brussels.

³⁷ Ibid

from one to five, which is divided into three risk categories (low, moderate, high). The assessment results are intended to be used by decision-makers to decide on the category of risk or the need for intervention. Completing the tool is a process that may require interviewing the prisoner, collecting and analyzing observation reports, getting feedback from frontline staff and examining other available information (e.g., prison records, other assessment tools).³⁸ The use of all of the RRAP tools requires a training and certification process.

Advantages of the RRAP are that it represents a whole prison approach to the issue of radicalization, encompassing prison administrators as well as front-line staff. Disadvantages are that it appears to require a great deal of training and certification and the comprehensive nature of the approach appears best suited to well-resourced correctional systems. Also, as with the VERA-2R and ERG22+, it also relies on detailed and verified information from multiple sources. Furthermore, the approach focuses on vulnerability and risk of radicalization rather than the risk presented by VEPs specifically. Finally, there appears to be very little information available in the public domain regarding how the tools are meant to work together and be used in practice.

4) The Significance Quest Assessment Test (SQAT)

The SQAT is a risk assessment tool for violent extremists developed in the United States by professor Arie Kruglanski. Rather than being based on an SPJ approach, the SQAT is a self-questionnaire designed to measure detainees' degree of radicalization or adherence to violent extremist ideology.³⁹

It is grounded in the *Significance Quest* theory of radicalization, which identifies three general drivers of violent extremism: need, narrative and network (i.e., the 3N approach). The theory asserts that it is the desire for personal significance (i.e., the desire to matter) and have meaning in one's life that is the dominant need that underlies violent extremism.⁴⁰ The SQAT is divided into three sections based on these drivers, with between 18 and 30 statements in each. The VEP is asked to respond to each statement on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 being "rarely or never" and 7 being "always". The statements related to the needs section or domain assess the desire to feel significant (e.g., "I feel like nobody cares about me"). In the narrative section, the questions are related to the person's political and religious beliefs (e.g., "Under no circumstances does Islam support the killing of civilians"). With respect to networks domain, this examines beliefs regarding the role of Islam or of the Muslim community in relation to the state (e.g., "Political leaders in our country should be selected solely by Islamic clerics"). It should be noted that these question examples are related to the version of the

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner's Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

⁴⁰ Kruglanski, A., Jasko, K., Webber, D. Chernikova, M. and Molinaro, E. (2018). The making of violent extremists. *Journal of General Psychology*, 22(1), pp. 107-120.

instrument that examines Islamic radicalization. The developers of the tool have noted different versions of the tool would be able incorporate different ideological contents, such as ones related to, for example, other types of religious extremism or ethno-nationalist extremism.⁴¹ In addition to its use as a risk assessment tool which can assist in making informed decisions regarding placement decisions and early release, it can also be helpful to monitor the efficacy of rehabilitation efforts.

With respect to end-users, the SQAT can be used by anyone who has received the appropriate training, which is focused on the methodology used to develop the tool, how to instruct those completing the instrument and how to respond to questions from individuals who have to complete the tool. Compared to the VERA-2R and ERG22+, the SQAT has no specific or quantified end-score as an outcome. Specifically, the quantitative response derived from the scales measuring each of the three Ns are intended to be summed to yield the overall factor score. Adding these three scores together will give an overall risk score for a given individual. The higher the score, the greater the risk posed by the individual.⁴²

As a self-questionnaire tool, rather than one based on the SPJ approach, it is much easier to implement as it requires neither much time to complete nor external information. However, this also makes it more at risk for false or socially desirable responses from the detainees who complete the questionnaire. However, the developers have concluded that in many prison environments and particularly in cases where individuals are already sentenced, highly ideologically committed and where participation in terrorist groups is more accepted, there appears to be a willingness and openness to fill out the survey honestly.⁴³ Some have noted, that while the SQAT is not necessarily intended to be a replacement for an SPJ tool, it may work well as an addition to one.⁴⁴ The developers also note that numerical estimates of risk based on the SQAT and a shortened version of the VERA can be combined by simple averaging, providing an overall measure of risk, although this work is still preliminary.⁴⁵ The advantages of the SQAT are that it is a simple, self-report instrument that would be easier to implement in many settings than the more involved and time consuming SPJ tools. However, it still requires training from a tool developer or recognized trainer and due to its self-report nature, it is very questionable whether, on its own, it would be adequate to assess the risk a VEP presents for future violence. However, it may have utility and provide additional useful information in combination with an existing SPJ approach.

⁴¹ Kruglanski, A., Belanger, J. and Gunaratna, R. (2019). *The Three Pillars of Radicalization: Needs, Narratives and Networks*. Oxford University Press: New York.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner's Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

⁴⁴ Personal Communication, Dr. Julie Coleman, International Centre for Counter-terrorism (ICCT), the Hague, February 11, 2020.

⁴⁵ Kruglanski, A., Belanger, J. and Gunaratna, R. (2019). *The Three Pillars of Radicalization: Needs, Narratives and Networks*. Oxford University Press: New York.

5) RAN CoE Returnee 45

The RAN CoE Returnee 45 was developed by the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) Centre of Excellence.⁴⁶ The tool is narrower in focus than other risk assessment tools for VEPs, as it has been developed for use specifically with returning FTFs. It is described as an investigative tool rather than a risk assessment instrument and aims to provide a framework for operational planning and intervention management.⁴⁷ The tool is based on risk behaviours that have been identified in the literature and by experienced practitioners from across the EU who participate in RAN's working groups on RFFs and radicalization. Like the VERA-2R, the Returnee 45 includes resilience factors.

In addition, it focuses on how a multiagency intervention might be built around the individual FTF. The tool examines both internal and external measures of behaviour (e.g. grievance and the use of overt religious symbolism), cognitive styles (e.g. internal/external attribution, group identity bias) and social networks (online and offline). Motivation, personal/social history, trauma and disengagement processes are also assessed.⁴⁸ The items and format of a conference version of the RAN CoE Returnee 45 are provided in Annex D. The Returnee 45 is strengthened by the fact that it is identified as a guide for planning rather than a tool for assessment, and it is aimed at assisting multi-agency interventions. The fact that it is heavily influenced by practitioner experience makes this planning instrument unique.⁴⁹ Disadvantages include its limited focus on FTFs and the lack of testing of the instrument with a suitable sample. In addition, information regarding the required training to use the tool or details regarding how it should be used to inform decision-making is currently lacking.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN SELECTING OR DESIGNING A RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR VEPs

When either selecting or designing a specialist risk assessment tool for violent extremism, radicalization or to assess the risk of a specific subgroup of VEs such as FTFs, there are several steps that should be followed in term of laying the groundwork for a successful and sustainable approach for a specific jurisdiction. The purpose of this section is to identify these key steps as a guide for jurisdictions who are in the process of deciding upon how to best assess VEPs and/or radicalized prisoners as well as those under community supervision. Much of this information is drawn from a recent article by Cornwall and Molenkamp (2018) in a RAN EX Post Paper entitled “*Developing, implementing and using risk assessment for violent extremist and terrorist offenders*”⁵⁰ as well as the *UNODC Handbook on the Classification of Prisoners*.

⁴⁶ RAN Manual (2017). *Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families: RAN Centre of Excellence*

⁴⁷ Lynch, O. (2017). Understanding Radicalisation: Implications for Criminal Justice Practitioners. *Irish Probation Journal*, 14, pp. 78-91.

⁴⁸ RAN Manual (2017). *Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families: RAN Centre of Excellence*

⁴⁹ Lynch, O. (2017). Understanding Radicalisation: Implications for Criminal Justice Practitioners. *Irish Probation Journal*, 14, pp. 78-91.

⁵⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_developing_implementing_using_risk_assessment_brussels_09-10_07_2018_en.pdf

Step 1: Start with a clear objective

When considering the selection, development and/or implementation of a risk assessment tool for VEs, the most important determination that needs to be made at the beginning of the process is to establish and clearly articulate the objective of the risk assessment.⁵¹ Specifically, who is the intended target group of the tool and what is it that you want to learn from and/or achieve from the use of the tool?

With respect to the intended target group, it is important to identify who you would like to assess and for what kind of risk. For example, is it the aim to be able to predict the risk of future extremism violence post-release for those convicted of terrorism-related offences or primarily to determine whether they present a risk in a prison environment with respect to recruitment or radicalization of other prisoners (or both)? Is it an objective to identify those in prison or being supervised on probation who may be vulnerable to radicalization or are in the process of adopting extremism views? Or is it of interest to assess the risk of a subgroup of the VE population such as FTFs? Clear identification of the target group(s) of the assessment is critical in determining the appropriate tools and approaches. Regarding the objectives for the tool, risk assessment instruments can be designed for use with different and multiple aims including as: an *organizational tool* to assist in arranging and organizing different sources of information to gain a quicker understanding of prisoner related risks and needs; a *decision-making tool* to inform decisions such as placement, supervision strategies and early release; a *rehabilitation tool* to assist in identifying interventions to reduce the prisoner's future risk; a *reviewing tool* to assess and reassess individuals during their sentence in order to identify progress and adjust interventions and management strategies based on changing levels of risk and need, and; a *multi-agency cooperation tool* to enable required information sharing between different law enforcement and intelligence agencies and ensure that there is a common method of risk evaluation and language when describing the risk of this group of prisoners as they move through the criminal justice system.

Step 2: Use an existing tool or develop a new tool

Once the tool objectives and target group are determined, the next step is deciding whether to use an existing tool or develop a new tool specifically for the jurisdiction drawing from available knowledge and research. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. While using an existing tool is simpler and faster to implement, there are typically costs associated with either the training, ongoing use of the tool or both. In addition, if the tool was developed for a specific context and population (e.g., the ERG22+) it may not be automatically transferable to another context without modifications that the developer(s) would have to agree with. The creation of a new tool may assist in the tailoring of the approach to a particular jurisdiction or setting, but it is typically a lengthier process since it usually requires the external expertise of those with a background in the assessment

⁵¹ van der Heide, L., van der Zwan, M. and van Leyenhorst, M. (2019). *The Practitioner's Guide to the Galaxy – A Comparison of Risk Assessment Tools for Violent Extremism*. ICCT Research Paper: The Hague.

of VEs as well as the development of documentation, training and quality assurance aspects to ensure proper ongoing use of the tool.

Step 3: Ensure Adherence to International Standards and Evidence-Based Best Practice on Prisoner Assessment and Classification

While the existing evidence indicates that specialized tools and approaches are beneficial for understanding the risks posed by VEPs and FTFs, it is important to note that assessment and classification activities undertaken with this group still need to adhere to international standards and general evidence-based best practice with respect to the assessment and classification of prisoners as described in the *UNODC Handbook on the Classification of Prisoners*. This includes ensuring that classification of these prisoners is based on an assessment of their risks and needs, not only to determine the most appropriate placement and security regime, but also to identify and address the factors related to the individual's involvement in extremist behaviour. This approach enables the development of individualized case and sentence plans that place the prisoner in the least restrictive environment required and identify the interventions that will focus on the need areas that are linked to their criminal behaviour, as well as broader rehabilitative needs, such as those related to mental and physical health. It has been consistently demonstrated that such an approach promotes rehabilitation and social reintegration prospects, including for groups such as VEPs, and reduces reoffending upon release, in keeping with the purpose of imprisonment outlined in rule 4, paragraph 1, of the Nelson Mandela Rules, namely: *The purposes of a sentence of imprisonment or similar measures deprivative of a person's liberty are primarily to protect society against crime and to reduce recidivism. Those purposes can be achieved only if the period of imprisonment is used to ensure, so far as possible, the reintegration of such persons into society upon release so that they can lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life.*

Furthermore, the reassessment of prisoners at regular intervals is a key component of a sound assessment and classification approach. This recognizes that a prisoner's risk and need areas do not remain static over time. Therefore, regardless of the tool or approach selected, the regular reassessment of these prisoners, including VEPs, with opportunities for reclassification need to be built into the model.

Step 4: Develop a plan for piloting and eventual implementation

Prior to any larger scale implementation of a risk assessment tool, including those for VEPs, it critical to pilot the tool at a limited number of sites in order to ensure that the Instrument is working as planned, to identify any unintended consequences (e.g., unanticipated increases in workload of certain staff that affects their ability to do other work) and to see whether the approach is workable on a

practical level. Several tasks are involved in this process. An excellent summary of the steps specific to the piloting and implementation of an assessment tool for VEPs is provided in by Cornwall and Molenkamp in the RAN EX paper noted above and is described in more detail in Annex E.

Step 5: The importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation

As noted in the *UNODC Handbook on Prisoner Classification*, prisons administrations that either have existing assessment and classification regimes or have implemented new or modified prison classification systems should implement a process of review, ongoing monitoring and evaluation to determine whether the system is working as intended, confirm its predictive ability and validity and assess both its intended (e.g., improved safety and security of prisons and improved prisoner access to services matched to their needs) and unintended or unforeseen impacts (e.g., increased workloads of prison staff, higher than anticipated demand for certain programmes). In addition, it is important to assess periodically whether all policies and procedures developed to support the assessment/classification approach are being followed. In the case of assessment tools, these instruments should be regularly revalidated to ensure continued predictive accuracy for the prisoner population on which it is being used. To assist with this, a system of even basic data collection is important, as it facilitates the ability to evaluate whether the tools used in classification and risk prediction are achieving the desired results in terms of the appropriate placement of prisoners to minimize security incidents and escapes and, ultimately, reduce reoffending, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement.

CONCLUSION

Concerns with respect to the threat of radicalization and terrorist acts have increased around the world in recent years including not only the risk presented by home-grown extremists but also that of returning FTFs. In keeping with this, interest in and demand for tools to assess the risk of radicalization in prisons as well as the risk for future violence among those convicted of terrorist-related offences has grown.

The aim of this paper was to provide an overview of this issue by exploring issues such as the history of assessment approaches for VEPs, the main issues and challenges in the assessment of VEPs, research on risk factors and indicators of violent extremism, special considerations for foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), an overview of the most relevant current tools available for the assessment of VEPs (including FTFs) and factors to consider when selecting or designing a risk and needs assessment tool for VEPs. It is hoped that the issues discussed, and the resource tools provided, will enhance the ability of jurisdictions to make sound decisions and plans with respect to the selection and use of such tools in their specific prison and probation contexts

Annex A

Potential Risk Factors for Radicalizing to Violent Extremism ^a

Risk Factor	Radicalization	Violence
Experiencing identity conflict/being a loner	x	
Feeling there is a lack of meaning in life	x	
Wanting status	x	
Failing to achieve aspirations		x
Wanting to belong/trouble with platonic relationships	x	x
Trouble in romantic relationships		x
Desiring action or adventure/military experience	x	x
Having experienced trauma or abuse	x	x
Having mental health issues or being emotionally unstable	x	x
Being naïve or having little knowledge of religion and ideology	x	
Having strong religious beliefs/extremist ideology	x	x
Having grievances	x	
Feeling under threat	x	
Having an “us vs them” worldview	x	
Justifying violence or illegal activity as a solution to problems	x	
Having engaged in previous criminal activity	x	x
Involvement with a gang or delinquent peers		x
Stressors (e.g., family crisis, being fired from a job)	x	x
Societal discrimination or injustice	x	x
Exposure to violent extremist groups or individuals	x	x
Exposure to violent extremist belief systems or narratives	x	x
Family members or friends in violent extremist network	x	x

Potential Behavioural Indicators That an Individual is Radicalizing to Violent Extremism ^b

Risk Factor	Radicalization	Violence
Seeking information on a violent extremist ideology	x	
Withdrawing from society or existing relationships	x	
Engaging in conflict with family/others (e.g., teachers, religious leaders)	x	x
Making dramatic lifestyle changes (e.g., unexpectedly quitting work, leaving home)	x	
Immersing oneself with violent extremist peers	x	
Joining or staying in a violent extremist organization	x	x
Making public statements about violent extremist beliefs	x	x
Expressing threats or the intent to engage in terrorist activity	x	x
Engaging in preparatory activities related to an attack (e.g., training, obtaining weapons and materials)	x	x
Others becoming aware of one's grievances		x

^{a b} **Source:** *Countering Violent Extremism: The Application of Risk Assessment Tools in the Criminal Justice and Rehabilitation Process*. 2018. RTI International: North Carolina, USA., pp. 5-6.

https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_CVE-Application-Risk-Assessment-Tools-Criminal-Rehab-Process_2018Feb-508.pdf

Additional notes from text: These tables summarize widely accepted risk factors and behavioural indicators for VE identified by the United States National Institute of Justice (NIJ) through a conference that examined risk assessment research in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States in 2015 and through an examination of NIJ-funded research efforts as well as other existing models of extremist violence.

Annex B

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CODE	VERA-2R Indicator Items (PRESSMAN, DUITZ, RINNE, & FLOCKTON, 2018)	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
BA.	BELIEFS –ATTITUDES-IDEOLOGY			
BAI.1	Commitment to ideology that justifies violence			
BAI.2	Perceived grievances and/or injustice			
BAI.3	Dehumanization of identified targets of injustice			
BAI.4	Rejection of democratic society and values			
BAI.5	Expressed emotions in response to perceived injustice			
BAI.6	Hostility to national identity			
BAI.7	Lack of empathy, understanding outside own group			
CI.	CONTEXT & INTENT			
CI.1	Seeker, consumer, developer of violent extremist materials			
CI.2	Target for attack identified (person, group, location)			
CI.3	Personal contact with violent extremists (informal/social)			
CI.4	Expressed intention to commit acts of violent extremism			
CI.5	Expressed willingness/preparation to die for cause			
CI.6	Planning, preparation of acts of violent extremism			
CI.7	Susceptible to influence, authority, indoctrination			

HAC.	HISTORY- ACTION & CAPABILITY	L	M	H
HAC.1	Early exposure to violence promoting militant ideology			
HAC.2	Network of family and friends involved in violent extremism			
HAC.3	Violent criminal history			
HAC.4	Strategic, paramilitary and/or explosives training			
HAC.5	Training in extremist ideology in home country or abroad			
HAC.6	Organizational skills and access to funding, other resources,			
CM	COMMITMENT & MOTIVATION			
CM.1	Motivated by religious obligation and/or			
CM.2	Motivated by criminal opportunism			
CM.3	Motivated by camaraderie, group belonging			
CM.4	Motivated by moral obligation			
CM.5	Motivated by excitement, adventure			
CM.6	Forced participation in violent extremism			
CM.7	Motivated by acquisition of status			
CM.8	Motivated by a search for meaning and significance in life			
PROTECTIVE /RISK MITIGATING INDICATORS				
P.1	Re-interpretation of the ideology (less absolute, rigid)			
P.2	Rejection of violence as a means to achieve goals			
P.3	Change in concept of the enemy			

P.4	Participant in programs against violent extremism			
P.5	Support from the community for non-violence			
P.6	Family members support/ other important persons for non-violence			

COD E	ADDITIONAL INDICATORS	YES	NO
CH	CRIMINAL HISTORY		
CH.1	Client of the juvenile justice system/convicted for non-violent offence(s)		
CH.2	Non-compliance with conditions or supervision		
PH	PERSONAL HISTORY		
PH.1	Violence in family		
PH.2	Problematic upbringing and/or placed in juvenile care		
PH.3	Problems with school and work		
MD	MENTAL DISORDER		
MD.1	Personality disorder		
MD.2	Depressive disorder and/or suicide attempts		
MD.3	Psychotic and schizophrenic disorder		
MD.4	Autism spectrum disorder		
MD.5	Post-traumatic stress disorder		
MD.6	Substance use disorder		

Pressman, E. & Duits, N. (2019). De VERA à VERA-2R : nouvelles avancées dans l'évaluation du risque d'extrémisme politique violent. *Les Cahiers de la Sécurité et de la Justice*, 46, 57-71

Annex C

ERG22+ FACTORS AND DOMAINS

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Engagement	Intent	Capability
1. Need to redress injustice	14. Over-identification with group, cause or ideology	20. Personal knowledge, skills, competencies
2. Need to defend against threats	15. Us & them thinking	21. Access to networks, funding, equipment
3. Identity, meaning and belonging	16. Dehumanization of the enemy	22. Criminal history
4. Need for status	17. Attitudes that justify offending	
5. Excitement, comradeship & adventure	18. Harmful means to and end	
6. Need to dominate others	19. Harmful end objectives	
7. Susceptibility to indoctrination		
8. Political, moral motivation		
9. Opportunistic involvement		
10. Family and/or friends support extremism		
11. Transitional periods		
12. Group Influence and control		
13. Mental health issues		

REFERENCE: Powis, B., Randhawa-Horne, K. & Bishopp, D. (2019). *The Structural Properties of the Extremist Risk Guidelines (ERG22+): A structured formulation tool for extremist offenders*. Ministry of Justice Analytic Series. United Kingdom.

Annex C

RAN CoE Returnee 45

Conference Version

Source:

RAN Manual – Responses to Returnees (June, 2017)

Conference Version of Tool Posted on Twitter – (June, 19. 2017)

<https://twitter.com/alexritzmann/status/876725179350749184?lang=en>**

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RAN CoE Returnee 45			
I. Motivation (before / after travel)	Degree of Risk: Low	Degree of Risk: Moderate	Degree of Risk: High
1. Psychological factors influenced by pathways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action-oriented • Family • Brooder • Belonging / acceptance 			
2. Grievance / Injustice			
3. Susceptibility to indoctrination			
4. Sudden change in behaviour			
5. Adherence to Salafi-jihadi ideology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of specific terminology (takfir, etc) • 'Them' and 'us' thinking • Glorification of martyrdom and violence • Rejects Western values and norms • Demonisation and dehumanisation of enemies • Fixation 			
6. Social Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital footprint (avatar, secure communication channels) • Conspiratorial thinking • Consumption and production of extremist propaganda material • Communication with like-minded extremists 			
7. Stress levels			
8. Impulse control			
9. Conflict management skills			
10. Family norms (accepting / rejecting ideology)			
11. Limited sense of belonging to society (on religious grounds)			

II. Social Context (before / after travel)	Degree of Risk: Low	Degree of Risk: Moderate	Degree of Risk: High
12. Contact with radical network / milieu			
13. Attraction to subculture (gangs)			
14. Criminal past			
15. Level of family dysfunctionality			
16. Siblings or other family members as FTFs			
17. Self-isolation			
18. Mental health issues			
19. Evasive behaviour			

III. Experience in Conflict Theatre	Degree of Risk: Low	Degree of Risk: Moderate	Degree of Risk: High
20. Registration and security vetting			
21. Training camp experience			
22. Position inside the group			
23. Marital status and family (in theatre)			

24. Social media footprint			
25. Reflection on experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glorification • Regret • Disillusionment • Aggression • Fear 			

IV. Decision to Return	Degree of Risk: Low	Degree of Risk: Moderate	Degree of Risk: High
26. Disillusionment			
27. Health factors			
28. Family pressure			
29. Social pressure			
30. Financial / living conditions			
31. Negative experiences			
32. Returning alone or in a group			

V. Arriving Home (see section on Motivation / Social Context as they are also applicable)	Degree of Risk: Low	Degree of Risk: Moderate	Degree of Risk: High
33. Capacity for self-reflection about the future			
34. Disillusionment			
35. Mental health (trauma, unresponsiveness, high stress levels)			
36. Destructive support network / radical milieu			
37. Connection to society and community			
38. Family involvement			
39. Lack of housing / employment			
40. Peer pressure			
41. Level of trust and relationship with authorities			
42. Sense of belonging (to non-believers)			
43. Paranoia			
44. Expression of explicit and implicit threats of violence			
45. International contacts (with extremists)			

Annex D

The following is reproduced from the RAN EX POST PAPER RAN P&P Working Group Brussels, 9-10 July 2018

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-p-and-p/docs/ran_pp_developing_implementing_using_risk_assessment_brussels_09-10_07_2018_en.pdf

Implementation process

Effective implementation of risk assessment tools hinges on the degree of understanding, cooperation and coordination across the various stakeholders working with the tools. This includes those providing input (information) for the tool (intelligence services, police, prosecution, prison staff, etc.), those working with the tool (probation officers, psychologists, social workers, etc.) and those using the outcomes of the tool (probation officers, psychologists, social workers, prosecution, judges, lawyers, local authorities, etc.).

Therefore, ideally, decision-making on the use of a specialised risk assessment tool and its related processes should be discussed with all relevant stakeholders, before actually considering which particular tool to use. Decisions around use of the tool, and who 'owns' and which agency completes the assessment, as the individual passes through the criminal justice system, are key to helping all agencies understand the process and the need for information-sharing.

In the following step-by-step analysis, the prison initiates the implementation process — similar steps would be followed if initiated from a probation perspective.

Step 1.

Consult with relevant stakeholders on the need and necessity of a specialised risk assessment tool for violent extremist offenders. The following considerations should be taken into account.

- The target population of the assessment, and the size of that population.
- The costs of developing, implementing and using the tool in the prison system — considering what is currently available and how to utilise this in support of the tool, rather than reinventing resources.
- Insight into which gaps/needs the specialised tool would address (e.g. being able to better address radicalisation in the rehabilitation process or being able to better manage violent extremist offenders in terms of security).

- Clearly specifying the use of the tool: pretrial, in sentencing, for screening, for categorisation of prisoners, for interventions or programmes, etc.
- Use an evidence-based structured approach process, supported by current professional decision-making tools and evidence-based risk management.

The decision is taken by the designated prison authority to invest in a specialised risk assessment tool.

Step 2.

Map current risk assessment tools in prison and from relevant stakeholders (e.g. police). The aim is to understand what they focus on, what kind of information they provide and how they are used during the criminal justice process.

Step 3.

Research on existing specialised risk assessment tools for extremism and radicalisation. Consider which tool best meets the needs set out in Step 1, or whether a new tool should be developed. Consider the mapped tools in Step 2 to ascertain which tool works best in conjunction with existing processes. Existing tools may differ in terms of target audiences and use (e.g. those for screening vs those for court processes). It may be possible to use components from different tools, but you must ensure they are fully compatible once integrated and that they can be used across domains, for an outcome that harmonises with the assessment process as a whole.

Step 4.

Share conclusions with relevant stakeholders (prioritising those due to work directly with the tool). Sharing outcomes and facilitating discussion on how the tool works in individual cases is critical. This builds confidence in users and broadens their understanding of the tool's use. Different assessors bring diverse skills to the table and sharing these builds a more comprehensive knowledge base. The decision is taken to use tool X as a specialised tool for extremism and radicalisation.

Step 5.

The tool must be adapted to the national/local context (in terms of legislation, language, jargon, specific circumstances, etc.). All parties involved should understand what the tool is used for and also, importantly, what it is not used for. If the aim is to use it to signpost interventions and programmes, ensure they are available, and the staff involved are aware of the assessment tool.

Step 6.

Assign a pilot location for working with the specialised risk assessment tool. The pilot phase serves to support development of the working processes around the tool (since these processes are

determined by the local/national legislation and criminal justice framework, questions posed below are of a general nature).

- When should it be used? (During pre-trial? After sentencing?)
- Who are the assessors? Ensure they remain in contact, as feedback for the pilot is crucial from them.
- What is the target group? (Sentenced terrorists, vulnerable offenders in the regular population?) Ensure the group is varied and diverse.
- How often should it be repeated? Annually? Following a change in the individuals' circumstances?
- How will it be documented? How will this information be used to inform the pilot as well as the tool and training materials?
- Who will have full/partial access to the risk assessment tool outcomes? Will certain sections of the assessment need to remain confidential? How will this confidentiality be ensured?
- How will offenders themselves be involved? How can you best involve them? What if they do not wish to be involved?
- Who needs to know about the tool? (Additional training may be required for prison management, local authorities, etc.). Some groups may need awareness-training, which may be delivered through emails, team meetings, visits, etc. as alternatives to formal training.

Step 7.

Those involved in the pilot (i.e. carrying out or directly affected by the risk assessment) must be trained to use the tool. The training should instil confidence in the tool and the process. Assessors need to feel supported and secure in the knowledge that the tool is based on solid research, able to withstand challenges to its legality and authenticity.

Step 8.

The risk assessment pilot begins and continues for a specified time period.

Step 9.

Review of the pilot

- What benefits did the tool offer? Is it really needed? Did it have a positive impact? Do users believe it has value and want to use it again?
- How can the working processes be improved? Can time be saved by cutting out unnecessarily repetitive processes?
- Have all relevant stakeholders been involved?
- Most crucially, written and verbal feedback should be provided from all involved. Small groups of users should openly and honestly critique the tool, offering their perspectives, both positive and negative.

- Produce a report and propose actions/make recommendations, consider how to implement changes to the tool, the training and the practice.

Step 10.

Modify the tool and working processes, drawing from the experiences of the pilot phase. Prepare roll-out to other parts of the country/criminal justice system. For follow-up, there should be a plan for review and feedback, with quality assurance of assessments and a dedicated individual/team to support assessors and decision-makers.