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PREPARE PROJECT

Preventing radicalisation through probation and release

March 2019

Spain: 15 years of work on radicalisation in prison

In Spain, the first measures aiming at preventing, detecting, following up on and neutralising possible radicalisation processes in prison were taken in the wake of the 2004 Madrid train bombings.

Probation allows for individualised follow-up for prisoners leaving prison and mobilises many services (prison administration, justice services, etc.). As a result, it is a key moment to act against the violent radicalisation of these individuals, whether it took place in prison or on release. Local authorities have a key role to play in coordinating these different institutions. They can also use their knowledge and know-how in the field of prevention of reoffending and disengagement.

PREPARE contributes to the prevention of radicalisation through disengagement and rehabilitation programmes during release and probation, notably through multi-agency partnerships that include local authorities.

Efus coordinates this project from 2017 to 2019 with a broad partnership of local authorities and civil society organisation: City of Malaga and Generalitat of Catalonia (Spain), Rotterdam and The Hague (Netherlands), Bagnolet (France) and Vilvoorde (Belgium), Violence Prevention Network and Denkzeit (Germany), Fryshuset (Sweden), European Forum for Restorative Justice (Belgium) and Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion (France).

>>>> *National Strategy*

Spain adopted in 2015 the National Strategic Plan Against Violent Radicalisation (*Plan estratégico nacional de lucha contra la radicalización violenta*), which replicates at national level the European Union's Counter-Terrorism Strategy as well as the subsequent and more concrete EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism.

In a schematic way, we can say that the National Plan defines three clear spheres of action:

- Prevention (before)
- Surveillance (during)
- Action (after).

The plan includes a “special reference to the treatment in penitentiary centres of cases of individuals imprisoned for their involvement in acts of violence or, in any case, for links with terrorism.” In such cases, the penitentiary authorities “must monitor and evaluate [the prisoners'] activity within the centres where they serve their sentence.” The General Secretary of Penitentiary Institutions will design a specific plan in this regard.

This control will be extended to those individuals involved in violent extremist recruitment or indoctrination activities during their time in prison.

In all cases, upon completion of their sentence, “a system of information and coordination will be regulated, depending on where they are released, between the prison centre and the corresponding local multisectoral coordinator.”

Initiatives of deradicalisation of individuals (who have or not been sentenced for terrorism) are collected in successive annual management plans.

>>>> *Spanish policy against violent radicalisation in prison: historical records*

To deepen the purpose and methodology used in the current national strategy for the prevention of radicalisation in prison, it is necessary to mention some important milestones in the evolution of Spain's penitentiary policy.

Spain has experience in the management of terrorist and radical inmates since 1972, when the first member of the basque terrorist organisation ETA was incarcerated.

Following the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, the first measures aiming at preventing, detecting, following up on and neutralising possible radicalisation processes in prison were taken, establishing a new classification of prisoners:

- Group A (prosecuted/sentenced with terrorist charges)

- Group B (indoctrination/recruitment/pressure groups)
- Group C (members/followers/vulnerable)

Different sets of security measures were designed for each of these three groups.

In 2008, the first units for obtaining, analysing and processing information related to radicalisation were created, the “Control and Monitoring Groups”.

The same year, the first “Manual for the detection and control of radicalisation in penitentiary centres” was published (later revised, in 2010).

In 2011, the database of prisoners under “special control” (Fichero de Internos de Especial Seguimiento, FIES) was revised to include prisoners classified as Group B. The current Radicalisation Prevention Programme in Prison was launched in 2014.

Finally, the Order of Service 3/2018 concerns the development of an “instrument for the evaluation of violent radicalism” to detect and assess variables that may indicate a real risk of committing acts related to violent radicalism.

>>>> *Current Spanish penitentiary policy*

We must therefore begin with a description of the general and specific objectives of the current penitentiary policy in Spain in the fight against radicalisation in prison.

General Objective

The general objective of the penitentiary policy is to prevent the recruitment and indoctrination of new terrorists in prison by detecting, neutralising, disengaging and de-radicalising inmates who show signs of adhering to an extremist ideology.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- neutralize potential radical inmates, categorised as such from their criminal background (Jihadist terrorism);
- detect, identify and neutralise those inmates who, serving a sentence for other types of crime, could be or become radicalising agents;
- identify risk variables of radicalization in and intervene with those inmates who may be receiving direct and harmful influence from others or who are particularly vulnerable;
- preserve security, order and normal coexistence inside prisons;
- promote the participation of extremist inmates in treatment programmes;
- deactivate religious fanaticism as a source of violent radicalism;
- improve and optimise coordination and cooperation procedures with the security forces.

Action lines

- Proper distribution, classification and separation of these inmates, as per the provisions of the FIES files.
- Have an adequate, modern and safe network of infrastructures and services in the prisons.
- Human resource optimisation: increasing staff and ensuring they have specific and adequate training.
- Exercise specific control and monitoring of these inmates through observation (behavioural change, appearance, participation in activities, etc.) and other security measures provided in current regulations (search / body search / requisition of material used to indoctrinate or recruit other inmates).
- Specific control of people with whom the inmate communicates or requests to communicate (other inmates / people abroad) as well as of movements of money.
- Intervention on inmates' communications (written, oral and telephone) in accordance with penitentiary legislation.
- Specific intervention and treatment programmes.

These action lines have been translated into two differentiated and consecutive phases, based on two different programmes:

1. **Programme for the prevention of radicalisation in penitentiary centres (2014),**

This programme is focused on measures for the detection and prevention of recruitment processes and radicalisation of Muslim inmates. Its objective is to collect, analyse and systematize a set of data and relevant variables to detect and limit incipient or consolidated processes of radicalisation.

Special attention will be paid to the possible relation of jailed terrorists with people who have been previously in jail, regardless of whether they were convicted of terrorism or other crimes. Communications and visits with such people, relationships established with them or with third parties, and relation with other forms of organised or terrorist crime will be also observed.

Control and monitoring groups

Established in 2009, the “control and monitoring groups” gather officials within the prison who are specifically trained to analyse data and relevant variables in order to detect and limit incipient or consolidated processes of radicalisation. Specific coordination and cooperation is established with the security forces to manage this information.

2. Framework Programme for intervention in cases of violent radicalisation of Islamist inmates (2016)

This programme complements and furthers the previous prevention programme.

It is based on the guiding principles and objectives of the Spanish penitentiary policy, whereby the prison administration, in addition to ensuring custody during the sentence, will offer re-educational activities to inmates in order to prepare their social reintegration and ensure they return to society with the ability and willingness to abide by the law.

According to Article 10 of the penitentiary rules, the penitentiary administration will use programmes and techniques of a psychosocial nature to improve inmates' capabilities and address issues that may have influenced their criminal behaviour.

In general terms, from the moment they are incarcerated and after they have been submitted to appropriate psychosocial, legal and medical evaluations, inmates are assigned an Individualised Treatment Programme (ITP).

Depending on the results of their individual evaluation, prisoners will either be allowed to have general activities as all other inmates, or will be assigned specific treatment activities and programmes designed according to the type of crime committed (gender violence, sexual crimes, child pornography, etc.), and their individual circumstances, such as:

- Foreigners
- Disabilities
- Drug addiction
- Mental health problems
- Violent radicalism.

As its name implies, the Specific Action Plan for the Prevention of Radicalisation in Penitentiary Centres is designed for inmates classified as violent radicals.

General objectives

The plan seeks to lead radical inmates to:

- reject violence and disengage from the criminal / extremist organisation to which they may belong;
- avoid and prevent the indoctrination of other inmates;
- address religion from a rational point of view;
- learn values and principles of coexistence in a democratic state of law;
- learn prosocial values and attitudes of respect and tolerance;
- identify and reduce cognitive distortions;
- learn to identify and express their emotions;
- foster positive emotions;
- reduce personal resistance: improving relations with officials and other inmates.

In order to achieve these goals, the following intervention lines are foreseen:

1. Raising awareness and fostering internal change

This stage targets inmates who have a particular religious interpretation and a potentially violent behaviour, and identify with real or fictitious groups through which they build their own identity narrative. These individuals have low tendency to introspect and strong feelings of grievance and injustice. During this stage, they will work with several techniques to improve their self-awareness and cognition:

- personal history analysis;
- religious experience narrative;
- emotional awareness and personal feelings;
- emotional conscience of others;
- mental schemes;
- personal identity and group belonging;
- personal values.

Inmates will also be trained in personal change strategies:

- cognitive restructuring – critical thinking;
- empathy – identification of possible victims;
- violent behaviour and self-control;
- education in psychosocial values;
- knowledge of other cultures and religions;
- religious ‘restructuring’ – collaboration with moderate Imams;
- change and increasing personal autonomy.

Specific intervention strategies targeting Groups B and C:

- Working on a healthy self-esteem and banishing the concept of failure, emphasising personal achievements.
- Social skills and assertiveness: learning to defend our interests without being aggressive, and avoiding being manipulated.
- Manipulation and persuasion: strategies of persuasion, analysis of language, fear as a conditioning factor and humanisation of victims.

2. Religion – As a second stage, targeting all inmates from Groups A, B and C

This module is aimed at providing inmates from all the mentioned groups with a deeper and rational knowledge of Islamic doctrine, thus enabling them to practice without adopting any violent behaviour.

Experienced moderate Imams or civil society organisations with deep knowledge of Islam and respected or recognised as an authority by the inmates are necessary at this stage.

Spanish authorities are thus contemplating involving in the programme the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (Federación española de entidades religiosas islámicas).

Tertiary prevention initiatives

As per the Spanish legal system, there is no provision of deradicalisation /disengagement programmes linked to probation. Probation modalities are in general terms classified as follows:

- imposition of security measures;
- community work;
- suspension of the prison sentence;
- substitution of the prison sentence.

In any case, all decisions concerning measures to be applied during probation are taken by a judge and not automatically granted. Hence each decision concerning individuals on probation as part of a sentence linked to extremism has to be motivated and take into account the potential risk of causing alarm among the public or mistrust in public institutions.

Targets

There are a number of general aspects to be taken into consideration when analysing the Spanish penitentiary policy related to radicalisation in prison and its targets.

- In Catalonia, the competences regarding the management of the penitentiary system were transferred to the Government of Catalonia in 1983. This means two systems coexist: the national one (for the whole of Spain), and the Catalan one.
- Nevertheless, according to the Spanish Organic Law Code, offences related to “terrorist crimes” (which should include all crimes aimed at or related to self-radicalisation, indoctrination or recruitment of others) are always investigated and prosecuted by the National Court (Audiencia Nacional), including crimes with lighter penalties or committed by minors aged between 14 and 18, and those relevant to the prison supervision court.
- As a result, sentences related to crimes prosecuted by the Audiencia Nacional are served in any of the 51 national prisons that are part of the Spanish penitentiary system but never in prisons in Catalonia.

As we have seen above, the Spanish penitentiary administration manages a database of inmates under special supervision (Fichero de Internos de Especial Seguimiento, FIES). The special

security measures these prisoners are subject to are defined by the General Secretary for Penitentiary Institutions.

The FIES includes information on individuals or groups of prisoners deemed very dangerous, either because of the seriousness of their crimes or because of their behaviour in custody. The database also includes information on prisoners requiring special protection.

The FIES classification establishes three different groups:

Group A: detainees serving a sentence or remanded in custody for offences linked to Jihadist terrorism; these individuals are considered highly dangerous and harbour deeply rooted extremist values and ideology.

Group B: inmates who are actively disseminating ideas and trying to indoctrinate and recruit.

Group C: inmates considered vulnerable and at risk of being radicalised, or already in a process of radicalisation, because they have displayed attitudes of contempt for those who do not follow their precepts.

Role of Local Authorities

The National Plan Against Radicalisation includes the figure of the Local cross-sectoral coordinator as contact point within the local security forces in charge of centralising all the information concerning any radicalisation process in the area.

Furthermore, the Plan stipulates that every municipality must have a multi-agency Local Group Against Violent Radicalisation, whose modus operandi will be replicated from the National Groups Against Violent Radicalisation.

The constitution, participants, competences and modus operandi of these groups will be set out by specific administrative rules.

As mentioned in the National Plan Against Radicalisation, whenever an offender for terrorism / extremism is released at the end of his sentence, his prison will exchange all relevant information with the local multi-sectoral coordinator (of the territory where the prison is situated).

Involved Practitioners

The practitioners involved in preventing or countering radicalisation in prison and probation have different backgrounds and work for different agencies.

The Control and Monitoring Groups gather prison officials tasked with detecting and controlling all the relevant data and information gathered through the Prevention Programme, the Framework Programme for Intervention and the follow up phase. The local cross-sectoral groups also intervene to coordinate this information.

A Treatment team gathering legal practitioners, psychologists, social workers and educators is in charge of the initial evaluation as well as of following up on the prisoner's progress. Given that

radicalised inmates have all a fanatic interpretation of religion, authorities seek to promote a moderate interpretation of Islam with the help of moderate Imams. An ad-hoc agreement has been signed between the General Secretary of Penitentiary Institutions and the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (Federación española de entidades religiosas islámicas).

Multi-agency approach

As mentioned before, the programme's complex development requires coordination between the treatment teams (legal practitioners, psychologists, social workers and educators) and the Control and Monitoring Groups.

In the same way, and following guidelines established in the National Plan, information will be shared between the prison and the local cross-sectoral coordinator each time a prisoner having served a sentence for extremism or terrorism is released.

Governance of these initiatives

The coordination of these measures (intervention model) is carried out by the prison's Deputy Director of Security, who is responsible for sharing information about the relevant prisoners with the management team. They will release on a weekly basis a detailed report on the evolution of each of the monitored prisoners, and proposals of intervention if relevant. This report is handed to the prison's Director as well as to the General Sub-Directorate of Treatment and Prison Management.

Evaluation

According to interviews and information gathered for this paper, the results of the programmes mentioned above are as follows:

- Programme for the "Prevention of radicalisation in penitentiary centres" launched in 2014:

Since the start of the programme and as of January 2019, 131 prisoners classified as Group A (i.e. linked to Jihadist terrorism) have been involved, as well as 39 Group B (indoctrinators/recruiters) and 82 Group C (at high risk or in the process of being radicalised).

- Results related to the "Intervention on violent radicalisation with Islamist inmates" Framework Programme (as of January 2019)

Since the launch in 2017 till September 2018, 41 prisoners have participated in the programme. There are currently 13 prisoners actively engaged, of whom 9 are classified as Group A (for Jihadist terrorism), and 4 as Group C (at high risk or in the process of being radicalised). Furthermore, a total of 28 prisoners have been removed or have withdrawn from the programme (of whom 12 are Group A, 7 are Group B, and 9 are Group C). Ten have successfully completed the programme (5 of Group A, 1 of Group B and 4 of Group C); and 18 have withdrawn for different reasons: transferred, voluntary, expelled or released.

Based on the interviews conducted for this paper and on the results here exposed, a number of lessons can be drawn.

- Prisons appear as proper breeding grounds for radicalisation processes.
- It is necessary to update both the Prevention and Intervention programmes.
- It is crucial to train the staff and upskill them so they can better implement the Prevention and Intervention programmes.
- The systems for data gathering and analysis must be reinforced and updated.

Lessons learned from the Intervention Programme.

- It is necessary to keep working on and updating the programme, notably in the follow-up phase and to include some after-care activities. Furthermore, it would be interesting to involve more practitioners, probably with the support of local authorities.
- Changing the name of the programme and of some activities would be helpful to enrol more prisoners, as some are deterred by the current denomination.
- It is necessary to work on strengthening the therapeutic alliance between inmates and therapists.
- It is crucial to improve the dynamic descriptions on the programme.
- There should be a system rewarding programme participants according to their involvement and efforts.
- Collaboration with Muslim Imams should be strengthened and fostered at all stages.
- More investigation and research on the ground is needed to analyse more deeply the push and pull radicalisation factors in prison, and thus improve the design and implementation of these programmes.