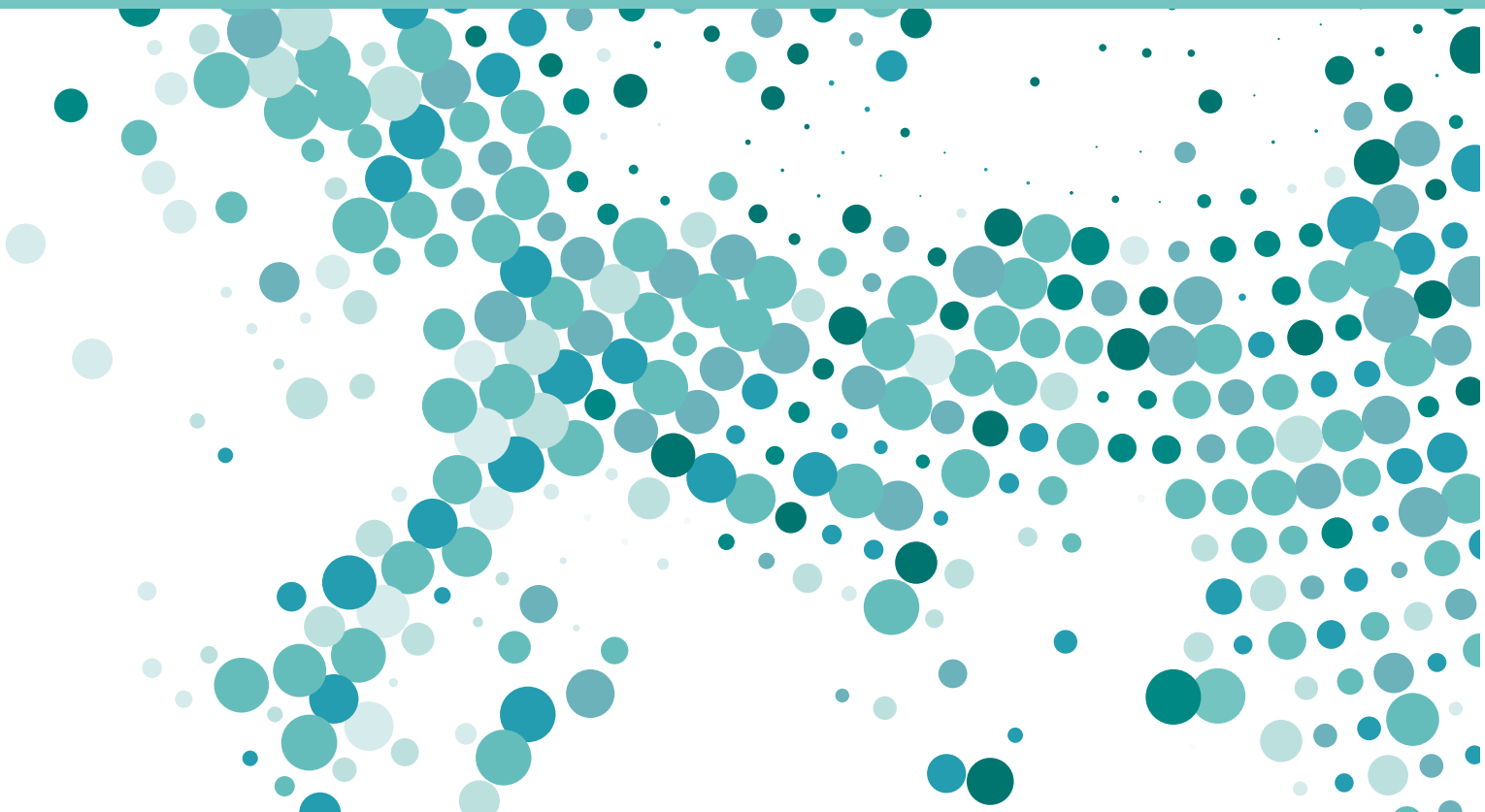


Violent extremism in Finland – situation overview 1/2018

**Threat assessment of violent extremism in Finland in 2017 and trends.
Women and children in radical Islamist terrorist organisations under
special review**

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR PUBLICATIONS 17/2018

Internal security



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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Since 2013, the Ministry of the Interior has regularly published situation overviews of violent extremism. Overviews are drafted under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior, together with key experts. They are meant to provide an overall picture of violent extremist movements and related crimes and trends during a given time period in Finland.</p> <p>This overview presents the national definitions of violent radicalisation and extremism along with related crimes. These definitions are integral to the content of the report. The summary describes trends in the number of crimes suspected to be extremist in nature based on information from the police information systems as well as trends in the number of hate crimes committed, to the extent that these are relevant to this report.</p> <p>The overview presents the actions of violent extremist groups in Finland in 2017 and addresses the situation and status of women and children in radical Islamist terrorist organisations. Daesh is the first radical Islamist terrorist organisation that has managed to attract a large number of women to travel to the region controlled by the organisation. Some women brought children along with them. There are also other children living in this region who were born into families after they left Europe. Although all the children are victims, some of them may also pose a security threat.</p>			
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Referat	<p>Sedan 2013 har inrikesministeriet regelbundet publicerat lägesöversikter över våldsam extremism. Översikterna bereds under inrikesministeriets ledning tillsammans med centrala sakkunniga. Syftet med översikten är att ge en övergripande bild av våldsam extremism och brott relaterade till våldsam extremism samt av trender i Finland under den granskade perioden.</p> <p>Översikten innehåller nationella definitioner av våldsam radikaliserings och extremism samt av relaterade brott som är centrala med tanke på innehållet i översikten. Utifrån uppgifter från polisens informationssystem beskriver sammanfattningen utvecklingen av antalet misstänkta extremistiska brott samt hatbrott i den mån som det varit motiverat med tanke på översiktens tema.</p> <p>Översikten tar upp våldsamma extremistiska gruppers verksamhet i Finland under 2017 och granskar läget och ställningen för kvinnor och barn i radikala islamistiska terroristorganisationer. Daesh är den första radikala islamistiska terroristorganisationen som har lyckats locka ett stort antal kvinnor till områden som kontrolleras av organisationen. Barn har rest till områdena tillsammans med kvinnorna, och dessutom har barn fötts i familjer som lämnat Europa. Alla barn är offer, men en del av dem kan även bli säkerhetshot.</p>		
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1 Summary

The threats arising from different types of violent radicalisation and extremism as well as the crimes suspected of being motivated by these phenomena take many different forms.

From the perspective of violent radicalisation and extremism, violent right-wing extremists using violence against perceived opponents have the biggest impact on everyday security. Racist skinhead groups still constitute the most common form of right-wing extremism in Finland. Their activities, which mostly take the form of spontaneous street violence, are based on local associations. The National Socialist Nordic Resistance Movement, previously known as the Finnish Resistance Movement, is the most visible right-wing extremist group in Finland. Its activities have been affected by the legal action taken by the National Police Board in March 2017 aimed at having the organisation dissolved. On 30 November 2017, the Pirkanmaa District Court ordered the dissolution of the Finnish chapter of the Nordic Resistance Movement and its local branches and associations. The decision has been appealed to a court of appeal and is therefore not yet final.

Religiously motivated violent extremism manifests itself as the threat of terrorism, related crimes and sectarian violence. An increase has been noted in cases related to radical Islamist terrorism that have exceeded the threshold of preliminary inquiry, criminal investigation and the bringing of charges. In August 2017, a mass stabbing attack on local people occurred in Turku. The perpetrator is accused of murder and attempted murder committed with terrorist intent. This was the first suspected offence against life or health made with terrorist intent after the Finnish legislation was revised in 2003 (chapter 34a of the Criminal Code). According to the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, the threat of terrorism in Finland is now at level 'elevated' (level 2 on a four-level scale). Underlying the elevated threat level is the conflict in Syria and Iraq and the phenomena associated with it. Assaults and illegal threats carried out by Muslim men against Muslims who have converted to Christianity were a dominant feature in crime statistics on sectarian violence.

The biggest threat of serious violence, such as mass killings, is connected with individual actors who may be broadly motivated by violent extremism. A recent survey shows that individual actors rarely act on their own. They are usually part of a social environment.

Left-wing extremism, which in this context mainly means the activities of anarchists and anti-fascist radicals, was relatively rare in 2017. These groups mainly engage in provoking right-wing extremists and disrupting their activities, and the Nordic Resistance Movement remains their main adversary. There were few signs of radical alternative activities during 2017.

Almost 100 offences suspected of being connected with violent extremism were identified in the crime reporting system of the Finnish police in 2017. The crime reporting system does not, however, give a comprehensive picture of the number of offences because a case can be entered into the system as a single offence or each suspected offence can be recorded separately. For example, all crime reports filed in connection with a demonstration can be entered under a single offence designation ('violent rioting') or each case can be recorded separately.

More than half of all suspected offences with extremist motives reported to the police involved violent right-wing extremism. Assault was the most common offence designation in the suspected offences committed by right-wing extremists. Other designations included petty assault, ethnic agitation and attempted aggravated assault. Helsinki accounted for two thirds of all suspected offences by right-wing extremists. The most common offence designations in suspected offences involving religiously motivated extremism were assault and illegal threat. The suspected offences recorded in the stabbing in Turku (two murders committed with terrorist intent, and eight attempted murders committed with terrorist intent) also belong to this category. Southwest Finland was the region with by far the largest number of suspected offences involving religiously motivated extremism. Assaults and illegal threats in connection with demonstrations in Helsinki accounted for most of the suspected offences involving violent left-wing extremism.

In accordance with the decision made by the Government in September 2016, the police put more focus on the combating of hate crimes during 2017. A national hate speech investigation team was established in the Helsinki Police Department and its tasks include the investigation of all suspected cases of ethnic agitation on the internet and breaches of the sanctity of religion. Making the investigations the responsibility of a single unit helped to make the work more effective, and especially the number of crime reports on ethnic agitation increased considerably from previous years. With more cases under investigation, case law will be created on how to draw the line between harmful but non-illegal and illegal hate speech.

Fewer people are travelling to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. Only a small number of individuals have returned from the area. Other conflict zones where regional branches of Daesh or other terrorist organisations are operating may become attractive destinations in the future.

A significant number of women from different parts of the world (including Finland) have travelled to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. In Finland, women account for more than 20% of all people leaving for the area. About 20 adult women and about 30 children from Finland have travelled to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq and about half of the children have been girls. Some of these children are already adults. The total number of children born in the conflict zones who have links with Finland is not known but according to rough estimates, the figure may be more than ten.

2 Situation overviews since 2013

Since 2013, the Ministry of the Interior has regularly published situation overviews on violent extremism. The overviews are drafted under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior, together with key experts. The decision to publish these overviews was taken in the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism¹ (measure 24). The overviews are either general reviews addressing all forms of violent extremism in Finland, thematic reviews focusing on a single topical theme or combinations of the two.

The goal of the situation overviews is to provide information on violent extremist movements and other ideological movements operating in Finland which, in the light of international experience, the nature of their activity or observations made by the public authorities, are potentially violent.

The purpose is to make it easier for the general public, professionals from various fields and organisations to identify and prevent violent extremism and radicalisation. The situation overviews are based on situation awareness, research data, information generated by key experts, experiences from abroad and other unclassified sources of information compiled by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, the National Bureau of Investigation and local police departments.

The previously published situation overviews are available on the following web page of the Ministry of the Interior: <http://intermin.fi/en/police/violent-radicalisation>

¹ Ministry of the Interior publications 15/2016

3 Violent radicalisation and extremism and related crimes – national definitions

There is no single internationally accepted definition for violent radicalisation and extremism. Despite this, the definitions used in different countries are close to each other. In Finland, violent radicalisation and extremism were defined in the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism, which was adopted in April 2016.

In Finland, violent extremism refers to using, threatening with, encouraging or justifying violence on ideological grounds. Violent radicalisation is a process through which individuals resort to violence or the threat of it, urge someone to commit acts of violence or justify it based on one's own view of the world or on ideological grounds. An ideology means a shared set of ideas based on interpretations of, for example, the world, religion, population groups, relations between people and states, human dignity, the sacred or non-sacred, and on beliefs guiding individual actions.

All ideologically motivated offences that are associated with using, threatening with or inciting to violence or other offences justified on ideological grounds are regarded as extremist crimes. Attempts and different forms of complicity are also taken into consideration (complicity, aiding and abetting, incitement, commission of an offence through an agent). In addition to offences against life or health, pursuant to chapter 21 of the Criminal Code, violent crime means all such offences whose essential elements entail the endangerment of life or health or a danger of it. Even though violent extremist movements and their members cause criminal damage to property, these offences were not included as material in this overview because of the above-mentioned national definition. For instance, criminal damage committed by a member of an extremist movement was, therefore, not selected as material for this overview, but criminal mischief was included in the material.

Furthermore, extremist crime also includes such above-mentioned violent offences which are not clearly and purely motivated by other causes than ideology and are committed by persons known to be members of violent extremist movements. Such other causes of violence may include violence associated with other crime, personal disputes or domestic and intimate partner violence. Hence, the spontaneous street violence of, for example, far-right skinheads is considered to be extremist crime. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, at the individual level it is plausible, and consistent with available research data, that a member of a violent extremist movement will more easily resort to violence than a non-member in a corresponding situation. Secondly, when it comes to safety in society, it should also be noted that the violence used by high-profile extremist movements, irrespective of the target or the motive at any given instance, is instrumental – the general threat of violence increases the movement's appearance of terror. This may degrade people's sense of security, at least locally. This being the case, all such violent crime associated with violent extremist movements as a phenomenon is considered to be violent extremism.

4 Violent extremism as a crime

4.1 Crimes related to violent extremism in 2017

Nearly 100 offence designations suspected of being connected with violent extremism were identified in the crime reporting system of the police in 2017. The crime reporting system does not, however, give a comprehensive picture of the number of offences because a case can be entered into the system as a single offence or each suspected offence can be recorded separately. More than half of the suspected offences involved right-wing extremism, about one third religiously motivated extremism and the rest were connected with radical left-wing extremism.

Assault was the most common offence designation in the suspected offences committed by right-wing extremists. Other designations included petty assault, ethnic agitation and attempted aggravated assault. Helsinki accounted for two thirds of all suspected offences by right-wing extremists. The rest of the suspected offences occurred in cities across Finland.

The most common offence designations in suspected offences involving religiously motivated extremism were assault and illegal threat. The suspected offences recorded in the stabbing in Turku (two murders committed with terrorist intent, and eight attempted murders committed with terrorist intent) also belong to this category. Southwest Finland was the region with by far the largest number of suspected offences involving religiously motivated extremism.

Assaults and illegal threats in connection with demonstrations in Helsinki accounted for most of the suspected offences involving violent left-wing extremism.

In June 2016, the police investigated a suspected preparation of a terrorist act in Helsinki. The police had become aware of facts that gave reason to suspect the preparation of a terrorist act. According to the information, the Temppeliaukio Church would have been the target of a possible act. The police took extensive measures in the area around the

Church to prepare for an external threat. In the criminal investigation carried out by the National Bureau of Investigation, it became clear that there was no cause for concern with regard to any concrete threat. The incident did not lead to any changes in the terrorist threat assessment.

5 Extremist crimes and hate crimes

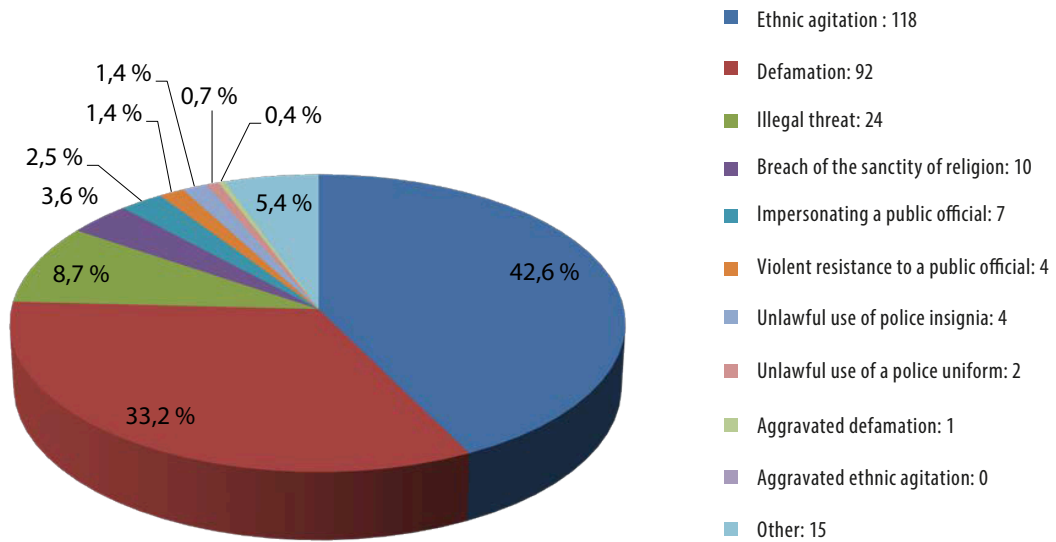
Hate crimes are motivated by the hate of the perpetrator towards one characteristic of the victim, but extremist offences are motivated more strongly by the perpetrator's ideology. The offence itself may be outwardly identical in both cases. The differences between hate crimes and extremist offences pertain to the planned nature of the crime, known connections between the perpetrator and violent extremist movements and other factors explaining the motive.

In accordance with the decision made by the Government in September 2016, the police put more focus on the combating of hate crimes during 2017. One of the measures was the establishment of a national hate speech investigation team in the Helsinki Police Department. Its tasks include the investigation of all suspected cases of ethnic agitation on the internet and breaches of the sanctity of religion. For this reason, there was a considerable increase in the number of crime reports, especially those concerning ethnic agitation. Even though ethnic agitation is considered a hate crime, it may be difficult to establish a connection between the act and violent extremism.

A total of 233 crime reports and 14 miscellaneous reports were recorded by the above-mentioned national unit in 2017.

The Police University College is preparing a comprehensive study of the hate crimes reported to the police in 2017. The study will be published in autumn 2018.

Offence designations



Kuva 1. Offences investigated by the national hate speech investigation team in 2017, by offence designation

6 Crimes related to religiously motivated violent extremism

An increase has been noted in cases related to radical Islamist terrorism that have exceeded the threshold of preliminary inquiry, criminal investigation and the bringing of charges. In August 2017, a mass stabbing attack on local people occurred in Turku. The perpetrator is accused of murder and attempted murder committed with terrorist intent. The incident did not change the threat assessment issued by the Finnish Security Intelligence Service in June 2017, under which the threat of terrorism in Finland is at level 2.

According to the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, there are a total of 370 counter-terrorism target individuals in Finland. The target individuals do not necessarily have any previous criminal record. Offences typically committed by these individuals include traffic and property offences and offences involving defamation and fraud. There have also been child abductions in connection with the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Only a small number of the target individuals have committed sexual or narcotics offences, unlike the persons identified by the Criminal Sanctions Agency linked to religiously motivated violent extremism.

On the basis of the risk assessments, potential perpetrators of terrorist crimes can be divided into two groups. The first group comprises individuals with a strong ideological commitment who consider violence and the use of violence justified. The second group comprises individuals who have a loose ideological commitment, who often have a criminal background and for whom the threshold of using violence has become lower. For these individuals, organisations such as Daesh (also known as ISIS or ISIL) provide a context and justification for violent behaviour.

Assaults and illegal threats carried out by Muslim men against Muslims who have converted to Christianity were a dominant feature in crime statistics on sectarian violence in 2017.

Religiously motivated assaults between Sunni and Shia asylum seekers as well as between radical Islamist asylum seekers and asylum seekers with moderate views continue to occur. For example, Muslim women refusing to dress or behave in accordance with the religious codes imposed by men have been assaulted or threatened.

Only some of the sectarian offences are reported to the authorities. When these cases are examined, it should also be noted that it is not always easy to establish the motives of the perpetrators. The acts may have been prompted by racist, religious or honour-related matters or they may involve conflicts between clans.

7 Violent extremism in Finland in 2017

7.1 Violent right-wing extremism

As a whole, violent right-wing extremist groups have been relatively quiet in Finland in recent years even though there have been periods of higher activity. The number of violent extremist offences reported to the police has remained fairly constant. Last year, a total of about 50 such offences were identified.

Racist skinhead groups still constitute the most typical form of right-wing extremism in Finland. The skinhead movement is divided into a large number of independent local associations and it does not have any central leadership. The movement also lacks a clear ideological direction. Violent extremism connected with the movement is mostly spontaneous street violence. About a dozen suspected violent offences by racist skinheads were identified in Finland in 2017.

The National Socialist Nordic Resistance Movement, previously known as the Finnish Resistance Movement, is the most visible right-wing extremist group in Finland. The organisation has already existed for ten years and it still strives to develop its activities on a long-term basis. In fact, in this respect the Nordic Resistance Movement is a fairly unique organisation because most of the political extremist groups in Finland only exist for a few years.

In 2017, the activities of the Nordic Resistance Movement were affected by the legal action taken by the National Police Board in March aimed at having the group dissolved. The Pirkanmaa District Court issued its decision on the case on 30 November 2017, ordering the dissolution of the Finnish chapter of the Nordic Resistance Movement and its local branches and associations. The Court justified its decision by stating that the activities of the Nordic Resistance Movement flagrantly violating the law and acceptable practices are extensive and an important part of its activities.

According to the Court decision, the objectives of the organisation are incompatible with democratic values. The Movement describes ethnic groups in a defamatory manner, spreads hate speech, uses violence and encourages its supporters to use violence and harassment against groups it claims to be its enemies. The Court was of the view that the organisation's activities are not protected by the freedom of association or the freedom of speech because they violate the fundamental and human rights of others. The Nordic Resistance Movement has appealed against the decision and therefore the decision is not yet final. In February 2018, a court of appeal rejected the claim of the National Police Board that the activities of the Nordic Resistance Movement should be banned on a temporary basis. As the legal process is still pending, the Nordic Resistance Movement can continue its activities.

The legal process gave the Nordic Resistance Movement a great deal of publicity and media attention in 2017. In its public activities, the organisation focused on opposing the legal action aimed at dissolving its activities. In October 2017, the Nordic Resistance Movement held a demonstration in Tampere in connection with the legal process, which attracted about 200 people. No suspected offences concerning the Nordic Resistance Movement were recorded at the event but a video shows how the organisation's members are behaving aggressively towards counter-demonstrators. In fact, the assumption is that a large police presence and anticipatory action prevented violent clashes.

On 6 December 2017 (the Finnish Independence Day), the Nordic Resistance Movement held its traditional march in Helsinki. This time, other ultra-nationalistic groups displaying their symbols were also able to take part in the event. At least three members of the Movement are suspected of having carried out assaults in two separate incidents in connection with the demonstration. Opponents of visible extreme right-wing activities and supporters of the extreme left-wing ideology were injured parties in the cases. Last year, it was also reported to the police that during an event held by the Nordic Resistance Movement, a member of the Movement was suspected of having carried out a petty assault against a member of an ethnic minority.

In early 2018, the Helsinki Court of Appeal increased the sentence given to a member of the Nordic Resistance Movement for aggravated assault at the Helsinki Railway Square in September 2016. According to the Helsinki Court of Appeal, the perpetrator had been motivated by racism because shortly before the assault, the injured party had expressed his opposition to the values of the Nordic Resistance Movement. The Helsinki Court of Appeal extended by three months the two-year prison sentence given by the district court.

The stabbing in Turku on 18 August 2017 did not cause extremist movements to become more active but it provoked strong views against immigrants and asylum seekers in the

forums used by right-wing extremists. The attack did not lead to any large-scale activities by anti-Islam right-wing extremists. These groups remained fairly unorganised in 2017, focusing on communications in social media.

The consequences of the split in Finnish society due to the asylum situation in 2015 were still visible last year. The demonstration in the Helsinki city centre organised by the ultra-nationalistic Suomi Ensín (Finland first) association, which continued for several months, was one sign of this. The association launched a counter-demonstration against asylum seekers in February 2017 after asylum seekers unhappy with Finland's migration policy had started gathering at the Kiasma Square in the Helsinki city centre. Later in the same month, the police moved both demonstrations to the Helsinki Railway Square where the activities continued until the end of June when the police ordered the demonstrators to leave the area. During a continuous presence lasting for several months, individuals taking part in the anti-immigration demonstration repeatedly disturbed public order. They were suspected of having committed about 30 offences involving violent extremism. Most of these were different types of assaults.

7.2 Violent left-wing extremism

Extreme left-wing radicalism, which in this context mainly means anarchism and anti-fascism, rarely involves clearly identifiable groupings. Extensive activities are often carried out with the help of loose ad hoc networks on a project basis.

Extreme left-wing radicalism was relatively rare in 2017. About a dozen suspected offences involving violent extremism were recorded during the year. The groups have shifted their emphasis to radical anti-fascism in which provoking right-wing extremists and disrupting their activities is the main form of activity. For example, about ten suspected acts of violence targeting participants of the above-mentioned anti-immigration demonstration at the Helsinki Railway Square were recorded and according to the crime reports, it is likely that supporters of radical anti-fascism were responsible for at least some of these offences.

The Nordic Resistance Movement remains the main adversary of the radical anti-fascists. The demonstration against the event held by the Nordic Resistance Movement in Tampere attracted hundreds of opponents of the organisation and neo-Nazism. Most of the counter-demonstrators were peaceful but radical anti-fascists and anarchists also took part in the event. Some of the counter-demonstrators tried to actively disrupt the event of the Nordic Resistance Movement by, for example, throwing fireworks at the demonstrators and the police. The disruptive activities of the left-wing extremists are investigated as

violent rioting. Even though several individuals are suspected of having participated in the violence, only one offence designation related to violent extremism was recorded at the event.

Shortly before the Independence Day on 6 December 2017, three cars were destroyed in an arson in Vantaa. The cars belonged to the owner of a local restaurant in whose premises ultra-nationalist groups were planning to celebrate Finnish independence. Soon after the attack, anonymous anti-fascists announced that they were responsible for the criminal damage. Even though the offence designation 'criminal damage' is not directly connected with violent extremism, the incident is an example of provocations against right-wing extremists that do not involve direct disruptions of public events. Igniting a motor vehicle may lead to deaths or injuries even if the act was only intended to cause material damage.

Two suspected offences involving violent extremism were recorded in the Independence Day demonstrations against right-wing extremists and ultra-nationalists. However, a total of about ten demonstrators were apprehended to prevent offences and disturbance. These individuals were behaving in a threatening manner and throwing various items with the intent of disrupting the event or had gas sprays in their possession.

7.3 Radical alternative movements

With regard to radical alternative activities, the year 2017 was peaceful. No offences involving violent extremism were reported to the police. The radical anti-nuclear movement, which was still active in early 2016, has been quiet lately. There were also few signs of any radical environmental activities during 2017.

The only major event involving radical animal rights activists in 2017 was the arson in November in which four lorries were destroyed. An anonymous cell defending animal rights took responsibility for the act. The act is investigated as aggravated criminal damage, which is not an offence designation connected with violent extremism.

7.4 Religiously motivated violent extremism

Religiously motivated violent extremism is assessed differently in different countries. At the moment, religiously motivated violent extremism in Europe is mostly connected with radical Islamism, which operates in an ideological framework permitting the use of violence.

Events in conflict zones, such as Israel and the Palestinian territories, and the armed conflict in Syria, which has continued for years and has caused a great loss of civilian life, are often given as factors radicalising individuals and groups and prompting them to embrace religiously motivated extremism. Experiences of racism, discrimination and injustice as well as the feeling of exclusion and identity crises also provide a basis for radicalisation.

The main societal problem concerning religiously motivated violent extremism and radical Islamist ideology is intolerance towards Western lifestyle and the opposition to Western democracy and the rule of law. Social exclusion may be one reason behind radicalisation but the followers of this ideology are also characterised by intentional non-integration and isolation from the mainstream society. This manifests itself as non-participation in political and civil activities and working life, and prevention of women and children from going to school and using the opportunities offered by society and restrictions to their marital rights. As the intolerance and restrictions are justified with religion, they may also be reflected more widely in Muslim communities and weaken their integration into the surrounding society. All this may have a particularly negative impact on the status of women and young people.

Increasing levels of home-grown radicalisation, a higher number of counter-terrorism target individuals and the impacts of the conflict in Syria and Iraq are some of the reasons why the Finnish Security Intelligence Service has raised the level of terrorist threat in Finland. Finnish-based networks supporting terrorism are trying to radicalise their supporters and recruit new followers. If these support networks grow and become stronger, they may also resort to action or attempt to carry out terrorist attacks in Finland or elsewhere. According to the assessment of the Finnish Security Intelligence Service, the support given to activities abroad is likely to increase. In Finland, there are also entities representing various states and religions, as well as international events, which face a bigger threat than normally. The threat of terrorist attacks against tourist sites and Western interests has increased and Finns may also become victims of attacks targeted against Westerners.

The Finnish Security Intelligence Service has identified more than 80 individuals who have travelled to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq but the actual figure is higher.

Most of these individuals travelled to the area between 2012 and 2016 after which the region has become less attractive or people have left for the area without the authorities noticing it. The number of individuals leaving for the area has decreased because Daesh has been weakened and new travel restrictions have been introduced. About 20 people have returned to Finland from the conflict zones and between 15 and 25 individuals may have died there. The remainder will fight there until the end or try to leave the area. Other conflict zones where regional groups of Daesh or other effective terrorist organisations are operating may become attractive destinations in the future.

The individuals who have travelled to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq are a heterogeneous group. Some of them are terrorist foreign fighters who have received combat training and experience and are strongly committed to terrorism and its ideology. Some of them may have lost their faith in Daesh but not in the ideology, while others have lost their faith in both. It is difficult to determine the actual situation of these individuals. Some of them may be seriously traumatised and as a result have symptoms manifesting themselves as violence. In many cases, women have also actively supported terrorist activities. There have been violent propaganda and indoctrination targeting children, and in accordance with this teaching, children have been instilled with ideologies and ideas encouraging violence. Boys may have received combat training from the age of nine, while girls have been considered ready for marriage at this age.

Daesh has lost most of its resources and operational basis in Syria and Iraq. It now only controls a fraction of the land areas it occupied in the past and it has also lost most of its combatants. The remainder will stay in the area and fight until the end, hide among the local population or leave the zone, returning to their home countries, or move to third countries or other conflict zones. At the moment, only a small number of fighters are returning to their home countries in Europe, and it is particularly difficult for men to leave the area. A small number of women and children have returned to European countries. Some of these individuals may move to countries outside Europe or to European states that are not their home countries.

The Finnish Security Intelligence Service is monitoring whether fighters who had travelled to the conflict zones from Finland or other countries are trying to return to Finland or use Finland as a transit country. The Finnish Security Intelligence Service is also monitoring whether people aspiring to become radical Islamist fighters will now head for conflict zones outside Syria and Iraq. On 29 March 2017, the ministerial working group on internal security and administration of justice adopted an operating model for dealing with individuals returning from the conflict zone.

Link: http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79612/Palaaajat%20_enkku.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Daesh is changing its strategy as a result of the military defeat. In the medium term, it may be changing into a more decentralised network in the same manner as al-Qaida. In future, its activities may be based on independent cells and networks. Unlike previous movements of this type, Daesh can continue its existence in the digital world. Most of its propaganda organisation has been destroyed but propaganda is still disseminated by Daesh followers and old material is also used in the process. Daesh encourages its followers to carry out attacks in their home countries and several such attacks took place during 2017. The authorities have also managed to prevent a large number of attacks. In the short run, Europe is likely to experience attacks carried out by followers of Daesh but better-organised attacks are also possible. Radicalised individuals living in their home countries are the main threat, and they may act alone, encouraged by instigators or as cell members. Individuals returning from the conflict zones may act as instigators or role models or they may take part in the preparations of the attacks or carry out them.

Turkey has launched a new military operation in the western Kurdish areas of northern Syria. Turkey justifies the operation with the threat posed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is classified as a terrorist organisation. The widening of the anti-Kurdish operation has also given rise to demonstrations against the Turkish policies and expressions of Kurdish nationalism in many countries (including Finland), which may generate street violence.

8 Women and children in radical Islamist terrorist organisations

Violent radicalisation of women or their participation in the activities of radical Islamist terrorist organisations is not a new phenomenon. These activities often involve fundraising, recruitment, facilitating of travel and a broad range of different logistical and courier activities. Suicide attacks carried out by women are the extreme form of this phenomenon even though not all religious scholars consider them justified.

Daesh is the first radical Islamist terrorist organisation that managed to attract a large number of women from different parts of the world to the areas under its control. The role of women is centred around housekeeping and the raising of children but many women are also increasingly interested in working in other tasks, such as carework, production of propaganda or armed activities.

In the strategy of Daesh, women play a key role in the efforts to ensure the continuity of the violent radical Islamist ideology and activities. Women are expected to produce and raise the offspring who will continue their parents' struggle against the enemy. In its propaganda, Daesh encourages women to travel to the 'caliphate' where giving birth is, in its own words, a particular blessing. Children must be indoctrinated with the ideology and teachings of Daesh from the early age and they must learn to hate infidels. All children must learn Arabic so that they can mix with others and become members of the community².

In a logical continuum to this ideology, an ascetic lifestyle is instilled into the children and they are taught to strive for a life after death. From the early age, they must get accustomed to seeing weapons, explosives and other military equipment at their homes. Children are taught to love armed struggle (Daesh refers to this as jihad) by showing them violent mujahidin videos and by encouraging them to actively follow Daesh propaganda available in printed form and as recordings.

2 Rumiya 9, pp. 18-21: The Woman Is a Shepherd in Her Husband's Home and Responsible for Her Flock.

In its schools, Daesh provides boys with physical education and trains them to use weapons (child soldiers) while girls are taught housekeeping skills so that they are ready for a marriage at an early age³. If the role of the mother is to raise children, act as an educator and to engage in carework, armed struggle and other work for Daesh are the men's domain. The honour of the family depends on how its members behave and how faithfully they observe the rules of Daesh⁴.

Women have become increasingly interested in armed activities. In Europe, too, there have been a small number of violent acts and attempted attacks in recent years motivated by radical Islamist thinking and carried out by women or women cells. However, al-Qaida and Daesh do not have identical views on how actively women should be involved in the armed struggle, as al-Qaida emphasises a more traditional role for women.

In October 2017, in an article in the Arabic-language al-Naba magazine, women were given the permission to take part in armed jihad. Al-Naba is a weekly published with the approval of Daesh central administration. The armed jihad probably means the opportunity to defend one's home with arms. At some point, Daesh also had an armed women's group (al-Khansaa), which had women from Western countries as its members. The battalion probably acted as the religious police tasked with ensuring that women adhere to Daesh's moral code. Women from different cultural and educational backgrounds have joined Daesh, and this also has an impact on the roles in which the women may have acted.

8.1 Women who have travelled to the 'caliphate' from Finland

The Finnish Security Intelligence Service was one of the first such organisations in the EU to draw attention to the phenomenon of women travelling to Daesh-controlled areas in Syria and Iraq. In Finland, women account for more than 20% of all individuals leaving for the area. About 20 adult women and about 30 children have travelled to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, and about half of the children have been girls. Some of these children are already adults. The total number of children born in the conflict zones who have connections to Finland is not known but according to rough estimates, the figure may be more than ten.

Women who have travelled to Syria and Iraq have networked with each other before their departure. This means that in the case of women, too, one can talk of a network and peer-

3 General Intelligence and Security Service: The Children of ISIS. The Indoctrination of minors in ISIS-held territory.

4 Rumiya 9, pp. 18-21: The Woman Is a Shepherd in Her Husband's Home and Responsible for Her Flock.

to-peer recruiting. Some of the women travelling to the area have been married and they have taken their families with them. Unmarried or divorced women have probably got married and given birth to children in the conflict zones.

Compared with men, there have been more Finnish citizens and converts among the women travelling to Syria and Iraq from Finland. There are both young and middle-aged individuals among the women but most of them have been below the age of 30 at their departure. With few exceptions, none of the women have a criminal background. Women who have travelled to the conflict zones from Finland have produced propaganda for women for Dabiq and Rumiya, the official magazines of Daesh. One of the women has made threats against the Finnish Shia community and posed with weapons in social media.

Travelling to the conflict zones with the aim of joining a terrorist organisation is an indicator of violent radicalisation. In other words, the individual accepts religiously motivated violence in certain situations even if they are not planning to carry out violent attacks. Women have stayed in the conflict zones for long periods, which means that they have been exposed to a violent ideology over a period of several years and have been able to establish an extensive international network⁵.

Each of the women leaving for the conflict zones has her own reasons for travelling there even though it seems that the radicalisation and the decision to go have often taken place in a radicalised group and that some of the women have acted as facilitators. For example, according to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the women seem to have been fascinated by an idealised life in a community of like-minded individuals and a marriage with a holy warrior⁶. According to the Netherlands General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), the establishment of the 'caliphate' and the propaganda of the terrorist organisations have been a major motivation for those deciding to leave for conflict zones⁷.

The Finnish Security Intelligence Service anticipates that at least some of the women will try to return to Finland and bring their children with them. Some may also attempt to move to other countries. Radicalisation of women and raising children in accordance with the radical Islamist ideology justifying violence are not confined to the conflict zones as the problem also exists in Finland. The Finnish Security Intelligence Service is also monitoring whether child soldiers recruited by terrorist organisations in the conflict zones or wives of terrorist leaders and their children are also trying to enter Finland as asylum seekers.

5 General Intelligence and Security Service: Jihadist women, a threat not to be underestimated, p. 8.

6 Canadian Security Intelligence Service (2016): Al-Qaida, ISIL and Their Offspring. Understanding the Reach and Expansion of Violent Islamic Extremism, p. 12.

7 General Intelligence and Security Service: Jihadist women, a threat not to be underestimated, p. 5.

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