



Ministry of the Interior  
Finland

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# National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022–2025

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# National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022–2025

Ministry of the Interior Helsinki 2022

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## National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022–2025

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### Abstract

The National Counter-Terrorism Strategy guides Finland's counter-terrorism activities both nationally and internationally. Finland's counter-terrorism strategic objectives and actions are laid down in the Strategy.

With its National Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Finland responds to the demands presented to counter-terrorism activities by a changing operating environment and the threat of terrorism that has constantly been on the rise. The Strategy supports sustained and broad cooperation among all those involved in counter-terrorism. As part of its international security and development cooperation, Finland combats terrorism and the violent radicalisation and extremism that lead to it. This safeguards Finland's national interests and fosters the safety and security of our country and its population.

The aim in preventing terrorism is to address the underlying causes of terrorism. Terrorist offences are prevented and detected as early as possible and criminal liability is enforced. Society's capacity and recovery in the aftermath of a possible terrorist offence are strengthened through preparedness. Communications by the authorities support counter-terrorism by identifying narratives that encourage terrorism and addressing these.

The Strategy underscores the importance of respect for the rule of law as well as for fundamental and human rights also in counter-terrorism.

The Ministry of the Interior monitors achievement of the Strategy's objectives and will prepare an interim report in 2024.

<b>Keywords</b>	terrorism, public order, security, national security, internal security, strategies, government resolutions
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## Kansallinen terrorismintorjunnan strategia 2022–2025

**Sisäministeriön julkaisuja 2022:38****Teema**

Sisäinen turvallisuus

**Julkaisija**

Sisäministeriö

**Yhteisötekijä**

Sisäministeriö

**Kieli**

englanti

**Sivumäärä**

30

**Tiivistelmä**

Kansallinen terrorismintorjunnan strategia ohjaa Suomen toimintaa kansallisesti ja kansainvälisesti terrorismintorjunnassa. Strategiassa vahvistetaan terrorismintorjunnan strategiset tavoitteet ja toimenpiteet.

Kansallisella strategialla vastataan vaatimuksiin, joita muuttuva toimintaympäristö ja jatkuvasti kasvanut terrorismin uhka asettavat terrorismintorjunnalle. Strategialla tuetaan pitkäjänteistä ja laajaa yhteistyötä kaikkien terrorismintorjuntaan osallistuvien välillä. Terrorismin ja siihen johtavan väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ja ekstremismin torjunta osana kansainvälistä turvallisuus- ja kehitysyhteistyötä turvaa Suomen kansallisia etuja sekä edistää Suomen ja suomalaisten turvallisuutta.

Terrorismin ennalta estämisen tavoitteena on puuttua terrorismin taustasyihin. Terrorismitarkoituksia ennalta estetään ja paljastetaan mahdollisimman varhaisessa vaiheessa sekä toteutetaan rikosvastuu. Yhteiskunnan toimintakykyä ja palautumista normaalitilaan mahdollisen terrorismitarkoituksen seurauksista vahvistetaan varautumisella. Viranomaisviestintä tukee terrorismintorjuntaa tunnistamalla terrorismiin kannustavia narratiiveja ja puuttamalla niihin.

Strategia korostaa oikeusvaltioperiaatteen sekä perus- ja ihmisoikeuksien kunnioittamista myös terrorismintorjunnassa.

Sisäministeriö seuraa strategian toteutumista ja laatii väliraportin vuonna 2024.

**Asiasanat**

terrorismi, yleinen järjestys, turvallisuus, kansallinen turvallisuus, sisäinen turvallisuus, strategiat, valtioneuvoston periaatepäätökset

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## Nationell strategi för bekämpning av terrorism 2022–2025

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### Referat

Den nationella strategin för bekämpning av terrorism styr Finlands verksamhet nationellt och internationellt vid terrorismbekämpningen. I strategin fastställs de strategiska målen och åtgärderna för terrorismbekämpningen.

Genom den nationella strategin bemöts de krav som den föränderliga omvärlden och det kontinuerligt ökade hotet om terrorism ställer på terrorismbekämpningen. Genom strategin stöds långsiktigt och omfattande samarbete mellan alla som deltar i terrorismbekämpningen. Bekämpningen av terrorism och av våldsbejakande radikaliserings och extremism som leder till terrorism tryggar som en del av det internationella säkerhets- och utvecklingsarbetet Finlands nationella intressen samt främjar Finlands och finländarnas säkerhet.

Målet för förebyggandet av terrorism är att ingripa i orsakerna till terrorism. Terroristbrott förebyggs och avslöjas i ett så tidigt skede som möjligt och det straffrättsliga ansvaret realiseras. Samhällets funktionsförmåga och återgång till normaltillstånd efter ett eventuellt terroristbrott stärks genom beredskap. Myndighetskommunikationen stödjer kampen mot terrorism genom att identifiera narrativer som uppmuntrar till terrorism och ingripa i dem.

Strategin betonar respekt för rättsstatsprincipen samt de grundläggande fri- och rättigheterna och de mänskliga rättigheterna även vid terrorismbekämpningen.

Inrikesministeriet följer genomförandet av den nationella strategin för bekämpning av terrorism och kommer att utarbeta en halvtidsrapport 2024.

**Nyckelord** terrorism, allmän ordning, säkerhet, nationell säkerhet, inre säkerhet, strategier, statsrådets principbeslut

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## FOREWORD/INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is an evolving international phenomenon. Because of its cross-border nature and aim of destabilising legitimately constituted governments, terrorism poses a threat to Finnish society and the interests of Finland. As a nation governed by the rule of law and a member of the international community, Finland is committed to the many forms of action taken to combat terrorism. Ensuring respect for the fundamental and human rights of the individual and strengthening democracy, as well as cooperation between security authorities, are but some examples of the many dimensions of counter-terrorism.

The National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022–2025 is the fourth government-level document of its kind. The Strategy aims to reinforce existing cooperation models and to support the creation of new approaches. In a landscape of tighter public finances, the activities of all of those involved in counter-terrorism must be consistent, systematic and sustained in order to be successful.

Like its predecessors, this current Strategy recognises the close link between counter-terrorism and other strategic guidance documents, key among which are the Internal Security Strategy, the Government Report on Internal Security, the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy, the Government Defence Report, the Security Strategy for Society and the Finnish Cyber Security Strategy 2019. The strategic counter-terrorism policies and actions have been aligned with the said strategies and the action plans to which they have provided the foundation.

Counter-terrorism at the international level is guided by the key counter-terrorism Resolutions of the UN Security Council, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/ RES/60/288) and the European Commission's Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU (COM(2020) 795 final) This new Strategy seeks to respond to the demands of these international guidance documents.

One example of the concrete impact of international guidance documents is the evaluation of Finland's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2018–2021 conducted by the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) in 2019. The evaluation report commends the Strategy for its balanced and multidisciplinary approach, its emphasis on cooperation and its respect for the rule of law. This new



Strategy continues to emphasise the importance of these aims and to reinforce the approaches that ensure their realisation.

Responsibility for updating the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy and monitoring the achievement of its aims resides with the Ministry of the Interior.

**Krista Mikkonen**  
Minister of the Interior

# 1 Current state

## 1.1 Global situation awareness on terrorism

The threat of radical Islamist terrorism remains high the world over while in the West, extreme right-wing terrorism poses a higher threat than before. The highest risk of a terror attack in the West comes from individual actors or small groups who subscribe to an extreme right-wing or radical Islamist ideology. Most commonly, terror attacks are simply executed with tools easily accessible, such as edged weapons and vehicles, yet firearms and explosives are also constantly in use especially in the various conflict areas of the world. In the delivery of explosives and weapons, ground vehicles have been joined by unmanned aerial vehicles and various kinds of improvised systems. Terrorist actors are embracing advances in technology and terrorist groups are also being formed virtually without their members necessarily ever meeting in the real world.

Radical Islamist terrorist organisations have been making use of the online environment in 2018–2021. The emphasis in their online presence is on propaganda dissemination, recruitment and networking. Moreover, terrorist organisations such as ISIS, for example, have encouraged their supporters to carry out various kinds of online operations. Since 2016, online operations linked to ISIS or its supporters have involved hacking into email systems, releasing stolen personal data and implementing denial of service attacks across the world. Much of the radical Islamist terrorist content online is disseminated by supporters of various terrorist organisations.

In the West, the threat of extreme right-wing terrorism has manifested in recent years in the form of attacks, both thwarted and successful. In the international arena, both violent right-wing extremists and their loosely organised groups of supporters have actively leveraged the internet for purposes of propaganda dissemination, recruiting and networking. Successful right-wing terror attacks have a significant inspirational impact. Idolisation of such attacks and their perpetrators is a part of the international far-right subculture present on various online platforms. Open exhortation to political violence is an element of these far-right activities. The Christchurch mosque shootings in New Zealand, for example, have reaped much admiration among the violent far right and they have influenced subsequent far-right terror attacks in both Europe and the United States. In recent years, the perpetrators of far-right terror attacks have typically acted outside any official or organised movements or groups.

The greatest threat of international radical Islamist terrorism currently comes from ISIS and Al-Qaida. The phenomenon of foreign fighters has increased and amplified the international connections of radical Islamist actors. The Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS, in the operations of which Finland is an active participant, has diminished the capabilities of ISIS from their peak, yet ISIS remains active in conflict areas in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The West withdrawing from Afghanistan and ceding control of the country to the Taliban is a propaganda victory for the radical Islamist movements. The development is particularly beneficial to Al-Qaida, which has a long-standing presence in the area. Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), a regional offshoot of ISIS, also stands to gain from the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan. The capacity of ISIS and Al-Qaida to direct terrorist activity in the West has diminished in 2018–2021. Nonetheless, both continue to urge their supporters to take action also in the West.

The level of threat from other terrorist actors is low in the West. Extremist left-wing and anarchist terror attacks mainly target business and government and for the most part causes material damage. A number of armed actors all across the globe have found supporters in the West. The Syrian conflict area, for example, has attracted volunteers who have also joined armed organisations of Kurdish background and engaged in combat in the area. Separatist terrorism is highly localised by nature and poses no widespread threat in the West.

Activities in support of international terrorism, such as fundraising, recruiting and dissemination of propaganda, take place in Europe. Travel to conflict areas and the promotion of such travel have been in decline in recent years. The years 2018–2021 have seen both people and their family members who have travelled to conflict areas return to the West. Such people have also been remanded and convicted in many European countries for terrorist offences.

The aims of terrorist groups and organised crime groups differ considerably and there is seldom any established cooperation between the two. However, from time to time there may be overlap between them, for example in illegal arms trade. Individuals with backgrounds in terrorism and organised crime may connect in prisons, for example.

The specific impacts of the Covid pandemic and the ensuing economic and social crisis on terrorism are difficult to assess. The pandemic has brought about little change in the modus operandi of terrorism. Restrictions on movement and travel within and between states have hampered also the mobility and in-person meetings of terrorists. Consequently, communication with terrorist intent has switched over to the internet and online networks. The pandemic may be presumed to have increased social polarisation and brought about sharper divides in attitudes. Various groups have sought to harness the pandemic in support of their existing, violent narratives. At the level of individual, this may

have provided additional incentive to condone or take part in terrorist activity and may this way have contributed to the breeding grounds for terrorism. The counter-terrorism capabilities of the authorities have been maintained in spite of the pandemic.

## 1.2 Assessment of future developments in terrorism 2022–2025

In 2022–2025, the greatest risk of a terror attack in Europe is likely to originate in individual actors or small groups subscribing to a far-right extremist or radical Islamist ideology. Simple attacks using easily accessible tools are the most likely form of attack in Europe. The use of firearms and explosives is also possible. Events of international significance and the media attention given to these along with possible rising tensions in society may serve to trigger a terror attack.

In the West, the threat of extreme right-wing terrorism is likely settling to an established level. It is unlikely that any single, centrally led actor will arise in the far-right terrorist environment and instead, activities will continue to be based on online networking and loosely organised groups. It is possible that the number of terrorist plots linked to the far right will continue to rise in the West, as it has done in recent years. An uptick in far-right activity may increase the threat of violent reactions among other extremist movements.

The capability of globally active radical Islamist terrorist organisations to direct attacks in Europe is likely to remain low. The radical Islamist ideology will retain its attractiveness. While ISIS and Al-Qaida are likely to remain the most significant international radical Islamist terrorist organisations, it is also possible that new collective groups will emerge. At the same time, loose networks unconnected to these organisations may possibly rise in significance in the West. ISIS and Al-Qaida continue to focus their activities on conflict areas, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. While travellers to conflict areas may return to their countries of origin, it is likely that some will also remain there.

The events in Afghanistan provide radical Islamist actors with inspiration in many ways. The country is likely to remain a favourable operating environment for terrorist actors. The deteriorating security situation will likely give rise to refugeeism. Some refugees may head for Europe, which may result in societal tensions there. However, most refugees from Afghanistan will remain in the country's neighbouring areas, in Pakistan and Iran.

It is likely that terrorist actors will continue to embrace advances in technology and will quickly and flexibly adopt new applications for communication and money transfers, for

example. At the same time, measures to counter extremist terrorist actors on various social media platforms, for example, will likely be intensified.

Phenomena such as the Covid pandemic may have powerful regional effects on the situation awareness on terrorism. In the West, protests against Covid restrictions, for example, have provided an alternative outlet for radicalism and also a breeding ground for conspiracy theories and associated movements.

### **1.3 Threat of terrorism against Finland and its interests**

The Finnish Security and Intelligence Service estimates the threat of terrorism in Finland to stand at level 2, 'Elevated', on the four-tier scale. While the threat level has remained unchanged since 2017, based on recent developments the threat of far-right terrorism now gives rise to greater concern.

The highest risk of terror attacks arises from individual actors or small groups subscribing to a far-right extremist or radical Islamist ideology. The most likely attacks are simple ones executed with tools easily accessible, such as edged weapons and vehicles, yet the use of firearms and explosives is also possible. The risk of attacks organised from abroad by terrorist organisations active in conflict areas is low in Finland.

Activities in support of terrorism have a considerable presence in Finland. At the time of publication of this Strategy, counter-terrorism targets numbered around 390 individuals, many of whom had received training in arms, taken part in armed conflict or expressed their desire to do so. The list of target individuals is dynamic, meaning that individuals are constantly being added to and removed from it.

### **1.4 International and EU counter-terrorism**

Counter-terrorism activities call for extensive international and EU-wide cooperation. Finland is actively involved in counter-terrorism cooperation and prevention of the violent radicalisation that leads to terrorism. The major cooperation forums for Finland are the UN, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, NATO, the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS, Europol, Interpol, Eurojust and other international and European partners, including counter-terrorism cooperation among the security and intelligence services. Arms control regimes, arrangements and international cooperation towards the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction play an important role in the fight against terrorism.

The European Union provides Finland with an important channel of influence as well as a security community whose external relations efforts to combat terrorism and internal security measures within the Member States enhance our ability to combat and prevent terrorism. As an active member of the international community, Finland is capable of safeguarding its national interests also by means of foreign and security policy and contributing to international security cooperation. Finland is committed to the premise, approved by the UN and the EU, that international and national counter-terrorism measures must be implemented in compliance with obligations under international law, including international human rights obligations, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.

Through multilateral cooperation, Finland seeks to reduce the capacities of terrorist groups in the areas where they are active and to work together with others to address the root causes of terrorism, especially in areas where threats against Finland arise.

Finland is a State Party to nearly all key international conventions on terrorism. Counter-terrorism measures such as sanctions may furthermore be imposed by UN Security Council Resolutions. The Security Council sanctions against ISIS and Al-Qaida have been implemented also in respect of Finland by means of EU instruments. These sanctions are complemented by the EU's own sanctions against ISIS and Al-Qaida as well as the other sanctions imposed by the EU to combat terrorism. The sanctions under EU instruments are in full force in Finland. In the talks on its accession to NATO in July 2022, Finland affirmed that as a member, Finland will commit fully to the counterterrorism documents and policies of NATO, including the comprehensive action plan updated in 2021 that defines and determines NATO's role in the international community's fight against terrorism.

Finland's international and EU policy objectives support a holistic approach that also takes into account building up the target country's own rule-of-law services and security structures with respect for human rights. Development cooperation taking place in conflict areas and fragile states allows Finland, in concert with other donor countries and international actors, to strengthen the capacity of societies and their abilities to address the underlying causes of terrorism. Crisis management seeks to stabilise conflict situations and to enhance and reinforce the activities of the judicial and security authorities of the country concerned, which in turn serves to ameliorate the circumstances conducive to terrorist activity.

Finland is committed to international cooperation to fight impunity and to bring terrorists to justice. Finland continues to provide strong support to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Counter-terrorism is an integral part of the African Union's peace and security operations supported by Finland and the whole of the EU. Preventing terrorism through holistic cooperation and international and EU crisis management fosters the security of Finland and its population as well. In addition, Finland's peace mediation and actions to promote dialogue between cultures and faiths support the goals of social stability and security.

The Member States themselves are responsible for national security. EU cooperation is a key approach in several sectors relevant to national security. Intelligence-sharing among Member States takes place outside the confines of EU structures. Finland is involved in increasingly close international cooperation among intelligence and security services, its key partners being the Nordic and European security and intelligence services. Finland works together with the other EU Member States to prevent the abuse of entry permits, including entry into the Schengen Area for terrorist purposes.

Development at the European level improves the ability of the Finnish Border Guard to fight terrorism. The advances in EU information systems relating to border crossings and in particular the associated biometric identification prevents the use of false identities and improves the reliable identification of persons. Information systems central to the effectiveness of border controls are the Entry/Exit System (EES), the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), and the Visa Information System (VIS) which is now undergoing reform. In addition, the EU is conducting negotiations on the reform of the Eurodac system in which asylum seekers and irregular border crossers are registered.

Interoperability developments in information systems will ensure that a person retains the same identity in the different systems and that third-country nationals can be reliably identified. A further element in the EU information systems is the reform of the Schengen Information System (SIS) to allow for example alerts concerning enemy combatants to be entered in the system. All of these systems and their data are available to border authorities at the time of border crossing. The capabilities of the border authorities are further enhanced by developments in the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), in which a standing corps, rising stepwise to 10,000-strong by 2027, will support border control and return tasks. In addition, the Member States' border control will be supported through both the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) and Frontex.

## 1.5 Counter-terrorism in Finland

Counter-terrorism in Finland is based on cooperation and partnership among all authorities and societal actors. The effectiveness of counter-terrorism as a whole is enhanced by the parties' understanding of the various actors' resources and scope of

action and the related cooperation, competences based on law and a clear division of responsibilities. Information required to combat terrorism is generated not only by public authorities but also by parties responsible for society's vital functions and sites, by the municipalities and by civil society.

Primary responsibility for counter-terrorism rests with the Police, whose counter-terrorism capabilities comprise the intelligence capabilities of the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, the prevention and operational response capabilities of local police, the capabilities of the National Bureau of Investigation to gather information and investigate offences committed with terrorist intent, and cooperation among the authorities. The Finnish Border Guard contributes to counter-terrorism in the context of maintaining border security and by providing specialised personnel and materiel to support the Police as necessary. The Finnish Defence Forces and Customs also support counter-terrorism in their respective fields.

Outside the security authorities, the rescue services maintain and build on their preparedness in managing the aftermath of terror attacks. The role of the Finnish Immigration Service is one of prevention by means of making decisions on entry into and stay in Finland as well as permits and citizenship, verifying identity and maintaining the system of reception centres. The Criminal Sanctions Agency supports measures to combat violent radicalisation and terrorism by preventing recidivism and re-integrating convicts into society.

The focus in counter-terrorism is on prevention, which refers to addressing underlying causes, motivations and other factors that may lead to violent radicalisation and ultimately even enlistment in terrorist groups. A key element in the prevention of terrorism is for policies and strategies to address polarisation and inequality in society. Polarisation and social exclusion increase a sense of alienation, which in turn may breed violent radicalisation and terrorism.

For the security authorities, prevention within the meaning of this Strategy means activities by the authorities to detect, prevent and investigate, as early as possible, terrorist offences as defined in the Criminal Code of Finland. Every effort will be made to address terrorist offences, the escalation of phenomena linked to terrorism and terrorist activities taking place in Finland, whether these concern Finland or another state, by means of comprehensive intelligence-gathering, analysis of data and observations, investigative measures, and national and international cooperation. Efficient operations require sustained improvements in the management and situation awareness systems between authorities.



Counter-terrorism is supported by the resources and expertise allocated to maintaining border security. Border controls at airports, ports and land border crossing points play a key role in the detection and monitoring of counter-terrorism target individuals. With regard to customs safety and security, the potential for terrorist action may be diminished by means of addressing crime related to the cross-border flow of goods and cash.

Terrorist financing is combated by investigating cases of terrorist financing, detecting networks relating to counter-terrorism target individuals, and identifying ways in which terrorist financing functions. The Government adopted on 29 April 2021 a resolution concerning Finland's national risk assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing 2021 and an action plan 2021–2023. The risk assessment describes the threats, vulnerabilities and risks arising from money laundering and terrorist financing which the measures in accordance with the strategic priorities of the action plan seek to mitigate. One of the most important aims is to actively prevent asset transfers for terrorist financing and to protect the financial system.

The criminal investigation of terrorist offences enables enforcement of criminal liability by decisions of the prosecution service and courts.

Preparedness for terrorism and incident management takes into account the victims of terror attacks and ensures that their needs for information, support and assistance are met. The proposals of the working group of the Ministry of Justice tasked with improving terrorism victims' access to information and support will help enhance recovery and aftercare in terrorist incidents. Systematic and adequate communications so as to reach all victims plays a key role along with effective information-sharing and coordination of duties between the authorities. Alongside the authorities, also the third sector will be taken into account in preparedness and incident management. In the interests of systematic preparedness, Victim Support Services Finland will create a system that allows services to be launched on a rapid timetable outside regular service hours.

Preparedness complements the proactive nature of counter-terrorism. It provides the framework for the identification and management of terrorist incidents and the recovery of normal conditions in society as quickly as possible. The effectiveness of the preparedness and practical capabilities of the authorities depends not only on human resources but also on training, materiel performance and up-to-date legislation.

Because the authorities are mutually dependent, it is vital to share resources and expertise. Efficient executive assistance is ensured through regular exercises and established procedures as well as through assessments of their effectiveness. Authorities may provide support to other authorities in Finland and abroad. In situations falling under the EU solidarity clause, international assistance may be requested from the EU

or from other Member States to support the Finnish authorities and provided to the EU or the authorities of another Member State in the form of police or military resources, for example. In situations falling under the mutual assistance clause, assistance may be requested from or provided to other Member States. The EU's assistance mechanisms, such as the Civil Protection Mechanism, may be drawn upon when dealing with the after-effects of terrorism. Executive assistance to the Police in combatting or halting a terrorist offence may include the use of armed force with the military materiel of the Finnish Defence Forces or the Finnish Border Guard when specific conditions are met.

## 1.6 Communications in counter-terrorism

In the event of a terrorist attack, it is vital for the authorities to have the ability to warn and instruct the population as quickly as possible. Comprehensive and up-to-date communications by the authorities may serve to prevent harm and save lives. Consequently, besides their operational capabilities, the authorities must also pay attention to the importance of communications in alleviating the effects of fear and anxiety within the society, because one of the aims of terrorism is specifically to heighten such feelings. Quickly implemented open communications by the authorities can thwart the accomplishment of terrorist aims. All communications by the authorities will comply with the communications operating model of the Prime Minister's Office.

The effects of terror attacks on society can be mitigated in advance by means of systematic communications to increase awareness of the terror threat facing Finland and its underlying causes. The change in the emphasis of the activities of public authorities and the reduced availability of certain services provided by them increase the need for communications in the event of the threat level being raised to High or Severe.

A key aspect of proactive communications is to prevent the dissemination of false information and to ensure a fact-based approach to the topics at hand. Balanced and timely communications by the authorities may be used to identify, monitor and counter messages that incite hate and violence. Cooperation with civil society is vital in communications seeking to prevent violent radicalisation, as the internet and social media sites are major platforms for the dissemination of terrorist propaganda. The preventive measures put into place by the authorities to combat violent radicalisation must also be communicated to the population. At the same time, it must be ensured that communications are balanced and that every group within the population is treated equally.

Finland also takes part in international cooperation to combat terrorist communications. Part of the mission of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS, for example, is to monitor the communications of ISIS, combat their terrorist propaganda, and give voice to moderate actors and maintain a dialogue with the media.

## 2 Objectives of the Strategy

### 2.1 Prevention

The key objectives of counter-terrorism are to prevent terrorism and to protect human life and health.

Counter-terrorism serves to maintain national security by proactively preventing terrorist activities taking place in Finland, targeting Finland's interests from abroad, or targeting another country from Finland. Finland also contributes to the wider efforts to combat terrorism through its active participation in international cooperation.

The escalation of terrorist phenomena in Finland will be halted. The underlying causes, motivations and factors contributing to the proliferation of terrorism will be prevented by identifying threats at an early stage, addressing risk factors and increasing awareness of the factors that contribute to the threat of terrorism. All action will be based on shared situation awareness and the shared situational understanding formulated on its basis.

Actions to prevent terrorism and violent radicalisation that leads to terrorism will be implemented at all levels of society. Prevention will be supported by the authorities through training provision, research, communications and making their expertise available to actors.

### 2.2 Operational response

Counter-terrorism capabilities will be maintained at high standard throughout the country and developed to respond to changes in the operating environment. Capabilities will be based on jointly agreed procedures that are subject to regular practice and enhancement. The authorities will keep each other up to date on any changes in their capabilities and procedures.

Each authority involved in counter-terrorism will, within the confines of its powers, promote intelligence-gathering and information-sharing, analysis, surveillance of target individuals, combating terrorist financing, and national and international cooperation.

All action to combat terrorism will emphasise seamless information-sharing. Terrorist activity will be addressed at an early a stage as possible.

Besides cooperation among the authorities, cooperation between the authorities, communities and municipalities is also key. Such cooperation will be enhanced on an ongoing basis and any barriers to information-sharing will be removed.

## 2.3 Preparedness

The disruptions to important sites and functions in society caused by terrorism will be minimised through preparedness, site protection and operations protection, supervision by the authorities, countermeasures, response and incident management.

Counter-terrorism will take account of preparedness for threats to Finnish nationals abroad or to Finland's interests.

The security authorities will make more efficient use of their joint and coordinated capabilities. The powers and operational capabilities of the authorities will be maintained and developed on a long-term basis.

## 2.4 Incident management

Incident management capabilities will be maintained at high standard throughout the country and developed to respond to changes in the operating environment.

The incident management models of the authorities, based on preparedness, will be harmonised and they will be subject to regular practices and enhancement.

Rapid and active communications on the part of the authorities is a component of incident management and serves to prevent further damage.

## 2.5 Rule of law in counter-terrorism

Finland observes the rule of law and respects fundamental and human rights in counter-terrorism. The realisation of fundamental and human rights and the effectiveness of counter-terrorism are to be in balance with the protected interests of the individual and of society.

Finland is a respected and dependable actor in international counter-terrorism and fulfils its international commitments. Finland will make effective use of the available mechanisms for requesting and providing international assistance.

Criminal liability for terrorist offences will be effectively enforced. The status and rights of victims of terrorist offences will be fully taken into account.

## Appendix. Strategic actions

### 1. Counter-terrorism cooperation internationally and under the EU's external relations

Finland continues to engage in international cooperation to combat terrorism, violent extremism and violent radicalisation as part of its national prevention efforts. Finland is actively involved in the international fight against terrorism by means of foreign and security policy, including partnership and development policy and civilian and military crisis management. Finland's strengthening peace mediation activities support the aim of social stability and security. In addition, Finland supports and fosters dialogue between cultures and religions. Finland supports multilateral action and a rules basis in counter-terrorism cooperation.

Finland supports measures taken in the EU's external relations to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism and, in particular, measures to increase the capabilities of external partner states to perform their basic functions, such as security and human rights and the training of law enforcement and rule of law actors. Finland contributes to the efficiency enhancement and targeting of the EU's counter-terrorism activities in the mutually agreed manner.

The Finnish authorities make use of initiatives within the EU and related outcomes in the development and targeting of national actions. Finland contributes to legislative and other projects at the EU level in the interests of developing tools of counter-terrorism and information-sharing channels.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry for Foreign Affairs

*Other responsible authorities:* Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, Finnish Defence Forces

*Timeline:* continues

### 2. International crisis management activities

Finland continues its active involvement in civilian and military crisis management. Finland's participation in crisis management operations serves to promote the realisation of the rule of law, democracy, good governance and human rights and also supports the enhancement of the capabilities of the target states' own security and judicial authorities. These activities aim to address, for example, the root causes of refugeeism

and radicalisation in the target countries, where the escalation of cross-border threats and problems is prevented by strengthening the capabilities of their authorities.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* Ministry of Justice, Defence Forces

*Timeline:* continues

### 3. Preventative action at the EU external borders and in third countries

Finland has in place an effective system of border security and is capable of supporting the fight against terrorism at Finland's external borders. The Finnish Border Guard and Customs will take part in the border security operations of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex, in the context of which attention is also paid to links between terrorism and a mass influx of migrants and its arrangement as well as human trafficking. Customs will help to implement the EU common framework for risk management by means that include ensuring the safety and harmlessness of goods traffic, which improves the efficiency of external border control. The Border Guard and the Police enhance the capabilities of their liaison officers based at diplomatic and consular missions to identify and process information that may be of relevance to the threat of terrorism in Finland. The security authorities of Europol, Frontex and the Member States engage in active information-sharing and maintain a common set of risk indicators.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior, Finnish Border Guard

*Other responsible authorities:* National Police Board, Customs, Finnish Immigration Service

*Timeline:* continues

### 4. Increasing traveller awareness of terrorism

As part of its travel safety communications, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will inform citizens travelling abroad from Finland or residing abroad on a permanent basis of terrorism-related risks and phenomena. The topic will be addressed in travel advice bulletins and, where necessary, also in communications on social media platforms. As concerns travel safety, the importance of filing travel notifications will be highlighted: people who have submitted their travel details can be sent information and advice by text message and email when a crisis or emergency so requires. The potential for leveraging new channels of communication will be examined when developing information provision and communications.



*Main responsible authority:* Ministry for Foreign Affairs

*Other responsible authorities:* Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

*Timeline:* continues

## **5. Enhancing capabilities of the authorities in the event of kidnapping and hostage-taking abroad**

The operating model for responding to the kidnapping of Finns abroad will be maintained and enhanced. In capability enhancement, attention will be paid to the ability of the authorities to act abroad and to interoperability in situations of international cooperation.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry for Foreign Affairs

*Other responsible authorities:* Ministry of the Interior, National Police Board,

Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, Finnish Defence Forces, Finnish Border Guard

*Timeline:* continues

## **6. Development and sharing of authorities' counter-terrorism situation awareness**

The sharing and exchange of counter-terrorism intelligence held by the authorities will be improved.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior, National Police Board,

Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

*Other responsible authorities:* Finnish Border Guard, Customs, Finnish Defence Forces, Government Situation Centre, Finnish Immigration Service

*Timeline:* continues

## **7. Enhancing the authorities' cyber capabilities in counter-terrorism**

The Finnish Defence Forces will continue to build up cyber defence capabilities by enhancing intelligence and control capabilities, international cooperation and military intelligence-gathering methods that may be used to support the responsible authorities in combating cyberterrorism. The capabilities of the Police Cybercrime Centre will be strengthened and a cyber intelligence system equipped with storage platforms will be built. The Finnish Security and Intelligence Service will enhance and strengthen its cyber capabilities in civilian intelligence and combating cyber-intelligence in cooperation with other authorities, also from the counter-terrorism perspective. This will be accomplished in accordance with the policies outlined in Finland's Cyber Security Strategy 2019 and the Government Report on Internal Security. The measures will also be coordinated with the cyber security development programme of the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* Defence Forces, National Police Board, Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

*Timeline:* continues

## 8. Enhancing national and international CBRNE<sup>1</sup> cooperation

International cooperation will be actively fostered by means of CBRN capabilities prepared for provision to the rescEU medical reserve and distribution mechanism under the umbrella of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism as well as CBRNE stockpiling. Finland will seek rescEU funding for these preparations. Enhancement of the capacities utilised in the provision of international assistance will also serve to strengthen Finland's national CBRN preparedness and promote CBRN cooperation among the authorities at the national and international level. The development priorities identified in the national CBRNE strategy will continue to be actively promoted. Capabilities in intelligence, situation identification and investigation will be strengthened by the authorities in cooperation and under the coordination of the responsible authorities.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finnish Defence Forces, Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK), National Police Board, Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, Finnish Border Guard, Customs

*Timeline:* continues

## 9. Using the Government's incident management model to harmonise procedures

Incident management models will be further developed at Government level so as to support the abilities of the authorities to implement the immediate measures for national incident management that have been planned in the event of a terrorist attack or the imminent threat thereof in Finland or its neighbouring areas. The role of the meeting of the Heads of Preparedness will be taken into account in these situations with an eye to obtaining situational understanding and coordinating situation awareness in relation to the distinct responsibilities of the various administrative branches.

*Main responsible authority:* Prime Minister's Office

*Other responsible authorities:* all ministries

*Timeline:* continues

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1 CBRNE is an acronym for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive.

## 10. Harmonising communications by the authorities

The communications model under the Prime Minister's Office's Government Guidelines for Enhanced Communications will be used and common strategic messages will be prepared for coordinated use by the authorities in their communications after a terrorist attack. Finland will take part in international communications cooperation, also by the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS in order to promote communications that prevent and combat terrorism.

*Main responsible authority:* Prime Minister's Office

*Other responsible authorities:* all ministries

*Timeline:* continues

## 11. Improving the resilience of important sites, actors and functions

The independent risk-aware protection, guidance and supervision of targets such as critical government properties, actors and functions vital to society will be promoted.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior, National Emergency Supply Agency

*Other responsible authorities:* operators, supervisory authorities

*Timeline:* continues

## 12. Protecting soft targets and public spaces

The proposed measures and recommendations under the programme to improve security in public spaces prepared by the Ministry of the Interior will be drawn upon in the cooperation between the Police and the key actors responsible for public spaces. The accomplishment of preventative security work at public events and other gatherings will be ensured, having regard in particular to cooperation with local government. The authorities will educate event organisers on the new security threats and taking these into account in security planning.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* National Police Board

*Timeline:* continues

## 13. Increasing and enhancing information-sharing between the migration authorities

The identification of risk persons takes place through cooperation between multiple authorities that supports the prevention of and fight against terrorism. The processing of observations identified in matters concerning foreign nationals and data analysis will be enhanced and strengthened. Finland will be an active participant in projects and

drafting of legislation at the EU level aimed at improving information-sharing between the competent authorities in the Member States.

Finland will look into the establishment of a national ID centre for determining the identity of residence permit or citizenship applicants or asylum seekers through intersectoral cooperation. This will entail, among other things, determining the most appropriate manner of organising the operations of such a centre and the prerequisites for its establishment, particularly with regard to organisation, legislation, economic impacts and the social impacts sought.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior, Finnish Immigration Service, National Police Board

*Other responsible authorities:* Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, Finnish Border Guard, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

*Timeline:* continues

#### **14. Taking national security requirements into account in all matters concerning foreign nationals**

The application of the legislation on aliens and citizenship will carefully take account of the identification of risk individuals with regard to counter-terrorism and actions to evaluate the grounds of such individuals to enter Finland and stay here and, when necessary, to intervene in these and to intensify returns, with respect for fundamental and human rights. Finland will prepare an asylum-seeker reception system that is well directed and of high operational standard and allows the prevention of radicalisation and the identification of activities and individuals of concern at an early stage.

*Main responsible authority:* Finnish Immigration Service

*Other responsible authorities:* Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, National Police Board, Finnish Border Guard, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

*Timeline:* continuous

#### **15. Continued implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism 2019–2023**

The consistency of counter-terrorism measures with the National Action Plan will be ensured, with particular attention on engaging young people, women and religious communities. Each year, the Ministry of Justice will grant discretionary government grants to projects in support of preventing radicalisation and developing operational models and assessing their impacts, such projects to be decided by an intersectoral working group appointed by the Ministry.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* National Police Board, Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish National Agency for Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finnish Immigration Service

*Timeline:* 2022–2023

## **16. Developing research to support counter-terrorism**

Research projects to increase research-based knowledge in counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent radicalisation will be implemented on an annual basis.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* ministries, Defence Forces

*Timeline:* continues

## **17. Providing training in the identification of terrorist phenomena**

The authorities and representatives of key civil society organisations will be provided with training in the identification of terrorism and violent radicalisation.

*Main responsible authority:* Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, National Police Board

*Other responsible authorities:* Finnish Border Guard

*Timeline:* continues

## **18. Safeguarding the operational capabilities of the Police and other security authorities**

The maintenance and advancement of terrorist prevention, detection and operational response capabilities and their compatibility with those of other security authorities will be ensured.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior, Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, National Police Board, Finnish Border Guard, Customs

*Other responsible authorities:* Defence Forces

*Timeline:* continues

## **19. Development and improvement of terrorist incident aftercare**

Operational guidelines and plans for terrorist incident aftercare will be prepared in cooperation among the authorities. The needs of victims of terrorism will also be taken into account in the development of aftercare, as will the role of civil society organisations alongside the authorities in providing information and support.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

*Other responsible authorities:* Ministry of the Interior

*Timeline:* 2022–2025

## 20. Preventing violent radicalisation taking place in prisons

The identification of radicalisation taking place in prisons and EXIT activities targeting in particular prisoners who are to be released and who are at risk of violent radicalisation will be developed.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of Justice

*Other responsible authorities:* Criminal Sanctions Agency

*Timeline:* continues

## 21. Sharing the counter-terrorism expertise of the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

The Finnish Security and Intelligence Service will also prepare reports of lower protection levels to ensure the availability of information to all persons with a need to know in the various governmental organisations.

*Main responsible authority:* Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

*Timeline:* continues

## 22. Combatting terrorist financing

Efforts to combat terrorist financing will be developed in keeping with the policies outlined in the national risk assessment and action plan on money laundering and terrorist financing. This development will be informed by the recommendations of international actors. Counter-terrorism measures will support the activities of the national governmental cooperation group for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior

*Other responsible authorities:* National Police Board, National Bureau of Investigation, Customs

*Timeline:* continues

## 23. Joint counter-terrorism exercises

The operational capabilities of the authorities for exceptional incidents will be enhanced with an emphasis on the ability of special units of the Police, Finnish Border Guard and Finnish Defence Forces to coordinate their activities and on the management of their capabilities. In the exercises, attention will be paid to rescue operations, prehospital

emergency medical care and aftercare as well as joint exercises with critical infrastructure site operators.

*Main responsible authority:* Ministry of the Interior, National Police Board, Finnish Border Guard, Defence Forces, Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

*Other responsible authorities:* Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

*Timeline:* ongoing



Ministry of the Interior  
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