

MICHELE AVINO

Intel Analysis on Global Terrorism [May 2011]



The Homegrown terrorism and violent
Islamist radicalisation in Europe

Michele AVINO – INTEL ANALYSIS ON GLOBAL TERRORISM
[MAY 2011]

Dr. Michele AVINO is Islamic affairs analyst and is a specialist on issues relating to the fundamentalism, radicalisation and related terrorism.

He is expert analyst on radicalization process leading to the homegrown terrorism and counter terrorism strategy.

In his analysis he explore the beliefs, narratives and ideologies that lead to violent radicalism underpinned by an abusive interpretation of Islam, with a view to understanding of the causes and remedies for violent radicalization.

He follow methods, such as internet, through which Islamist militants in Europe mobilise their supporters and find new recruits.

He is expert analyst on the radicalization in prisons as well as prevention and response strategy.

m.avino@gmail.com

© Michele AVINO
Autoriproduzione
m.avino@gmail.com

The Homegrown terrorism and violent Islamist radicalisation in Europe



Abstract

The paper intends to give an insight of the factors influencing homegrown terrorism and violent Islamist radicalisation in Europe. The terrorist attacks in Europe and the foiled attempts and arrests in Some EU States have brought home the reality of the terrorist threat that faces Europe today.

Homegrown terrorism is defined as acts of violence against targets primarily, but not al-ways, in Western countries in which the terrorists themselves have been born or raised. The purpose of such terrorism is to advance political, ideological or religious objectives.

The homegrown terrorism is driven by some form of radical Islam and involves citizens and/or residents of Western countries who "have picked up the sword of the idea" and are willing to attack their own countries, even if they are themselves killed in the process.

The Islamist militancy in Europe has mutated into an autonomous phenomenon consisting of groups of alienated, homegrown Muslims – often described as "self-starters" – who have adopted the language of Al Qaeda but act on their own accord.

The paper is just an analysis of the attributes of radicalization starting from the observation of the role played by religion.

Understanding the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism and the radicalization process of these individuals is vital to the formulation of counterterrorism strategies and the undercutting of the powerful jihadist message.

INTRODUCTION

After 9/11 the threat seems shifted towards more autonomous Western based groups or individual who did not have any direct links to international terrorist organisations, but were inspired by the ideology of militant Islamism.

Those involved in the most recent terrorist cases in Europe were not recognized as emissaries of al Qaeda; the majority of these individuals were citizens and residents appeared to be integrated who were sending a message to their own governments.

Interest in radicalisation in Europe and the phenomenon of homegrown Islamist terrorism received a boost by the Madrid bombings in 2004 and other incidents and arrests in, among others, the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Denmark.

The English attack of London were carried out by British citizens of Pakistani descent who appear to have been highly susceptible to radicalization. The Spanish bombings were carried out by resident ethnic Moroccans who wanted to react against the Spanish government for its support of America's "War on Terrorism."

Perpetrators have been autonomously organized, have had little direct assistance from transnational terrorist networks, and prepare their attacks within the countries they plan on targeting.

The return of Jihadists from conflict zones around the world is also becoming a growing threat as they bring back with them combat experience, weapons knowledge, ideology and connection with international terror groups.

The term "jihadist" normally describes in the common thinking radicalized individuals using Islam as an ideological and/or religious justification for their belief in the establishment of a global caliphate, or jurisdiction governed by a Muslim civil and religious leader known as a caliph.

Of course religious faith alone does not propel one into terrorism but radical political views are certainly prerequisite and we still need to know more about how radicalized persons ultimately are recruited or recruit themselves into terrorism.

The indicators observed do not necessarily make a terrorist, but they help to analyze how terrorists are radicalized where radicalization it seems to be a prerequisite to terrorism. In other words there are no moderate attackers but radicalization does not automatically propel one all the way to violence.

Homegrown terrorism is quite new term and Europe has already learned through it's experience that is extremely dangerous that cannot be ignored.

There are now individuals in EU, some who have grown up here

and are officially EU citizens, they haven't done anything to violate the law, but they have become radicalized to the point of violent extremism.

This phenomenon, labeled "homegrown terrorism", represents a significant evolution in the threat posed by militant jihadism.

This may range from lone wolf individuals who wish to perpetrate an attack, to groups who are a "self recruited, self-trained, and self-executing" "group of guys" with few, if any, connections to an international conspiracy, to those who may be groups living in a particular country who have trained with and maintained connections to the al Qaeda transnational network, and finally to " sleeper cells" planted by al Qaeda in a particular country who are bent on conducting a medium- or long-term terrorist mission.

Homegrown terrorists fall into three categories: immigrants and visitors: legal or illegal; second- and third-generation members of the Muslim diaspora community; and converts to Islam.

Individuals looking for a cause and a stronger Muslim identity have increasingly found the answer in the ideology of radical Islam.

Tomas Precht has provided one definition of homegrown terrorism, describing it as "acts of violence" targeting "Western countries in which the terrorists themselves have been born or raised. The purpose of such terrorism is to advance political, ideological or religious objectives." *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe (research report funded by the Danish Ministry of Justice, Dec. 2007)*. During the radicalization process, Precht claims that religion plays an important role, but for some it probably rather serves as a vehicle for fulfilling other objectives.

Homegrown terrorism can be viewed as a sociological phenomenon where issues such as belonging, identity, group dynamics and values are important elements in the transformation process. Religion plays an important role, but for some it rather serves as a vehicle for fulfilling other goals. A common denominator seems to be that the involved persons are at a cross road in their life and wanting a cause.

A 2009 survey of Western jihadists posits, for instance, that over 40 percent of the sample under study had travelled overseas for training (or to fight) while another 22 percent (for whom data was available) traveled to receive religious instruction (Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman, *Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and U.K.: An Empirical Examination of the Radicalization Process*, Foundation for Defense of Democracies April 2009).

It seems that by the end of the 1990s some of the migrant jihad veterans and radical ideologists began to approach members of the local Muslim communities in Europe. Recent migrants and young second and third-generation Muslims proved particularly receptive to the extremist ideas of these jihadists.

The picture is quite variable in Europe. There are countries where Muslims are mainly first-generation immigrants (Spain, Italy), while in France, Germany, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, they

are mainly made up of second and even third generations.

The rise of Islamist terrorism in Europe is often directly or primarily linked to the effects of large-scale immigration of Muslims over the past few decades and problems related to their integration.

In Europe it is common to oppose two approaches: the British 'multiculturalism' (where Muslims are defined by a distinct ethno-cultural identity) and the French 'assimilationnisme' (where Muslims may become full citizens only by shedding their pristine identity).

In order to formulate intelligence strategies to prevent this, we must better understand the process of radicalization and recruitment to terrorism.

THE CHALLENGE OF RADICALISATION

Radicalisation is best understood as a personal process in which the individual adopts extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence.

The current knowledge on radicalization processes is almost limited. Despite the extensive amount of literature on the causes and consequences of radicalisation, fundamental knowledge about who radicals are and, more importantly, why they commit to extreme and often violent ideologies remains lacking.

There is no single cause or catalyst for radicalisation. Radicalisation is a multi-dimensional process influenced by a complex array of factors.

Since the process can evolve in many different directions, including non-violent ones, radicals can engage in nonviolent behaviour without terrorist intent yet still be considered radical.

Radicalisation often starts with individuals who are frustrated with their lives, society or the foreign policy of their Governments.

From a counter terrorism perspective, the concern is that the process of radicalisation normally occur quickly, widely and more anonymously in the Internet age than only a few years ago. In particular, it raises the possibility of attacks from unknown self-starter groups. The major problem is that those involved appear to be normal and unremarkable.

Persons who are radicalised are often well educated, have jobs and families and appear to be active in their local communities.

"Radicalization" describes the process of acquiring and holding extremist, or jihadist beliefs. This activity is not necessarily illegal.

It is generally assumed that major factors in the radicalisation process are the influence of a spiritual leader, a sense of alienation, perception of marginalisation, political oppression, discrimination, poverty, overseas training experience, the Internet and perceived wrong doings of Western foreign policy and an aspiration of "wanting to do something".

In a few words, we can state that an ineffective Muslim integration and political representation, as well as the social exclusion,

unemployment and discrimination that the Muslims experience in their adopted countries with their deeper exclusion and marginalization, can facilitate the development of Islamic radicalism and home-grown terrorism.

Many young Muslims living in the West are split between the traditional Islamic culture of their parents and the secular multi-cultural society in their country of residence.

They find they are not understood at school, by their parents or by local Imams and can only discuss issues amongst themselves.

In their search for identity, some individuals are turning to religion.

The turn towards a religious identity may be reinforced by several relative deprivation factors such as alienation, social dissatisfaction, poverty, experiences of discrimination and social exclusion. In this view embracement of radical Islam can be seen a possibility to gain dignity, a feeling of belonging.

The place of residence might offer the location where people first encounter extremist thoughts, either from within their own family or peers or from others within the community.

The presence of a charismatic person or a radical preacher seems to have been a common factor in many of the most recent European terrorist cases. However, this is not a prerequisite for radicalisation.

Identity is another key factor in understanding the radicalisation process. French sociologists such as Olivier Roy, Gilles Kepel and Farhad Khosrokhavar put much emphasis on problems stemming from globalisation and Westernisation which prompt second and third generation Muslims in Europe to question what it means for them to be Muslims in a Western society.

Some Muslims in Europe may find themselves alienated and unwelcome which feeds their feelings of social exclusion and even victimisation.

In this sense "prevention" is particularly important, because it addresses the main drivers of the process of radicalization.

Analyzing radicalisation and homegrown terrorism it's necessary to address two different and independent, at first sight, social phenomena, namely immigration and terrorism, that have dissimilar causes and radically different objectives, but became in the latest years directly interconnected in the European history.

Based on this assumption, we need to note that since the migration flow to Europe, mainly from the Muslim countries, increased during the last decades, and since the terrorist attacks were launched on European soil by the Muslim immigrants, the integration of Muslim communities has become extremely actual and urgent in the context of EU counterterrorism policy.

The integration of Muslim communities and struggle against radical Islam are directly interconnected and involve both social and security policy.

Try to identify pathways toward radicalism drive to a radicalisation process that can be assumed as a model to understand

the way and the progress towards homegrown terrorists undertake violence.

We can follow four distinct phases.

The first phase is defined as "pre-radicalization" and indicate the period before individuals begin their experience to extremism.

In this phase generally there is an apparent normalcy and the majority of individuals show to have ordinary jobs, and normal life.

The second phase, maybe the most significant, is the "self-identification," where individuals begin exploring Salafi Islam "while slowly migrating away from their former identity that now is re-defined by Salafi philosophy, ideology, and values."

Frequently a particular event run as a trigger in this change such as the loss of a job, alienation or discrimination, or death in the family. These personal situations can produce an identity crisis that shakes previously held beliefs, and readies individuals to accept a new identity and new beliefs.

The third phase is the "indoctrination," where the individuals' newly adopted progressively intensify Salafi beliefs. A person going through this phase normally concluded that the conditions and circumstances exist where action is required to support the Salafist cause. In this phase there is the fully acceptance of religious political view that legitimize the violent action against so called *kufir* (*disbelief*) or non-islamic or other muslims whose ideas are clearly contrary to the radical ideology program.

The fourth and final phase is the "jihadization," where individuals accept their individual commitment to participate in violent action and self-designate themselves as holy warriors or mujahideen.

Ultimately, they will begin operational planning for a terrorist attack. It is necessary underline that many people enter the first phase, but few progress through all the phases to actually undertake violent action.

One important aspect of the analysis is related to the observation of behavioral changes that homegrown terrorists went through during the radicalisation process. In this view we can select different manifestations that individual shows during the process:

- the adoption of a legalistic interpretation of Islam;
- trust only a select and ideologically rigid group of religious authorities;
- view the West and Islam as irreconcilably opposed;
- low tolerance for perceived religious deviance;
- attempt to impose religious beliefs on others;
- expression of radical political views

These are the main external manifestations displayed by individuals selected on the base of case study and bibliography.

It is interested to note that those who start with rigid interpretation of Islam refer normally to how believers interpret their rights and obligations in relation to Islam's holy texts. It is also necessary to clarify that that a person exhibiting a rigid interpretation of Islam is not necessarily radical, or radicalizing: it may simply be indicative of a conservative practice of the faith.

A case study can help to identify the behavioral changes main indicators as in the history of the American Daniel Joseph Maldonado, who first convert in Islam then follow a radicalisation process and at the end was pleaded guilty in April 2007 to undergoing military training with al-Qaeda elements in Somalia. Maldonado is a particular case of non muslim converted to islam that give the idea on how the radicalisation process in follow the religion interpretation was reflected in his external appearance.

During the course of his radicalization, Maldonado adopted an increasingly rigid interpretation of his faith. The investigating authority reports that he began wearing traditional Arab clothing, including the galabeyah, an ankle-length gown with long sleeves that covered the tattoos on his arms.

In addition to changing their appearance, individuals' adoption of a rigid interpretation may be reflected in their daily activities, behaviors, and habits.

This is the case noted for Ramzi Mohammed one of the London attacker at Tube Oval station in 2005.

Ramzi Mohammed was born in Somalia in 1981 and arrived in London in 1998 at the beginning he drank, went clubbing and chased girls without ever thinking much about his religion. He became more interested in Islam around 2003; the following year he was regularly attending London's radical Finsbury Park Mosque, and listening to the sermons of infamous preacher Abu Hamza al-Masri. The effect of Ramzi's legalistic understanding could be seen in his daily life. He quit his job at Waterloo's Reef bar, because as a strict Muslim he did not want to be near alcohol.

Ramzi shows the typical homegrown character, on the surface he appeared to be a hard working family man who had recently decorated his flat, but in reality he was a jihadist committed with his co-conspirators to becoming what he regarded as a martyr for all Muslims. After his bomb failed to go off at the Oval, Ramzi Mohammed panicked and travelled back to his flat by bus, leaving his Fiat Punto parked in a street in Stockwell. When police raided the property, they found extremist literature.

THE ROLE OF INTERNET

Increasingly, attention is being paid to the role that the Internet plays in radicalisation of young Muslims.

Jihadist concepts, theoretical insights, views and notions are produced and distributed in numerous ways via jihadist mosques, training and education institutions, via regular media, and certainly, or perhaps primarily, via the Internet.

According to Marc Sageman ('Leaderless Jihad. Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century', Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), the major role the Internet plays within the jihadist movement has not been planned, but is rather the consequence of a spontaneous evolution, based on the growth of the

Internet and the attention paid by the government to meeting places and mosques.

Propaganda has always been integral to the violent Islamist movement, especially for the purpose of attracting followers. More than any other factor of globalization, the Internet has arguably been responsible for promulgating radicalism across the globe.

Conventional media is not the most efficient tool for a terrorist group's public messaging, especially if governments intervene to prevent reporting about terrorist groups or if the media presents such groups unsympathetically.

Anonymity and invulnerability, make the Internet a playground for Jihadists becoming in many ways the cyber equivalent of Afghanistan or Yemen; ungoverned, de-territorialised spaces where transnational networks of militants can operate with impunity.

After 9/11, al-Qaeda relied on a website called Alneda.com as one of its main mediums of communication, using it to post its statements, theological justifications for its actions and other propaganda material.



The Internet allows groups to create and identify dedicated insiders and to maintain fervor in those already dedicated to the cause on a global scale. In terror cases the role of the Internet has been a significant facilitating factor in the radicalisation process.

Today, for an individual seeking information on this ideology, Internet provides the most accessible source of information both passive, in the form of static Web pages, and interactive, in the form of chat rooms and discussion forums that can connect interested individuals with extremists around the world.

Using the Internet is cheap, it has global reach, it allows for rapid dissemination of text and video in order to spread propaganda, threats or claim responsibility for attacks. Furthermore, the Internet is anonymous and serves as a platform for contacts, communication and information sharing for both males and females.

By giving easy access to radical Islam and the opportunity to create local and international contacts, the Internet is playing a major role in all the phases of the radicalisation process from pre-radicalisation to operations. The Internet has removed the practical barrier to entering terrorism thus making it easier.

A radical movement can exist of a virtual group in which people who have never met are nevertheless connected through shared attitudes and ideology. The Internet is a perfect instrument to establish a 'deterritorialised' virtual network of believers.

The internet has provided young Muslims, particularly in Europe, with a virtual community that serves primarily to ease the emotional strain on Muslim immigrants experiencing the difficulties of adapting to a new environment and feeling a need to maintain their religious identity.

Special note should also be made of the phenomenon of "lone wolves" and the Internet's influence on them. Even where radicalized individuals or groups of individuals do not actively communicate with other like-minded individuals around the world, the Internet can provide an invaluable "handbook" for lone wolf terrorists.

On the internet web site normally radical materials are often mixed with other, unobjectionable, material.

Most acute threat presented by these websites are the libraries of jihadist literature and radical content, that provide an entrée into the community for individuals who are re-disposed to or susceptible to radical ideologies.

Jihadists use the Internet just as ordinary citizens for a variety of purposes, and they regard the Internet as a crucial jihad resource. There is evidence of several so-called mother sites', from which jihadist publications and the jihadist message are first distributed, and which host forums on all kinds of jihadist issues that contain a range of information and views, then document and message are distributed via numerous non-jihadist sites and applications such as YouTube and social network sites.

Internet use supports the entire radicalisation process a supply is available for each phase of radicalisation. Using the Internet, a potential jihadist can go through the processes of ideology formation, ideology reinforcement and ideological indoctrination. The threat is greater from interactive sites, including social network sites or forums, than from static sites from which, for example, only documents can be downloaded. It is precisely the interactivity of jihadist Internet use that has increased, and with that, the influence of the Internet on radicalisation.

The interactive jihadist sites can provide an ideal recruitment location. Young people feel attracted to scenes of jihadist action, and use the Internet to search for a way of getting there. On the Internet, a very interactive form of recruitment has been observed which is strongly linked to interactive propaganda methods. No general pattern can be identified and usually the people involved have 'presented themselves' rather than being 'recruited' in the classical sense of the word.

The virtual jihadism is based primarily on three virtual media organizations, they play a crucial role in the creation of jihadist publications and are also responsible for their punctual and simultaneous distribution among designated websites and forums. These are:

1) As-Sahab ('Al Sahab Institute for Media Production')
<http://as-sahab.blog.com/>

As-Sahab Foundation for Media Production

2) Global Islamic Media Front (GIMF) and



3) Al-Fajr (Media Centre)



The nature and quality of productions, the methods of working and the areas of special interest vary. As-Sahab, which means 'The Clouds', acts as the media organisation of core Al Qaeda. The messages are produced in various languages and versions, and are aimed at a wide audience. It is the only and exclusive organisation which maintains physical contact with the Al Qaeda leadership. The GIMF is one of the largest and, up to now, the longest-lasting media organisations.

The GIMF operates on the Internet in a more or less open way. Presumably the GIMF is run by amateurs who develop a variety of media projects, such as Internet TV. However, the GIMF also acts as a publisher of digital books and magazines. It has also made video training courses on how to handle weapons, ammunition and explosives.

Lastly, Al-Fajr is one of the distribution centres which focuses on supporting various jihadist groups in Iraq, as well as in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Al-Fajr, which means 'The Daybreak' and which is the title of sura 89 in the Holy Qur'an, was established at the beginning of 2006 and was responsible for a number of Al Qaeda websites, such as the al-Falluja and Shumukh al-

Islam websites, as well as for new publications and media productions.

Besides these 'large' media organisations, there are also a number of small-scale virtual media organisations which focus on specific tasks such as the media coverage of jihadist actions of some groups. A prominent example of a small-scale media organisation is the 'Al-Furqan Foundation for Media Production', an organisation which is undergoing rapid development.

The jihadist sites and media, which were often Arabic oriented in origin, are focusing increasingly on a Western audience. This is reflected in different developments. First, speeches by the leaders of Al Qaeda and video productions about terrorist activities that have been carried out are often accompanied by proper subtitles in English.



There is also a marked improvement in the quality of translations and use of language. Some publications such as 'Jihad Recollections' have been written or narrated in perfect American English.

It has been noted that jihadist sites are being expanded to include English, French and German sections. These contain news, communiqués, bulletins and video films about the jihadist conflict. Europol states that the role of the Internet as regards radicalisation is rarely clear, but that there is no doubt that the Internet has played a role in the radicalisation of suspects identified by criminal investigations in the United Kingdom. Europol has also identified recruitment via the Internet as a source of concern, although it states that the Internet can never replace the personal interaction between potential recruits and the recruiter. On the other hand, Europol makes it clear that a convert in the United Kingdom who had placed a bomb in a restaurant in Southwest England in 2008 had become radicalised independently and was encouraged to act by literature and other material on the Internet (TE-SAT 2009, EU terrorism situation and trend report, Europol).

As regards Internet and recruitment, the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation states:

- *The Internet has come to play an increasingly important role.*

The main function is to support 'real-world' recruitment by reinforcing religious and political themes; by facilitating networking; and by creating a climate of exaggeration. In recent years, however, new forms of Islamist militant online activism have emerged, which rely less on human contact and can be described as 'virtual self-recruitment'. (Recruitment and Mobilisation for the Islamist Militant Movement in Europe, ICSR, 2007 www.icsr.info).

From different part have been indicated that the Internet has assumed, or can be able to assume, the role of physical training camps. In this sense is useful to clarify that the jihadist movement is still keen to use physical training camps, and that these continue to exist primarily in the border area of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

On internet there is an abundance of military and tactical training handbooks on jihadist web pages. Handbooks can be found on almost all subjects which might be relevant for training and preparation purposes.

Internet play as a kind of classroom. Interested members can discuss training-related issues, exchange personal experiences and communicate with virtual trainers who can explain and clarify problematic subjects.



On Thursday 07/01/2010, was launched the first online propaganda magazine in English, named Inspire, with the aim to help the terror group recruit inside the USA and Europe.

The magazine, called Inspire, is being run by Al Qaeda's branch in Yemen, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which means he is, most likely, edited by Anwar al-Awlaki. The launch suggests that the group hopes to broaden its reach inside the USA, where officials have seen a spate of homegrown terrorists.

In terms of counter operation against internet use by jihadist based on the analysis conducted we can affirm that it requires an extensive commitment of national security authority with Human Intelligence involvement monitoring jihadist web sites and related forum and blog in order to identify all possible narrative, message and document distributed through them.

The choice to cancel the web site by the National Authority do not appear to be the right one as it has been already demonstrated on web site closed today, is normally re-opened tomorrow from another country.

A good counter ideology action performed by HUMINT experienced personnel introduced to the mentioned forum and blog can perhaps provide some different positive results.

THE RADICALISATION IN PRISONS

There are many experiences of radicalization in prisons.

There is an increasing evidence that prisons become recognized important incubators of jihadist thought and are playing important role in recruit new followers.

Prisons are 'places of vulnerability', which produce 'identity seekers', 'protection seekers' and 'rebels' in greater numbers than other environments. They provide near-perfect conditions in which radical, religiously framed ideologies can flourish.

A statement released by Abu Qatada – often referred to as Osama bin Laden's Ambassador to Europe – talked about seeing the signs of Allah within British prisons, where – in his own words – young men enter into Islam and then... learn Arabic and the Sharia in a short number of months. Similar observations have been made by extremists all over the world, and it is no exaggeration to say that prisons – for all kinds of movements and in all periods of history – have been fruitful places for radicalisation and recruitment.

Prisons are highly unsettling environments in which individuals are more likely than elsewhere to explore new beliefs and associations.

Unable to participate in operations and planning, imprisoned terrorists may want to use their time in prison to help develop their movements' strategy or ideology as well as to recruit.

When we use the term 'place of vulnerability' we intend the locations in which individuals experience social isolation or personal crises, both of which are widely believed to be factors that increase a person's responsiveness to extremist messages and/or approaches.



Terrorists are not 'ordinary' criminals. They often use their time in prison to radicalise other prisoners, and when given the opportunity attempt to recreate operational command structures.

At the end of 2008, Michèle Alliot-Marie the French Minister of Internal Affairs, when commenting on the presence of about 144 terrorists and several thousand inmates of Muslim origin in the French prisons, declared "French prisons are fertile grounds for the recruiting of Islam radicals" (*Article in Figaro, 10-09-2008, Interview with M.Alliot-Marie, "France: The State of Terrorism"*).

Extremist recruitment is also made easier because many Muslim prisoners have little or no knowledge of Islam and can easily be persuaded that adopting rigid Islamist beliefs will help them turn away from crime, drugs and alcohol to make a 'new start.

Islamist militant prison radicalisation is a relatively new phenomenon which prison authorities have only recently started to work with. We can agree that improving the capacity to spot radicalisation is vital, but that doing so represents one of the most difficult aspects of dealing with the phenomenon.

It is important to emphasise on the need to train prison staff, and other frontline staff who interact with prisoners on a daily basis as it is critical in making early detection.

Two principal challenges come out in dealing with radicalization in prison: preventing radicalisation, and detecting radicalization.

Overcrowded, chaotic prisons make it difficult for prison staff to understand what is happening 'on the ground' and, as a result, will allow extremists to operate at free will. Under such conditions, effective monitoring and detection of radicalisation becomes impossible.

The prisons institution rarely have enough knowledge about Islam, its language and its culture so it is easy to imagine how difficult it must be for them to evaluate the more specific indicators of the heretic forms of Jihadism used for subversive political purposes.

Extremists will find it easier to fill the (spiritual and material) vacuum created by prisons that fail to provide prisoners with a perspective and a set of meaningful activities towards which their energies can be directed.

Changes in religious practice, especially the adoption of strict and literalist varieties of the Islamic faith, need not pose a security problem, and prisoners' freedom of religious expression should always be respected.

Given the nature of Islamist extremism, which combines political and religious motifs and consciously uses the language and symbols of faith, it can be difficult to distinguish between legitimate expressions of faith and politically inspired extremism.

There is a written guidance for how violent jihadists should behave when taken prisoner. An example includes the Declaration of jihad against the country's tyrants – military series. This publication (a copy of which was discovered in a raid in Manchester in 2000 and thus is also referred to as the Manchester manual) has a chapter relating to prisoners, specifically the 18th lesson – prisons and detention centres.

The 18th lesson prepares the violent jihadist for what to expect during a trial and how he should conduct himself in prison.

For example he must:

- Take advantage of visits to communicate with brothers outside prison and exchange information that may be helpful to them in their work outside prison [according to what occurred during the investigations]. The importance of mastering the art of hiding messages is self evident here.

- Inside the prison, the brother should not accept any work that may belittle or demean him or his brothers, such as the cleaning of the prison bathrooms or hallways.

- The brothers should create an Islamic program for themselves inside the prison, as well as recreational and educational ones, etc.

- The brother in prison should be a role model in selflessness. Brothers should also pay attention to each others needs and should help each other and unite *vis a vis* the prison officers.

- The brothers must take advantage of their presence in prison for obeying and worshipping [God] and memorizing the Quran, etc.

From the evidence has been plotted a spectrum of the potential activities that radicalized or ideologically motivated group may undertake in a custodial environment.

Have been also observed a range of behaviours including:

- making consistent allegations of mistreatment at the hands of the authorities as part of a deliberate strategy

- refusing to cooperate in the formal prison regime creating parallel structures in the prison for religious purposes

- using time in prison to develop and refine their ideological and strategic thinking, and to distribute such material both within and without the prison

- seeking to use prisoners more generally as vehicles for propaganda and information campaigns

- using coded communication or variations in language to communicate internally and with associates and organizations outside the prison

- seek to convert or radicalize other "ordinary" inmates to their interpretation of Islam and alternative worldview

The points raised demonstrate that the prison behaviours of terrorists and other motivated subject are different from the rest of the prison population. The particular challenges in dealing with this issue are:

- Recognising radicalisation;

- Monitoring the activities of terrorist inmates;

- Controlling external influences;

- Preventing the radicalisation of (non-terrorist) inmates;

- Preventing the maintenance and/or recreation of operational command structures;

- Preventing the exploitation of the prison environment for the purpose of mobilising outside support.

- Provide opportunities for de-radicalisation and disengagement; and

- Make a positive contribution to reducing terrorism and radicalisation

on the outside.

Most prisons seek to prevent prisoners from having the opportunity to interact with known extremists, but such individuals are not always easy to recognise, especially when they claim to look after prisoners' religious needs and the prison authorities have no way of distinguishing 'moderates' from extremists.

A typical behaviour is for convicted terrorists to attempt to assume leadership roles among the wider prison population, for example by leading Friday prayers or taking the lead in negotiating concessions on behalf of 'Muslim prisoners'.

We can fully agree that in dealing with radicalisation, prison services are confronted with two challenges: preventing radicalisation, and detecting radicalization.

The analysis of the problem conducted by different specialized research and study centre in Europe and the policies adopted by some EU countries showed that, first of all, running safe and orderly prisons is critical to address the problem.

There is also the need for sufficient numbers of well-trained staff, and it reinforces the fundamental importance of prison programming in creating 'inmate identities' that will reduce the occurrence of defiant, hopeless and vulnerable prison populations.

Another important element in dealing with prison radicalisation is to deny religious space to extremists. The recent upsurge of interest in the institution of the prison imam shows that prison services have understood the significance of preventing extremists from monopolising the Islamic narrative by extremist.

Conversion in prison is not the same as radicalisation, and good counter-radicalisation policies never fail to distinguish between the two. Changes in religious practice, especially the adoption of strict and literalist varieties of the Islamic faith, need not pose a security problem, and prisoners' freedom of religious expression should always be respected.