

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM

OFFICIAL VISIT TO NORWAY

14-15 January 2020

NOTE-TO-THE-FILE

Introduction

On the 14th-15th of January 2020, the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) conducted an official visit to Norway. The 20-member delegation, which consisted of CCT members as well as representatives from the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, was led by OSCE PA President George Tsereteli. The visit, initiated by CCT Chair Mr. Abid Q. Raja and organized by the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget), was also attended by OSCE PA Secretary General Roberto Montella.



After being welcomed by the President of the Norwegian Parliament, the delegation paid tribute to the victims of the 22nd July 2011 terror attacks in both Utøya Island and Oslo. During the two-day programme, the delegation also had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Climate and Environment, the Governing Mayor of Oslo, several members of the Labour Party and the Worker's Youth League, as well as with representatives of the Norwegian Police Security Service, Norwegian Correctional System, the 22nd July Commission, the 22nd July Parliamentary Committee, the 22nd July Support Group and academia. Notably, many interlocutors had first-hand experience of the 22nd July 2011 tragic events.

Ultimately, the visit provided an excellent opportunity to get familiar with the national counter terrorism system and learn more about Norway's multifaceted response to the 22nd July attacks, which included legislative reform, emergency response preparedness, the prevention of terrorism and radicalization, and the role of public health services. In addressing the consequences of such tragic events, Norway exhibited outstanding resilience and a strong commitment to its democratic values.

The important lessons learned in Norway will inform the future policy efforts of the CCT.

Key Findings

- Jihadism and right-wing violent extremism are top security threats in Norway. Whilst a significant increase in far-right violent extremism has been observed throughout Europe, globally speaking, jihadism remains the most dangerous form of violent extremism in terms of attacks and casualties, which is also due to the lethal combat experience acquired by its members in several conflict zones.
- Aligning criminal legislation and operational procedures amongst OSCE countries is instrumental for effective co-operation and timely data exchange on counter-terrorism.
- The 22nd July 2011 attacks in Oslo Government Quarter and Utøya island were the deadliest attacks in Norway since World War II, with 77 deaths and 242 injuries¹. Norway's response to these tragic events denoted outstanding resilience and unequivocal commitment to democracy and the rule of law. Improving overall security without jeopardizing citizens' fundamental freedoms is a key challenge in this context.
- At both political and societal levels, the 22nd July attacks have been primarily processed as aggression against Norway as a whole and its core values. This enabled the country to stand united at a very critical juncture. A thorough analysis of the underlining causes of those attacks could help prevent future similar instances.
- Several failures in the Norwegian security system were identified by the 22nd July Commission, which was established by the Government to investigate the attacks and put forth recommendations to address possible shortcomings (i.e. the Gjørsvik Report). On the

¹ According to the court indictment.

other hand, health emergency services responded efficiently to the crisis, whilst the government kept the general public duly informed on all developments.

- Consequently, over the last ten years, the Norwegian criminal justice system has been significantly overhauled and legislation has been amended to more effectively address the terrorism threat. Operational capacities and emergency response preparedness of the security services were also significantly improved.
- The 2014 Action Plan against Radicalization and Violent Extremism provides a comprehensive framework to counter the threats stemming from these phenomena. Its 45 measures are intended to build synergies among relevant national and local authorities, civil society, academia, educational, health and social services.
- An individualized approach is considered critical to preventing radicalization in prisons (e.g. Mentoring Programme), even though it requires significant resources and it is hard to quantify its real impact.
- Survivors of the attacks, families of the victims and support groups such as the 22nd July Support Group play a decisive role in promoting justice and reconciliation in Norway. In this context, the role of the state to duly support the victims of terrorism and their families, both in the immediate aftermath of an attack, and in the long run, is key.

Background

The 22nd July attacks in Norway were two sequential terrorist attacks in the city of Oslo and on Utøya island carried out by the Norwegian right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik (hereinafter, the perpetrator), leaving 77 people dead. In carrying out the first attack, the perpetrator detonated a car bomb in the Government Quarter of Oslo, which killed 8 and injured 209 people. Hours after the explosion at the Government Quarter, the perpetrator travelled to Utøya island - where the annual summer camp of the Worker's Youth League was being held - and opened fire at the camp participants, killing 69 and injuring 33.

In a manifesto he had written prior to carrying out the attacks and at his trial, the perpetrator explained that the attacks were explicitly aimed at the Norwegian government, the Labour Party and members of the Workers' Youth League. He stressed that he was determined to fight multiculturalism and social Marxism in Norway, for which Labour party policies and the new generation of social democrats were to blame.

The 22nd July terrorist attacks were the deadliest attacks in Norway since World War II - the shooting on Utøya island had the highest casualties in the history of mass shootings carried out by a single perpetrator.

Part I: Learning what happened on 22nd July and paying tribute to the victims

Visit to Utøya Island

Upon arrival on Utøya, the delegation was welcomed by **Jørgen Wayne Frydnes**, the General Manager of the island. Mr. Frydnes pointed out that Utøya became property of the Worker's Youth League in the 1950's and has ever since represented a very important place for Norwegian politics because of the annual summer camps held on the island. In the years after the attack, survivors, family members and the leadership of the Worker's Youth League consulted intensively to determine through what means the victims of the Utøya shooting could best be commemorated, and whether to return to the island with new initiatives or not.



Eventually, it was decided to restart the yearly summer camps in 2015. The *Hegnhuset* (The Safeguard House), now serving as Learning and Memorial Centre, was built on the grounds of the cafeteria, which was one of the main sites where the terrorist killed many young camp participants. Additionally, a memorial named the *Lysninga* (The Clearing) was erected at the highest point of the island. The erection of the memorial and reconstruction of the buildings on Utøya were financed by the Labour Party, the Norwegian government as well as through public donations.



During the visit to Utøya, the delegation was accompanied by **Ms. Astrid Willa Eide Home** (Deputy Chair, Worker's Youth League), **Mr. Åsmund Aukrust** (Member of Norwegian Parliament for the Labour Party, former Vice-Chair of Worker's Youth League), **Ms. Lisbeth Røyneland** (Chair, National Board of 22nd July Support Group) and **Mr. Erik Høie Mortensen** (Deputy Member, National Board of 22nd July Support Group).

Mr. Aukrust, Ms. Eide Home and Mr. Høie Mortensen - all survivors of the Utøya shooting - shared their personal accounts of the

terrorist attacks. During the exchanges, it was noted that Norwegian society and the political system had somehow failed to objectively analyze (to this date) the root-causes of the 22nd July Attack, namely the far-right wing ideology that the terrorist prescribed to, eventually leading him to carry out the attacks. In their view, anti-immigration sentiments and islamophobia continue to negatively affect Norwegian society.



The Chair of the National Board of the 22nd July Support Group explained that the Group was founded by the Labour Party and the Norwegian Red Cross as a space for survivors and the families of victims to come together and share their stories. Currently, it has 1749 members and operates through 15 regional groups across Norway; its activities are funded by the Norwegian government. Besides being a forum for mutual support among its members, the 22nd July Support group engages in different projects, such as research on victims'

and relatives' mental health as well as prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. In recent years, the group has been particularly active in the fight against right-wing extremism, contributing to European forums such as the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network.

Visit to the 22nd July Centre and City Hall in Oslo

Upon returning from Utøya, the delegation visited the 22nd July Centre in Oslo. The Centre is a Learning and Memorial Centre situated in the building that housed the Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Justice at the time of the attack. Through its educational programmes, the Centre strives to ensure that the memory and knowledge of the 22nd July events are preserved. In front of the Centre, a temporary memorial honoring the victims of the 22nd July Attacks was erected.



At the Oslo City Hall, the delegation met with the Governing Mayor of Oslo, Mr. Raymond Johansen, and with Ms. Christin Kristoffersen, former Mayor of Longyearbyen and member of the Labour Party. Both, Mayor Johansen and Ms. Kristoffersen were directly affected by the 22nd July events and shared their personal accounts with the delegation; Mayor Johansen was the secretary of the Labour Party at the time and was therefore called to run a complex crisis management operation thereafter, whereas Ms. Kristoffersen's two sons were on Utøya island attending the Worker's Youth League's summer camp.



Echoing the words of other survivors, Mayor Johansen and Ms. Kristoffersen confirmed that the Norwegian political system, in a spirit of national unity, treated the 22nd July Attacks as an attack on Norway as a whole. By adopting a narrative that framed the events as an attack on all Norwegians and their shared values - rather than targeting the Labour Party, its political ideals and future leadership - Norway allegedly missed a valuable opportunity to openly debate, condemn and counteract far-right extremism. The delegates commended the incredible resilience and outstanding work of the survivors, the 22nd July Support Group, the Worker's Youth League and the Labour Party following the 22nd July attacks and thanked all interlocutors for sharing their moving accounts. The delegation commemorated all victims by symbolically laying down roses at the Clearing Memorial on Utøya island and at the Memorial site in Oslo.

Part II: Learning more about Norway's counter-terrorism efforts

Terrorism and Violent Extremism Trends

Dr. Thomas Hegghammer, Director of Terrorism Research at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, provided an overview of the most serious terrorism trends. According to Hegghammer, the terrorism threat is higher than in previous decades both in Norway and across Europe. However, given today's more refined counter-terrorism measures, the number of casualties from terrorism related offences is significantly lower.

Right-wing terrorism and jihadism remain the most prominent ideologies motivating terrorist activities. Whilst right-wing terrorism has consistently represented a considerable threat, jihadism



has seen a huge surge in followers with the introduction of the internet and the proliferation of social media. Right-wing terrorists are said to have primarily used the internet to interconnect globally and inspire each other's actions. Jihadists, on the other hand, have used the internet as an arena for recruitment and planning, allowing groups such as ISIS to effectively organize themselves. Recently, states have been more successful in implementing counter-terrorism measures tackling the use of the

internet as it concerns the recruitment and organization of terrorist groups online. Whilst a significant increase in far-right violent extremism has been observed throughout Europe, jihadism remains very dangerous, also because its affiliates continues to operate in conflict-affected zones, thereby acquiring lethal combat experience.

In combatting terrorism, Dr. Hegghammer advocated for a realistic approach, stressing that tackling the underlying root-causes of terrorism proves often elusive. Rather, states should focus on dismantling terrorist organizations by enforcing stronger mechanisms to stop illegal arms flows and making online propaganda less accessible.

These considerations were generally corroborated by **Ms. Randi Øgland**, Analyst in the Counter Terrorism Unit of the Norwegian Police Security Service, who presented Norway's Annual Threat Assessment and briefly introduced the Norwegian counter-terrorism system. In her presentation, she also noted that the anti-Islamic sentiment in Norwegian society has significantly grown over the years, especially since the European migration crisis in 2015. According to the Police Security Service, there is a 40-60 % chance that a politically motivated terrorist attack will be carried out in Norway in 2020.

Finally, both interlocutors advocated for duly aligning relevant criminal legislation, as well as procedures for information and data exchange, amongst OSCE countries to more effectively counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Counter-Terrorism Response

Shortly after the 22nd July attacks, the Norwegian Government established the 22nd July Commission, which was an independent body mandated to examine what happened on 22nd July. **Ms. Åsne Julsrud**, Secretary of the 22nd July Commission on Police Security Services & Norwegian Intelligence Service, noted the following findings:

- The bombing of the Government Quarter could have been prevented through effective implementation of already adopted security measures, which would have hindered the perpetrator from accessing the premises and detonating a car bomb in front of the Prime Minister's office.
- The police's response to the Utøya shooting was significantly hampered by insufficient emergency response capacity, which resulted in a severe breakdown of police communications and the failure to mobilize adequate means (i.e. boats and helicopters) to quickly access the island.
- The health and emergency systems responded efficiently to the unprecedented crisis.

Mr. Knut Arild Hareide, Chair of the 22nd July Committee, explained how the Norwegian Parliament furthered the 22nd July Commission findings to address such deficiencies. He also praised the reaction of former Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg to 22nd July attacks. While publicly apologizing for what had happened, Stoltenberg stressed that Norway would respond to the heinous attacks with more tolerance and openness, a message which brought together politicians across party lines and unified the Norwegian public. This unequivocal commitment to democracy and the rule of law still resonates within Norwegian society today.



When asked how the Government responded to the findings of the 22nd July Commission, Justice Minister **Mr. Jøran Kallmyr** stressed that a great number of counter-terrorism measures have been implemented ever since the 22nd July attacks. A national police emergency response centre was established to enhance operational crisis management and contribute to crisis mitigation, prevention and preparedness. New criminal legislation has been adopted, making penalties more severe and introducing new specific terrorism-related crimes (e.g. incitement to, recruitment and training for acts of terrorism, and participation in a terrorist group), while greater investigative and preventive powers were assigned to law enforcement authorities. In 2016, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Penal Code with a view to raising efforts to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. The Norwegian Police were supplied with new resources (including 3 new helicopters) and Radicalization Focal Points were appointed in each of Norway's 12 police municipalities. Finally, the Centre for Research on Extremism (C-REX) was founded to further the studies of right-wing extremism, hate crime and political violence. Allegedly, the perpetrator of the 2011 attacks has been treated in a firm, but fair and humane manner by the criminal justice system.

In 2014, the Norwegian government adopted an **Action Plan**, which provides a comprehensive set of measures on countering threats stemming from terrorism and violent extremism, including by enhancing coordination among relevant authorities, civil society, academia, educational, health and social services. The action plan contains 45 different measures concerning knowledge and expertise, co-operation and coordination, preventing the growth of extremist groups and helping promote reintegration, preventing radicalization and recruitment through the internet as well as international co-operation.



Preventing and combatting radicalization is also a priority of the Norwegian Correctional Service, as pointed out by **Ms. Kari-Anne Aasterrud**, Advisor at the Norwegian Correctional Service Directorate. *Inter alia*, the 2014 Action Plan foresees a mentoring scheme in accordance to which radicalized inmates, or those who are vulnerable to being radicalized, are each assigned a mentor. The mentor is tasked with establishing a credible relationship with the inmate to be able to offer

advice and guidance, provide practical help and potentially reduce the risk factors for radicalization. Concerning the release of radicalized inmates from prison, the action plan envisages close coordination among the correctional service, municipalities and local police on monitoring them once they are released. Unfortunately, evaluating the impact of these prevention measures is quite challenging.

Impact of 22nd July attacks on the survivors and their families

Dr. Grete Dyb, Research Professor at the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (hereafter NKVTS), discussed the centre's work with the survivors and families of the Utøya shooting. In response to the 22 July Attacks, NKVTS proposed the establishment of national outreach programme to respond to and monitor the health care needs of victims and their families.

The Utøya study is an on-going study conducted by the NKVTS aiming to explore the survivors and their families' experiences with the Norwegian health care services in the year after the Utøya shooting. The study found that the majority of respondents suffered from post-traumatic stress reactions, whereas 45% of female respondents and 15 % of male respondents had also experienced a variety of somatic symptoms. In conclusion, a number of respondents continue to suffer long-term effects from the trauma experienced after the attack.

List of Participants

Mr. George Tsereteli – President, OSCE PA
Mr. Abid Q. Raja – Chair of the OSCE PA/CCT
Mr. Åsmund Aukrust – Member of the Norwegian Delegation to the OSCE PA
Mr. Paolo Grimoldi – Member of the OSCE PA/CCT
Mr. Branimir Jovanović – Member of the OSCE PA/CCT
Ms. Pia Kauma – Member of the OSCE PA/CCT
Mr. Reinhold Lopatka – Member of the OSCE PA/CCT
Ms. Stefana Miladinović – Special Rapporteur on Digital Agenda of the OSCE PA
Mr. Pedro Roque – President of the 1st Standing Committee on Political and Security-related Cooperation of PAM
Mr. Fejzo Numanaj – Deputy Head, OSCE Action Against Terrorism Unit
Mr. Alex Tiersky – Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Helsinki Commission
Ms. Silje Arnekleiv – Secretary of the Norwegian Delegation to the OSCE PA
Mr. Johannes Bangum – Advisor to Chair of the OSCE PA/CCT
Mr. Massimiliano Ferrari – Political Advisor to the Head of Italian Delegation to the OSCE PA
Ms. Eeva Lahti – Secretary of Finnish Delegation to the OSCE PA
Ms. Lisbeth Stock - Co-Secretary of the Norwegian Delegation to the OSCE PA
Mr. Veljko Racković – Secretary of the Serbian Delegation to the OSCE PA
Mr. Roberto Montella – Secretary General, OSCE PA
Mr. Marco Bonabello – Senior Advisor, OSCE PA
Ms. Freyja Koci – Research Assistant, OSCE PA