

Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark





THE ASSESSMENTS BY THE DANISH INTELLIGENCE SERVICES OF THE THREATS TO DENMARK

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE TERRORIST THREAT TO DENMARK

by the Centre for Terror Analysis (CTA) determines the national terrorist threat level and describes the terrorist threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad. The assessment is one of five recurring assessments of threats in and against Denmark. The other assessments are:

- **ASSESSMENT OF THE ESPIONAGE THREAT TO DENMARK, THE FAROE ISLANDS AND GREENLAND** by the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), which describes foreign state intelligence activities targeting Denmark, particularly espionage, influence activities and illegal procurement of technology and knowledge.
- **INTELLIGENCE OUTLOOK BY THE DANISH DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE** (DDIS), which describes the external conditions for Danish national security and interests.
- **THE CYBER THREAT AGAINST DENMARK** by the Centre for Cyber Security (CFCS), which describes and determines the national threat levels in relation to cyberespionage, cybercrime, cyberactivism, disruptive cyberattacks and cyberterrorism.
- **NATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT OF TERRORIST FINANCING** by PET, which addresses the prevention of terrorist financing in Denmark and abroad.



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Preface

The Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark is the overall assessment of the terrorist threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad by the Centre for Terror Analysis (CTA).¹

It is the overall assessment of CTA that the terrorist threat to Denmark remains at the level of **significant**. Developments in 2023, primarily relating to cases of perceived insults to Islam and the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine, have exacerbated the terrorist threat within the current level. CTA assesses that these dynamics will continue to have a considerable impact on the threat in 2024.

The conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine, which escalated following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, has had a spillover effect on the threat picture in Denmark. Reactions to the conflict in Denmark have led to a number of cases regarding condoning of terrorism, and attacks motivated by the conflict have been carried out in other Western countries. On 14 December 2023, a number of individuals in Denmark and abroad were remanded in custody (some in absentia) on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack. According to PET's information, the case has links to Hamas and an illegal gang.

Overall, the conflict holds a considerable potential for radicalization and mobilization which may prompt spontaneous or premeditated reactions, including terrorist attacks, from various threat actors. This includes extremist actors as well as actors with no contact to extremist communities, such as individuals associated with organized crime.

Militant Islamism

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad from militant Islamists remains at the level of **significant**. In 2023, militant Islamist groups and individuals abroad have focused greatly on the Quran desecrations in Denmark and elsewhere, re-

newing the perception of Denmark as a prioritized target for terrorism among such actors. As a result of this attention, specific threats have emerged against individuals in Denmark, Denmark as a whole, and Danish interests abroad. Cases of perceived insult to Islam and their impact on the terrorist threat to Denmark is not a new dynamic, but the development in 2023 underlines the vast mobilization potential of such cases and illustrates how even minor incidents in Denmark can spark reactions from a global audience on account of the rate and scope of information dissemination.

Additionally, CTA assesses that the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine holds a considerable mobilization and radicalization potential that may affect the threat from militant Islamists in Denmark.

Right-wing extremism

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from right-wing extremists in Denmark remains at the level of **general**. Young people radicalized and recruited in online forums continue to pose the main threat. Glorification of right-wing perpetrators as "saints" is a central element of such forums, where past attacks are used as catalysts for future attacks. There is also a trend towards increased organization offline, as activities in online communities are supplemented by physical organization and so-called Active Clubs where exercise is combined with right-wing extremist indoctrination.

Anti-establishment extremism

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from anti-establishment extremists in Denmark remains at the level of **limited**. Whereas anti-establishment extremism used to be primarily driven by narratives concerning the authorities'

¹) CTA is a fusion centre comprised of staff from four Danish authorities (the Danish Security and Intelligence Service, the Danish Defence Intelligence Service, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Danish Emergency Management Agency) collaborating on analysis of the terrorist threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad.

efforts to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, the community now mainly pursues a number of parallel, wide-ranging and volatile agendas that enable it to remain active.

The agendas, which are based on current issues, are typically interpreted within a framework of conspiracy theories and linked to narratives that legitimize violence. For instance, some anti-establishment extremists consider the government illegitimate and therefore subject to punishment by "the people". Conspiracy theories have existed for years within a number of areas. In the new technological reality, narratives that previously existed separately can now be commercialized and merged online into a shared language and world view that serve to drive anti-establishment extremism and its predominant enemy perceptions. The commercialization is driven partly by the way certain social media companies operate and partly by individuals who have turned the dissemination of conspiracy theories and other false narratives into their profession.

While the freedom to debate and the opportunity to voice criticism of the authorities are fundamental pillars of democracy, dissemination of indisputably false narratives and conspiracy theories can undermine the prevailing trust in authorities and democracy in the long term. Consequently, there is a risk that the threat from anti-establishment extremists will manifest itself as direct violent attacks, primarily against individuals, or as a long-term threat to the democratic foundation of society.

A number of countries in the West have divided the extremist anti-establishment threat into a threat from attacks and a long-term threat to democracy. CTA assesses that there is currently a situation in Denmark where the threat of a violent attack by anti-establishment extremists is limited but where there is a latent threat to democracy in the long term.

Left-wing extremism

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from left-wing extremists in Denmark remains at the level of **minimal**.

The threat picture is generally characterized by a low degree of readiness for violence. However, the wider left-wing extremist community has gradually increased its activity level and is inspired by agendas with a potential for mobilization, including the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine.

The impact of international conflicts on the threat

In addition to the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine, CTA has considered the situation in Ukraine. It remains the assessment of CTA that the war in Ukraine currently has no direct effect on the terrorist threat to Denmark. However, the war may still have long-term derived effects on the terrorist threat, for example through dissemination of weapons currently used in the war.

New technology

Artificial intelligence and quantum technology are highlighted among new technologies that may fundamentally change society in the coming years. CTA assesses that such technologies directly or indirectly may come to affect the terrorist threat and the authorities' ability to counter the threat. However, it remains too soon to assess the specific effects.

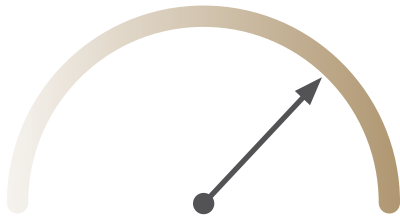
PET regularly launches operations to uncover and prevent potential terrorist threats to targets in Denmark. Terrorist attacks may occur with no prior intelligence indications, even when the perpetrators have previously been known to have extremist sympathies.

The Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024 is based on intelligence processed before 1 March 2024.

Enjoy the read.
Michael Hamann
Head of CTA



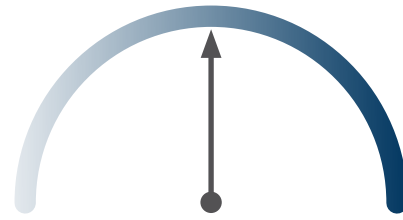
Definitions



TERRORIST THREAT LEVEL

CTA uses the following terrorist threat levels (highlighted in **BROWN** in the text):

- **Very significant** · There is a specific threat.
There is capability, intent, planning and possibly initiation.
- **Significant** · There is a known threat.
There is capability, intent and planning.
- **General** · There is capability and/or intent and possibly planning.
- **Limited** · There is a potential threat.
There is limited capability and/or intent.
- **Minimal** · There are no indications of any threat.
There is absence of intent, capability or both.



PROBABILITY

CTA uses the following degrees of probability (highlighted in **BLUE** in the text):

- **Highly likely** >90%
- **Likely** 60-90%
- **Possible** 40-60%
- **Less likely** 10-40%
- **Unlikely** <10%

TERM	DEFINITION
Terrorism	CTA defines terrorism in accordance with Section 114 of the Danish Criminal Code.
The West	North America, Australia, New Zealand and Europe, not including Russia, Belarus, Türkiye and Caucasus.
Traveller	A private person who has travelled to a conflict zone in order to support one of the parties in the conflict without necessarily engaging in combat.
Hybridization	A process in which the combination of different ideologies, world views or communities leads to the creation of new extremist narratives and modi operandi among individuals, groups or communities. Not to be confused with hybrid warfare.
Capability	Agreement between a person's accessible means and their ability (training, skills, logistics, etc.) to use these in a terrorist attack.
Intent	The will to employ a certain capability against a certain target or target group.
Extremism	The will to engage in or legitimize violent action in order to change existing societal conditions. ²
Radicalization	A dynamic process in which a person increasingly accepts the use of violence to achieve political, religious or ideological ends.
Lone actor	A person who commits a solo terrorist attack, while planning, training etc. may involve other people.
Inspired attack	Gerningspersonen er inspireret af militant islamisme eller politisk ekstremisme og planlægger angreb på egen hånd.
Supported attack	The perpetrator is in direct contact with one or more people who provide guidance or in other ways support the attack plans.
Directed attack	An attack sanctioned by and/or planned under mandate from the senior leadership of a terrorist group.

2) CTA has adjusted its definition of extremism to emphasize the inherent element of violence.



The Israel-Palestine conflict

The conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine and its effect on the terrorist threat to Denmark.

The Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent Israeli military response, primarily against targets in Gaza, have prompted substantial renewed focus on the Israel-Palestine conflict. This is in part due to the nature of the Hamas terrorist attack in October as well as the intensity of the subsequent Israeli military response and the resulting substantial civilian casualties and humanitarian consequences. As a result, wide segments of the population have expressed their views through legal political activity, including demonstrations throughout Denmark and the West.

The historic Israel-Palestine conflict has also occupied the broader Danish population in the past. However, whereas previous escalations of the conflict have not had the same degree of isolated effect on the terrorist threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad, CTA assesses that the current situation holds a considerable potential for radicalization and mobilization that may prompt spontaneous or premeditated reactions, including terrorist attacks, from various threat actors. CTA therefore assesses that the conflict will significantly affect the terrorist threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad for an extended period of time, thus increasing the threat to Israeli, Jewish, and Palestinian interests in Denmark.

CTA assesses that the conflict may potentially introduce threat actors who have not previously been relevant in a Danish terrorism context, including the Palestinian group Hamas, which primarily operates out of Gaza, and the Lebanese group Hezbollah. Historically, Hezbollah has conducted a number of terrorist attacks outside the Middle East. According to CTA's information, the most recent attack was on an Israeli tourist bus in Bulgaria in 2012. CTA is not aware of any terrorist attacks by Hamas outside the region. However, CTA notes that, in December 2023, a number of possible Hamas associates were arrested in Europe, including Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. CTA assesses that there are individuals in Denmark who sympathize with Hamas and Hezbollah, including people from organized crime networks. CTA assesses that it may aggravate the threat if individuals associated with organized crime and a high readiness for violence and access to weapons are radicalized and mobilized to take violent action as a result of the conflict.

As the conflict unfolds, with the involvement of several actors in the region, the narrative depicting the conflict solely as a matter between Israel and militant groups in Palestine may shift towards a narrative of a wider conflict between the West and the Muslim world. This may lead to additional radicalization within a Danish context, especially among pro-Palestinian Muslim individuals, and increase

the risk of spontaneous or premeditated reactions, including terrorist attacks, by, for example, lone actors with no prior record of radicalization or other issues of concern.

Furthermore, CTA assesses that the conflict holds a considerable mobilization and radicalization potential that may affect militant Islamists in Denmark. CTA assesses that militant Islamist propaganda calling for acts of terrorism in the West in response to the conflict may prompt and inspire militant Islamists to act. Despite considerable ideological differences between Hamas and militant Islamist transnational groups, such as Islamic State and al-Qaida, CTA is aware of several examples of groups capitalizing on the conflict after the 7 October attack, for example Islamic State in the Khorasan Province and al-Qaida. In January 2024, the official media outlet of Islamic State released an audio message calling for the killing of Europeans, among others, to avenge “the brothers” in Palestine. CTA assesses that the use of propaganda by militant Islamist groups in relation to this conflict may affect the terrorist threat to Denmark. CTA assesses that a threat may emanate from individuals on the periphery of the physical militant Islamist community in Denmark, but it is **less likely** that the established community itself will actively engage in the conflict through violent action. This is partly due to the fact that there are considerable ideological differences between Hamas and the transnational militant Islamist groups, such as Islamic State and al-Qaida, predominantly supported by the communities.

Historically, the pro-Palestinian agenda has been central to the left-wing extremist community in Denmark, and the escalation of the conflict has revived this agenda. CTA assesses that the Danish left-wing extremist community can use this renewed focus for mobilization, for example around anti-imperialist agendas, and this may affect the terrorist threat to Denmark in the long term. It is currently **unlikely**³ that left-wing extremists will commit acts of terrorism in Denmark based on the conflict.



The anti-establishment extremist community in Denmark is characterized by continuous focus on current agendas that are often interpreted within a framework of conspiracy theories. A number of key individuals within this community have engaged in the Danish debate on the conflict in Gaza, drawing on conspiracy narratives concerning the existence of a Jewish elite controlling the Danish government. It is currently **unlikely** that anti-establishment extremists will commit acts of terrorism in Denmark based on the conflict.

There is a varying degree of focus on the conflict within the right-wing extremist community in Denmark. Among other things, this has prompted a stronger focus on anti-Semitic and anti-Palestinian narratives in parts of the right-wing extremist community. In Western countries, there have been a few examples of right-wing extremists acting violently as a result of the conflict in Gaza, for example against pro-Palestinian demonstrations. It is currently **unlikely** that right-wing extremists will commit acts of terrorism in Denmark based on the conflict. ■

3) According to CTA's definitions, the term “unlikely” indicates a likelihood of 0-10%. See page 7 for all probability degrees.

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Militant Islamism

DEFINITION

Militant Islamism is an interpretation of Islamist ideology which legitimizes and accepts the use of violence to achieve political, religious or ideological ends.



SUMMARY

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from militant Islamists remains at the level of **significant**. The Quran desecrations in 2023 have renewed the perception of Denmark as a prioritized target among militant Islamist groups, resulting in specific threats to targets in Denmark and Danish interests abroad. The conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine also has a radicalizing and mobilizing effect. See pages 8-9 for more on this topic. Overall, the effect of the Quran desecrations and the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine have exacerbated the terrorist threat to Denmark within the current level of significant. CTA assesses that these dynamics will also have a considerably effect on the terrorist threat in 2024.

In Denmark, a number of individuals residing in Denmark have been convicted for attempted terrorism in recent years. However, in 2023, several threats to Denmark have emanated from actors abroad, especially lone actors and small groups of sympathizers with links to established militant Islamist groups operating in Europe or its neighbouring regions. Nevertheless, the threat picture remains affected by the presence of militant Islamists in Denmark who may become inspired by calls for attacks in militant Islamist propaganda or via transnational contacts online. It remains the assessment of CTA that radicalization, recruitment and other terror-related activities mainly take place online. Online platforms create a forum for young people sympathizing with militant Islamism. A number of arrests in Western countries in 2023 involved underage and young actors.

The most likely militant Islamist terrorist attack in Denmark remains an attack carried out by a lone actor or a small group inspired by Islamic State or al-Qaida, using easily accessible means such as bladed weapons or vehicles, firearms or improvised explosive devices. Militant Islamist target selection does not follow a consistent or predictable pattern. The target may change during the planning phase, and selection may be influenced by factors such as militant Islamist propaganda, current agendas, copycat effects, personal networks as well as the capability of the attack planner. The attack in Brussels on 16 October 2023 illustrates how a current agenda may influence the selection of a target. In this case, an attacker motivated partly by the Quran desecrations in Sweden shot and killed two Swedish citizens while wounding a third.

CTA assesses that the most likely targets of a militant Islamist terrorist attack in Denmark (in no particular order) are symbolic targets, including Jewish and Israeli targets, targets associated with perceived insults to Islam, LGBT+ targets, and authority targets as well as civilian targets, such as a crowded public place. It is likely that an increase in anti-Semitic views and narratives in the West, e.g. prompted by the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine, will aggravate the threat to Jewish and Israeli targets.

THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED INSULTS TO ISLAM ON THE TERRORIST THREAT

The terrorist threat in 2023 was highly affected by the Quran desecrations that began in Stockholm on 21 January 2023 and continued throughout the year, primarily in Denmark and Sweden, but also elsewhere in Europe. The increased negative focus on Denmark from militant Islamists following the desecrations has contributed to the exacerbated terrorist threat to Denmark and created a renewed focus on Denmark as a prioritized target among militant Islamist groups. This has materialized as threats – online as well as offline – to individuals in Denmark, Denmark in general, and Danish interests abroad.

The exacerbated threat in 2023 is founded on the historic perception of Denmark as a nation that insults Islam. Historically, cases of perceived insults to Islam have had a considerable effect on the terrorist threat to Denmark. The so-called cartoon cases, which began with the printing of satirical cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* in 2005, and which were refuelled when a number of Danish media outlets reprinted the cartoons in 2008, continue to be a point of reference among militant Islamists. In recent years, Danish courts have ruled on a number of terror-related cases against individuals residing in Denmark where perceived insults to Islam to varying degrees played a role. For example, in 2022, a man was sentenced to 12 years in prison and stripped of his Danish citizenship.

CTA assesses that the impact of the perceived insults on the terrorist threat depends on the exposure of the individual cases in national and international editorial media, on social media and in militant Islamist propaganda. Some cases never get any attention within the militant Islamist communities in Denmark and abroad, while others receive considerable negative attention and lead to planning and execution of militant Islamist acts of terrorism against targets in the West. CTA assesses that the Quran desecrations in 2023 have largely reactivated this threat dynamic in cases of perceived insults to Islam.

Militant Islamist propaganda in 2023 has focused on

Denmark and Danish citizens involved in Quran desecrations to an extent only surpassed by the cartoon cases. Islamic State and al-Qaida have called for attacks in response to the Quran desecrations, and, as a new development, similar calls have been issued by Shia actors. It is **highly likely** that this may inspire individuals to carry out attacks, also in the long term.

Social media and international editorial media may also affect the level of exposure of a case of perceived insults, both in terms of scope and rate. In this context, CTA assesses that the exposure of such cases will become increasingly unpredictable and difficult to control.

CTA assesses that, like the cartoon cases, the Quran desecrations in 2023 may become a reference point for militant Islamists in the long term and thus come to affect the threat to specific individuals or Denmark in general. Reactions to perceived insults may also occur with considerable delay. This was exemplified by the attack on author Salman Rushdie in August 2022, which was motivated by a case of perceived insults dating back to 1989. CTA assesses that the continued framing of Denmark as a nation that insults Islam in militant Islamist propaganda will potentially prolong the current threat to Denmark and Danish interests abroad for many years to come. It is **likely** that the negative focus will continue to manifest in threats, attack planning, and attempted attacks against Denmark and Danish interests abroad. ■

THE THREAT TO THE WEST FROM MILITANT ISLAMIST GROUPS LOCATED ABROAD

The Danish Defence Intelligence Service states in **Intelligence Outlook 2023** that the primary terrorist threat to Denmark still emanates from single individuals and small groups of militant Islamists in and near Europe inspired by militant Islamist propaganda.

The escalation of the conflict in Gaza triggered by the 7 October Hamas terrorist attack on Israel has resulted in targeted threats against Europe in propaganda by Islamic State and al-Qaida.

Even though the most immediate terrorist threat is still posed by single individuals and small sympathizer networks, terrorist groups with a higher level of organization still play a key role in driving the terrorist threat against Europe and European interests abroad. However, the capability Islamic State and al-Qaida have for large coordinated attacks in Europe is likely very limited, among other things as the result of international counter-terrorism efforts that exert continuous pressure on terrorist groups and networks in and outside the West.

Despite having lost a number of high-ranking leaders in 2023, Islamic State has proved capable of supporting and directing successful and attempted attacks across the group's global organization. In the years to come, Islamic State will continue to exploit the fragile security situation in Syria to preserve its room for manoeuvre and support terrorist attacks outside Syria, including in the West.

Intelligence Outlook 2023 is available at the website of DDIS.

1.1 Developments in the West

In 2023, the militant Islamist terrorist threat in the West has been affected by negative reactions to the Quran desecrations and the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine. As a result, there has been an increase in tangible threats and attack planning from militant Islamists and militant Islamist networks in Europe and its neighbouring regions. It is **possible** that the focus on supporting or directing attacks has generally intensified among such networks. However, the far majority of militant Islamist terrorist attacks in 2022 and 2023 were carried out by lone actors inspired by militant Islamist propaganda and motivated by individual cases, including perceived insults to Islam.

THE THREAT FROM MILITANT ISLAMISTS BASED ABROAD

The threat from militant Islamists abroad may emanate from individuals with or without links to Denmark. They may include individuals or small groups who have travelled to Europe with the purpose of committing terrorist acts inspired or directed by a militant Islamist group. Radicalized individuals and small groups located outside Denmark, mainly in neighbouring countries, may thus pose a terrorist threat to Denmark.

The use of refugee and migrant routes has previously been a key element of Islamic State attack planning against targets in Europe, and it is **possible** that militant Islamists still intend to exploit available routes.

CTA assesses that the primary meeting places for militant Islamists in the West are predominantly online. As a result of this development, new demographic segments are becoming exposed to militant Islamism, and CTA assesses that young Westerners increasingly engage in militant Islamist communities online.

When young militant Islamists engage in online networks where calls for violence, bomb-making manuals and other such material are shared, it can affect their opinion regarding the legitimacy of committing acts of violence. In illustration of this point, the number of foiled militant Islamist attacks in the West involving young people up to the age of 18 has seen a sharp increase since 2022. It is **likely** that this trend will continue in the coming year. ■

THE TERRORIST THREAT FROM MILITANT SHIA ISLAMISTS

Approximately 10 percent of Muslims are Shia. Sunni and Shia Muslims share many fundamental views of Islam, for example in terms of the Quran, Allah and the Prophet. The primary difference between the two is their view on who they consider eligible to lead the Muslim community. While the Sunni faith emphasizes compliance with the traditions of the Prophet, the Shia faith emphasizes kinship with the Prophet. Militant Sunni Islamists regard Shias as apostates and thus legitimate targets of attack.

Historically, militant Shia Islamist groups and individuals have carried out few attacks in the West, and typically as a result of domestic conflicts or in response to perceived insults to Islam. The militant Shia Islamist community in Denmark is considerably smaller than the Sunni and less affected by propaganda from transnational actors. It is **less likely** that the militant Shia Islamist community will affect the militant Islamist threat picture in Denmark in the coming year.

However, the Quran desecrations in 2023 have sparked reactions in Shia propaganda from Shia actors located abroad. CTA assesses that this situation, combined with the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine, can potentially lead individuals within the militant Shia Islamist community to take violent action.

1.2 Militant Islamists in Denmark

The militant Sunni Islamist community in Denmark is active both offline and online. Some members of the community are primarily active offline, while others are only active in online networks, and some shift back and forth between the two domains.

The offline segment of the community, which mainly exists in and around the major Danish cities, are typically small, gender-segregated and multi-ethnic groups of individuals in their twenties and thirties. The members of these groups engage in social and religious activities and share extremist propaganda material. CTA assesses that a threat may emanate from individuals on the periphery of the offline militant Islamist community in Denmark or from individuals who for various reasons have been excluded or turned away from the community, while it is **less likely** that individuals within the established community in Denmark will take violent action.

The online segment of the community is connected with transnational networks online. Transcending age, ethnicity and nationality, these transnational networks typically have no connection to the offline segment of the community. Some online communication platforms allow a relatively high degree of anonymity, and a range of different social media and communication platforms are used for terror-related activities, including propaganda and recruitment. The agendas are often elusive and topical in nature, and issues that receive little attention within the offline community can have much greater significance online. It is **highly likely** that the online activities of militant Islamists based in Denmark will significantly affect the ability of militant Islamists to radicalize and recruit in Denmark and other Western countries in the coming year.

CTA assesses that the average age of those involved in militant Islamist online forums is typically lower than in offline groups. In part, this stems from the fact that online forums offer anonymity, which makes it possible to participate without being judged on physical appearance, age, or life experience, and that any geographical barriers that may exist in the physical world are eliminated.

CTA assesses that young people are at particular risk of becoming exposed to militant Islamist material online as the material is accessible on both niche and mainstream social media as well as gaming and communication platforms. Furthermore, CTA assesses that vulnerable young people who struggle being part of offline militant Islamist communities have turned to militant Islamist communities online.

Both offline groups and online networks may serve as echo chambers where members build, reaffirm, and reinforce an unchallenged militant Islamist view of the world. The level of security awareness is considerable within the offline groups as well as the online networks. Thus, statements expressing approval of acts of violence or terrorism and support for groups such as Islamic State and al-Qaida are usually made in closed forums or indirectly by means of references only insiders will understand.

It is **likely** that the primary terrorist threat from militant Islamists in Denmark emanates from individuals on the periphery of the offline groups or from lone actors radicalized online who have sporadic or no connection to the established offline community.

CTA assesses that the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine holds a considerable radicalization and mobilization potential that may affect militant Islamists in Denmark. See pages 8-9 for more on this topic.

CTA assesses that inter-personal relations exist between individuals from the criminal networks and the militant Islamist community. Such relations, which are most commonly the result of a shared past or family ties, may enhance the capability of militant Islamists to carry out terrorist attacks in Denmark using firearms and explosives. However, CTA assesses that people involved in organized crime networks in Denmark are primarily driven by money and personal status. Historically, this has implied a general reluctance within such networks to potentially attract the attention of the authorities by being involved in terror-related activities.

MILITANT ISLAMIST PROPAGANDA

Militant Islamist propaganda continues to radicalize and inspire individuals in Denmark and other Western countries, for example by identifying possible targets. The propaganda may be official propaganda produced and distributed by dedicated media outlets, for example in Islamic State and al-Qaida, as well as propaganda produced by affiliated groups and other sympathizers. Current agendas, such as ongoing armed conflicts or perceived insults to Islam, including Quran desecrations, fuel the propaganda.

A terrorist threat may emanate from radicalized asylum seekers, rejected asylum seekers, accepted refugees, and migrants located in Denmark. It is **possible** that there are foreigners on tolerated stay in Denmark sympathizing with militant Islamism who may pose a terrorist threat. At Departure Centre Kærshovedgård, there is a concentration of released terror convicts and other radicalized ex-prisoners who have been sentenced to deportation.

It is **likely** that terror convicts and militant Islamist sympathizers who are subject to deportation orders will seek to establish new networks or strengthen existing networks of like-minded individuals during their stay at Departure Centre Kærshovedgård. Contact is not necessarily driven by an interest in militant Islamism but could also be motivated by a shared past and/or similar circumstances in life. CTA assesses that individuals at the departure centre may be particularly susceptible to radicalization and influence from militant Islamist agendas. ■

RADICALIZED INMATES

Radicalized inmates in Danish prisons may pose a terrorist threat, both during and after their imprisonment. The group of radicalized inmates in Danish prisons includes individuals convicted of terror-related offences and others who start or continue a radicalization process while remanded in custody or serving a sentence and who are prepared to legitimize or use violence.

Developments within this area are influenced by the historically high level of terror-related charges and convictions, in Denmark as well as in many other European countries, in recent years. The high concentration of terror convicts carries an elevated risk of mutual influence and strengthening of networks among radicalized inmates in Danish prisons. Over the coming years, a large number of terror convicts stand to be released, not only in Denmark but also in other European countries.

CTA assesses that the profiles of terror convicts and other radicalized inmates have become increasingly diverse, with significant variation in their capability, network, ideological affiliation, psychological profile, age, and gender. Over the coming years, the authorities will therefore have to counter threats from divergent and new types of terror convicts and radicalized inmates, both during and after their incarceration.

In December 2020, the then Minister of Justice set up a cross-ministerial task force to put forward recommendations on how to strengthen measures in relation to terror suspects, terror convicts and others who have been radicalized, both during their imprisonment and following their release. The two reports prepared by the task force are available in Danish on the website of the Danish Ministry of Justice.

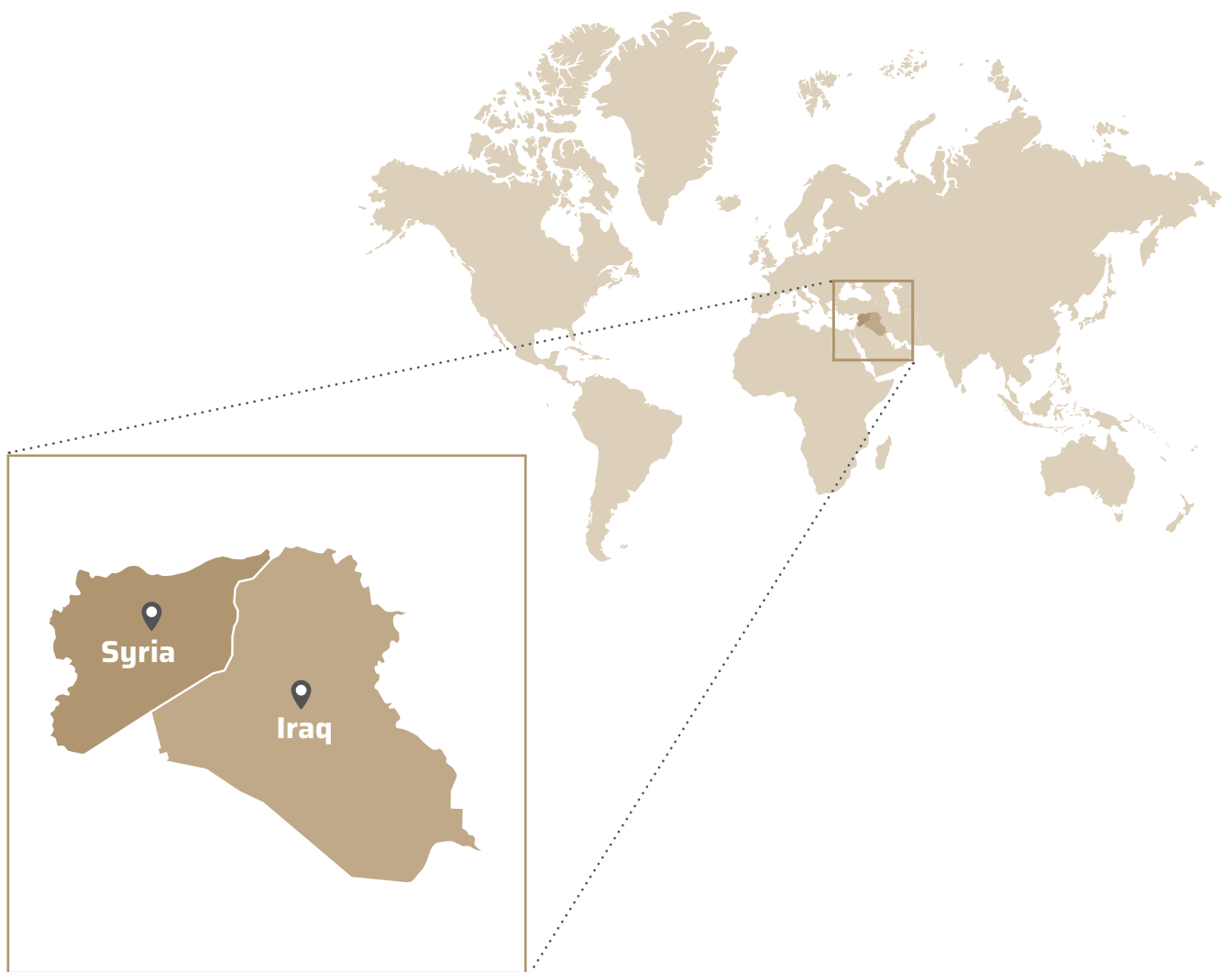


1.3 Travellers to and returnees from Syria/Iraq

CTA assesses that, since the summer of 2012, a substantial number of individuals have travelled from Denmark to the conflict zone in Syria/Iraq.⁴ According to CTA's information, no individuals from Denmark have travelled to the conflict zone to join a militant Islamist group since 2016.

Approximately one third of the travellers have died in the conflict, and approximately half have returned to Denmark or other countries outside the conflict zone. All adults who have returned to Denmark since 2016 have either been convicted or are being prosecuted for crimes committed in connection with their stay in the conflict

4) *Based on the available information and in line with previous assessments, CTA assesses that at least 161 individuals have travelled to the conflict zone in Syria/Iraq since 2012. CTA notes that information collection in conflict areas is generally challenging.*



zone. A woman and her two children were evacuated to Denmark from the Roj camp in June 2023. The woman has been charged with violation of Sections 114 e and 114 j of the Danish Criminal Code. In addition, in August 2023, a woman was found guilty of violating Sections 114 e and 114 j of the Danish Criminal Code and sentenced to four years in prison and stripped of her Danish citizenship.

According to CTA's information, around one fifth of the travellers from Denmark remain in the conflict zone or in neighbouring countries, mainly Türkiye. Furthermore, there are approximately 45 children of travellers in the conflict zone or in neighbouring countries with at least one parent who is a Danish citizen or was a Danish citizen or legal resident at the time the child was born. Of these children, less than ten are located in the camps in north-eastern Syria together with their mothers, one of whom is a Danish citizen.

Some of the individuals from Denmark who have been to the conflict zone in Syria/Iraq may pose a threat to Denmark or Danish interests abroad. Whether this is the case is subject to a specific assessment of the individual's possible intent and capability to attack Danish targets.

It is **unlikely** that a terrorist threat currently emanates from children who remain in the conflict zone or in neighbouring countries. Whether or not children of travellers will pose a threat in the long term is subject to a specific and individual assessment of each child.

The threat from travellers, including children of travellers, who return to Denmark may be affected by how they are received by the Danish authorities, for example whether they are offered preventive social support. ■

NATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT OF TERRORIST FINANCING 2024

The objective of the National risk assessment of terrorist financing is to prevent terrorist financing in Denmark and abroad.

In the National risk assessment of terrorist financing 2024, it is assessed that the risk of terrorist financing in Denmark is high within a number of areas, including cryptoassets, the nonprofit sector, cash and high value goods, illegal value transfer systems and authorized money service businesses. In addition, there is a considerable risk of terrorist financing through the banking sector or by way of organized crime and identity misuse as well as derived crime.

The National risk assessment of terrorist financing 2024 is available at the website of PET.



1.4 Terrorist financing in Denmark

CTA assesses that terrorist financing from individuals in Denmark is mainly channelled to militant Islamist groups in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Türkiye, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestine. It is **possible** that the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine will increase the flow of money to Palestine and that such funds will be used for terrorist financing.

Islamic State presumably still has substantial financial reserves, but the income and expenses of the group have been significantly reduced following the loss of territory in Syria and Iraq. It is therefore **likely** that funding, covering for instance the maintenance of individuals in conflict zones, will continue to involve individuals in Denmark. It is also **possible** that a stronger focus on attempts to direct or support attacks in the West will trigger efforts to finance individuals for this purpose. CTA assesses that Islamic

State will increasingly seek to attract donations in cryptocurrency. In addition, terrorist groups continuously seek new financing options, for instance through international organized drug crime.

In recent years, there have been a number of convictions for violation of the terrorist financing legislation in Denmark. ■



1.5 The threat to Danish interests in non-Western countries

CTA assesses that Danish diplomatic representations and other Danish presence in non-Western countries, including employees of Danish companies, may be perceived as symbolic targets providing an opportunity to harm Denmark without carrying out an attack in Denmark. This was particularly relevant in 2023, with the increased focus on Denmark and Sweden brought on by the Quran desecrations also affecting the threat to Danish interests abroad. This has been reflected in propaganda and threats as well as attempted and committed attacks on Danish and other Western interests in non-Western countries. For example, in early 2023 there were plots to attack a number of European consulates in Türkiye. Furthermore, a Danish NGO was attacked in Basra, Iraq, on 22 July 2023. It is **likely** that the attack was connected to the Quran desecrations. ■

THE TERRORIST THREAT IN NON-WESTERN COUNTRIES

The Danish Defence Intelligence Service (DDIS) states in **Intelligence Outlook 2023** that local conflicts will continue to be the main drivers of the terrorist threat. The conflicts create settings for extremist groups to build up capabilities to launch or support terrorist attacks. Such settings include increased operational leeway and the possibility that a regional conflict between great powers could hamper counter-terrorist efforts against groups such as al-Qaida and Islamic State.

The DDIS further states that the 7 October terrorist attack by Hamas in Israel and Israel's massive military response in Gaza are clear examples that unresolved conflicts in Europe's vicinity have the potential to escalate quickly and cause extensive regional instability. A protracted Israeli military campaign and presence in Gaza, combined with anti-Western sentiments, will increase the threat to Western, including Danish, interests in the region. **Intelligence Outlook 2023** is available at the website of DDIS.

02

Right-wing extremism

DEFINITION

Right-wing extremism is a generic term covering various political views on the far right of the political spectrum which legitimize and accept the use of violence to achieve political and ideological ends.



SAMMENFATNING

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from right-wing 'extremists remains at the level of **general**. The right-wing extremist threat in the West, including Denmark, primarily emanates from individuals radicalized online. CTA assesses that many of those recruited to right-wing extremist online communities are minors and young individuals, including individuals with mental disorders or who are otherwise vulnerable. Furthermore, there is a trend towards increased organization offline. For instance, in Denmark and other Western countries, right-wing extremists are establishing so-called Active Clubs where the focus is on training martial arts and cultivating right-wing extremist narratives. Additionally, there have been examples where young right-wing extremists have combined online extremist activities with offline organizational activities.

The most likely right-wing extremist terrorist attack in Denmark is an attack by a lone actor radicalized online or a small group that may interact both online and offline. Further, CTA assesses that a threat may emanate from individuals on the periphery of established right-wing extremist networks who are susceptible to radicalization and who may find identity, inspiration, and a sense of belonging within the right-wing extremist community.

Right-wing extremist target selection does not follow a consistent and predictable pattern. The target may change during the planning phase, and the selection process may be influenced by factors such as propaganda, current agendas, copycat effects, personal networks and preferences as well as the capability of the attack planner. CTA assesses that the most likely targets of a right-wing extremist terrorist attack in Denmark (in no particular order) are Muslim targets, Jewish targets, LGBT+ targets, authority targets and/or critical infrastructure as well as individuals and groups considered a threat to white population groups. The conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine has prompted a greater focus on anti-Semitic and anti-Palestinian narratives in parts of the right-wing extremist community. See pages 8-9 for more on this topic.

2.1 Developments in the West

The terrorist threat from right-wing extremists in the West remains closely linked to dynamics online. Lone actors radicalized online were behind the majority of the committed and foiled right-wing extremist terrorist attacks in 2022 and 2023. Extremist material is propagated online in large international right-wing extremist networks such as Terrorgram⁵ as well as in smaller groups and networks via encrypted and unencrypted platforms and instant messaging services such as Telegram, Facebook and Discord.

CTA assesses that, after the COVID-19 pandemic, right-wing extremists increasingly organize and establish networks offline. International events such as concerts, right-wing extremist memorial days and street marches are once again rallying the community. Generally, Western countries are witnessing an increase in the number of new, smaller groups as well as a stronger focus on physical training and capability building. This is exemplified in the establishment of so-called Active Clubs, a new type of international organization where right-wing extremists gather in small local groups to pursue shared interests in martial arts, physical training as well as idolization of nationalist and extremist right-wing narratives. The visual aesthetics put forward by the Active Clubs is more mainstream, with members appearing physically fit and style-conscious, while swastikas and aesthetics that glorify violence are rare. CTA assesses that it is **highly likely** that Active Clubs may also appeal to individuals who are not necessarily right-wing extremists, such as people from the martial arts and hooligan communities.

CTA assesses that Active Clubs are part of a trend in the West where right-wing extremists prepare for an impending crisis and/or societal collapse and therefore focus on recruitment, radicalization, and capability building as well as on general influencing of public opinion in a right-wing extremist direction. ■

5) For more information about Terrorgram, see the box on page 24.



2.2 Communities and activities

The right-wing extremist community in Denmark comprises a number of offline and online networks and groups. Their degree of hierarchy, structure, and membership requirements ranges from fixed admission procedures and established leadership structures to informal and leaderless communities.

Danish right-wing extremists use and administer a large number of open and closed Danish and international online forums located on a wide range of different platforms and instant messaging services such as Telegram and Discord. CTA assesses that the number of right-wing extremists online far exceeds the number of right-wing extremists in groups who interact offline. Today, all right-wing extremist groups and networks use online platforms and instant messaging services for communication, dissemination of propaganda, and recruitment. These dynamics are often reinforced by the platforms' algorithms, which help draw attention to and spread right-wing extremist propaganda.

CTA assesses that online recruitment to right-wing extremist communities in the West and in Denmark has become more proactive and strategic in recent years. Potentially interested members of open forums are invited into more closed groups where radicalization takes place.



In some cases, interactions online lead to invitations to attend offline activities.

It is **likely** that involvement in groups where there are incitements to violence or dissemination of bomb-making manuals may particularly affect young and/or vulnerable people's assessment of when it is considered legitimate to commit acts of violence. In Denmark and other Western countries, young people who have met online are increasingly establishing groups that also meet offline. CTA assesses that this dynamic shows that online and offline domains should no longer be considered two separate worlds. Thus, it is common for extremists to find inspiration in one domain while acting in the other.

Danish and international right-wing extremist communities are working to influence public opinion on right-wing extremist key issues and thereby make right-wing extremist views more mainstream. This approach is known as shifting the Overton Window.⁶ The concept gained relevance in the context of terrorism when the right-wing extremist perpetrator of the terrorist attack on an LGBT+ bar in Slovakia in 2022 referred to it in his manifesto.

It is **likely** that recruitment and propaganda strategies in Denmark and other Western countries may increase the number of right-wing extremists and/or the number of people exposed to right-wing extremist material. In this context, CTA assesses that vulnerable young people who struggle being part of right-wing extremist offline communities have become important actors in right-wing extremist online communities. It is **possible** that some of these young people may be particularly susceptible to radicalization, which may heighten the terrorist threat from right-wing extremist lone actors in particular.

In Denmark, there have been no right-wing extremist attacks or identified attack planning in recent years, but in May 2023, a young Danish right-wing extremist linked to Feuerkrieg Division was sentenced to five and a half years in prison for attempting to recruit another person to a terrorist organization and for facilitating terrorist activities, as stipulated in Section 114 c and Section 114 e of the Danish Criminal Code. The ruling has been appealed. ■

⁶) The Overton Window is a theoretical concept named after the American researcher Joseph Overton. The concept is used to describe how the range of acceptable political opinions in a society can shift over time.

TERRORGRAM AND SAINTS

Terrorgram is an international right-wing extremist online network and collective that produces, gathers, and disseminates right-wing extremist propaganda. Terrorgram is a contraction of the words “Terror” and “Telegram”, the latter being the online platform used to disseminate most of the propaganda material. Terrorgram takes inspiration from the SIEGE culture and accelerationism⁷, and the primary focus of Terrorgram publications is on the use of violence to accelerate societal collapse, for example by calling for terrorist attacks and by sharing instructions relating to targets and modus operandi. In 2022, a 19-year-old right-wing extremist perpetrator shot and killed two people and seriously wounded a third in an attack on an LGBT+ bar in Bratislava, Slovakia. The perpetrator’s manifesto, in which he described his inspiration and motivation behind the attack, included direct references to Terrorgram.

The idolization of the perpetrators of right-wing extremist terrorist attacks is a key element of Terrorgram. Right-wing extremist perpetrators are referred to as “saints” and seen as idols. For example, Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 people in a right-wing extremist attack on two mosques in New Zealand in 2019, is referred to as “Saint Tarrant” and is portrayed as a saint in memes and iconography.

7) *The enemy perceptions of the SIEGE culture, which draws inspiration from accelerationism, largely coincide with those of other right-wing extremist groups, but focus is on the fight against “The System”.*

Accelerationism is a key concept in modern right-wing extremism. The concept encapsulates the idea of saving “the white race” by accelerating societal collapse and provoking a race war using terrorism as a tool to destabilize society.

2.3 Ideologies and cultures

Danish right-wing extremists take inspiration from different political and ideological agendas, including conspiracy theories. CTA assesses that Denmark and other Western countries are home to a number of right-wing extremist individuals and organizations operating within clearly defined ideological frameworks, including classic National Socialist organizations. Other groups operate, typically online, from a compound, yet coherent ideological basis. One example of this is the so-called SIEGE culture.

CTA assesses that the amount of right-wing extremist online communities with more loosely defined ideological positions is increasing, and that these communities often include minors and young individuals. People in the communities often see themselves as part of an international online community and attach less importance to their affiliation with a specific organization or group. Instead, they construct narratives and enemy perceptions with inspiration from right-wing extremist sources that glorify violence and violent aesthetics and idolize right-wing extremist “saints”. Thus, the importance of ideology and organizational structure is declining, allowing more scope for individual, often hybrid, beliefs and communities. For example, in parallel with right-wing extremism, there is a fascination with true crime (e.g. mass murderers), school shootings and gore (i.e. explicit extreme violence such as execution videos).

CTA assesses that the anti-state focus of Danish right-wing extremists that gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic is being maintained through enhanced capability building triggered by the community’s fundamental distrust in the authorities’ ability to protect the best interest of the citizens. CTA further assesses that the focus on anti-Semitic narratives and conspiracy theories has grown in recent years, partly due to inspiration from extremist anti-establishment conspiracy theories about perceived “evil elites”. Anti-Semitic narratives are being maintained and reinforced through current events abroad, for example the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine. This may potentially increase the threat against Jewish targets. ■

HYBRIDIZATION AND LONE ACTORS

CTA defines hybridization as a process in which the combination of different ideologies, world views or communities leads to the creation of new extremist narratives and modi operandi among individuals, groups or communities.

CTA notes that there is a growing trend among extremists in Denmark and other Western countries to mix traditional ideological and religious narratives as well as non-ideological narratives, expressions and modi operandi. Today, extremists take inspiration from each other across ideologic/religious divides, and/or they construct new, individualized enemy perceptions and narratives. Societal trends and technological developments are creating an environment in which extremist narratives are increasingly combined. This allows individual extremists to construct their own enemy perceptions and world views based on ideological as well as religious convictions, with factors such as conspiracy theories, fascination with violence, or mental disorders also adding to the picture.

A hybrid world view can be motivated by several factors. Some extremist actors are motivated by new political narratives and agendas that cannot be accommodated within existing ideologies, while others are mainly motivated by personal issues. The latter phenomenon, which in academia is often referred to as lone actor grievance-fuelled violence, implies that individual actors couple their own personal experiences with wider agendas. This makes it difficult to distinguish clearly between ideological conviction, criminal intent, and personal motivation as the driver of a specific act of violence. CTA assesses that hybridization is often based on right-wing extremist narratives, but that it also occurs among other extremists.

For more information about the concept of hybridization, see the **Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2023**.

03

Anti-establishment extremism

DEFINITION

Anti-establishment extremism refers to a non-ideological and often conspiracy theory-driven community that fully or partially rejects existing national and international institutions of authority, and that legitimizes and accepts the use of violence to achieve political ends.



SUMMARY

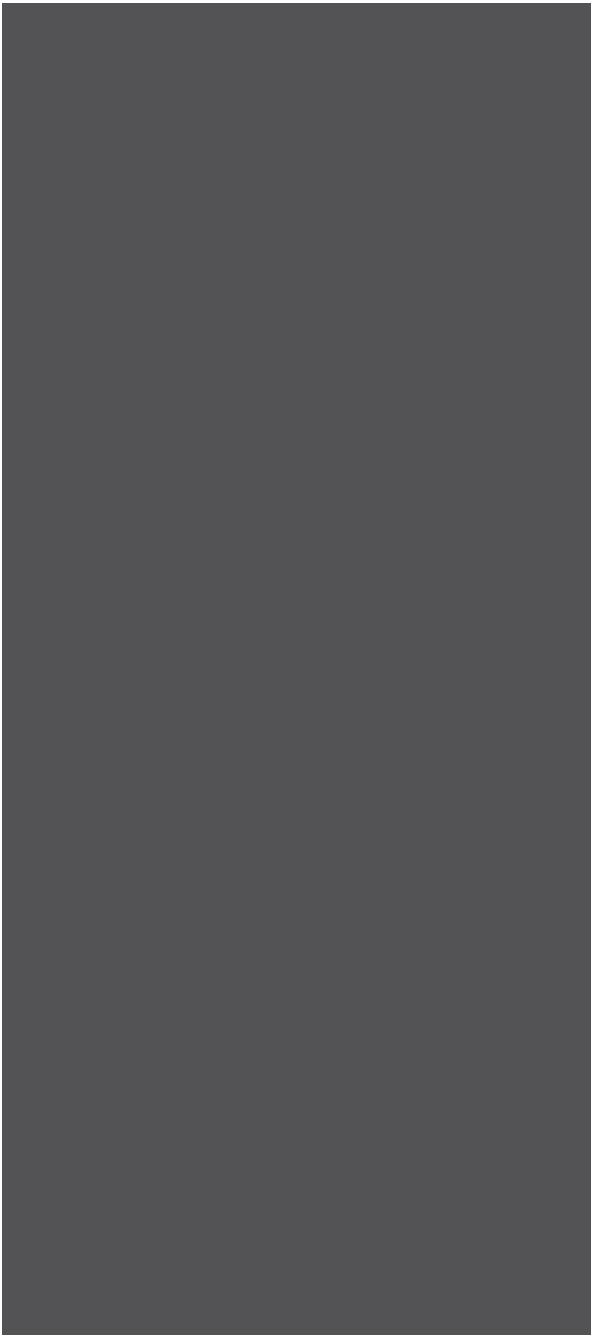
CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from anti-establishment extremists remains at the level of **limited**. Whereas anti-establishment extremism in Denmark used to be highly driven by opposition to the restrictions following from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now characterized by a number of parallel, wide-ranging, and volatile agendas, which means that the extremist anti-establishment community remains active.

The continued high activity level is mainly driven by prominent and agenda-setting individuals with many followers online. These actors are able to lead and mobilize their followers to act, thereby creating an intense negative focus on specific individuals. They are not necessarily seeking to take violent action themselves, but they produce and disseminate propaganda, conspiracy theories, and threat-inducing narratives on mainstream platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. Such narratives can be characterized as extremist because they legitimize violence and thereby have the potential to incite the use of violence. Consequently, it is **possible** that threat-inducing narratives can have an indirect threat impact. An indirect threat impact means that there is no explicit incitement to carry out an attack. However, the accumulated amount of threats, e.g. on social media, and the substantial negative media exposure may serve to indirectly single out individual targets. Such an attack may, depending on the circumstances, be characterized as terrorism. Furthermore, the narratives may potentially contribute to eroding trust in the authorities and civil society institutions in the long term.

The most likely terrorist attack by anti-establishment extremists in Denmark is an attack carried out by a lone actor or a small group, potentially influenced by threat-inducing narratives that are typically disseminated online.

CTA assesses that the activity level in the offline extremist anti-establishment community is generally lower today than during the COVID-19 pandemic, but that the offline segment of the community can be reactivated in the future event of a perceived crisis situation. CTA assesses that the most likely targets of extremist anti-establishment terrorism in Denmark are individuals such as politicians, public officials and experts, or institutions exposed in an extremist anti-establishment narrative.

Within the anti-establishment extremist community there are several prevalent conspiracy theories, including theories about alleged secret elites involved in sexual child abuse. Currently, the community is particularly focused on conspiracy narratives regarding the existence of a Jewish elite. The conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine has exacerbated anti-Semitic enemy perceptions involving Jewish elites in some segments of the extremist anti-establishment community. See pages 8-9 for more on this topic.



3.1 Developments in the West

The number of terrorist attacks by anti-establishment extremists in the West declined from 2022 to 2023. However, a number of incidents have occurred that cannot be characterized as violent attacks against individuals. For example, six arson attacks against schools in Belgium believed by the authorities to be linked to anti-establishment extremism and conspiracy theories. In this case, a school's sexual education programme was perceived as the authorities' introduction of a "paedophile system" and as a scheme to push children to change gender. CTA assesses that issues concerning identity politics, particularly aspects of gender and sexuality, have been a common denominator for several extremist anti-establishment incidents in the West.

Following the harassment of health professionals and public officials in connection with the authorities' handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, several Western countries have seen a general growth in hostility against representatives of authority. A similar trend can be observed in Denmark, where some public-sector employees carry personal attack alarms due to the growth in cases of harassment and threats. CTA assesses that it is



possible that this increase is partly due to the propagation by anti-establishment extremists of threat-inducing narratives depicting the authorities and their representatives as part of an illegitimate or evil elite.

Threat-inducing narratives are often directed at politicians and other public figures. The scope and nature of threats may trigger behavioural changes in the person receiving the threats. For instance, the person may choose to become less visible in the public debate or even withdraw from politics altogether. When threats and harassment, including threats and harassment based on extremist narratives, have this kind of chilling effect, it jeopardizes a key prerequisite to democracy: That a free debate, based on facts, can take place without the contributors having to fear the consequences.

The anti-establishment extremist community in Denmark and other Western countries often views the perceived social elite through the lens of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, which prepares the ground for hybridization with right-wing extremist communities, ideas and *modi operandi*. ■

EXAMPLE OF HYBRIDIZATION

There are several overlaps between right-wing extremists and anti-establishment extremists. The reason for this is that conspiracy theories play a major role in both communities and that enemy perceptions coincide, for example in relation to Jews, LGBT+ and the authorities.

However, the manifestations, particularly of anti-Semitism, vary. For right-wing extremists, anti-Semitism is founded on matters regarding race, while the anti-establishment community is focused on conspiratorial ideas about a perceived evil Jewish elite, but not usually on Jews in general. The differences with regard to race keep the two communities from fusing completely.

Right-wing extremists mainly affect the anti-establishment community in that they attempt to radicalize and recruit individuals who may not have previously subscribed to a right-wing extremist ideology, but who are considered highly critical of the authorities and other overlapping perceived enemies. Conversely, key players in the anti-establishment community are seen to successfully set agendas that affect the current focus of right-wing extremists.

3.2 Communities

The extremist anti-establishment community in Denmark mainly consists of individuals, small offline groups and larger online communities with negative perceptions of the authorities. Unlike other extremist communities, the anti-establishment community does not have a unifying ideology or a clearly defined goal apart from their shared opposition to the authorities. Instead, extremist anti-establishment activities are typically driven by individuals acting on personal motives and the idea of belonging to and representing a larger group of like-minded individuals fighting for “the people”. The community is thus strongly influenced by personal perceived negative experiences with the authorities that are viewed within the broader narrative of the community. The community is also united by the widely held belief that, together, the individuals involved can establish a “true” democracy, although they do not agree what this involves. The lack of a unifying ideology means that the extremist anti-establishment community can be characterized as a loosely structured network with a very low degree of formal organization, limited offline group interaction, and a high degree of informal online networks.

Today, the anti-establishment extremist community in Denmark is primarily active online, and conspiracy theories and narratives mainly emerge and develop online. For example, social media and other online forums, both open and closed, are used by anti-establishment extremists to

make threatening comments about prominent politicians and public officials and to spread conspiracy theories and threat-inducing narratives. The narratives are often disseminated by leading and agenda-setting individuals, and primarily on mainstream social media. The persistent and massive propagation of narratives means that anti-establishment extremists in Denmark can reach a relatively larger potential target group for radicalization and mobilization than other extremist communities. Moreover, it increases the probability of influencing vulnerable and susceptible individuals to commit acts of violence.

The anti-establishment extremist community largely makes use of alternative news sources, particularly material from international online forums propagating conspiracy theories. The community often finds inspiration in conspiracy theory trends from other Western countries and transfers these to a Danish context, creating echo chambers that allow anti-establishment extremists to build, reaffirm, and reinforce an unchallenged view of the world. In this context, CTA assesses that it is **highly likely** that the extremist anti-establishment community will be susceptible to conspiracy theories and/or misinformation disseminated with the aim of destabilizing Danish society. CTA further assesses that it is **likely** that incidents or acts taking place outside Denmark may have a spill over effect on the anti-establishment extremist community in Denmark. ■

INDIRECT THREAT IMPACT VIA THREATENING OR HOSTILE POSTS

CTA assesses that certain individuals may perceive threatening or hostile posts on social media as legitimization of acts of violence. Furthermore, these individuals may see acts of violence as a means to achieve status and recognition within a larger community. CTA assesses that the amount and exposure of threatening or hostile posts may increase the risk that certain individuals, merely by exposure to other peoples' views and opinions, may find inspiration to commit an act of violence that may be characterized as terrorism subject to a specific legal assessment.

3.3 Sovereign citizen movements

A distinct segment of the extremist anti-establishment community in Denmark and other Western countries are the so-called sovereign citizen movements. Sovereign citizen movement is a collective term for groups and individuals who, for different reasons and with different motives, refuse to recognize the legitimacy and authority of the state and the authorities. Consequently, they feel no obligation to respect current legislation and aim to establish parallel societies.

Because of their anti-state convictions, sovereign citizen movements pose a potential threat to public authorities. It is **less likely** that sovereign citizen movements pose a terrorist threat in Denmark, but potential lone actors from the extremist anti-establishment community may sympathize, fully or partly, with the sovereign citizen movement along with other anti-establishment extremist narratives.

In Denmark and other Western countries, the threat from supporters of the sovereign citizen idea is especially likely to materialize when these individuals resist arrest or refuse to follow directions from the authorities by taking violent action that may be characterized as terrorism subject to a specific legal assessment. For example, in March 2023, a German police officer was shot and wounded by a member of the German Reichsbürger movement during a police action against the sovereign citizen community in Germany. ■

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of shattered glass. The glass is broken into many irregular, sharp-edged fragments that are interconnected, creating a complex, web-like pattern. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the sharp edges and the facets of the broken glass, giving it a crystalline appearance. The overall color palette is muted, with shades of brown, grey, and white.

04

Left-wing extremism

DEFINITION

Left-wing extremism is a generic term covering various political views on the far left of the political spectrum which legitimize and accept the use of violence to achieve political and ideological ends.



SUMMARY

CTA assesses that the terrorist threat from left-wing extremists remains at the level of **minimal**. The threat picture is characterized by a low readiness for violence in the broad left-wing extremist community in Denmark. Currently, the community is increasingly influenced by the climate agenda. Furthermore, the conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine has brought a renewed focus on pro-Palestinian and anti-imperialist narratives in parts of the left-wing extremist community. See pages 8-9 for more on this topic. At the same time, CTA assesses that the left-wing extremist community still has a strong organizational capability, reflected, for instance, in their ability to mobilize support for demonstrations and the use of doxing.⁸ Moreover, the community has individuals at its core who are willing to use violence. Both of these factors may affect the overall threat picture. The threat from left-wing extremists in Denmark currently emanates from small offline groups who embrace anarchist and anti-fascist narratives. The groups perceive right-wing extremist individuals and groups in Denmark as their primary enemies while at the same time incorporating anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist views.

It is **unlikely** that left-wing extremists in Denmark will carry out a terrorist attack in the coming year. This does not necessarily imply a complete absence of activities that could be characterized as terrorism subject to a specific legal assessment. The most likely act of violence by left-wing extremists in Denmark would be assaults on political opponents, particularly opponents perceived as right-wing extremists. CTA assesses that Danish left-wing extremists increasingly take inspiration from international agendas and cooperative relations, which may increase the terrorist threat in the long term.

8) *Doxing is the collection and publication of personal information about political opponents in order to intimidate and discredit the victim publicly, thereby impeding their political activities.*



4.1 Developments in the West

In recent years, politically motivated violence committed by left-wing extremists in the West has not caused fatalities and has thus been less extreme than violence committed by other types of extremists. However, the past year has seen an increase in the intensity and number of attacks in the West committed by left-wing extremists. For example, in connection with the commemoration of a neo-Nazi memorial day in Budapest in February 2023, the Germany-based “Hammerbande” was behind several attacks that could be characterized as aggravated violence against individuals perceived as right-wing extremists. Other left-wing extremists have in recent years carried out several bomb and arson attacks against government buildings and other physical installations on several locations in Europe. The attacks have primarily taken place in countries with a historically strong representation of left-wing extremists. ■

4.2 Communities

CTA assesses that, after several years of minimal activity, the left-wing extremist community in Denmark is currently seeing an increase in activity which is now comparable to pre-COVID-19 levels, and consequently there has also been a slight increase in the use of violence. Despite the generally low readiness for violence, CTA assesses that some individuals at the core of the left-wing extremist community in the West and in Denmark, with clearly defined enemy perceptions and a will to act, are still ready to use violence. CTA further assesses that the core of the left-wing extremist community has a strong organizational capability enabling them to dox and threaten political opponents and to quickly mobilize broad support from the community for demonstrations and actions; particularly in situations where current agendas have a unifying effect.

In 2023, Danish left-wing extremists increased their presence in public places, for example in connection with demonstrations. This increases the risk of physical confrontations between left-wing extremists and their per-

ceived political opponents as well as the police. It is **possible** that this trend may cause an increase in Danish left-wing extremists' use of violence.

A number of the agendas traditionally associated with the political left - e.g. climate, anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - are receiving renewed attention due to the general developments in Western societies. CTA assesses that this may increase the basis of mobilization in the left-wing extremist community in Denmark and enable the community to quickly mobilize a larger number of people around these agendas.

The same agendas have also caused increased activity among left-wing extremists abroad who are in contact with the Danish community. Therefore, CTA assesses that there is currently a greater potential for Danish left-wing extremists to cooperate with and/or be inspired by like-minded groups and activists abroad, particularly in relation to the climate agenda. This may affect the threat picture in the coming year. ■



05

Other factors affecting the threat picture



A number of other factors may affect the terrorist threat to Denmark. These factors may have a violent threat potential that can lead to actions which subject to a specific legal assessment may be characterized as terrorism.

5.1 State actors involved in terrorism and terrorist-like activities

The global security policy landscape is volatile and complex. The world is undergoing a geopolitical transition in which the US-led, liberal world order is under pressure from states aiming for less Western dominance on the global scene. This has led to a situation affected by more intense competition and conflict between states, with some state actors exhibiting intent to use acts of terrorism to pursue political goals, hereunder in the West. Some of these actors have in recent years demonstrated intent to direct or support terrorist attacks or other acts of violence in Europe, i.a. via assassinations of political opponents exiled in Europe.

Historically, there have been several examples of state-sponsored terrorist attacks and other targeted acts of violence, e.g. against political opponents. For example, several attacks in Europe in the 1980s involving Libyan state authorities, including the bombing of an American passenger airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Another example is the attack on an Israeli tourist bus by the Iran-backed group Hezbollah in Bulgaria in 2012.

Acts that may be characterized as terrorism and that involve a state actor may target the state's own population, individuals or organizations abroad, or other states and their populations. Apart from direct state terrorism, state terrorism may also manifest indirectly through actors controlled or supported by the state at one or more stages.

A recent example of this is a case from 2018 in which a Norwegian individual of Iranian descent was convicted of complicity in attempted murder of an exiled Iranian living in Ringsted, Denmark. According to the court's judgment, the person acted on behalf of an Iranian intelligence service. Furthermore, in Europe, the assassination and attempted assassination of Chechen exile opposition members have in media reportings been linked to Russian authorities. For example, in 2019, a Chechen exile was shot and killed in Berlin. Various methods are used in the attacks, including involvement of individuals with direct ties to a state actor and outsourcing of assassinations to criminal networks or rebel groups acting as proxies for the relevant state.

CTA assesses that there is an increased intent among certain states to support targeted use of violence in the West. Moreover, state actors may react directly or indirectly to cases that are attracting interest and engagement from specific parts of the population, which may consequently affect the terrorist threat to Denmark. An example of this was when Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Khamenei reacted to the Quran desecrations in 2023, stating that any indication by a state of support for the Quran desecrations was to be treated as a declaration of war. Reactions may also include propaganda or disinformation that may ultimately mobilize individuals or groups to carry out a terrorist attack on their own. ■

5.2 Diaspora groups and international events

Conflicts and isolated events abroad may spark reactions from individuals in Denmark and potentially develop into acts of violence that may be characterized as terrorism subject to a specific legal assessment.

Reactions may come from individuals in the diaspora of the country in question, or they may be directed at these individuals. The reactions may also come from people who are strongly committed to a specific cause although they have no personal connection to the country it involves.

Reactions from individuals or groups of people may manifest as attacks against other countries' diplomatic representations, politicians, authority representatives, political meetings, or activities linked to other countries or random citizens in Denmark.

The conflict between Israel and militant groups in Palestine, which escalated in October 2023, is an example of an international event that could potentially inspire acts of violence in Denmark against Jewish/Israeli as well as Muslim interests and targets.

Additional information on diaspora groups is available in PET's **Assessment of the Espionage Threat to Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland 2023**. ■

5.3 Climate extremism

Climate extremism is a generic term covering various political views which legitimize and accept the use of violence in the fight to protect the environment and the climate.

CTA assesses that there are currently no extremist climate groups in Denmark that will use violent forms of action in their fight to promote the climate agenda. However, climate activists experience a growing sense of urgency to take concrete action. CTA assesses that this creates a potential for climate activists in Denmark to adopt more confrontational methods in the coming years.

At the same time, relations are developing between climate activists and parts of the left-wing extremist community. CTA assesses that both communities take inspiration from and are increasingly cooperating with like-minded groups and individuals abroad, especially in Sweden and Germany. CTA further assesses that the relations between activists and extremists abroad and the communities in Denmark may cause individuals and groups in Denmark to use violent forms of action in their fight to promote the climate agenda in the short to medium term.

The political focus on the climate agenda has also triggered political and activist reactions motivated by opposition to climate and environmental action. CTA assesses that the climate agenda may potentially serve to exacerbate political polarization of the Danish society in the medium term. ■

5.4 Refugees and migration

Generally, the area of refugees and migration does not in itself have a direct impact on the terrorist threat to Denmark. However, there may be derived effects on the threat. For example, radicalized individuals may enter Europe and Denmark, and refugees and migrants who are facing difficult life circumstances may be particularly susceptible to radicalization.

CTA assesses that a substantial increase in the number of refugees and/or migrants entering Europe and Denmark could affect the authorities' ability to identify individuals posing a potential threat to the West, including Denmark, in due time.

Furthermore, a substantial increase in the number of refugees and/or migrants entering Denmark as well as increased attention given to this issue could affect the terrorist threat to Denmark by way of reactions from, for example, right-wing extremists. ■

5.5 Attacks on schools

Over the past years, there have been a number of cases in which individuals in Denmark with an interest in extremist communities have expressed an interest in attacking schools. CTA assesses that several of these cases involve individuals engaged in online hybrid communities fascinated with violence and where school shooters and extremist perpetrators are revered without it necessarily being connected to a political, ideological, and/or religious motive. ■

5.6 Incels

The term incel is an identity label adopted by a certain group of people to describe their feeling of living in involuntary celibacy. Incels gather in various online communities to share this experience.

CTA assesses that the segment of the incel culture which is radicalized and willing to use violence may be relevant to the terrorist threat to Denmark, as this form of extremism may carry an element of politically motivated violence. In June 2023, a Canadian court categorized, for the first time, an incel culture-inspired attack as a terrorist attack, and in November 2023, the perpetrator was sentenced to life in prison. The case involved a machete attack carried out on 24 February 2020 at a massage parlour in Toronto, Canada. ■

5.7 Mental disorders

In recent years, the threat picture in the West has been dominated by terrorist attacks carried out by individuals acting alone, several of whom were suffering from mental disorders. Furthermore, there have been examples of perpetrators with mental disorders adopting modi operandi known from terrorist attacks, without the acts necessarily reflecting a political, ideological, and/or religious motive.

A person's mental state and any mental disorders they may suffer from can greatly influence the person's behaviour and motivation to act. For some radicalized individuals with a mental disorder, there is a strong synergy between their disorder and their extremist mind-set. For others, the disorder may be a limiting factor in terms of their radicalization or it may be completely disconnected from it. A mental disorder is not necessarily decisive in respect of an individual's ability and will to commit an act of terrorism but can be one of several factors which may trigger or intensify a radicalization process. Sometimes, the threat may be aggravated if the mental disorder appears in conjunction with other risk factors, such as social isolation, marginalization, and life-altering events.

If a perpetrator suffers from a mental disorder, it may be difficult for the authorities to assess whether actions committed by that person constitute acts of terrorism. ■

5.8 Individuals associated with organized crime

Organized crime networks are generally motivated by a desire to promote their own interests, i.e. primarily to earn money through criminal activities and achieve status across criminal environments. Historically, there have nevertheless been examples of militant Islamists using contacts within criminal networks when building capabilities and planning terrorist attacks. Traditionally, people associated with organized crime who have helped militant Islamist perpetrators acquire weapons or build capabilities have most likely been unaware of or uninterested in the intended use of the weapons. Examples from abroad show that some organized crime networks can have an independent negative impact on national security by means of their capability and willingness to use violence.

In other examples from abroad, criminal networks have carried out violent attacks such as assassinations on behalf of actors driven by a political or religious motive; a phenomenon known as crime-as-a-service. Furthermore, there have been several examples in Europe where ministers, judges, or other individuals with key societal functions have been threatened, intimidated or killed by people from criminal networks, solely due to their actions as official representatives.

Historically, there have been examples of pragmatic cooperation between individuals associated with criminal networks and militant groups, and some terrorist groups abroad are financing parts of their activities through drug trafficking. Finally, there is a possibility that individuals from criminal networks actively support or cooperate with militant groups abroad because of their own personal convictions. Relations of this type may also affect the threat to Denmark from militant groups abroad. ■

06

The terrorist threat to Greenland and the Faroe Islands

6.1 The terrorist threat to Greenland

The terrorist threat to Greenland remains at the level of **minimal**. CTA is not aware of Greenland having been subject to attention from militant Islamist actors, for example in connection with the cases of perceived insults to Islam in the past year. Moreover, CTA is not familiar with any other matters that have affected the terrorist threat to Greenland over the past year.

It is **likely** that the trend in recent years towards hybridization of the terrorist threat, increasing online activity in extremist communities and a growing number of young extremist actors may affect the threat picture in Greenland in the same way that it affects other parts of the Danish Realm.

However, CTA assesses that violent extremism is less widespread in Greenland than in Denmark. Yet, extremist propaganda may still influence individuals in Greenland to commit acts of violence. Socially marginalized or vulnerable young people may be particularly susceptible to radicalization.

CTA assesses that the easier access to weapons and explosives in Greenland, compared to other parts of the Danish Realm, might increase the risk of an individual carrying out an attack with greater damaging effect. ■

6.2 The terrorist threat to the Faroe Islands

The terrorist threat to the Faroe Islands remains at the level of **minimal**. CTA is not aware of the Faroe Islands having been subject to attention from militant Islamist actors, for example in connection with the cases of perceived insults to Islam in the past year. Moreover, CTA is not familiar with any other matters that have affected the terrorist threat to the Faroe Islands over the past year.

It is **likely** that the trend in recent years towards hybridization of the terrorist threat, increasing online activity in extremist communities, and a growing number of young extremist actors may affect the threat picture in the Faroe Islands in the same way that it affects other parts of the Danish Realm.

However, CTA assesses that violent extremism is less widespread in the Faroe Islands than in Denmark. Yet, extremist propaganda may still influence individuals living in or travelling to the Faroe Islands to commit acts of violence. This may be triggered by political single issues such as animal welfare. Socially marginalized or vulnerable young people may be particularly susceptible to radicalization. ■

Modi operandi

CTA assesses that terrorists' choice of modus operandi is determined by a number of factors, including trends in propaganda and on online platforms, the perpetrator's capability and access to resources, the intended target, and inspiration from other attacks. The capability in extremist communities may be enhanced through recruitment or radicalization of key figures with legitimate access to facilities, resources or information.

The following sections describe the modi operandi that CTA assesses to be relevant for potential perpetrators in connection with a terrorist attack in Denmark.

7.1 Easily accessible means, firearms and improvised explosive devices



Terrorist attacks with easily accessible means can be carried out spontaneously or following a very short planning phase. In Denmark, easily accessible means mainly include bladed weapons, bludgeons, incendiary devices and vehicles. Attacks with easily accessible means may cause major harm.

CTA assesses that there are extremists in Denmark with the capability to commit acts of terrorism using firearms.

According to CTA's assessment, there are extremists in Denmark with the capability to make small improvised explosive devices and use these for terrorist attacks. Instructions and manuals on how to make various explosives and improvised explosive devices are available online and can be used by people with no prior training. However, the effect of such improvised explosive devices may vary considerably.

Production of improvised explosives is subject to a number of barriers, including restrictions on the sale of substances used to manufacture the explosives.

Some criminal networks in Denmark have contacts that enable procurement of factory-made explosives. Increased availability of such explosives may ease the production of improvised explosive devices for potential terrorist use.

CTA assesses that radicalized individuals who have received weapons training in a conflict zone such as Syria, Iraq or Ukraine, or who have knowledge of weapons from military service, shooting clubs, criminal networks, or elsewhere will be able to carry out high-impact attacks. ■

7.2 Improved firearms



Developments in 3D printing technology have made the manufacturing of improvised firearms far more accessible than previously. This has made it possible to bypass traditional barriers set up to control the access to firearms. Several online communities regarding this topic have emerged. In these communities, files and instructions are developed, designed, and shared. With these files and commercially available 3D printers, people can manufacture their own firearms and/or components for factory-made firearms. Moreover, several individuals have been arrested in Western countries due to various degrees of involvement in manufacturing 3D-printed firearms and/or weapons components. A few attacks have been carried out using improvised firearms, including an attack in Germany in 2019 and the assassination of Japan's former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2022. While these attacks involved improvised firearms, none of the firearms used were manufactured using 3D printing technology.

Despite the files and instructions circulating online, CTA assesses that certain barriers still exist that prevent individuals from manufacturing and using improvised firearms, including acquiring ammunition. However, CTA assesses that the continuous technological development in this area will gradually make it easier and cheaper to acquire and use improvised firearms. ■

7.3 Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's)



For a number of years, weaponized UAV's have been used in and around conflict zones such as Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Yemen, Lebanon and Gaza, and militant groups in these areas have demonstrated proficiency in the use of UAV's in attacks.

CTA is not aware of any terrorist attacks in the West carried out with weaponized UAV's, but CTA has information about foiled attacks in the West potentially involving the use of UAV's. In Denmark, final judgment was passed in 2021 against three individuals who were sentenced to imprisonment for ten years, four and a half years, and three years, respectively, in a case concerning shipment of UAV equipment to Islamic State in Syria.

Modifying or acquiring and using a weaponized UAV requires financial resources, technical know-how and access to explosives. However, CTA assesses that the continuous technological development in this area will gradually make it easier and cheaper to acquire UAV's with the aim of weaponization. ■

7.4 Chemical or biological agents



CTA assesses that there is limited capability among extremists in Denmark to weaponize biological agents or carry out chemical attacks using means other than unprocessed substances. However, various extremist propaganda publications have recurrently focused on the use of chemical agents, and militant Islamists in the West have occasionally attempted to manufacture various chemical substances. CTA assesses that there are extremists in Denmark who would be able to produce certain toxins suitable for use in a simple biological attack. However, the execution of an attack would also require insight into efficient means of dispersion of the agent.

In 2023, a person was arrested on suspicion of attempting to carry out a militant Islamist attack in Germany using ricin and cyanide. This illustrates the continued interest from militant Islamists in carrying out attacks using chemical and biological agents. However, CTA is not aware of such agents having been successfully used to carry out terrorist. ■

7.5 Cyber-related means



In their publication *The cyber threat against Denmark 2023*, the Centre for Cyber Security assesses that extremists in Denmark do not have the capability to commit cyberterrorism. Furthermore, the intent to carry out this type of attack is limited. The term cyberterrorism refers to serious cyberattacks aimed at causing an effect similar to that of conventional terrorism, including human injury or massive disruption of critical infrastructure. Additional information about the threat from cyberterrorism is available at the Centre for Cyber Security's website. ■



Center for Terroranalyse **CTA**

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