

# Prisons and Terrorism

## Extremist Offender Management in 10 European Countries

By Rajan Basra and Peter R. Neumann



There are an estimated 1,414 individuals held in custody for terrorism-related offences across the 10 countries surveyed.



When including those who are monitored for signs of their radicalisation, this increases to 3,080.



54% of the inmates monitored for signs of their extremism entered prison as 'regular' criminals, and not because of terrorism-related offences.



Almost half of these inmates (558) are in France. Most of the remainder are in Spain (329 inmates), Britain (238), and Belgium (136). The remainder are in Sweden (53), the Netherlands (36), Norway (34), Greece (~20) and Denmark (19). Germany does not provide national statistics.



The average sentence for terrorism offences varies from 5.5 years to 16 years, depending on the country.



Jihadists remain the most numerous and account for 82% of all extremist offenders who have been classified by their ideology. Supporters of the far right make up almost 7% of categorised offenders. Another 10% are classified as 'other', be they former members of ETA (the now-disbanded Basque separatist group), Kurdish groups such as the PKK, or individuals who do not follow a specific ideology. Less than 1% are categorised as left-wing or anarchist, with most of them imprisoned in Greece.



One country follows a policy of 'concentrating' their terrorist inmates (Netherlands). Three other countries have established separate units where they can place their most disruptive or dangerous terrorist inmates (Belgium, England and Wales, and France). One country has extremists in quasi 'isolation' (Spain). The remainder 'disperse' their inmates among the general prison population.



Not every country has extremism-specific rehabilitation programmes.



Violent Extremism Risk Assessment 2 Revised (VERA-2R) is the most widespread risk assessment tool used.

Since 2015 there have been 22 prison-related terrorist attacks and plots in Europe. 12 of these were carried out by perpetrators within two years of their release from prison. Six took place within prison.