



**PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

VERBAL NOTE

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, and referring to the note LA/COD/11/1 has the honor to provide the following information.

Terrorism threat assessment

In Finland, the terrorism threat level was raised in June 2017 and it remains at the level "elevated". The Finnish terrorism threat assessment is based on four levels and the level "elevated" corresponds to level 2 in this assessment. Currently, the most significant terrorist threat in Finland is posed by individual actors or small groups motivated by radical Islamist propaganda or encouraged by terrorist organisations. These persons are likely to have either direct or indirect links to radical Islamist networks or organisations. The Finnish Security Intelligence Agency (Supo) has become aware of more serious terrorism-related plans and projects in Finland. Some foreign terrorist fighters who originate from Finland have gained significant positions within ISIL (Da'esh) in particular and have an extensive network within the organisation.

After the collapse of the so-called "Islamic Caliphate", several female foreign terrorist fighters or female family members of foreign terrorist fighters with their children have sought refuge at Kurdish/SDF camps and some of them have expressed, by different means, a wish to return to Finland. Should FTFs or their family members return to Finland, they would be treated in accordance with the guidelines established in the Proposal for Arranging Cross-Sectoral Cooperation on Managing Returnees from Conflict Zones¹.

Currently, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service (Supo) has around 390 counterterrorism target individuals. The number has increased in the past few years. This trend is assessed to go on, as a consequence of radicalisation and detection of new networks. In addition to the increase in number, the links of target individuals to terrorist activity are also more direct and more serious than before. Finland's profile within the radical Islamist propaganda has become stronger. In this propaganda, Finland is viewed as a Western country and a part of

¹ Proposal for Arranging Cross-sectoral Cooperation on Managing Returnees from Conflict Zones including a proposal for combining NGOs' services with the action of the authorities, 7 April 2017, <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/79612>

anti-ISIL coalition. Propaganda is also produced in Finnish language and directed against Finland. Active members of radical Islamist networks take part in the operational activity of terrorist organisations especially in the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq. The parts operating in Finland have so far focused on support activities and spreading of the ideology. The networks try to grow both by radicalisation and by seeking new members in other ways. The changes occurring in the conflict zone or in the leadership of terrorist organisations, as well as strategic choices, might affect also the radical networks operating in Finland.

On 1 June 2019, new civilian intelligence legislation will enter into force in Finland with the goal of improving capabilities to protect against serious threats to national security. The President of the Republic approved the amendments to the Police Act and the Act on the Use of Network Traffic Intelligence in Civilian Intelligence on 26 April.

Terrorism related investigations

The National Bureau of Investigation has continued a pre-trial investigation, originally mandated in 2016 by the Prosecutor General of Finland concerning two murders committed with terrorist intent in 2014. Two Iraqi males were acquitted in 2018 by the Pirkanmaa District Court due to the lack of evidence. However, following an appeal by the State Prosecutor to Turku Court of Appeal and a request from the State Prosecutor, the pre-trial investigation continued. The Turku Court of Appeal is expected to give a judgment during the autumn of 2019.

The National Bureau of Investigation has issued warrants of arrest for persons related to five separate terrorist offences. According to the information the Police have, those persons have either fled from Finland or, based on un-confirmed information, have been killed at the conflict area controlled by ISIL (Da'esh). All the wanted persons are with foreign background and have either received or applied permanent residence permit or asylum in Finland.

Convictions

Based on the Turku knife attack in 2017, the Southwest District Court on 15 June 2018 found Abderrahman Bouanane guilty of two counts of murder committed with terrorist intent and eight counts of attempted murder committed with terrorist intent. He was sentenced to life in prison. Bouanane appealed, but later withdrew his appeal.

Recent measures in counter-terrorism and prevention of violent radicalization and extremism in Finland

Finland has continued to work to prevent terrorism and violent extremism. Finland continues to analyze the counter-terrorism measures already taken and targets the measures according to the changing threat environment. Finland's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy was updated in 2018 through a broad-based cooperation between public authorities. The updated strategy contains a number of policy definitions and strategic actions. The guiding principle in this strategy, as in the previous ones, is that any measures taken to counter terrorism are in compliance with human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

The first National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism was published in 2012. The action plan was renewed in 2016 to take into account the changes in the operating environment. The second National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent

Radicalisation and Extremism (2016) was assessed by KPMG on the assignment of the Ministry of the Interior.² The assessment was executed by exploring the background material given by various actors and interviewing the key actors. Based on the assessment, the plan will be updated again, and the new plan will be published in August 2019.

Proposal for Arranging Cross-sectoral Cooperation on Managing Returnees from Conflict Zones was adopted in April 2017.³ The objective is to reduce the possible risk of violence and radicalisation posed by the returnees by, among other things, promoting their integration into Finnish society. The model is based on the cooperation between authorities. Nongovernmental organizations are also involved in measures to integrate returnees.

The new Anchor Manual on Multi-Professional Anchor Work was published in March 2019.⁴ Anchor work refers to multi-professional cooperation targeted at children and adolescents to promote their wellbeing and prevent crime. The manual published aims to support the implementation, development and assessment of Anchor work in Finland. The manual is forward-looking and describes the Anchor model, which is based on research knowledge and good practices. The aim is to steer, support, and standardise Anchor work, so that young people have as equal as possible access to services nationwide.

Finland will have the transposition of the EU Directive (EU) 2016/681 on the use of passenger name record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime fully legislated on 1 of June 2019. The Finnish Parliament passed the legislation on the national implementation of the PNR Directive on 18 March 2019 and the law will enter into force on 1 June 2019. The new legislation defines the setting up of a national Passenger Information Unit (PIU). The Finnish PIU started operating already on 1 November 2016, and once the relevant legislation is in force, the PIU will be fully operational.

The National Bureau of Investigation and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service are currently updating the inter-agency cooperation agreement with the aim of efficient and productive execution of tasks laid down in national legislation for both agencies in their respective area of responsibility.

Information gathering has been enhanced due to reduction of ISIL-controlled territory as it may lead to the return of foreign terrorist fighters back to Europe and Finland. In Finland counter-terrorism target persons or persons who have travelled abroad to become foreign terrorist fighters are mainly with foreign background and have either received or applied permanent residence permit or asylum in Finland.

² Assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism, 26 April 2019, <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161565>

³ Proposal for Arranging Cross-sectoral Cooperation on Managing Returnees from Conflict Zones including a proposal for combining NGOs' services with the action of the authorities, 7 April 2017, <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/79612>

⁴ Anchor Manual on Multi-Professional Anchor Work, 27 March 2019, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/1410869/ankkuritoiminnan-tavoitteena-on-auttaa-nuoria-koko-suomessa-yhden-luukunperiaatteella?_101_INSTANCE_3wyslLo1Z0ni_languageld=en_US

The National Police Board has continued the implementation of strategic actions defined in the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2018-2021 giving due regard for the compliance with basic and human rights, rule of law and international law.

During 2018, the National Police Board filed a complaint in administrative judicial proceeding with the aim of abolishing the Nordic Resistance Movement and its accessory functions. Pirkanmaa District Court, as a first instance, ruled in favor of the complaint, as did the Turku Court of Appeal after the Nordic Resistance Movement appealed.

Currently the case is in the Supreme Court after the Nordic Resistance Movement appealed demanding the dismissals of the Court of Appeal's judgment and the original complaint. The Supreme Court issued 28 March 2019 a temporary and immediate ban prohibiting all actions of the Nordic Resistance Movement until the case has been finally decided by the Supreme Court.

The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), acting on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, conducted a visit to the Republic of Finland from 9 to 11 April 2019 in follow-up to the Committee's initial visit in June 2012. The follow-up visit focused on progress made by Finland in implementing the Committee's 2012 visit recommendations, as well as on measures introduced to implement Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017) and other relevant Council resolutions.

National legislation

Many Criminal Code amendments required by the Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating terrorism came into force on 15 November 2018. The Penal Code was supplemented with provisions on an offence committed with terrorist intent regarding a radiological weapon and facilitation of travelling for the purpose of committing a terrorist offence (Chapter 34(a), Sections 1(a) and 5(c) of the Criminal Code). Some forms of serious cybercrime offences (aggravated damage to data, aggravated interference with communications and aggravated interference in an information system) were included in Section 1(1) regarding offences committed with terrorist intent. The provision on receiving training for the commission of a terrorist offence (Section 4(b)) was widened to cover self-study. The provision on travelling for the purpose of committing a terrorist offence (Section 5(b)) was amended to cover all travels for such purposes regardless for example of the nationality of the traveller or the destination. The provision on financing of terrorism (Section 5) was widened to cover the financing of new terrorist offences and new forms of already criminalized terrorist offences.

The Finnish Act on Preventing Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing 444/2017 covers the obligations laid down in the EU's Directive (EU) 2015/849 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing. In addition, the Finnish Act implements international recommendations by the Financial Action Task Force to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. The objectives of the Act and Directive are to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing, to promote their detection and investigation and to reinforce the tracing and recovery of the proceeds of crime.

The Directive (EU) 2015/849 has been amended by the Directive (EU) 2018/843 and these amendments should be transposed by January 2020. However, the requirements of the latest Directive have already been mainly implemented into the Finnish legislation. For

example, virtual currencies and services, which could involve a high risk of money laundering and terrorist financing, are covered by the Finnish legislation by the amendments force from 1 May 2019.

The Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations assurance of its highest consideration.

New York, 3 June 2019



Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations