

Lesson 2: Looking deeper into the link between religions, radicalisation and terrorism

This session has been prepared by DARTKE, Hungary



Lesson Outline

Target Group

Resettlement Workers
Prison officers Prison Management
Probation Officers
Parole Officers
Liaison Officers

Suggested Number of participants

14

Duration

2 hours

Equipment

- ✓ Data projector or large TV screen
- ✓ Laptop
- ✓ Flipchart
- ✓ Post-It

Malta's Muslim leaders condemn Paris attack

'A crime against freedom of expression and Islam'

Kurt Sansone

Muslim leaders in Malta have condemned the killing of French journalists, describing the act as a crime against freedom of expression and Islam.

Imam Mohammad Elisadi and Saqib Hussaini, president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, yesterday expressed solidarity with the French people.

"We categorically condemn this criminal attack irrespective of the identity of the perpetrator, their ideology or their motives... At this difficult time we express our full solidarity and sympathy with the French people against all kinds of extremism and terrorism," Mr Elisadi said.

He described the storming of the offices of satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* as "terror attack" and "an insult" to the prophet Mohammad and the teachings of Islam.

Mr Elisadi said reverence to Mohammad was not expressed through violence and bloodshed but by showing the true values of respect for the sanctity of human life.



French police secure a neighbourhood in Corcy, northeast of Paris, yesterday. Photo: Reuters

"This cowardly attack is against Islam and Muslims because it damages the image of Islam, fuels Islamophobia, hatred and injustice against the peaceful, innocent mainstream Muslims," Mr Elisadi said.

Continued on pages 4-5

Aim

Participants will develop a sensitive approach towards religions and radicalisation. The participants will familiarise with the world's main religions and get to know what religious radicalisation means. Islam radicalisation is a popular topic nowadays so this point will be discussed more. Furthermore, the participants will learn how to identify religious radicalisation and what security questions should be discussed when radicalism rises. Despite of the active and practical manual, this lesson is rather theoretical-oriented because of the subject. Dealing with religion is different in each country and it needs very careful approach, therefore it is advisable to shape this lesson country-specific.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

Participants will familiarise with the world's most important religions in brief. Furthermore, they gain knowledge about religious radicalisation, especially Islamic radicalisation. It is very useful because when somebody detects a slightly religiously radicalised prisoner he/she will know how to handle this sensitive situation.


Skills

Religious tolerance - participants will develop a new attitude towards prisoners in order to help eliminate their radical views.

Attitudes

The participants' communication and stress handling level will increase. Furthermore their sensitiveness towards recognition and prevention of religious radicalism are the key on this matter, because the violent acts often happen when the inmates are released from custody.

Introduction to lesson

 Have a look at the following video describing the most prevalent world religions:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6dCxo7t_aE

- Looking closely, it seems like all religions have a similar starting point – but what about the path religion takes? What fundamental differences can you mention?
- There are various stereotypes attached to the different religions. Can you mention a few?
- Which religion(s) do you think are more at risk for stereotypes revolving around radicalisation, terrorism and violence? Why do you think this is?

Development

Introductory level



Step 1: As the saying goes: 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'.

Even though the word 'Jihad' conjures up fear in the mind of many people, in Arabic the word merely means 'to strive', or to make 'a determined effort'. What people today are afraid of is the distorted meaning of the word. 'This tie, however, advances a twisted concept with little to do with the mainstream teaching of Islam.'



Read the following article: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2018/08/01/the-distortion-of-islam-that-drives-terrorism/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2c0b94fa2895

Points for discussion:

How do you think that such events distort the true meaning of a religion?

Do you think that the media plays a role (positive or negative) in the promotion of Islam?

Step 2: What do you understand by the terms 'Christian radicalisation' or 'Christian terrorism?' Do you think it is an issue? Why?



Now have a look at this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0p2HvG2wng>
Did your views change at all? How?

Step 3: Dealing with different violent religious radicalisations (see compulsory reading material:

Why Mark Anthony Conditt – a white Christian – isn't called a terrorist)

Step 4: Recognise the religious violent radicalisation

Advanced Level

Step 5: Moderate Reform Movement in Islam

Step 5: Diagnose and monitoring – How can we reduce the chances of violent religious radicalisation?



Conclusion

Introductory level

At the end of the lesson a discussion will start about the previously heard material. The facilitator should oversee the whole discussion as the participants argue about religious radicalisation. An important thing is to compare the different religions and radicalisations and find a common feature in it to help prevention in the future.

Advanced Level



Further discussion about the advanced material. Read the following text: A Muslim Letter to Christians: <https://www.newsweek.com/muslim-letter-christians-103603>

Do you think there can be a way to bridge the differences between the religions in an attempt to reduce violence and radical thinking?

Evaluation

Describe the most important religions in brief and show its “weak points” where radicalism could arise.



Reading Material

Introductory level

Compulsory reading:

Why Mark Anthony Conditt – a white Christian – isn't called a terrorist -
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/23/mark-anthony-conditt-terrorism-christianity>

Supplementary reading:

The dawn of Buddhist radicalism - <https://dailytimes.com.pk/194214/dawn-buddhist-radicalism/>

An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders (full text)
<https://www.acommonword.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ACW-English-Translation.pdf>

Inside the mind of a former radical jihadist | Manwar Ali
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwpil18TBdE>

Holy cow: as Hindu nationalism surges in India, cows are protected but minorities not so much
<https://theconversation.com/holy-cow-as-hindu-nationalism-surges-in-india-cows-are-protected-but-minorities-not-so-much-76632>

Advanced Level

Compulsory reading:

Byron R. Johnson: Addressing Religion and Spirituality in Correctional Settings: The Role of Faith-Based Prison Programs. In: APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality (Vol. 2) - An applied psychology of religion and spirit.

Prisons and Terrorism Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries. pp. 25-37.:
<https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Prisons-and-terrorism-15-countries.pdf>



Training for Detainees, Section 1
Workshop on Religious Studies

Information for the Facilitator

This topic is very sensitive, so the facilitator should make clear to every participant that the lecture discusses religion but it does not judge or criticise ones' personal belief. The session only tries to introduce the basics of religions and the show the possible connection points of radicalism. If anything serious happens during the lesson the facilitator should cease any hostilities between the participants.