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The phenomenon of Religious Terrorism Law enforcement measures of Italian Prison Administration

The raising of terrorist threat of the jihadist type, which is occurring in various countries in the world in often new and unusually violent shapes, prompted the Italian Prison Department to implement, over the years, a series of control and prevention measures increasingly refined and capable to counter the fundamentalist phenomenology.

In a wider context with the introduction of innovative and effective enforcement measures, the Department of Penitentiary Administration contributes by dealing with the study and analysis of radicalization and proselytism in prison through the monitoring of all those related to the crime of international terrorism and all subjects reported for alleged proselytizing activities and violent radicalization.

For the analysis of the phenomenon in question, this Department, makes use of a Central Investigative Unit which, with the collaboration of regional operating units and local specially trained contacts, coordinates information from the Institute's operators to monitor detainees.

1. GUIDELINES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE FOR PENITENTIARY SERVICES.

The guidelines for penitentiary services and for probation on radicalization and violent extremism, announced by the Council of Europe and adopted on the 2nd March 2016, by the Committee of Ministers, during the 1249th meeting of the Deputies of Ministers, had already been put in place with good practices by this Administration at an earlier time, and then shared with existing operational profiles through written instructions.

These guidelines recommend measures to be taken by the penitentiary and probation services in order to prevent people to be radicalized to the point of accepting opinions of violent extremism that can lead to acts of terrorism as well as measures to identify, manage and rehabilitate radicalized people.

2. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

The analysis and study of the phenomenon of radicalization and proselytism is articulated by the Department of Penitentiary Administration, on three different levels:

- **The first level**, which groups individuals by crimes related to international terrorism (AS2) and those of particular interest for acts that detect forms of proselytism, radicalization and / or recruitment.

- **The second level** (to put under special attention) and groups the detainees that within the prison have shown attitude that indicates their proximity to the jihadist ideology and therefore proselytizing and recruitment activities.
- **The third level** includes inmates who, given the general type of information provided by the Institute, deserve study for further evaluation as to be included into the first or second level, that is being left in or ousted from the third level.

For monitored and under attention inmates, data collection covers the aspects of daily prison life, normally and legitimately already in possession of the Penitentiary Institutes, such as:

- *stream of mail correspondence;*
- *telephone calls;*
- *conversations;*
- *parcels;*
- *money amounts;*
- *disciplinary offences;*
- *composition in prison room;*
- *behavioral rapport;*
- *any items of a similar nature which may further be useful for the examination of the subject.*

These informations, submitted by the staff of the Institutes in the database for the management of prisoners, are immediately available on-line and the analysis of the data is ensured at central level by the Investigative Unit of the Penitentiary Police.

It is noted that each control on subjects at risk of radicalization is carried out in full compliance with the guidelines of the Council of Europe at the Title III "*Fundamental Principles and general considerations*" letter b "*respect for the protection of the confidentiality of sensitive data*" recommends the following: "*Each control and restriction of contacts, correspondence and conversations of inmates due to suspicions of radicalization must be proportionate to the risk and must be made in full compliance with internationally recognized standards of human rights and on national laws on persons deprived of freedom and must comply with European penitentiary rules on prisoners' contacts with the outside world.*"

3. SITUATION ROOM¹

Since the 14th December 2015, this Department in order to assist the activity of study for this phenomenon, introduced in the application "Critical Events" the category "proselytism risks and radicalization" in which the Institutes' staff inserts all

¹ The sector '**situation room**', set up for connecting on-line the central administration with prisons and created to facilitate the flow and analysis of data - on staff, inmates, penitentiary facilities and critical events - provides, in this case, a preparatory support in the pursuit of risk analysis for radicalization and proselytism.

significant events and behaviors under the profile of radicalization and proselytism, thus allowing this administration a real-time view.

4. DETAINEES CONFINED FOR THE CRIME OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM.

In the allocations of inmates convicted of crimes related to international terrorism, the prison administration has avoided, in principle, the concentration in individual institutes, preferring a greater geographical distribution where there is less concentration of inmates of Islamic faith.

However the allocations of inmates are individually assessed and reviewed at regular intervals also based on the analysis and monitoring conducted

In any event, the aforesaid allocations meet the guidelines of the Council of Europe that as of Title IV "*Work of penitentiary services and of the probation*" letter c "*institutes or high security sections and transfers to other penitentiaries*" recommend the following: "21. *The need to confine prisoners convicted of terrorism-related offenses in institutes of high security or to subject them to high-security schemes in medium security institutions must be assessed on a case-to-case basis, and such decisions should be continuously reviewed at regular intervals...*"

5. INDICATORS OF RADICALIZATION

It should be duly taken into account that a change in behavior or a suspicious attitude is not a reliable indicator for a possible radicalization.

In general, there will be an array of different elements pointing at radicalization, and for this reason it is necessary a careful and differentiated observation.

Normally, this requires a constant and attentive observation by the Penitentiary Police and other penitentiary workers.

Behavioral changes can be manifested in various aspects of everyday life within an institution.

In order to provide additional insights to the Institutes a set of information called "**indicators on radicalization**" were given. Those detect situations worthy of attention such as changes both physical (dress style, beard growth, etc) and behavioral (intense prayer, hostility towards staff, etc.). These findings are in fact valid cognitive tools and concur in defining the profile of the restricted potentially exposed to ideological indoctrination.

Essentially, indicators were identified in accordance to specific contexts, such as: religious practice, daily routine, organization of the prison room, behavior with other people and commentary on political events and current affairs.

The experience gained in the study of this phenomenon has shown that typical behaviors of radicalized individuals are to challenge or to not recognize the authorities, avoid proximity of non-Muslim inmates and categorically refuse to share the prison room with them, expose symbols of terrorist groups (photos of flags

or fighters, executions, etc.), rejoice in times of natural disasters occurring in western countries, or to the attacks carried out by terrorist groups, etc.

It is, however, more difficult to identify the "*hidden radicals*" as those tend to conceal attitudes as described above.

These subjects emerge for their alleged mediation activity, as a matter of fact during protest situations those are often identifiable with those who act as a liaison with the police and prison staff are able to impose themselves on the prison population stopping them from making any complaints.

Factors that may contribute to violent radicalization of an inmate are:

- *the presence of an indoctrinator (often coincides with the one who holds the position of imam);*
- *the perception of being discriminated against by the staff at the non-acceptance of any requests and the occurrence of external triggers such as mourning, an international event perceived as negative.*

Another important point, detected during the study, is that, often, a large proportion of subjects who showed signs of extremism don't remain the same throughout the detention and as a matter of fact after transferring them to other penitentiaries, they are no longer able to exercise their influence.

This has a positive effect, with respect to both subjects who suffered his influence and the recruiter himself who, surrounded by less vulnerable individuals, gradually departs from his own extremist views.

Implementation of the guidelines of the Council of Europe that at the Title V "*Detection, prevention and treatment of radicalization and violent extremism in prison*" letter b "*Discovery procedures*" recommend the following: "32. *In developing indicators that highlight the radicalization, the personnel must be warned that such measures should not be considered in isolation but in the context of personal characteristics and specific circumstances of a given case in order to reach arbitrary conclusions* "

6. ANNUAL REPORT

The evidence gathered during the analysis of phenomenology, as well as helping, proactively, with the counter-terrorism instruments, are conveyed into a yearly report drawn up by the Central Investigative Unit.

In this report are highlighted, on a national scale and in detail, the following elements:

- Institutes with premises to be used for prayer meetings;
- practicing muslim inmates;
- the profession of Islamic faith and prayers, with an eye to the mannerism during the performance and related rituals / intensification;
- the names of all those who access from the outside as an imam, cultural mediators and voluntary assistants;

- the names and behavioral reports of detainees who lead the prayer, that become promoters of the demands of other inmates, or that otherwise appear to be charismatic, and of the converted from other religious faiths.

7. TRAINING

With the understanding that a more comprehensive and correct knowledge of Islamic culture ensures the positive impact in the management and relationship with the inmates of Muslim faith, free from stereotypes, preconceptions and prejudice, this Department started training initiatives, the are currently still in progress, pertaining radicalization and proselytism.

These training events have a multi-professional characteristic, as they invest penitentiary police personnel, educators and operators from Article 80 O.P. in service at the detention facilities and are providing important elements of assessment on the subject, also offering a general overview of the most important differences between our culture and Islam.

Even in this case there has been a full implementation of the guidelines of the Council of Europe, Title III *"Fundamental Principles and general considerations"* letter d *"The good management of penitentiary institutions"* recommend the following: "13. ... A staff training on cross-cultural and multi-religious awareness must be an integral part of education and training of personnel in order to promote understanding and tolerance of various creeds and traditions. "

8. COORDINATION MEETINGS

During the months of December 2015 and March 2016 meetings with all representatives have been made, both at local and regional level, within the aforementioned monitoring programme.

During the meetings in addition to the departmental announcements concerning the matter in question, the following topics were covered:

- *The ISIS phenomenology and symbolism associated with it;*
- *The phenomenon of proselytism in prison and the risk of radicalization*
- *Analysis levels of this phenomenon: "monitored", "under attention, "reported and their differences*
- *Coordination of analytical stages*
- *C.A.S.A. and technical discussions*
- *Situation Room – Critical events radicalization*
- *Forms and SIAP/AFIS*
- *Correctional indicators of radicalization*
- *The behavioral relationship*

- *Reports for the Judicial Authorities*

Full implementation of the guidelines of the Council of Europe which at the Title V "Detection, prevention and treatment of radicalization and violent extremism in prison" letter b "discovery procedures" recommend the following: "30. ... In particular, the staff must have the tools to report their concerns about signs of radicalization towards violent extremism, and adequate procedures must be applied in order to promptly and professionally evaluate these risks "

9. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PENITENTIARY ADMINISTRATION AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES.

Since 2008 the Penitentiary Administration is permanently included in the Committee of Anti-terrorism Strategic Analysis (C.A.S.A.) a permanent table between the Judicial Police and intelligence services, is an important tool at national level that allows to share and evaluate information regarding the internal and international terrorist threat. It was formally established on 6th May 2004 by Decree of the Ministry of Interior concerning the national plan for the management of events of a terrorist nature, and the operating mode of the relative Crisis Unit.

The Committee consists of the Central Direction of the Prevention Police, Police Forces, intelligence agencies and the Penitentiary Administration. The Committee, in which all the outcomes of this Administration convey, also serves as connection with foreign Police or Intelligence services.

10. TERRORIST SCREENING CENTER

The Department of Penitentiary Administration through the Central Investigative Unit is included in the C.A.S.A technical group called "**Terrorist Screening Center**".

In this context a connection was made to the software application of the Central Unit of the Prevention Police (Direzione Centrale della Polizia di Prevenzione) populated with information from the US data-base containing the names of individuals deemed dangerous under a terrorist profile and reported by 80 countries in the world.

Through this program is therefore possible to compare all of the names in the US Data Base with those in the SIAP-AFIS system and detect whether a subject arrested for common crimes, has in reality been reported by another country as dangerous from a terrorism point of view.

11. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER POLICE FORCES.

Penitentiaries were advised of the need to inform Prefectures about the presence of detainees monitored by this Administration for their behavior that suggests violent radicalization in progress.

With this in mind we have sensitized all Prisons to report immediately to local law enforcement the so-called sudden releases (early release, withdrawn custody, etc.), as well as all requests proposed by the above detainees that might lead to an early end to their penalty.

In addition, with the release of *monitored, under attention* and *reported* detainees a behavioral report will be delivered to the local Police Forces, in order to keep track of their behavior in prison.