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PREVENTIVE ACTION OF CRIMINAL POLICE AIMED AT CONTROLLING AND PREVENTING TERRORISM

Abstract:

This paper discusses preventive action of the criminal police aimed at controlling and preventing terrorism. The preventive role of the criminal police in terms of preventing terrorism is realized through the following three types of activities: building positive relations between the police and citizens, police work focused on local community issues, and the application of crime control. The aim of this paper is to highlight both the contribution of implementing these activities to the prevention of terrorism and the extent to which the activities of uniformed police affect the quality of work of the criminal police. This paper presents the research conducted on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim to determine whether, in addition to the special police units tasked with fight against terrorism, the community police should also deal with the prevention, control, and suppression of terrorism, i.e. the identification of terrorist threats, as well as whether the police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are adequately equipped and have all the necessary resources to combat radicalization and control terrorist threats.

Keywords: *prevention, criminal police, uniformed police, terrorism, radicalization, crime control.*

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the police strive to prevent numerous problems with their preventive work. This is also the case with regard to combating terrorism. Preventive work is one of the most significant activities of the criminal police, aimed at countering terrorist action. Emphasis is placed on the causes and conditions that are a favourable environment for terrorist activities. Various behaviours that represent the precursors of terrorism attract particular attention. Nowadays, the process of radicalization significantly contributes to the commission of terrorist criminal acts. The expansion of the phenomenon of radicalization in the process of the genesis of terrorism represent a grave threat to the most significant social values, with special emphasis placed on the significance quest model, which sublimates the roles of motivation, ideology, and social processes in radicalization (Dugas & Kruglanski, 2014:423).

Terrorist radicalization is a dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or to engage in terrorism. Possible drivers of terrorist radicalization are varied and complex and combine in a unique way in each case. Terrorist radicalization and recruitment does not occur in a vacuum. It should be viewed as an interactive process between the individual and external influences, including terrorist propagandists and recruiters, broader developments in society, and the actions of public authorities. Therefore, in order to be able to prevent and counter this process, it is important to understand the nature and impact of different factors and the degree to which they might vary and interact in different cases. (OSCE, 2014: 40–41).

Today, there is a growing use of the term decentralization of radicalization. The focus is exclusively on the local community and the very process of radicalization within it. In this regard, more than ideology, the Internet, or affiliation with a particular organization, the radicalization can be better explained by personal connections that individuals establish among themselves, especially in isolated communities. Individuals of more or less the same age, who share life similar experiences and have similar opinions, and who live in more or less the same neighbourhoods, start a radicalization process together. In a study in the US, for example, 93% of Sunni militants, whether converted or not, have had a group influence in their radicalization process, and 42% have been radicalized by horizontal contacts – family, friends, etc. This decentralization would explain the increase in home-grown terrorism, as well as self-activated and self-radicalized independent cells. Such cells lack direct contacts, not only with the umbrella

organizations, but also between themselves. (Popović, 2023:63–64; International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC), 2016:160). For this reason, there is a clear need for prevention-focused community policing. It is necessary for the police authorities to closely monitor their activities and to prevent potential terrorist activity through preventive work.

This is practical and logical because the police activity, whether repressive or preventive, is largely related to the field (security sector), i.e. it is implemented directly on the field, since the field is the place where all security problems manifest themselves (Šetka, 2018: 467).

In such situations, crime prevention activity is of great importance and it includes the activity undertaken by internal affairs bodies before the initiation of criminal proceedings. It consists of police measures and actions, starting with those that have the strategic goals of building positive civil-police relations in order to efficiently control the terrorism in practice and, based on this, to identify problems in society and the local community that are related to radicalization and comprehensive terrorist activity. Preventive police activity includes the following: building positive relations between the police and citizens, community policing, and crime control (Simonović & Pena, 2010:115).

BUILDING POSITIVE CIVIL-POLICE RELATIONS

Building of the positive relations between the police and citizens represents the broadest form of police engagement in society, where the police implement different projects of informal, relaxing, educational, and informative contacts (Simonović, 2004:104; Simonović & Pena, 2010:116). Thereby, the conditions are created to raise the professional activities to a higher level, expand the circle of persons having positive experiences with the police, increase the possibilities of obtaining information, achieve a higher number of possible collaborators within the community, etc. (Simonović, 2006:47). The strategic goals are the following: building trust of citizens in the police and forming numerous types of cooperation and information flow in order to more efficiently control and prevent terrorism which threatens the citizens' quality of life and the feeling of security. Police and judicial authorities are not able to efficiently confront the radicalization and terrorist activities unless they closely cooperate and coordinate with citizens and different social institutions (multi-agency approach to prevention) (Popović, 2023:355-356). There are many forms of cooperation and building positive relations between the police and citizens. First of all, in addition to focusing on the so-called general public, their strategical focus should be on target groups of special interest for the preventive strategic

goals of the social community. For example, in order to prevent radicalization and terrorist activity, it is particularly important to build positive relations between the police and the young people and school-age youth, since young people largely experience criminal acts of terrorism, as victims and perpetrators (Simonović, 2004:104). The police should treat all individuals equally. At the same time, they should make every effort to be sensitive to the needs and complexities of different communities and groups within these communities. Different communities and groups will be concerned and affected differently by the prevention of terrorism and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. The police should adjust their engagement activity accordingly to be effective in establishing contact and rapport. Therefore, in the same way, the police must engage with youth, women, faith-based organizations and religious leaders, ethnic minorities, civil society organizations, small and medium-sized businesses, etc. (OSCE, 2014:151).

Positive relations between the police and citizens are achieved through the media engagement, the implementation of neighbourhood or school police officers with defined tasks, setting up counselling centres for citizens, holding regular meetings within local communities, organizing educational preventive courses, counselling potential victims, etc. This approach directs citizens towards better cooperation with the police, increases the exchange of security information, and enhances the level of citizens' resistance to radicalization and terrorist activity; citizens are better informed about how to resist the process of radicalization and how to behave when criminal acts of terrorism happen (psychological help, securing evidence, etc.) (Simonović, 2004:104). Establishing positive relations between the police and citizens represents a quality path that leads to solving of complex issues in the local community.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Problem-oriented policing in the local community represents the embodiment of a proactive criminal approach and focusing of police and criminalistic strategic activities on the precursors of terrorist activities. Namely, the police force of majority of developed countries in the world today focus their activities on identification of issues within local communities that can lead to radicalization and terrorist activities. Through various measures (increased supervision, various forms of neighbourhood policing) and programs (aforementioned radicalization prevention programs, e.g. prevention of youth radicalization, etc.) or in cooperation with other institutions (multi-agency approach), they seek to solve these issues before they escalate or progress further. Police work and stra-

tegic-criminalistic work do not begin at the moment of commission of criminal acts of terrorism, but are based on identifying the issues that can lead to their commission. In accordance with that strategy, the police are tasked with learning more about individuals and families at risk of radicalization and, based on their knowledge, they take adequate measures towards de-radicalization process (Simonović & Pena, 2010:116–117). Community engagement and joint problem-solving efforts provide police with the opportunity to identify and address grievances affecting both men and women that may be underlying violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, in partnership with male and female representatives of communities and other public authorities. Where an issue falls outside the responsibilities of the police, police officers can advise the public on possible courses of action to strengthen community cohesion; they can facilitate the mobilization of community members, civil society organizations and competent public authorities, as appropriate (OSCE, 2014:99). In addition to the police, political representatives can also make a significant contribution to strengthening community cohesion. In this way, they can greatly help the police in solving various problems in the local community. For example, the Prime Minister of Norway, after the terrorist attacks of 22 July 2011, promoted cohesion and reaffirming democratic values. Terrorists aim to inspire fear in all, or parts, of the public in order to draw attention to themselves, their grievances and goals, and to impose their demands on society and the state. They seek to communicate through their attacks, and the propaganda surrounding them, their particular interpretation of reality and what should be done. Such attacks and the narratives they convey can have a very divisive impact on society. When the identity of the perpetrators is not known, rumours can easily spread, laying blame on the basis of stereotypes and prejudices. In shock, society and state authorities may be induced to overreact, which is sometimes precisely what terrorists are trying to achieve. An essential aspect of resilience to terrorism, especially in the immediate aftermath of attacks, is for state officials and political leaders to encourage cohesion and solidarity in society in the face of terrorism, to reaffirm their commitment to democracy and the rule of law and to reject violence and divisive ideas and stereotypes. (OSCE, 2014b: 64).

It is important to note here that maintaining, consolidating and enhancing community policing in ways that enhance social cohesion is an important counter-terrorism strategy, particularly where the legislative regime runs the risk of undermining social cohesion and alienating communities. In this regard, community policing should be the first line of defence in the fight against terrorism. Ensuring that community policing is integrated into counter-terrorism policing will involve enhancing democratic forms of policing through

the sharing of information between police and diverse communities (Pickering, McCulloch & Wright-Neville, 2008:102). The focus of police agencies on community gives the following benefits: trust of the community; knowledge about targets most at risk; reduced crime as well as prevented terrorism; deeper knowledge of your community; closer collaborations with businesses; a reputation for openness, and respect (Newman & Clarke, 2008:80). Using a problem-based approach, the police tend to see behind individual terrorist acts and address the underlying problems. As a rule, terrorism is only a symptom of the problem that caused or contributed to its execution (Simonović, 2006:52). Integration of problem-oriented policing, i.e. the embodiment of a proactive criminal approach is today considered a civilizational standard in the world framework (Simonović & Pena, 2010:117; Popović, 2023:357–358). This is the only way to successfully fight against all types of crime, including terrorism.

THE ROLE OF CRIME CONTROL IN THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM

Crime control is an organized activity of internal affairs bodies with a pronounced criminal-preventive-repressive character. It consists of the observation, monitoring, and analysis of phenomena, places, and individuals for which there is (which are characterized by) a general suspicion that they may contain a criminal intent, if past experience is taken into account. This is an organized activity of internal affairs bodies aimed at preventing crime in general, including terrorist activities. Therefore, it involves the detection (i.e. identification, recognition), monitoring (i.e. observation, control, following) and analysis (i.e. studying, comparing, forecasting) of phenomena (asocial and antisocial, as well as those related to terrorism), locations (potential criminal and terrorist hotspots, potential criminal environments or meeting places, routes used by criminals or terrorists for movement and communication) and individuals (for whom there is a forecast that they could commit criminal acts of terrorism, e.g. repeat offenders, parolees, or those on furlough) etc. (Simonović & Pena, 2010:105–106). By exercising control, the data on pre-criminal conditions and situations, as well as on the activities and mutual relationships of persons with criminal tendencies, are systematically and continuously collected. Timely identification of facts and circumstances that are a realistic but also insufficiently precise signal of a pre-delinquent state that represents the precursors to crime, the existence of which is linked to certain phenomena, objects, and individuals, is an essential precondition for the success of the undertaken crime control measures (Žarković, 2009:73).

Crime control aims to acquaint the internal affairs body and keep it informed about various socially harmful phenomena (radicalization, terrorism, etc.), criminal factors, and interesting environments, as well as to gain insight into the movements of certain categories of individuals (convicted persons, parolees, etc.) (Ninčić, 2019:116). This is about preventing crime and therefore different forms of terrorist activities in situations that are signalling them (Žarković, 2009:72). The condition for implementation of crime control is the existence of a general suspicion based on criminal experience (knowledge of criminal methodology of criminal acts of terrorism, criminological and criminal typologies of delinquents, forecasts of crime development in the field of terrorism), that certain phenomena, places, and individuals could contain radical and terrorist intent (have conditions or causes for the occurrence of criminal acts of terrorism). At the moment of implementation of crime control concerning some of the mentioned facilities, the internal affairs bodies do not have indications that there is any behaviour related to terrorism, but rely solely on a general suspicion that certain criminal acts of terrorism could be committed in certain places, that certain individuals could commit the said criminal acts, or that certain social phenomena contain potential radical and terrorist intent. Crime control is carried out permanently and continuously based on general suspicion, and within it, the search is made for grounds of suspicion indicating that radicalization, incitement, planning, and preparation of terrorism may taking place in a certain environment and (or) that certain individuals are planning, organizing, preparing, inciting, financing, or committing criminal acts of terrorism, as well as acts related to them (terrorism; financing of terrorist activities; taking hostages; endangering persons under international protection; illicit trafficking in weapons, military equipment, and dual-use goods; unauthorized acquisition and disposal of nuclear material; endangering nuclear facilities; piracy; hijacking of aircrafts or ships or seizing of fixed platforms; endangering the safety of air and maritime navigation; destruction or removal of air traffic safety signs; misuse of telecommunications signs; illegal trade; illegal production; incitement of public to commit terrorist activities; recruitment for terrorist activities; training for carrying out terrorist activities; organizing of terrorist groups; and illegal formation and joining of foreign paramilitary and parapolice formations). The following operational-tactical measures and actions are undertaken within the framework of crime control: patrolling, identification, inspection of vehicles and luggage, ambushes, raids, use of informants, general and special information, informative questioning, secret observation, supervision of potential perpetrators of criminal acts, cooperation with other police and non-police services and in-

stitutions (Simonović, 2004:105–106; Simonović & Pena, 2010:117–118; Popović, 2023:358–359).

For crime control to give quality results, there needs to be continuous cooperation between criminal and uniformed police. Additionally, operability is an important segment – the management of information by the police, in this case the information relevant to the prevention of terrorism, which is indispensable for successful proactive police work. It is necessary for the cooperation between the criminal and uniformed police to manifest itself in the timely and expedient exchange of all information, which is of great importance in preventing terrorist acts. This exchange must be honest and timely so that police actions can take place in full cooperation and coordination between the uniformed and criminal police, leading to significant results in terms of the prevention of terrorism (Popović & Šetka, 2018:200).

Based on all of the aforementioned, the role and importance of preventive police work in the fight against terrorism are clearly visible. Its importance and contribution are significant, especially now that certain preparatory actions are designated as separate criminal acts, as clearly seen in the case of terrorist incriminations. It can be said that in those stages, perhaps it was never given such importance, because these actions were not criminalized and were certainly not given the attention they should be given today. Namely, the aforementioned behaviours nowadays require a very serious and extensive preventive activity, which is necessary in order to effectively oppose terrorist activities (Popović, 2023:359).

RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The research "Strategic and legal aspects of control of terrorism with special reference to Bosnia and Herzegovina" was conducted in the period from 1 June 2020 to 1 July 2020. A survey questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection[3]. The sad research was conducted on a sample of 200 police officers, more precisely 100 police officers from the Republic of Srpska and 100 police officers from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of whom 50 from the territory where Bosniaks live and 50 from the territory where Croats live. For the purposes of this paper, two questions were analysed from the aforementioned broader research:

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[3] The survey was conducted for the purpose of preparation of a PhD thesis: Strategic and legal aspects of control of terrorism with special reference to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 1. (Police officers were asked the following) – *In addition to the police special units whose competence is the fight against terrorism, the community police should deal with the prevention, control, suppression of terrorism, i.e. the detection of terrorist threats*, (Popović, 2020:327–328)?

	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
I completely agree	49	24.5	24.5
I agree	104	52.0	76.5
I disagree	22	11.0	87.5
I completely disagree	1	0.5	88.0
I cannot say – I have no opinion	24	12.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

When answering the aforementioned question "In addition to the police special units whose competence is the fight against terrorism, the community police should deal with the prevention, control, suppression of terrorism, i.e. the detection of terrorist threats,)" (Table 1) out of the total number of respondents (200 police officers), 49 respondents (24.5%) opted for "I completely agree ", the majority of respondents, more precisely 104 of them or 52% opted for "I agree", then 22 respondents (11%) opted for "I disagree", 1 respondent (0.5%) opted for "completely disagree", while 24 respondents (12%) opted for "I cannot say - I have no opinion". The answers to the above question are expected, although in practice there are certain problems. Thus, throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project "Community Policing " has been neglected, which certainly makes it difficult for uniformed police officers to work on the ground in the fight against terrorism. However, the main problem in this regard is presented in the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The stated problem is of an organizational nature, since on the territory of the mentioned entity there are the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, being competent for criminal offences of terrorism, and ten cantonal ministries of internal affairs to which the uniformed police (community police) not being competent for the said criminal offences. The uniformed police in the cantons (police in the community) must carry out the preventive activity of terrorist activities. However, if the cantonal police continue not to be compe-

tent for criminal offences of terrorism, uniformed police officers will not act preventively and will not deal with the problem of terrorism (causes, conditions, and radicalization) at all, as they will deal with other criminal offences for which the cantonal ministries are competent. Consequently, the criminal police will lack information from the field, that the uniformed police have access to in the security sector, which certainly makes the work difficult and reduces the quality of the work of the criminal police in terms of combating terrorism. This is also confirmed by the terrorist act that took place in Rajlovac, when a member of the Wahhabi movement, Enes Omeragić, killed two soldiers of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the cantonal police did not react and did not pay attention to the said act, which could have been prevented by the preventive work of the uniformed police in the filed in cooperation with members of the criminal police. The situation in the Republic Srpska and Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina is different in this regard because the lines of work dealing with combating terrorism (criminal police) are directly connected to the uniformed police (they are under the auspices of one Ministry of internal affairs and there are no cantons), which is engaged in preventing and combating terrorism in the field. For this reason, it can be said that uniformed police officers in the Republic of Srpska and Brčko District are more interested and work more in the field in matters of prevention and fight against terrorism than the uniformed police in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the following period, it is necessary to intensify the work of uniformed police officers throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of the prevention, control, and suppression of terrorism, and identification of terrorist threats (for which it is necessary to regulate the normative and organizational framework for the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina). The paradox is even greater due to the fact that the federal part of Bosnia and Herzegovina is most affected by radicalization processes. If there is no involvement of the uniformed police in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, such a situation will significantly complicate and weaken the quality of the work of the criminal police.

Table 2. (Police officers were asked the following) – *Police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are adequately equipped and have all the necessary resources to combat radicalization and control terrorist threats* (Popović, 2020:329)?

	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
I completely agree	15	7.5	7.5
I agree	56	28.0	35.5
I disagree	76	38.0	73.5
I completely disagree	17	8.5	82.0
I cannot say – I have no opinion	36	18.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

With regard to the question "Police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are adequately equipped and have all the necessary resources to combat radicalization and control terrorist threats" (Table 2), out of the total number of respondents (200 police officers), 15 respondents (7.5%) opted for "I completely agree", 56 respondents (28%) for "I agree", then the largest number, specifically 76 or 38% opted for "disagree", 17 respondents (8.5%) for "I completely disagree", while 36 respondents (18%)for "I cannot say – I have no opinion". Based on the results obtained, it is clear that the majority of respondents disagree with the stated statement. Although there are organizational units of the criminal and uniformed police, human resources, and certain logistical support, it can be said that the answers are expected considering that the community policing project has been neglected and that the uniformed police officers are not sufficiently trained and lack quality knowledge about the concept and process of radicalization, the realization of process of radicalization, and, more precisely, the role and place of the uniformed police in that process. In this regard, it is necessary to commend the aforementioned work of the Directorate for Combating Terrorism and Extremism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Srpska, which is implementing three pilot projects: Zvornik, Doboj and Trebinje. Within these pilot projects, alongside working with people from local communities, children, adults, and people from local self-government, efforts are also directed at working with uniformed police officers to recognize and combat radicalization.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism, as a negative social phenomenon, attracts a lot of attention due to its harmfulness in terms of endangering the most vital social values. Today, preventing and combating terrorist activities is a serious task. In this regard, one of the most significant activities of the criminal police aimed at combating terrorism is preventive work. In this way, action is taken on the causes and conditions that favour the commission of terrorist acts, as well as on behaviours that serve as precursors to terrorism. Today, the process of radicalization is present to a large extent, and its expansion significantly contributes to the commission of terrorist crimes. Nowadays, it is increasingly associated with the local community, where it has taken a certain decentralized form.

Hence, the criminal preventive activities have great significance, manifested through the implementation of a range of police measures and preventive actions. These encompass: building positive relations between the police and citizens, community policing, and crime control.

Building positive relations between the police and citizens is achieved by establishing contacts between them, engagement of the police in society through various informal, relaxing, educational, and informative projects. Such an approach contributes to raising professional activity to a higher level, expanding the circle of individuals who have positive experiences with the police, increasing the possibilities of obtaining information, as well as achieving a greater number of possible collaborators within the community. Moreover, this approach serves strategic goals such as building citizen trust in the police and achieving numerous forms of cooperation and information flow to achieve control and prevention of terrorism in the best possible way, which is in the interests of citizens.

Community policing embodies a proactive criminal approach, putting the focus of strategic criminal activity on the precursors of terrorist activity. Here, efforts are directed at identifying problems in the local community that can lead to radicalization and terrorist activity and solving them by undertaking various measures and programs, if necessary, in collaboration with other institutions, their development or escalation.

Preventive work is achieved to a large extent through crime control. The prevention of terrorist activities is enabled by identifying, monitoring, and analysing occurrences, locations, and individuals linked to radicalization and potential terrorist activities. This approach systematically and continually collects data on pre-criminal conditions and situations, as well as on the activities

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and mutual connections of persons with criminal tendencies, all aimed at preventing terrorist activities.

Based on the conducted research, it is evident that the community police must have a significant impact on preventing, controlling, combating and detecting terrorist threats. Uniformed police substantially contribute to the quality of criminal police work in terrorism prevention. The main problem lies is the neglect of the "Community Policing" project, primarily within the cantonal ministries of internal affairs of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which include uniformed police, who are not competent for criminal acts of terrorism, despite the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina being the most affected by the radicalization process. In such a situation, preventive work is impossible, and the criminal police are deprived of information from the field that the uniformed police have access to in the security sector, which undoubtedly makes it difficult and reduces the quality of the work of the criminal police in terms of the fight against terrorism, as evidenced by the aforementioned terrorist act in Rajlovac. The situation in the Republic of Srpska and Brčko District is different, as the lines of work dealing with the fight against terrorism (criminal police) are directly linked with the uniformed police (they are under the auspices of the same ministry), which gives quality results in terms of terrorism prevention. Nevertheless, it is necessary for the uniformed police, in line with the applicable organization of police structures, to engage across the entire territory. If they engage in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina in full capacity with regard to the prevention of terrorism, such a state of affairs will greatly facilitate and improve the quality of the criminal police work. However, the major issue here is that police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not adequately equipped and do not have all the necessary resources to combat radicalization and control terrorist threats. Despite the fact that on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina there are organizational units of the criminal and uniformed police, human resources and certain logistical support, the problem still exists because the project "Community policing" has been neglected and uniformed police officers are not sufficiently trained and lack quality knowledge about the very concept and process of radicalization, the realization of the process of deradicalization, and more precisely, the role and place of the uniformed police in that process. A major contribution to this issue is made by the criminal police, more specifically the Directorate for Combating Terrorism and Extremism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Srpska, which implements three pilot projects in Zvornik, Doboj and Trebinje. Within these pilot projects, alongside working with people from local communities, children, adults, and people from local self-government,

the efforts are directed at working with uniformed police members in order to recognize and combat radicalization.

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