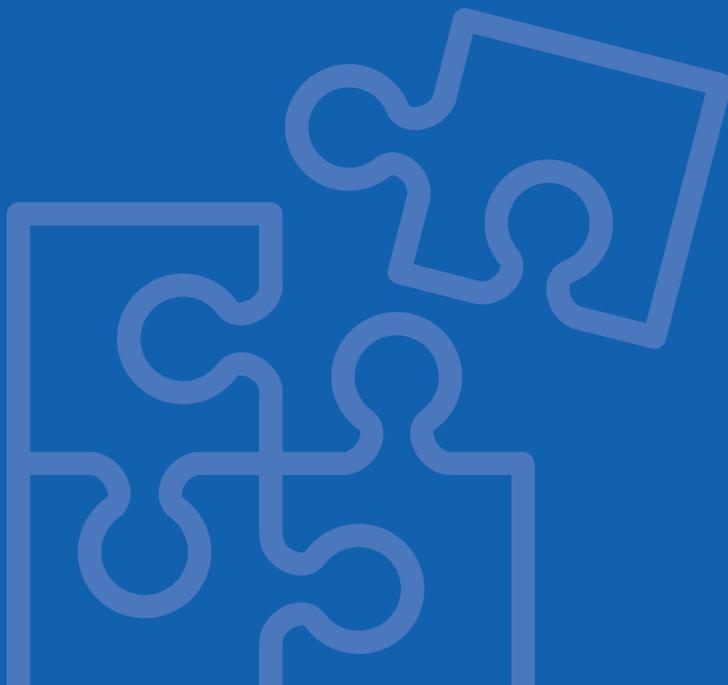




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Reintegration of returning foreign fighters: what approach best suits Kosovo?





Reintegration of returning foreign fighters: what approach best suits Kosovo?

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|---|
| CRC | Care Rehabilitation Center |
| CVE | Countering Violent Extremism |
| DDIS | Danish Defense and Intelligence Service |
| EPP | Early prevention program |
| FFs | Foreign fighters |
| IC | International Community |
| IS | Islamic State |
| ICK | Islamic Community of Kosovo |
| ISIL | Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant |
| ISIS | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| KCS | Kosovo Correctional Service |
| KCSS | Kosovar Center for Security Studies |
| KP | Kosovo Police |
| KSB | Kosovo Security Barometer |
| PRAC | Prevention Rehabilitation and Aftercare |
| PTSD | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| SFCT | Strategy for Counter Terrorism |
| UN | United Nations |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The disengagement and reintegration of former foreign fighters in Kosovo is difficult to approach in policy due to lack of previous basic programmes addressing this issue. In comparison to other European countries, Kosovo has very limited institutional capacity to design and implement successful programmes of reintegration. The existing legal framework, the correctional systems and other relevant institutions, do not provide a sufficient solution as they barely comply with the situation on the ground. Consequently, it is an immediate need for Kosovo to develop its own model based on local capacities and expertise, whilst taking into consideration specific cases and contexts. Rather, across the field there exists a conundrum of approaches to re-radicalisation that do not stem derive from a consultative and coordinated process. Accordingly, a detailed programme of re-socialization and reintegration of radicalised individuals should be developed to complement the legal framework.

Key findings:

- According to the law on the Execution Penal Sanctions in Kosovo, sanctioned persons should undergo through rehabilitation before re-entering into the society. The reintegration as such is not a policy preference, but a legal obligation for the Kosovo Government;
- Similar to other countries in the region, Kosovo lacks capacities in designing and implementing rehabilitation and reintegration programs within the correctional services;
- As of 2016, the Kosovo Government initiated the process of designing the programme on de-radicalisation and reintegration. Its implementation is expected to commence in 2017;
- De-radicalisation and reintegration programmes are not supposed to be only directed to the individuals who have returned from the conflict-zones. These programmes also involve other individuals who have not joined foreign conflicts but have been subject to extremism inside the country;
- The majority of arrested former Foreign Fighters are not expected to stay in prison for more than 3.5 years;
- The research indicates that those charged with terrorism and recruitment activities have the tendency in spreading violent ideologies inside prisons. Correctional services appeared challenged to handle with the matter;

- By the end of 2016, some preventive measures have been undertaken by the Kosovo Correction Service. These measures included risk assessments for each convicted person and categorising according to the scale of radicalisation;
- Radical religious literature has been removed by the Correction Service authorities, while new books with unprovocative content were given in disposal to the inmates. This process was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Community of Kosovo;
- When it comes to reintegration of returning Foreign Fighters into society, the wide community in Kosovo expresses a reservation of accepting them as a part of society;
- According to the Kosovo Security Barometer, the majority of respondents think that the foreign fighters should undergo a rehabilitation and reintegration programme before their reintegration into the society;
- A quarter of the respondents said that they are ready to receive FFs back into their community, only if they are supervised by Kosovo's security authorities;
- The research finds that a Kosovar model which draws and adopts from, adjusts and adds to the existing practices in Germany, Denmark and Saudi Arabia. These cases offer an approach that to some extent suits the domestic needs in Kosovo. Nonetheless, the programme may potentially benefit from other models as well;

INTRODUCTION

Similarly, to other countries, Kosovo is facing threats from violent extremism, the return of foreign fighters, and radicalised individuals. Currently, Kosovo has circa 130 individuals (either foreign fighters or their family members) and vast majority of them are in needs of undergoing through a de-radicalisation and especially a reintegration process. De-radicalisation and reintegration programmes are not supposed to be only directed to the individuals who have returned from the conflict-zones. These programmes also involve other individuals who did not join foreign conflicts but have been radicalised and committed violent extremism. In addition to that, such programmes should include also individuals who have been radicalised within the correctional system facilities through other radicalised inmates. In recent counter violent extremism efforts, several European states such as Germany, United Kingdom, Denmark, and other countries commenced adapting various approaches aiming to tackle this issue, especially the returning fighters from conflict zones. Rehabilitation is increasingly seen as a policy prescription to tackle extremism and stop the spread of violent ideologies. It can be described as *“a purposeful, planned intervention, which aims to change characteristics of the offender that are believed to be the cause of the individual's criminal behavior with the intention to reduce the chance that the individual will re-offend.”*¹ De-radicalisation and reintegration of radicalised persons is one of the key objectives as a response towards the failure to identify and prevent violent extremism. Thus, this stage relates to all the persons that are already in an advanced stage of radicalisation and are willing to undertake steps within and out of Kosovo for different reasons.²

Reintegrating former FFs (foreign fighters), or individuals affiliated with violent extremist ideologies/groups into the society is difficult. It is a process which takes time, effort and resources. The impact of this process and the success of the implementation varies from country to country, depending on the specific factors which need to be considered carefully. Some of these factors include: social and economic variables, education, ideology, personal beliefs and political culture of the country.

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- 1 Tinka Veldhuis, “Designing rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs for Violent Extremist Offenders: A Realist Approach”. International Center for Counterterrorism. The Hague. P.3
 - 2 Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism 2015-2020. Available at: http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGY_parandalim_-_ENG.pdf

The first section of this paper begins with a short historical overview of countering violent extremism in Kosovo, to continue analyzing the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for the returned FFs. The paper continues with an analysis of three case studies or potential models for Kosovo, such as the following: Germany, Denmark and Saudi Arabia. This report highlights the fact that, although it is a new challenge for Kosovo, the reintegration of former FFs and other radicalised individuals represent a challenge that needs to be properly addressed by its correctional services and other relevant stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

The methods of analysis used for the purpose of this research include: qualitative and quantitative methods, with a large component of comparative analysis. Within the qualitative methods, interviews take a special place. These interviews have been ongoing for a period of five months, between October 2016 and February 2017.

The qualitative method was applied in the data collection process while interviewing individual foreign fighters who have returned home. In total, 9

interviews were conducted (including former foreign fighters), with the representatives of relevant stakeholders such as: Representative of Islamic Community in Kosovo, Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Kosovo, representative from Correctional Service Center (CRC), representative from Ministry of Justice, representative from Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and senior analysts in Kosovo Security Council. The KCSS also utilized data from more than a dozen interviews with foreign fighters that were conducted for other studies.

Additionally, the comparative methodology was used aiming to analyze the countries that provide programmes on reintegration of the returned former foreign fighters. While, quantitative methods correspondes on statistics of FFs who joined the conflict zones and returned back home and the willingness of the community in accepting FFs into society.

The decision to compare the selected case studies, namely Germany, Denmark, and Saudi Arabia, lies in their mix of soft and hard measures that they apply toward their returnees. For instance, Germany has started to implement the rehabilitation programmes inside the prisons. These programmes involve family members of the returnees, as well as trainers and psychologists. Denmark has the "EXIT" programme, which deals with radicalisation by focusing more on resocialization process rather than relying on coercive measures. This programme focuses on prisons with lectures and training, and they organize different workshops amongst the inmates (ex. construction, professional skills and further education). Saudi Arabia is the second largest country with the most foreign fighters with conflict experience. Saudis provide Islamic re-education regarding violent extremism. Those who are considered to be violent extremists undergo some courses which, contrary to the previous two programmes, predominantly focus on religious re-education and re-interpretation.

This research has one restriction which should be emphasized. This restriction consists on the disengagement phase of reintegration. It is worth noting that although the disengagement phase is a precondition for any rehabilitation or reintegration process to take place, the report will not focus on this phase, since this is more related to the efforts of policing violent extremism and bringing suspects to the court.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CVE IN KOSOVO

The ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the expansion of the so called “Islamic State”³, hereafter referred as ISIS, attracted high numbers of foreign fighters who joined extremist and terrorist units in the conflict. The general data from different research show that the repressive measures which have been undertaken at the international level did not have any extraordinary influence on decreasing the flow of foreign fighters. On the contrary, according to data provided in 2016 by the Soufan Group, “despite sustained international effort to contain the Islamic State and stem the flow of militants traveling to Syria, the number of foreign fighters has more than doubled.”⁴ This means that the impact of those efforts to decrease the flow of foreign fighters has failed. This shows that other measures that need to be taken to prevent the flow of foreign fighters going to Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, following heightened offensives over ISIS, the trend of going to Syria has widely decreased in most of the native countries of the FFs’.

Kosovo is not an exception to this. In March 2015, Kosovo’s Parliament adopted a draft law on “Prohibition of Joining Armed Conflicts outside State Territory”⁵ as a reaction to the relatively high number of Kosovars that have joined the conflict zones in the Middle East. There is a significant number of people who were recruited by violent extremist supporters as foreign fighters who participated at least once in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, predominantly during 2012 and 2013. More than 40 women from Kosovo have joined violent extremist groups in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria ⁶or the former Jabat Al-Nusra, which has recently changed the name into “Jabhat Fatah Al-Sham” after severing ties with Al-Qaeda⁷.

Out of around 317 Kosovars (from 2013 till 2015) who have participated in conflicts in Syria and Iraq in total, approximately 127 are considered to have returned to Kosovo. The overwhelming majority of around 120 of them have already been arrested by the

3 The self-proclaimed Islamic State is a militant Sunni movement that has conquered territory in Western Iraq, eastern Syria and Libya from which it has tried to establish the caliphate, claiming exclusive political and theological authority over the world’s Muslims. In 2014 publicized battlefield successes attracted thousands of foreign recruiters.

4 International Policy Digest: “How many foreign fighters in Syria are there?” October, 2016. Available at: <https://intpolicydigest.org/2016/10/15/how-many-foreign-fighters-in-syria-are-there/>

5 Official gazette of the Republic of Kosovo. No.7/02. April, 2015. Pristina. Available at: https://www.mpb-ks.org/repository/docs/LAW_NO_05_L_002_ON_PROHIBITION_OF_JOINING_THE_ARMED_CONFLICTS_OUTSIDE_STATE_TERRITORYEMLJE.pdf

6 KCSS: “Women in violent extremism. Lessons learned from Kosovo”. February 2017. Available at: http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/women-in-ve-eng_594236.pdf

7 Available at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/08/jabhat-al-nusra-sever-al-qaeda-focus-local-syria.html>

Kosovo Police (KP), while 58 are reported to have been killed on the battle field in Syria and Iraq.⁸ According to the Basic Court in Prishtina, 59 defendants are on the run, which means that, the majority of them are in Syria and Iraq.⁹ These individuals were arrested in 2014 and were charged under the provisions of the penal code of Kosovo. The others were arrested pursuant to the new law No: 05/L-002 on prohibition to join armed conflict outside state territory and engaging in terrorist organizations which entered into force in April 2015.¹⁰

No terrorist incidents have taken place in Kosovo as this report is being written, but there have been reports that the KP has undertaken a number of preventive actions by arresting some individuals for planning attacks. Last year the KP arrested 19 persons accused of terrorism, who were allegedly (according to the Police) involved in planning an attack in Albania while the international football match between Albania and Israel was being played in Shkodër.¹¹ This shows an exceptional achievement of intelligence and police structures to prevent allegedly a classical terrorist attack.

When it comes to dealing with returned FFs and other individuals showing radicalised approach, Kosovo's government has shown its willingness to participate in such programmes, but one should take into consideration the type of approach that communities apply in Kosovo towards former foreign fighters. It is important to emphasize the fact that the majority of Kosovo felt unconfident about foreign fighters who have already returned in Kosovo. The Kosovo Security Barometer 2016¹² findings show that citizens have expressed their concerns about the risks posed by these individuals. In the KSB 2016 findings, citizens were asked whether the returned foreign fighters pose any risk, and 64 percent of respondents stated that the arrival of former FFs poses a threat to national security. Citizens are therefore reluctant to host returnees in anticipation of the threat they post to the community and state.

8 KCSS: "Mapping the state of play of institutional and community involvement in countering violent extremism in Kosovo". February 2017. Available at: http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/KCSS_Needs_Assesment_final_42754.pdf

9 Prishtina Basic Court, "Numbers of the defendants for Terrorism", November 2016

10 LAW No. 05/L-002 ON Prohibition OF Joining THE Armed Conflicts Outside State Territory. Available at: https://www.mpb-ks.org/repository/docs/LAW_NO._05_L__002_ON_PROHIBITION_OF_JOINING_THE_ARMED_CONFLICTS_OUTSIDE_STATE_TERRITORYEMLJE.pdf

11 Koha.net, Policia tregon si i kapi terroristët që planifikonin sulmin në ndeshjen Shqipëri – Izrael. Available at: <http://koha.net/?id=27&l=142814>

12 Kosovo Security Barometer, sixth edition. Available at: http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/KSB-Sixth-Edition_327922.pdf

2. IMPORTANCE OF REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES IN COUNTERING AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Rehabilitation is an important process which offers support to the people that need to be disengaged from violent extremist activities and ideas. As a term, rehabilitation in this report is understood as an effort made in the social context to engage, resocialize, and mobilize at the community level, the people affected by a violent extremism ideology. This includes those who have been part of conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, and those that are in or out of prison. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes should be provided for both cases. Both processes and more possible cases (unpresented here) of rehabilitation and reintegration should consider not only the present exclusion of affected individuals from the community, but also how these individuals could once again be integral members of it. During the rehabilitation process, various measures should be undertaken with the purpose of disengaging individuals from violent extremist ideas and activities. In addition to, selected cases show that providing economic assistance for those who need it, social as well as religious education, and also psychological therapy could be effective. On the other hand, various research has shown, improvement of social-economic status or education does not always prevent these individuals from engagement in violent extremism. Based on the study conducted by "Mercy Corps", findings show that increasing access to education and socio-economic status does not fully address the underlying drivers of potentially destabilizing actions.¹³ However, combining education with civic engagement opportunities that allow youth to carry out community campaigns, both participation in and support for violence drop significantly.¹⁴

In order to better understand or find the best approach to de-radicalisation and disengage individuals from such ideas, it is important to study the diverse processes of how they got to the point of embracing violent extremist ideas. A sensible strategy, therefore, would require three main phases, which would include: rehabilitation, social reintegration, and an after-care phase. As certain cases show, disengagement is not a simple process, with coercive measures such as arrests and imprisonment verdicts having contradictory impacts on radicalisation. Such lessons can be learned from the case of Iraq, where despite convictions of various suspected individuals, they remain active in violent extremist activities and often become more radicalised after completing their sentence.¹⁵

13 Mercy Corps: "Critical choices: Assessing the effects of education and civic engagement on Somali youths' prosperity towards violence". November 2016.

14 Ibid.

15 See here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kathy-kelly/abu-bakr-al-baghdadi-iraq-prison-camp_b_5851708.html

Similarly, the possibility of further radicalisation and its proliferation inside prisons need to be taken into account in Kosovo, and should be a primary concern for its prison authorities. It is reported that the Kosovo Correctional Services (KCS) with the support of the Islamic Community of Kosovo (ICK) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have audited the literature in the libraries available in Kosovo prisons.¹⁶ This is because the authorities have identified books which may be considered to belong to interpretations of unacceptable doctrines judged by the given authorities. As a result they removed them from the shelves in order to prevent possible radicalisation inside the Kosovo prisons. Nonetheless, one should be aware that the proliferation of radical ideas mostly occurs during inmate discussion, as well as in response to conditions surrounding different inmates. It is not driven solely by the critical or radical engagement with texts. Logically, one may suspect that radicalism comes prior to reading, and not the other way around. Findings show that there are already several returned foreign fighters in Kosovo who admitted to have purposefully attempted to influence the other prisoners to accept 'their way' of practicing Islam.¹⁷ Another important aspect which needs to be considered here is that the outcome itself, when reading texts which could contain radical interpretations, can be different depending on whether an individual is radicalised or not. Therefore, it is dubious to make a direct link between texts and radicalisation, as any interpretation is subjective. In addition, there is limited professional staff in prisons to deal with such issues.¹⁸

The following chapter will be focused on specific cases which were selected by KCSS to illustrate the models that Kosovo can follow in its efforts to offer rehabilitation and reintegration for radicalised persons.

Since Kosovo lacks experience in dealing with returned foreign fighters, particularly in respect to the programmes targeting rehabilitation and reintegration, this paper adapts some practices and experiences which some countries have adopted. This report analyses such programmes from three case studies: Germany, Denmark and Saudi Arabia. The reason these cases are considered is because all three of them employ different measures regarding to rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, and have had some successful results. Germany has previous experience in dealing with the rehabilitation of Neo Nazis (far right wing) and has applied both soft and hard measures toward returned fighters from the conflict zones. The case of Denmark shows that the programme of rehabilitation of convicted individuals for violent extremism targets success through the use of soft measures, as evidence by its "Rehabilitation Centres" concept which differs from classical prisons. In general, Scandinavian countries are known for their soft approach toward prisoners and focuses on the system of rehabilitating prisoners. Alternatively, Saudi Arabia represents a case which applies

16 Interview with Sabri Bajgora. 15 October 2016.

17 Interview with Representative from Correctional Service Centre, 06 February 2017

18 Ibid.

powerful soft measures despite having a very classical concept of prison systems. It has experience with these programmes since 2004 and is the second largest country with FFs.

Now, we turn to analyze the three case studies, and focus on the components of the respective approaches that have been used in these cases.

2.1 Case study: Germany

Germany is one of the European countries that developed several reforms seeking reintegration in society of individuals have directly associated with violent extremism. In February 2014, German authorities have identified Islamic extremist ideology as a serious threat. They estimated the number of German foreign fighters in Syria to be at around 720.¹⁹ German authorities rely on both soft assistance and hard security measures when it comes to preventing, countering violent radicalisation and dealing with returning foreign fighters. On the security side, German authorities have opted to confiscate passports and other personal documents (ID cards) to make it harder for potential departees to travel, so they become invalid outside of Germany.²⁰ But these administrative measures have not been applied consistently. According to a German intelligence report that was released in December 2015, a total of 677 German nationals have left for Syria and Iraq since 2012. (The report only analyses travel departures up until June 29, 2015; the current official estimate puts the number of departees at 790). On average, the departees featured in the report were 26 years old and first became radicalised at age 22. More than three quarters were male.²¹

German strategy tackles radicalisation through the HAYAT²² programme, a civil society programme which aims to de-radicalise and reintegrate former FFs²³. Funded by Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the goal of Hayat, which means "life" in Arabic — is to prevent radicalised Muslim individuals from becoming foreign fighters. Hayat counters the work of global jihadi networks that skillfully use social media to distribute propaganda and recruit new members.

19 ICCT: "The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union: Profiles, threats, policies". April, 2016. The Hague. Available at: https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf

20 Journal Deradicalisation: "Of alienation, association, and adventure: Why German fighters join ISIL?" Spring 2016.

21 Ibid.

22 HAYAT is the first German counseling program for persons involved in radical groups or on the path of violent extremism. This program is available to the radicalised persons as well.

23 See here: <http://hayat-deutschland.de/english/>

The first step in the process of HAYAT is to conduct an analysis and risk assessment of the respective situation to determine whether cases pose a threat and to check the level of religiosity.²⁴

HAYAT's model focuses on three main points in de-radicalisation process, which encourages a gradual reintegration into society. These include:

1. Ideological: de-legitimize and invalidate jihadi group narratives and encourage FFs to come to terms with their past;
2. Pragmatic: assist FFs in finding employment, education or training and housing;
3. Affective: address FFs's emotional needs to be supported by their families and establish an alternative reference group.²⁵

The initiatives under HAYAT are based on advanced methods and approaches to counsel and work with the relatives of radicalised persons to eventually prevent, decelerate and invert the radicalisation process. Moreover, the HAYAT programme works directly with radicalised persons to demonstrate the possibilities of distancing from radical behavior, and ideologies which are considered as a threat to society. Most of the initiatives in Germany are taken at the state (Länder) level. For instance, in the Land of Hesse, the Interior Minister proposed a model to discern radical Islamist tendencies by having authorities visit schools to explain the negative implications of traveling to Syria. These models seek to implement an early warning system to prevent individuals going to Syria particularly German adolescents. Also, a hotline is being created and consulting centers for parents.²⁶

It is important to emphasize that in the rehabilitation and reintegration projects within the prisons in Germany, the emphasis on secularism is predominant. Germany has chosen a secular option for rehabilitation process instead of involving imams and other religious authorities, similar to other European countries, including Denmark, and Saudi Arabia outside of Europe.²⁷ The German model on deradicalisation and reintegration is based on the experience of dealing with right wing Neo Nazi extremists in 1990.²⁸ This could explain the more secular approach to the rehabilitation of foreign fighters.

24 Yermi Brenner, "How Germany Is Attempting To De-radicalize Muslim Extremists", November 3, 2016. Available at: <http://forward.com/articles/212268/how-germany-is-attempting-to-de-radicalize-muslim/>

25 Charles Lister, "Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration", Foreign Policy Brookings, 2015. P.10

26 Benjamin Weinthal, "The German jihadist's colony in Syria", *The long War Journal*, December 19, 2013

27 See at: <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-neglecting-islamist-de-radicalisation-in-prisons/a-19141684>

28 Yermi Brenner, "How Germany is attempting to de-radicalize muslims extremists". January 16, 2015. Available at: <http://forward.com/articles/212268/how-germany-is-attempting-to-de-radicalize-muslim/>

In short term, the outcomes of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are difficult to evaluate. According to a HAYAT counselor, this programme has dealt with 130 cases so far.²⁹ The evaluation results show success in the sense that recidivism has shown significantly reduced rates.³⁰

The success story behind these programmes lays on the assistance provided to their families. These programmes provides support and special assistance for the individuals affected by violent extremism, such as education and psychological assistance. On the other hand, the neglect of religious authorities to debate with religiously radicalised individuals, and its possibility to have a positive impact on de-radicalisation, is still to be seen. The German authorities leave the reform in the hands of the family with the justification that Islamists appreciate the role of the mother's power in the family. Yet, the observations and several interviews from the field in the case of Kosovo indicate that many of those that have left to join the conflicts in the Middle East have lied to their (both) parents about their destination, or ignored the religious necessity of acquiring the permission from the mother before joining jihad, thus undermining the possibilities of success of the German family based model.

2.2 Case study: Denmark

Denmark is one of the countries which has conducted a particular programme for rehabilitation and reintegration processes. Denmark is known to use soft measures towards former foreign fighters and violent extremists in general. Danish authorities consider the issue of FFs a major threat to the country's security.³¹ In 2016, 125 Danes travelled fight with extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. Approximately 62 have returned. Four of them have been arrested by the police who had returned to the Danish capital.³² Upon returning to Denmark, the returnees are screened by the police, and thereafter are provided with assistance from the Danish Security and Intelligence Service.³³ The Danish approach has attracted attention not least because of its gentler approach to returnees from Syria and Iraq and the fact that it has been developing for

29 Ibid.

30 American Institute for Contemporary German Studies: "Countering Jihadist Prison Radicalisation in Germany and U.S". Available at: <http://www.aicgs.org/publication/countering-jihadi-prison-radicalisation-in-germany-and-the-u-s/>

31 CSS Study; "Foreign Fighters: An overview of responses in eleven countries". March 2014. Available at: http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Foreign_Fighters_2014.pdf

32 Denmark: Extremism-Counter extremism. Available at: http://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/country_pdf/DK-04222016.pdf

33 PET serves as national and intelligence and security authority. PET is responsible for identifying, preventing, investigating and countering threats to freedom, democracy and security in Danish society.

nearly a decade.³⁴ As of September 2014, Danish authorities have been rehabilitating most of the 15 former foreign fighters that re-entered Denmark from Syria.³⁵ According to a psychology professor at Denmark's Aarhus University, relevant in this field, Preben Breteslen, "a citizen of democratic state governed by law, should be given the opportunity for rehabilitation and inclusion into society."³⁶ In other words, such individuals have a right to be 'redirected' away from their previous trajectory towards more legitimate activities.

Denmark's programmes are based on the dialogue which aims to find the way to prevent participation in conflict zones. Instead of threatening to arrest and imprison young people who want to join extremist groups and those returning from war zones in the Middle East, Danish authorities provide some reintegration and rehabilitation programmes including: health care, schooling, finding work, and assist them with housing. This model has latter been called, the Aarhus model.³⁷ The Aarhus model comprises of a wide range of factors which have big impact on reintegration of radicalised persons such as: Info House which includes cases with social and psychological problems.³⁸ Parent's network is another key factor which facilitates the dialogue between local authorities and their families affected by violent extremism. Parent's network has been established for parents who must deal with radicalised children, and the purpose is to empower these parents when dealing with radicalised children.³⁹

Denmark has prioritized the strategy for rehabilitating and reintegrating FFs returnees and others radicalised through two basic programs: Early Prevention Program (EPP), which aims to prevent further violent radicalisation of youngsters who do not represent any danger or security threat, but may do so if their radicalisation process continues in a violent direction⁴⁰, and encouraging others to return through the Exit Program. In Denmark, the police, the municipal council, and the local NGOs cooperate with each other and have engaged extensively with the Muslim communities in

34 Danish Institute for International Studies: "An introduction to Danish approach to countering and preventing violent extremism and radicalisation". 2015. Available at: <http://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/almindel/reu/bilag/248/1617692.pdf>

35 Denmark: Extremism-Counter extremism. Available at: <http://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/countrypdf/DK-04222016.pdf>

36 Charles Lister, "Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration", Foreign Policy Brookings, 2015. P.7-8

37 Aarhus Model comprises programs for both early prevention and exit processes. It tries to prevent further violent radicalisation and deals with radicalised individuals.

38 Panorama, "From the Desert to World Cities, the New Terrorism", Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, January, 2015 P.243-245.

39 Ibid.

40 Preben Bertelsen, "Danish Preventive Measures and De-radicalisation Strategies: The Aarhus Model". January 2015. Available at: http://psy.au.dk/fileadmin/Psykologi/Forskning/Preben_Bertelsen/Avisartikler_radikalisering/Panorama.pdf

preventing radicalisation.⁴¹ The Exit Programme is directed already towards radicalised people who have intentions and capabilities of committing politically and religiously motivated violent crimes and terrorism.⁴² The initiative of the Exit Programme offers medical treatment for war wounds and psychological trauma. This programme also assists returning fighters with finding work and resuming education.⁴³

Another important element is the dialogue that takes place with the Muslim communities. This factor has been excluded by the German model on de-radicalisation. The Aarhus team is in continuous open dialogue with different communities, organizations and Mosques in Aarhus with the aim to prevent violent radicalisation of their young members, including the recruitment of and by potential violent extremists. Education is considered another very important activity within this model which includes the network of facilitators, mentors, comprehensive training and workshops with instructors on de-radicalisation process, risks and potential risks, as well as conflict management.⁴⁴

This model also uses methods such as community policing, communication between teachers, counselors, parents, other members of community and police.⁴⁵ Moreover, through this programme the authorities maintain contact with families of those who are already in Syria, ranging from helping them stay in touch via various means of communications to liaising with government officials, consulates and intelligence agencies to help get their relatives home when they decide they want to come back.⁴⁶ To be sure, this programme does not attempt to change the ideology of the violent extremists. According to rehabilitator Steffen Nielsen: "we don't spend a lot of energy fighting ideology."⁴⁷ He justifies this by arguing that they do not want to make them change their dream for the "Caliphate", because there are some means that they cannot use because of the restrictions provided by the penal code in Denmark.⁴⁸ This approach allows individuals to be what they like to be, as long as they do not actually do things which contradict the law. In other words, this does not focus on what people think, as long as the actions they may possibly take are not unlawful.

41 Charles Lister, "Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration", Foreign Policy Brookings, 2015. P.9

42 Ibid.

43 Denmark Counter Extremism Project. 2016. Available at: <https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/denmark>

44 Ibid.

45 Kelly Cobiella, "Denmark De-radicalisation Program Aims to Reintegrate Not Condemn" May 2015. Available at: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/denmark-de-radicalisation-n355346>

46 Al Jazeera: "Denmark introduces rehab for Syrian fighters". September 2014. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/09/denmark-introduces-rehab-syrian-fighters-201496125229948625.html>

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

The Danish program's organizers say that while it is difficult to judge exactly how successful they've been, the number of people traveling from Aarhus to fight dropped from 31 in 2013 to just one last year.⁴⁹ The strong efforts and coordination between the National Intelligence and Security Authority (PET) with religious leaders has shown to be a good example of how to deal with the former foreign fighters. In the case of Denmark, this is considered to be a positive approach to eliminating domestic violent extremism.⁵⁰ After a coordinated effort by PET to initiate a dialogue with the mosque's leaders, the statistics did not show any tendencies from the Danes to engage in jihad in Syria.⁵¹ The Danish model of reintegration has drawn global attention for its soft approach towards former foreign fighters. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Denmark, on the other hand, provides a huge amount of money to these programs in order to succeed. As such, the cost of these programmes need to be taken into account should Kosovo decide to apply such a model.

2.3 Case study: Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia might be one of the last places one would expect to find an art therapy course for convicted terrorists. The Kingdom, after all, is known for an unforgiving approach to criminal justice.⁵² The Saudis run effective programmes to prevent and fight violent extremism inside its borders – as many times, violent extremists claimed and at times took actions to overthrow the Kingdom whom they accused of being apostates for cooperation with the West.

De-radicalisation and reintegration programmes in Saudi Arabia began in 2004, during this period the soft approach was emphasized. There are up to 2,500 FFs from Saudi Arabia to join the recent conflict, listing the country at second from the top of the list with FFs.⁵³ Over time, the Saudi rehabilitation programme grew in scope and prestige as a great part of former foreign fighters appeared to reintegrate successfully into the society. Saudis provide Islamic re-education that tackles the issue of violent extremism. Those who are considered to be violent extremists undergo some courses which aim to trump their ideas through alternative or Saudi mainstream religious interpreta-

49 Kelly Cobeilla: "Denmark De-radicalisation program aims to reintegrate not condemn", May 2015. Available at: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/denmark-de-radicalisation-n355346>

50 Hudson Institute: "The Danish Model for Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism". August 2014. Available at: <https://www.hudson.org/research/10555-the-danish-model-for-prevention-of-radicalisation-and-extremism>

51 Ibid.

52 Bennet Drake: "How to defuse a human bomb". April, 2008.

53 The Telegraph: "Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for Isis?", March, 2016. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isis/>

tions.⁵⁴ The program of rehabilitation starts with inmates and is designed to treat the prisoner as a misguided victim who can be redeemed through re-education.⁵⁵

“Saudi Arabia’s program is designed on the presumption that violent extremism comes as a result of a mistaken interpretation of Islam, rather than deliberate support for terrorism. Thus, programs are designed to ‘reeducate’ individuals and promote a more holistic and nonviolent interpretation of religion.”⁵⁶

An important point about the Saudi programme is that it began solely with the involvement of clerics, but as time went on, the clerics understood that a purely ideological (in this case Islamic) approach was not sufficient. As a result, they invited psychiatric and psychological professionals to help assess the prisoners throughout the treatment programme and have in the last years many psychological aspects to their programme including art therapy.⁵⁷

Key components of Saudi Arabia’s strategy are divided into three tools: Prevention, Rehabilitation and Aftercare.⁵⁸ These three tools aim to discourage individuals from being affected by terrorism or violent extremist ideas.

Prevention aims to distract the ideology embraced by individuals targeted by the extremist ideology and to teach potential victims with non-violent and legal interpretations and expression of Islam. This phase is completed through some advising programmes, including public lectures, workshops, seminars and conferences in addition to utilizing the mass media including TV, newspaper and the internet to counter deviant ideologies.⁵⁹ These programmes serve as advisory programs, which are run through dialogue sessions with families, individuals in their homes and school debates. These scholars meet with tribal leaders and students at schools and go to the mosques to give lectures. They spend around 15 days to raise awareness of the dangers of extremism. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also organizes events such as evening talks and lectures, discussing the various aspects of radicalism.⁶⁰

54 Abdullah F, Ansary, “Combating Extremism: A brief overview of Saudi Arabia’s approach”. Middle East Policy.

55 Ibid.

56 Fink&Hearne, “Beyond Terrorism: De-radicalisation and Disengagement from Violent Extremism”. October 2008. P.6

57 Anne Speckhard: “Prison and community based disengagement and de-radicalisation programs for extremists involved in militant jihadi terrorism ideologies and activities”.

58 Christopher Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s Soft Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation and Aftercare”. Carnegie endowment for international peace, September 22, 2008.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

Rehabilitation and pre-care of the Saudi Rehabilitation Strategy seeks to reeducate individuals through intensive dialogue and religious debates. Before reentering society, victims spend a period of eight to twelve weeks in the Center for counseling and advice. The counseling process begins with face to face meetings between a prisoner (victim) and an advisory committee. This encourages extremists to renounce “terrorist ideologies”⁶¹, especially the doctrine of Takfir.⁶² The counseling program designed not on punishment or retribution but on a presumption of benevolence.

An important aspect of Saudi Rehabilitation Program is that it does not consist only of religious lectures. Dialogues and discussions are also encouraged. Inside prisons there are spaces for families to accommodate visitors and facilitate the inclusion of detainees’ families while creating larger social networks which facilitate the rehabilitation process.⁶³

Unlike the German programmes of reintegration which excludes religious authorities, Saudi Arabia involves Islamic scholars who serve as lecturers in prison – suited for the country specific traditions and circumstances. The aim of the clerics is to explain to the prisoners why their justifications to be involved in violent practices were wrong, and to teach about state-approved interpretations of Islam.⁶⁴ This program runs a series of short dialogue sessions lasting one to two hours that take place in both formal and informal classroom sessions and meetings. These short session programmes consist of six-week courses in specific topics, such as takfir ideology, jihad and terrorism. After this, every prisoner takes an exam which they must pass or retake if it is needed.⁶⁵

The rehabilitation program launched by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Saudi Arabia is focused more on the prison system. Various religious scholars visit prisons where they spend time speaking to prisoners. If inmates are successfully transforming their belief systems, then those individuals pass through the Care Rehabilitation Center (CRC).⁶⁶ The CRC offers support for family members with disabilities and those in need of psychological assistance.⁶⁷ This center has many activities which are considered important in the counter-radicalisation process, because they not only build teamwork but also encourage and develop state institutions as well.

61 Christopher Boucek, “Saudi Arabia’s Soft Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation and Aftercare”. Carnegie endowment for international peace, September 22, 2008.

62 Takfir is referred to someone who is unbeliever and no longer Muslim.

63 Global Research Analysis: “Jailing Jihadists: Saudi Arabia’s Special Terrorist Prisons Publication: Terrorism Monitor Volume: 6 Issue: 2. January 2008. Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/jailing-jihadis-saudi-arabias-special-terrorist-prisons/>

64 ChristooharBoucek, “Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia”. August, 2016

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Marc Jones: “Rehabilitating Islamist Extremists: Successful methods in Prison-Centred ‘De-Radicalisation’ Programmes”.

One of the key elements of Saudi Rehabilitation Program is that it does not only treat the individual but also involves the prisoners' family.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it informs the community about the situation in the prison. This is a good reciprocity mechanism between two sides and increases cooperation among prisoners and family members. This programme also obliges families to take care of family members following a release from prison.

Since the beginning of this programme in 2004, According to Dr. Muhammad al Nu-jaymi from the advisory Committee roughly 2000 prisoners have participated who have passed through those counseling programs in different phases. 700 of them have announced their beliefs changed."⁶⁹ However, according to some published reports around 1,400 of them have refused to be part of rehabilitation programmes because most of these inmates do not believe they will ever get out of prison, and as such intentionally attempt to frustrate authorities' attempts to help prisoners.⁷⁰

Saudi Arabia has been successful to a certain extent and in some cases has prevented individuals from embracing violent extremist ideas, but also to de-radicalise those that have already embraced these ideas. Given the country's context they have overwhelmingly focused on religious re-education since these programs worked under the assumption that violent extremist ideas inside Saudi Arabia are largely a result of religious misunderstandings. As such it emphasizes the prevalence of religious curricula in all phases of education. Even though Saudi Arabia has implemented these programmes that are specific to their context, and may not necessarily be as productive in other contexts, at least, one can draw some specific elements which might suit other cases.⁷¹ As with Denmark, however, it needs to be noted that the programme on rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia enjoys the advantage of the amount of resources and money provided for this programme.

68 Samuel J. Mullins: "Rehabilitation of Islamists Terrorists: lessons from criminology". University of Wollongong. 2010.

69 See at: <https://jamestown.org/program/extremist-re-education-and-rehabilitation-in-saudi-arabia/>

70 Ibid.

71 Note to readers: The discussion here acknowledges reports that speak about the possibility of Saudi Arabia's involvement in supporting violent extremist groups outside its country's territory. This paper suggests, however, that this should not be conflated with the programs that this country runs to prevent and fight violent extremism inside its borders, something which the regime has struggled with for decades. Similar reports and academic literature suggest that support for violent extremist groups has also been part of many western countries' foreign policy tool. Likewise, such foreign policy tools should not be conflated with the genuine objectives that these countries have and want to obtain domestically - thus lessons can be learned in their domestic attempts.

3. ARE WE ABLE TO CREATE A KOSOVAR MODEL TO DEAL WITH VIOLENT EXTREMISTS?

A possible model that Kosovo should adopt ought to consider some of the experiences and practices of the countries elaborated above, and be further adopted to the context of Kosovo.

Despite the lack of experience of dealing with former FFs and extremists, the Kosovo Government has shown the willingness to design a rehabilitation and reintegration programme for individuals affected by violent extremism. The MoJ with the support of the ICITAP has started the implementation of a rehabilitation and reintegration programme alongside the correctional service. This programme is divided into three phases (rehabilitation within the prisons, social reintegration and post release or after care phase). This programme includes several components, including staff training, interviews with inmates, visiting families, and activities inside the prisons.⁷²

FFs returnees are not a homogenous group, other radicalised persons as well. To be effective, reintegration programmes need to be flexible to individual's specific characteristics and needs. Any effort to reintegrate violent extremists or terrorists should start with an assessment of the individual's needs, using specific risk assessment methods for violent extremism.

In addition to some aspects of the models implemented by the three case studies discussed above, the KCSS's proposal for a model is also based on the research carried out on the ground. The KCSS research team has identified 3 categories of targeted individuals which a Kosovo programme on rehabilitation and reintegration should consider: a) Those who returned by their own will and show or not regret for what they did; b) Families of the individuals affected by violent extremism; and c) Those who have not been part of the conflict, but who have committed criminal activities affiliated to violent extremism and terrorism.

Having these categories in mind, and drawing from some of the aspects of the models in the discussed case studies, the model of Kosovo ought to consist of three specific phases: 1) Rehabilitation phase; 2) Reintegration phase; 3) After-release phase. A more comprehensive analysis on each of the phases is provided in the following chapter.

3.1 Rehabilitation Phase

The aim of rehabilitation is to stimulate the offender's process of societal re-entry which requires a disengagement with their previous attitudes and behaviours. Reha-

72 Interview with Mike Pannek. 10 February 2017.

bilitation serves as a valuable tool in changing the circle of violence for those who do not see any other possibility to do so without external assistance. Throughout this phase, it is probable to learn more on the varying motivations of FFs. Among the conducted interviews by KCSS researchers with FFs, it has been noticed that not all of them show their willing to undergo through rehabilitation process. For instance, one of the returned FFs, emphasized his reluctance to be part of the program.⁷³ Such as individuals are more frustrated to institutions and do not think that the state could do the best for them.⁷⁴ This phase is an essential and integral comprehensive approach not only for FFs, but for the other inmates as well. This phase should consist of several components which have relevance on the treatment of radicalized persons such as:

Correctional facilities or rehabilitation inside the prison- rehabilitation programmes in many countries are struggling on how to best address prisoners and their recruitment tactics. The rehabilitation needs for prisoners vary, depending on their profile of the very process of their radicalisation. Lately, the CRC made efforts to improve the correctional service centres including camera surveillance inside the prisons, and conducting the risk assessments.⁷⁵ According to representatives of the Correctional Service Center (CRC), in Kosovo prisoners are concentrated in some of the correctional services centres, and are divided in two categories: Those who are highly radicalised are settled in "High Security Prison" in Dyz, where 18 prisoners indicted for violent extremism are found guilty. Whereas, the less radicalised prisoners are kept in detention centers in Dubrava, Lipjan, Smrekonice, Prishtine, Prizren, Peje, Gjilan, Mitrovica, and Lipjan.⁷⁶ These persons are mixed with the other inmates, sentenced for the other issues.⁷⁷ The basic idea behind rehabilitation through imprisonment is that the person who has been imprisoned will never want to be sent back to prison after they have been set free.⁷⁸ On the other hand, many researches argue that some prisoners will learn new and better ways to commit crimes while they are detained.⁷⁹ So, prisons are not a guaranteed tool for rehabilitation. Prisons should offer better rehabilitative services to inmates such as activities inside and outside prisons. For example, creating a better environment through sports activities, gym, allowing access to the libraries, and non religious field as well as to allow them practicing praying. However, there are some challenges which could make rehabilitation process difficult due to the budget and since everything is related to the prisons, there is lack of professional staff (experts) inside the prisons.⁸⁰

73 Interview with H.L. 20 February 2017

74 Ibid.

75 Interview with Representative from Correctional Service Centre, 06 February 2017

76 Ibid.

77 See: <http://zeri.info/aktuale/95442/rrezik-nga-radikalizmi-neper-burgje/>

78 See <http://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/rehabilitative-effects-of-imprisonment/>

79 Ibid.

80 Interview with Valdet Hoxha. 20 September 2016

Family integration in the programme is another important component. It is important to mention that, Rehabilitation and Reintegration programmes should not focus only on radicalised individuals (former foreign fighters) but part of those programs should also include their families and other persons outside the prisons who may be potential subject of radicalisation. Family plays a vital role in CVE and in promoting rehabilitation models as seen in the success of the case studies. Reconnection with the family after a potential FF returns home is the first step that would ease or make their future reintegration possible. Family is an important social component in individuals' behavior, and it is one of the "first aid" elements that any program should focus on. Family also plays the mediator's role between the radicalised individuals and society – including public institutions, and as such can provide direct support in both directions. Therefore, the government should provide social support for FFs families (other radicalised and the role of mothers in de-radicalisation in general) to help and encourage them to be the bridge between the former FFs and state authorities. To recall, the cases of Denmark, Germany and Saudi Arabia suggest that engaging families and community in rehabilitation program can be successful, especially in Kosovo, where family and community has a crucial role. Preparing families with the best possible approaches when interacting with their returned and radicalised family members, also eases the process of re-socialization and integration. The family's perception and behavior towards the returnees may have one of the first and big influences upon the returnees.⁸¹ The KCSS has visited the family members of FFs engaged in violent extremism on numerous occasions, and we have noticed that they could be helpful in the rehabilitation process. Within the family, the role of the mother is significant in preventing violent extremism. One of the returned foreign fighters Albert Berisha, was willing to share his experience on how his mother influenced his decision to return home.⁸² He said "It was the voice of my mother on the phone who made thinking about going back home".⁸³ Hence, the family should be considered as a key factor in all phases, rehabilitation and re-socialization and after release as well in the future programme in Kosovo.

The psychological treatment is another component that plays an important role in the rehabilitation program. Psychologists can provide more information about the social and the psychological factors, their personality, and unpack alienation as drivers of violent extremism. This information helps to determine whether they are a threat, and to design more individualized reintegration plans. Psychological and medical care is needed for all returnees.

Religious authorities or (theologians): Religious authorities have a certain impact on the religiously radicalised individuals that other aspects of rehabilitation do not possess. They possess the authority of religious interpretation through which, though not al-

81 Interview with Liridon Berisha. 23 October 2016

82 Interview with Albert Berisha. 23. October 2016

83 Ibid.

ways, the radicalised individuals may justify their deeds. A non-violent religious interpretation from a religious authority, devised specifically to target the radicalised individuals, can be a source of a more legitimate discussion with the victims. They are likely to recognize their language, their mentality and they can contribute in combating their ideology, in cases when genuine discussions can take place between some of these religious authorities, and the religiously radicalised individuals. An analyst from the National Security Council emphasizes the role of Imams should have in rehabilitation process. He said that they should have a special curricula regarding to the lectures and debates with inmates.⁸⁴ Different studies from selected cases in this paper have shown that religious counselling can induce positive attitudinal and motivational change, or religious counselling can encourage inmates to adhere to a more moderate peaceful religion interpretation. In the end, it is the state who decides who should be imprisoned.⁸⁵

Former Foreign Fighters for extremists: Disillusioned foreign fighters may serve as particularly potential tools against the influence of extremists' propaganda. Those individuals who have returned could be incorporated into reintegration the process itself. Of course, care should be taken when selecting them to be part of the process, since former violent extremists might become targets for violent retaliation. The former foreign fighters who regret travelling to conflict zones know better about the radicalisation process, and could hold some legitimacy when speaking to the newly returned. They also have stories to share amongst each other, and should be elaborated across society and public institutions. The state authorities should encourage the former FFs and give them the opportunity to express their experiences of their participation in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the negative consequences of this engagement. Many of former FFs who are not considered affected with radicalism can contribute in the counternarrative of the other FFs. One example is the case of Albert Berisha who was part of the conflict in Syria and Iraq, and a year after, he decided to tell his story in public about how his decision to join the conflict was wrong.⁸⁶

3.2 Reintegration Phase

Reintegration or as it is known by Kosovo legislation, the re-socialization phase, is often referred to as the support given to offenders during the process of reentering into society following imprisonment. Reintegration, or resocialization, is also part of the legal framework of Kosovo which regulates the execution of criminal sanctions, more precisely, the "Law on Execution of Penal Sanctions" adopted in 2010. This law requires that criminal sanctions should be executed in such a manner that assures human treat-

84 Interview with Kujtim Bytyqi. 15 October 2016

85 Interview with Representative from Correctional Service Centre, 06 February 2017

86 Interview with Albert Berisha. 23. October 2016

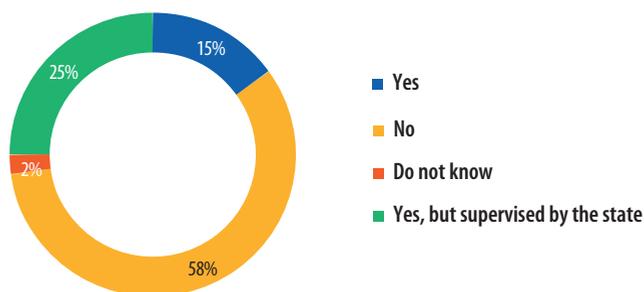
ment and respect for the dignity of every convicted individual. The process of re-socializing and reintegrating of the convicted person into the community is also pursued through the involvement of private and public institutions, as well as other individuals who can potentially contribute to the reintegration process.⁸⁷

Reintegration is supposed to be a process which gives the subjects the feeling of a hopeful return to the society. It is important to note that the model of reintegration follows several principles that are drawn from some of the practices from the cases discussed above, but adapted to the domestic context. This phase comprises of the following components:

Community: Community serves as a mechanism for helping returnees to reconnect to society and not feel isolated. Building trust between the community members and the returnees is important – if and when they spend time in prison and after they are released. Outright marginalization or exclusion of these individuals may lead to further frustration and unexpected behaviour. The problem remains, however, that communities' readiness and willingness to accept former FFs back into the society are not very promising, highlighting that major work needs to be done at this level.

More concretely, the KSB⁸⁸ conducted a study on communities' receiving FFs, and the respondents provided the following answers:

Figure 1. Are you personally ready to receive former foreign fighters into your community?



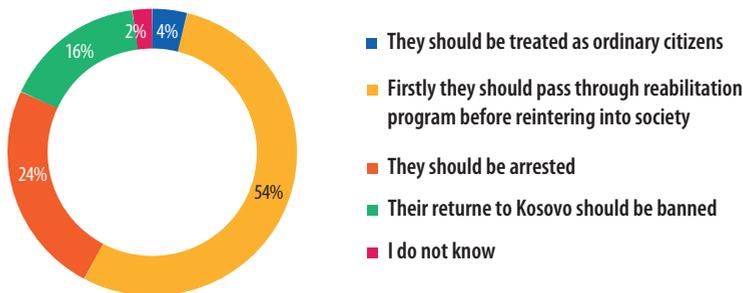
87 Official gazette of Republic of Kosovo. "Law NO 04\L -149 on Execution of Penal Sanctions". Available at: [http://www.md-ks.net/repository/docs/Ligji_per_ekzekutimin_e_sanksioneve_penale_\(anglisht\).pd](http://www.md-ks.net/repository/docs/Ligji_per_ekzekutimin_e_sanksioneve_penale_(anglisht).pd)

88 Kosovo Security Barometer, sixth edition. Available at: http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/KSB-Sixth-Edition_327922.pdf

The findings show that citizens are reluctant to receive Kosovo's FFs into their community, due to the threat they believe the FFs pose to the community. The findings of the KSB show that 58 percent of the respondents would not feel safe to live in the same community with the former FFs. On the other hand, a quarter of the respondents said that they are ready to receive FFs back into their community, only if they are supervised by Kosovo's security authorities. It is early to speculate on the background of such responses, but it begins to indicate what individuals feel regarding reintegration. Simultaneously, this has a normative twist, because should the reintegration program show some success, work needs to be done at the community level to explain the actual level of threat that these individuals may pose to the community, or at least the heterogeneity among the returned FFs when it comes to the level of security each of them poses.

Also, when asked about the measures which the state should undertake with regards to the returned FFs in Kosovo, the respondents of the KSB project had mixed perceptions. Around 54 percent of them said that the FFs should undergo a rehabilitation and reintegration programme before their reintegration into the society. On the other hand, 24 percent of the respondents said that Kosovo's returned FFs should be arrested immediately, upon their return to Kosovo. While 16 percent of the respondents said that the state should prohibit the returned Kosovo citizens who have participated in conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Figure 2. What do you think about return of Kosovo's foreign fighters?



Non-formal education: Education is considered to also be an essential element of re-socialization and the post release phase, as well as for any preventive measure. It prevents them reverting to their former network. Informal education provides young people with an important avenue through which to be informed over various ideas and possibilities. Training is also a critical component of the education phase. Vocational training is often provided to a specific career or trade and focuses mainly on the prac-

tical applications of skills learned with little emphasis on theory. Such training would improve employment, practical skills and prepares inmates for the labour market after being released from the prison. So, while engaging with educational institutions, significant investment needs to be put into the quality of education. Civil society and government should be encouraged to provide education through skills trainings and lectures. Quality education is a key component in preventing violent extremism, and thus the role of the Ministry of Education, Sciences and Technology (MEST) is crucial here.

The socio-economic status- is considered an important feature for almost all phases of de-radicalisation and reintegration. Since the socio-economic aspect is considered as one of the push factors facilitating individuals to join the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, treating the socio-economic aspect in practice should be part of the wide process. Though, this is a general and long term aspect which considers other socio-political factors in the country. During KCSS ongoing fieldwork has been noticed that some of the families affected by violent extremism are living in very difficult economic conditions. However, from the Ministry of Labour it is said that they do not provide any budget, not because of the will, but due to the lack of enough budget in general.⁸⁹

3.3 Post-Prison Phase

The process of rehabilitation does not end within the prison environment. The post-release phase is the final phase of a rehabilitation and reintegration programme. This phase should be considered as a last step before subjects' re-entry into society. Returning to society after a number of years is not simple. This phase has several challenges, because it is difficult to evaluate when the other phases have successfully concluded. Nonetheless, in this phase, rehabilitated individuals can enjoy their freedom. Therefore, this phase can serve as a tool for monitoring the movements, actions and behaviours of individuals who have been released from prisons. Willingness is always difficult to measure, though the judgement should be made based on the willingness and readiness of the subject to settle back into the community and engage in a normal life. Nevertheless, special attention should still be paid to these inmates even after the phase is completed. Employment, education, and other opportunities should also be on offer.

Police monitoring: after release, attention should be paid to those who have left prison. The role of the police is to supervise and monitor returnees' behaviour in the community. Police engagement should ensure public safety and promote problem solving. At the same time the police should encourage a collaborative role between released inmates and community.⁹⁰

89 Interview with Fatmir Haxholli. 14 September 2016

90 Interview with representative from Correctional Service Centre, 06 February 2017

CONCLUSION

De-radicalization programmes are seen as a possible answer to the question of what to do with the large numbers of radical extremists incarcerated throughout the world. When it comes to de-radicalisation and reintegration of returned foreign fighters and other persons radicalized in Kosovo, the paper emphasizes that it is difficult to apply foreign practices and guarantee their exact successful implementation. Currently, Kosovo is in a process of addressing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Since reintegration is a relatively new occurrence in Kosovo, offering models and practices from the other countries present possible options to Kosovo on how to deal with such phenomenon.

Taking into account such models, KCSS offers an alternative programme which is divided in three phases: rehabilitation, including some components such as rehabilitation within the prisons, family integration in the programme, psychological treatment, religious authorities, former FFs for extremists; reintegration or resocialization phase, including: community, non-formal education, socio-economic status, training, and the post-release phase or post prison, including: employment, and police monitoring. Such a programme would be useful within the Kosovo context due to the KCSS' experience in conducting similar work and activities, it is expected that a comprehensive reintegration programme can be created.

The paper concludes with the set of components and features which could possibly be applied within the Kosovo context. The Kosovo programme addresses the prisoner's social needs by emphasizing also the role of family in its efforts. Providing socio-economic support for them with needs would prevent potential radicalization of these members with financial hardships, and as well as, would encourage goodwill toward the institutions, which would increase the trust in them.

As such, the paper has compiled effective measures for the Kosovo institutions from different national strategies with the hope of taking into consideration those measures and insuring best implementation within the Kosovar model.

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- **Kujtim Bytyqi**- Analyst at the National Security Council
- **Mike Panek**- Senior Corrections Advisor- ICITAP
- **Valdet Hoxha**- Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Internal affairs and Coordinator of the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism
- **Sabri Bajgora**-Chief Imam of Islamic Community of Kosovo
- **Representative** from the Correctional Service Center
- **Albert Berisha**- Former foreign fighter
- **Liridon Kabashi**- Former foreign fighter
- **H.L.**- Former foreign fighter

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