



Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Fund

Overview

New Zealand's [Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy](#) (the Strategy) aims to bring the nation together to protect all New Zealanders from terrorism and violent extremism of all kinds¹. This Strategy has a four-fold approach: to increase our understanding of the issues, to work collectively as a nation to reduce the risk, to prevent violent extremism, and be ready to respond and recover if an incident occurs. Within this approach, Government's priority is **prevention**.

Whakahōtaetae: Prevention

Preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) describes efforts to intervene before a person is radicalised to violence and undertakes a terrorist attack. It is a comprehensive approach that complements existing and traditional counter-terrorism work with activities focused on effective, long-term prevention of violent extremism and terrorism. It involves a broader range of New Zealanders including social policy agencies, non-governmental and civil society organisations, and communities.

These efforts can cover a spectrum of activities. At one end are targeted interventions designed to support individuals showing signs of radicalisation to violence. At the other end are activities that aim to prevent the emergence of violent extremism, including through building social cohesion.

Radicalisation to violence

The Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry's definition of radicalisation:

The process through which people develop commitment to a particular extremist ideology. People can radicalise to violence when they come to see violence as a feasible tool to address their grievances.

Extreme views become harmful when an individual radicalises to violent extremism. This is a belief that violence is the only justifiable solution to address a perceived grievance. A radicalised individual may not necessarily consider carrying out violence themselves. They may advocate violence online or encourage others to undertake violent acts. Activity at this stage can also take the form of criminal offending such as vandalism or harassment against a perceived enemy.

There is no single profile of a violent extremist and demographics such as age, gender, and social or economic background cannot be used to predict if someone will radicalise or mobilise to violence. Every individual will have unique factors that contribute to their susceptibility to radicalisation and their subsequent behaviours.

The ideologies of many violent extremists are no longer always fixed and firm, but at times there is a significant overlapping and/or merging of ideologies. Intervention work will be guided by concerning

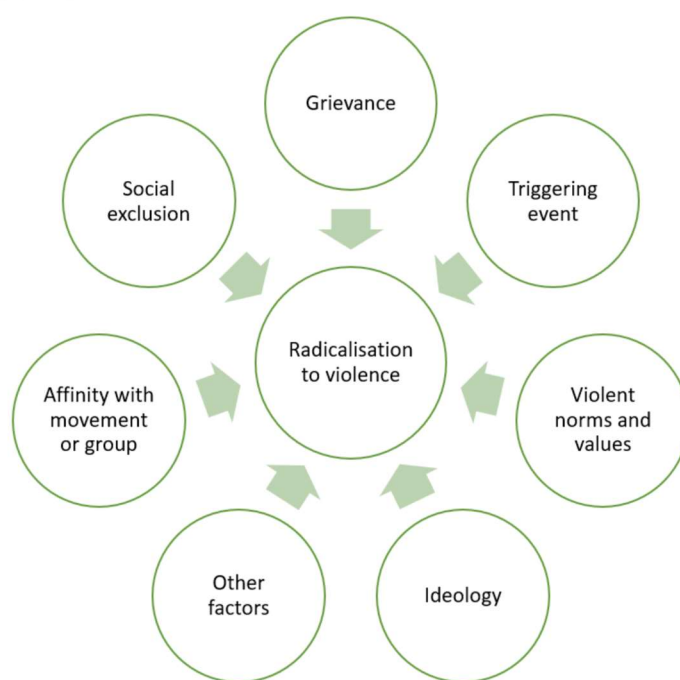
¹ New Zealand's Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy includes four pillars: mōhio – understand; mahi tahi – work together; whakahōtaetae – prevent and; takatū – be ready to respond and recover

behaviours more than ideologies. For more information about concerning behaviours, see [Know-the-signs.pdf \(nzsis.govt.nz\)](#).

Despite this, there are some common views that form part of the pathway of many violent extremists. Gender-based violence, for example, presents regularly in violent extremists' backgrounds. A better understanding of the early stages of radicalisation to violence will assist whānau and communities to understand and support individuals who are at risk of undertaking violence.

Radicalisation to violence is highly individualised. There is no single model to explain why people choose to mobilise to violence. Rather there are various factors that may make an individual more vulnerable to radicalisation to violence. A person's individual characteristics (such as their life experiences and their background) and wider socio-economic and political factors such as social exclusion and marginalisation) interact in unique ways to influence a person's likelihood of radicalising.

The internet is now regularly a predominant factor in radicalisation to violence (see outcome 2). Individuals can easily find online networks and ideas that reinforce their own grievances, and rapidly access content that both supports their existing views and encourages more extreme views. Individuals inhabit both online and offline communities and spaces and ensuring there is appropriate real-world support is vital for at-risk individuals living increasingly digital lives.



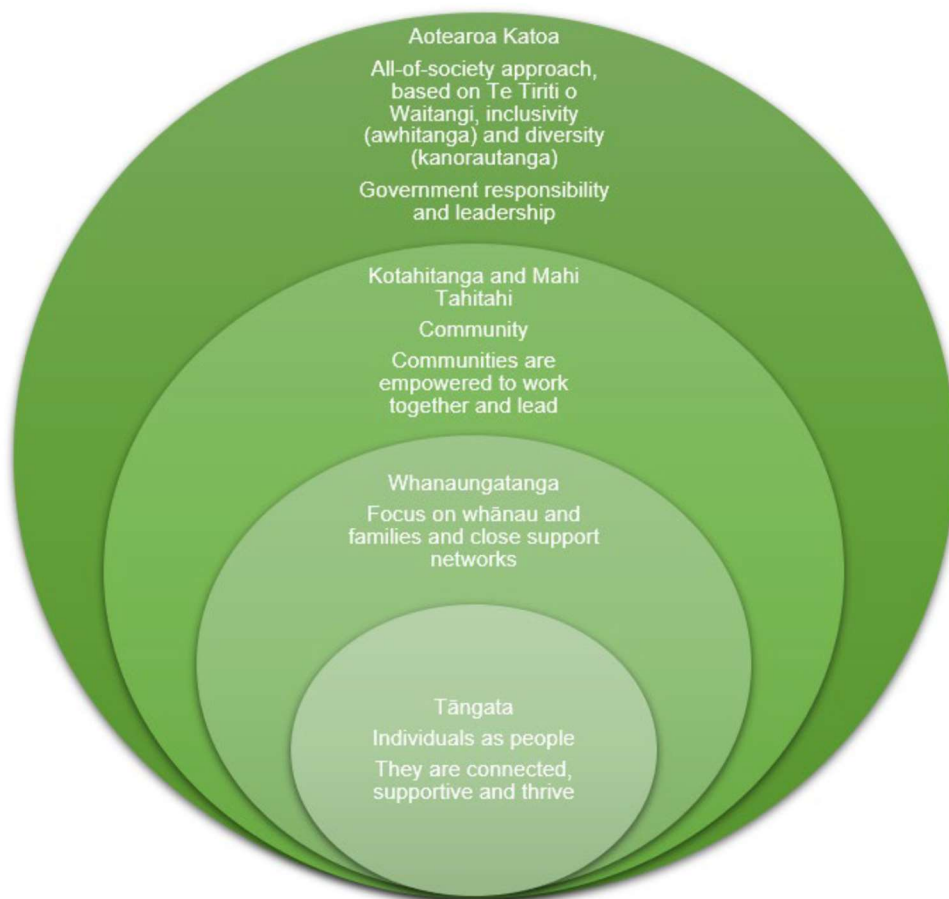
This diagram provides a non-exhaustive list of some of the factors that may lead an individual to radicalising to violence. A person may have all, one, some or none of these factors. The presence of one or more of these factors is also not a direct correlation with violent extremism.

Practical approaches to preventing radicalisation to violence

Violent extremism is complex and continuously evolving, with very diverse individual cases that often do not fit within clearly defined boxes. Radicalisation to violence rarely follows a linear process, and a broad programme of initiatives are required across the prevention and countering spectrum.

Each person who has been radicalised, or is at risk of radicalising to violence, has a unique world view that has been influenced by very specific push and pull factors. Therefore, in each example, violent extremism looks, sounds and feels different.

Drivers of radicalisation will most often be at an individual level but there may also be drivers at a group, network, community, institutional and systemic level. The diagram below details the system layers that surround individual and the levels of intervention required in prevention.



We all have a part to play

Activity to prevent and counter violent extremism will be undertaken at an all-of-society level, led by the Government, as well as at community, whānau and individual levels. We will coordinate and support nationally, and act locally to empower and support communities in preventing and countering violent extremism.

The people closest to a potentially violent individual are often best placed to lead and be supported in work to disengage them from violence. At times government agencies will also lead this disengagement support for individuals, working in partnerships where appropriate.

Positive connections to communities, a sense of purpose and fulfilment, and institutions that are strong, free from bias, and able to understand grievances provide the best chance of preventing violent extremism, and of being resilient when extremism may occur. Interventions will therefore aim to empower individuals, whānau, communities and civil society to take actions that keep all of us safer.

Civil society organisations and communities can have the most positive impact in delivery of community-based initiatives, particularly at a local level. They are also better placed than other sectors to lead initiatives to challenge violent extremist narratives, lead counter-narratives and de-radicalisation, and build individual and community resilience. Where feasible, multi-stakeholder models should be pursued and government will seek to facilitate partnerships, resource, support and enable civil society and communities for appropriate localised delivery.

The PCVE fund is intended to support and enable individuals, communities, civil society, government and others to make changes that create a New Zealand that continues to reduce the risk of radicalisation and build resilience to violent extremism at all levels – from individuals to institutions.

Outcome 1: Individuals that are down, or heading down, a path of radicalisation to violence are supported from further harm

Context

Pathways into and out of violent extremism are often highly personal, encompassing multiple elements of an individual's life. As such, effective preventative and rehabilitative measures are holistic in approach and tailored to individuals.

There is little reliable New Zealand-specific or international data on why certain disengagement measures succeed, and others do not. Disengagement from violence is frequently driven by changes in an individual's life and circumstances. Measuring the extent and sincerity of a person's disengagement remains difficult.

When someone supports violent extremism, effective assessment of their situation and work to support disengagement from violence requires careful consideration of who is most appropriate to engage with the individual and how. Frequently, this engagement will involve social welfare services or mental health providers as well as law enforcement, as there are often social-economic, health and wellbeing matters that have influenced the radicalisation.

Approaches to prevention

People who are becoming radicalised to violence need support to move them away from seeking to cause harm. Often, it is the people closest to an individual who are best placed to provide this support, particularly when it relates to challenging the harmful ideologies that a person possesses. Government has an active role to play in providing support to whānau and communities to undertake this disengagement.

In some cases, Government agencies will need to play a more direct role, such as through the wrap-around support provided through [He Aranga Ake](#), and working alongside localised and community-based approaches.

He Aranga Ake is a multi-agency disengagement framework to protect and support individuals where indicators suggest they may be on a pathway towards carrying out an act or facilitating an act of extremist violence or terrorism. The scope of He Aranga Ake is for national security persons of concern who pose a growing violent extremism or terrorism risk who meet a specific threshold of concern.

Within a Department of Corrections environment, when identifying that someone has potentially violent extremist views, Corrections assesses their level of risk and develops an individualised plan focused on disengaging them from the potential use of violence and building protective factors to engage them in prosocial activity.

Both programmes take a multi-disciplinary team approach to developing plans and can also include partner agencies such as Police as well as external agencies who offer reintegrative, cultural and community support. These plans may also include supported employment or job seeking activity and supported accommodation or living.

Providing support to disengage from violence is a complex, sensitive and specialist area. There are few specialists with expertise in this area in Aotearoa New Zealand. Those who lead and deliver this work – whether inside or outside government – need expertise and to be appropriately trained, qualified and supported. We will continue to focus efforts to resource and build capability in this priority area of PCVE work. Whilst we grow this capability and capacity, we will prioritise work identifying, supporting and disengaging those who have a clear intent and are more likely to mobilise to physical violence.

Outcome 2: A safer online environment mitigating risks of radicalisation to violence

Context

New Zealanders are spending a large and growing share of their professional and personal lives in the digital realm. A free, open, and secure internet is a powerful tool to promote connectivity, enhance social inclusiveness and foster economic growth.

The internet is a place for sharing and connection. However, it can also provide a means for the sharing of terrorist, violent extremist, and harmful content, as well as enabling connections that can lead an individual

down a path of radicalisation to violence. In an increasingly digital world, we need to be aware there are elements of the internet that provide relentless exposure to and dissemination and mainstreaming of extremist and hateful ideologies.

Individuals can find connection and inclusion in communities online, particularly where they may not find a sense of belonging offline. Through digital mechanisms and platforms, New Zealanders are able to connect with local and international networks of extremists. This includes international violent extremist groups and individuals influencing – and at times directly coordinating with – New Zealanders online. Terrorist incidents internationally can inspire and create violent intent in Aotearoa New Zealand-based extremists.

Approaches to prevention

A free, open, secure internet is essential to realising our rights online and our actions on this issue must be consistent with human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression as well as the right to life.

Digital literacy and critical thinking skills are important to help New Zealanders evaluate the information they are presented online. Strengthening these skills amongst New Zealanders of all ages helps individuals navigate mis- and dis-information, and/or conspiracy theories linked to violent extremist narratives.

New Zealand, alongside France, will continue to lead the global implementation of the Christchurch Call to Action to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online. This unique, multi-stakeholder (industry, governments and civil society) initiative has made considerable progress since its launch in May 2019. This includes the reform of the industry-led Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, and a detailed collaborative work programme to tackle terrorist and violent extremist content online.

As part of this, we will support work to understand better how online content hosting platforms present information to users and the extent to which some algorithmic systems might amplify or promote engagement with radicalising content. An understanding of those systems and their outcomes will be important for better promotion of credible alternatives, or counter-narratives. We will continue to build our understanding of what interventions work most effectively in these digital spaces.

Continuing to keep pace with the speed at which the online environment evolves requires continuous information, research, assessment and analysis of the current landscape and emerging issues. Voluntary cooperative and regulatory approaches will need to adapt to this changing environment, as different platforms and digital mechanisms emerge and the ways that individuals engage with violent extremist ideologies evolve over time. Government will continue to look at how our media content regulatory regime can be modernised, including for online content. This will consider issues like how we regulate social media platforms and ensure appropriate content moderation and enforcement of terms of service.

Further Information

For questions or support on the application process or completing the application, please contact pcve@dia.govt.nz

For questions about the priorities or PCVE generally, please contact pcve@dpmc.govt.nz

