



The Norwegian Police Security Service's (PST) annual threat assessment is an analysis of anticipated developments within PST's main areas of responsibility¹ for the year ahead. The assessment focuses on matters that can affect Norwegian security and harm national interests. This report is an unclassified summary of the threat assessment for 2009.

UNCLASSIFIED THREAT ASSESSMENT 2009

Politically motivated violence – terrorism

The potential for politically motivated violence perpetrated by individuals inspired by extreme Islamism² will continue to represent a challenge for Norway in 2009. There are groups and individuals who sympathise with and provide active support to extreme Islamism in the vast majority of European countries. There have been no successful terrorist attacks in Europe in 2008. However, the level of activity within several of the European-based groups is high. Countries in which arrests were made last year include Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany. Even though the threat picture throughout Europe is variable, the authorities in several countries assess the terrorism threat level as high in these countries. The terrorism threat level is not expected to be lowered during 2009.

In Norway, extreme Islamist activity is carried out by small groups. However, the international connections the persons in these groups represent, in addition to activities they carry out, are such in nature that they can also influence the national threat picture. Providing different forms of support remains the main activity of extreme Islamist players in Norway. Support is provided in the form of propaganda activities and the transfer of funds to persons or groups who are considered to be connected to extreme Islamist organisations abroad. It is expected that those involved would wish to continue with this activity in the year ahead.

There are indications that activities connected to radicalization³ in extreme Islamist groups in Norway are somewhat on the increase. There are charismatic leading figures in Norway who can exercise significant influence on individuals who are in the process of becoming radicalised. These leading figures are first and foremost ideological guides, but are also able to assist young radicalised individuals in establishing

¹ Section 17 b of the Police Act stipulates that PST shall prevent and investigate offences against the Penal Code chapters 8 (crimes against the security and independence of the State) and 9 (crimes against the Norwegian constitution and head of state), illegal intelligence activity, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, sabotage and politically motivated violence.

² *Extreme* is used by PST and other security services to describe a person's attitude to the use of violence. It describes the attitude of a person who accepts the use of violence to achieve his political objectives. *Extremism* therefore denotes solely the choice of means but not the political objectives.

³ *Radicalization* is used by PST to refer to the process by which a person increasingly accepts the use of violence as a means of achieving political aims.

contact with militant groups outside Norway. Periods spent in conflict-ridden areas or in training camps abroad can lead to more and stronger bonds between extreme Islamist groups abroad and those in Norway. Such periods spent abroad can in certain circumstances give individuals in Norway more motivation and capacity to carry out terrorist acts in this country or against Norwegian interests abroad.

Various international events, for example the situation in Afghanistan, Iraq and in Gaza in various ways affects developments in radicalised groups in Norway. Extreme Islamist ideologies and charismatic leading figures use these conflicts as the basis for legitimising and as inspiration to carry out terrorist attacks. In addition, the Internet has become an important propaganda tool in connection with radicalisation and recruitment. Conflicts involving militant Islamic groups can motivate radicalised individuals to travel to conflict-ridden areas in order to participate actively in warfare. Events in and around these conflicts could also lead individuals who are already radicalised to develop a lower threshold for responding negatively than they would have had previously. However, there is currently little to suggest that such ongoing conflicts in themselves lead to the radicalisation of individuals in Norway.

PST has not uncovered concrete plans relating to terrorist attacks in Norway, and the threat level is considered to continue to be low. However, the threat picture is complex, and the situation could change suddenly. Al-Qaida has repeatedly threatened to carry out attacks in European countries. Experience shows, meanwhile, that terrorist attacks have been carried out without prior warning. For various reasons, extreme Islamists also regard Norway and Norwegian interests as legitimate targets. Events connected to the Norwegian military participation in Afghanistan exemplify a situation that can affect extreme Islamists' view of Norway in a negative way. The same applies to other matters that may arise in the Norwegian media and public life, and the media and public life in other countries. Comments and debates that criticise Islam, as well as any cultural expression regarded as controversial among some Muslims, could have an impact on the threat posed to Norway and Norwegian interests abroad.

Politically motivated violence – national extremism

National extremist groups currently represent no serious threat to Norwegian interests. However, some groups and individuals' violent conduct can contribute to causing fear and insecurity. Actions carried out by such groups can in addition inflict significant financial harm on individuals and businesses.

The far right extremist groups in Norway have been weakened owing to limited recruitment, weak leadership, financial difficulties and a low level of activity. To the extent that the far right extremists represent a threat, this takes the form of the violent conduct of some individuals. Far right extremist ideology is spread mainly via the Internet. The contents of far right websites come across in some cases as being racist and threatening.

The threat from Norwegian far left extremist groups is particularly connected to demonstrations and protests against American and Israeli interests as well as a few other diplomatic missions in Norway. It is believed that the far left extremist groups will primarily represent a public order problem in 2009 as well. The violent demonstrations in Oslo at the beginning of the year show how protests can result in extensive property damage and at the same time cause fear and create situations that put life and limb in danger.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction⁴ represents a significant security threat. It is therefore important to prevent the export from Norway of goods, know-how and technology to players that have the intention of developing and producing weapons of mass destruction or the means of delivery for these.

During 2008, PST recorded several possible breaches of export control regulations. Procurement activity directed at Norway continues to be high and is carried out in sophisticated and covert ways.

A weapons programme is put into effect by building up expertise and technology within a broad spectrum of specialist areas. In order to prevent the export of such expertise and technology, we must therefore see the connection between different types of technology and specialist areas and understand the modus operandi of different players.

Players with a deliberate intention to avoid export control exploit loopholes and weaknesses in the established control systems. Attempts are made to mask procurement by the extensive use of false end-user declarations, companies that act as fronts, and intermediaries. The activity can also involve parties in several countries. Norwegian companies are asked to procure goods from other Western countries which the parties themselves are not able to buy from directly. Norwegian companies are used in this way in order to circumvent the export control systems of other countries.

Controlling the export of intangible products, such as specialist know-how, presents a challenge. Just like so-called dual-use goods, know-how can be used for different purposes. Dual-use goods can to a certain extent be controlled through export control mechanisms. However, Norway has not established a way of controlling the export of know-how. It is therefore assessed as probable that students and researchers from countries that give cause for concern⁵ can obtain know-how and technology which can be abused in connection with the development of weapons of mass destruction. In order for Norway to fulfil its obligations in relation to export control, it is necessary to control the transfer of know-how related to sensitive areas. The increasing international focus on the transfer of know-how means that several countries have implemented, or are in the process of implementing control systems to assess whether know-how that is about to be transferred can be abused in a programme for the development of weapons of mass destruction. This type of control system is in most instances connected to applications for residence permits.

The current Norwegian export control regime and system of declaration is based to a large extent on trust. It is vulnerable to Norwegian players who deliberately or unwittingly contribute with goods, technology or know-how for the development of weapons of mass destruction without the authorities being made aware. It is therefore critically important that all parties involved, not least the exporter and shipping agent, are knowledgeable about the export control regulations and understand why their product can represent a threat in relation to proliferation.

⁴ Weapons of mass destruction include in this context chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and the means of delivery of these.

⁵ This is a reference to states that have not signed international agreements relating to non-proliferation, or that act in contravention of such agreements.

Illegal intelligence activity against Norway and Norwegian interests

Several sectors within Norwegian society are attractive targets for intelligence gathering, and the activity level of foreign states' intelligence services against Norway and Norwegian interests is high. Intelligence activity mainly targets political decision-makers, public bodies, central government and various private players. Information is particularly sought within the petroleum and gas sector, research and development, technology, and matters related to NATO.

The target of foreign states' intelligence activity in Norway is to progress their own strategic interests, often at the expense of Norwegian interests. This takes the form of the collection of sensitive information and actively influencing Norwegian decision makers. The covert and long-term nature of intelligence activity can make it difficult to connect the resulting loss and damaging consequences directly to the preceding intelligence activity. The activity is assessed in any case as having the potential to inflict significant financial and political harm on Norway.

Intelligence activity in Norway is mainly carried out using traditional intelligence methods. However, several states are in the process of building significant capacity within computer network operations. This capacity can be used to collect sensitive information through unauthorised accessing of data (espionage), crippling computers and networks (denial-of-services attack) and the spread of information that serves a foreign state's strategic objective (information operations). In relation to computer network operations, PST expects that one of the biggest threats against Norway and Norwegian interests will be related to espionage and targeted information gathering. The potential for harm from the loss of sensitive information can be great. Preventive efforts by individual establishments can considerably reduce system vulnerability.

Norway receives refugees from a number of countries where the authorities monitor and persecute opposition figures and ethnic minorities. Several states are thought to also carry out intelligence activity targeting individuals and groups within the minority and refugee communities in Norway. In several cases in recent years specific suspicion has been directed at foreign states' intelligence and security services as the ones behind refugee-related intelligence activity, accusations, harassment, and killings in European countries. Some of these instances have directly concerned refugees in Norway. Refugee-related espionage can therefore cause significant fear and insecurity among those affected.

Threats to dignitaries

PST has special responsibility for preventing and investigating threats to, and attacks on Norwegian dignitaries⁶. PST regards a threat as existing if a person makes known, or is considered as having, the intention of and capacity to inflict physical harm on a dignitary. During 2008, PST investigated several threats, including death threats and physical attacks on dignitaries.

A large proportion of threats to dignitaries are made by individuals that are mentally unbalanced. Many threats are made spontaneously in the heat of the moment, or while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and are often based on anger and bitterness about personal difficulties or dissatisfaction over the handling by the authorities of a political matter. In most situations, a threat is not connected to a real intention to inflict physical harm on a dignitary.

An increasing number of threats and strong opinions directed against Norwegian dignitaries are found on websites, in blogs, emails and text messages. These technological developments have provided new channels through which people make contact with dignitaries or discuss them. This seems to have generally lowered the public's threshold for expressing themselves. Which specific dignitary is subjected to aggressive and threatening expressions, often corresponds to current media coverage of news stories. In the year ahead it is expected that the Internet will be an increasingly important arena for threatening dignitaries, and that these threats to a large extent will reflect what is happening in the media.

In connection with parliamentary elections in 2009, certain dignitaries will enjoy a higher profile than usual. It is expected that this could lead to a further increase in various types of threats to these individuals.

It is expected that certain dignitaries will continue to be frequent recipients of unpleasant comments, and that in periods of high media coverage they will be especially subjected to aggressive reactions from the public. In addition, it is probable that dignitaries will be subjected to criminal acts that require investigation, and that some serious threats will be issued, which will require measures to be taken to protect the dignitaries in question.



⁶ *Dignitaries* in this context refers to members of the Royal Family, the *Storting* (Norwegian parliament), the Government and Supreme Court, as well as representatives of foreign states who are in Norway. In addition PST can, following an administrative decision by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, be given a duty to protect other individuals who are potential targets of threats.