THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT POLICE-TRAINING IN TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM IN TRNC

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Abstract

In today’s world, terrorism is a major factor that has an adverse effect on the society. Thus, the police forces that are involved in the process of combating terrorism become the main target of such terrorist groups. The terror phenomenon which leads to changes and transformations in the society manifests itself in extremism as a global social problem. The recent statistical data suggest that there should be more focus on terrorism phenomenon in the police-training education curriculum. In terms of “protective and preventive” measures taken to combat extremism and terrorism, identifying and dealing with terrorist behaviours is one of the subject areas that can be included in the police-training curriculum. Moreover, in terms of “healing measures”, coping with trauma, dealing with the state of panic and training for those who have been exposed to violence so as to be able to heal sufferers can also be included in the curriculum. All in all, “generating solutions” for crisis response and emergency aid should be one of the subjects to be included in the police-training curriculum. In the light of the factors mentioned above, this study aims to investigate the effect of the basic-police-training and in-service-training courses concerning extremism and terrorism offered to the police officers who work in the TRNC Police Forces on their professional lives and to identify what should be done to ensure the effectiveness of the measures taken to combat extremism and terrorism. A qualitative method was used for the purpose of this particular research. Firstly, the current curricula of the basic-police training and in-service training provided within the TRNC Police Headquarters were analyzed and evaluated. Secondly, in accordance with the purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the police officers that currently work in the field and had been trained through these courses. Content analysis was used to analyze the results of the interviews. The analysis of the results provided the researchers with comprehensive implications about the developments that could be made in the police-training so that the police officers can combat terrorism and extremism more effectively.

Key Words: Police Education, Education, Terrorism, Extremism.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The necessity to effectively and efficiently fight against terrorism and extremism is inevitable in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) too as it is in other parts of the world. Therefore, law enforcement agencies need to improve and update themselves through relevant training courses in order to effectively combat terrorism and extremism which also continue to change in parallel with the changing and developing world.

Within the scope of this study, previous and current basic training and in-service training courses in the TRNC Police Forces were examined to evaluate the effectiveness of the police-training courses in terrorism and extremism provided in the TRNC.

The study aimed to reveal the effectiveness of both basic training and in-service training courses concerning terrorism and extremism provided to police officers working in the TRNC Police Forces on their professional lives and toput forward ideas on what can be done to provide more effective and efficient educational training on terrorism and extremism.

**THE CONCEPTS OF TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM**

The concepts of “terror” and “terrorism” have connotations of fear, horror, threat, violence and illegality. Indeed, the origin of the term comes from the Latin word “terrere” which means to frighten, terrify, scare away, deter, etc. Today, the phrase “with a political aim” has been added to these meanings; so, acting and terrifying, frightening with a political aim have been the key elements of terrorist activity. (Çitlioğlu, 2011: 46)

Based on these definitions, it is possible to draw some general conclusions in relation to the terms-terror and terrorism. First of all, terror/terrorism is a product of understanding which deems the use of violence legal in order to achieve especially political aims. Terrorism which has become such an instrument is being systematically used by the states or specific rebel groups. There is not a common definition of the words terror and terrorism, which also causes a major problem in the area of anti-terrorism. This problem impedes the cooperation among the countries fighting against terrorism. After the Cold War, the new world is no more an organised place divided into blocs with straight lines and consists of well-organised and well-identified enemies and threats. As a result of the globalisation of economic operations, technology, information and human mobility, a multidimensional, interdependent structure has been formed. This new world needs a new defensive approach, a new definition of threat and a new understanding of war (Narlı, 2002: 10). Consequently, the simultaneous rise of globalism and the global terrorism period has made it necessary to adopt a common policy and ensure global cooperation. (Türköz, 2016:156)

The “International terrorism”, on the other hand, focuses on transboundary aspects of terrorism and its international effects and consequences. According to Wilkinson, “ Terrorism is the systematic use of murder and destruction, and the threat of murder and destruction in order to terrorize individuals, groups, communities or governments into conceding to the terrorists' political demands" (Wilkinson, 2001: 12-13)

In international literature, the first step to define the concept of terrorism was taken by the League of Nations before the Second World War. As a result of the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou in Marseilles on 10.12.1934 by a terrorist, “The Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism was opened for signature and adopted by twenty states on 16 November 1937. (Taşdemir, 2006:9)

According to the Article 1/1 of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism dated 1937, it was confirmed that based on the international law the states have the duty to refrain from encouraging any terrorist activities against any other state and to prevent any such activities. In Article 1/2 terrorism is defined as “Criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons, or a group of persons, or the general public”. (Kaya, 2005: 27)

The efforts by the international community to define terrorism still continued after the ratification of the UN Charter. Within this framework, The UN General Assembly, by its Resolution 49/60, approved “The Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism” on 9 December 1994. (Çitlioğlu, 2008: 77)

Extremism, in a similar way, can be defined as to frighten the public, to overawe and to intimidate. The violence by the extremists is a direct attack on the UN Charter and an extremely serious threat to the international peace and security.

A violent extremism threat is not limited to any ethnic group, religion or nationality. While trying to find a solution to this problem, there is a need to act together and avoid any behaviour that will make the problem more complicated. (Ki-Moon; 2016)

There are several examples of violent extremism in almost all over the world. Violent extremism is like an act of defiance at national and regional as well as international level. Considering that there are socio-political, economic and security-based factors which structurally change due to the changing dynamics in the field, a comprehensive analytical study is needed to be conducted so that these phenomena can be better understood. As the factors are variable, there is a need for a comprehensive, clear and flexible route map at national and regional and international level for the fight against extremism. (ORSAM, 2017: 7)

The ideational background of a radical group can be derived from any ethnic, ideological, religious, sectarian or philosophical basis. The concept of radicalisation can be defined as “being positioned in the extreme point of any ideology in such a way that freedom of expression of opposing views and approaches and right to live for the people affiliated with them can be targeted”. Therefore, any group affiliated with ideological, ethnic, religious, etc. references conforming to this pattern can be named as being radical. From IRA to ETA, and to ASALA, DHKP-C, Al-Qaeda, Boko-Haram, Al-Shabaab and DAESH, history shows that radicalisation cannot be explained by focusing on a single particular ideational context or basis and thus cannot be attributed to a single motivation or value system. (ORSAM [Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies], 2017: 9)

**TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS**

Cyprus, throughout its history, was seen as an indispensable strategic and commercial base for the states which desired to spread towards the Middle East. Cyprus paves the way for the surrounding regions to become “regional and strategic powers”. The island, which is believed to look like a spaceship travelling towards the Gulf of İskenderun based on its geographical position, has always had strategic importance and features. The prevailing power on the island controlled the region from Turkey to Egypt and from Lebanon to Iran. (Cömert, 2017)

Cyprus which is a centre for western countries to gather intelligence is a meeting point especially for European intelligence officers. Cyprus is located between Asia and Europe, which makes it a meeting point for intelligence officers going from Europe to Asia and coming back from Asia. The operations by Western countries against especially the Middle East are carried out here on the island. The intelligence officers meet here and depart for their final destinations from here. It is not only the intelligence officers who meet here but also the duties of the agents are assigned here. European countries deem Cyprus a gift from God and this idea potentially makes the island a target for terrorists. (Özkaya, 2017)

No legal regulation on the fight against terrorism and extremism has been introduced in TRNC. However, there are regulations on unlawful associations under the section “Offences against the Public Order” of the Chapter 154 Criminal Code. These are Article 56 - “Membership of Unlawful Association Illegal”, Article 57- “Advocating and Encouraging Unlawful Association”, Article 58- “Giving or Soliciting Contributions for an Unlawful Association”, Article 59- “Possession of Documents Having a Seditious Intention and Publication, etc., of Propaganda of Unlawful Association”, and Article 63-“Definition of Unlawful Association”.

The Ordinance on “Illegal Terrorist Organisations” issued by the Council of Ministers under the Article 63 of the Criminal Code was published in the Official Gazette and entered into force on 02 January 2018. Based on this Ordinance 26 organisations have been declared as illegal and classed as terrorist organisations. Thus, the activities of these organisations and their derivatives have been banned and it is prohibited to carry flags as well as the photos of the leaders of these organisations and their derivatives.

Within the framework of the fight against terrorism and extremism, in order to present a general idea on the extent of the activities of the terrorist organisations in TRNC, the following table has been compiled based on the evaluation of the data on the Police records in TRNC of the cases reported to the police under the above-mentioned relevant provisions of the Criminal Code during the period of 2008-2017.

Table 1: Illegal Organisation Cases reported to the Police between 2008-2017

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Districts** | **2008-2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **TOTAL** |
| **Nicosia** | 0 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 13 |
| **Famagusta** | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| **Kyrenia** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Güzelyurt (Morphou)** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **İskele (Trikomo)** | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| **TOTAL** | 0 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 27 |

Considering the case records between 2008-2017, it can be seen that the police conducted proceedings related to 27 cases while there is no case reported to the police during the period of 2008-2014. It is shown in the table that there were 5 and 2 police proceedings in Nicosia, the Capital of TRNC and İskele District in 2015 respectively, whereas there were 3 in Famagusta, 1 in Kyrenia and 1 in İskele in 2016. Taking the records of 2017 into consideration, it can be noted that there were 15 cases reported to the police in total- 8 in Nicosia, 5 in Famagusta and 2 in Kyrenia, which indicates that there was a significant increase in these kinds of cases.

**TRAINING COURSES ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM, OFFERED TO THE TRNC POLICE DURING THE PERIOD OF 2011-2017**

The study firstly evaluated the training courses on anti-terrorism and anti-extremism provided within the last 7 years under the basic and in-service training curricula kept at the Personnel Department of the Directorate of Administrative and Personnel Affairs, TRNC Police Headquarters.

Within this period, a course named State Security and Intelligence which included basic terminology was offered to basic-training cadets of three semesters, totally to 145 personnel. The in-service training included various training courses on the fight against terrorism and extremism provided to 266 police officers in total working in the relevant field at the Directorate of the Intelligence.

Table 2: **In-Service Training Courses on the Fight against Terrorism and Extremism provided between 2011-2017.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IN-SERVICE TRAINING** | **NO. OF TRAINEES** | **DURATION (Day)** | **YEAR** |
| **Course in Management of Human Information Sources** | 43 | 5 | 2013,2016,2017 |
| **Course on Combating Terrorist Organizations that Exploit Religion** | 42 | 5 | 2016,2017 |
| **Seminar on Combating the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation (FETÖ)/Parallel State Organization** | 7 | 3 | 2016 |
| **Course on Human Intelligence Sources** | 24 | 5 | 2014 |
| **Course in Intelligence** | 7 | 5 | 2013 |
| **Basic Training in the Fight against Smuggling and Organised Crime** | 20 | 5 | 2015 |
| **Course in Intelligence related to the Fight Against Organised Crime** | 40 | 5 | 2013,2015 |
| **Training in Investigation of Organised Crime** | 25 | 5 | 2011,2012,2016 |
| **Training in Criminal Intelligence Analysis** | 16 | 5 | 2011,2017 |
| **Basic Training Course in the Fight Against Terrorism** | 42 | 5 | 2016,2017 |

The Table 2 shows that within the scope of in-service training, 43 police officers were offered a “Course in Management of Human Information Sources” during a five-day training programme in 2013, 2016 and 2017, 42 officers were provided a “Course on Combating Terrorist Organizations that Exploit Religion” during a five-day training programme in 2016 and 2017, 7 officers were offered a “Seminar on Combating the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation (FETÖ)/Parallel State Organization” during a three-day training programme in 2016, 24 officers were provided with a “Course on Human Intelligence Sources” during a five-day training programme in 2014, 7 officers were offered a “Course in Intelligence” during a five-day training programme in 2013, 20 officers were provided with “Basic Training in the Fight against Smuggling and Organised Crime during a five-day training programme in 2015, 40 officers were provided a “Course in Intelligence related to Fight Against Organised Crime” during a five-day training programme in 2013 and 2015. Moreover, “Training in Investigation of Organised Crime” was provided to 25 officers in total during a five-day training programme during the years of 2011, 2012 and 2016. 16 officers were provided with the “Training in Criminal Intelligence Analysis” during a five-day programme in 2011 and 2017. Finally, 42 officers were offered a “Basic Training Course in the Fight against Terrorism” during a five-day training programme in 2016 and 2017. Based on the data, it is seen that 18 in-service training courses on the above-mentioned subjects offered during this 7-year period were all short-term courses.

**EVALUATION OF THE INTERVIEWS**

The second phase of the study included the involvement of the officers who work in the department responsible for the cases related to combating terrorism and extremism and have taken the relevant courses. A semi-structured interview form was used and the findings were analysed with a content analysis.

A sample of 70 police officers working in the Intelligence Directorate whose duties include fighting against terrorism and extremism has been drawn from the population of the TRNC Police Force which has approximately 2000 staff members.

Only **48** persons from the sample of 70 were interviewed due to the reasons such as annual leave, illness, working system and time limits. The respondents were not guided in any way during the interview and the data was evaluated objectively.

**The questions addressed to the 48 officers during the interview are as follows:**

1. Do you think police officers should be offered both basic and in-service training in combating terrorism and extremism?
2. Why do you think training in combating terrorism and extremism should be or should not be offered?
3. Have you ever received any training on such subjects during your professional life?
4. Can you name the subjects that you were trained in?
5. Do you think the training courses (Basic/In-service training) were efficient from the perspective of education/methods-materials, facilities etc?
6. Can you explain why you think the training courses you have taken were not efficient?
7. Do you think the previous/current training courses on combating terrorism and extremism offered in the Police Force you work for are sufficient?
8. Can you explain why you think these courses are not sufficient?
9. What else can be done to improve basic/in-service police training in order to be more effective in combating terrorism and extremism?

The data obtained from the findings of the interviews were categorised into three: The Necessity of Training in Combating Terrorism and Extremism, Experience in Training Courses provided in relation to Combating Terrorism and Extremism, and Solution Recommendations made by the Personnel.

**The Necessity of Training in Combating Terrorism and Extremism**

All of the respondents stated that the training on the relevant subject is necessary and that in-service training enhances the efficiency in the field and ensures that police officers have a comprehensive knowledge of the subject, ensures police officers are more competent in preventive activities, ensures that the duties are carried out within a legal frame and are correct, ensures that police officers have a better understanding of the changing/developing world, technology, terrorist organisations and their activities as well as their visions, ensures that police officers understand the importance of the island of Cyprus for the organisations due to its strategic location, ensures police officers understand for whom and for what purpose the organisations serve in TRNC, provides police officers with foresight in such cases encountered, ensures that the time is efficiently used because police officers learn how to respond to different cases and ensures that police officers comprehend the subject is risky in terms of its results.

**Experience in Training Courses provided in relation to Combating Terrorism and Extremism**

37 of the respondents indicated that they had taken training courses on the fight against terrorism and extremism. However, the other 11 respondents did not have the opportunity to take courses on the related subject as they had recently been transferred to the relevant Department.

The training courses taken by the respondents were on the following subjects: Counter- terrorism, Terrorist Organisations that Exploit Religion, Intelligence, Police Defence Tactics, Basic Police Training, Patrolling, Aggravated Fraud, Crime Analysis Statistics, Organised Crime Organisations, Police Photography, Counter-Intelligence, Human Information Sources, Police Pursuits and Surveillance, the Fight Against Illegal Migrant Smuggling, Questioning Tactics, Subversive Activities, Organised Intelligence, Analysis of Terrorist Organisations, Combating the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation (FETÖ)/Parallel State Organisation, Operational and Organisational Structure of Terrorist Organisations, Communal riots, Crisis Management.

Those police officers who thought that the training courses they had taken were not efficient and sufficient indicated so because there were not enough experienced and expert trainers, the training courses were not efficient due to the lack of infrastructure needed for technical follow-up, the trainers had not taken the training for trainers course, the materials used during the training courses were not enough, the training courses were only theory-based and the duration of them was not enough, the subjects of the courses were neither innovative nor comprehensive, the courses were not offered to all personnel in the police force, the number of the training courses offered nationwide were not enough, the trainers did not have enough academic education/training and were not specialists in their fields, the courses were not up-to-date, appropriate for today’s conditions and were not provided on a continuous basis, there was no or not enough applied training and the training courses were not related to the active or potential terrorist organisations in our country.

**Solution Recommendations made by the Personnel**

Considering the answers given by the respondents on the question about what can be done to improve the training courses so that police officers can work effectively to fight against terrorism and extremism, it can be concluded that the participants believed there is a need to improve technical infrastructure and equipment used, follow the developments in this field worldwide, ensure cooperation in educational matters with other countries which have been successful in this subject, increase the number of the training courses offered abroad, offer special education/training courses about the organisations in TRNC, provide visual and applied training, offer training courses on how to safely/securely respond to the cases, provide courses taught by the trainers who are experienced in their fields and can pass on their experience/knowledge to trainees, offer courses on specific subjects by experts, provide education that strengthens trainees’ analytical thinking competency, to broaden the scope of the courses, increase the number of educational opportunities, to provide training for all personnel and finally, to ensure the continuity of the training courses offered.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Terrorism and extremism are two significant phenomena that should be taken into consideration and against which significant measures should be taken. Therefore, in order to effectively work in the field of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism and to be always ready to work in this field in TRNC just as in other parts of the world, significant importance should be placed on the training of the TRNC Police Forces personnel.

The courses on this matter should be offered by the experienced trainers who have an academic career and a good command of the subject and are experts in their field who can pass on their experience to trainees.

These courses should be appropriate for today’s conditions, accurate and sufficient and be offered on a continuous and applied basis to all the personnel in the police force. Additionally, it is deemed essential to provide training courses that strengthen analytical thinking skills of the personnel and that ensures police officers safely respond to the cases and to offer specific courses that are related to the active organisations in TRNC.

In addition, it is also concluded that in order to effectively combat terrorism and extremism, it is necessary to cooperate in educational fields with other police forces in different countries which have been successful in this matter and with Higher Education Institutions and to organise training so that police officers can exchange their knowledge and experience.

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