

Threat Assessment 2017

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Introduction

The Threat Assessment 2017 compiled by the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) is one of four threat assessments and risk analyses and is published annually. The other three are published by the Intelligence Service, the National Security Authority and the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning.

The main task of the **Intelligence Service** is to supply information and assessments on foreign, security and defence policy matters. The Service publishes an annual assessment on conditions in other countries that could threaten Norway and Norwegian interests. This year's assessment, Focus 2017, provides an overview of situations and security threats in different countries and regions together with the nature of the threats. The assessment has a time frame of one year and is published in the first quarter of the year.

The National Security Authority is the Norwegian expert body on information and object security and the national centre of expertise on IT security. The Authority publishes an annual assessment on security matters within the scope of application of security legislation. It includes an assessment of the risk that individuals, critical

national functions and infrastructure, or sensitive and classified information will be subject to espionage, sabotage, acts of terrorism or other serious incidents. The assessment has a time frame of one year.

The Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning maintains an overview of risk and vulnerability factors in Norwegian society. The Directorate has published scenario analyses since 2011.¹ The analyses are concerned with the risk of disasters that could affect Norwegian society, so that society's emergency preparedness and response systems are equipped to meet them. The scenarios include natural disasters, major accidents and deliberate acts. These analyses have a longer time frame than the annual assessments of the other three agencies.

The security policy situation in Europe and adjacent areas is now more uncertain and unpredictable than it has been for a long time. A number of European countries are facing economic, social and political problems that will in the next few years require substantial resources and considerable attention.

This situation is fertile ground for a broad range of state and non-state actors that represent a threat. However, the threat picture differs considerably from one European country to another.

So far, Norway has not suffered from violence and terrorism by Islamist groups or right-wing extremists in the same way as some other countries in Europe. However, we know that new threats can suddenly emerge. A minor incident may have major and often unexpected consequences for the threat picture, in Norway as well as elsewhere. The transnational nature of such threats also means that all countries must cooperate more closely on counteracting them.

The Annual Threat Assessment is an assessment of expected developments in PST's areas of responsibility in the year ahead. In drawing up the assessment we have had to strike a balance

between a detailed description and simple, clear information. This Threat Assessment is therefore intended to present the main outlines of the most likely threats Norway will face in the coming year. The target group consists of those in Norwegian society who wish for public information about expected developments in the threat picture.

In the work on this assessment we have made use of information from a number of different sources. We have also based our assessment on information from other government agencies such as the Intelligence Service and the National Security Authority.

¹ Up to and including 2015, the scenario analyses were called «National risk assessments». As from 2016, their new designation is «Crisis scenario [year] – analysis of serious incidents that could affect Norway».

Summary

■ In 2017 Norway and Norwegian interests will be subject to foreign intelligence activity with a major damage potential. Such activity will be aimed primarily at targets in the Norwegian defence and public security sector and at political decision-making processes and critical infrastructure. Foreign intelligence services use both traditional methods and advanced computer network operations against their Norwegian targets.

■ Extreme Islamists still represent the greatest terrorist threat to Norway. We consider it possible² that a terrorist attack will be made on Norway in 2017. However, a number of other European countries are more likely targets for terrorist attacks.

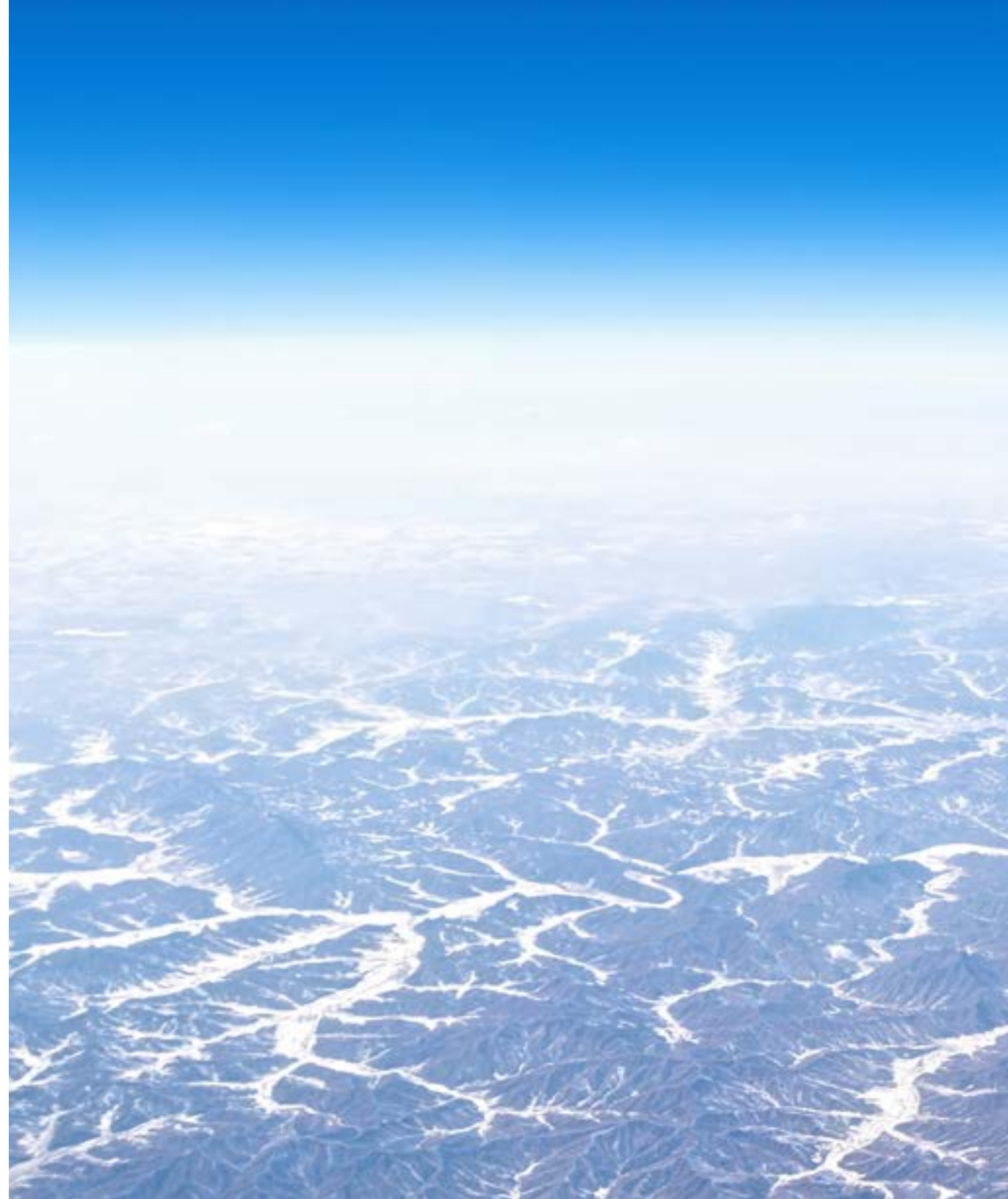
■ The number of new individuals radicalised to extreme Islamism will continue to be small, and in 2017 only a very few individuals are expected to leave Norway in order to join ISIL.

■ We consider it unlikely that right-wing extremists will carry out a terrorist attack in Norway in 2017. Right-wing extremism in Norway continues to be characterised by unorganised and loosely coordinated networks. However, such extremism is a matter of concern owing to the growth, improved organisation and higher level of activity among certain members of these groups.

■ It is very unlikely that left-wing extremists will carry out terrorist attacks against Norwegian interests in 2017.

■ The general election in 2017 is likely to provoke a higher level of threatening behaviour against dignitaries. However, the number of cases involving serious threats handled by PST has remained stable in the last 10 years, and we do not expect this situation to change in 2017.

² See page 22 for an explanation of the different levels of probability.



State intelligence activity



In 2017 Norway and Norwegian interests will be subject to foreign intelligence activity with considerable damage potential. Among the targets for such activity are the Norwegian defence and public security sector, political decision-making processes and critical infrastructure. Intelligence operations against targets in Norway will include computer network operations. Foreign intelligence services will also actively attempt to gain access to individuals in organisations that deal with sensitive information and technology.

The intelligence threat

State intelligence is a key tool for supporting a country's political, economic and security policy interests. Thus a number of different countries are interested in maintaining their intelligence activity in Norway.

The main country with the intention and capacity to carry out intelligence activity with considerable potential for damaging Norway and Norwegian interests is Russia. However, we are aware that in certain contexts there are also other states whose intelligence activity could harm Norwegian interests.

Norwegian intelligence targets

There are a number of intelligence targets in Norway. Intelligence operations against Norwegian targets will be carried out in 2017 in three main areas: the defence and civil defence

sector, political decision-making processes and critical infrastructure. We also consider it likely that new intelligence operations will be initiated against Norwegian technology targets and opponents of a regime living in exile in Norway.

Defence and public security sector

Norway's alliance obligations and its strategic location in relation to the High North and the Arctic are strong motives for intelligence activity directed at us. The tense security policy relations between Russia and the West have created a need for intelligence about Norwegian defence installations, activities and personnel. Military installations and facilities especially relevant for Russian security and for Norwegian defence capacity in areas adjacent to Russia are particularly at risk. This includes NATO cooperation and Norwegian naval activity, military exercises and intelligence facilities.



Political processes and decisions

In a time of security policy uncertainty, other states' need for intelligence about Norwegian political processes and decisions will remain high. Such political intelligence activity is directed at decision-makers and those who influence them, with the aim of collecting information about Norwegian positions on particular political issues. Another goal for these services is to carry out operations to influence these issues. The intention is to protect the interests of the state concerned, usually at the expense of Norwegian interests.

Individuals involved in the development and implementation of Norwegian policy on defence and security, Svalbard and the High North, and natural resource management are particularly likely to be targeted by such political intelligence activity. Those responsible for Norway's bilateral relations with countries such as Russia and China are also possible targets of operations by intelligence services.

Critical infrastructure

Norwegian critical infrastructure will continue to be targeted by foreign intelligence activity in 2017. The aim of such intelligence operations is to collect information about the infrastructure concerned and to prepare for data manipulation or sabotage in the event of a tense foreign or security policy situation.

Power supply systems and electronic communications services are critical infrastructure that is especially likely to be targeted by intelligence activity. A secure electricity supply is vital for Norwegian society, and electricity produced in Norway is important for the stability of the power markets in the Nordic countries and other parts of Europe. Given the increasing and ever closer European cooperation on power supplies, the intelligence and sabotage threat to Norwegian critical infrastructure should be viewed in a wider European context.

Norwegian technology

Foreign intelligence services will continue to give priority to gaining access to new Norwegian technology that can be used to strengthen their countries' own defence functions and business sector. The risk is particularly high for defence institutions and technology companies that are relevant in a defence context, and for technology developers in the petroleum and maritime sectors. Companies and institutions that develop or use technology with both military and civilian use will also be subject to targeting by foreign intelligence services.

Espionage against refugees

The intelligence services of a number of countries, including Iran, are making active efforts in Norway to identify individuals and groups considered to be critical of or in opposition to the authorities in their own countries. The aim is either to threaten or put pressure on individuals to cooperate, or to force them to

desist from their criticism of the regime or their oppositional activity. This type of intelligence activity also includes identifying other individuals considered to be hostile to their respective regimes.

Certain refugees and opponents of a regime in Norway will therefore continue to be intelligence targets in 2017.

How intelligence services operate in Norway

In the last few years a number of intelligence services with interests in Norway have devoted considerable resources to developing their capacity for digital espionage. Actors with links to both Russian and Chinese authorities have attempted to compromise computer systems in organisations whose activities involve major commercial interests and fundamental national values. Advanced computer network operations will continue to be carried out against Norwegian authorities, IT services suppliers, technology communities and actors responsible for critical infrastructure in 2017.

A number of states have intelligence personnel in Norway. Many of them work under diplomatic cover as employees at embassies and consulates. Some states also use positions in commercial organisations, or business delegations or research institutions visiting Norway, as cover for their intelligence personnel.

Establishing confidential contacts and subsequently also sources in prioritised Norwegian organisations is an important aspect of the work of intelligence services. Efforts to recruit sources are increasingly taking place in the digital arena. We have observed that intelligence services use social media as one way of starting the recruitment process. This arena makes it easy to share personal information, especially about work and qualifications, which the service can use to identify potential targets for a recruitment

operation. Once contact has been established, the service may assign tasks and develop cooperation with the individual. Intelligence officers often operate under cover in order to lower the threshold for cooperation.

Several of the intelligence services that operate in Norway are also interested in planting or making contact with loyal employees in key organisations. There are currently a number of individuals from countries with which Norway has no security cooperation occupying positions where they have access to sensitive information. These individuals are particularly vulnerable to approaches with a view to recruitment. The intelligence services use a number of different methods to establish cooperation with such individuals, such as threats and other forms of pressure aimed at either the individual concerned or their family. Attempts at recruitment will continue to be made in 2017.

If an intelligence service succeeds in recruiting or planting employees loyal to them in an enterprise, these can use their legitimate access to a computer network to facilitate computer network operations from the inside. Such a combination of insider activity and network operations has the potential to inflict very serious damage.

Influence operations and active use of measures

The main task of every intelligence service is to promote and protect the national interests of their own country. In some cases, this means taking measures to influence the political debate or undermine the legitimacy of political decision-making processes. Such measures may also be taken by intelligence services that operate against Norway and Norwegian interests.

Intelligence services play a role in the planning and implementation of influence operations by planting false documents, supporting net troll activity and contributing to false news items in other countries. Norway could be subjected to these types of measures in 2017.

In a tense security policy situation we expect a range of measures to be taken by foreign intelligence services against Norway, including influence campaigns and the dissemination of misinformation.

Advanced weapons development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

One of PST's tasks is to help prevent the procurement of sensitive goods in Norway by countries that we assume are involved in the development of advanced weapons or weapons of mass destruction. The export of certain types of goods and technologies is therefore strictly regulated. In spite of this, a number of countries in Asia and the Middle East have made covert attempts in Norway and other European countries to procure goods for their own national programmes for weapons of mass destruction or for advanced weapons programmes.

Under the nuclear deal with Iran, the country's nuclear programme is once more being monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, Iran's missile programme is not part of the agreement, and the Iranians are continuing to develop and test ballistic missiles. Norwegian enterprises that develop relevant technology must continue to be alert to illegal procurement attempts by the Iranian authorities.

Norwegian enterprises should also be aware of procurement attempts by countries with nuclear weapons programmes that do not comply with international agreements in this area and that

therefore do not feel bound by the provisions. This applies to both North Korea and Pakistan.

Many companies in Norway have products, know-how and technology that are covered by export control regulations. Some of these companies have experienced illegal attempts to procure such goods and technologies. We know that such purchasers make extensive use of third countries and front companies as covers, to distract attention from or to conceal the real purpose of the exports. Some customers also report a fictitious end use for the good in question.

Countries of concern are continuing their efforts to obtain technological know-how for use in advanced weapons development or development of weapons of mass destruction. These countries have a long time horizon for their procurement strategies and a strong interest in recruiting or planting students and researchers in Norwegian higher education and research institutions who could later be employed by Norwegian companies and enterprises that develop or use relevant technology.



Extreme Islamism

Extreme Islamists continue to represent the greatest terrorist threat against Norway. We consider it possible that a terrorist attack will be made against Norway in 2017. However, there are a number of other European countries that are more at risk of a terrorist attack than Norway.

Terrorist threat

The most serious terrorist threat against Norway and Norwegian interests in 2017 will continue to be linked with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qaida (AQ). Both ISIL and AQ consider Norway a legitimate but not a priority target for a terrorist attack. These two organisations' efforts to encourage individuals to carry out attacks on Western countries will continue to gain support among their followers in Norway. We therefore consider it possible that a terrorist attack will be made against Norway in 2017.

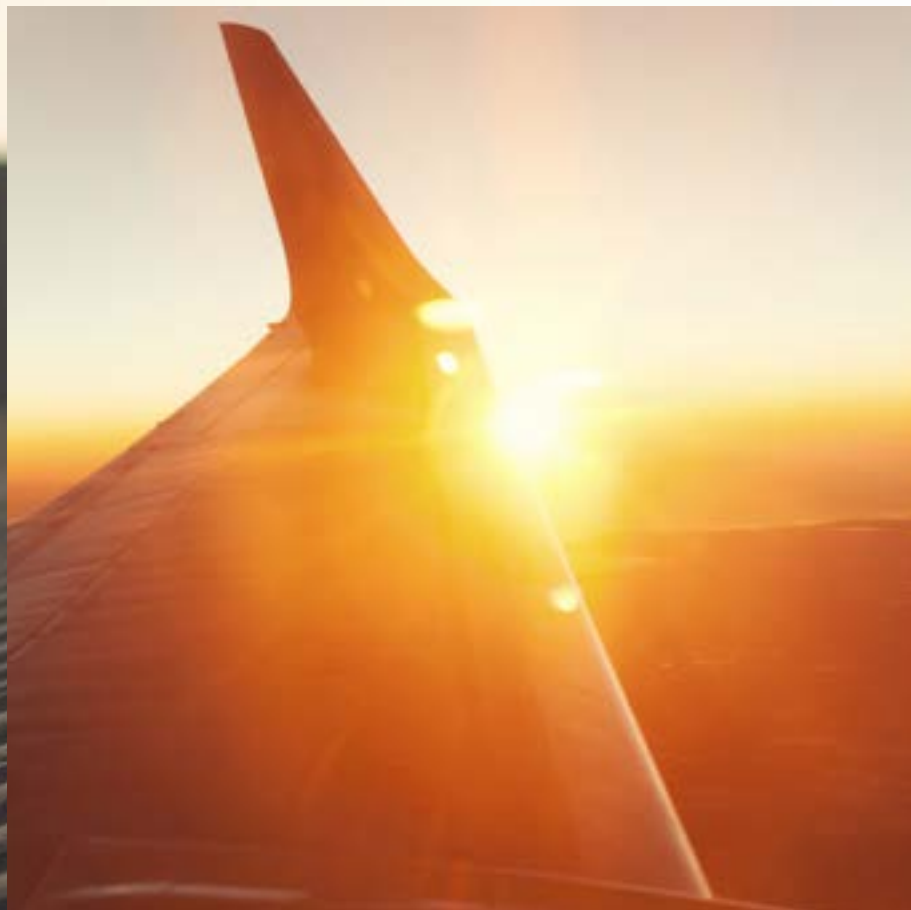
The threat picture will continue to be challenging. In the last few years ISIL has called on sympathisers to carry out independent attacks without making contact with the organisation's leadership. We expect ISIL to continue this strategy in 2017. These calls to action are one reason why we have seen an increase over the last few years in the number of lone terrorist attacks in the West. The likeliest scenario for a terrorist attack in a Western country is an ISIL-/AQ-inspired attack carried out with a

simple weapon against a target with little or no protection.

As regards the profile of potential terrorists, we have observed that the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Europe in the last few years have a number of characteristics in common with those radicalised in Norway. In a 2016 radicalisation study, PST has described radicalisation in Norway as a multi-ethnic phenomenon that appeals mainly to men with a low level of education and weak labour market attachment. Many have a background in crime and a history of violence prior to their radicalisation.

Ideology and enemy image

The extreme Islamists who present a threat to Norway have a multifaceted enemy image. Most of them support ISIL and AQ and what they perceive as a war against oppressors of Muslims and Islam. In this war, those perceived as infidels are considered to be legitimate targets. Influential extreme Islamists in Norway will continue to applaud ISIL's activities in Syria and Iraq and in the West.



In addition to the extreme Islamists, Norway has sympathisers and supporters of extreme Islamist groups with a more regional focus, who support groups in for example Somalia, Chechnya and Afghanistan.

Experience has shown that a number of different factors can trigger plans for an attack, support activity and the radicalisation of sympathisers among extreme Islamists in Norway. Military conflicts involving extreme Islamist organisations will continue to motivate many of these individuals, and the same applies to a Norwegian and other Western military presence in Muslim countries. We are also aware that members of extreme Islamist groups are provoked by debates and actions they perceive as insulting to Islam and Muslims.

Organisation, radicalisation and recruitment

The number of new radicalised individuals will continue to be low in 2017. The attraction of extreme Islamism and the occurrence of organised radicalisation reached a peak in 2013/2014 but has since declined. The drop in the number of newly radicalised individuals may be partly due to the fact that a number of key members of a previously active group in South-Eastern Norway have been prosecuted. Moreover, several individuals who were active at the time have been killed in Syria. The reduction applies to radicalisation and recruitment of both sympathisers who remain in Norway and those who leave the country to join a terrorist organisation abroad.

However, there are still some individuals in Norway who seek to radicalise others. These radicalisers are to be found among the remaining members of the group in Eastern Norway, and also in more ethnically homogeneous groups in various parts of the country. The internet is also an important arena for radicalisation,

and it has been found that this arena enhances the effectiveness of Norwegian radicalisers' efforts to recruit sympathisers.

Furthermore, radicalisation in prisons is a phenomenon that will become more common in Norway in 2017. There are a number of individuals currently in prison as a result of national investigations of travellers to Syria, and in 2017 more of them will be prosecuted for violation of the terror provisions in Norwegian law. This means that there will be an increasing number of prisoners in Norway who have played a role in extreme Islamist groups here and who also have operational experience gained abroad. It is likely that extreme Islamists will retain their convictions in prison and attempt to radicalise others. Attempts have already been made to radicalise other prisoners, including individuals sentenced for gross violence.

Immigration

Immigration to Europe will influence the terrorist threat in various ways in the coming year. One of the problems we expect to face is the radicalisation of asylum-seekers, migrants and illegal immigrants in Norway. Attempts may be made to radicalise members of these groups by other migrants at reception centres or by visitors.

As in previous years, individuals who support and sympathise with extreme Islamist organisations will arrive in Norway in 2017. However, previous experience has shown that there is not necessarily a connection between holding extreme Islamist views in the home country and committing violence in another country.

There have been a number of examples in the past year of individuals being sent as part of the flow of immigrants to Europe to take action there. However, since Norway is considered to play a relatively minor role in the enemy image

held by ISIL and AQ, it is unlikely that these groups will send individuals with a premeditated intention to commit violence to Norway in 2017, either independently or as part of the flow of refugees.

Syria travellers³

Very few individuals are expected to leave Norway to join ISIL's self-declared caliphate in 2017. The decline began in 2015 and the numbers dropped even more in 2016. At the beginning of 2017, around 40 individuals with close links to Norway were staying in an ISIL-controlled area.

There are several reasons why we are seeing a reduction in the number of travellers to Syria. One is that the scale of organised radicalisation in Norway has diminished. Another is that a number of national and international measures have now made it more difficult to travel there. A third reason is that joining Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq seems to be becoming less attractive. The focus of ISIL's propaganda has also changed, away from the appeal of the state-building project and towards a more military focus.

Few individuals returned from Syria to Norway in 2016, and we expect only a small rise in the number of returnees in 2017. However, these will be individuals who could have acquired or increased their knowledge of tactics and developed a lower threshold of violence. Norwegian Syria travellers may become more interested in returning to Norway as the military pressure on ISIL increases. However, they will find it difficult to leave the region, and more of them are likely to be killed in the fighting or taken prisoner, or to move to another area of conflict.

³ «Syria traveller» is used in this context to refer to a person who has travelled to the region in order to join a terrorist organisation with links to the conflict in Syria and Iraq. The concept includes both foreign fighters with a military assignment and individuals who only play a civilian role. Both types of links to a terrorist organisation are subject to the provisions of the Norwegian Penal Code.



Right-wing extremism

We consider it unlikely that right-wing extremists will carry out a terrorist attack in Norway in 2017. Right-wing extremists in Norway are mainly to be found in unorganised, loosely coordinated networks of individuals. However, their ideology has become a matter of greater concern because we expect an increase in numbers, better organisation and a higher level of activity among a few individuals in this milieu.

Intention, ideology and enemy image

Opposition to immigration is a key feature of the right-wing enemy image. This opposition is often founded on conspiracy theories based on the idea that immigration and Islam are a threat to Norwegian society, culture and way of life, or to the «white race». The public debate on immigration is used to reinforce the right-wing extremist message. A few members of this milieu wish to establish a strong «national socialist state» to prevent immigration.

The right-wing enemy image also includes the government, political parties and dignitaries. These are held responsible for negative developments and the bad state of the country, which the extremists attribute to immigration. There is also a widespread conspiracy theory that the Norwegian authorities are in league with the enemy or failing to take the necessary counter-measures.

It is unlikely that right-wing extremists will carry out terrorist acts in Norway in 2017. The idea of terror as a means of achieving political goals seems to have little support in this milieu, nor is there an active ideological agent inspiring or inciting followers to engage in terrorism.

However, some individuals in Norway with right-wing views support and are in a position to commit violence. Any right-wing acts of violence and terrorism in Norway in 2017 are most likely to be committed by individuals or small groups acting on their own initiative. The planning horizon for such acts will be short. This means that such acts will be difficult to prevent. Violence committed by right-wing extremists will in many cases come under the category of hate crimes. It is possible that reception centres for asylum-seekers will be exposed to harassment and vandalism this year as well.





In 2016, European right-wing extremist groups with close ties to groups in Norway held a number of demonstrations involving violent clashes with opponents and the police. This is likely to inspire right-wing extremist groups to demonstrate in Norway in 2017, and violent confrontations with opponents may occur here as well.

Organisation, radicalisation and recruitment

The right-wing extremist milieu in Norway consists primarily of unorganised, loosely coordinated networks spread throughout the country. Because of internal conflicts and constant changes of leadership, their activities are mainly confined to contact with lone individuals over the internet.

However, a small number of members of the milieu have become more organised and established a more well-defined leadership. They have also strengthened their radicalisation and recruitment activities over the last year. The milieu is likely to attract more members in 2017, and is likely to continue concentrating on radicalisation and recruitment. Members of the milieu make use of several different arenas, and distribute posters, flyers and stickers with a right-wing extremist message. The last year has seen an increase in this type of propaganda compared with previous years. However, the internet is the main arena for disseminating right-wing extremist utterances and information.

Individuals with links to organised right-wing extremist groups regularly attempt to make contact with other extremist⁴ groups, networks and protest movements in Norway. It is likely that right-wing extremists will attempt to take control of such actors and persuade them to recruit supporters and promote their own agenda. Over the long term this could strengthen support for right-wing extremism.

Participation in demonstrations and other public events abroad provides Norwegian right-wing extremists with access to an important arena for radicalisation and international network-building. We expect Norwegian right-wing extremists to continue strengthening their contact with such groups in other European countries, especially Sweden.

⁴ «Extremist groups, networks and protest movements» is used here to mean groups with right-wing extremist views who do not support violence or terror as a means of achieving political, ideological or religious goals.

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Left-wing extremism

We consider it very unlikely that left-wing extremist actors will carry out terrorist acts against Norwegian interests in 2017.

The left-wing extremist milieu includes groups and individuals preoccupied by many different causes. However, the cause that from time to time unites these groups continues to be in opposition to right-wing extremism.

Left-wing extremist activity consists mainly of demonstrations against individuals and events these extremists associate with right-wing extremism. An increase in right-wing extremist activity is likely to lead to greater left-wing extremist activity.

The left-wing extremist milieu is unlikely to grow and become more organised in the year ahead, due to the lack of a common ideology, a unifying cause and strong leadership. Any problem associated with this milieu will continue to be a public order concern in 2017.



Threats against dignitaries

The majority of Norwegian parliamentarians are subjected to threats and harassment, and some of them also receive serious threats of violence and injury. This applies particularly to government members and politicians with a high media profile who front controversial issues. The number of cases of serious threats against dignitaries dealt with by PST has remained stable over the last 10 years. We do not expect any material change in this situation in 2017.

Ideology-related threats

Most of the threats against dignitaries are made by individuals in the form of harassment and individual smear campaigns. Such threats are often triggered by a combination of personal frustration and life crisis. Some threats have an ideological, political or religious motive. Although most individuals who utter threats do not really intend to commit violence, threats and harassment may influence the activities of the dignitary concerned.

Individuals with right-wing extremist views have also uttered threats against dignitaries. The threats are usually linked to specific symbolic issues or related to asylum and immigration policy.

General election 2017

The general election in 2017 is likely to provoke an increase in threatening activity prior to and during the election. A number of dignitaries will appear in public and will receive greater media coverage. Politicians who deal with controversial issues or who occupy key positions in their parties are expected to be subject to a higher

incidence of threats and annoying behaviour during this period.

We do not expect the general election to affect the threat to the Royal Family, the Supreme Court or foreign embassies and consulates in Norway. We therefore consider it likely that threatening behaviour towards these dignitaries will remain at the same level in 2017.

The intelligence threat

Norwegian dignitaries will continue to be targets of foreign intelligence activity in 2017. The purpose of such activity is to gather sensitive and classified information and influence decisions. This applies particularly to dignitaries whose political areas of responsibility include defence, foreign affairs, public security, research, industry or the High North. The intelligence activity ranges from network-based operations to the cultivation and exploitation of personal contacts. In addition to targeting the dignitary directly, intelligence activity may be targeted at members of the dignitary's family or entourage, such as advisers.



PST's categorisation of probability levels

In our assessment of politically motivated violence and threats against dignitaries we have devised a set of standardised terms to indicate estimated probability. The aim is to achieve a more uniform description of the probability level in each case and thereby reduce as much as possible any lack of clarity and the risk of misunderstandings.

The following terms and definitions have been developed in a cooperation between the police, PST and the Norwegian Intelligence Service.

Term	Definition
Very likely	There is very good reason to believe
Likely	There is reason to believe
Possible	About as likely as not
Unlikely	There is little reason to believe
Very unlikely	There is very little reason to believe