

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Counter Extremism Project and European Policy Centre release report on disguised compliance by terrorist offenders

Brussels, Belgium - Today, November 9, the Counter Extremism Project (CEP) and the European Policy Centre (EPC) launched a joint paper, titled 'Hiding in plain sight? Disguised compliance by terrorist offenders.' The Discussion Paper is co-authored by Professor Ian Acheson, Senior Advisor to CEP and Amanda Paul, Senior Policy Analyst at EPC.

The paper examines how terrorist prisoners engage in 'disguised compliance', whereby they successfully deceive the professionals involved in their rehabilitation or deradicalisation. The Vienna attacker, Kujtim Fejzulaj and the London Bridge attacker, Usman Khan, are worrying examples of this phenomenon. Both completed deradicalisation programmes while incarcerated and were able to, relatively easily, disguise how dangerous they were to those responsible for monitoring their risk in prison and post-release.

Professor Ian Acheson, Senior Advisor to CEP and prison expert, said: "*Disguised compliance is a complex, controversial and still little understood facet of terrorist offending. Many violent extremists have lived a life in the shade, evading detection and incarceration and are adept at counter measures to conceal their true intent. We are not doing nearly enough to combat this phenomenon in prisons and in the community. This paper explores the challenges and opportunities that must be grasped to protect the national security of citizens across the world.*"

As evidence emerges across Europe that this tactic is a growing threat and that terrorist prisoners are actively misleading those concerned with their rehabilitation to gain the opportunity to attack again, this paper provides recommendations on how this increasing risk can be tackled.

The authors found that reactive, generic and mechanistic approaches to risk management of violent extremists that is over-reliant on collaboration and devalue frontline professional intuition are keeping us less safe. The report advocates an assertive blended approach that includes new technologies and 'integrity-checking' by a team of practitioners.

Amanda Paul, Senior Policy Analyst at EPC said: "*The initial findings on disguised compliance determined that practitioners working on the frontline are poorly equipped and vulnerable to manipulation. While a more comprehensive approach may be more expensive or time-consuming, deceptive terrorists are currently falling through the cracks. The long-term political and human price of this is incalculable.*"

This latest report will contribute to a ground-breaking research project by Staffordshire University and CEP, which aims to shed new light on the intentions of violent extremists. The 'Disguised compliance in terrorist offending' project will provide frontline staff across UK security agencies with the best tools and approaches to reveal the true intentions of people motivated to acts of violence by ideologies.

The report is available [here](#).

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

The **Counter Extremism Project (CEP)** is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, international policy organization formed to combat the growing threat from extremist ideologies.

The **European Policy Centre (EPC)** is an independent, not-for-profit think tank dedicated to fostering European integration through analysis and debate.