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**Human Rights Council**

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,**

**political, economic, social and cultural rights,**

**including the right to development**

 Visit to Austria[[1]](#footnote-2)\*, [[2]](#footnote-3)\*\*

 Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

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|  *Summary* |
|  The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of people’s to self-determination visited Austria from the 21 to 29 June 2018. Pursuant to its mandate, the Working Group’s visit focused on the phenomenon of foreign fighters as mercenary related actors and the private security industry in the country. The Working Group noted that Austria was one of the countries with the highest numbers per population in Europe whose citizens travelled to major conflict zones abroad between 2014 and 2015. The report thus addresses the motivational factors that prompted individuals to travel to conflicts such as Iraq and Syria. With regard to private security companies, the report focuses on an immigration related centre operated by a multi-national private security company in Vordernberg and the general framework regulating the private security industry. The Working Group makes recommendations to address both foreign fighters and private security companies.  |
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Annex

 Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination on its mission to the Austria

 I. Introduction

1. The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination visited Austria from 21 to 29 June 2018 at the invitation of the Government. The delegation comprised two members of the Working Group, Gabor Rona, Chairperson-Rapporteur and Saeed Mokbil. They were accompanied by staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

2. In accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/2 and Human Rights Council resolution 33/4, the Working Group is mandated to study and identify sources, causes, manifestations and trends with regard to mercenaries and mercenary-related activities, and their impact on human rights, particularly the right to self-determination. The Working Group is also mandated to monitor the human rights impact of the activities of private military and security companies.

3. Since 2014, the Working Group has explored the linkages between the phenomenon of foreign fighters and mercenaries, and their impact on human rights. The Working Group undertook visits to several countries where these phenomena were assessed and has since issued reports where foreign fighters were identified as mercenary-related actors, particularly when motivated to engage in armed conflict for financial or material gain.

4. In connection with the Working Group’s mandate, Human Rights Council resolution 33/4 emphasised its utmost concern about the impact of the activities of private military and security companies operating in privatised prisons and immigration-related detention facilities and their impact on human rights. In 2017, the Working Group presented a report to the General Assembly (A/72/286) which assessed the use of private military and security companies in places of deprivation of liberty and the impact of on the human rights of those deprived of their liberty.

5. During the visit, the Working Group held meetings in the provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria, and Styria, namely in the towns of Garsten, Leoben and Vordernberg. It met with representatives of the Federal Government including the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry for Constitutional Affairs, Reforms, Deregulation and Justice; Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, Federal Chancellery; Department for Families and Youth; and also with members of Parliament. It also met with representatives from the Ombudsman’s office. The delegation also met with prisoners at Garsten Prison and detainees at the Vordernberg immigration detention facility, as well as with representatives of civil society organizations, academics and youths who were undergoing programmes focused on de-radicalisation.

6. The Working Group would like to thank the Government of Austria for its co-operation in facilitating the visit and for the factual comments shared on the draft report. The delegation was able to hold open and frank discussions with the all the State representatives it met. The Working Group also warmly thanks all the non-government interlocutors who availed their time to meet and hold discussions with the delegation. The Working Group also appreciates the support and assistance it received from the United Nations Information Centre in Vienna.

 A. Definition and Scope

7. A “mercenary” is defined in international law as someone who is specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict. A mercenary is motivated essentially to take part in hostilities by a desire for private gain, or is promised, by or on behalf of a party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promise or paid to combatants of similar rank and functions in the armed forces of that party. He or she is neither a national of a party to the conflict, nor a resident of the territory controlled by a party to the conflict; is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict, and has not been sent by a State, which is not a party to the conflict, on official duty as a member of its armed forces.

8. There is no international legal definition, for foreign fighters, or a specific legal regime governing them. The Working Group[[3]](#footnote-4) noted that foreign fighters are generally understood to be individuals who leave their country of origin or habitual residence to engage in violence as part of an insurgency or non-State armed group in an armed conflict.

9. Both mercenaries and foreign fighters are external actors who intervene in an armed conflict. Mercenaries are neither nationals of a party to the conflict nor residents of a territory controlled by a party to the conflict. Similarly, foreign fighters, while they may or may not be nationals of a party to the conflict, do not reside in the State affected by the conflict and have travelled from abroad to join the insurgency. Both mercenaries and foreign fighters may be recruited abroad or locally.[[4]](#footnote-5)

10. The right to self-determination, in its contemporary manifestation, encompasses political struggles for greater democracy and human rights. This right is referred to in Article 1 (2) of the Charter of the United Nations, as a fundamental principle necessary for the achievement of universal peace. The Human Rights Committee recognizes the right to self-determination as an essential condition for the effective guarantee and observance of individual human rights, and for the promotion and strengthening of those rights. This right is also broadly understood as the right of peoples to determine their own political and economic system, including by participatory political processes.

11. The Working Group defines a private military and/or security company as an entity that provides, on a compensatory basis, military and/or security services by physical persons and/or legal entities.

 B. Background

12. Austria is a parliamentary representative democracy with a population of approximately 8.7 million inhabitants. The capital and largest city Vienna has a population exceeding 1.8 million. According to the Human Development Index, Austria has a high standard of living and was ranked in 2018 at number 20 out of 189 countries and territories in the world within the human development category.[[5]](#footnote-6) Austria has been a member of the United Nations since 1955, and joined the European Union in 1995.

13. As a federal republic, Austria is comprised of nine independent federal states or provinces: Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Vienna.[[6]](#footnote-7) Its official languages include German (88.6%), Croatian, and others including a smaller percentage who speak Slovene and Hungarian. According to recent studies, an estimated 64% of Austrians were Roman Catholic, 5% were Protestant, while 8% were Muslims.

14. Migration to Austria has resulted in a diverse and multi-ethnic population. The conflicts in countries such as Iraq and Syria in recent years, have also resulted in an influx of individuals seeking asylum or passing through to other countries in the region for the same purpose. In 2016, some 1.9 million people with foreign background (both parents born abroad) were living in Austria. A large majority of these individuals were born abroad while around 480,000 were born in Austria and were descendants of foreign-born parents, and who were often referred to as “second generation” immigrants.[[7]](#footnote-8) Vienna remains the prime destination for international migration to Austria and many migrants have settled mostly in the eastern part of the country in close proximity to the capital.

15. Between 2011 and 2016, Europe experienced an increasing number of their nationals travelling to conflicts such as those in Iraq and Syria. During this period an estimated 42,000 foreign fighters from over 120 countries joined armed conflicts abroad, and around 5000 were estimated to come from the Europe.[[8]](#footnote-9)

16. From 2014 and 2015, Austria was reported as having one of the highest per capita rates in the European Union of foreign fighters travelling to major conflict zones. An estimated 317 individuals tried to go to join groups such as Da’esh and Al-Nusra. Around 60 individuals were intercepted attempting to travel there, many of whom were tried and convicted under Austria’s anti-terrorism laws. About 93 were known to have returned from the conflict zones, but there are no definitive statistics on numbers for those who were killed in conflict.

 C. Legal and Institutional Frameworks

 17. Austria has ratified many of the international human rights conventions including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Convention on refugees and stateless persons, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Additional Protocols in which a mercenary is also defined.[[9]](#footnote-10) Austria has yet to ratify the International Convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries and the International Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families.

18. The Working Group noted that most individuals who were reported to be travelling to participate in armed conflicts abroad were charged and convicted mostly under Section 278 of the Penal Code, known as the antiterrorist legislation. The participation in a criminal organization as defined in Section 278a of the Penal Code constitutes a criminal offence while Section 278b criminalizes the leading of and the participation in a terrorist group. For the purpose of further defining the meaning of "participation" the law stipulates this to apply to anybody who inter alia supports a (criminal) group by providing information or assets or in any other way, which promotes the group or its criminal acts. Section 279 criminalises the recruitment of members for armed associations and the financing of armed associations punishable by imprisonment of up to three years.

19. The Working Group also noted that offences related to those who travelled to engage in conflict due to financial incentives or those that could possibly fall under what is deemed a mercenary-related actor, could also be charged under Section 278 in Austria. Further, support for criminal organisations acting outside the country is punishable, if the supportive act has been effected in Austrian territory. The recruitment of members for a criminal organisation can be considered as a supportive act.

20. Austria has specific regulations to prohibit the use and distribution of symbols attributable to Da’esh (ISIS) or Al-Qaeda. Regulations further allow border authorities to prevent minors from leaving Austria upon suspicion that they will participate in fighting activities abroad. Authorities are allowed to withdraw citizenship from an Austrian dual national who voluntarily and actively participates in fighting in an armed conflict. Austria's Office for State Protection and Counterterrorism (BVT), the key counterterrorism agency within the Ministry of the Interior, has reported ongoing efforts to address radicalization to violence by extremist groups, including those they identify as Islamist extremist groups.

21. In response to foreign fighters, law enforcement agencies focused on intelligence gathering and investigations, while integration officials engaged in public outreach to prevent radicalization to violence. In 2017, a number of legislation was approved on the use of stringent surveillance measures, which grants far-reaching surveillance powers to the government’s security agencies. The measures raised concerns relating to the implications on, inter alia, the right to assembly, right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy.

22. Austria supports the work of the UN Security Council, in particular of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and the Taliban/Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee and has financially contributed to, and thus enabled the start of, a Global Programme against Terrorism by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Austria has taken an active approach to implementing UN Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014) to counter foreign terrorist fighters, and 2199 (2015) to counter Da’esh/ISIS, and has taken steps to incorporate Global Counterterrorism Forum’s good practices on foreign terrorist fighters.[[10]](#footnote-11) It is also a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, and a member of the Defeat-ISIS Working Groups on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Stabilization.

23. Austria is also a party to several bi- and multilateral treaties in the field of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition, including the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal matters and its Additional Protocol and the European Convention on Extradition and its Second Additional Protocol.

24. At the time of the visit, the Working Group was informed of a draft national strategy on de-radicalization and prevention of violent extremism, which had yet to be adopted. The Working Group noted the critical need to ensure the valuable contributions of civil society organizations and community groups to the content of this plan, to ensure that it will not wholly focus on security and law enforcement measures but will also cover the multi-dimensional areas that violent extremism and radicalisation are linked to. As such, the National Network for Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism and Deradicalisation (BNED) founded by the Federal Ministry of Interior in 2017 and involving around 70 experts from multi-sectors in society, including health, education and media, can significantly assist with the programmes on deradicalisation and countering violent extremism.

25. Austria has an Ombudsman Board as a national human rights institution and recommendations made in the country’s Universal Periodic Review in 2015[[11]](#footnote-12) noted the need to ensure that the appointment of Board members complied with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, (the “Paris Principles”).

26. The private security industry in Austria is not regulated by a sector-specific legislation but by general commercial law known as the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act enacted in 1994. The law does not allow armed private security services unless a special license has been granted by the competent national authority in charge of drafting and amending legislation *(Trade and Commerce authority - Gewerbebehörde).* The same authority is responsible for controls and inspections as well as imposing administrative and penal sanctions.

 D. Positive observations

27. Having ratified the majority of the international human rights conventions, and with a Constitution and legislation that provide strong protection for fundamental human rights, Austria is often seen as a beacon of democracy and the rule of law.

28. With regard to the foreign fighter phenomenon, the Working Group notes that the government has engaged in multiple strategies, engagements and fora, nationally, regionally and internationally to address this challenge. The Government’s aims of de-radicalisation and of countering and preventing violent extremism have been attributed to stemming the flow of fighters to conflict zones at the time of the visit.

29. The Working Group noted that a collaboration existed among the security sectors of the State with a network of civil society and non-government organizations to address de-radicalisation and assist in the prevention of violent extremism. Some of these actors were from local communities and included religious experts, social workers, counsellors, academics and non-government groups.

30. The delegation also noted positive initiatives, including public-private partnerships, such as the programme DERAD, an association working mainly with extremist inmates in prison, as well as with the Radicalisation Awareness Network,[[12]](#footnote-13) which brings together numerous practitioners from around Europe to work on the prevention of radicalisation. A number of other initiatives included groups focused on sports and activities for youth which also dealt with radicalisation and those at risk of violent extremism. The Government’s support of, and engagement with these initiatives are crucial as the sustainable solutions and actions needed to address the phenomenon of foreign fighters requires collaboration among multi-sectoral actors from the Government and from the private and non-government spheres.

31. Austria’s efforts to counter violent extremism has also included co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Islamic Faith Community to undertake information campaigns in mosques, Islamic organizations, and community centres. The initiative included education outreach to encourage Austrians to differentiate between Islam and what is understood as violent extremism. In an effort to counter radicalisation and improve integration for new arrivals of refugees, the Integration Office within the Foreign Ministry developed an educational program focused on German language acquisition and education on gender equality and democratic principles. The Austrian government also established and maintained a counselling centre[[13]](#footnote-14) and a 24 hour helpline where any member of the community can contact social workers and counsellors to answer questions or discuss issues related to violent extremism and radicalisation. The Working Group noted the valuable work provided by the counselling centre having visited it and met with some of the young people it serviced, including a young refugee from Syria.

32. With regard to private military and security companies, Austria provides a positive example in that it has not fallen into the trend of contracting private military and security companies, domestically and abroad, for core government functions such as military services and operation of prisons. The Working Group was pleased to note that there are constitutional prohibitions against such outsourcing and there were no specific concerns relating to such operations. Article 79 of the Federal Constitution states that military defence of the country is the exclusive responsibility of the Federal Armed Forces, and that it is therefore inadmissible for other (possibly also outsourced) institutions to act with the framework of military defence for the country. The private security companies in Austria primarily carry out functions such as the guarding of events and public and private institutions.

 II. Overview of findings

 A. Foreign Fighters

33. The foreign fighter phenomenon is not new to Europe. In the past, conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Afghanistan and others had attracted foreign fighters, including from Austria. However, the volume of those travelling between 2011 and 2015, in connection with the crises in Iraq and Syria, was unprecedented.[[14]](#footnote-15) Terrorist attacks in Europe also prompted fears regarding those who would return from conflict zones, prompting a series of measures that were largely punitive, while others focused on rehabilitation.

34. The travelling to conflict zones from Austria began to take place sometime after 2011, peaking around 2015. Between 2013 and 2014, around 8 to 10 youths were reported to have left to Syria from Austria. According to an organization working on de-radicalisation, between 2011 and 2012, staff received information at their various youth centres in Vienna, that many youths were beginning to discuss the conflict in Syria. Many who were with a Muslim background, had questions related to religion that spurred these discussions. Not long after, information began to emerge of individuals travelling to join groups like Da’esh and Al Nusra in Syria.

35. By September 2015, 230 identified individuals had left Austria for Syria or Iraq; 120 were still in the conflict zone and at least 34 had died. According to the authorities, the number of returnees exceeded 70 at this period. Around 17 women had left Austria by February 2015 for Da’esh controlled territory, some of whom were under 18 at the time of their departure. At the time of the visit, the estimates put the overall number of foreign fighters from Austria at over 300.

36. Many of those who were intercepted were either in prison or in the criminal justice system, mainly charged or convicted under article 278 of the Criminal Code, the anti-terrorist law. At the time of the visit, the Working Group was informed that the number of those travelling to engage in conflict had declined significantly and that there weren’t any known individuals attempting to travel. During the period of the visit, the military suppression of Da’esh had gained momentum and measures by the Government to address foreign fighters had taken effect.

37. The Austrian security and law enforcement agencies and BVT (counterterrorism body) officials also routinely cooperated with other States in investigative areas, from the informal sharing of preliminary investigative information to joint, multilateral investigative projects and enforcement operations. Border security forces made effective use of security measures, including biographic and biometric screening capabilities at ports of entry and information sharing internally and with other European Union countries. Border security officials at ports of entry have discretion when determining documents and passengers subject to screening on arrival.

 38. While security measures were being implemented to address those travelling to conflict zones, focus was also devoted to better understanding the reasons that prompted individuals to travel to these conflicts.

*Motivation and recruitment*

39. There is no standard profile for Austrians who travel abroad to fight and there are diverse factors that motivate different individuals. Some of the main factors include ideology, religious conviction, search for identity and a sense of belonging, economic and financial gain, and adventure. Financial gain is of particular interest to the Working Group’s mandate and with the wealth that groups such as Da’esh had accumulated through illicit means, there was a likelihood of individuals being primarily drawn to become members by material and financial gains. The delegation was informed of a case where an individual’s family was promised a payment of 4,000 euros for going to Syria. Other recruits were reportedly promised salaries in excess of those paid to local fighters and, in some cases, even houses and cars. For a number of cases, the motivation could be a combination of financial and other factors.

40. The Working Group was also informed that humanitarian assistance was also a common motivation. When the crisis in Syria began in 2011, there were a number of individuals from the region who were travelling to the conflict to fight against the Assad regime and to provide services as doctors (for example) to combatants. Other interlocutors stated that they were certain some of those travelling from Austria also involved classic mercenaries, particularly from the older generation. Many stated that young people were likely to travel more for ideological reasons, to find a group where they felt they could belong, to obtain status or respect, and also due to religious belief, involving an imagined paradise and living in a community of shared religious values and practices. Some youths became foreign fighters in rebellion or in opposition to their families. The age range in general for those travelling were reportedly from 18 to 35 years.

41. Though most fighters have been men, women have also travelled, mainly to join husbands or friends. Young women and girls were mostly reported to have travel to conflict zones to become brides of Da’esh or Al Nusra members. In April 2014, two Austrian teenagers of Bosnian descent, aged 15 and 16, travelled to Syria to marry fighters in Da’esh. Both the girls were reportedly recruited through a mosque involving preachers with violent extremist ideologies. Their cases became well-known due to their ages, and the fact that they were radicalised without their family’s knowledge, a trend that would soon be evident among youths who travelled to conflict zones.

42. A particular feature of the foreign fighter phenomenon in Austria is that around 50% of fighters who travelled were of Chechen origin. While many said that some of these individuals were radicalised to join groups such as Da’esh due to ideological leanings, others pointed to the fact that quite a number of Chechens saw the war in Syria as an extension of the war between the Russian Federation and Chechnya, and thus joined the conflict as an act of retaliation. There is also a large Chechen diaspora in Austria and nationals of the Balkan countries with refugee status who have been particularly targeted by recruiters. Other nationalities of alleged foreign fighters included individuals who were Austrian, ethnic Serbs, Afghans, Bosnians, Turks, Kurds, and Russians. A lot of fighters, of the older generation, were said to be affected also by the wars they had experienced in their countries of origins and were likely to travel to conflict zones. The trauma that many of them had experienced made it difficult to integrate into society, and thus they were more likely to be drawn back into conflict.

43. In some cases, entire families, including children, have travelled together. The Working Group noted that many of the individuals who became radicalised were from a migration background and disadvantaged and poor communities, and had reportedly experienced racism, religious discrimination, poverty, lack of opportunity, social and societal rejection and mental health issues. This prompted a lot of discussion about discrimination against particular ethnic and religious groups and the need for better integration, social cohesion and attention to the specific circumstances of foreign fighters that led them to be radicalised in the first place. Some of the political discourse in the country were also seen as having strong anti-migrant elements and were contributing to the challenges of integration and a sense of belonging in society.

44. The Working Group learned that in many successful cases of de-radicalization, the individual shared experiences involving victimisation through racism, poverty and lack of opportunity. This highlights the need to address the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism and not focus exclusively on symptoms. The Working Group commends the engagement and active involvement of social actors in the network against radicalisation and violent extremism and reiterates the need to ensure a human rights-based approach to tackling root causes to this phenomenon.

45. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism, 296 Austrian-born persons are known who were actively taking part in conflict in Iraq and Syria. At the end of 2016, 280 could be localised in Austria and were put under surveillance by the authorities.[[15]](#footnote-16) However, this number is shrinking due to consequent penal prosecution and sentencing of suspects.[[16]](#footnote-17)

46. The fact that there are people living in Austria who are ideologically close to extremist ideology is shown by a study conducted by the City of Vienna with youth. Out of the 401 surveyed youth, 27% showed positive feelings towards extremely religious people who are willing to go to war for their faith. These youth also viewed the West as the “suppressor” and agreed that Islam has to be protected with violence.[[17]](#footnote-18) From 2014 to 2017, the aforementioned 24 hour helpline on prevention of extremism, was contacted 2,399 times. In over 40% of cases brought to the service, the questions many asked were about religiously motivated extremism, general predisposition to violence and intercultural issues.[[18]](#footnote-19)

47. In 2017, 63 inmates were in Austrian prison due to their participation in terrorist associations.[[19]](#footnote-20) The number of convictions under Section 278 had increased since 2015. For those considered to be jihadists in Austrian prisons, special security measures were taken and particular support services were offered.[[20]](#footnote-21) Research on around 39 former inmates with radicalised background, focusing on their imprisonment, motives and ideology found that most were radicalised before prison and did not have criminal records beforehand. The results also showed that de-radicalising measures, including anti-violence training and political education through experts, organizations and programmes such as DERAD had positive benefits.[[21]](#footnote-22) Further, organizations such as NEUSTART[[22]](#footnote-23) which provide special services and legal support[[23]](#footnote-24) were also helpful.

48. With regard to recruitment, while mosques were commonly suspected as a major locus of recruitment, a number of foreign fighters were recruited in public places including parks, sport centres and local neighbourhoods, while many were through online platforms. Both men and women were actively involved in recruitment and children and youth were often targeted due to their vulnerability.

 B. Measures for foreign fighters

49. In line with its obligations under the human rights conventions it has ratified, Austria has the opportunity to address the phenomenon of foreign fighters through measures that are based on human rights principles and standards. These measures could better enhance efforts for de-radicalisation, prevention of violent extremism, stemming the flow of foreign fighters while enhancing integration, and promoting social cohesion for migrants and foreigners who are often affected. However, the Working Group was concerned with some of the human rights implications employed to address foreign fighters.

50. The Working Group noted that a majority of those in prison convicted under article 278, also included some individuals who were arrested and charged for merely posting a message on social media sympathising with the aims of groups like Da’esh. For instance, a youth had been prosecuted under Section 278(b) for posting message on social media that was deemed as aligning with violent extremism. The wide interpretation given to this law thus has the potential to encompass various situations that are not necessarily terrorist activities. The law’s breadth could also lead to criminalization of mere beliefs and to discriminatory enforcement. The Working Group cautioned that excessive emphasis on law enforcement not only favours symptoms over causes, but may also lead to further stigmatisation of migrants and foreigners.

 51. The delegation was also informed of initiatives by the authorities to address and combat “radicalized jihadism[[24]](#footnote-25)” or violent extremism associated with Islamism. The delegation heard at various times, the term “political Islam” and government initiatives to combat this.

52. The Working Group was also informed of measures involving the investigation and closure of certain mosques determined by the Government to espouse radical Islamism. At the time of the visit, around seven mosques had been closed. In addition, a number of imams were being investigated with the possibility of their residence permits not being extended if their salary arrangements were found to violate the Islam Law (ban on foreign funding relating to those whose salaries are not funded domestically).

53. The Working Group noted that often the focus on Islamic faith can have human rights implications on the overall Muslim population, even if the original intention is to address a dangerous form of ideology that may be associated with religion. It further notes the importance of ensuring that any initiatives that may focus on a particular ideology, religion or community of faith, should not further fuel discrimination and stigmatization of a particular group.

54. The Working Group also has concerns about policies that may be specifically used to target migrants, foreigners and members of the Muslim communities. Even measures to enhance integration also had human rights implications. Under one particular policy, social welfare benefits may be reduced if the target group fails to actively participate in integration in Austrian communities. Yet, instead of punitive security measures, preventive and more socially orientated efforts to address the root causes of the problem need to be applied.

55. A policy that disadvantages migrants and foreigners who fail to cooperate with integration programs by denying them social benefits may be morally attractive and effective in many cases, but it can also be counterproductive in other cases. The Working Group believes that in spite of the many positive facets of initiatives aimed at improving social cohesion and reducing radicalisation and violent extremism, some of these measures, if not implemented with due respect to non-discriminatory human rights standards, can actually lead to further marginalization and radicalisation.

56. During its Universal Periodic Review of 2015, States observed that one of the greatest challenges in Austria was the influx and transit of refugees from Syria and other countries. While measures had been taken to ensure successful integration of these individuals, a number of recommendations by States called on the Austrian authorities to address xenophobia, racial discrimination, hate speech, the resurgence of extremist nationalist ideologies and intolerance towards migrants, refugees and persons belonging to certain ethnic groups. Discrimination against Muslims, Roma, persons of African descent were highlighted and references were made to the need to ensure measures do not exacerbate the situation of already marginalised and discriminated groups, which can also create fertile ground for individuals to be radicalised and be drawn into violent extremist ideologies.

*Returnees*

 57. The Working Group was informed of various cases of Austrians who were wanting to return to their home country but were unable to and were stuck in detention facilities in Iraq or Syria, or within the conflict territory. Some of the reasons as to why returnees were wanting to return included being disillusioned or remorseful; still being driven by ideology but wanting better living conditions; being sent to carry out an attack back in the country or region of origin; and having been captured or returned unwillingly.[[25]](#footnote-26) Some interlocutors working on the foreign fighter issue were often contacted by parents and relatives to assist with the return of their loved ones. Foreign fighters who managed to escape from conflict zones and made contact with their consulate offices were reportedly not able to return as well. Government authorities reportedly had little desire to assist in bringing these individuals home due to their perceived threat as returnees.

58. In this connection, the Working Group expressed its concerns about the revocation of citizenship for those categorised as foreign fighters and charged under Section 278. The Government informed that this measure was applied on a case by case basis and related to those who possessed dual citizenship in order to prevent statelessness. However, there are still implications with citizen revocation as it is mostly perceived as stigmatising immigrants and their descendants, and perpetrating unequal treatment of minorities, particularly Muslims. [[26]](#footnote-27) The Working Group reiterates that the right to citizenship should not be taken away when to do so would render an individual stateless.

59. While many concerns related to returnees who were at risk of causing further harm, there were also cases in which they were also contributing constructively to deradicalisation efforts. Those who have been successfully rehabilitated and reintegrated, were however, few in number as many were imprisoned and were not fully assessed as fit for release or for rehabilitation programmes. Successfully rehabilitated returnees were among the most effective counter-narratives, as they were perceived to have greater legitimacy than other sources of information, were able to explain the realities of fighting, or convey the messages that were important to shifting mind-sets about ideology or religious beliefs that supported violent extremism.

60. The Working Group was informed of an Austrian national known as Oliver N who joined Da’esh. At 15 years of age, he travelled to Syria where he joined young fighters from Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, Germany and Mexico. He later left Da’esh to return home after witnessing the brutality of the armed group in the conflict zone. He spent 20 months in prison, wrote a book about his experience and was now actively working with deradicalisation programmes and assisting with the reintegration of former radicalised Islamists back into society.

 61. However, the general and common approaches to returnees have been criminal prosecutions and imprisonment. Many of these individuals have witnessed extreme violence in the conflict zone, and most likely have suffered from psychological problems including post-traumatic stress disorders. These problems can manifest themselves in aggression and violence if they are not dealt with or if there has been no successful rehabilitation or deradicalisation efforts for the returnee. Indeed, these individuals can pose a threat to national security, as have been seen in some of the terrorist attacks in the region. The Working Group notes the need to employ tailored and individual assessment of returnee cases in order to prevent further radicalisation of individuals in prisons and encourage rehabilitation and reintegration for individuals who are able to successfully undergo de-radicalisation programmes.

62. As one interlocutor mentioned, the persons at risk of further radicalisation and violent extremism, were likely those who were intercepted from travelling and were now incarcerated. These individuals had clear intentions to travel into conflict zones and should be assessed for de-radicalisation efforts and also to better understand the root causes and motivational factors for their decisions to engage in armed conflict abroad.

 63. In this context, it is ever more critical to strengthen the collaboration and work of the Government with multi-sectoral actors such as those involved in the National Network on prevention, countering violent extremism and de-radicalisation (BNED) to, *inter alia*, ensure that punitive measures are applied to cases where they are deemed to be appropriate. Furthermore, rehabilitation measures should be tailored for individuals who could benefit from such programmes. This approach can also take into account the various situations of children, women and men with diverse and unique profiles. This includes situations where children are born to these individuals and thus are innocent victims of the foreign fighter phenomenon.

64. Rehabilitation and reintegration programs have thus attracted considerable interest for their community-driven, holistic approaches that draw on mental health support, education and employment counselling, and even religious theorizing. Some good practices that are present in Europe include the Aarhus Model, where Danish authorities have provided around 330 returning fighters with psychological counselling and job support. Another innovative approach is the Belgian Vilvoorde Method, which was launched in 2014 and focuses on whole families. While these approaches have had some success, most counterterrorism experts agree that prevention is the best approach. Radicalization in many cases is a symptom of social isolation and marginalization; many of the same tools to support individuals’ reintegration into society could help prevent them disengaging in the first place.[[27]](#footnote-28)

 65. Several interlocutors noted however that the State appears more interested in attacking the manifestations of radical Islam than the causes of alienation that have led to radicalisation and violent extremism. Further, that there has been excessive interest in criminalising adherence to certain religious beliefs than in addressing the causes of extremism.  The Working Group reiterated that all efforts to tackle violent extremism must be devoted to both assessing root causes and security measures and that Austria had the expertise and dedicated resources available to prevent violent extremism through measures that were also aligned with human rights principles and standards.

66. In its dialogue with authorities and on the measures to address foreign fighters, the Working Group emphasised that human rights and human security are mutually reinforcing. Without rights, there is no security. Without security, there are no rights. Human rights are centered on the notion of human dignity. Discrimination, such as that reflected in laws and policies that distinguish and prejudice a single religion or ethnic group, can actually result in increasing insecurity rather than its elimination.

 III. Private security companies

67. Concerning private security companies, the Working Group noted that there is no specific and comprehensive legislative or other regulation of this industry. While acknowledging that currently, Austria does not have significant problems with this industry, the Working Group raised the need to establish clear regulations to offset any potential problems including human rights abuses at the hands of these companies. There are currently around 700 private security companies in the country, many of which are small-scale operations that include object guarding and detective services.

68. The licensing and registration of private security companies in Austria falls within the competence of the Ministry of Trade and Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Interior oversees certain aspects including the vetting of company personnel. With the piloting of the use of the multinational private security company, G4S in Vordernberg, the Working Group notes that this is even more of a reason to establish national regulation to effectively address trans-border activities by such companies so as to clearly define permissible and prohibited activities including the use of force. This would also help address the classification of arms and the conditions in which these can be used. There is also a need to strengthen oversight of these companies by regularising the conduct of inspections of company activities and importantly, to strengthen accountability and remedy frameworks where private security company personnel commit criminal offences and human rights abuses. Private security companies are growing in size and power in the international arena and they have been known to commit human rights abuses around the world. Strong and centralised regulation is therefore essential.

*Vordernberg*

69. The Vordernberg Detention Centre for foreigners, which is located in a remote village of the same name in Styria (some 70 km north-west of Graz), was opened on 1 March 2014. The centre is jointly operated by the Austrian Ministry of Interior, the Vordernberg municipality, the private security company G4S and a company called Humanocare. The centre is an impressive modern facility and it accommodates foreign nationals who are undocumented and who were apprehended from various parts of Austria. The detention centre has an official capacity for around 193 detainees in pre-removal detention under an “open doors” regime that run from 07:00 to 21:30 hours.

70. The Vordernberg immigration facility is the only one of its kind in Austria, and G4S was contracted to provide specific services to the detainees. At the time of the visit, the total staff included 60 from the Ministry of Interior; 55 from G4S and 15 for Humanocare.

71. The Working Group notes that there are positive aspects of the arrangement between the government and G4S. Primarily, and of importance to the Working Group, is that G4S is involved solely in administrative matters and services to the detainees. The G4S staff do not have the same powers as the police officers that guard the premises. Their tasks specifically involved providing them with food, monitoring the open-door regime, arranging for cultural and sports activities, providing technical support to the centre and arranging for interpreters. The company was not permitted to use force when intervening with detainees and was not involved with interviewing or imposing security measures.

72. In the interviews with detainees, many indicated that they had good relationships with G4S, in comparison to the police staff. The delegation witnessed this first-hand and much of this can be linked to the specific functions required of G4S, which do not involve making decisions that significantly have negative impact on the detainees.

 73. However, the delegation noted some concerns that were raised by detainees.  One of the prominent complaints received was that detainees were being billed a fee of 70 euros per day. The delegation learned that this imposed fee was in relation to *Article 19 and Article 113 of the Aliens Police Act 2005* which imposed fees on detainees for all detention centres and not only Vordernberg. Some of the bills that the delegation observed to be paid by detainees were in excess of 2,000 euros. This system of charging detainees for their involuntary detention is not only unusual but disregards the indigent state and already vulnerable and difficult situation detainees were in. The Working Group was informed, that these charges would be waived if the detainee could not pay them. However, if a detainee did have sufficient funds on arrival, the charges would be taken directly from his account. Further, we were informed that if a detainee was deported and was to re-enter Austria at a later date, then the fee owing in this context had to be paid before re-entry could be possible.

74. Detainees also complained that the money they arrived with was taken from them and they were not given a receipt or information on whether they would eventually get the money back.  The authorities at the centre informed that these funds were provided to detainees at the rate of 50 to 60 euros per week through a pre-paid card that the detainee could use at the kiosk at the centre.

75. The delegation observed that in general, detainees at the centre were not aware or were confused as to how to channel their complaints to the authorities or to G4S. Several said that they were often dismissed and their concerns were not taken seriously, or that they were threatened with reprisal if they persisted in their complaints. They were not fully informed of their legal status and were anxious about the indefinite duration of their stay in the facility. Some had been in the centre for a few days, some for several weeks and others for months. Some of the  detainees were clearly in need of psycho-social care and although the centres has been heralded as a good model of an open regime with better conditions and treatment than other centres of its kind, the use of sanctions against detainees, lack of contact with family and lawyers and the possible use of solitary confinement were concerning. The Working Group understood that a non-government organization provided legal advice to the detainees but some complained that legal support was inadequate.  Many detainees stated that Austria was not their destination, but merely a transit point in which they were arrested and detained awaiting deportation and that their destination points were elsewhere in the region. Their main concern and source of anxiety was to be freed from what they referred to as “prison” and be reunited with family members.

76. The Working Group was also concerned about the apparent age of some of the detainees, as one particular individual appeared to be less than 18 years old. The delegation was informed that the Federal office for migration and asylum (BFA) was the responsible agency with information about the detainee and so it was difficult to confirm his age at the time of the visit. Some of these detainees were young and were clearly seeking better opportunities to make a living or were trying to get to relatives who were residing in various parts of Europe. Their impending return to their country of origin or departure was causing some of them significant distress, as they have escaped from or severely impoverished situations and countries that were destabilised by armed conflict. Some of the detainees who shared their countries of origin with the delegation had come from Gambia, Morocco, Gambia, Nigeria and Pakistan.

77. While no significant complaints were expressed against G4S in Vordernberg, the Working Group cautions against expanded outsourcing of government functions to private security companies, with careful consideration given to human rights implications involved in such practices.

## *Regulations at the European Union*

78. The EU has played a critical role in promoting national and regional controls over the provision and export of various military and security services. The application of such controls to PSCs/PMCs, however, remains limited and, so far, there are no common regulations on PSCs/PMCs registered in the EU and the export of their services abroad. At best, current controls within the EU can serve as an example of various mechanisms that could be used to improve the regulation of the private security industry.

79. The regulation of PSCs and the export of military and security services remains very much a matter for the individual EU member states. So far, however, no EU member state has specific laws controlling the provision of security services abroad. Most EU member states have extensive regulations for the provision of private security services within their borders. Prime mechanisms are the national registration and licensing of PSCs and their personnel. The conditions for a licence, which on average needs to be renewed every five years, vary among the member states. However, all member states require a clear criminal record among PSC management and personnel. Additional conditions include sufficient liability insurance, identification cards with name and photo, and approved uniforms which are not easily confused with those of the police or armed forces. About 60 percent of the EU member states mandate specific training of private security personnel and the passing of an examination.

*Montreux Document[[28]](#footnote-29)*

80. Austria is a signatory to the Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflicts. The Montreux Document clarified the status of private security companies and the responsibility of the governments that hire them under international law. The legally non-binding document includes two parts that cover the obligations of states and PSCs under international law, and outlines a wide range of ‘good practices’ for contracting states regarding the hire, use and oversight of PSCs. The second part proposes a voluntary code of conduct for PSCs.

## *International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers*

81. The International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers’ Association (ICoCA) is a multi-stakeholder initiative established as a Swiss non-profit association. All members, States, private security companies and civil society organizations (the three ‘pillars’) form part of the General Assembly. There are currently

82. The ICoCA is guided by the principles of the Code of Conduct. These include a commitment to good governance, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and a high standard of professional conduct. The ICoCA strives to ensure protection and provide remedy to victims of abuse by private security providers. The ICoCA endeavors to prevent excessive use of force; to prevent torture and other degrading treatments or punishments; to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, and gender-based violence; to prevent human trafficking, slavery and forced labour; to protect the rights of children; and to prevent discrimination.

83. Currently, Austria is not part of the ICOCA and no private security companies based in Austria are members to ICoCA. During the discussions with the Working Group, the Austrian authorities noted that they felt that it was not necessary to be members of the ICOCA as they did not engage private military and security companies. Further, the requirement for membership may result in differential treatment of private security companies, some of which may be able to fulfil the criteria for membership and therefore have advantage in securing contracts over those who cannot afford to be members. In this sense, Austria did not feel the need to become a member of the association, stating that their current regulations were sufficient to cover the private security industry.

84. The Working Group however, reiterated the utility of ICOCA membership in that it requires standards for a company to meet in order to be certified as being in good standing. This means that the company has been vetted and inspected and found to be compliant with relevant human rights standards. Further, as a result of membership, these companies are then required to provide a grievance mechanism to address situations where human rights abuses or offences have been committed, a positive practice that helps ensure accountability.

 IV. Conclusions and recommendations

84. **Austria is at an important junction in dealing with the foreign fighter phenomenon. With all the initiatives that it has initiated, one of the important priorities for the Government is to effectively address the root causes of violent extremism and radicalisation to prevent its nationals and residents from travelling abroad to fight in conflict zones such as Iraq and Syria. Government efforts to strengthen national security and the ability of law enforcement agencies to intercept individuals attempting to join and fight with groups properly designated as ‘terrorists’ are understandable and necessary. However, if excessively focused on punishment, these efforts can have the effect of increasing radicalisation and extremism. Addressing the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism, which include a myriad of social and economic factors, can lead to more effective long-term solutions.**

85. **With regard to private security companies, the Working Group commends the Government of Austria for its track record in avoiding outsourcing of government functions to private military and security companies.**

86. **In light of the findings relating to the foreign fighter phenomenon and the private security company industry in Austria, the Working Group thus provides the following recommendations:**

87. **Ensure the laws and policies addressing the foreign fighter phenomenon align with international human rights standards.**

88. **Ensure that integration policy aligns with international human rights standards to ensure social cohesion and not further marginalisation.**

89. **Adopt and finalise the national strategy on de-radicalization and prevention of violent extremism, and ensure the inclusion of valuable contributions from the community and civil society organizations working and specialising on these issues.**

90. **Ensure the national strategy on de-radicalisation and preventing violent extremism and measures are not focused excessively on law enforcement but also on social needs that are currently being addressed by child services, social and health care services, prison and probation related services, schools and so forth.**

91. **Good practice models including the multi-agency approach on de-radicalisation should be supported, including with funding, to ensure sustainability.  More funding and fully integrating these practices through the broadest possible participation are critical, as well as ensuring that it is informed by multidisciplinary in-depth research and analysis.**

92. **Given the myriad of actors and initiatives on foreign fighters, the Working Group observes that it is critical to ensure effective collaboration between the various entities to address the root causes that prompt individuals to travel abroad and engage as foreign fighters. Additional and ongoing research into motivational factors is critical to forming responses that are effective in addressing causes.**

93. **Ensure that any plan or policy on deradicalisation and prevention of violent extremism should have a clear understanding and valuing of respective expertise and roles of multi-sectoral actors working in this domain. It should also attract the necessary resources for full implementation immediately and in the medium and long term, with a budget that is based on consultation and strikes more of a balance between expenditure on preventive and social measures. It must adopt a human rights-based approach in all stages of implementation, and particular attention should be paid to the inclusion of especially affected communities, with clear indicators, as well as monitoring and evaluation of related programmes.**

94. **Government efforts aimed at combating the foreign fighter phenomenon should place strong emphasis on the social dimension, including integration, equality and non-discrimination, in keeping with international human rights standards and the obligations of Austria as a State party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and all the other core human rights instruments.**

95. **Special consideration should be given to addressing issues that lead to Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment in the country, with recognition in schools and cultural programming of Muslims and the history and contributions of migrants to Austrian society.**

96. **Similar initiatives are encouraged from civil society organizations and grassroots projects, particularly emanating from the Muslim community. Parents and families may also need to acquire the awareness and skills to address the needs of children with diverse heritage.**

97. **Youth programmes and incentives including through sports, arts, education and cultural means can be used as a vehicle to promote social inclusion and a sense of community among young people, particularly those who are vulnerable to radicalisation.**

98. **Strengthen and encourage interfaith dialogue and existing platforms where community and faith based leaders can work together to address and curb radicalisation and violent extremism and enhance integration.**

99. **Deradicalization in prisons should continue to be prioritized and implemented effectively, within the framework of respect for human rights.**

100. **The Working Group stresses that greater social cohesion will mitigate long-term security risks, and that focus on strong support to communities and families can also lay the groundwork for the optimization of measures. In this respect, intercultural institutions, policy and dialogue would be instrumental in building community ties, and the Working Group recommends building on the foundation being developed in this regard.**

101. **Similarly, education has been consistently raised as a crucial vehicle for awareness-raising and dialogue. The Working Group supports raising awareness in schools and related platforms where student dialogue can take place, particularly from the primary level of education. Promoting inclusive education of citizens and developing positive counter-narratives against violent extremist propaganda can also be implemented through education and awareness-raising programmes.**

102. **Coordination was a recurrent theme among the Working Group’s interlocutors. Local authority staff and others noted that institutional coordination was crucial for the effectiveness of programmes, as was a clear understanding of one’s level and role in the larger federal system. Such coordination could prove critical in, for example, centralising information from different agencies with a view to identifying the best entry points for action and standardization, as well as the sharing of methods and expertise.**

103. **In terms of action at the European and international levels, the Working Group recommends improved coordination with the European Union and, crucially, between foreign fighters’ countries of origin and countries through which they transit. It also strongly recommends effective cooperation for information sharing and evidence gathering to support legal proceedings.**

104. **The Working Group emphasizes that State responses to foreign fighters must balance punitive measures with preventive ones and ensure rehabilitative opportunities for returning fighters. It recommends prioritizing the deradicalization and rehabilitation of returnees with an emphasis on the use of the human rights based approach.**

105. **The Working Group encourages further research and compilation of good practices in relation to the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, which could further inform law and policies relating to these actors.**

106. **The Working Group encourages implementation of recommendations made by the United Nations human rights mechanisms for Austria, including by the Universal Periodic Review which, inter alia, raised concerns relating to discrimination, racism and xenophobia.**

***Private military and security companies***

107. **Consider legislation dedicated specifically to the regulation of PMSCs, including a requirement that any PMSC registered to do business in Austria or that seeks to contract for services in the country, including with the Austrian Government, must be a member in good standing with the International Code of Conduct Association.**

108. **Deprivation of liberty of irregular or undocumented migrants, including those in Vordernberg, should be imposed for the shortest duration possible.**

109. **Detention of migrants on the ground of their irregular status should not be punitive in nature.**

110. **Consider the indigent and impoverished situation often faced by undocumented migrants and ensure that they are not charged or required to pay for their detention.**

111. **Ensure children are not detained at Vordernberg and similar facilities, by verifying and cross-checking the age of detainees with the BFA (Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum).**

112. **Ensure the provision of psycho-social support, appropriate medical assistance and legal support to detainees in Vordernberg and that follow- up procedures to those in need of care are regularly undertaken.**

113. **Ensure that the contracting of private security companies for detention facilities is the exception and not the norm, and ensure their functions do not involve those reserved for State institutions vis-à-vis persons deprived of their liberty.**

114. **Consider support for the negotiation of a binding international regulation on private military and security companies.**

1. \* The summary of the report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is being circulated in the language of submission only. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. \*\* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect recent developments. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A/70/330 paragraph 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. para 14 of A/70/330. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/AUT.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Austrian Press & Information Service in the United States Embassy of Austria, available at:

 <http://www.austria.org/overview/> [accessed on 30 April 2018]. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Ibid footnote 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Radicalisation Awareness Network Manual: Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families (July 2017) at

 <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Article 47 of Protocol I relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. <https://www.thegctf.org/About-us/GCTF-documents>f. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. A/HRC/31/12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network_en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. <https://www.boja.at/english/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. See footnote 7, page 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Kurier, Polizisten im Visier der IS-Terrormiliz, 20 September 2016,

 kurier.at/chronik/oesterreich/syrienrueckkehrer-polizisten-im-visier-der-is-terrormiliz/220.175.092. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Federal Ministry of the Interior, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2016, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. City of Vienna, Jugendliche in der offenen Jugendarbeit. Identitäten, Lebenslagen und abwertende

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 [www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp.](http://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp.content/uploads/2017/06/Bilanz-Beratungsstelle-Extremismus_Dez_14_Mai_17.pdf)

 [content/uploads/2017/06/Bilanz-Beratungsstelle-Extremismus\_Dez\_14\_Mai\_17.pdf](http://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp.content/uploads/2017/06/Bilanz-Beratungsstelle-Extremismus_Dez_14_Mai_17.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
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22. <https://www.neustart.at/at/en/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Response by the Ministry of Justice of 13 September 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. The Working Group notes that terminology such as “radicalised jihadism” or event “jihadist” or “jihadism” may

 also be considered vague and abstract. In this context, based on the common use and understanding of interlocutors, it is mainly used to refer to groups with profiles such as Da’esh. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. See footnote 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/foreign-fighters-will-revoking-citizenship-mitigate-threat>. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department, the Role of Private Companies (PSCs) in CSDP Missions and Operations, 2011, at 45. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/433829/EXPO-SEDE_ET%282011%29433829_EN.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)