

The following is summarised information from a Security Intelligence Report produced by the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) and the Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG). Where possible, excerpts of the original document have been used. Some details are withheld under section 6(a) of the Official Information Act 1982 as release would prejudice national security.

Excerpt from New Zealand returning foreign terrorist fighters: a threat picture

Report Date: **6 June 2019**

Report No: DMS6-15-755

Summary

- NZSIS is aware of some New Zealand citizens who have travelled to Syria to engage with terrorist entities.
- Should a New Zealand foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) successfully return to New Zealand there are a range of threats those individuals may present to New Zealand's domestic security. The level of threat posed by a returnee is dependent on the individual's intent and capability to undertake threat-related activity.

Threat posed to New Zealand's national security by returning New Zealand foreign fighters

- This report provides an updated threat assessment regarding identified New Zealand foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs).
- A foreign terrorist fighter is defined in this report as any New Zealand citizen who has travelled to Syria or Iraq in order to engage with a terrorist entity, whether in a combat or non-combat role.
- In previous reporting, CTAG assessed that the level of threat posed by a returnee FTF is dependent on the individual's intent and capability. CTAG assesses these factors must be considered on an individual basis to determine the appropriate level of associated threat. While there is intelligence to indicate the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has encouraged returnee FTFs to conduct attacks upon their return, CTAG assesses a threat could take some time to manifest.
- New Zealand continues to be largely unharmed by ISIL's global terrorist campaign. While some New Zealand persons are assessed to be supportive of ISIL, there has not been a domestic attack committed on ISIL's behalf.
- However, since the 15 March terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch by an individual with an extreme right wing ideology, violent extremists and other issue-motivated groups and individuals have a heightened awareness of New Zealand. It is possible some upcoming events, such as court appearances of the alleged perpetrator of the Christchurch attack, could refocus international attention on New Zealand and New Zealand's interests abroad.
- Official statements from the spokespersons for ISIL, Al-Qaeda (AQ) core, and AQ-aligned groups have almost certainly raised the profile of New Zealand among ISIL and AQ supporters. CTAG has assessed extremists are likely to reference the Christchurch attack to justify future terrorist attacks, regardless of when they were

planned, or whether they target New Zealand interests specifically or Western interests more broadly.

- Since ISIL's physical caliphate no longer exists, the possibility of FTFs returning to New Zealand has increased. New Zealand's threat environment will likely change should an FTF return.

Methodology

- There are a range of threats returning FTFs may present to New Zealand's domestic security, should they return to New Zealand. These threat vectors broadly fit into the categories defined below.
 - **Attack:** intelligence indicates that a person
 - a) aspires to conduct, or expressed a desire to conduct a terrorist or violent extremist attack;
 - b) is preparing to conduct, is involved in, or is aware of a terrorist or violent extremist attack; or
 - c) has already conducted a terrorist or violent extremist attack.
 - **Travel:** intelligence indicates a person has already travelled, is preparing to travel, or aspires to travel offshore to engage in or support a terrorist or violent extremist activity or group.
 - **Radicalisation:** intelligence indicates a person has radicalised or encouraged, or intends to radicalise or encourage, others to engage in, facilitate or promote a terrorist or violent extremist activity or group.
 - **Supporter:** intelligence indicates a person supports, promotes or sympathises with terrorist or violent extremist activities or groups.
 - **Association:** intelligence indicates a person is an associate with a person of counter-terrorism interest or subject of a counter-terrorism investigation.