



THREAT ASSESSMENT

New Zealand Terrorism Threat Level Remains at MEDIUM

Issued: 1 February 2021

20-232A-TA


New Zealand Terrorism - MEDIUM

(R) This routine Threat Assessment (TA) comprises the annual review of the New Zealand terrorism threat level (TTL). CTAG continually monitors the threat from terrorism in New Zealand and the impact of global trends in terrorism which may result in a change to the TTL outside of the annual reporting cycle.

(R) This TA follows CTAG's 4 March 2020 TA 'New Zealand Terrorism Threat Level remains at MEDIUM' [99A/20/TA refers], and should be read in conjunction with CTAG's Threat Insight (TI) 'The New Zealand terrorism threat environment', issued on 27 November 2020 [20-231-TI refers], and CTAG's *Violent Extremism Ideologies Framework* [20-229-TI refers].

(R) CTAG has consulted with a range of agencies in preparing this TA. Overall, we have MODERATE confidence in our assessments, which are informed by a range of credible sources. More specific levels of confidence are explained within the assessment as appropriate.

Summary

1. (R) CTAG continues to assess the New Zealand terrorism threat level as **MEDIUM**; *terrorist attack is assessed as feasible and could well occur.*
2. (R) CTAG recognises the presence of actors with probable¹ intent and almost certainly the capability to conduct a terrorist attack in New Zealand; however, CTAG has not sighted information to indicate New Zealand is the target of credible, specific and current attack plans by individuals or groups who adhere to any violent extremist ideology.
3. s6(a)

4. (R) CTAG continues to assess there is a realistic possibility individuals adhering to any violent extremist ideology could mobilise to violence without coming to the attention of intelligence and law enforcement agencies. We assess a lone actor attack using low-sophistication attack capabilities, such as bladed weapons, firearms, or a vehicle, continues to be the most likely attack scenario in New Zealand.
5. (R) New Zealand's terrorism threat environment remains dynamic due to the ongoing influence of the 15 March 2019 Christchurch attacks, the COVID-19 pandemic, and enduring global trends in extremism and terrorism [20-231-TI refers]. We assess there is a realistic possibility COVID-19-related personal grievances, and increased time spent online throughout various COVID-19 restrictive measures, will

¹ CTAG's probabilistic language yardstick is found on page 6 of this document.

continue to accelerate some drivers of violent extremism in New Zealand, including social, political and economic factors. We assess there is a realistic possibility these will also contribute to the acceleration of radicalisation pathways for some individuals in New Zealand in the medium to long-term. However, the extent of this radicalisation, how it has manifested to date, and how it will manifest in the medium to long-term, remains unclear.

- 6. (R) The Christchurch attacks continue to influence the domestic terrorism threat environment almost two years on, however, the influence of the attacks has highly likely gradually diminished over that time. We assess the Christchurch attacks will almost certainly continue to have some degree of influence on New Zealand's terrorism threat environment in the long-term, including the continued presence of associated propaganda online. s6(a)

[Redacted]

[Redacted] We note there was no information to suggest the attacker used his sentencing hearing in August 2020 as a platform to spread his ideology. The broader implications of the attacker's sentencing, and subsequent designation as a terrorist entity in New Zealand and Australia, are still being understood. s6(a)

[Redacted]

s6(a)

Intent

Identity-Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE)

- 7. (R) **There are individuals in New Zealand who advocate the use of violence to promote their own identity or denigrate the identity of others.** IMVE in New Zealand comprises a broad range of subset ideologies, including those who advocate violence based on ethnicity, gender or sexuality. We continue to assess IMVE in New Zealand is fragmented and comprises a spectrum of motivations and objectives. Of the known individuals who adhere to IMVE in New Zealand, White Identity Extremism (WIE) remains the predominant ideology among identified cases.

- 8. s6(a)

- 9. (R) **CTAG has seen an enduring prevalence of possibly New Zealand-based individuals making online threats to potentially conduct IMVE attacks.** The true intent and ideology in each instance is generally difficult to initially establish, particularly as threats are made in forums that host a myriad of IMVE humour, internet memes, and in-group signalling to subvert cultural taboos and promote extreme messages. s6(a)

[Redacted]

- 10. s6(a)

s6(a) [Redacted]

11. s6(a) [Redacted]

12. (R) **We assess the most likely IMVE attack scenario in New Zealand is a lone actor mobilising to terrorist violence with little or no intelligence forewarning.** This is based on the fragmented nature of IMVE in New Zealand, and domestic and international examples reinforcing the predominance of lone actor threats. Often these lone actors have not come to the attention of law enforcement for their extremist views.

Faith-Motivated Violent Extremism (FMVE)

13. s6(a) [Redacted]

14. (R) **Of the known individuals supportive of FMVE in New Zealand, the majority are supportive of an ISIL-inspired ideology.** s6(a) [Redacted]

15. (R) **We assess FMVE sympathisers are unlikely to form a cohesive group in New Zealand for the purposes of mobilising to violence in the near term, and would most likely operate as lone actors.** s6(a) [Redacted]

Other Ideologies

16. (R) **Our continually developing understanding of violent extremism in New Zealand draws awareness to new and potentially extreme fringes of other political or single-issue motivated individuals and groups** [20-231-TA refers]. Whilst some individuals and groups have lawfully advocated for significant change to current political and social systems, there continues to be little indication of any serious intent to engage in violence to achieve that change.

17. s6(a) [Redacted] we assess there is a realistic possibility that cumulative factors, such as COVID-19-associated grievances and growing international political and social tensions have increased the number of individuals in New Zealand motivated by personal grievances or single issues.

18. s6(a)

[Redacted]

Capability

19. (R) **Based on our understanding of known individuals and capability available in the New Zealand environment, we assess any terrorist attack in New Zealand will highly likely involve low-sophistication attack capabilities.**² We judge terrorist capability in New Zealand is typically reflective of weapons and techniques available to most members of the public, such as bladed weapons, some types of firearms, vehicles, blunt force instruments, materials which could enable arson, and online instructions for the use or manufacture of weapons, tactics and other capability guidance.

- a. (R) In New Zealand, a firearms attack could vary in sophistication, depending on the specific firearm(s) used, training, reconnaissance, planning, and whether the attack is mixed-mode, as well as other factors.
- b. (R) We cannot discount the potential for individuals to develop rudimentary Improvised Explosive Device (IED) capability due to assembly instructions being readily available online, and the general availability of basic IED precursors in New Zealand.

20. s6(a)

[Redacted]

Identity-Motivated Violent Extremism

21. (R) s6(a)

[Redacted] We assess the most likely IMVE attack capability scenario in New Zealand is a lone actor mobilising to violence without intelligence forewarning, using low-sophistication attack methodologies s6(a)

[Redacted] Low-sophistication capabilities may include bladed weapons and vehicles and some types of firearms.

22. s6(a)

[Redacted]

Faith-Motivated Violent Extremism

23. (R) s6(a)

[Redacted] We assess the most likely scenario for a FMVE attack in New Zealand would involve a lone actor using basic weapons, such as a bladed weapon. s6(a)

[Redacted]

² See 20-230-TI CTAG glossary for capability spectrum included in the CTAG methodology

24. s6(a) [Redacted]

Other Ideologies

25. s6(a) [Redacted]

Conclusion

26. (R) The New Zealand terrorism threat environment remains dynamic due to the ongoing influence of the Christchurch attacks, COVID-19, and enduring global trends in extremism and terrorism. We assess there is a realistic possibility COVID-19-related personal grievances have accelerated some drivers of violent extremism in New Zealand, including social, political and economic drivers.

27. s6(a) [Redacted]

28. (R) CTAG continues to assess there is a realistic possibility individuals, especially lone actors, adhering to any ideology, could mobilise to violence without coming to the attention of intelligence and law enforcement agencies. We assess a lone actor attack using low-sophistication attack capabilities, such as bladed weapons, some types of firearms, or a vehicle, continues to be the most likely attack scenario in New Zealand.

Threat Level

29. (R) CTAG continues to assess the terrorism threat level for New Zealand as **MEDIUM**; *terrorist attack is assessed as feasible and could well occur.*

Intelligence cut-off date: 15 January 2021

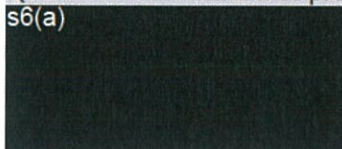
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s6(a)



CTAG Threat Definitions

Likelihood Assessment	Threat Level
Terrorist attack, or violent protest, or violent crime is expected	EXTREME
Terrorist attack, or violent protest, or violent crime is assessed as highly likely	HIGH
Terrorist attack, or violent protest, or violent crime is assessed as feasible and could well occur	MEDIUM
Terrorist attack, or violent protest, or violent crime is assessed as a realistic possibility	LOW
Terrorist attack, or violent protest, or violent crime is assessed as unlikely	VERY LOW

Probabilistic language

<< Lower likelihood		Even chance		Higher likelihood >>	
Remote/Highly unlikely	Unlikely	Realistic possibility	Likely Probable Probably	Highly likely	Almost certain