



New Zealand
Security Intelligence
Service
Te Pā Whakamarumarū

Kia mataara ki ngā tohu **Know the signs**

A guide for identifying signs
of violent extremism

**Now more than
ever we need to
work together to
protect each other.**



Contents

Foreword	4
How you can use this guide	6
The scale of extremism	8
Understanding the motivations behind violent extremism	9
How we developed these indicators	10
The indicators of violent extremism	12
1. Mindset and ideology	13
2. Association and relationships	14
3. Research and planning	15
4. Gathering knowledge, skills and resources	16
5. Preparation	17
6. Security awareness	18
7. Unusual changes in behaviour	19
Who can help us? The role of our communities and whānau	20
Who to contact	22

Foreword



By Rebecca Kitteridge, Director-General of Security

I'm pleased to publish the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service's (NZSIS) first-ever guide to help members of the public to identify signs of violent extremism.

Now more than ever we need to work together to protect each other.

One of our core missions is to detect violent extremists. That is increasingly difficult in a world where casual violent rhetoric is widespread, and serious violent extremists are very security-aware.

In these circumstances, information from the public can be critical to our success.

Every year we're contacted by hundreds of New Zealanders who notice concerning behaviour and decide to let us know. We want to help New Zealanders feel more confident about stepping forward, by explaining the kinds of behaviours or activities that concern us the most.

Knowing the signs of violent extremism

This guide draws on the expertise and experience of NZSIS's intelligence professionals, who identified and compiled the most common behaviours observed during their work to counter violent extremism in Aotearoa New Zealand. All these indicators directly relate to the New Zealand context, and will often have been seen by our partners overseas as well.

What you will find in this guide are actual observable behaviours you might see in someone on a pathway towards carrying out an act of extremist violence.

You will notice that the indicators in this guide are not specific to any particular extremist belief or ideology. That is deliberate. Violent extremist ideologies are constantly evolving and violent extremists come from a wide range of backgrounds.

We need your help

NZSIS cannot do this work alone. We all have a role to play in keeping each other safe. I am asking all New Zealanders to look out for concerning behaviours or activities that could be easily observed, and to report them. You may be uniquely placed to see the signs, and to help NZSIS to understand the true threat an individual poses.

Trusting your instincts is important. Even the smallest piece of information can be vital to our efforts to detect and prevent terrorist attacks.

**In other words –
if you see something,
say something.**

How you can use this guide

This guide aims to raise awareness of indicators of violent extremism, to help people identify some of the key warning signs. Please tell us if you see or know anybody behaving in the ways described.

The guide talks specifically about violent extremism rather than non-violent forms of extremism.

By releasing this guide, we aim to help more people understand the threat of violent extremism and how you can report concerning behaviour or activities.

These indicators are a guide rather than a checklist

The indicators in this booklet are not a checklist. They cover the most concerning behaviours and activities our investigators have observed from violent extremists in New Zealand and overseas.

We're asking people to report any behaviours or activities they come across that resemble any of the indicators described in this guide, or that feel concerning.

Someone on the path toward violent extremism is unlikely to demonstrate concerning behaviour in any particular order. They may start acting in a concerning way and then stop. They could also re-engage or disengage with violent extremist ideologies and behaviours at any time.

You report, and then we assess

Once we receive a report, we'll consider it in context with other available information. Our aims are to determine if we need to investigate further and understand if there are any risks to be managed. We'll consider several factors when determining if an individual is likely to be, or become, a violent extremist.

The individual behaviours and activities listed in this guide are concerning when they occur alongside other activities. These behaviours on their own may not be considered signs of violent extremism.



The scale of extremism

Extremism comes in different forms. This guide describes extremist behaviours only where they become, or there is an intention that they become, violent. Non-violent forms of extremism, however objectionable, lie outside the purpose of this booklet and outside NZSIS's areas of focus.

Extremism: views on the fringe

Extreme ideologies can be based on faith, social or political beliefs that exist on the fringes of society, outside the more broadly accepted views and beliefs of most people. Extremists may seek to radically change the nature of government, religion or society, or to create a community based on their ideology.

Violent extremism: the belief in violence

Violent extremists take these ideologies further and justify using violence to achieve radical changes. Violent extremists often target the groups that they see as threatening their success or survival, or undermining their worldview.

Terrorism refers to acting on that belief in violence

Violent extremism would only become terrorism when a terrorist act is carried out. Under New Zealand law, a terrorist act is defined as an ideologically, politically, or religiously-motivated act that is intended to intimidate a population, or to coerce or force the government to do or not to do certain things. A terrorist act could include acts causing death or serious bodily injury, but isn't necessarily limited to this.

Understanding the motivations behind violent extremism

We use the following framework when referring to the motivations or ideologies behind violent extremism.

Politically-Motivated

Violent Extremism

Promoting the use of violence to achieve change to or within an existing political system.

Identity-Motivated

Violent Extremism

Promoting the use of violence to advance one's own perception of identity and/or denigrate others' perceived identities.

Faith-Motivated

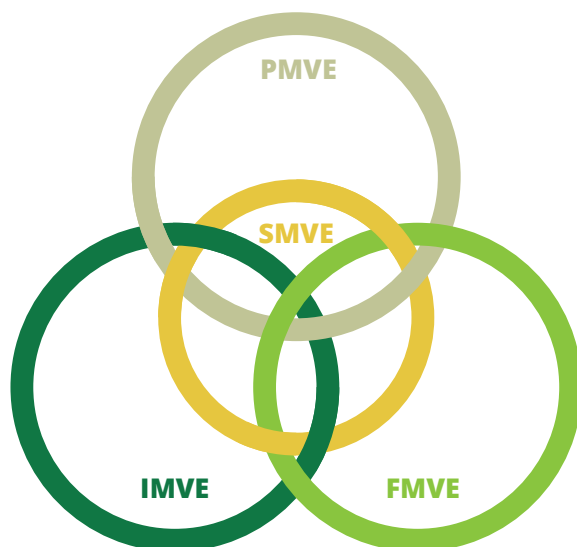
Violent Extremism

Promoting the use of violence to advance one's own spiritual or religious objectives.

Single Issue-Motivated

Violent Extremism

Promoting the use of violence to achieve a desired outcome to a specific issue.



How we developed these indicators

Each indicator in this resource has either been observed or discovered to have happened within New Zealand.

Our NZSIS investigators reviewed New Zealand counter-terrorism investigations dating back to 2006 to identify the common behaviours and activities detected in those cases. We then grouped those indicators into seven themes.

Due to the relatively low numbers of violent extremists and terrorist acts in New Zealand, we've used events seen overseas to validate some of these indicators. We've done this to ensure we're sharing information that is analytically robust.

We now use these indicators as a tool within NZSIS to help identify genuine threats as they emerge.







The indicators of violent extremism

All of the following behaviours and activities have been identified in people who have either been investigated for violent extremism or have committed a terrorist act. This is not an exhaustive list.

By sharing these indicators with you, we aim to raise awareness about the nature of the threats we face, and to encourage you to help to keep New Zealand safe.



Mindset and ideology

These behaviours may indicate someone is developing or promoting a violent extremist ideology.

Accesses violent extremist content

- ▶ Consumes violent extremist videos, media, music or messaging.

Identifies with a violent extremist cause

- ▶ Possesses or displays imagery and symbols from known terrorist or violent extremist groups or movements. They may display this imagery online or in the real world.
- ▶ Becomes fixated on violent extremist ideology or views.
- ▶ Donates money to violent extremist figures or causes.

Develops a hostile 'Us-Versus-Them' worldview

- ▶ Makes dehumanising, hostile or violent statements against individuals or groups they perceive as 'the enemy' or the 'other'.

Supports the use of violence to further their cause

- ▶ Considers violence a valid way to further their cause and advance their ideological aims. This may include justifying terrorist attacks or other acts of terrorism.
- ▶ Praises acts of terrorism and people responsible for violent extremist attacks.

Expresses a willingness or desire to die on behalf of a violent extremist cause

- ▶ Communicates a willingness to die for their violent extremist ideology.
- ▶ Views themselves as a defender or saviour of their cause.



Association and relationships

The behaviours or activities which may indicate someone is developing relationships with known terrorist groups and extremists. Such relationships have led to radicalisation in some cases, and may exist in the real world or online.

Seeks out or engages with violent extremist individuals or groups

- ▶ Knowingly joins an established terrorist or violent extremist group where violent rhetoric is normalised or extremist propaganda is shared.
- ▶ Creates their own violent extremist group or seeks a following to promote their cause, or both.
- ▶ Attempts to contact individuals or groups known to be terrorists or violent extremists.

Becomes exposed to violent extremists

- ▶ Forms ties or friendships with individuals who promote a violent extremist ideology.
- ▶ Becomes involved in a group whose members are violent extremists or where extremist ideas are discussed.



Research and planning

These behaviours or activities may indicate someone is researching or planning to engage in terrorist or violent extremist activity.

Examines possible targets

- ▶ Requests information about particular sites with emblematic or symbolic significance even though they have no personal connection to that place. (These might be official buildings, places of worship or places where crowds gather.)
- ▶ Collects tactical details to target individuals or places linked to their extremist ideology or grievance. Tactical details include information that helps them understand the lifestyles or routines of their targets.
- ▶ Tries to access critical infrastructure for no legitimate reason.

Conducts reconnaissance

- ▶ Carries out unusual surveillance or detailed reconnaissance of a site.
- ▶ Pays particular attention to security procedures.
- ▶ Takes unusual photos or videos of a site.

Shows interest in offshore terrorist activity

- ▶ Asks for advice and recommendations from extremist associates on how to travel to places where terrorist or violent extremist groups operate.
- ▶ Conducts research on offshore places where terrorist or violent extremist groups operate.
- ▶ Searches for offshore conflicts related to their ideology.



Gathering knowledge, skills and resources

These behaviours or activities may indicate someone is gathering the knowledge, skills or resources to engage in terrorist or violent extremist activity. Any skills training might happen in New Zealand or offshore.

Gathers detailed knowledge on using or making weapons

- ▶ Accesses or possesses publications or instructional videos on making or using weapons.
- ▶ Gathers information describing the materials that can be used to make weapons.

Acquires potential weapons or ingredients for making explosives

- ▶ Suspiciously or illegally acquires chemicals or other materials associated with making explosives.
- ▶ Suddenly or unusually develops a stockpile of knives, firearms or explosive materials for no legitimate reason.
- ▶ Seeks access to knives, firearms or explosive materials for no legitimate reason.

Receives or gives financial support

- ▶ Receives financial support from violent extremist groups and individuals.
- ▶ Helps fund other violent extremist causes.

Develops skills, experience or inside access

- ▶ Seeks training, technical expertise or employment at sensitive sites or in specialist jobs for unexplained reasons.
- ▶ Trains to use knives, firearms or explosive materials in a way that seems unusual or concerning.
- ▶ Conducts training in military or paramilitary-style survivalist tactics for no legitimate reason.



Preparation

These behaviours or activities may indicate someone is in the final stages of preparing to conduct a terrorist or violent extremist act.

Prepares weapons

- ▶ Suspiciously builds or tests weaponry or improvised explosives.
- ▶ Inscribes weapons with ideological symbols, text, or both.

Justifies reasons for an attack

- ▶ Seeks justification to carry out an act of violent extremism from perceived like-minded individuals or extremist leaders.

Declares intent to conduct a terrorist or violent extremist act

- ▶ Communicates to associates their intention or plans to conduct a violent act to support their extremist cause.
- ▶ Prepares or disseminates a manifesto, social media post or video statement explaining their intention to conduct a violent act to support their cause.



Security awareness

These behaviours or activities may indicate someone is attempting to conceal their violent extremist activities.

Displays a security awareness or concern

- ▶ Uses fake names, aliases or pseudonyms when online or within specific communities.
- ▶ Creates exclusive groups on secure forums or messaging apps.
- ▶ Becomes secretive about their activities with associates.

Develops a cover story to hide their intentions

- ▶ Creates a story to try to explain unusual or suspicious behaviour or activities.
- ▶ Provides limited or false information when questioned about future plans.

Uses tactics to avoid detection

- ▶ Regularly switches between SIM cards or mobile phones.
- ▶ Starts using burner phones, which they dispose of after a short time.
- ▶ Conceals their online activities by using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) or proxy servers.

Note:

The behaviours and activities listed under this indicator are concerning when they occur alongside other activities listed in this guide. These behaviours on their own are not considered signs of violent extremism.



Unusual changes in behaviour

An individual displaying noticeable changes in their everyday behaviour may indicate they plan to conduct an attack.

Unexpected changes in regular behaviour and appearance

- ▶ Abandons employment without notice.
- ▶ Withdraws from or abandons close relationships.
- ▶ Appears withdrawn or prone to sudden outbursts.
- ▶ Sells or disposes of personal belongings unexpectedly, or with urgency, and shows a disregard for any future considerations. (For instance, they may not seek any personal or financial gain from what they're selling.)
- ▶ Stops participating in regular and established commitments.
- ▶ Has suspicious or unexplained injuries, such as burns or skin irritations.

Note:

The behaviours and activities listed under this indicator are concerning when they occur alongside other activities listed in this guide. These behaviours on their own are not considered signs of violent extremism.



Who can help us? **The role of our** **communities and whānau**

All New Zealanders are responsible for helping to detect and prevent terrorist attacks. We also have a role in preventing and countering violent extremism.

The people closest to vulnerable individuals tend to be whānau, friends and community members. These are the people who are most likely to identify concerning behaviours.

Leaders in the broader community also have a role, from civil society organisations and groups online to iwi leaders, faith communities and interfaith groups. Everyone can have a positive, constructive role in preventing violent extremism and keeping New Zealanders safe.

Kia mataara ki ngā tohu Know the signs

IF YOU SEE THE SIGNS

In an emergency, phone 111 immediately. Also phone 111 immediately if the information is time-critical, such as if an attack is likely to happen very soon.

If the information is not time critical, you can report suspicious behaviour in one of the following ways.

Tell NZSIS

Complete an online form confidentially on our website:
www.nzsis.govt.nz

Tell the Police

You can either:

- complete an online report at 105.police.govt.nz, or
- call their non emergency number 105.

Tell Crimestoppers

Phone Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111,
or submit an online report at www.crimestoppers-nz.org





Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government