

The asylum-jihadism nexus: non-government actors and detection of jihadism among asylum seekers. A case study of the Dutch Refugee Council and the guardianship organization for unaccompanied minors (Nidos).

*J. van Wijk & Maarten P. Bolhuis**

5 September 2017

Abstract:

This article explores why, how and to what extent two non-government organizations working with asylum seekers in the Netherlands engage in the detection of jihadism. It concludes that the organizations acknowledge the importance of sharing possible signs of jihadism with relevant governmental actors, but struggle in striking a balance between serving the interests of their clients and pupils, on the one hand, and assisting in identifying possible national security threats, on the other hand. The authors recommend a systematic study on the extent to which non-government actors (are willing to) engage in identifying jihadism amongst asylum seekers.

Keywords: Asylum seekers, refugees, jihadism, detection, indicators, non-government actors

Introduction

Security experts acknowledge at least three risks relating to the asylum-jihadism nexus: 1) jihadists travelling with the migratory flows into Europe (and applying for asylum); 2) recruitment with jihadi intent amongst asylum seekers; and 3) radicalization of asylum applicants during their stay at reception centres (Van Wijk & Bolhuis 2016: 13). In public statements, intelligence agencies have repeatedly emphasized that unaccompanied minors in the asylum-seeking process are particularly vulnerable to recruitment or radicalization.ⁱ Because of these perceived risks, European countries increasingly intensify their efforts to detect possible jihadists amongst asylum seekers. Measures typically include awareness-raising campaigns and specially developed trainings for frontline professionals working with asylum seekers (EMN 2016).

In a recent publication in *Perspectives on Terrorism* (Van Wijk & Bolhuis 2017), we discuss how frontline professionals working for governmental actors – the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND, hereafter referred to as Immigration Service) and the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA, hereafter referred to as Reception Agency) – try to detect jihadism amongst asylum seekers. In this article we will focus on the question how and to what extent *non-government actors* are willing to engage in, what Schuurman et al. (2012: 188) label ‘passive detection’ of jihadism amongst asylum seekers. More specifically, we will focus on the role of the Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN, hereafter referred to as ‘Refugee Council’) and guardianship organization, Nidos Foundation (hereafter referred to as ‘Nidos’).

The Refugee Council is an association which assists asylum seekers with their legal processing and reintegration. Nidos acts as the guardian for unaccompanied minor asylum

* **Joris van Wijk** (j.van.wijk@vu.nl) and **Maarten P. Bolhuis** (m.p.bolhuis@vu.nl) work as criminologists at the Center for International Criminal Justice (www.cicj.org) at VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Their research interests lie at the crossroads of migration, international crimes and terrorism.

seekers (hereafter referred to as ‘unaccompanied minors’). As will be elaborated on in the sections below, both organizations play a significant role in the lives of recently arrived asylum seekers, which arguably places them in a good position to recognize indications or possible signs of jihadism or radicalization. At the same time, because of their supportive role and/or organizational culture, they may be more reluctant in approaching the police or intelligence and security services with information about their pupils or clients than governmental actors. This article discusses how these organizations deal with this apparent tension in actual practice.

After a methodological section, we briefly introduce the institutional setting in which the two organizations operate and their respective roles. Subsequently, we will discuss the structural setup within the organizations for sharing possible signs of jihadism. Next, on the basis of a literature review, we describe some of the challenges associated with engaging non-government actors in the passive detection of jihadism. This is followed by a section in which relevant findings from interviews with these organizations are presented, discussing how the organizations, in practice, see and take up their role in identifying possible jihadism. The article concludes that both organizations acknowledge the importance of sharing possible signs of jihadism with relevant governmental actors, but struggle in striking a balance between serving the interests of their clients and pupils on the one hand, and assisting in identifying possible national security threats on the other hand. We recommend a systematic study on the extent to which non-government actors (are willing to) engage in identifying jihadism amongst asylum seekers.

Methodology

The data presented in this article was gathered in the context of a study carried out on request of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice. The report, which discusses how jihadism is detected in the Dutch immigration process, was published in November 2016 and is available in the Dutch language only (Van Wijk & Bolhuis 2016). Apart from an analysis of relevant academic literature and policy documents, the main source of data stems from interviews with 49 respondents working for organizations involved in the immigration process. This included interviews with 10 respondents, both policymakers and practitioners, working for the Refugee Council and Nidos. Interviews typically took place at the offices of the respondents and were not taped. Interviews with practitioners were held in focus groups, in which three to four staff members were interviewed at the same time. The limited number of respondents in this study means that it should be considered explorative in nature. The views and opinions expressed by respondents are not necessarily representative of the perspectives within these organizations, but do illustrate the types of challenges that are dealt with by employees of these organisations. We made notes during the interviews and shared interview reports with the respondents for approval. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity. Respondent codes (R#) are used for reference.

The context in which the research was conducted can be characterized as dynamic. During and since the period of data gathering Europe has witnessed several terrorist attacks. For this reason, it is important to place the findings of this study in time. It cannot be ruled out that respondents would by now express themselves differently or that the described practice has in the meantime been subject to small changes.

The Refugee Council and Nidos; role and institutional setting

The Refugee Council is an important actor in the Dutch asylum process, be it one with a special position. It is registered as an association whose members are eight regional

independent foundations which have a total of 310 local branches. A national office supports the regional and local branches with advice, education, and information. The Refugee Council finances most of its activities through gifts and donations, but also receives funding from the Ministry of Security and Justice.ⁱⁱ Although the Refugee Council has a few hundred paid employees, the vast majority – over 13.000 – are volunteers.ⁱⁱⁱ On its website, the organization claims to be an independent organization “which represents the interests of refugees and asylum seekers in the Netherlands, from the moment of entry to the integration into Dutch society.”^{iv} In practice this means that staff and volunteers provide asylum seekers with information about the asylum process, assist them in making their asylum claim, and help them to integrate in Dutch society. Volunteers often operate as some sort of ‘buddy’ or ‘mentor. Traditionally, the Refugee Council takes a rather ‘critical’ position regarding restrictive government policies on asylum.

Nidos is a fully government-funded, but independent, foundation that carries out a statutory guardianship task for unaccompanied minors.^v As such, Nidos is responsible for protecting the interests of unaccompanied minors and performs its tasks based on ‘the best interests of the child’ framework as expressed in Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Beltman & Zijlstra 2013). Guardians have the responsibility to guide and support unaccompanied minors with regard to legal, social and psychological issues. To do so, it is important for guardians to (quickly) build up a relationship of trust with their pupils (Inspectie Jeugdzorg 2011). Guardians are responsible for representing the interests of unaccompanied minors until they reach the age of eighteen. Children below the age of fourteen are placed in a foster family, those who are older are placed in special small-scale residential units. Guardians meet their pupils once a month on average, if necessary more often (R15). In 2015, almost 4.000 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum, which is a twelve-fold increase compared to 2013. The vast majority are older boys from Syria and Eritrea.^{vi}

The detection of jihadism; awareness and the structural setup for sharing signs

Both the Refugee Council and Nidos do not have a formal role in identifying national security threats. Yet, both organizations do have policies in place with regard to detecting possible jihadism (R9, R10, R15). In 2015, the national office of the Refugee Council drafted an internal policy guideline that discusses how staff members and volunteers should deal with possible signs of jihadism and radicalization.^{vii} This document was sent to all regional directors and is available on intranet. It emphasizes that staff members and volunteers should not keep such signs to themselves, but share them with their superior. In the case of concrete suspicions, such signs may – possibly in consultation with the asylum seeker’s lawyer – be shared with other actors such as the Reception Agency (R9, R10). The Refugee Council itself does not conduct awareness training for its staff, but staff members and volunteers have in some cases been offered the possibility to take part in the training that the Reception Agency has been organizing at different reception centres all over the country since late 2014 (R9, R10). It is unknown how many staff members and volunteers have actually taken part in such trainings. To our knowledge the Dutch government has not yet actively requested the Refugee Council to create more awareness about jihadism among its staff.

Nidos too has a policy with regard to sharing possible signs relating to jihadism. Guardians can detect signs themselves, but may also be informed by foster parents or mentors working with pupils at the small-scale residential units. When a guardian believes that he or she has been confronted with an indication of possible jihadism, he or she is in principle expected to share such a signal with the regional manager, who is to forward the information to the national office management. The management subsequently decides whether or not the signal

warrants being forwarded to the relevant authorities. If a signal relates to a pupil who already has obtained a legal status, it will be directly referred to the General or Military Intelligence and Security Services (AIVD and MIVD, hereafter referred to as ‘Security Services’). If the asylum procedure is still pending, a signal will be referred to the Immigration Service in order to allow the Immigration Service to make further enquiries during the asylum interview(s). As to awareness trainings, in 2015, Nidos’ national management and regional managers participated in a two-hour awareness training that was presented by the Reception Agency. The PowerPoint presentation was shared with the guardians. The Dutch government more recently requested the opportunity to create more awareness about jihadism amongst Nidos staff members. On the initiative of the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV, hereafter referred to as ‘National Coordinator’), two behavioural scientists who work for Nidos will undergo a more elaborate and intensive training module from a professional training company. Based on the ‘train the trainer’ principle they are to integrate the knowledge that they acquire during the training into Nidos’ internal educational programme. NCTV’s request to take more training might in the eyes of Nidos be considered an ‘unwelcome responsabilization strategy’ (Mythen & Walkate 2006). A representative of Nidos’ management, however, regarded the request certainly not to be a coercive move on behalf of the government; the organization is open to the idea of receiving additional training (R15).

The willingness to share possible signs of jihadism

The above indicates that the management of the Refugee Council and Nidos are, in principle, willing to embed expertise in their organization and to share concrete signs of jihadism or radicalization with government actors such as the Reception Agency, the Immigration Service and the Secret Services. Academic literature suggests, however, that awareness training and information exchange on such a sensitive topic may, in practice, be challenging and complex to design and deliver. Based on an analysis of three awareness programmes that aim to assist professionals in recognizing radicalization, De Goede & Simon (2012: 227) warn that embedding expertise on radicalization:

“...is not a smooth, top-down process: the assemblage is recalcitrant and rife with contradictions. It entails fragile alignments. One element of tension within the counter-radicalisation assemblage concerns the extent of state-civil society security cooperations.”

One of the reasons for this tension is that civil society representatives may not feel comfortable as ‘an instrument’ of the Security Services. They may also be concerned about the risk of overreporting and stigmatization. De Goede & Simon provide a nice illustration of the sensitivities in this regard, by referring to the tensions that existed in relation to a programme that involved training civil society workers in the Netherlands. The coordinators of this programme expressed considerable unease that their programme was state-directed and funded, especially since – after a reshuffling of Ministries – they suddenly fell under the Dutch Ministry of *Security* and Justice (rather than the Ministry of Justice). The discomfort was even stronger, however, with some of the civil society workers who were asked to share possible signs of radicalization. Meah & Mellis (2008) also emphasise the reluctance of frontline staff to act as informants, similar to how teachers may feel as if they are spying on or reporting their students. Frontline professionals are hesitant to engage in ‘spotting radicals’ and to act as an ‘informant’ for the intelligence services. Their statements also indicate that they do not necessarily ‘buy into’ the crisis narrative about terrorism and are hesitant to label

potentially normal behaviour as somehow problematic or dangerous. The statement of a British social worker is illustrative in this regard:

“A real problem is that it feels like we are being asked to identify terrorists [...] we have a role in ensuring that our young people can explore ideas and debate these [...] I certainly would be concerned that providing names of young people, particularly to so-called counter terrorist officers, would end up criminalising these young people who need support to explore their ideas and question their validity.” (Meah & Mellis 2008: 7)

Indeed, reservations to share signs may occur when staff of non-government actors are under the impression that the terrorist threat is overemphasized and/or that sharing signs with government actors is not in the interest of their clients, or will hamper the relationship they have with their clients or others within their network, because this constitutes a breach of confidentiality. The willingness to share signs to a large extent depends on levels of trust between the parties involved:

“Frontline professionals are asked to watch out for signs of concern, register social exclusion and share information. What happens to these reports of concern? Who handles them and how? The answers to these vary locally and are not always clear to practitioners and participants [...]” (De Goede & Simon, 2012: 330)

In cases in which the frontline staff of civil society organizations are confronted with very concrete indications of jihadism, one may expect them to share such signs. Yet, the above suggests that it is not self-evident that they adopt or follow what is taught during awareness programmes as legitimate and/or share any information bearing on government-defined signs. The independent positioning of the Refugee Council, its complex organizational structure (with several independent members), its employment of both paid staff as well as volunteers and its traditionally ‘critical’ perspective towards government make it likely that some frontline workers have a relatively low level of trust in government authorities. It is to be expected that within such a big and diverse organization different perspectives and views exist about the organization’s role in relation to identifying jihadism. As to Nidos, it is to be expected that the organization may struggle with the dilemma of whether it should primarily serve the interests of society to inform government actors about the possible radicalization of one of their pupils or the interest of its pupils not to be known or registered as a possible jihadist.

Sharing possible signs about jihadism; practice

In line with the previous studies referred to above, our research indicates that staff members of the Refugee Council and Nidos do not lightly share possible signs of jihadism with state authorities. In part, this may be due to the fact that they might not interpret a given factual constellation as a signal of possible jihadism, where other (state) actors may do so. Reservations to report, moreover, stem from the fact that they act as counsellor or advocate to asylum seekers, which makes them reflect critically on the question of how and to what extent making an alert could affect the relationship with their clients or pupils. They furthermore expressed feeling uncertain about the possible (negative) consequences of making an alert.

The Refugee Council

Interviews with staff members of the Refugee Council revealed how they sometimes interpret the very same factual constellation differently from respondents with the Immigration Service

and the Reception Agency, which also both fall under the Ministry of Security and Justice. Where respondents of the government organizations apply a rather low threshold for considering certain situations ‘worthy’ of bringing to the attention of the Secret Services, respondents of the Refugee Council were more hesitant. A staff member of the Reception Agency remembered:

“At a certain moment a group of young Syrian men who had just arrived in the Netherlands indicated that they wanted to return on short notice. [...] They had received a first negative decision and all stated that they wanted to return to Syria, if possible within a week. This made the alarm bells ring with our colleagues. That’s strange [...]. These colleagues then shared this information with the Bureau for Security and Integrity of the Reception Agency.” (RF31)

Staff members of the Immigration Service who were working at the same reception centre also believed the behaviour to be suspicious:

“Last year there was a remarkable rise in the number of Syrian young men who suddenly wanted to return; they had just arrived and suddenly they wanted to withdraw from their asylum procedure.” (RF35)

“They said something like ‘my father is ill, my mother is dying’. If that is said often and by different people in a certain period, it gives you a strange feeling.” (RF33)

Respondents of the Refugee Council, however, assessed the very same situation quite differently:

“Last year there were about fifteen Syrians who wanted to return to their country of origin a week after having arrived. Staff members of the Reception Agency told me that to them this was a signal to share. To me that is not a signal. These people changed their minds, they just want to return.” (RF39)

A colleague added:

“These were people who had registered themselves, they heard that it will take a long time [to process their request]. We all assumed that that was the reason why they wanted to go back, that they were ‘penitents’. But at the Reception Agency there was someone who said ‘they want to go back to fight in Syria’.” (RF37)

“The Reception Agency, the Immigration Service and the Return Agency must be vigilant, that's their job. If there are Syrians who want to return within a week all alarm bells start ringing, even the Security Services are informed. We take a different perspective.” (RF39)^{viii}

Policymakers at the Refugee Council stated that, for an organization like theirs, it is complex to formulate a clear position with regard to sharing possible signs of jihadism. The organization is primarily known to advocate for the interests and rights of refugees. Representatives of the Refugee Council often function as a confidential counsellor for their clients, which means that they have a confidential relationship with them. On the other hand, everyone working at the Refugee Council wishes to keep groups as the Islamic State (IS) out of the Netherlands, exactly because so many of their clients fled their country because of such

groups. This means that when there are concrete signs, they certainly are willing to share signs (R9, R10).

As conversations with frontline staff confirm, they struggle with their role as trusted advocate, on the one hand, and securing national security interests, on the other hand:

“You can compare the role of the Refugee Council with the role of a lawyer. We will not give away all information to [the Ministry of Security and Justice], we primarily advocate for our client.” (RF39)

“What’s more, during our introduction meetings we say ‘everything you say here, stays within these walls’. Clients have to sign an authorization that allows us to digitally share information on them within our organization. It leads to a moral conflict if you’d then share information with others.” (RF37)

However, respondents agreed that if they really were confronted with concrete signs, they would prioritize the interest of sharing such a signal over the authorization. But what criteria to apply when assessing whether a signal really is concrete and in what instances to really share concerns is unclear. As one of the respondents mentioned:

“Within the Refugee Council there is not really a clear policy how to deal with this issue. Our clients come with a request, that request is central to what we do. The dossier may contain information that someone, for example, is a Salafist. Is it then up to us to share that information? The individual you’re assisting is at the centre of what you’re doing, it is about the request for assistance. [...] If you share suspicions with Justice, they will be on top things, immediately deal with it.” (RF39).

In line with the findings of Meah & Mellis (2008) and De Goede & Simon (2012), staff members furthermore stated that they were reluctant to share signs because of the possible consequences this may have. As they do not exactly know what the consequences might be, they are hesitant to share information:

“You don’t know what the effect is; what if you ruin someone’s procedure by making an alert....” (RF39)

“Maybe detention...?” (RF38)

“Perhaps they get 1F right away?”^{ix} (RF37)

“They will surely investigate!” (RF38)

“Investigating equals ‘not accepting’. Syrians are now accepted in a fast track procedure. Each alert means delay (...). If the Immigration Service has serious reasons to believe that someone is radicalizing or is a jihadist, rest assured that it will take more than fifteen months before he’ll receive a decision. That is absolutely not in the interest of the individual. So, an advocate deals differently with such matters. And rightly so.” (RF37)

In a similar vein, Nidos struggles in positioning itself on the issue of sharing possible signals. Although intelligence organizations repeatedly emphasized that unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable to recruitment or radicalization, some staff members of Nidos downplayed the risk that their pupils are susceptible to racialization (RF48, 49, 50). One of the frontline staff workers noted:

“They are here with a different goal: the procedure. If the procedure fails, chances increase that things go wrong, but not so if all goes according to plan [...]. We also note that they have an aversion against everything related to radicalization. In their home country, they have witnessed all sorts of things related to IS, that’s exactly what they fled from, so only if they encounter a lot of failures in their trajectory they could be driven into [radicalization].” (RF49).

In general, though, frontline staff of Nidos do express there is a need to be vigilant and that it would be good if staff members would receive more awareness training. If not only to be better positioned to differentiate possible signs of jihadism from activities and behaviour that are simply part of Islam (e.g. praying five times a day) (RF48, 49, 50).

A senior manager extensively discussed Nidos’ dilemmas in relation to living up to its internal standards. In principle Nidos has a confidential relationship with its pupils. Nidos’ specific code for professional standards states that confidentiality can only be breached in the interests of the child. In practice this may, for example, mean that Nidos will not inform the social services when a guardian has strong indications that a foster family of one of the pupils is committing fraud, because this might not be in the interest of the child to report this. Specific guidelines are available to assess when breaching confidentiality may be considered, for example when there are indications that foster parents abuse pupils. In case confidentiality is breached, the guidelines state that guardians have to ‘exercise openness’, which means that they always have to inform the pupil about the confidentiality breach and the reasons for it. The importance of exercising openness in communication towards the pupil has been stressed in past disciplinary procedures (R15).

With regard to identifying possible jihadism, the abovementioned guidelines create a dilemma. Indeed, when a guardian has indications that a pupil is radicalizing and considers informing third parties, the guidelines prescribe that the pupil should, in principle, be informed that an alert has been made in his case. Informing the pupil might, however, neither serve the interest of national security, nor be in the best interest of the child. The confidential relationship between guardian and pupil is most likely frustrated. Perhaps he or she immediately initiates an attack or tries to travel to Syria. An alert could also have negative consequences for the pupil. The respondent emphasized that it should be taken into account that alerts about radicalization can have negative labelling as a consequence:

“Imagine Nidos [...] alerts the Security Services about possible radicalization of a pupil. How would that impact the pupil’s future? What if later in life he is doing fine, decides he wants to become a police officer and needs to be screened? That’s tricky.” (R15)

The respondent could furthermore imagine that on the basis of an alert the Security Services would advise the Immigration Service to deny a status. Exactly because the possible consequences are so unclear to the respondent, he states to be “cautious”. For the very same reason, Nidos is reticent to join initiatives to share possible signs locally with actors such as

the police or prosecutor. There is the fear that sharing information in such a context too, could contribute to stigmatization:

“If you label a pupil [...] as a possible jihadist, what are the consequences? It results in social dynamics; it easily leads to stigmatization”. (R15)

Nidos currently explores what process it will follow in the future when confronted with signs of possible jihadism. In the presence of an external ethicist a ‘moral deliberation’ is planned to discuss the matter. At the time of the interview the respondent could not tell what filters are used in actual practice to decide when a possible signal is forwarded to the relevant authorities or not; there have not yet been enough instances to speak of any ‘established practice’. In the few instances when Nidos made an alert, the pupils have so far not been informed (R15).

Conclusion

Security experts warn that jihadists have travelled along with migrants and that asylum seekers may be susceptible to recruitment and radicalization. In the interest of national security, it is therefore important that all actors in the immigration process are vigilant and engage in the passive detection of jihadism. Non-government actors too, can arguably play a significant role. Because of their special relationship with asylum seekers, they may receive information that government actors will miss. At the same time, it is of utmost importance that asylum seekers have access to an independent counsellor or advocate whom they can trust. This article described how the Dutch Refugee Council and guardianship organization Nidos struggle in trying to strike a balance between serving the interests of their clients and pupils, on the one hand, and identifying possible national security threats, on the other hand.

Respondents of both organizations acknowledge the importance of sharing ‘concrete’ signs with relevant state actors, yet the very ambiguity is what exactly makes a sign concrete enough to share. In line with earlier findings in academic literature, respondents expressed reluctance to share just any possible signs. They are hesitant to define a certain factual constellation as a sign and are well aware that sharing signs can hamper the confidential relationship with their clients and pupils. A specific challenge for Nidos is that sharing signs about a pupil without informing him or her about this is, in principle, a contravention of its internal guidelines which require guardians to ‘exercise openness’ vis-à-vis their pupils. Respondents from both organizations furthermore indicated that they are uncertain whether, and to what extent, an alert has negative consequences for their clients or pupils. Perceptions exist that it may negatively affect the asylum procedure (e.g. delays, exclusion under Article 1F, adverse security assessments), lead to stigmatization and/or frustrate future integration and access to the labour market. In the context of this study we have not assessed to what extent these concerns are justified or not. Yet, from a counter-terrorism perspective it is already worrying that non-government actors express cautiousness because of uncertainty about the consequences. Perceptions alone may lead to reluctance to share signs.

The findings from our research indicate that non-government actors are most likely to share information if they trust the information is in good hands and if the consequences of sharing such information are predictable. The currently witnessed political polarization in many countries may in this regard put passive detection by non-government organizations under pressure. With more conservative law and order-oriented parties dominating government, it will be increasingly difficult for the Immigration Service and the Security Services to be regarded as ‘trusted’ parties by the traditionally left-leaning and progressive civil society organizations working with asylum seekers. The intelligence position of the Security Services

may benefit when non-government organizations are well informed about the legal possibilities of sharing information and the possible consequences of making alerts.

In the methodological section, we already stated that the limited number of interviews make that this study is explorative in nature. The article nonetheless contributes to existing literature by illustrating the tangible dilemmas non-government actors such as the Refugee Council and Nidos are confronted with in the passive detection of jihadism. We expect that other non-government actors and/or civil society organizations that rely upon a relationship of trust with asylum seekers experience similar dilemmas and reservations. For this reason, we recommend more systematic and/or comparative studies on the extent to which – and for what reasons – non-state actors (are willing to) engage in passive detection of jihadism amongst asylum seekers.

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Notes

ⁱ Michelle Martin, 'German spy chief says Islamic State wants to attack but no specific plot known,' Reuters, 10 April 2016 (last visited 25 April 2016 via <<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-security-idUSKCN0X701U>>), "'Norway's PST wary of asylum centre radicalization', The Local, 31 March 2016. Last visited 25 April 2016 via <<http://www.thelocal.no/20160331/norway-intelligence-agency-closely-watching-asylum-centres>>. There have been several incidents that suggest that these risks are not only potential threats but a reality. In 2016, a Dutch court convicted a Somali man to 18 months' imprisonment for trying to recruit unaccompanied minors. Algemeen Dagblad, 'Tilburgse IS-ronselaar krijgt 18 maanden cel', 18 February 2016. Last visited 24 May 2016 via <<http://www.ad.nl/ad/nl/1012/Nederland/article/detail/4247304/2016/02/18/Tilburgse-IS-ronselaar-krijgt-18-maanden-cel.dhtml>>. In July 2016, a 17-year-old Afghan asylum seeker who had arrived in Germany as an unaccompanied minor and had been living with a foster family in Ochsenfurt, attacked about 20 passengers on a train in northern Bavaria with an axe and a knife. Later, an IS flag was found at his home. Philip Oltermann, 'Islamic State flag "found at home of suspected German train attacker"', The Guardian, 19 July 2016. Last

visited 23 January via < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/19/islamic-state-flag-home-of-suspected-german-train-attacker>>.

ⁱⁱ For instance for financing its information and supervision activities in reception centers. In 2015, the Ministry of Security and Justice provided funds for such activities (see Jaarrekening 2015, VluchtelingenWerk, p. 29; last visited 5 May 2016 via

<https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/sites/public/u895/17032016_Jaarrekening_LB_2015_%20DEF_met_acc_verklaring>).

ⁱⁱⁱ See <<https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/english>>.

^{iv} See <<https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/over-ons/missie-en-visie>>.

^v See <<http://www.nidos.nl/en/home/missie-en-visie-van-nidos/missie-nidos/>>.

^{vi} See

<<http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=82045ned&D1=0&D2=a&D3=0&D4=0&D5=a&HD=160715-1016&HDR=T%2cG1&STB=G2%2cG3%2cG4>>.

^{vii} Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland Landelijk, 'Notitie Vluchtelingenwerk, radicalisering en jihadisme (aangevulde versie)', August 2015 (copy on file with authors).

^{viii} Unfortunately, there is no information available on what eventually happened to these asylum seekers. This makes it impossible to assess whose interpretation was more valid.

^{ix} On the basis of article 1F Refugee Convention asylum seekers may be excluded from refugee protection when there are serious reasons for considering that they have committed serious crimes. More information, see e.g. <<https://cicj.org/research/escaping-justice/>>.