

# Islamist terrorists taking psychology courses to convince prison bosses they are deradicalised

From the [Telegraph](#)

Islamist terrorists are taking psychology courses to help them deceive prison bosses into believing they are deradicalised, a former prisoner governor and government adviser has said.

Prof Ian Acheson, who led a Ministry of Justice review of [extremism in jails](#), said there was growing evidence across Europe that terrorist prisoners were successfully deceiving professionals into believing they were willing to rehabilitate, with potentially deadly consequences.

He cited four cases in the past two years of terror attacks and prison murder attempts where Islamist extremists had been able to mount them after securing new freedoms on release or in jail due to their ability to manipulate the authorities into thinking they had given up jihad.

In a paper to be published on Tuesday by the Europe in the World programme, Prof Acheson said many violent extremists, particularly hardcore jihadists, often viewed their imprisonment as a test of their commitment to their cause and an opportunity to continue their jihad.

“During their sentence, they look for ways to convince those with whom they interact (prison officers, social workers, psychologists, supervisors) that they have understood the error of their ways and have turned over a new leaf to speed up their release,” he said.

“In some cases, jihadists have opted to study psychology. While on the surface, this [studying] could be perceived as a positive step forward, they use what they learn to better manipulate the work of prison therapists,” said Prof Acheson. He named the technique “disguised compliance” as the most dangerous form of deception, where terrorists gained an advantage over those monitoring them, avoiding scrutiny, concealing their true intentions and securing benefits in prison that could be at odds with public protection. It enabled terrorists to game deradicalisation programmes.

He cited the case of [Kujtim Fejzulai](#), who killed four people in 2020. The Austrian government admitted Fejzulai had “fooled” its deradicalisation into allowing him early release.

There was also the [London Bridge terrorist Usman Khan](#), who was attending a conference for rehabilitated individuals on the day of his attack, in which he deliberately targeted those who had been assisting his reintegration.

In France, Bilal Taghi, sentenced to 28 years for the attempted murder of two French prison officers in 2016, boasted in court that he had deliberately lowered the guard of his targets by appearing to be a model prisoner who was approachable and “chatty”.

“The stakes of disguised compliance remain extremely high,” said Prof Acheson.

*It's called taqiya; Mohammed said 'War is deceit'. Read it all [here](#); I don't think it is behind the paywall*