

**Plan of 25 September 2002 for intensified efforts to combat crime and problems of law
and order etc. originating in the biker community.**

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1.0. Situation

The character of biker crime has changed from being to a large extent violent crime to various forms of profit-oriented crime, committed with deliberate use of the aura of violence that surrounds the biker culture. In addition, the biker community is increasingly causing a general sense of insecurity in local communities.

A detailed description of the situation regarding bikers is attached at Annex 1.

The Minister of Justice on 2 July 2002 issued a press release on the effort to deal with biker crime, attached at Annex 2, from which the following is taken:

"..... I put decisive emphasis on continuation and intensification of the police effort. I have therefore agreed with the National Commissioner of Police that, during the summer, he will draw up a broad proposal for the continued effort in relation to the biker community in co-operation with the police districts and the Prosecution Service."

2.0. Strategy

2.1. The strategy to date

The police effort in relation to the biker community (as of summer 2002) is broadly based and quite comprehensive, and is relatively successful in producing results. Evidence of this is the large number of biker-related individuals put behind bars. Some 150 people linked to the biker community are continuously detained, serving custodial sentences or being held on remand.

The police strategy to deal with biker crime to date has been established since the end of the violent internal showdown between the Hells Angels and Bandidos in 1997. The strategy, most recently confirmed in the autumn of 2001 by the steering group on investigative support centres and cross-border, organised crime¹, contains the following principal aims²:

- Counteract the committing of acts of general danger etc. as part of any showdown taking place between biker groups in conflict.
- Investigate, uncover and prosecute crime committed by biker-related individuals and prevent these individuals from committing crime.

¹ The steering group comprises the National Commissioner of Police, who is its chairman, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commissioner of the Copenhagen Police and the other senior regional police officers, representatives of the Association of Chief Constables and the Danish Association of Senior Police Officers, a representative of the regional prosecutors and the head of National Commissioner of Police Department A, cf. circular of 29 September 2000 to all police districts concerning guidance on the steering group on investigative support centres and cross-border, organised crime.

² Cf. National Police circular of 24 October 2001 to all police districts on the status of the law-enforcement effort against biker crime.

2.2. Future strategy

The objective of the plan is, on the basis of the strategy adopted to date and within the well-established and successfully operating structures and frameworks that exist today, to enhance and intensify the effort made, including in particular:

- Increasing the focus on the part of biker crime that is concealed.
- A more extensive effort being made to establish law and order and carry out checks.
- The greatest possible incentive being given for the public to report biker-related crime.
- Increasing the focus on co-operation between authorities.
- A broadly based social effort being made – including in local communities – to prevent entry to the biker community and ensure general dissociation from the biker community.

3.0. Goals

The following interim goals are drawn up on the basis of the strategy described above:

3.1. Continuation of the systematic police monitoring

The systematic police monitoring continues, so that relevant information on the biker community is regularly gathered and analysed. Both the strategic and overall and the specific operational effort can be planned in the most appropriate way ("intelligence-led policing").

As part of systematic police monitoring, it is important that the police closely follow developments in the relationship between the groups, including the support groups, so that an accurate threat scenario can be constantly established. The current threat in relation to internal biker showdowns is – and how been for several years – reduced and stable, and the law-enforcement effort in particular against profit-oriented crime has therefore been allocated high priority. If the threat scenario changes, the police effort will have to be changed accordingly, so that use is made for example of legal powers to prohibit spending time in particular properties.

It is also important that the information gathered and analysed is used both as a basis for targeted investigations and as a basis for efforts geared more towards maintenance of law and order and carrying out checks, cf. 3.2.

3.2. Increased supervision and checks on particular occasions and at particular events in the biker community

Systematic police monitoring makes it possible for feedback to take place to an increased extent from the investigative support centres to those responsible for planning in the uniformed branch, so that police supervision and checks can be established to an increased extent on special occasions and at special events in the biker community.

Better interaction between the monitoring effort and the effort geared more towards maintenance of law and order and checks may at the same time be expected to generate more information, which can be used both in investigations and in efforts geared more towards maintenance of law and order and carrying out checks.

3.3. Greater focus on hidden crime

Profit-oriented biker crime, such as narcotics crime, smuggling of contraband goods, trafficking in women etc. is by its nature more hidden, partly because there are not, in the same way as in ordinary crime, people who have been caused injustice who have a direct interest in reporting the crime. However, systematic police monitoring provides the police with good opportunities to find approaches to biker-related profit-oriented crime independently, so that the police can document the basis of suspicion that is necessary for example in relation to obtaining court orders which make it possible to establish incursions into the secrecy of messages etc., for example in cases concerned with narcotics.

Systematic police monitoring is well established and operates successfully, but conversion into specific investigations is sometimes limited due to availability of resources, and the hidden nature of the crime is a factor in the setting of police priorities.

The intention is therefore for the police internally always to bear in mind that in view of the general effort to deal with the biker community it is very important to accord priority to forward-looking investigations against biker-related individuals - even if the investigations typically are protracted and demanding on resources and do not relate to a directly visible problem.

3.4. Greatest possible incentive for the public to report biker-related crime, including in particular violence, extortion etc.

Circumstances reported to the police are (naturally) investigated. Partly because of the aura of

violence surrounding the biker culture, however, it must be acknowledged that biker-related crime is reported to a lesser extent than crime in general.

It is important therefore that the greatest possible encouragement should be given from the side of the police for the public to report biker-related crime, including in particular street crime in the form of assault, threats, what are known as 'penalties for being stupid' etc.

It is very important in this connection that the police make use to the necessary extent of the various options that exist with regard to witness protection.

3.5. Even more consistent and targeted uniformed-branch effort for all areas where the police encounter biker-related individuals

During the violent internal showdown in the mid-1990s between the Hells Angels and Bandidos, the effort geared more towards maintenance of law and order and control was intensified to a considerable extent, for instance in the form of many body searches etc., based on a latent suspicion determined by the situation that biker-related individuals were in possession of weapons etc. This meant at the same time that the bikers were restricted in committing other crime, such as narcotics crime. This may be regarded as having been a major factor in the process that led to what is known as the "peace agreement" between the Hells Angels and Bandidos in 1997.

The effort geared more towards maintenance of law and order and carrying out checks is constantly in progress at an intensive level within the limits allowed by law.

However, there is a need for a further intensification of the checks carried out, for instance in bars and in the area of road traffic. It is also very important that the police make use of the law-enforcement instruments available, including, depending on the circumstances, the law prohibiting visiting particular premises.

3.6. Intensive police effort, where the police are visible to biker-related individuals

It may be regarded as a goal in itself for bikers to know and be aware they are closely monitored by the police and society.

The police have good experience of intensive supervision of maladjusted young people³. The

³ Cf. National Police circular of 29 September 2000 to all police districts on intensive supervision of maladjusted young people.

strategy of intensive supervision in relation to maladjusted young people is directed in particular against street gangs. The strategy was established to implement an initiative described in the report from November 1999 from an interdepartmental committee on initiatives in relation to maladjusted young people. The strategy – or elements of it – can be advantageously put to use in relation to the members of the supporter groups and in particular the more loosely connected individuals.

3.7. Increased co-operation between authorities in the area of law enforcement

Several steps have recently been taken for intensified co-operation between the police, the Central Customs and Tax Administration and the local authorities. This interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral co-operation should be strengthened to complement the police effort, which cannot stand alone.

Areas that can be mentioned for efforts crossing authority boundaries are efforts in relation to social security fraud, evasion of tax and duties, contraventions of building regulations, fire legislation, local plans etc. in relation to club buildings, and so on.

3.8. Increased preventive and attitude-marking effort

Individuals who have attained a permanent affiliation to the biker community cannot be regarded as amenable to influence through dialogue, and the effort made to deal with them must therefore primarily consist in consistent law enforcement.

There is, however, a circle of young people who appear to be attracted by biker community. It appears important that it should be made clear to those young people who are amenable to influence, through a broadly based social effort, including in the local communities, that they are on the way into a criminal community whose behaviour is not socially acceptable and from which it is difficult to escape.

4.0. Implementation

The individual elements of the plan are implemented collectively, so that a totality is created which ensures in an effective way that the police effort in relation to the biker community is strengthened. All parts of the police are therefore involved in the effort to combat crime and problems of law and order etc. originating from the biker community. The following in particular can be emphasised in this connection:

4.1. The police districts

Primary responsibility for combating biker crime rests with the police districts, with regard both to (forward-looking) investigative measures and police efforts geared more towards maintenance of law and order and carrying out checks.

4.2. The regional police districts

The regional police districts are responsible for co-ordinating and assisting the police effort in the region - depending on the local circumstances and agreements/practice in the region.

In the area of maintenance of law and order and carrying out checks, it has to be taken into account in particular that bikers have increasingly turned to local communities where direct police coverage is limited.

The regional police districts additionally have responsibility for the local regional investigative support centre (REC), including responsibility for ensuring that relevant information is reported, and that relevant information and analyses are made available to the local police districts.

4.3. The National Police

The National Police are responsible for the national investigative support centre (NEC), including being responsible for ensuring that relevant information and analyses are made available to the (regional) police districts.

The National Police are additionally responsible for the Rocker Task Force and otherwise responsible for the necessary support and assistance being provided to the (regional) police districts in relation to specific investigations (including in particular forward-looking investigations) in the form of observation teams, investigating officers etc. and other operational assistance in connection with special efforts.

The National Police is also a contact point for international police co-operation.

4.4. The steering group on REC/NEC and cross-border, organised crime

The steering group on investigative support centres and cross-border, organised crime is partly intended to carry forward the work done previously in the special steering group relating to biker

crime, which was set up by the Ministry of Justice in 1996. It is thus a key task for the steering group to discuss topics, for example strategies, in relation to the law-enforcement effort against biker crime.

The overall establishment of strategy, co-ordination and adaptation of the effort, including in relation to the interaction with the Prosecution Service, is thus undertaken by the steering group.

The steering group regularly follows up the results achieved (via the user group established alongside the steering group) and evaluates the effort made.

4.5. Resources of authorities outside the police

The police effort cannot stand alone – and neither does it do so. There is good co-operation with various authorities today, particularly in the area of checks, and this co-operation is to be expanded, cf. 3.7.

It may also be regarded as appropriate for local boards, licensing boards etc. to discuss the effort made across authority boundaries to deal with biker crime and the insecurity which the emergence of the biker community often entails in local communities, so that there is agreement on means and ends in the effort that is made.

The SSP co-operation and the work of the Crime Prevention Council are also important elements in the effort.

4.6. Rest of society

The active support of the rest of society and the individual citizen is of great importance, particularly in relation to determining attitudes and increased reporting of crime. It is important to involve parents, clubs, organisations etc. in the effort.

4.7. Press

An active press policy is pursued, partly with a view to gaining the active support of the rest of society and the individual citizen.

The press effort, in compliance with the general obligation of objectivity and the rules of the Administration of Justice Act, must pursue the principal aim of exposing the biker community and clarifying the results of the efforts of the police (and others).

General

"Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs" (OMCG) are an international phenomenon that exists in all parts of the world. The term rockers (bikers) is normally used in Denmark.

At the world level, the Hells Angels (the group that has existed for the longest time), Bandidos, Outlaws and Pagans are the leading groups.

The biker community in Denmark (and the other Scandinavian countries) is dominated by Hells Angels and Bandidos, cf. below.

Both the Hells Angels and the Bandidos are groupings established with an internal hierarchy, where special rank and status is allocated. The structure of the Bandidos is established on the basis of the structure of the Hells Angels, but the Bandidos are controlled from the top to a greater degree.

History ("biker wars")

The biker phenomenon started to become apparent in Denmark in the early 1970s in the form of a dozen or so – in some cases rival – motorcycle clubs, whose members were clearly inspired by Hells Angels.

The rivalry in the biker community in Denmark developed later in the 1970s to a number of homicides and serious assaults. It became clear during the police investigation of these cases that bikers were involved in a large number of criminal offences. It was noted at the same time that four of the Danish biker groups had merged and were applying for admittance to the Hells Angels parent organisation which – after a trial period as a "prospect chapter" - took place at the end of 1980, when the group was admitted as a full chapter under the name of "Hells Angels MC Denmark".

The internal rivalry in the biker community continued in the 1980s, particularly in the form of a "biker war" between Hells Angels and Bullshit, in which several people were killed.

Bullshit was disbanded in 1988. The Hells Angels afterwards had sole dominance over Danish biker community, but in 1993 two chapters of a Danish biker group were admitted as full members of the Bandidos. The rivalry between the Hells Angels and Bandidos led to an actual

showdown between the organisations (sometimes referred to as the "Great Nordic Biker War", during which in the Nordic countries a total of eleven murders and 74 attempted murders were committed over the period 1994-1997, of which five murders and 40 attempted murders took place in Denmark.

No assaults that can be described as part of an actual showdown between Hells Angels and Bandidos have been committed since the "peace agreement" was entered into in 1997, but at the worldwide level relations between the organisations, which regard each other as rivals, remain tense. This tense relationship means that actual internal showdowns, often referred to as 'wars', regularly take place around the world. There have been showdowns of this kind in recent years in Canada and Australia, and a relatively large number of people have been killed during the course of these showdowns. The relationship between Hells Angels and Bandidos at present is particularly tense in Germany. The view is that the situation in Denmark is relatively stable, but both groups are assumed to have access to large quantities of weapons etc.

Present-day biker community

The situation in Denmark in the late summer of 2002 is that the Hells Angels have eight full chapters (divisions), while the Bandidos have ten full chapters and two 'prospect chapters'. The number of members in the two "parent" organisations has remained relatively constant over recent years and is at a level that means that the groups are more or less equal in size, with both groups having around 150 permanently affiliated individuals.

However, the supporter groups – which over recent years have organised fellow-travellers etc. in a more formal and permanent structure – have expanded in terms of both spread and membership, and this may mean that the biker groups are represented in large parts of the country, including in the smaller local communities. The Hells Angels' supporter groups are organised under the name of the Red & White Support Crew, while the Bandidos' supporter groups are organised under the name of the Support X Team.

The supporter groups, which appear to be a peculiarly Nordic phenomenon, can generally be described as consisting of young men who typically wish to attain permanent affiliation to the Hells Angels or Bandidos. To attain this status, they lend a hand, for instance by acting as guards at various events, but also to a significant extent by attending to the practical committing of criminal acts. The structure of the support groups resembles that of the parent groups, but having a Harley Davidson motorcycle, for example, is not a requirement, and the uniform does not consist of waistcoats but of special jackets with logos.

It is estimated that the Red & White Support Crew consists of about 35 divisions with some 450 affiliated individuals, while the Support X Team is estimated to consist of around 25 divisions with some 350 affiliated individuals. The number of divisions and in particular the number of permanently affiliated individuals is subject to some uncertainty, as the logos of the supporter groups can be freely acquired, making it difficult for the police to differentiate between permanently affiliated individuals and people who are more loosely attached to the biker community.

It is estimated by the police that the actual biker community in Denmark altogether is made up of around 1100 people, of whom about five-sixths have been identified by the police.

There is evidence that the Hells Angels and Bandidos have in some way divided up the country geographically between them, so that the country is divided into territories. In the larger cities, where both groupings are represented, agreement has been reached on who is allowed to frequent specified bars. It is assumed that the territorial division also applies in part to the committing of crime.

Biker crime

Crime is closely linked to the biker community.

Following a Danish initiative, a report was prepared in 1997 by the Europol Drugs Unit (the predecessor of the present-day Europol), which showed that biker crime meets the EU criteria for organised crime. It has since emerged from the EU annual reports on organised crime that "Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs" are a source of organised crime. In the view of the Danish police, this also applies to the biker community in Denmark.

People with links to the biker community in Denmark are (and continue to be) involved in all forms of crime for profit, including narcotics crime, robbery, the smuggling of contraband, theft, fraud and extortion and running brothels (trafficking in women). Crime is committed to a large extent with deliberate exploitation of the aura of violence that surrounds the biker community.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the Prison and Probation Service in the late summer of 2002 reported that around 150 biker-related individuals were either serving custodial sentences or were being held on remand. The number of biker-related individuals detained has been at this level over a prolonged period.

The latest trend in biker crime shows a steady increase in the use of "crime by proxy", where

individuals who are not affiliated to or only have a peripheral affiliation to the biker community are forced to commit crime and hand over the proceeds or most of the proceeds to biker-related individuals.

In this connection, there are increasingly common examples of robbery, credit fraud, burglaries etc. committed under pressure from individuals affiliated to the biker community.

Effort to combat biker crime

02.07.2002

Biker crime, and the aura of threats and violence characteristic of the biker community, have recently led to substantial discussion of rising insecurity and concern.

The biker clubs and their supporter groups are present and visible in local communities, and there are constant new reports of "penalties for being stupid" and people being forced into crime.

Many Danish local authorities have joined forces to discuss the biker problem and look at the most effective way of tackling biker crime and its unacceptable impact on the local community. With a view to supporting this important process, the Minister of Justice has invited mayors and the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark to an early meeting.

In addition, discussions have been held in the Ministry of Justice with the National Police Service on the biker situation.

The Minister of Justice, Lene Espersen, says:

"The problem with the biker clubs and their supporter clubs is not a new phenomenon. It is a grouping with its own norms and rules, which is constantly striving to attract weak characters with a need for such a relationship of belonging. And the problems that arise from this grouping are not concerned with love of motorcycles. They involve threats, violence and killings and organised profit-oriented crime.

Biker crime has been systematically monitored by the police for many years, and an intensive police and investigative effort is being made to combat this crime.

It is of decisive importance to me that the police exercise their law-enforcement powers over the biker community visibly and intensively through supervision, checks and targeted efforts. The bikers must know and be aware that they are being attentively followed by the police and society.

In this connection it is not just the authorities who have to make an effort. The local communities also have an important role to play. In this connection I have been pleased by the general mobilisation and the dissociation from the biker community we have recently experienced in local communities and from parents, associations and organisations.

There is no doubt that a joint local effort and close co-operation between the authorities involved can help buttress this mobilisation. I therefore look forward to discussing with the local authorities how we can best ensure a joint, effective fight against biker crime.

At the same time, I wish to emphasise that I attach special importance to continuing and intensifying the police effort. I have therefore agreed with the National Commissioner of Police that, during the summer, he will draw up a broad proposal for the continued effort in relation to

the biker community in co-operation with the police districts and the Prosecution Service."