



POLITIHØGSKOLEN

Evaluation report

Evaluation of PST's and the
police's handling in connection
with the Kongsberg incident
on 13th October 2021



Summary

On the afternoon of Wednesday, October 13th, the man who turned out to be the perpetrator, Espen Andersen Bråthen¹, left his residence in Kongsberg. He was armed with a bow, a quiver of 60 arrows, a sword and two knives. On his way to the Coop Extra store, he shot arrows at a person, but missed. When he arrived at the building, he shot arrows at two people in Coop's and liquor store's garage. The South-East Police District's control room received the first call at 18:12. Two patrols, a total of three officers, were sent from the Kongsberg police station. Shortly afterward, the incident was defined as "PLIVO", an episode of ongoing life-threatening violence. In the meantime, the perpetrator entered the Coop Extra store, where he shot arrows at several people. When the police arrived, a confrontation arose, with the perpetrator shooting several arrows at the first patrol. The perpetrator evaded the patrol by way of an emergency exit, which was unknown to them. When outside on the street, "Myntgata", he shot arrows at several people while walking towards Peckels street, where he attempted to enter a residence. The three officers in Kongsberg began searching for the perpetrator on foot and in one patrol car. At the same time, the police control room made a number of alerts, which resulted in the rapid deployment of several police patrols from the South-East and Oslo Police Districts, as well as the Central Mobile Police Service and Police National Emergency Resources. The patrols from Kongsberg were the only police officers on the scene for most of incident until an arrest was made. While the police searched for him, the perpetrator killed five people in Hyttegata by stabbing them, before he was arrested at approximately 18:47. The elapsed time from the first emergency call to the arrest was about 34 minutes.

Bråthen has a history of psychological problems. He had been in contact with the police over the course of many years before the tragic events of October 13th, 2021. His first confrontation with police was in 1998. He was registered in PST's (Norwegian Police Security Services) systems for the first time in 2015, on the suspicion that he was radicalised or was in the process of being radicalised. PST recommended that the police follow up with an interview. In 2016 the Kongsberg police interviewed Bråthen's mother. Her comments somewhat lessened their concerns that he might be radicalised. In 2017, Bråthen published two identical videos on YouTube, which put him back into focus for PST. In the videos, he said that he was a Muslim and that he had a "warning". PST asked the police in Kongsberg to speak to him again. However, PST and the Kongsberg police disagreed on the extent to which his remarks were illegal, and the police did not want to react until there was a legal opinion that deemed the content punishable by law. PST concluded that the content was not illegal. PST repeated the request that the Kongsberg police speak to Bråthen, and a police patrol contacted him on the same day by. After the conversation, the police officers recommended that Bråthen get medical help. PST then concluded that the conversation reduced any concern of radicalisation. The day after the interview with the police, Bråthen attempted to contact a person in authority in Oslo, in order to warn him. The incident led to a comprehensive and operational threat assessment of Bråthen's intentions and capability. The analysis led to a recommendation

1 The evaluation committee chooses, except from Chapter 4, to refer to Bråthen as the perpetrator. This is because there is no doubt that it is Bråthen who is dealt with in the time before the Kongsberg incident on 13 October 2021. During this incident, however, there was an unknown perpetrator until the arrest (see Chapter 5).

that the Kongsberg police monitor Bråthen's interest in extreme Islamism. This recommendation was not communicated to the Kongsberg police.

Both the police and PST deemed that Bråthen was psychologically unstable, and he should be monitored by the health services. Bråthen had been hospitalised in psychiatric hospitals several times and had been in contact with police due to threats and violence towards his own parents. He had restraining orders against him, prohibiting him from visiting his parents and local shops in Kongsberg. His last stay in a psychiatric institution was in 2019. He was released after 11 days, and he had refused any medical care or medication.

In 2020, Kongsberg police received two reports about Bråthen due to threats of violence and murder. These reports were registered in police systems, but PST was not informed. The way the reports were logged and the notes from the registrar reflect that the Kongsberg police understood Bråthen to be mentally ill and unstable, an individual who spent a lot of time on the internet and conspiracy theories. Over the 14 months before the events of October 13th, Bråthen became increasingly isolated, and had no contact with either his family, the police or the health services.

On November 4th 2021, PST and the Police Directorate mandated an evaluation of the events surrounding the Kongsberg incident of October 13th, 2021. The goal of the present investigation is for PST and the police services to learn from the evaluation. With this in mind, the committee described and evaluated PST's and the police services' handling of the reports they received, as well as the communication between the branches of the police services and from the police to the health services prior to the incident. In addition, the operational handling of the incident from the first emergency call to the police to the perpetrator's arrest were described and evaluated, as per the mandate. In order to learn from the incident, the committee also listed what went well and what could have been done better.