

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

## Federal Women Offenders' Involvement in Security Threat Groups (STGs)

**Actively engaged STG affiliated women were more likely to have committed a violent offence and were higher in risk and need than those who were inactive.**

### Why we did this study

The proportion of women offenders affiliated with a Security Threat Group (STG)<sup>1</sup> continues to increase. A recent study indicates that 4% of the federal women offender population is STG affiliated; 6% of women in-custody were assessed as part of a STG.<sup>2</sup> The involvement status of these women has not been previously examined. Therefore this study was conducted to explore the differences between active and inactive<sup>3</sup> STG affiliated women offenders.

### What we did

Federal women with a STG affiliation ( $N=93$ ) were included; 77% ( $n=72$ ) were Indigenous, 14% ( $n=13$ ) were White, and 9% ( $n=8$ ) were members of other racialized groups. A greater proportion were active (59%,  $n=55$ ) and 41% ( $n=38$ ) were inactive. Comparisons between women in-custody (44%,  $n=41$ ) and in the community (56%,  $n=52$ ) were also undertaken.

### What we found

Almost half of actively and inactively involved women were aged 18 to 29 years. However, a greater majority of women in-custody (63% of those actively engaged and 71% of those inactive) were 18 to 29 years compared to STG affiliated women in the community (32% and 19%, respectively). Three-quarters of the women in the study were single,<sup>4</sup> which was slightly higher for inactive women.

Three-quarters of women in the study group were serving their first federal sentence. Fewer women actively engaged were serving sentences of four years or less compared to those inactive (53% versus 66%); this pattern was consistent for the in-custody and community subgroups.

Women actively engaged were more likely to have committed a violent offence than those identified as inactive (64% versus 48%); actively engaged women were more likely to commit assault (26% versus 21%), robbery (15% versus 8%), or homicide-related offences (13%

versus 8%), and less likely to commit property offences (4% versus 13%).

Actively involved women were more likely to be assessed as high risk and need compared to those who were inactive, and were also less likely to have a high motivation level, reintegration potential, or accountability level. Correctional plan engagement was also lower for actively versus inactively engaged women (82% versus 95%). This pattern was evident for the in-custody and community subgroups.

Actively engaged women were more likely than those who were inactive to have a moderate to high need in the following DFIA-R domains: attitudes (83% versus 51%), marital/family relations (75% versus 69%), and personal/emotional orientation (87% versus 77%) but were less likely to have identified need in community functioning (54% versus 66%), employment/education (69% versus 74%), or substance abuse (75% versus 91%). Almost all of both study groups had need related to associates (94%).

Institutional and post-release outcomes<sup>5</sup> show that those actively engaged women compared to inactive women continue to present operational and reintegration challenges: institutional transfers 63% versus 59%; filed grievances 96% versus 88%; suspension of release: 52% versus 33%.

### What it means

Distinct differences exist between actively and inactively engaged STG affiliated women across the indicators examined. Women who continue to actively engage in their STGs may benefit from additional supports aimed at their attitudes and personal/emotional orientation. Future research could explore the reasons why women chose to remain engaged versus disengage in STGs.

### For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#).

You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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<sup>1</sup> STGs are categorized as street gangs, Indigenous gangs, prison gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, traditional organized crime, Asian gangs, white supremacy groups, subversive groups, terrorist organizations and hate groups.

<sup>2</sup> Farrell MacDonald, S. *Federal offenders affiliated with Security Threat Groups (STG)* RIB 20-09. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

<sup>3</sup> Inactive STG affiliated offenders are not actively engaged in the STG but have not formally disaffiliated.

<sup>4</sup> Single means the offender was not currently married/common law or was not previously married/common law.

<sup>5</sup> The groups had comparable rates of correctional program completion (100% each), disciplinary charges (82% to 83%), institutional incidents (100% each), and returns to custody (10% each).

