



Contract killings in the Netherlands

Trends & Life story backgrounds regarding gunmen and other persons involved

Summary

Sheila Adjiembaks
Frank Boerman
Robby Roks
Ewout Stoffers

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SUMMARY

Objective & research questions

This summary is based on a research that provides both quantitative and qualitative insights regarding contract killings¹ in the Netherlands. With this research we aim to share scientific knowledge about this phenomenon and provide a constructive contribution to meaningful perspectives for practitioners involved in countering the social breeding ground for involvement in contract killings and organized crime. The research report² elaborates on five leading questions:

- I. What is the nature, distribution and volume of contract killings in the Netherlands in the period 2016 - 2021?
- II. What are the demographic background characteristics of the actual gunmen ('hitters') involved in contract killings?
- III. What criminal careers can be distinguished among gunmen involved in contract killings?
- IV. How do individuals get involved in contract killings and what motivations play a significant role regarding that involvement?
- V. How do those convicted for involvement in contract killings describe their life stories?

Methods

The research report is divided in two parts. The first part is primarily based on quantitative analyses of a 'Murder & Manslaughter Database' from the Dutch National Police Department. This analysis provides an answer to research questions 1, 2 and 3. The second part is based on qualitative analysis, where eleven criminal casefiles of the Public Prosecutor were studied and life story interviews with seventeen convicted persons involved in contract killings give rise to answering research questions 4 and 5. For a more detailed methodological elaboration, we refer to chapter 2 of the complete report.

¹ The definition of 'contract killings' (in Dutch 'liquidaties') can be found in paragraph 2.1 in the (Dutch version of) the report https://essaresearch.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/RAPPORT_Liquidaties-in-Nederland_AdjiembaksBoermanRoksStoffer_2024.pdf, page 37. In short, it refers to (the assignment of) killing one or multiple person(s) because of (knowledge about) criminal offenses as a result of a purposefully murder plan in order to create, maintain or strengthen ones own position in the criminal social environment or playing field (Slot, 2009, p.18).

² https://essaresearch.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/RAPPORT_Liquidaties-in-Nederland_AdjiembaksBoermanRoksStoffer_2024.pdf,

Conclusions

The following is a summary of the main conclusions³ of the Dutch study on contract killings in the Netherlands, ordered by research question. For a full description we refer to the complete report.⁴

PART 1 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

1. Nature, size & distribution of contract killings

The number of contract killings in perspective.

Analysis of the 'Murder & Manslaughter Database' shows that an average of nineteen cases of murder/manslaughter in the criminal environment annually take place in the Netherlands. About half of these involved are contract killings. On average there are ten (and at most thirteen) contract killings. In the period 2016 - 2021, there were 57 contract killings that took place. Of all murder/death cases in the Netherlands, one in twelve can be defined as a contract killing. This shows that the majority of murder/death cases in the Netherlands does not involve contract killings. The number of contract killings has also been decreasing since 2017.

Contract killings mainly take place in the Randstad⁵, on weekdays and in the evening.

A considerable proportion of contract killings take place in the province of 'Noord Holland' (40%) and 'Zuid Holland' (26%), mainly in the so-called 'Randstad', in or the surrounding areas of the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Adding the provinces 'Noord Brabant' (12%) and 'Utrecht' (12%), results in the vast majority of all contract killings in the Netherlands (90%). No registered contract killings occurred in the province 'Friesland,' 'Flevoland,' 'Drenthe' and 'Groningen' in the defined research period.

Most contract killings occur on weekdays (90%), during the evening- and night hours (67%) on public roads and parking lots (83%). Gunmen seem to strike on weekdays because of the predictability of victim routines, possible to increase the 'success' rate of the killing. They prefer executing the contract killing during the dark hours and outside, presumably in order to flee quickly and unseen after the execution. (Previous) descriptions suggesting contract killings are taking place "in broad daylight" - as sometimes used in the media - can thus be nuanced by this finding.

The use of fully automatic weapons does not determine the risk to bystanders of contract killings.

This research shows that almost half of the 57 contract killings (47%) can be qualified as a contract killing with a 'low risk' to bystanders (no persons present other than the perpetrator and victim). On the other hand, we qualify 25 of the 57 contract killings (44%) as 'high risk' bystander situations. In those cases, the contract killings took place in a room or place with several people and multiple shots were fired in which bystanders were at risk of being hit or were actually hit. In less than a quarter of the

³ For a more detailed presentation of the conclusions, we refer to Chapter 10.2 of the (Dutch) report.

⁴ https://essaresearch.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/RAPPORT_Liquidaties-in-Nederland_AdjiembaksBoermanRoksStoffer_2024.pdf,

⁵ A West-centred geographical economically thriving area in the Netherlands, defined by – amongst others – cities like Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht.

contract killings (13 out of 57 contract killings), a fully automatic firearm, such as a Kalashnikov or Skorpion, was used. Six of these 13 killings took place in the city or surrounding area of 'Rotterdam', five in 'Amsterdam' and one in 'Utrecht'. The use of fully automatic firearms is mainly limited to the 'Randstad.' We see no increase or decrease in the use of fully automatic firearms over the period 2016-2021, so no actual trend can be detected on this. Six out of thirteen contract killings executed by use of fully automatic firearms involved a high risk to bystanders. Thus, a high risk to bystanders is somewhat evenly distributed looking at contract killings executed by use of fully automatic firearms and those killings executed by use of other firearms such as Glocks and Lugers. The use of fully automatic firearms, therefore, - and perhaps somewhat surprising - does not increase bystander risk according to our data.

Criminal market: four out of five contract killings in the Netherlands are cocaine related.

About four out of five contract killings in the Netherlands are cocaine-related (83%). Especially in the 'Randstad' area this relationship can be established. For the amount of contract killings in 'Amsterdam' and surrounding areas the relationship with cocaine exists in twenty out of the 23 cases. Regarding the city of 'Rotterdam' and surroundings it concerns thirteen out of the fifteen contract killings and in the province of 'Utrecht' all contract killings seemed cocaine related. In the province of 'Noord- Brabant' the picture differs a bit: three out of the seven contract killings are cocaine-related, the rest is related to cannabis and/or synthetic drugs.

Motivation: there is no such thing as 'friends' in crime.

The motivation that lies behind the danger of being killed often comes from ones own criminal alliance or network than from a competing criminal network. Analysis of the 'Murder & Manslaughter Database' from the Police shows that less than 40% of the motivations that are constructed relate to contract killings of a competing network, while more than half of the contract killings came from ones own criminal alliance or in the periphery thereof. The most common motivations for killing someone from ones own criminal alliance are 'lacking performance,' 'theft' (of money or drugs), 'talking to the police, judicial authorities or with someone else in the criminal social environment.' Top that, the life story interviews (also) illustrate that having friendly relationships within ones own criminal network is rather questionable. Respondents talk about 'orders to kill purported friends' and business-related persons within the drug trade. In short, the thought or expectation that especially enemies or competing alliances kill each other deserves a refinement: the danger comes more often from ones own criminal alliance than from competing ones.

2. Demographic background characteristics of shooters and victims

In 40 out of the 57 contract killings committed in the period 2016-2021, a total of 56 gunmen or 'hitters' were identified. Most of these involved one gunman per contract killing (60%). In 17 cases of the contract killings, no gunmen were identified. The 57 contract killings involved 62 deaths and five seriously injured victims. In most cases there is one /a single deceased victim (95%). One out of five contract killings were not intended.

Gunmen are not consistently getting younger.

This study shows that gunmen are exclusively men with an average age of 29 years. The average age shows a declining trend. Surprisingly that is not due to an increase in the amount of relatively young gunmen. It is caused by the fact that the number of older gunmen is decreasing while the number of younger ones is not increasing. Gunmen are therefore not consistently getting younger.

Victims of contract killings are on average more than 11 years older than gunmen: 40 versus 29 years. All deceased victims were male with the exception of one (unintended) female victim.

A majority of gunmen is born in the Netherlands with roots from outside Europe.

Six out of every ten gunmen are born in the Netherlands. The roots of a significant proportion of gunmen are from outside Europe, partly due to the fact that roots are officially determined not only by own country of birth, but also by that of parents: out of every ten gunmen, eight have roots from outside Europe. However important differences exist between the countries of origin. If we look at the distribution of the classical Dutch migration countries (Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, Surinam and the Caribbean), over a quarter of the gunmen involved seem to have roots in the Caribbean ('Antillen'). Gunmen with Moroccan roots are just as common as those with roots in Surinam: almost one out of five each. Gunmen with Turkish roots are but few and those with Indonesian roots are completely absent in the data. An overrepresentation of persons with non-European roots can also be found among victims of contract killings, but to a lesser extent than among gunmen: five out of ten (versus eight out of ten).

Contract killings involve more unintended victims due to 'fateful presence' than 'fateful similarity.'

This study shows that one out of five contract killings are not intended. Focussing on these unintended cases, the victims of so-called 'mistaken contract-killings' in particular receive a lot of attention from the media. This includes events in which a person is murdered because he is mistaken for someone else. In the Netherlands, there were four victims like this between 2016-2021. Less attention is paid to another category of victims in contract killings: persons who are killed because they are simply near the target; they simply are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Here, we unravelled seven victims involved. In short, it thus can be concluded that in contract killings more deaths occur because of 'fateful presence' than 'fateful similarity.'

3. Criminal careers of gunmen

Criminal history: gunmen have a considerable 'track record.'

The majority (93%) of the 56 identified gunmen were already known to the police prior to committing the contract killing because of registrations of criminal offenses. Usually, a gunman commits the contract killing only years after his first registered crime - for a vast majority five years after that or later. On average, a gunman has been a suspect of 27 criminal offenses prior to executing the contract killing. We can therefore conclude that gunmen have a considerable 'track record' - and thus do not come out of the blue - before they get involved in a contract killing.

Criminal careers of gunmen: lots of violence but no specialization, both escalation and de-escalation.





A majority (34) of the gunmen involved, start their criminal careers as minors (below the age of 18) and a minority (13 gunmen) start their career as an adult (above the age of 18). Gunmen are on average 16 years old at the start of their (registered) criminal career. Five of them have been a suspect of a criminal offense as a child (below the age of 12). A lot of violence occurs looking at the criminal careers of all gunmen involved: one out of three gunmen is immediately violent at the start of their criminal

career, ninety percent are known for registered crimes with a violent component (eleven hitters even have more than ten violent registrations) and 22 gunmen have previously been a suspect of involvement regarding (attempted) murder/death. However, violent crimes are not the majority of gunmen's registered offenses. They also have registrations regarding a variety of other offenses, such as property crimes without violence. Gunmen are therefore no 'specialists' in violent offenses looking based on their registrations. Also, the seriousness of the crimes involved does not increase during their criminal career. In fact, there even are a bit more gunmen with a de-escalating rather than an escalating criminal career.

PART 2 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

4. Personal motivations & modes of involvement in contract killing

In order to gain more insight into the modes of involvement in contract killings in the Netherlands, we studied eleven criminal case files from the Public prosecutor and interviewed fourteen convicted persons unravelling their life story which resulted in four 'narrative poses' that can be distinguished from the interview data. A narrative pose is the way a convicted person presents himself during his narration on the contract killing. The narrative poses are based on a narrative analysis which focussed on the (1) personal motivations put forward in the story told and (2) the narrative about the mode of involvement in the contract killing. Below we present and describe the four narrative poses unravelled:

	'Autonomous gunman' 	'Professional' 	'Naive man' 	'Denier that knows' 
Personal motivation (why)	Revenge in order to retain or reinforce reputation in the criminal environment (personal conflict) 'An eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth' No financial reward involved	Money, also in order to maintain reputation in the criminal environment (business) 'I'm known for my quick & dirty 'bad-ass' reputation' Receives a financial reward	Money & belonging/loyalty regarding significant others 'I got involved without 'deliberately knowing' Belonging, acknowledgement and a financial sum/reward	No motivation portrayed. Denies his role or share in the contract killing as allocated by authorities 'I had to choose' Portrays the general dynamics in the criminal environment
Mode of involvement (how)	Directly, via a personal (friendly) relationship with the victim also involved in the criminal environment Executes the contract killing autonomously. No phased/professional murderplan involved.	Directly, at the behest of some one else in the criminal environment Executes (parts of) the contract killing by himself by use of a more phased, professionally conceived murderplan.	Indirectly, via criminal (family/neighbourhood and schoolrelated) personal relationships. Naivety dominates. Gets involved by executing 'side jobs', not exclusively related to a contract killing.	Denial of the role assigned by authorities. Deals with a dilemma: talking to authorities will lead to death. Claims to have prevented other crimes. Sees himself as a 'victim' of the criminal justice system.

Four narrative poses on contract killings in the Netherlands (Adjiembaks et al, 2024).

Three modes of involvement in contract killings: (1) directly, as the result of a personal conflict, (2) directly, in commission of others, and (3) indirectly/gradually.

Directly, as the result of a personal conflict: involvement in a contract killing in this first mode of involvement proceeds directly and is the culmination of a personal conflict between the perpetrator and the actual victim. We refer to this as the narrative pose named as the 'Doe-hetzelver' (in Dutch) / **'Autonomous gunman'** (in English). This pose teaches us that this mode of involvement is primarily embedded in an initial collaborative and friendly relationship with the victim in the criminal environment. Convicted persons who portray this narrative pose handle and settle the contract killing entirely autonomous, according to a (relatively) less complex or phased conceived plan because the killing is seen as an immediate 'split' response in order to show that one cannot mess with him. In other words: the contract killing is portrayed as a necessity, a response needed to maintain or strengthen one's own reputation in the criminal social environment.

Directly, in commission of others: second, for other perpetrators we interviewed, involvement in a contract killing proceeds also directly, but in commission of others. This mode of involvement is referred to as the narrative pose of the 'Professional.' This person portrays himself as someone who is well-known for his 'bad ass,' often violent reputation: a person who can get the job done, executes it professionally, quick and is ready to act on short notice. The **'Professional'** executes (different parts of) the contract killing himself, grounded in a more phased, conceived plan which is often thought through in more detail than the first narrative pose as described above.

Indirectly/gradually: a third mode that emerges from the life story interviews concerns a more indirect, gradual mode of involvement. This is - unlike the previously mentioned two modes - marked by a degree of naivety. Involvement is the result of interactions within one's own social network (and/or network) of family and/or friends, often from within the direct neighbourhood or school. These convicted persons portray themselves as persons who were not aware of the actual embeddedness of their actions considering an impending contract killing. We refer to this narrative pose as the 'Naïveling (in Dutch) / **'Naïve man'** (in English) who gets involved in all kinds of (relative minor) 'side-jobs' that, do not necessarily relate to a contract killing (think of beaconing a car, spotting a person, et cetera).

Motivations for involvement in a contract killing are varied and complex: revenge, financial gain, and belonging/loyalty.

Because suspects from the files studied often make use of their right to stay silent during the criminal justice procedure, prosecutors and judges often are assigned to construct a motivation based on the (fragmented) information that is portrayed in the file. Personal motivation related to financial gain is often brought to the court. This motivation does align with knowledge from the life stories that were narratively studied. In particular, regarding the narrative pose of the 'Professional' this motivation is plausible. This primarily indicates that involvement in a contract killing is purely a 'business transaction', also befitting the professional's criminal reputation. This shows that 'financial gain' as a (constructed) motivation in the case of silent suspects can indeed be plausible, based on the empirical material we obtained.

However, there is more to it. The data collected in our research simultaneously shows that a focus on merely 'financial gain' as motivation is too limited. First, based on the narrative pose of the 'Autonomous gunman,' we discovered that financial gain is sometimes even perceived as despicable and that feelings of revenge rooted in 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'- principle, comes to the fore as meaningful. These feelings are mostly motivated by personal conflicts regarding money and/or ripped or stolen batches of hard drugs by (alleged) friends and/or members within one's own collaborative criminal alliance.

Second, regarding the narrative pose of the 'Naive man' we see that feelings of loyalty and 'belonging' (whether or not combined with the prospect of a financial compensation) are the main meaningful motivations for involvement. In some cases, this is accompanied by a sense of perceived compulsion or coercion: some convicted perpetrators state that they felt that there was no way back when they found themselves in precarious situations prior to the execution of the contract killing. In this regard, the narrative pose of the 'Naïve man' we see portrayals as persons who do not always bear knowledge of the impending contract killing. They are not actively aware and somehow - as time passes by - 'discover' that their 'chores' or 'side jobs' play part in executing a contract killing.

At the same time, these stories teach us that this sometimes involves a degree of ambiguity in the form of 'deliberate unawareness' due to some form of perceived coercion: one does not feel save enough to (dare) ask questions about what is about to happen. Partly because initial commitments have been made for a (seemingly) 'harmless chore' that is not necessarily related to a contract killing (like beacon placement, picking up a car, et cetera). In short, we conclude that there is more than just 'financial gain' as a (constructed) motivation for involvement in contract killings: it entails a complex entanglement, an intertwining of the (initial) motivations for a 'side job' and the actual involvement in a serious offence as a contract killing.

Fear of retaliation from the criminal environment is bigger than the fear of a (potential) criminal sentence.

This research has shown that the majority of suspects and convicted perpetrators as mentioned in the Public prosecutor files invoked their right to remain silent or denied their alleged role by the Public prosecutor in the preparation or execution of the contract killing involved. This attitude of remaining silent or holding back on statements seems to be related to the street code of 'not snitching'. Based on our empirical material from the life story interviews, we also learn that 'staying silent' during prosecution is also prompted by the haze of violence that surrounds contract killing cases.

This is illustrated in the (fourth) narrative pose of the '(Ont)kenner' (in Dutch) / '**Denier-that-knows**' (in English): these perpetrators portray themselves as persons who actually have knowledge on the whereabouts and dynamics within the criminal environment but deny or reject the role assigned by the Public prosecutor regarding the contract killing. The 'Denier-that-knows' presents himself not as a perpetrator but rather as a victim of a failing criminal justice system. Some of them know the underlying actual motivations or motive for the contract killing involved. However, they face an important dilemma. Although they have knowledge which could potentially plead for a lower sentence for themselves, they are at the same time very aware of the criminal code: 'talking = sleeping' (will lead to their death). For them, therefore fear of retaliation from the criminal environment is bigger than the fear of a (potential) criminal sentence.

5. Life course descriptions of persons involved in contract killings

Convicted persons in contract killings describe their lives mainly according to three lifetime periods: their childhood, their teenage years and their (young) adult years.

Childhood: a beautiful childhood despite violent events.

Although the majority of the convicted respondents referred to their childhood with positive feelings, they also describe some violent events during that period. These events include maternal neglect, police raids in their home(s), severe money problems and/or out of home placements, home convictions (e.g. due to sudden detention of one or more parents), sexual and/or violent domestic abuse. It is not inconceivable that such drastic experiences have led to traumas or psycho-social

problems later on. Based on the life story interviews, we however can conclude that for the majority of the respondents involved, mainly positive memories dominate in their descriptions of their childhood despite negative, sometimes violent experiences and (possibly traumatic) events during that period.

Teenage years: different factors that lead to derailment.

This research teaches us that the convicted persons began to experience that 'real' problems in their lives began to start in their teenage years, particularly during the transition phase (around 12 or 13 years of age) from primary to secondary school. During this period, a degree of (emotional) disconnection with home is mentioned by most respondents. In particular, they state there was an emotional disconnection with their (physically present or absent) father. Second, the life stories indicate that mostly 'bigger', more important problems (such as having financial problems at home) led to more systematic unauthorised school absence while, on the other hand, 'the street' increasingly begins to attract during that (teen)period in life. This attraction is partly driven by the increased need for (financial) autonomy in their teenage years.

During the teenage period, the majority of respondents, mostly at a very young age (12/13 years old), became involved in criminal activities for the first time. There are roughly four factors that play a meaningful role in this involvement. First (1), respondents indicate that experiencing poverty and having financial problems at home plays an important role. Lack of money seems to reinforce the drive for financial autonomy significantly and made them vulnerable for opportunities regarding crime that can lead to 'quick money.' Secondly (2), this seems embedded in neighbourhood dynamics where respondents grew up. A degree of interconnectedness (as peers) seems to arise and is mostly anchored in feelings of social deprivation: one grows up - according to respondents - in 'deprived neighbourhoods' where 'a lot of shit was going on'. This can create feelings of (collective) justification or neutralisation towards acquiring an illegal income in order to 'survive' daily life. Third, (3) the criminal context with criminally active role models in which a part of the respondents grew up, was also experienced as influential. Respondents describe negative influences from embedded criminal neighbourhood structures and (young)adult negative role models surrounding them in their teenage years. About half of the respondents talk about the perceived influence of criminally active family members and feelings of loyalty towards them. Criminal role models also reinforce the (retrospectively romanticised) image that crime does pay. The realisation that crime in fact does *not* pay off looking at the long term and that only a few people can actually have a 'successful criminal career,' is totally absent in the teenage period of their lives. This is partly explained (4) by the fact that for some respondents in that phase of their life, in particular, the 'craving' for excitement predominates along with a short-term focus.

From their teenage years to their (young) adult years, it is also striking that temptations involving participation in crime are actually accompanied by periods of (juvenile) incarceration. This has two different consequences. Some respondents experience (juvenile) detention as a place of structure: a 'moment of rest' during chaos in live and having a 'roof over their head'. For others, their incarceration is also a period that led to an increase in criminal contacts and 'learning' more about committing crimes and associated strategies for avoiding police and judicial disruptions.

(Young) adulthood: when crime gets 'serious' despite an early start.

The life story interviews show that for the majority of respondents, their criminal career seriously started in their (young) adulthood despite the fact that they already were criminally active from the start of their teenage years. This perspective is the result of the fact that in their (young)adult years, they started living on their own, being more independent and some of them even had children and refer to alternating periods of instability when it comes to work and acquiring a monthly income. Respondents also indicate that they continued their criminal careers because they experienced instability in the

period(s) after incarceration in terms of social relationships, income, work, and/or housing. For them, committing crimes in young adulthood acquires a more important, instrumental character: it actually is deployed to get basic needs in order, acquire income and 'earn' a living. A home, parenthood and having a job are usually factors that promote desistance from crime. The empirical results from this study however suggest that such factors can also be significant in *persisting* in crime if they receive too little attention after periods of being incarcerated. Top that, in the descriptions of the majority of respondents, it emerges that they participate in increasingly serious (inter)national criminal offences and criminal alliances or groups. It is thus clear that although the criminal career of persons involved in contract killings on average already started in their (early) teenage years, retrospectively, it is perceived as more important and instrumental during (young) adulthood.

Recommendations

This study provides insights that are significant for a better understanding of the qualitative and quantitative backgrounds regarding contract killings in the Netherlands. It feeds the perspectives of professionals to counteract the breeding ground for involvement in contract killings in several ways. We discuss these recommendations below. For a detailed discussion and further explanation, please refer to paragraph 10.3 of the (Dutch) report.

Embed and analyse police information in a national 'Murder & Manslaughter Database' to feed policies with accurate information on contract killings.

First of all, it has become clear that structural collection and analysis of police information provides valuable knowledge about contract killings in the Netherlands and those involved. With that knowledge, accurate information about this phenomenon can be provided. This can, for instance, correct biased reporting on contract killings and counterbalance existing (wrongful) perceptions which can do more just to citizens' sense of safety. Furthermore, structural analyses offer opportunities for developing better substantiated policies, aimed at preventing and countering the involvement in contract killings. It is therefore important that police and prosecutors embed a national 'Murder & Manslaughter Database' in which police information is structurally anchored and analysed.

Counterbalance romanticised images of crime.

Second, this research provides an opportunity to highlight another side of the perceived forecast that young people mostly get from social media and TV regarding the alleged 'glamorous' lifestyle in crime.' The analyses show, for example, that more than half of contract killings take place within one's own criminal alliance or its surroundings. This makes it clear that 'friendly' relationships in criminal alliances are rather relative or at least superficial. Paying more attention to such 'risks of a life in crime' and emphasizing the potential (life-threatening) consequences, can counterbalance existing romanticised images and purported expectations about involvement in crime based on empirical, first hand, scientific evidence.

The criminal career of gunmen offers few opportunities for early detection to prevent involvement in contract killings.

Thirdly, it appears that the criminal career of gunmen - unfortunately - does not provide any leads to predict future involvement in contract killings: their criminal career showed no common and/or characteristic criminal pattern that can contribute to prediction. Whilst, after a contract killing, public and media actors often raise questions like: what did we know about the suspect? Could this murder perhaps have been prevented? Our research illustrates that a prediction of involvement in contract

killings cannot be fulfilled. What does stand out however, is that over 40% of the gunmen have previously been a suspect regarding a(n) (attempted) murder/death offence.

Early prevention: focus on acting on the disruption of a positive development of youngsters.

Fourth, this research indicates that there are meaningful opportunities for early crime prevention in general. The life story interviews with those involved in contact killings teach us that an enhanced focus on serious disruption of positive development of young people, especially within the school domain is necessary: (structural) unauthorised school absenteeism should therefore not be seen as a cause but as a symptom of possible underlying, more complex problems. Also, collaborating with youngsters themselves offers the opportunity to engage in more meaningful insights to prevent involvement in (more serious forms of) crime.

Besides a focus on 'gaining prove' also a focus on 'understanding'

Last but not least, the results of this research regarding the four narrative poses indicate that there is a variety of personal motivations and modes of involvement related to contract killings. For example, there may be direct but also indirect involvement and also feelings of perceived coercion may play a significant role. The findings of this research therefore (re)affirm that the criminal justice chain should not only focus on 'gaining prove' during the criminal procedure but also on 'understanding' the wider context that leads to involvement in a contract killing, can take place. This can feed the criminal justice chain to formulate a more meaningful, fit sentence, tuned to the variety of modes of involvement and variety of personal motivations that can play a role in contract killings.