



SUMMARY OF TERRORISM THREAT TO THE U.S. HOMELAND

The Secretary of Homeland Security has issued a new National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin regarding the current heightened threat environment across the United States. The Homeland is facing threats that have evolved significantly and become increasingly complex and volatile in 2021. These threats include those posed by domestic terrorists, individuals and groups engaged in grievance-based violence, and those inspired or influenced by foreign terrorists and other malign foreign influences. Social media and online forums are increasingly exploited by these actors to influence and spread violent extremist narratives and activity. Such threats also are exacerbated by the impacts from the ongoing global pandemic.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Violent extremists may seek to exploit the easing of COVID-19-related restrictions across the United States to conduct attacks against a broader range of targets after previous public capacity limits reduced opportunities for lethal attacks.
- Historically, mass-casualty Domestic Violent Extremist (DVE) attacks linked to racially- or ethnically-motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) have targeted houses of worship and crowded commercial facilities or gatherings. Some RMVEs advocate via social media and online platforms for a race war and have stated that civil disorder provides opportunities to engage in violence in furtherance of ideological objectives.
- Through 2020 and into 2021, government facilities and personnel have been common targets of DVEs, and opportunistic violent criminals are likely to exploit Constitutionally-protected freedom of speech activity linked to racial justice grievances and police use of force concerns, potentially targeting protestors perceived to be ideological opponents.
- Ideologically-motivated violent extremists fueled by perceived grievances, false narratives, and conspiracy theories continue to share information online with the intent to incite violence. Online narratives across sites known to be frequented by individuals who hold violent extremist ideologies have called for violence against elected officials, political representatives, government facilities, law enforcement, religious or commercial facilities, and perceived ideologically-opposed individuals.
- The use of encrypted messaging by lone offenders and small violent extremist cells may obscure operational indicators that provide specific warning of a pending act of violence.
- Messaging from foreign terrorist organizations, including al-Qa'ida and ISIS, intended to inspire U.S.-based homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) continues to amplify narratives related to exploiting protests. HVEs, who have typically conducted attacks against soft targets, mass gatherings, and law enforcement, remain a threat to the Homeland.
- Nation-state adversaries have increased efforts to sow discord. For example, Russian, Chinese and Iranian government-linked media outlets have repeatedly amplified conspiracy theories concerning the origins of COVID-19 and effectiveness of vaccines; in some cases, amplifying calls for violence targeting persons of Asian descent.
- DHS encourages law enforcement and homeland security partners to be alert to these developments and prepared for any effects to public safety. Consistent with applicable law, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) law enforcement organizations should maintain situational awareness of online and physical activities that may be related to an evolving threat of violence.

HOW WE ARE RESPONDING

- DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) continue to provide guidance to SLTT partners about the current threat environment. Specifically, DHS has issued numerous intelligence assessments to SLTT officials on the evolving threat.
- DHS is collaborating with industry partners to identify and respond to those individuals encouraging violence and attempting to radicalize others through spreading disinformation, conspiracy theories, and false narratives on social media and other online platforms.
- DHS has prioritized combatting DVE threats within its FEMA grants as a National Priority Area.
- DHS remains committed to identifying and preventing domestic terrorism.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- DHS asks the public to report [suspicious activity](#) and threats of violence, including online threats, to local law enforcement, [FBI Field Offices](#), or a local [Fusion Center](#).
- If you know someone who is struggling with mental health issues, or may be a danger to themselves or others, [support is available](#).

Be Prepared and Stay Informed

- Be prepared for any emergency situations and remain aware of circumstances that may place your personal safety at risk.
- Maintain [digital media literacy](#) to recognize and build resilience to false and harmful narratives.
- Make note of your surroundings and the nearest security personnel.
- Business owners should consider the safety and security of customers, employees, facilities, infrastructure, and cyber networks.
- Government agencies will provide details about emerging threats as information is identified. The public is encouraged to listen to local authorities and public safety officials.

If you See Something, Say Something® – Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.