



12 August 2022

(U//FOUO) Violent Threats Against Federal Law Enforcement, Courts, and Government Personnel and Facilities Following Court-Authorized Search

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This *Joint Intelligence Bulletin* is intended to provide information on the potential for domestic violent extremists to carry out attacks on federal, state, and local law enforcement and government personnel or facilities. This *Bulletin* is being shared in light of an increase in threats and acts of violence, including armed encounters, against law enforcement, judiciary, and government personnel, in reaction to the FBI's recent execution of a court-authorized search warrant in Palm Beach, Florida. It is intended to support the activities of the FBI and DHS and assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government; counterterrorism, law enforcement, and court officials; first responders; and private sector security partners in effectively deterring, preventing, preempting, or responding to terrorist attacks against the United States.

(U) Coordinated with the National Counterterrorism Center.

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(U) All US person information has been minimized. For all other inquiries, please contact the Homeland Security Single Point of Service, Request for Information Office at DHS-SPS-RFI@hq.dhs.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.ic.gov.

(U) Overview

(U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS have observed an increase in threats to federal law enforcement and, to a lesser extent, other law enforcement and government officials following the FBI's recent execution of a search warrant in Palm Beach, Florida. These threats are occurring primarily online and across multiple platforms, including social media sites, web forums, video sharing platforms, and image boards. The FBI and DHS would like to ensure that law enforcement, court, and government personnel are aware of the range of threats and criminal and violent incidents.

(U//FOUO) Increase in Observed Violence and Calls for Attacks Against Federal Law Enforcement, Judicial, and Government Personnel

(U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS are aware of an increase in recent threats and calls for violence against federal law enforcement, US Government, and judicial personnel in reaction to the FBI's execution of a search warrant in Palm Beach, Florida on 8 August 2022. These developments highlight the heightened threat since 2020 by domestic violent extremists (DVEs) motivated by a range of ideologies, who have grievances against a variety of targets including law enforcement.^a

- (U//FOUO) Since the search, the FBI and DHS have observed an increase in violent threats posted on social media against federal officials and facilities, including a threat to place a so-called dirty bomb in front of FBI Headquarters and issuing general calls for "civil war" and "armed rebellion." Many of these threats include references to the perception that the 2020 presidential election was fraudulent and other claims of government overreach, which are narratives that have mobilized DVEs in the past to commit acts of violence, including against law enforcement and federal, state, and local governments.
- (U//FOUO) Some of these threats are specific in identifying proposed targets, tactics, or weaponry. Since 8 August 2022, the FBI and DHS have identified multiple articulated threats and calls for the targeted killing of judicial, law enforcement, and government officials associated with the Palm Beach search, including the federal judge who approved the Palm Beach search warrant. The FBI and DHS have also observed the personal identifying information of possible targets of violence, such as home addresses and identification of family members, disseminated online as additional targets.
- (U//FOUO) On 11 August 2022, Ricky Shiffer, Jr., wearing a technical vest and armed with an AR-style rifle and a nail gun, attempted to forcibly enter the FBI's Cincinnati Field Office. When uniformed officers responded to Shiffer's attempt to break a glass barrier, he fled the scene. A pursuit ensued, and Shiffer entered a standoff with FBI and law enforcement officers after firing multiple shots at responding officers from the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP). After a prolonged standoff, OSHP, with FBI SWAT support, attempted to arrest Shiffer, resulting in his death.

^a (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define a domestic violent extremist (DVE) as an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

- (U//FOUO) A subsequent review of Shiffer’s devices and online postings identified his likely ideologically driven, personal anti-FBI beliefs. In the days preceding the attack, Shiffer called on others to acquire weapons and kill federal law enforcement, claiming he felt he was fighting in a “civil war.” Some suspected DVEs have praised the attack and called for more incidents, while others have labeled it a false flag.

(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) In recent years, DVEs adhering to different violent extremist ideologies have coalesced around perceptions of government overreach and election fraud to threaten and conduct violence. As a result of recent activities, we assess that potential targets of DVE violence moving forward could include law enforcement, judicial officials, individuals implicated in conspiracy theories, and perceived ideological opponents who challenge their worldview. Drivers that could escalate the threat environment include possible future law enforcement or legal actions against individuals associated with the Palm Beach search, statements by public officials which incite violence, a high-profile successful DVE attack that inspires copycats, or the emergence of additional conspiracy theories. The threats we have observed, to date, underscore that DVEs may view the 2022 midterm election as an additional flashpoint around which to escalate threats against perceived ideological opponents, including federal law enforcement personnel.

(U//FOUO) Although observed threats have predominantly been against federal law enforcement agencies and their facilities, we have historically observed violent actors, including DVEs, are frequently unable or unwilling to differentiate between federal, state, and local law enforcement; separate government agencies; or co-located private businesses. The 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing remains the highest casualty DVE attack in US history and its plotters did not draw a distinction between the multiple government agencies—including a day care facility—occupying the building. More recently, in July 2021, a local Task Force Officer was killed during an attack on an FBI facility in Indianapolis, Indiana.

(U) Past Behaviors Associated With Radicalization and Mobilization to Violence

(U//FOUO) A body of court documents and press reporting reveals several observable behaviors that may indicate radicalization and mobilization to violence by DVEs. It is important to emphasize that many of the mobilization indicators may also relate to constitutionally protected activities. It is important to look critically and contextually at the specific actions of the individual and their intent. Law enforcement action should never be taken solely based on constitutionally protected activities; on the apparent or actual race, age, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity of the subject; or any combination of these factors. Individuals are encouraged to contact law enforcement if—based on these indicators and the situational context—they suspect an individual is mobilizing to violence or engaging in violent extremist activities.

- (U//FOUO) Identifying—in person or online—specific details of an intended violent activity, including target(s), time frames, and participant roles;
- (U//FOUO) Seeking or claiming religious, political, or ideological justification or validation for a planned violent attack;

- (U//FOUO) Unusual purchase of military-style tactical equipment (for example, body armor or personal protective equipment) in a manner that raises suspicion of planning violence;
- (U//FOUO) Communicating directly with, or seeking to develop a relationship with, violent extremists—or being contacted directly by them—for suspected criminal purposes;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual efforts to obtain explosive precursors, especially illegally or surreptitiously;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual acquisition of weapons or ammunition for suspected criminal purposes;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual change in, or initiation of, physical or weapons training for suspected criminal purposes;
- (U//FOUO) Producing, promoting, or extensively consuming violent extremist content online or in person, including violent extremist videos, narratives, media, and messaging for suspected criminal purposes;
- (U//FOUO) Expressing acceptance of violence as a necessary means to achieve ideological goals (for example, communicating a desire for revenge against ideological opponents) and saying that nonviolent means are ineffective or unavailable;
- (U//FOUO) Increasing or extreme adherence to conspiracy theories as justification of violence against ideological targets; and
- (U//FOUO) Attempting to radicalize others—especially family members and peers—to violence.

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) We encourage the use of the unclassified information sharing system eGuardian for reporting suspicious activity reports (SARs) to the FBI. eGuardian is accessible via the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP). If the information is urgent in nature, then please contact your local FBI field office directly and follow up with an eGuardian report. If you need a LEEP account, please navigate to the LEEP homepage at www.cjis.gov and select "Apply for an account". From within LEEP, navigate to LEEP Services and then select eGuardian and an eGuardian application page will be displayed. Further information about the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI) and eGuardian access can also be obtained here: <https://www.dhs.gov/nsi>.

(U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response

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(U) For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this document, please contact the FBI Counterterrorism Analysis Section by email at FBI_CTAS@ic.fbi.gov or the Intelligence Publications Center by e-mail at ianda_pb@hq.dhs.gov.

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.5, HSEC-8.8.3