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(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists Likely To Consider Varied Tactics Against a Range of 2024 Election-Related Targets

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This Joint Intelligence Bulletin provides an overview of potential threats of violence from domestic violent extremists (DVEs) during the 2024 general election cycle.^a It does not address potential threats originating outside the domestic terrorism sphere. DVEs' mobilization to violence depends on a blend of ideological, sociopolitical, and personal grievances, which vary among individual extremists; their reaction to divisive topics in public discourse; and their access to potential targets. The FBI and DHS advise federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government and law enforcement officials and private sector security partners to remain vigilant of these potential threats.

(U//FOUO) Potential Election-Related Targets and Tactics

(U//FOUO) DVEs pose a threat of violence to a range of targets directly and indirectly associated with elections through at least the presidential inauguration on 20 January 2025. DVEs who mobilize to violence could seek to use a range of violent or disruptive tactics against these targets, including but not limited to physical attacks, threats of violence, swatting and doxing, mailing or otherwise delivering suspicious items, arson, and other means of property destruction.

- (U//FOUO) Potential targets of DVE violence before, during, or after the election include candidates for public office, elected officials, political party representatives, election workers, judicial personnel participating in court cases related to the election, media personnel, and perceived ideological opponents. Some DVEs likely view publicly accessible locations like voting locations, ballot drop-box locations, voter registration locations, political rallies and campaign events, and political party offices as attractive targets, as evidenced by the attempted assassination of a former US president at a public rally on 13 July 2024. Similarly, threat actors may seek to target individuals at their

^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 own 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 does not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

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(U) All US person information has been minimized. Should you require US person information on weekends or after normal weekday hours during exigent and time sensitive circumstances, contact the Current and Emerging Threat Watch Office at 202-447-3688, CETC.OSCO@HQ.DHS.GOV. 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.sgov.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.ic.gov

private residences or other non-public locations, as seen in a second, unrelated attempt to assassinate the same former US president at a private golf course in West Palm Beach, Florida, on 15 September 2024.^b

- (U//FOUO) During the 2024 election season, we also have observed election-related threats of violence and disruptive incidents, including white powder letters sent to election officials and offices, hoax bomb threats to state capitol buildings, and swatting and doxing of public officials. In many of these incidents, the perpetrators and their motives remain under investigation, but their actions likely are intended to instill fear and disrupt election operations. Previously, during the 2023 elections, suspicious letters containing white powder—which was determined to be baking soda and trace amounts of fentanyl—prompted evacuations and temporary shutdowns at some election-related facilities.

(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists With Election-Related Grievances Pose the Most Likely Threat of Violence^c

(U//FOUO) DVEs with election-related grievances, such as the perception of election fraud or anger toward perceived political adversaries, pose the most likely threat of extremist violence to election-related targets during the 2024 election cycle. DVEs continue to create, exploit, and promote narratives about the election process or legal decisions involving political figures, and we are concerned that these grievances could motivate some DVEs to engage in violence, as we saw during the 2020 election cycle.

- (U//FOUO) Perceptions that election fraud is occurring remain a prominent narrative cited by some DVEs who have targeted government and election officials. In November 2023, a DVE in Texas was sentenced to two years in prison for threatening to murder three Georgia election officials and their families in January 2021. The DVE claimed the election workers should be killed because they were Chinese agents. Since the 2021 attack of the US Capitol complex, at least three DVE attacks and two disrupted plots have been linked to claims of election fraud.
- (U//FOUO) Some DVEs, due to their perceptions that election fraud has occurred, view law enforcement and judicial figures as the enforcement arm of a government or broader system intent on targeting political opponents. In August 2023, a DVE resisted arrest and pointed a firearm at FBI agents who attempted to arrest them at their Utah home for issuing threats against government officials, including the President of the United States, resulting in the DVE's death. Additionally, in August 2022, in response to the court-authorized search of a former US president's Florida residence, a DVE attempted to breach a window of the FBI field office in Cincinnati, Ohio; fled the scene; and engaged in a standoff with law enforcement that resulted in the DVE's death.
- (U//FOUO) DVEs also may target individuals they perceive as ideological opponents, such as candidates or their supporters, during otherwise lawful activities such as public

^b (U//FOUO) The FBI continues to investigate the motivations behind the assassination attempts.

^c (U//FOUO) The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics does not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

gatherings or protests. In October 2021, a DVE who is a self-described anarchist was sentenced to 44 months in federal prison for their January 2021 attempt to recruit and lead armed individuals to the Florida state capitol to engage in the violent confrontation of armed ideological opponents. In the months prior to this incident, the DVE told followers on social media to “gear up” in anticipation of election fallout.

(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists’ Reactions to Divisive Political and Social Narratives May Increase the Potential for Domestic Violent Extremist Violence During the 2024 Election Cycle

(U//FOUO) DVEs previously have mobilized to violence based on their perceptions related to social and political issues, such as immigration, LGBTQIA+ rights, and abortion access, which are more prominent in public discourse during election cycles. DVEs who perceive that broad support exists to engage in violence against their ideological opponents may be especially motivated to act. Some DVEs also may associate these issues with specific candidates and legislation, which could influence DVE violence against those election-related targets.

- (U//FOUO) Immigration, especially across the US southern border, remains a core grievance for some DVEs, and has inspired plots and calls for violence targeting border security personnel and immigrant communities. In October 2022, two DVEs in Missouri, who are awaiting trial, were arrested for allegedly plotting to travel to the US southern border to murder undocumented immigrants and shoot US Border Patrol officers they believed were allowing undocumented immigrants into the country. In February 2024, a DVE plead guilty to unlawful possession and transfer of an unregistered firearm silencer. This DVE, who was associated with the DVEs in Missouri, planned to set off explosives and act as a sniper at the US southern border.
- (U//FOUO) Several DVEs have cited narratives surrounding LGBTQIA+ issues as motivation for plots and calls for violence. In August 2022, an individual from Massachusetts, who is awaiting sentencing, made a hoax telephonic bomb threat targeting a hospital that provided gender-affirming care to adolescents. On 18 April 2023, during a university-sponsored debate on transgender issues in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, two DVEs dropped homemade smoke bombs and threw a large firework-type device directly targeting and injuring several university police officers. On 10 September 2024, the DVEs pled guilty to obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder, and one of them also pled to conspiracy.
- (U//FOUO) Since 2022, multiple DVEs have cited abortion-related grievances for conducting or threatening violence. In two separate incidents, attackers targeted reproductive health services facilities in Illinois in 2023. The actors for both attacks pleaded guilty and were sentenced to federal prison and to pay financial restitution for damage caused to the targeted sites. Additionally, in April 2024, a DVE was sentenced to 90 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to the May 2022 firebombing of an advocacy group’s offices in Madison, Wisconsin, following the leak of the opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. The DVE targeted the building because it was occupied by an organization that opposed abortion.

(U) Threats to Election Workers

(U//FOUO) On 25 June 2021, the DOJ, in close partnership with the FBI, established the Election Threats Task Force (ETTF) to identify and address reported threats targeting election workers following the 2020 US general election.

(U) In recent months, the FBI has seen an increase in threats to election workers. The types of threats are varied and have included online harassment and threats of physical violence, white powder letters sent to election offices, and swatting incidents. Threats to election workers tend to correlate with jurisdictions where results are contested via recounts, audits, or public election disputes.

(U//FOUO) The FBI's Election Crimes Coordinators program conducts ongoing outreach to election officials and election workers in their areas of responsibility to ensure election officials and workers know how to report threats through the FBI National Tip Line at 1-800-CALL-FBI (225-5324).

(U//FOUO) The FBI will continue to investigate threats to election workers throughout the 2024 general election cycle. The FBI also will continue to participate in the ETTF and take investigative actions when appropriate.

(U//FOUO) Indicators

(U//FOUO) DHS and the FBI have identified indicators that may warn of violent threats or violence surrounding the 2024 general election cycle. These activities may include constitutionally protected activity and should not be reported absent articulable facts and circumstances that support the source agency's suspicion that the observed behavior is reasonably indicative of preoperational planning. These behaviors include:

- (U//FOUO) Specific threats of violence toward political candidates, election workers, government officials, or election-related infrastructure or events;
- (U//FOUO) Identification of packages that contain excessive tape or postage stamps, suspicious markings, or suspicious substances;
- (U//FOUO) Attempts to gain access to restricted areas or bypass security at election-related infrastructure or events without a reasonable explanation;
- (U//FOUO) Suspicious photography of election-related infrastructure, security-related equipment, personnel, or access points consistent with preoperational surveillance, without a reasonable explanation;
- (U//FOUO) Suspicious interest in security procedures for critical infrastructure and election-related facilities or political figures from persons without a need to know;
- (U//FOUO) Theft of items that could compromise election-related facility or event security, such as uniforms, identification, blueprints, vehicles, technology, or access keys;

- (U//FOUO) Impersonation of first responders or security personnel in the vicinity of or at election-related infrastructure or events;
- (U//FOUO) Presence of unfamiliar individuals at election-related facilities or events who have no credentials or reasonable explanation for their presence; and
- (U//FOUO) Presence of dangerous objects concealed at security screening checkpoints or in areas in which weapons are prohibited.

(U//FOUO) Protective and Mitigative Measures for Election Infrastructure and Election Workers

(U) As a protective measure, election workers can evaluate their security needs and take measures appropriate for the level of threat they face. The following practices and steps are recommended by the Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and are not exhaustive.

(U) For election infrastructure facilities (e.g., election offices and/or voting locations):

- (U) Limit access points to ensure workers have awareness of all visitors entering the facility. Restrict public access to unused parts of the facility.
- (U) Post signage to indicate unauthorized areas and prohibited items.
- (U) Ensure all doors work properly and can be locked or secured from the inside.
- (U) Implement procedures for monitoring locations in the facility where visitors should not enter. Assign personnel with responsibility for monitoring.
- (U) Restrict access to sensitive systems, such as voting machines, when not in use.
- (U) Train election workers on chain of custody or securing election materials (including ballots) while not in use or during an incident.
- (U) Issue badges or other identification for poll workers to display while on duty in the voting location.
- (U) Remove or secure physical hazards like trash bins or chemicals.
- (U) If possible, evaluate landscaping around the facility to eliminate hiding places and provide clear visibility.
- (U) Ensure adequate lighting in parking areas and monitor for suspicious activity.
- (U) If possible, place vehicle barriers or other traffic management/control measures to secure areas where people may congregate (e.g., entrances, lines, curbside voting).

- (U) Encourage election workers to observe the outside area of the voting location for suspicious activity and packages by walking the perimeter of the site.
- (U) Establish procedures for handling suspicious mail/packages.
- (U) Consider implementing video security monitoring and alert systems to cover sensitive assets or locations, such as ballots and election equipment.
- (U) Conduct spot-checks to make sure security procedures are being implemented as intended.
- (U) Ensure the facility security plan has procedures for full accountability of visitors.
- (U) Additional resources can be found via CISA's Physical Security Checklist for Election Offices and Election Infrastructure Cybersecurity Readiness and Resilience Checklists

(U) For election workers:

- (U) Consider implementing appropriate protective measures around your home, such as those described in CISA's Personal Security Considerations Action Guide for Critical Infrastructure Workers.
- (U) Maintain situational awareness for potential indicators of threats (such as those described above) and be prepared to report them and/or adjust your behavior to reduce the risk of injury to you and those around you.
- (U) Consider limiting location services on your mobile devices and review privacy settings to prevent others from tracking your movements or identifying your home address or place of work.
- (U) Be careful when posting personal information like photos, birthdays, full names, home addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers online or on social media.

(U//FOUO) **Resources**

- (U) [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\) #Protect2024 Election Security Website](#)
- (U) [2024 General Election Cycle: Voluntary Incident Reporting Guidance for Election Infrastructure Stakeholders | CISA](#)
 - (U) [Personal Security Considerations Action Guide | CISA](#)
 - (U) [Physical Security Checklist for Election Offices and Election Infrastructure Cybersecurity Readiness and Resilience Checklists | CISA](#)
 - (U) [Non-Confrontational Techniques for Election Workers Training | CISA](#)

- (U) [De-escalation Series | CISA](#)
- (U) [US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators, 2021 Edition](#)
- (U) [USPIS/FBI/DHS/BATFE Poster 84: Suspicious Mail or Packages](#)
- (U) [USPIS/FBI/EAC/CISA Election Mail Handling Procedures to Protect Against Hazardous Materials](#)
- (U) [CISA, DHS and FBI Swatting Prevention and Response Guide for Election Workers and Law Enforcement](#)

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit www.dhs.gov/nsi.

(U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response

(U//FOUO) Information contained in this intelligence bulletin is for official use only. No portion of this bulletin should be released to the media, the general public, or over nonsecure Internet servers. Release of this material could adversely affect or jeopardize investigative activities.

(U) Some incidents included in this assessment are not resolved, and it is important to remember that charged individuals are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

(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_CTD_CTAS@ic.fbi.gov or the Intelligence Publications Center by e-mail at ianda_pb@hq.dhs.gov.