



## OFFICE of INTELLIGENCE and ANALYSIS

## INTELLIGENCE IN VIEW

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DHS-IA-IV-2024-27243

**(U//FOUO) Select Scenarios for Post-Election Violence in the Homeland**

(U//FOUO) While the clear and largely uncontested nature of the projected 2024 presidential election results removes one potential driver of post-election violence, we believe there is a possibility for significant violence or civil unrest between now and Inauguration Day. Many domestic violent extremists (DVEs) and other threat actors viewed the election outcome as an existential event that could determine the trajectory of issues that have previously motivated violence in the Homeland, including immigration policy, abortion rights, firearms access, LGBTQIA+ topics, environmental regulations, and US involvement in foreign conflicts. We therefore compiled three hypothetical scenarios of violence or unrest, along with indicators suggesting events are trending toward one or more of these scenarios. The scenarios are not mutually exclusive, as each could cause a cascading series of events. The indicators are not deterministic, as each could signal a range of potential developments, including scenarios where the run-up to Inauguration Day proceeds peacefully or only triggers small-scale, local violence. Many of the indicators discussed also represent constitutionally protected activities, and thus must be viewed within the totality of the circumstances to determine whether additional examination of involved individuals is warranted. Lastly, while this analysis focuses on domestic threat actors, foreign actors could use planned events and large gatherings to opportunistically stoke tensions through targeted information campaigns in an attempt to incite violence.

<b>(U//FOUO) Mass Civil Unrest</b>	<b>(U//FOUO) Mass Casualty Attack</b>	<b>(U//FOUO) Assassination Attempt</b>
<p>(U//FOUO) Mass civil unrest could occur concurrently at multiple locations, particularly in populous cities that historically have experienced sizable protests or violent unrest. This scenario could emerge from large, lawful gatherings celebrating or protesting the election results, which escalate to violence when opposing sides interact. Some individuals could exploit these events to target rivals, steal, or destroy property – potentially sparking retaliatory violence. Possible threat actors of concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(U//FOUO) Anarchist violent extremists (AVEs) could engage in opportunistic violence or disrupt critical infrastructure in reaction to potential policy changes they believe the incoming administration will enact.</li> <li>(U//FOUO) DVEs with partisan grievances, AVEs, or militia violent extremists may see lawful protests as an excuse to target ideological opponents whom they believe are disrupting public order.</li> <li>(U//FOUO) Racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (REMVEs) could opportunistically attack anarchists, those perceived as anti-fascists, or those perceived as embracing progressive ideals.</li> </ul>	<p>(U//FOUO) A lone offender or small cell could conduct a mass casualty attack at a large gathering or an accessible public location in response to the election outcome. Possible threat actors of concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(U//FOUO) DVEs with election-related grievances could view large gatherings of perceived ideological opponents as attractive targets.</li> <li>(U//FOUO) Some REMVEs could interpret the election results as justification for violence or be incensed by gatherings of those with opposing views on divisive policy issues, like immigration and LGBTQIA+ rights.</li> <li>(U//FOUO) Homegrown violent extremists inspired by a foreign terrorist organization could seek to target mass gatherings associated with the election for various reasons, to include being accessible targets symbolic of US democracy.</li> </ul>	<p>(U//FOUO) A lone offender or small cell could attempt to assassinate a key figure associated with the election, such as the president-elect; vice president-elect; or federal, state, or local government officials. Such attacks could occur in public or at private residences and have the potential for cascading effects, driving copycat or retaliatory acts of violence. Possible threat actors of concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(U//FOUO) Of most concern are those who might target public figures due to their perceived policy stances. The attempted assassination of the president-elect in September 2024 in Florida was allegedly motivated by the president-elect's stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, according to court documents.</li> <li>(U//FOUO) We cannot rule out attacks by threat actors driven by personal grievances, mental health issues, or other non-ideological motivations.</li> </ul>

<i>(U//FOUO)</i> Ground-Level Indicators   Mass Civil Unrest <sup>a</sup>	<i>(U//FOUO)</i> Ground-Level Indicators   Mass Casualty Attacks or Assassination Attempts <sup>b</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Pre-scheduled public gatherings at locales where past gatherings, including those unrelated to election issues, have been violent.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> The attendance of individuals with a history of exploiting lawful protests to engage in violence.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> The attendance of notable figures, speakers, or leaders who have a history of attempting to incite violence.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Attendees planning to arrive with body armor or bringing weapons.</li> </ul>	<p><i>(U//FOUO)</i> As pre-operational planning for mass casualty attacks and assassination attempts is often similar, the following list of indicators applies to both scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Individuals communicating an intent to engage in violence or a direct threat of violence.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Individuals disseminating their martyrdom, last will videos, or statements.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Individuals disposing of meaningful personal belongings in an unusual or urgent manner.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Individuals engaging in unusual acquisition of weapons, ammunition, or explosive precursors for suspected criminal purposes.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Individuals undertaking physical or weapons training for suspected criminal purposes.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Individuals praising, researching, or seeking to emulate past attacks.</li> </ul>
<i>(U//FOUO)</i> Strategic Warning Indicators   All Scenarios	
<p><i>(U//FOUO)</i> Strategic warning indicators are designed to flag the first signs of an emerging threat to give senior stakeholders enough time to make decisions on resources and mitigation measures. These indicators lack the precision to guide tactical responses and cover multiple possible scenarios. The observation of multiple indicators increases the likelihood that mitigation measures may be necessary to counter the risk that one or more of the worst-case scenarios is emerging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> An escalation of violent rhetoric, coupled with calls to action from a person in a perceived position of authority.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Intelligence indicating that DVEs are making violent threats or directing individuals to mobilize to violence.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Organization of mass protests with a large presence of individuals with opposing points of view on an election-related grievance or a divisive policy issue. Such protests might follow a controversial legal decision or policy announcement.</li> <li>• <i>(U//FOUO)</i> Major legislative, policy, or legal moves related to the election between Election Day and Inauguration Day.</li> </ul>	

<sup>a</sup> *(U//FOUO)* For more information, see "Certain Activities Indicate Potential for Violence at First Amendment-Protected Events," DHS-IA-IV-2024-00925, dated 14 March 2024.

<sup>b</sup> *(U//FOUO)* For more information, see "US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators 2021 Edition," DHS-FBI-NCTC, 2021-09234.

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**Source, Reference, and Dissemination Information**


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**For Questions,  
Contact***(U)* DHS-SPS-RFI@hq.dhs.gov**Definitions**

*(U//FOUO)* **Anarchist Violent Extremists (AVEs):** Individuals who seek, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence, to further their opposition to all forms of capitalism, corporate globalization, and governing institutions, which they perceive as harmful to society.

*(U//FOUO)* **Domestic Violent Extremist (DVE):** 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 alone does not constitute violent extremism and may be constitutionally protected. DVEs can fit within one or multiple categories of ideological motivation and can span a broad range of groups or movements. I&A utilizes this term synonymously with “domestic terrorist.”

*(U//FOUO)* **Homegrown Violent Extremist (HVE):** A person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization (FTO), but is acting independently of direction by a FTO. HVEs are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction or influence from a foreign actor.

*(U//FOUO)* **Lone Offender:** An individual motivated by one or more violent extremist ideologies who, operating alone, supports or engages in acts of unlawful violence in furtherance of that ideology or ideologies that may involve influence from a larger terrorist organization or a foreign actor.

*(U//FOUO)* **Militia Violent Extremists (MVEs):** Groups or individuals who facilitate or engage in acts of unlawful violence directed at federal, state, or local government officials or infrastructure in response to their belief that the government deliberately is stripping Americans of their freedoms and is attempting to establish a totalitarian regime. These individuals consequently oppose many federal and state authorities’ laws and regulations, particularly those related to firearms ownership, and often belong to armed paramilitary groups. They often conduct paramilitary training designed to violently resist perceived government oppression or to violently overthrow the US Government.

*(U//FOUO)* **Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists (REMVEs):** Groups or individuals who facilitate or engage in the potentially unlawful use, or threat of force or violence with the intent to intimidate or coerce, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from bias, often related to race or ethnicity, held by the actor against others, including a given population or group.

**Privacy and Civil  
Liberties  
Considerations**

*(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 violent extremism and may be constitutionally protected. US Persons linking, citing, quoting, or voicing the same themes, narratives, or opinions raised by threat actors are presumed to be acting under their own volition, and to be engaging in

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First Amendment-protected activity. Furthermore, variants of the topics covered in this product, even those that include divisive terms, should not be assumed to reflect malign activity absent information specifically attributing the content to violent domestic threat actors. Threat actors frequently amplify themes already present in lawful domestic debate. Lawful domestic actors in the United States have the right to use arguments originating from any source. This information should be considered in the context of all applicable legal and policy authorities while protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

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*(U)* **To report a computer security incident, either contact US-CERT at 888-282-0870, or go to <https://forms.us-cert.gov/report/> and complete the US-CERT Incident Reporting System form.** The US-CERT Incident Reporting System provides a secure, web-enabled means of reporting computer security incidents to US-CERT. An incident is defined as a violation or imminent threat of violation of computer security policies, acceptable use policies, or standard computer security practices. In general, types of activity commonly recognized as violating typical security policies include attempts (either failed or successful) to gain unauthorized access to a system or its data, including personally identifiable information; unwanted disruption or denial of service; the unauthorized use of a system for processing or storing data; and changes to system hardware, firmware, or software without the owner's knowledge, instruction, or consent.

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