

Statement for the Record

The Rise in Violence Against Minority Institutions

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House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

Washington, DC

February 17, 2022

10:00 a.m.



*Working to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure
Justice and fair treatment to all since 1913*

INTRODUCTION TO ADL

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Today, ADL is a global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education, and monitoring and fighting the spread of hate in our communities and online. For decades, one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, including white supremacists and other far-right violent extremists, producing research to inform the public of the scope of the threat, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry and elected leaders to promote best practices that can effectively address and counter these threats.

Domestic violent extremism and hate crimes have been on the rise in recent years. Reported hate crimes targeting Black and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) individuals and communities increased significantly over the last two years, including the terrible ongoing bomb threats against Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Jewish community continues to be a primary target of extremists. Our hearts are with the Colleyville, Texas community that was recently shaken by the trauma of being targeted by a terrorist who took worshipers hostage during a Sabbath service at a local synagogue, one that thankfully had security-related equipment and training – resources that many faith-based communities nationwide do not have access to.

Without a doubt, right-wing extremist violence is currently the greatest domestic terrorism threat to everyone in this country. From Charleston to Charlottesville, from Pittsburgh to Poway and El Paso, we have seen the deadly consequences of white supremacist extremism play out all over this country. Moreover, at ADL we are tracking the mainstreaming, normalizing, and localizing of the hate, disinformation, and toxic conspiracy theories that animate this extremism. We cannot afford to minimize this threat. We need a bipartisan “whole of government approach” – indeed, a “whole of society” approach – to counter it, and the work must start today.

CURRENT TRENDS

Overall Rise in Hate Crimes

As an initial matter, we know from the available data that hate crimes overall were at historic highs in 2020 as the pandemic raged. The FBI’s annual hate crimes report revealed that 2020 saw a 13 percent increase in reported hate crimes from the previous year and represented the highest total in almost two decades. A total of 8,263 hate crime incidents were reported, an increase from 7,314 in 2019. As has been the case consistently since hate crimes reporting began, race-based, and specifically anti-Black, hate crimes represented the largest portion of reported hate crimes. In 2020, there was a sharp increase in reported hate crimes targeting Black people; that number rose approximately 49 percent, from 1,930 in 2019 to 2,871. The number of reported anti-AAPI hate crimes increased significantly as well from 179 to 294. Reported gender-identity-based hate crimes also rose, from 198 to 266, which is the highest it has been since the FBI began collecting data on this category of hate crimes in 2013. Although reported “anti-Hispanic-or-Latino” hate crimes decreased slightly, the number is still the second highest it has been since 2010. Hate crimes targeting the Jewish community made up nearly 55 percent of all religion-based hate crimes in 2020. The increase in reported hate crimes came even though, for the third straight year, the number of law enforcement agencies providing data to the FBI declined.

However, the overall numbers reported by the FBI fail to tell the full story of hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents in this country. The FBI's hate crime data is based on voluntary reporting by local law enforcement agencies and appropriate characterization of crimes as having been perpetrated, at least in part, with bias motivation. For a variety of reasons, dozens of large cities either underreport or do not report hate crime data at all. For that reason, experts, including at ADL, know that the real volume and scope of hate crimes targeting all marginalized communities is even higher than the FBI reporting indicates.

Data collection efforts by other organizations also reveal significantly higher numbers of hate-motivated incidents, many of which do not rise to the level of a crime. For example, [Stop AAPI Hate](#) counted more than 10,000 hate incidents between March 2020 and September 2021 targeting AAPI persons and conducted a survey finding that nearly one in five Asian Americans experienced a hate incident during the past year. The potentially deadly nature of the attacks on this community was brought into stark relief in March 2021 when a shooter targeted three spas in the Atlanta metropolitan area, killing eight people, including six Asian women.

Colleyville and Antisemitic Violence

Antisemitism is an ongoing threat to the American Jewish community. According to the FBI's annual data on hate crimes, crimes targeting the Jewish community consistently constitute over half of all religion-based crimes. The number of hate crimes against Jews has ranged between 600 and 1,200 each year since the FBI began collecting data in the 1990s. There were 683 hate crimes against Jews in 2020, 963 in 2019 and 847 in 2018.

A violent attack against the Jewish community occurred just recently, on January 15, 2022, when a gunman entered Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, during services, taking three congregants and the rabbi as hostages. Though the standoff thankfully ended with all hostages freed and physically unharmed, the violent act reinforced the urgent need to address the threat of antisemitic violence – experienced by the Colleyville community and far too many others. The fact that the Colleyville attacker travelled from the United Kingdom underscores that there can be foreign influences on domestic terrorism, either through incitement, coordination, or direct participation.

Rising Antisemitism

ADL has recorded a 60 percent increase of antisemitic incidents over the past five years. While antisemitism has commonalities with racism, anti-Muslim bias, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny and other forms of hate and discrimination, it also has certain unique characteristics as a specific set of ideologies about Jews that has migrated across discourses – and across centuries. In almost every part of our society, this hatred has been conjured and adjusted to suit the values, belief, and fears of specific demographics and contexts. Thus, the underlying conspiracy theories employing Jew-hatred morph to fit the anxieties and upheavals of the time – for example, that Jews were responsible for the Black Death in medieval times and for “inventing,” spreading, or profiting from COVID-19 in the 21st century. Or that Jews exercise extraordinary power over governments, media, and finance – from the charges of a conspiracy to achieve world domination set forth in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and used by the Nazis, to thinly veiled antisemitism blaming “globalists” and “cosmopolitan elites” for all the ills of the world and for conspiring to impose a “[New World Order](#).” We cannot fight antisemitism without understanding how it is both intertwined with other forms of prejudice and

how it is unique. ADL's resource, [Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era](#), offers comprehensive information about the history and current manifestations of antisemitism.

Each year, the ADL Center on Extremism tracks incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism, and assault in the United States. Since 1979, we have published this information in an annual [Audit of Antisemitic Incidents](#). In 2020, ADL tabulated 2,024 reported antisemitic incidents throughout the United States. This is a 4 percent decrease from the 2,107 incidents recorded in 2019 but is still the third-highest year on record since ADL began this tracking. Known extremist groups or individuals inspired by extremist ideology were responsible for 331 incidents in 2020, up from 270 incidents in 2019. This represents 16 percent of the total number of incidents in 2020.

More recently, analysis from the ADL Center on Extremism reveals that antisemitic incidents in the U.S. more than doubled during the May 2021 military conflict between Israel and Hamas and its immediate aftermath compared to the same period in 2020. After peaking during that period, incident levels gradually returned to a baseline level.

Threats to HBCUs

Over the last several weeks, America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been targeted by widespread and repeated bomb threats. While the cases are still under investigation, law enforcement authorities reportedly believe the threats are racially motivated. It is no coincidence that HBCUs, a longstanding symbol of Black resilience and excellence, were targeted at the start of Black History Month and during a time of widespread and "equal opportunity" hate, which has affected marginalized communities nationwide.

Murder and Extremism: By the Numbers

[New research](#) from the ADL Center on Extremism finds that, in 2021, domestic extremists killed at least 29 people in the United States, in 19 separate incidents. This represents a modest increase from the 23 extremist-related murders documented in 2020 but is far lower than the number of murders committed in any of the five years prior (which ranged from 45 to 78). While this could be cause for optimism, more likely it is the result of COVID-19 lockdowns reducing mass gatherings and the increased attention of law enforcement following the January 6th, 2021 insurrection.

Most of the murders (26 of 29) were committed by right-wing extremists, consistent with trends lasting more than a decade in this country. Of the 333 right-wing extremist-related killings over the last 10 years, at least 73 percent have been at the hands of white supremacists.

White Supremacist Propaganda

The ADL [Center on Extremism](#) tracked a near-doubling of white supremacist propaganda efforts in 2020, which included the distribution of racist, antisemitic, and anti-LGBTQ+ fliers, stickers, banners and posters. The 2020 data shows a huge increase of incidents from the previous year, with a total of 5,125 cases reported to ADL (averaging more than 14 incidents per day), compared to 2,724 in 2019. This is the highest number of white supremacist propaganda incidents ADL has ever recorded. The number of propaganda incidents on college

campuses dropped by more than half, perhaps due to COVID-19 restrictions.

One of the most prolific of the white supremacist groups engaged in vandalism and the distribution of propaganda in 2020 is Patriot Front. Patriot Front split from another white supremacist group, Vanguard America, which had participated in the deadly Charlottesville Unite the Right rally in 2017 and whose symbols were carried by the man convicted of ramming a car into a group of counter-protesters, killing Heather Heyer. Many of those associated with Vanguard America who subsequently associated with Patriot Front had been at the 2017 Unite the Right Rally.

Propaganda gives white supremacists the ability to maximize media and online attention, while limiting the risk of individual exposure, negative media coverage, arrests, and public backlash that often accompanies more public events. The barrage of propaganda, which overwhelmingly features veiled white supremacist language with a “patriotic” slant, is an effort to normalize white supremacists’ message and bolster recruitment efforts while targeting marginalized communities including Jews, Black people, Muslims, non-white immigrants and LGBTQ+ people.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing Modern Terrorist Threats

We need a whole-of-government approach to address the extremist threat that the Jewish community, and many others, are facing and will continue to face in the years to come. The framework that ADL has created – the PROTECT plan – is a comprehensive, seven-part plan to mitigate the threat posed by domestic extremism and domestic terrorism while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. Together, focusing on these seven categories can have an immediate and deeply significant impact in preventing and countering domestic terrorism – more so than any one action, policy, or law – and can do so while protecting civil rights and liberties and ensuring that government overreach does not harm the same vulnerable people and communities that these extremists target.

- **Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism:** We urge Congress to adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to preventing and countering domestic terrorism.
- **Resource According to the Threat:** We must ensure that the authorities and resources the government uses to address violent threats are proportionate to the risk of the lethality of those threats. In other words, allocation of resources must never be politicized but rather based on transparent and objective security concerns.
 - Legislation that facilitates transparency in resourcing can help ensure this crucial oversight, such as the transparency mechanisms and related measures in the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act, H.R. 350 (DTPA). We urge Congress to pass the DTPA immediately; doing so can help lay a foundation on which to build an effective and comprehensive approach to addressing the threat.
- **Oppose Extremists in Government Service:** It is essential that we recognize the potential for harm when extremists gain positions of power, including in government, law enforcement, and the military.
- **Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures:** We must not wait until after someone has become an extremist or a terrorist attack has happened to act. Effective and promising

- prevention measures exist, which should be scaled.
- **End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism:** Congress must prioritize countering online extremism and ensuring that perpetrators who engage in unlawful activity online can be held accountable. Online platforms often lack adequate policies or enforcement practices to mitigate extremism and hate equitably and at scale. Federal and state laws and policies require significant updating to hold online platforms and individual perpetrators accountable for enabling hate, racism, and extremist violence across the internet. In March 2021, ADL announced [the REPAIR Plan](#), which offers a comprehensive framework for platforms and policymakers to take meaningful action to decrease online hate and extremism.
 - **Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist Content:** Congress should work with the Biden-Harris Administration to create a publicly funded, independent nonprofit center to track online extremist threat information in real-time and make referrals to social media companies and law enforcement agencies when appropriate.
 - **Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups:** Congress must recognize that white supremacist extremism is a major global threat of our era and mobilize with that mindset.

Nonprofit Security Grant Program

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is an essential tool in protecting nonprofits, including houses of worship and other faith-based organizations. The program can be used for training and equipment to secure facilities, such as synagogues like the one in Colleyville, Texas, whose leadership took advantage of the program. Far too many houses of worship do not. And those that do apply have a frustratingly low likelihood of receiving financial relief from the program for securing themselves. For houses of worship, community needs should be more front of mind than providing for their own security or raising funds for security precautions.

In the last grant cycle, 3,361 applicants requested \$399,763,916 in NSGP grants, according to FEMA. Congress had only funded the program at \$180 million, providing for a maximum of only 45 percent of security costs that nonprofits had assessed were necessary for their community's security. That funding gap represents almost \$220 million in unfunded liabilities for nonprofit organizations in an era of high and rising threats from domestic violent extremists. While the synagogue in Colleyville had fortunately been aware of this opportunity – and received some benefits from it – try to imagine all of the synagogues, churches, gurdwaras, and other community pillars lacking resources, and further, those that lack even the awareness of the program at all. While it might be fair to say that not all applications for funding are perfectly executed, it would also be fair to note that these are community institutions – not professional government contractors – navigating complex bureaucratic requirements when they should be focused on their communities. In this era of extreme threats to houses of worship, our communities deserve more.

Recommendations for Reforming the Nonprofit Security Grant Program

NSGP poses a significant opportunity to help secure our communities. Even modest reforms can provide significant support. ADL recommends that Congress take on the following reforms:

- **Significantly increase the pool of available funding for NSGP:** Funding NSGP at \$360 million last year would have ensured that 90 percent of applicants received funding. For many grant programs, funding a small percentage of applications is a signal of the competitiveness of the program. However, NSGP does not fund nonprofits performing government services, it funds nonprofits who need government support. It should not be competitive, it should be helpful. We should expect even more applications in the future, as more organizations should be made aware of the program, and the threat trends show an increase in risk. As such, \$360 million is the minimum amount that community organizations need to secure themselves in this era of severe risk.
- **Scale outreach and engagement to increase the applicant pool:** Not enough states avail themselves of the program, and many community organizations are not aware of it. Following the Colleyville tragedy, ADL heard from many community partners that they were not aware of the funding available. While ADL can make partners aware of the opportunity – and urge state governments to increase their efforts within their states – DHS must step up. DHS should significantly increase engagement with communities and with state governments to broaden the number of applicants seeking support from the program.
- **Scale outreach and engagement to guide applicants:** Nonprofits like houses of worship are not government contractors; the burdensome bureaucratic requirements of federal funding applications may be familiar to organizations with direct experience applying for federal grants, but for most NSGP applicants, applying is a new and unusual process. As such, DHS should increase its guidance to potential applicants on how to be successful when applying for funds. Applying for NSGP grants should not be a competition, pitting congregation against congregation. It should be a way to support all communities under threat.
- **Broaden the spectrum of eligible grantee expenses:** NSGP funds can be used for security training and equipment to guard against threats that are “terroristic.” “Terroristic” is not a term many applicants may be familiar with. Moreover, it should be interpreted as broadly as possible, such as including threats from domestic extremist organizations based on the tactics those organizations use. As such, safeguarding against cybercrimes, such as hacking a website, and other targeted harassment that bears the hallmarks of the behavior of hate-based movements that sometimes use terrorism should be allowable expenses. The interpretation of guidance on expenses should track the guidance on threats provided by DHS and other law enforcement and intelligence entities, which note that domestic terrorism represents the top terrorist risk to Americans domestically. The full scope of domestic terrorist tactics should be considered when making programmatic decisions.
- **Provide full support to DHS to faithfully execute a scaled program:** Grant management is a technical skill, and oversight is incredibly important for large funds. DHS should not be expected to adapt to the heightened threat environment without further resources to ensure funding is spent effectively and to provide necessary outreach. DHS should receive additional staff and other resources to administer the program, as well as new funding streams for additional outreach to potential applicants.
- **Ensure transparency and oversight in the administration of the program:** While DHS must be empowered to help community members secure themselves, it cannot be allowed to operate without careful oversight. We must acknowledge that some communities may feel less empowered, not more, when seeing DHS increase its resources. The program should be reviewed through a civil rights and civil liberties lens. Further, it is difficult for the public to determine how funding has been dispersed: DHS should release a public,

annual report on the program, and Congress should ensure that the resources provided to DHS for this objective are being used proportionate to the evidence of terroristic threats.

Implementing a Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes

Congress took a significant step forward in improving our nation's response to hate crimes by passing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act in 2021, which included the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act. The bill included crucial measures to expedite an Attorney General review of hate crimes nationwide, require the promulgation of guidance to law enforcement agencies regarding best practices for establishing hate crime reporting tools and collecting data on these crimes, and created new grant programs to provide much-needed resources to establish state-run hate crime hotlines and improve hate crime reporting to the FBI. The Department of Justice has already made strong progress in implementing provisions of this law; however, full implementation of all of the important new grant programs requires that Congress appropriate funds for them. ADL urges Congress to appropriate \$15 million for grant programs to implement the National Incident-Based Reporting System, to create State-run hate crime reporting hotlines, and to conduct training and develop protocols for identifying, analyzing, investigating, and reporting hate crimes.

However, passing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act should not represent the end of Congressional efforts to address hate crimes; there remains significant work to do to implement a comprehensive and data-informed approach to this devastating problem. A necessary prerequisite to developing such an approach is having complete and reliable data about hate crimes – data that does not currently exist. Multiple factors contribute to deficits in our knowledge about the full scope and nature of hate crimes, including victimized communities' distrust and avoidance of law enforcement agencies; lack of training for officers in recognizing and investigating bias motivations; and frontline agencies' limited capacity to maintain and share records with the FBI. Some of these challenges can begin to be addressed through full implementation of the NO HATE Act; however, there remains one key weakness in the current hate crime data collection program – it relies on voluntary participation by state and local law enforcement. Congress must evaluate options for making hate crime reporting mandatory by all law enforcement agencies.

In addition to ensuring a robust system of hate crime reporting, we must also invest in community-centered approaches to preventing hate crimes from occurring in the first place. The communities that are most impacted by hate crimes must be positioned to lead efforts to develop policies and programmatic approaches to address this problem. One way that the Administration can immediately support this community-focused preventative work is through a revitalized Community Relations Service (CRS) at the Department of Justice. CRS is the only federal agency dedicated to working on the ground with community groups to resolve local conflicts and prevent and respond to hate crimes and incidents. CRS works to build relationships with community stakeholders before tragedy occurs, helping ensure that crisis response can be both timely and meaningful. CRS's focus on prevention provides a unique value-add to communities, bringing experts to help problem-solve and build local capacity to prevent and respond to conflict, tension, and bias-motivated incidents. CRS also provides crucial relationship-building programs designed to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community – work that is vital to effectively preventing and responding to hate crimes as many of the communities targeted by such violence often have mistrust of law enforcement rooted in historical and ongoing police violence against marginalized communities. ADL applauds the Administration's early efforts to revitalize

this crucial agency and urges Congress to increase the annual funding for this agency to \$40 million. In addition, DOJ can help support community-led efforts to prevent hate crimes and address their root causes by giving priority for federal grant funding to those qualified institutions of higher education and nongovernmental organizations that propose to use funding to provide services that reduce the risk of hate crimes or to provide legal, material, social, and other support to people and institutions affected by hate crimes.