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NJOHSP

MODERATE THREAT TO NEW JERSEY

Sovereign Citizens

Militia members early this month illegally seized the Maulher National Wildlife Refuge—a federal building near Burns, Oregon, about 300 miles south of Portland—to protest the federal government’s ownership of the land. Local law enforcement has reported harassment and damage to federal property, but the takeover so far has been largely peaceful. There is an estimated 15-20 individuals occupying the building with an unknown number of militia members outside providing support. A sovereign-citizen group, the National Liberty Alliance (NLA), which has a presence in New Jersey, and some white supremacists have expressed backing for the takeover.



Fraudulent identification used by sovereign citizens

- The leader of the takeover, Ammon Bundy, claims his group—the Citizens for Constitutional Freedom—occupied the building to protest the recent conviction of two Oregon ranchers who set fire to federal land in 2001. In 2014, Bundy was involved in a similar standoff in Nevada, largely over cattle grazing rights.
- This week, the sheriff of Harney County, where the standoff is taking place, publicly stated that militia members were parking outside law enforcement officers’ homes and intimidating their families. In addition, on Monday, occupiers damaged government property by removing a \$100,000 fence to allow cattle to graze on federal land.
- On January 5, the NLA on Facebook requested from its followers to call the US District Court of Oregon and file fraudulent paperwork demanding the release of the two Oregon ranchers. According to Western media, while no official link exists between white supremacists and anti-government extremists in Oregon, the leader of the Northwest Front—a white separatist group—expressed his support for the standoff online on January 2.



Weapons found during the traffic stop of Dustin Gunnells in Georgia

Contact Information

Any agency with information or comments/questions on this or other analytical products, please contact the NJOHSP Analysis Bureau at analysis@njohsp.gov or 609-584-4000.