



HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMISTS (HVEs)



Background

- Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs) are individuals inspired – as opposed to directed – by a foreign terrorist organization and radicalized in the countries in which they are born, raised, or reside.
- While international terrorist organizations have encouraged HVEs to carry out attacks, many HVEs use personal grievances to influence their ideology, target selection, and violent acts.
- HVEs can be radicalized through the use of mainstream and specialized social media websites that encourage attacks in the West or support for overseas terrorists.
- Some HVEs are influenced by multiple terrorist organizations and adhere to Salafi jihadism – an extremist interpretation of Islam. For example, San Bernardino attacker Syed Farook listened to lectures from Anwar al-Aulaqi, a deceased al-Qa'ida cleric. Immediately after the shooting on December 2, Tashfeen Malik, Farook's wife and co-attacker – or Farook posting on Malik's Facebook account – pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).



Tashfeen Malik and Syed Farook

Threat to New Jersey: High

HVEs pose the highest threat to New Jersey and will remain the most likely and persistent threat this year. In 2015, HVEs were active throughout the United States, often connecting with like-minded individuals online. In recent years, al-Qa'ida, its affiliates, and other terrorist groups have encouraged HVEs to attack in their home countries, and ISIS has continued this trend.

- In 2015, five of the nation's 66 HVE arrests occurred in New Jersey. Most notable were the arrests of brothers Alaa and Nader Saadeh and Samuel Topaz. The three were part of a larger group with members in New York attempting travel to Syria to join ISIS.



Alaa Saadeh



Nader Saadeh



Samuel Topaz



Tairod Pugh

- Tairod Pugh was arrested in January 2015 after flying from Egypt to Turkey and refusing to let Turkish security officials examine his electronic devices.

- In 2015, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania accounted for 30 percent of all HVE arrests nationwide. Of the 20 terrorism-related arrests in the tri-state area, one was for an attack, five for plots, and 14 for material support.

Intelligence Gaps

- How will the denial of service on social media platforms impact the use of encrypted messaging applications?
- Which methods of attack will HVEs prefer in 2016?

US Nexus

- In October 2015, the FBI Director estimated there were about 900 open terrorism investigations in the United States. Eighty-seven percent of HVEs last year were linked to attacks, plots, or material support for ISIS.
- Since ISIS declared its self-proclaimed "caliphate" in June 2014, about 200 US persons have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to join the group. Last year, 43 percent of terrorist-linked incidents involved traveling or attempting to travel to join terrorist groups, primarily ISIS.
- In 2014, ISIS began directing followers to execute low-level, unsophisticated attacks. After heavily favoring explosives from 2010-13, HVEs are now executing more successful small-scale attacks and using readily available handheld weapons, such as firearms and knives.

Years	Explosive : Handheld Weapon
2006-09	1 : 1
2010-13	8 : 1
2014-Present	1 : 3

Contact Information

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