

THE NEW JERSEY
OFFICE OF HOMELAND
SECURITY AND
PREPAREDNESS

TERRORISM THREAT
ASSESSMENT
2016

FOREWORD: TERRORISM IN 2015 AND BEYOND



The events of 2015 highlight that New Jersey—and the United States—face a terrorist landscape more dangerous than any since the attacks of September 11, 2001. From the brutal and tragic attacks in San Bernardino and Paris, the year saw a dramatic rise in multi-operative, small-scale attacks on civilian soft targets—all with little to no warning—as well as the decentralization and diffusion of the global terrorist movement. This compels the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) to bolster training, outreach, and preparedness efforts across all levels of government and with the public and private sectors.

In this terrorist landscape, OHSP assesses homegrown violent extremists are the greatest terrorist threat to New Jersey in 2016, followed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula. Of particular concern are terrorists who draw inspiration from multiple radical ideologies—a phenomenon we refer to as “*blended extremism*.” Blended extremists leverage the belief systems of multiple domestic and international extremist groups, tailoring these systems to develop and ultimately form unique, radical worldviews that advance the individuals’ violent goals.

In the next year, OHSP, in coordination with federal, state, and local partners, will continue to share intelligence and leverage collective operational resources. Moreover, it is imperative that OHSP continue public outreach activities, including publishing unclassified threat analysis, conducting training, and providing tailored briefings to diverse audiences. If you require such services, please visit us at www.njohsp.gov.

Lastly, we strongly encourage the public to stay vigilant and to report suspicious activity at 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ (866-472-3365) or email tips@njohsp.gov. ***Security is a collective responsibility and we are all in this fight together.***

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Rodriguez', written over a white background.

Dr. Christopher Rodriguez
Director, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness
January 2016

ABOUT US

Shortly after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, New Jersey's legislature and Governor passed and signed the Domestic Security Preparedness Act, which created the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force within the Office of the Attorney General. In 2002, the Governor created an Office of Counterterrorism (OCT) by Executive Order, which remained under the Office of the Attorney General. OCT provided New Jersey with a single agency to lead and coordinate New Jersey's counterterrorism efforts with state, local, and federal authorities and with the private sector.

OCT remained in place until 2006, when it was reorganized—again by Executive Order—into the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP), bolstering New Jersey's resources for counterterrorism, critical infrastructure protection, emergency preparedness, training, and federal grants management. OHSP was tasked with coordinating counterterrorism and emergency response efforts across all levels of government, law enforcement, emergency management, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector.

As OHSP approaches its ten-year anniversary in March 2016, the Office has matured and grown since it was created to more effectively handle New Jersey's rapidly evolving homeland security environment.

MISSION

OHSP leads and coordinates New Jersey's counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and emergency preparedness efforts while building resiliency throughout the State.

CORE VALUES

SERVICE. We put our State and its citizens first, and we put Mission before self. We take pride in being timely, agile, and relevant.

TEAMWORK. We stand with and behind each other. We recognize that partnerships, both internal and external, are critical to achieving success. We cannot fulfill our Mission alone

EXCELLENCE. We take great pride in the quality of our work. We do every task, every project, every initiative, to the best of our ability.

DIVERSITY. We strive to build a workforce that is as diverse as New Jersey's citizenry. We pride ourselves on encouraging diversity of thought, perspective, and problem solving.

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ASSESSED THREAT LEVEL TO NEW JERSEY IN 2016

HIGHEST

Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs)

HVEs are individuals inspired by foreign terrorist organizations and radicalized in the countries in which they are born, raised, or reside.

MODERATE (IN ORDER OF THREAT)

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

ISIS, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Islamic State, or Daesh, split from al-Qa'ida in 2014 and established its self-proclaimed "caliphate," claiming authority over all Muslims.

Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

AQAP is an Islamic extremist organization based in Yemen. It is al-Qa'ida's most active global affiliate.

Militia Groups

Militia groups are paramilitary organizations that view the federal government as an existential threat to the rights and freedoms of Americans. They judge armed resistance to be necessary to preserve these rights.

Sovereign Citizens

Sovereign citizens view all forms of government, including law enforcement, as illegitimate.

White Supremacists

White supremacists are extremists who believe in the inherent superiority of the white race. They seek to establish dominance over non-whites through violence.



Daryacheh-ye
Orumiyeh

LOWEST

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab is an Islamic extremist organization seeking to establish an austere version of Islam in Somalia. In addition to Somalia, the group operates in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.

Al-Qa'ida and its Other Affiliates

Al-Qa'ida's core leadership is based in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region and affiliates al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent, and the Nusrah Front are based in North Africa, South Asia, and Syria, respectively.

Anarchists

Anarchists are individuals or groups that violently reject contemporary capitalism and all forms of government.

Animal Rights Extremists

Animal rights extremists are individuals or groups that believe that all animals—human and non-human—have equal rights of life and liberty. They are willing to conduct criminal activity to advance this ideology.

Black Separatists

Black separatists are individuals or groups that seek to establish an independent nation for people of African descent.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is an Islamic extremist organization based in northeastern Nigeria, which pledged allegiance to ISIS in March 2015.

Environmental Rights Extremists

Environmental rights extremists are individuals or groups that believe manmade threats to the environment are so severe that violence and property damage are justified to prevent further destruction.

Hizballah

Hizballah is an Islamic militant group and political party based in Lebanon and allied with Iran.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT)

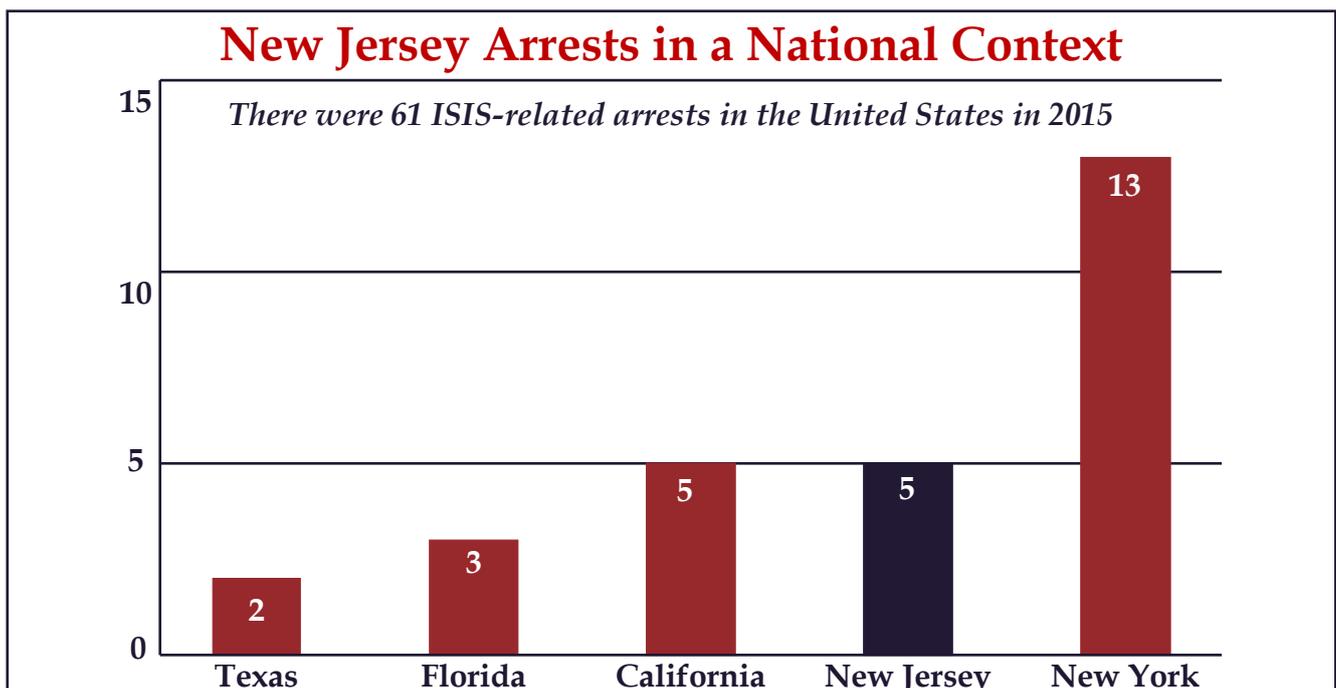
LeT is an Islamic extremist organization focused on attacking and expelling Indians from Kashmir, a northern state in India that borders Pakistan and is home to a Muslim-majority population.

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

TTP is an Islamic extremist organization seeking to overthrow Pakistan's government and expel US forces from Afghanistan.

COUNTERTERRORISM ARRESTS IN NEW JERSEY IN 2015

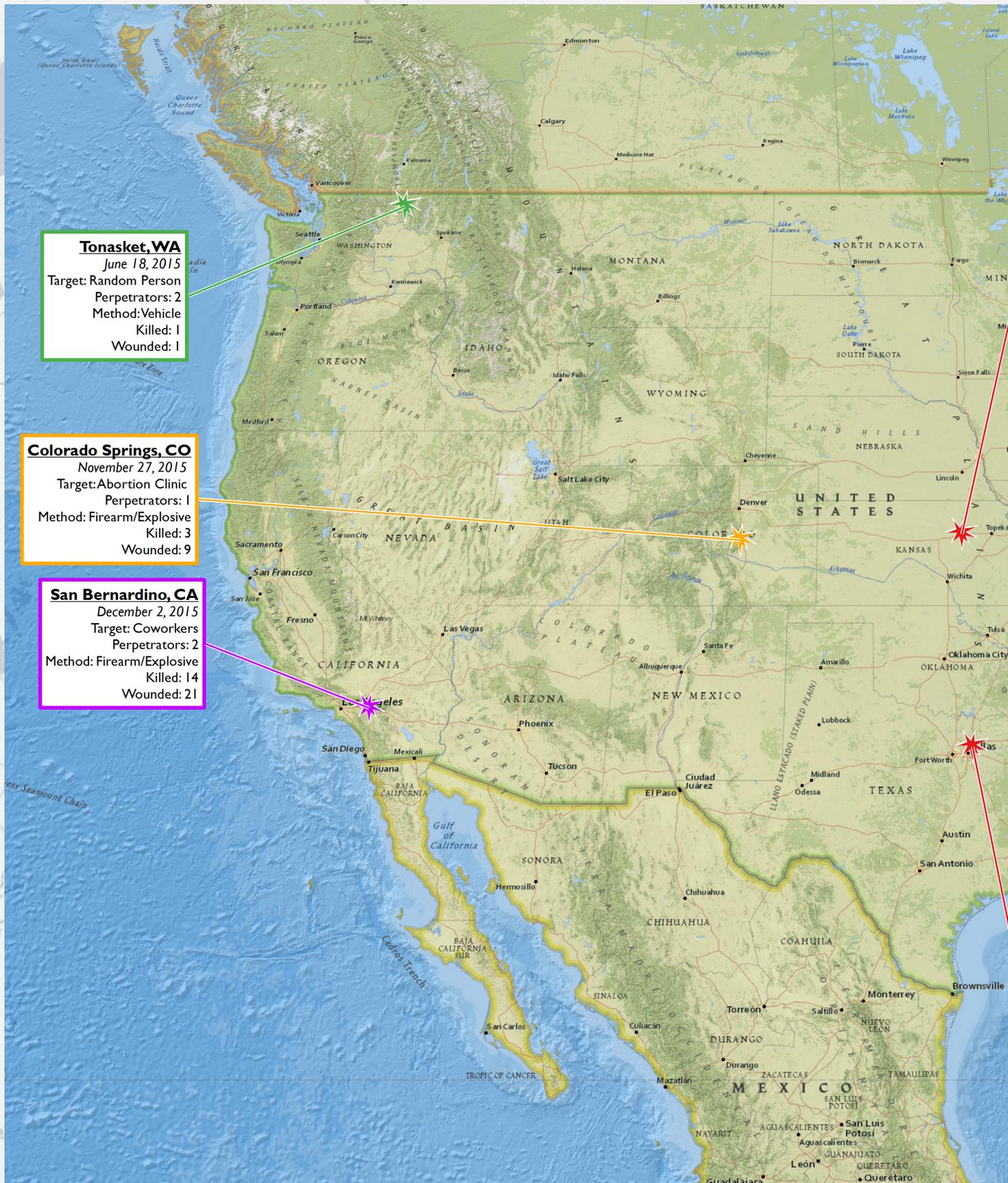
	Name (Age)	Description
	Tairod Nathan Webster Pugh (47)	On January 16, Tairod Pugh was arrested in Asbury Park (Monmouth County) for conspiring to travel to Syria and provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).
	Samuel Rahamin Topaz (21)	On June 17, Samuel Rahamin Topaz was arrested in Fort Lee (Bergen County) for conspiring with others in New Jersey and New York to provide services and personnel to ISIS.
	Alaa Saadeh (23)	On June 29, Alaa Saadeh was arrested in West New York (Hudson County) for conspiring with other individuals in New Jersey and New York to provide services and personnel to ISIS and attempting to persuade a witness to lie to the FBI.
	Nader Saadeh (20)	On August 10, Alaa's brother, Nader Saadeh, a resident of Rutherford (Bergen County), was arrested for conspiring with other individuals in New Jersey and New York to provide services and personnel to ISIS. He was arrested after returning to New Jersey from Jordan.
	Sealed Indictment	On August 14, federal law enforcement officers arrested a New Jersey resident inspired by ISIS.



SELECT ATTACKS IN THE WEST IN 2015

Date	Incident	
<p>December 2: San Bernardino, California</p>	<p>Married couple Tashfeen Malik and Syed Farook attacked a meeting of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, killing 14 and injuring 22. They used firearms and left behind improvised explosive devices intended to kill first responders. Both attackers were killed in an armed confrontation with police.</p>	
<p>November 13: Paris, France</p>	<p>Nine suspects, acting in three teams, executed coordinated attacks at various locations throughout Paris, including an athletic stadium, restaurants, and a concert venue, killing 130 and injuring over 350. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) claimed responsibility for the attacks. Seven of the nine attackers were killed during the incident.</p>	
<p>July 16: Chattanooga, Tennessee</p>	<p>Muhammad Youssef Abdulazez shot and killed five US military personnel and wounded two others at a military recruitment office and naval reserve center in Chattanooga. Abdulazez was killed by police.</p>	
<p>June 17: Charleston, South Carolina</p>	<p>Dylann Roof shot and killed nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, attempting to start a race war. Roof was arrested more than 200 miles from Charleston after a public tip.</p>	
<p>January 7: Paris, France</p>	<p>Sa'id and Cherif Kouachi killed 12 and injured 11 in an armed attack on the office of the satirical newspaper <i>Charlie Hebdo</i>. The brothers identified with al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and were killed in an armed confrontation with police. A third attacker—Amedy Coulibaly—killed an additional five people and wounded 11 more at three separate locations at the same time as the assault on <i>Charlie Hebdo</i>.</p>	

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE US IN 2015



Tonasket, WA
 June 18, 2015
 Target: Random Person
 Perpetrators: 2
 Method: Vehicle
 Killed: 1
 Wounded: 1

Colorado Springs, CO
 November 27, 2015
 Target: Abortion Clinic
 Perpetrators: 1
 Method: Firearm/Explosive
 Killed: 3
 Wounded: 9

San Bernardino, CA
 December 2, 2015
 Target: Coworkers
 Perpetrators: 2
 Method: Firearm/Explosive
 Killed: 14
 Wounded: 21



Anti-Abortion



"Blended Extremists"



Militia Groups



Daryacheh-ye Orumiyyeh



Sovereign Citizens



ISIS-Inspired



White Supremacist

HIGHEST THREAT TO NEW JERSEY

Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs)

HVEs will remain New Jersey's most likely and persistent threat over the next year. In 2015, HVEs demonstrated an ability to operate in New Jersey and throughout the region while connecting with like-minded individuals online and acting independently from organized terrorist groups. Since late 2014, a variety of radical groups such as ISIS and AQAP have encouraged HVEs to attack in their home countries.

- *In 2015, there were five HVE arrests in New Jersey—all ISIS-inspired.* In the same timeframe, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania accounted for 27 percent of all HVE arrests nationwide.
- In December, Tashfeen Malik and Syed Farook, a married couple, killed 14 people and injured 22 in a mass shooting in San Bernardino, California. The wife, Malik, pledged allegiance to ISIS's leader on Facebook. The couple had been radicalized for at least two years, according to the FBI.



Tashfeen Malik and Syed Farook

86%
of HVE attacks in the US in 2015 used firearms or edged weapons

- In July, Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez attacked two military facilities in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He killed five without guidance from a cell or planner. Abdulazeez appears to have been inspired by a variety of extremist propaganda, including from AQAP.
- Two months earlier, Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi opened fire at a “Draw Muhammad” event in Garland, Texas. A week before this attack, a terrorist recruiter invoked the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris in January 2015 and encouraged Simpson by writing, “It’s time for brothers in the #US to do their part.”
- In February, Ali Shukri Amin was arrested in Virginia for operating a pro-ISIS Twitter account and assisting others traveling to Syria, even though he was not a member of the organization.

“Today, with new and skilled use of the Internet, terrorist organizations may publicly recruit and inspire individuals to conduct attacks within their own homelands.”

**Jeh Johnson, Secretary,
US Department of Homeland Security**

MODERATE THREAT TO NEW JERSEY

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

The attacks in Paris in November indicate ISIS has the operational capacity to strike inside the West—underscoring the threat to New Jersey, the region, and the United States. In addition, deadly suicide attacks in Lebanon one day before Paris; the bombing of a Russian aircraft over Egypt in October; and the near-simultaneous attacks in Kuwait and Tunisia in June demonstrate ISIS's sophistication in planning and conducting complex, multi-country attacks. The Paris attacks almost certainly took months of planning and preparation, spanning multiple Middle Eastern and European nations.

90,000
tweets per day from...

...46,000
online ISIS supporters

In Iraq and Syria, ISIS's success is attributed largely to its clearly defined hierarchical structure and centralized organization.

- ISIS also provides services to locals residing in territories it controls, such as enforcing strict Islamic rule and providing jobs, security, and public transportation.



*ISIS leader
Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi*

ISIS is the richest militant organization in the world, worth nearly \$2 billion. The group relies on a variety of financial resources to sustain its state-operating and military efforts, including taxation and extortion—which are responsible for about two-thirds of its revenue—and oil smuggling, hostage-taking, human trafficking, and theft.



ISIS's declared "provinces"

ISIS has successfully marketed its brand of Islam on social media. The group's English-language magazine *Dabiq* is released every month in at least four other languages: French, German, Russian, and Arabic.

- Recurring themes in *Dabiq* are encouraging supporters to travel and join the group and carrying out attacks in the West. ISIS also releases photo essays, videos, radio bulletins, and audio statements.

In 2015, there were...

61

ISIS-related arrests in the US and...

...900

ongoing ISIS-related investigations, according to the FBI

Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

AQAP will remain a threat to New Jersey, the region, and the United States in 2016 because the group has demonstrated an ability to act outside its primary area of operations in Yemen, and it has attempted to strike the United States on three occasions since 2009. AQAP continues to hone media outreach efforts and propaganda through its online English-language magazine *Inspire*, publishing the 14th edition, which encouraged homegrown attacks, in September.

- In January 2015, French brothers Sa'id and Cherif Kouachi attacked *Charlie Hebdo*, a satirical newspaper in Paris, killing 12 and injuring 11. AQAP later claimed responsibility.



Charlie Hebdo attacks

- In April, New York City residents Noelle Velentzas and Asia Siddiqui were arrested for planning to conduct attacks using improvised explosive devices. Velentzas had contact with AQAP members, who encouraged the women to build bombs similar to the ones used in the Boston Marathon attack in April 2013.

- The deaths last year of AQAP leader Nasir al-Wahishi and other top leaders had little impact on AQAP's operational tempo. Its new chief, Qasim al-Rimi, has stepped up attacks against the Iran-backed Shia Huthis, and AQAP has acquired new weaponry and support from sympathetic Sunni tribes across Yemen.



*AQAP leader
Qasim al-Rimi*

- In 2009, 2010, and 2012, AQAP plotted unsuccessfully to blow up airliners over the United States. The chief architect of these plans, bombmaker Ibrahim al-Asiri, remains at large in Yemen. We assess Asiri has trained other terrorist operatives to build new, non-metallic explosives that can evade security detection, suggesting his death or arrest would not substantially diminish the AQAP threat to the United States.



*AQAP bombmaker
Ibrahim al-Asiri*

Al-Qa'ida and ISIS: Battle of the Brands

In February 2014, al-Qa'ida in Iraq split from al-Qa'ida because of ideological differences over strategy and tactics, reorganizing into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In June 2014, ISIS declared itself leader of the global jihad by announcing its self-proclaimed "caliphate," effectively supplanting al-Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri's authority. Since that time, both groups have fought each other on the battlefields in Iraq and Syria; alarmingly, their desire to "outbid" each other on the operational front has spread outside the Middle East, including to Europe. We expect this trend to continue—and even expand—in 2016.

White Supremacists

The threat to New Jersey from white supremacist groups is moderate because of their propensity for violence, diverse recruitment efforts, and the movement's decentralization. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), white supremacists are the most dangerous domestic terrorist group in the United States.

77%
of extremist-related murders in the US since 2005 involved white supremacists, according to the ADL

- *In 2015, six instances of Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and Advanced White Society recruitment were reported in Bergen, Burlington, Mercer, and Monmouth counties.* Recruitment fliers focused on social issues such as race mixing, homosexuality, and immigration. Last summer, the Advanced White Society held several recruiting events in Burlington County.
- Dylann Roof wrote a manifesto before he shot and killed nine people at an African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina in June, seeking to ignite a race war. He wrote, “We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the Internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.”
- In November, the FBI arrested three Virginia men for plotting to attack local synagogues and black churches, citing a desire to start a race war. At least one of the men had ties to the Aryan Brotherhood, a group also present in New Jersey.

Militia Groups

In New Jersey, militia groups—right-wing extremists with an anti-government and conspiracy-oriented ideology—pose a moderate threat because of their active recruitment, training, and access to weapons. Militia groups' involvement in protests and standoffs across the United States also demonstrates the movement's ability to organize on a national scale. We assess militia extremists will likely continue to propagate anti-Islamic rhetoric in the wake of the Paris attacks and ongoing coverage of ISIS.

- *Two militia groups have been recruiting in New Jersey since at least 2011.* In 2015, Jon Ritzheimer, a militia member from Phoenix, Arizona, made threats against Muslim Day at Six Flags in Jackson (Ocean County), which occurred in September. In November, Ritzheimer announced on Facebook his plan to travel to Islamberg, New York, a predominantly Muslim community in the southern part of the state, claiming he would “stop at every mosque along the way” to antagonize and intimidate Muslims.



*Militia member
Jon Ritzheimer*

- Following the shootings in July at two military installations in Chattanooga, Tennessee, armed militia members posted outside recruiting centers across the United States to “defend” the military.
- In April, a Tennessee man was arrested in a plot to recruit militia members from several states to conduct a terrorist attack against Muslims in New York.

Sovereign Citizens

The threat to New Jersey from sovereign citizen extremists, who believe federal, state, and local governments are illegitimate and lack the authority to issue or enforce laws, is moderate.

Most adherents engage in nonviolent tactics such as self-identifying in court paperwork and traffic-stop encounters. Sovereign citizens throughout the United States are guided and supported by organizations such as the National Liberty Alliance (NLA) and Moorish Nation, which also have an active presence in New Jersey.

- In New Jersey, the NLA has a state coordinator and claims to have approximately 20 other members who focus on creating “common law grand juries,” which assert the authority to conduct investigations, issue indictments, and remove officials from office.
- In May, legislation was enacted in New Jersey enhancing the penalties on sovereign citizens filing fraudulent financial documents or liens as a retaliatory tactic against public officials.
- Nationally, in 2015, sovereign citizens conducted three attacks and conceived one plot, all involving small arms. In September, sovereign citizen extremist Thomas Deegan was arrested for plotting to overthrow West Virginia’s government by targeting the state capitol, as well as National Guard and law enforcement officials.



Fraudulent identification used by sovereign citizens

- In July, Dustin Gunnells attempted to shoot a sheriff’s deputy during a traffic stop in Georgia, and in February, sovereign citizen Joseph Paffen was killed after shooting at police officers in Florida.



Weapons found during the traffic stop of Dustin Gunnells in Georgia



NLA logo

CYBER-TERRORISM: A GROWING THREAT

The cyber threat to New Jersey from terrorist groups is low despite their intent to target the United States.

According to the FBI, terrorist organizations, including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and Hizballah, are attempting to build offensive cyber capabilities, but to date they have had little to no success.

- In October, a media report citing federal sources indicated ISIS had attempted—unsuccessfully—to gain access to the US electric grid.

Terrorist groups are likely to continue developing cyber capabilities and will attempt disruptive or destructive cyber attacks as a means of intimidation and coercion. We assess ISIS is the most likely terrorist group to attempt cyber operations against US resources, but its capabilities remain limited to low-level activities such as socially engineered account compromises and website defacements.

- In August, Junaid Hussain, a British citizen reportedly responsible for leading cyber operations and recruitment for ISIS, was killed in Syria. Hussain allegedly released US service members' personal information last year—a tactic known as “doxing”—and used social media to inspire terrorist attacks in the West.



ISIS could leverage international hackers with more advanced cyber capabilities. These hackers often exploit targets of opportunity such as organizations with weak cybersecurity defenses. Large

and thriving online black marketplaces, where off-the-shelf hacking tools and capable hackers offer intrusion or attack services for nominal fees, could also be utilized.

- In October, a Malaysia-based hacker was arrested on a provisional US arrest warrant alleging he hacked a US company's servers, stole personal information of 1,300 US military and federal personnel, and provided the data to ISIS, which subsequently released it on social media.



This portion of the assessment was produced by the New Jersey Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC). Visit www.cyber.nj.gov to learn more.

Terrorists Using Encryption Technology

The widespread proliferation of peer-to-peer (P2P) encryption technology has helped terrorists shield their communications from conventional surveillance techniques, creating digital safe havens for operational planning, command and control, logistics, and execution. Beyond the cryptographic challenges of surveilling this terrorist traffic, most technology companies lack access to terrorists' private encryption keys to unlock data in compliance with lawful search warrants.

APPENDIX A: EIGHT SIGNS OF TERRORISM

1. Surveillance

The first sign of terrorism is someone trying to monitor or record activities. If terrorists are targeting a specific area, they will most likely be observed in that location during the planning phase. Terrorists will attempt to determine the strengths, weaknesses, and number of personnel that may respond to an incident.

2. Elicitation/Seeking Information

The second sign is an attempt to gain information through inquiries, including seeking knowledge about a place, person, or operation. Elicitation can be made by telephone, mail, fax, or in person. Examples include inquiries about critical infrastructure such as a power plant, water reservoir, or maritime port.

3. Tests of Security

Tests of security or probing are techniques terrorists use to gather data. These are usually conducted by driving past or even penetrating the target, moving into sensitive areas, and observing security and law enforcement responses. Terrorists may also try to penetrate physical security barriers or test response procedures to assess strengths and weaknesses. Specific areas of interest might include the number of response personnel and routes taken to a specific location.

4. Acquiring Supplies

The fourth sign of terrorism includes the purchase or theft of explosives, weapons, or ammunition. It could also include unusual purchasing or storing of fertilizer or harmful chemicals. Terrorists also find it useful to acquire law enforcement equipment and identification, military uniforms and decals, and flight passes, badges, or manuals. Terrorists often use false or stolen identification documents, including passports and driver's licenses. They may try to produce counterfeit identification by photocopying. Any of these items would facilitate entry to secure or prohibited areas.

5. Suspicious People

Another pre-incident indicator is observing suspicious people who do not belong. The suspicious person could be anyone in a building, neighborhood, or business establishment who seems out of place because of their demeanor or who asks unusual questions. Suspicious persons could also include stowaways aboard ships or people jumping ship in ports. It is important to remember: *We do not profile individuals. We profile behaviors.*

6. Dry Run

A dry run may be the heart of an attack's planning stage. Before the execution of an operation, a practice trial is usually run to work out any flaws or unanticipated problems. This is especially true for kidnappings and bombings. If you see someone monitoring a police radio frequency and recording response times, you may be observing a dry run.

7. Deploying Assets

Look for someone deploying assets or getting into position. This is your last chance to alert authorities before a terrorist act occurs. It is also important to remember that pre-incident indicators may be months or even years apart. Therefore, it is extremely important to document every fragment of information, no matter how insignificant it may appear.

8. Terrorism Funding

Terrorists use a variety of methods to raise, launder, and transport funds. Possible indicators include, but are not limited to:

- Suspicious credit card applications
- Suspicious spending
- Multiple surnames at the same address
- Illegal drugs
- Bulk purchases of cigarettes or other counterfeit goods

APPENDIX B: REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY



if you
SEE
something
SAY
something™

If You See Something Say Something™ used with permission of the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Report suspicious activity
call **2-1-1** or
1-866-4-SAFE-NJ
1-866-472-3365

Did you **SEE** something suspicious
such as an unattended bag or parcel?

Then **SAY** something to
local authorities.



www.njohsp.gov/report-suspicious-activity



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