

FACT SHEET: DHS Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security was created in the wake of the devastating 9/11 attacks to coordinate and unify the nation's homeland security efforts. As we marked the 18th anniversary of the attacks, the country confronts an evolving challenge of terrorism and targeted violence.

Foreign terrorist organizations remain a core priority of DHS's counterterrorism efforts and we will continue to make substantial progress in our ability to detect, prevent, protect against, and mitigate the threats that these groups pose. At the same time, we face a growing threat from domestic terrorism and targeted violence here at home. We must address and prevent the mass attacks that have too frequently struck our houses of worship, our schools, our workplaces, our festivals, and our shopping spaces.

DHS is introducing a new document, DHS Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, which explains how we will use the tools and expertise that have protected and strengthened the country from foreign terrorist organizations to address the evolving challenges of today.

- DHS was founded after the 9/11 attacks with the mission of safeguarding the country from threats, foreign and domestic.
- Nearly two decades after the attacks, the U.S. faces an increasingly complex and evolving threat of terrorism and targeted violence.
- Since its inception, DHS has developed and implemented an array of tools to address threats to the nation.
- DHS is rolling out a new Strategic Framework for combating terrorism and targeted violence that will make it clear that the whole of DHS is committed to addressing the threat posed by terrorism and targeted violence at home, just as we are committed to addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist organizations.
- The Strategic Framework takes a whole-of-society approach to prevention, empowering our citizens and our state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities, as well as our private sector, non-governmental, and community leaders, to develop localized prevention frameworks to protect their communities. By empowering our homeland security enterprise, DHS will continue to adapt ahead of evolving threats, enhancing the safety of our nation.



Current and Emerging Threats:

- Just like when DHS was founded, foreign terrorist organizations remain intent on striking the country through directed attacks or by radicalizing the most vulnerable and disaffected Americans.
- These groups seek to spur to violence our youth, our disenfranchised, and our disaffected—encouraging them to strike the heart of our nation and attack the unity of our vibrant, diverse society.
- ISIS, al Q'aida, returning foreign fighters, and those still in prison in theater represent significant, persistent, and long-term national security threats.
- Today, we face a growing threat from domestic actors inspired by violent extremist ideologies, as well as attacks from those are not ideologically driven.
- The prevalent trend of Americans driven by violent extremist ideologies or personal grievances to commit acts of terrorism and targeted violence with little apparent warning creates a unique challenge to traditional law enforcement and investigation methods.
- Racially- and ethnically-motivated violent extremism, in particular, violent white supremacy, is one of the most prevalent and abhorrent of these anti-American ideologies. There is no moral ambiguity on this issue.



GOALS OF THE STRATEGY

Goal 1: Understand the evolving terrorism and targeted violence threat environment and support partners in the homeland security enterprise through this specialized knowledge.

Goal 2: Prevent terrorists and other hostile actors from entering the United States, and deny them the opportunity to exploit the nation's trade, immigration, and domestic and international travel systems.

Goal 3: Prevent terrorism and targeted violence.

Goal 4: Enhance U.S. infrastructure protections and community preparedness.



DHS STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

- This is the first national-level strategy to explicitly state that terrorism and targeted violence overlap, intersect, and interact as problems and require a shared set of solutions.
- DHS is introducing new methods of creating a more comprehensive understanding of the challenge of terrorism and targeted violence, both within and outside the federal government.
- The Strategic Framework introduces a new annual assessment that will explicate the state of the threat to the nation. This new report will help to inform all levels of government and the broader public.
- The Strategic Framework also introduces a mechanism for crafting a new definition of the key concept of targeted violence and elucidates the nature of today's domestic challenges and, in particular, the dangers of violent white supremacy extremism.
- This Strategic Framework is designed to assess DHS's past and provide a guidepost to its future. It lays out a comprehensive framework to enhance our prevention capabilities in an age of complex and multidimensional domestic threats, regardless of ideology.
- Importantly, the Strategic Framework explicitly recognizes the need to focus on and protect our most vulnerable populations, particularly our youth.
- This Strategic Framework emphasizes the importance of transparency, the protections of civil rights and civil liberties, and the protection of data in a digital age.
- The Strategic Framework is intentionally forward-looking in its understanding of technology's role as a factor that can exacerbate problems, but also one that can provide new solutions to combat the threats we confront.
- DHS will follow this strategy with a public action plan, explaining to the American people in greater detail how we will accomplish our strategic goals.
- DHS has dedicated operators and personnel that will play a critical role in implementing this strategy with vigilance and integrity.



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