

The seal of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness is a large, light gray circular emblem in the background. It features the text "NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS" around the perimeter. In the center is a map of New Jersey with a stylized American flag pattern (stars and stripes). At the bottom of the seal are three five-pointed stars.

2017

# TERRORISM THREAT ASSESSMENT

**NJOHSP** | NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF HOMELAND  
SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS



# About Us

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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 the Office of Counterterrorism (OCT) by Executive Order, which remained under 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 New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP), bolstering New Jersey's resources for counterterrorism, critical infrastructure protection, emergency preparedness, training, and federal grants management. NJOHSP was tasked with coordinating counterterrorism and emergency response efforts across all levels of government, law enforcement, emergency management, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector.

## Mission

NJOHSP 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.

# Foreword

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On Saturday, September 17, 2016, the citizens of New Jersey witnessed a horrifying event as visitors to Seaside Park in Ocean County were rattled by an explosion minutes before a US Marine Corps 5K run. The series of bombings that followed in New York City and Elizabeth were a stark reminder of the very real threat we face from individuals who want to disrupt our way of life. No longer was terrorism over *there*; it had arrived *here* in our backyard.

But out of the terror came hope. From the members of the public who led Linden police to Ahmad Rahimi's location as well as the site of other planted bombs, to the heroes who ultimately detained Rahimi at great personal risk, to the collaboration and mission focus that characterized the subsequent federal, state, and local investigation, we in New Jersey—once again—showed how resilient we are in the face of great danger.

This event, combined with the horrific shooting in Orlando and other brutal attacks abroad in 2016, reminded us that the greatest terror threat we face is from homegrown violent extremism. This is largely because the violence some individuals are committed to carrying out is so difficult for homeland security and law enforcement to detect and deter. Add to this the dramatic rise in domestic terrorism across our country from race-based, single-issue, anti-government, and religious-based extremists, particularly against law enforcement and first responders, and it is clear our threat landscape has expanded dramatically in the last year.

These circumstances dictate that the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP) redouble its efforts to produce finished intelligence that informs local action, invests more personnel and resources in strategic partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels, and directly engages the public in awareness campaigns that push the “See Something, Say Something” message.

In the next year and beyond, we are committed to these actions—and as a result, the dedicated professionals at NJOHSP make this pledge to you: *We will do everything we can to ensure that you and your families are safe and secure.*

But we cannot fulfill this pledge alone. We need your support and partnership. **We are all responsible for keeping our communities safe, so please remember—if you see something, say something by reaching out to us at 1-866-4-SAFE-NJ (866-472-3365) or e-mail [tips@njohsp.gov](mailto:tips@njohsp.gov).**

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Rodriguez  
Director, NJOHSP  
January 2017

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# WHAT GROUPS POSE THE GREATEST THREAT TO NEW JERSEY IN 2017?

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## Assessed Threat Level

High	Homegrown Violent Extremists
Moderate	Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula
	Anarchist Extremists
	Black Separatist Extremists
	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
	Militia Extremists
	Sovereign Citizen Extremists
	White Supremacist Extremists
Low	Al-Qa'ida
	Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent
	Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb
	Al-Shabaab
	Animal Rights Extremists
	Anti-Abortion Extremists
	Boko Haram
	Environmental Extremists
	HAMAS
	Hizballah
	Lashkar-e-Tayyiba
	Nusrah Front
	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan

### Changes from 2016

**Anarchist Extremists**  
The threat from anarchist extremists increased from low to moderate in 2017. Last year, this group organized and directed counter-protests during white supremacist rallies and incited violence during anti-law enforcement and post-US presidential election protests.

**Anti-Abortion Extremists**  
In 2016, NJOHSP began assessing anti-abortion extremists because of a nationwide increase in threats against abortion facilities in 2015, when an extremist killed three and wounded six at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado.

**Black Separatist Extremists**  
The threat from black separatist extremists increased from low to moderate in 2017. Last year, extremists killed eight and injured 17 in response to perceived police brutality—compared to zero such incidents in 2015.

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# WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT HOMEGROWN VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN 2016?

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## New Jersey and New York Bombings, September 17-19



**M**embers of the public reported suspicious behavior that led authorities to Ahmad Rahimi's location and the site of other bombs, underscoring that citizen-outreach efforts aimed at raising terrorism awareness can yield impactful results. On September 19, law enforcement in New Jersey and New York issued news media, social media, and cellular alerts to the public with photos of Rahimi.

Four hours after the alerts were issued, a bar owner in Linden (Union County) notified police after observing a man later identified as Rahimi sleeping in the doorway of his establishment. Linden police responded and, following a gunfight, took Rahimi into custody. The previous day, two men found a backpack containing five pipe bombs near the Elizabeth train station. They notified local police, which detonated the device.

<b>Elizabeth, New Jersey</b> <i>September 15, 6:30 p.m.</i>	Cell phone video depicts Rahimi testing an improvised device.		
<b>Seaside Park, New Jersey</b> <i>September 17, 9:35 a.m.</i>	A pipe bomb in a garbage can explodes ahead of a 5K run honoring the US military.		
<b>Chelsea, New York City</b> <i>September 17, 8:30 p.m.</i>	An explosion occurs in a dumpster on West 23rd Street.		
<b>Chelsea, New York City</b> <i>September 17, 10:30 p.m.</i>	A pedestrian reports a second undetonated device on West 27th Street.		
<b>Elizabeth, New Jersey</b> <i>September 18, 8:40 p.m.</i>	Pedestrians discover five devices inside a backpack. A detonation occurs, resulting in no injuries.		
<b>Linden, New Jersey</b> <i>September 19, 9:30 a.m.</i>	After a shootout with Linden police, Rahimi is taken into custody.		

## Case Studies: Discerning Key Trends

<p>An NJOHSP nationwide review of home-grown violent extremists (HVEs) in 2016 reveals common personal characteristics and tactics prior to an attack. These findings suggest that despite the inherent difficulties of detecting and deterring HVE activity, there are multiple disruption points along the path to an operation, including a heavy reliance on public reporting of suspicious behavior. The case studies below highlight these opportunities.</p> <p>Historical studies of HVEs across the United States show analogous trends.</p>	<div data-bbox="1015 279 1226 310" data-label="Caption"> <p><b>Ahmad Rahimi</b></p> </div> <div data-bbox="938 338 1300 842" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>On September 17, Rahimi conducted a series of bombings in Seaside Park (Ocean County) and New York City, injuring 31.</p>
<p><b>MOST HVEs . . .</b></p>	<p><b>RAHIMI . . .</b></p>
<p><b>Choose targets proximate to their residences and in areas of relative familiarity.</b></p>	<p>Placed the bombs in locations easily accessible from his home in Elizabeth (Union County).</p>
<p><b>Display troubling behavior observable to associates, friends, and family members.</b></p>	<p>Displayed radical viewpoints to family members after trips to Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2011 and 2013-14. Although Rahimi's father reported his son to local law enforcement, which led to a federal investigation, he later recanted concerns about Rahimi's behavior.</p>
<p><b>Are influenced by multiple terrorist organizations while adhering to Salafi-jihadism, an extremist interpretation of Islam.</b></p>	<p>Cited deceased al-Qa'ida cleric Anwar al-Aulaqi and former Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) propagandist Abu Mohammad al-Adnani as inspirations for the bombings.</p>
<p><b>Use easily acquired weapons.</b></p>	<p>Built improvised explosive devices from materials purchased at local stores, using online instructions.</p>
<p><b>Act alone or in small groups.</b></p>	<p>Acted alone.</p>

Omar Mateen	Abdul Artan
	
On June 12, Mateen killed 49 and wounded 53 at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando.	On November 28, Artan drove his car into pedestrians on Ohio State University's campus in Columbus and then stabbed several people, injuring 11.
<b>MATEEN . . .</b>	<b>ARTAN . . .</b>
Conducted surveillance at Pulse prior to the attack.	Attended classes at Ohio State University.
Told co-workers in 2013 his family was linked to al-Qa'ida and that he was a Hizballah member.	Did not display suspicious or terrorist-related behavior prior to the operation, according to family members; however, the federal investigation is ongoing.
Watched videos of ISIS beheadings and Aulaqi. During the shooting, Mateen called 9-1-1 and identified himself as "Mujahideen," an "Islamic Soldier," and a "Soldier of God," pledging allegiance to ISIS and citing the Boston Marathon bombers and a Florida resident who joined an al-Qa'ida group in Syria.	Referenced Aulaqi in a Facebook post before the attack. Law enforcement officials suspect Artan may have read ISIS's English-language magazine <i>Rumiyah</i> , which provides instructions on how to use a vehicle to inflict mass casualties.
Legally purchased a semiautomatic rifle and a handgun two weeks prior to the shooting.	Used his vehicle and a knife purchased the morning of the attack.
Acted alone.	Acted alone.

## Anwar al-Aulaqi: Inspiring Jihadists Five Years After His Death

**T**he bombings in New Jersey and New York and the attacks in Orlando and at Ohio State University last year highlight the enduring influence of radical cleric Anwar al-Aulaqi, who was killed in a US airstrike in Yemen in 2011. Ahmad Rahimi, Omar Mateen, and Abdul Artan drew inspiration from Aulaqi prior to executing their attacks.

A US citizen and native English speaker, Aulaqi demonstrated that anyone can participate in violent jihad, and throughout various lectures and sermons he repeatedly called on Muslims in the United States and Europe to “take action.” Aulaqi is credited with inspiring Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who killed three and wounded 264 at the Boston Marathon in 2013, as well as Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik, who killed 14 and wounded 22 in San Bernardino, California in December 2015.

ISIS has leveraged Aulaqi’s messages for its own propaganda. In December 2013 and March 2014, the group featured Aulaqi in videos promoting the idea of an “Islamic state.” Additionally, the fourth issue of ISIS’s English-language magazine *Dabiq*, released in 2014, featured a photo of Aulaqi.

Many jihadists view Aulaqi as a martyr because he was killed in a US airstrike, boosting his reverence and credibility among followers and potential recruits. Omar Mateen, the Orlando nightclub shooter who killed 49 and wounded 53 in June 2016, had watched Aulaqi video sermons on violent jihad and martyrdom.

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### Since 2011, Aulaqi has been named in over 20 terrorism cases in the United States.

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## Arrests in the Tri-State Area

	<b>Edward Archer</b> <i>Philadelphia</i>	On January 7, Philadelphia police arrested Archer after he shot a police officer with a stolen firearm. Archer told responding officers he did so “in the name of Islam” and later pledged his allegiance to ISIS.
	<b>Azizjon Rakhmatov</b> <i>New York City</i>	On May 9, federal authorities arrested Rakhmatov after he discussed using explosives to attack Coney Island and President Obama. He also assisted in funding others’ travel to Syria.
	<b>Sajmir Alimehmeti</b> <i>New York City</i>	On May 24, federal authorities arrested Alimehmeti after he attempted to assist an individual traveling to Syria. He made multiple weapon purchases since 2015.
	<b>Ahmad Rahimi</b> <i>Linden, New Jersey</i>	On September 19, federal and state authorities arrested Rahimi after he attacked multiple locations in New Jersey and New York with explosives, injuring 31.
	<b>Mohamed Rafik Naji</b> <i>New York City</i>	On November 21, federal authorities arrested Naji after he discussed using a garbage truck to attack pedestrians in Times Square. He had traveled to Yemen and unsuccessfully tried to join ISIS cells there.

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# How Is DOMESTIC TERRORISM EVOLVING?

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**Domestic terrorism** is violence committed by race-based, single-issue, anti-government, and religious extremists without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist organization.

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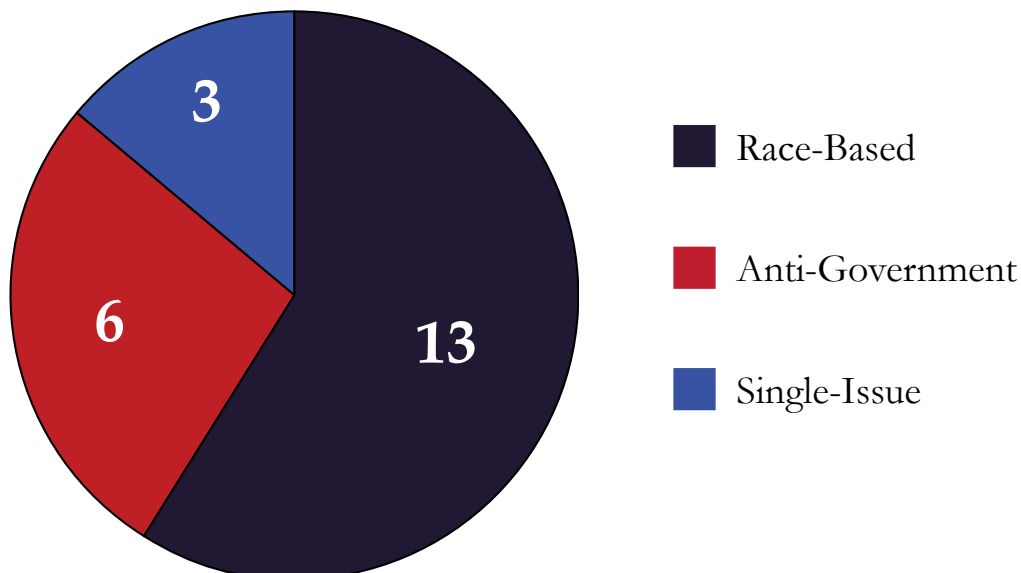
**A**ccording to an NJOHSP nationwide review, domestic terrorists engaged in 22 attacks in 2016 and were responsible for an additional 17 plots, threats of violence, and instances of weapons stockpiling. These numbers represent an increase from 2015, when the same NJOHSP study identified 16 attacks attributed to domestic terrorists, as well as 16 added plots, threats of violence, and instances of weapons stockpiling.

Attacks attributed to race-based extremists increased from five in 2015 to 13 in 2016, with the majority attributed to white supremacists. In July 2016, Ohio authorities arrested Charles Butler and Robert Paschalis for assaulting a black man outside his residence in Toledo. Butler posted on Facebook that the attack was “in the name of the White Race,” according to the criminal complaint.

59%

of all domestic terrorist attacks in the United States in 2016 were attributed to race-based groups such as black separatist and white supremacist extremists, with the primary targets being law enforcement and minority groups.

**Attacks in the United States, 2016**



## Rise in Deadly Assaults Against Law Enforcement

**A**n NJOHSP review of extremist attacks against law enforcement officers nationwide reveals that in the last year, these incidents were more lethal and pre-planned than in the past. They also often occurred following publicized cases of alleged police brutality and by individuals of varied ideologies. In 2016, 12 attacks resulted in nine police officer fatalities, as compared to eight attacks that yielded no deaths in 2015.

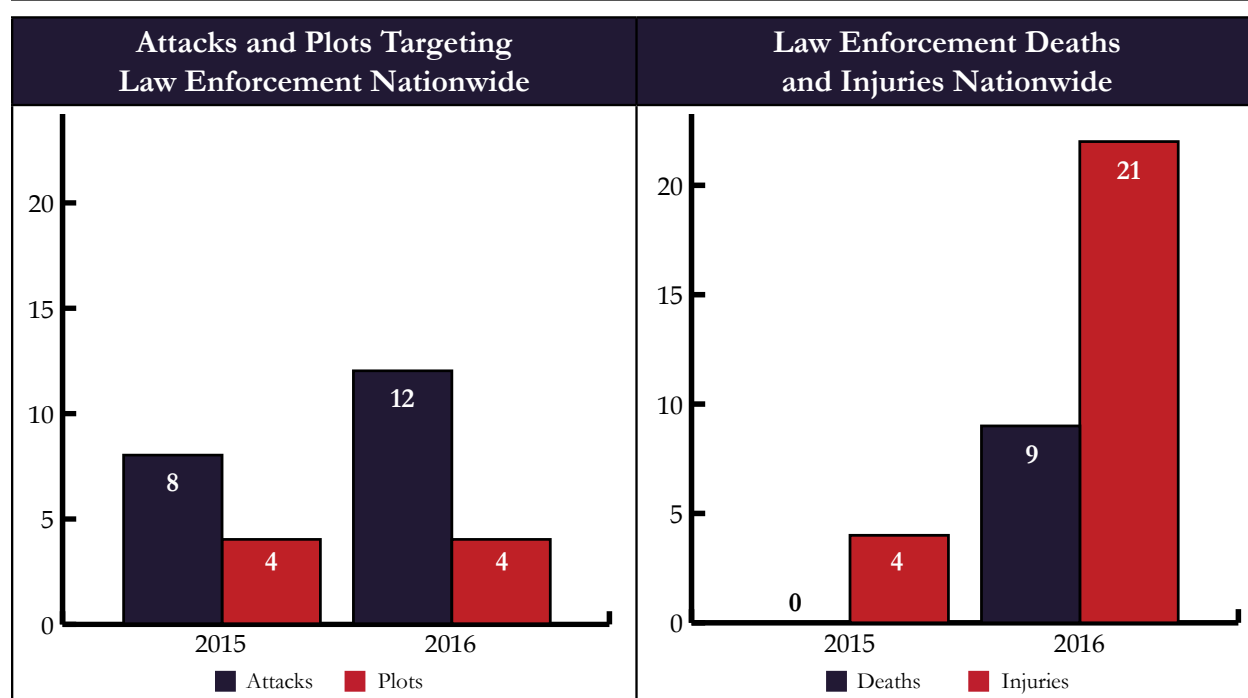
Last year, 90 percent of all extremist-perpetrated law enforcement deaths occurred after the police-involved shootings of Alton Sterling in Louisiana on July 5 and Philando Castile in Minnesota on July 6. On July 7, Micah Johnson, a former black separatist member, killed five officers and injured nine others at a Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas. During the standoff, Johnson said he was upset over recent police-involved shootings and wanted to kill primarily white police officers. On July 17, Gavin Long, a sovereign citizen and former Nation of Islam member, killed three officers and injured three others in Baton Rouge after posting YouTube videos alleging police oppression.

In October 2016, Damoine Wilcoxson fired at two police facilities in Indiana, sparking an armed stand-off. Wilcoxson left handwritten notes outside the police headquarters demanding \$100,000 and stating “white people must die.”

**Over half of the 12 attacks in 2016 were pre-planned.** In January 2016, homegrown violent extremist Edward Archer approached a police vehicle in Philadelphia, fired 13 shots, and critically injured one officer. Archer later told investigators, “Police bend laws that are contrary to the teachings of the Koran.” In 2015, all eight extremist attacks against police were conducted during routine, official activities such as traffic stops, search warrants, and interviews.

In 2016, the ideologies of extremists involved in law enforcement attacks were diverse; they included race-based, anti-government, and single-issue extremists. Notably, in North Dakota, an environmental extremist was charged after shooting at officers attempting to arrest her for disorderly conduct during a pipeline protest—the first reported environmental extremist act of violence since 2009.

**In 2016, 12 attacks resulted in nine officer fatalities, as compared to eight attacks that yielded no deaths in 2015.**





## White Supremacist Attacks in the United States, 2016

**L**ast year, there were seven documented attacks attributed to white supremacists, an increase from five in 2015. They were:

**1) Dana Ericson, Nashville, Indiana**

On February 18, Ericson, a self-proclaimed white supremacist, slashed a foreign exchange student with a hatchet while the student was on a class field trip. He claimed this act was “ethnic cleansing” and that he “hates people of color.”



**2) Oliver Stewart-Vukicevic, Harlem, New York**

On February 24, Stewart-Vukicevic, who was suspected of a hate crime involving anti-Semitic letters left throughout his apartment building, charged at detectives with a knife after they came to investigate. The detectives found swastikas and other hate-filled literature in his residence.

**3) Ian Justine Plankey, Richard Lawrence Daulton, Kevin Matthew Stewart, Lake Los Angeles, California**

On February 28, Plankey, Daulton, and Stewart began using racial slurs and harassing a group of Hispanic individuals playing soccer and speaking Spanish. The harassment escalated, and the three attacked the group with knives.



**4) Charles Butler, Robert Paschalis, Toledo, Ohio**

On May 18, authorities arrested Butler and Paschalis for assaulting a black man with a broom outside his residence, leaving him with a damaged eye socket. Prior to his arrest, Butler posted online that he was acting “in the name of the white race.”

**5) Russell Courtier, Colleen Hunt, Gresham, Oregon**

On August 10, Courtier and Hunt attacked an African-American teenager outside a convenience store. After the teen tried to flee, Courtier and Hunt ran over him with their car, killing him. Courtier was a long-time member of a white supremacist prison gang known as European Kindred.

**6) Daniel Rowe, Olympia, Washington**

On August 16, Rowe, a self-proclaimed white supremacist, stabbed an interracial couple with a knife after he saw them kissing outside a restaurant. While under arrest, he continued espousing racist rhetoric, focused specifically on the Black Lives Matter movement.

**7) Aaryn Snyder, Fort Wayne, Indiana**

On August 21, Snyder, a self-proclaimed white supremacist, stabbed his African-American neighbor to death for being in his yard. Snyder admitted to the stabbing and was also arrested for failing to register as a sex offender.



## Sovereign Citizen Extremists Flouting Laws

**S**overeign citizen extremists are adopting new methods to circumvent New Jersey laws due to a lack of standardized reporting and their success in using prisons as teaching outlets. In May 2015, New Jersey statute 2C:21-42, “an act concerning fraudulent financing statements,” enacted stricter requirements and increased penalties for filing false statements and liens.

An NJOHSP review of 24 states with enacted or pending laws imposing penalties on fraudulent lien filers found that either the laws are not expansive enough to cover victims or sovereign citizen extremists have created new ways to get cases dismissed. Online sites claiming to be “third-party recording entities” offer to post fraudulent liens on extremists’ behalf, which can easily be downloaded and replicated.

Between May 2015-October 2016, there have been 13 incidents in which sovereign citizen extremists in New Jersey filed fake lawsuits or liens on public officials. Due to a lack of standardized reporting procedures, identifying new trends and enforcing existing legislation is difficult. Other states have reported similar gaps in reporting.

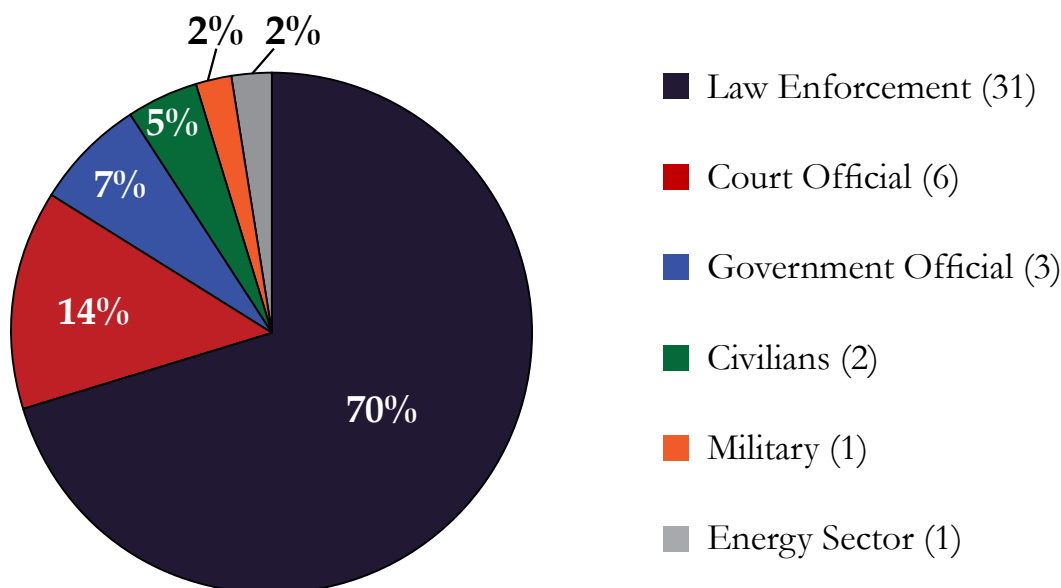
In 2014, four of 14 incidents in which sovereign citizen extremists threatened to file liens against public officials involved inmates at New Jersey correctional facilities. Extremists have taught fellow inmates how to file fraudulent liens—sometimes for a fee—claiming the tactic will get them out of jail.

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**Sovereign citizen extremists view federal, state, and local governments as illegitimate, lacking the authority to issue or enforce laws.**

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**Sovereign Citizen Extremist Targets in the United States, 2010-16**



## Fewer Militia Run-Ins With US Government Likely

**C**onfrontations between militia extremist groups and the US Government will likely decrease this year as signs emerge that Washington, DC is open to relinquishing some control of federal land to the states—a longstanding militia demand. Instead, militia extremists, particularly along the US-Mexico border, appear poised to increasingly focus on armed patrols and other perceived non-government threats to enforce security.

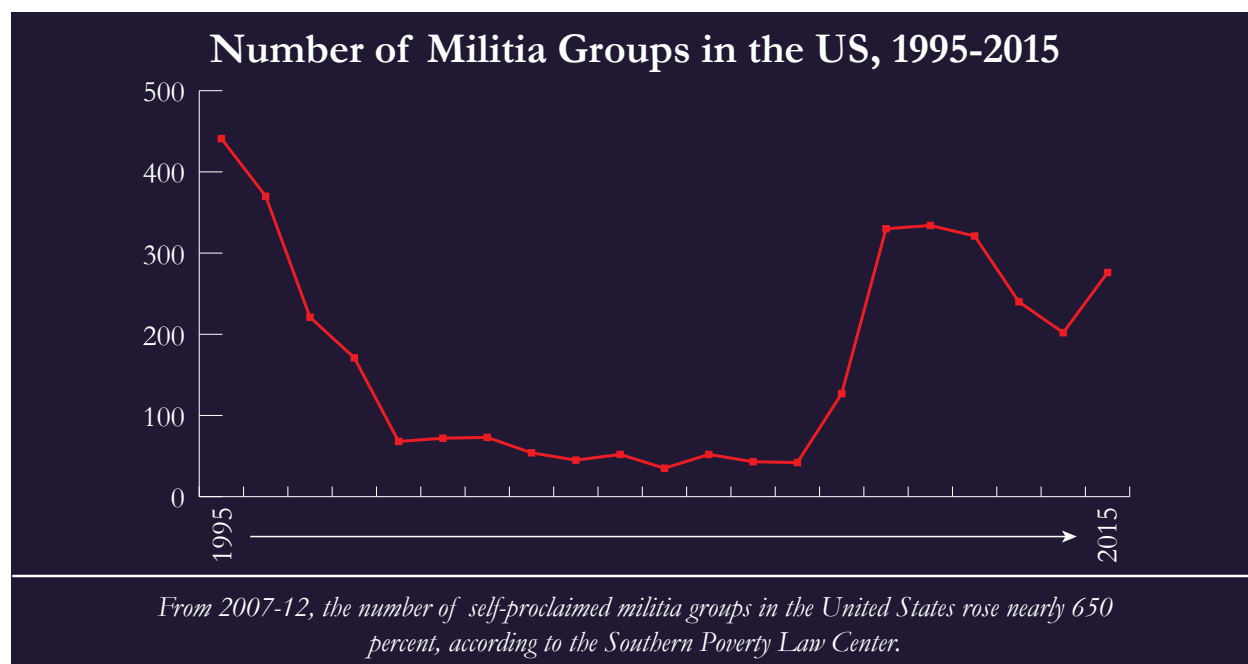
Three bills in Congress, set to be reintroduced this year, propose transferring millions of acres of federal land in Nevada to state control and allowing all states to regulate oil and gas drilling on federal land in their borders. An NJOHSP review of militia leaders' public statements in 2016 reveals a general sentiment favoring such moves, as the status of federally owned land has been a primary driver of armed standoffs with the US Government in recent years.

Since at least 2005, militia extremist groups have patrolled the southern US border. One such group has conducted reconnaissance on the US-Mexico border since 2011 and claims 200 volunteers, while another has surveilled border areas in Arizona and New Mexico since 2014.

Publicly, militia extremist groups are beginning to identify professed non-government threats. In October 2016, a Kansas militia plotted to bomb an apartment complex housing a mosque used by Somali immigrants. Additionally, in November 2016, the founder of a national militia group hosted a webinar providing instructions on how to set up neighborhood “Kill Zones” after the US presidential election—a response to his anticipation of “intruders” “suspending the democratic process” or “legitimizing the implementation of emergency powers and martial law.” Examples of “intruders” included political, civil-rights, terrorist, and race-based groups.



*Three members of “The Crusaders,” Curtis Allen, Gavin Wright, and Patrick Eugene Stein, who were behind the plot in Kansas to bomb an apartment complex.*





## Anarchists Mobilizing Amid Civil Unrest

**A**narchist extremists will likely exploit anti-law enforcement sentiment by carrying out criminal and violent acts during political rallies, otherwise legitimate protests, and race-based events. In 2012, police arrested a doctor in Bergen County for stockpiling explosive materials and found anarchist extremist literature in his home; since that time, no anarchist extremist activity has been reported in the State.

In April 2016, anarchist extremists in Pittsburgh attacked Republican Party supporters by physically assaulting attendees and using pepper spray against police and civilians. Extremists attempted to force their way toward supporters, leading to the arrest of three individuals, according to a pro-anarchist website.

In the past two years, anarchist extremists have infiltrated peaceful social-rights movements in the United States. In July 2016, law enforcement officials arrested about 100 people in Minnesota, including suspected anarchist extremists, after an anti-law enforcement protest.

In June 2016, 300 counter-protesters, including some anarchist extremists, attacked white supremacists rallying at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. In February 2016, anarchist extremists attacked Ku Klux Klan members holding a rally in Anaheim, California, which resulted in three stabbings and seven arrests.



*Anarchist extremists protest against white supremacists in Sacramento, California in June 2016.*

# \$1 million

Property damage caused by anarchist extremists in Portland, Oregon in the four days following the US presidential election. Additionally, the Portland Police incurred roughly \$500,000 in overtime costs during the riots.

## Domestic Terrorism Publications in 2016

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### January 14:

Militia Standoff in Oregon

[www.njohsp.gov/analysis/militia-standoff-in-oregon](http://www.njohsp.gov/analysis/militia-standoff-in-oregon)

### March 28:

Podcast Episode 11:

Mass Shootings - Defining a Phenomenon

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-mass-shootings](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-mass-shootings)

### April 18:

Podcast Episode 14:

One-on-One with Lauren Steinberg

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-lauren-steinberg](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-lauren-steinberg)

### May 18:

Oregon Standoff Bundle

[www.njohsp.gov/analysis/oregonstandoff](http://www.njohsp.gov/analysis/oregonstandoff)

### May 31:

Podcast Episode 20:

Round Two with J.M. Berger

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-jm-berger](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-jm-berger)

### June 6:

Podcast Episode 22:

One-on-One with J.J. MacNab

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-jj-macnab](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-jj-macnab)

### June 28:

Podcast Episode 25:

One-on-One with Thomas Brzozowski

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-thomas-brzozowski](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-thomas-brzozowski)

### July 5:

Mass Shootings in the US,

January 2015 to June 2016

[www.njohsp.gov/analysis/massshootings](http://www.njohsp.gov/analysis/massshootings)

### July 5:

Podcast Episode 26:

Domestic Terrorism Conference Recap

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-dt-conference](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-dt-conference)

### July 18:

Recent Attacks on Law Enforcement

[www.njohsp.gov/analysis/recent-attacks-on-law-enforcement](http://www.njohsp.gov/analysis/recent-attacks-on-law-enforcement)

### July 20:

Washitaw Nation: Non-Violent in New Jersey

[www.njohsp.gov/analysis/washitawnation](http://www.njohsp.gov/analysis/washitawnation)

### July 25:

Podcast Episode 29:

Sovereign Citizen Extremists

[www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-sovereign-citizen-extremists](http://www.njohsp.gov/media/podcast-sovereign-citizen-extremists)

### September 26:

Overlap Between Black Separatists and Moorish Sovereign Citizen Extremists

[www.njohsp.gov/analysis/overlap-between-black-separatists-and-moorish-sovereign-citizen-extremists](http://www.njohsp.gov/analysis/overlap-between-black-separatists-and-moorish-sovereign-citizen-extremists)

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# WHAT DOES 2017 LOOK LIKE FOR ISIS AND AQAP?

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## ISIS Losses in Iraq and Syria Could Spur More External Operations

**I**n the year ahead, mounting setbacks threaten to undermine the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS) position in its primary areas of operation. In 2016, ISIS suffered a series of territorial and leadership losses, as well as declines in online media production and foreign fighter recruitment.

**ISIS has lost approximately 40 percent of its territory since late 2015.** In October 2016, the Iraqi Army and its allies began an offensive to retake Mosul, ISIS's territorial stronghold in Iraq. Additionally, in November 2016, the United States and its allies launched a military offensive to push ISIS out of Raqqa, Syria—the group's de facto capital and hub for external operations.

**Last year, ISIS lost roughly 120 leaders,** including second-in-command and head of external operations Abu Mohammad al-Adnani and propaganda chief Abu Mohammad al-Furqan. According to the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, ISIS from 2015-16 endured a 75-percent decline in online media production, which includes videos and photographs.

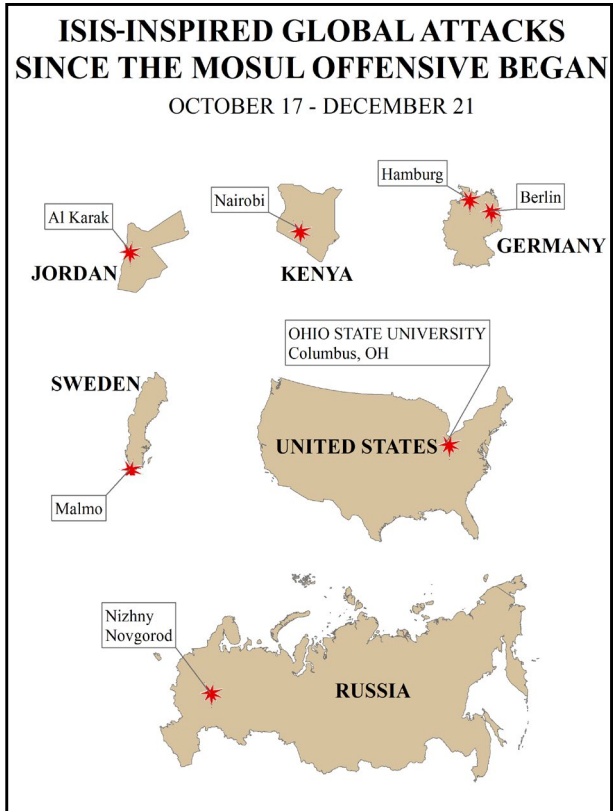
According to the US Intelligence Community, from 2014-15, ISIS experienced a drop in foreign fighter recruitment—from 2,000 fighters arriving in Syria every month on average to about 50. In May 2016, moreover, the FBI Director stated that in the first half of 2015, six to 10 people per month traveled from the United States to join ISIS, but by late 2015 that number had shrunk to one on average. He added the flow has remained at this level.

Since mid-2014, about 100 individuals arrested in the United States viewed or drew terrorist inspiration from ISIS propaganda.

To compensate for battlefield and recruitment losses, ISIS is pushing followers to conduct attacks in the West, including in the United States. Since October 2016, the group has adopted a refined, detail-oriented strategy to inspire homegrown violent extremists, in part to remain relevant in the eyes of followers and financial benefactors.

Between October and December 2016, ISIS claimed responsibility for seven inspired attacks in six countries, including most recently at Ohio State University, where Abdul Artan drove his vehicle through a crowd and struck fellow students with a knife, injuring 11.

In October 2016, ISIS's English-language magazine *Rumiyah* offered details on appropriate knives for attacks, which body parts to strike, and the types of victims. The November 2016 issue of *Rumiyah* identified the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City as an "excellent target" for a vehicle attack. In the same month, ISIS released a video with step-by-step instructions on how to construct a bomb with household materials.



## AQAP: Using New Jersey Bombings to Inspire Others

**I**n November 2016, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) cited the bombings in New Jersey as a model for future attacks in the United States, the first time the group has highlighted New Jersey in its English-language magazine *Inspire*. This 16th edition of *Inspire* also noted the attacks in New York City and Minnesota, continuing AQAP's longstanding trend of capitalizing on events it views as successful to motivate home-grown violent extremists (HVEs) in the West.

In the same edition, AQAP referred to the New Jersey and Minnesota attackers—Ahmad Rahimi and Dahir Adan—as “heroes of the Lone Jihad” and declared their efforts as “a new form of operations and a new form of tactics.”



*AQAP's Inspire magazine highlighting the bombings in New Jersey.*

AQAP uses Rahimi as an instructive case study on how to improve planning and execution in future terrorist operations. *Inspire* discusses the timing, targets, and methods Rahimi used, offering that a remote-controlled device is more effective than a timer because the operator has more control over detonation. The Seaside Park bomb, which was on a timer, detonated in advance of runners gathering for the start of the race.

Despite no deaths in New Jersey or New York, *Inspire* claimed “the American citizen will definitely feel and live in a state of fear and instability,” and the United States was “exhausted by a single operation.”

AQAP remains a persistent threat to the West because of its proven ability to incorporate, train, and deploy operatives abroad; the group also has maintained a territorial foothold in Yemen, giving it space to plan and finance operations. AQAP has not attempted to attack the United States since 2012, when a foiled plot against a US-bound airliner, conceived by the group's chief bombmaker Ibrahim al-Asiri, was disrupted.

The group last struck in the West in January 2015, when brothers Cherif and Sa'id Kouachi killed 12 and injured 11 at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris after receiving weapons training in Yemen.

While occupying the Yemeni port city of Mukalla from 2015 to April 2016, the group reportedly raided a city bank of \$100 million and collected approximately \$2 million per day in “taxes” on goods entering the port.

## AQIS: Threatening New Jersey

In April 2016, a group claiming affiliation with al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) threatened an NJOHSP official on Facebook. One month prior, a Bangladeshi pro-AQIS Facebook page urged militants in the United States to attack 10 US-based universities, including Princeton University (Mercer County).



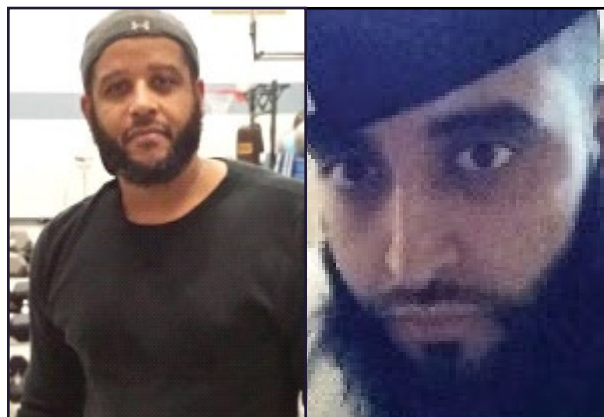
## Returning Jihadists Pose Low Threat

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**N**ew Jersey faces a minimal threat from returning jihadists because of the comparatively small number of US citizens who traveled to join ISIS and the likelihood individuals join other terrorist groups abroad. A comparative review of the 1980s conflict in Afghanistan, where an estimated 150 Americans joined the precursor to what would become al-Qa'ida, demonstrates that many American fighters did not return to the United States because of security or chose to fight elsewhere.

Since 2011, approximately 270 Americans—120 of whom have been arrested—either traveled or attempted to travel to Iraq and Syria, according to the National Counterterrorism Center. This is a low number compared to the estimated 4,200 foreign fighters from Europe. The number of known Americans who attempted to travel or successfully traveled to join ISIS has decreased since last year, from 32 in 2015 to seven in 2016, according to an NJOHSP nationwide review.

Intelligence sharing with coalition partners helps identify individuals attempting to travel or return to the United States from Iraq and Syria. In 2015, authorities abroad detained New Jersey residents Tairod Pugh and Nader Saadeh for attempting to join ISIS.



*Tairod Pugh (left) and Nader Saadeh (right)*

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The number of known Americans who attempted to travel or successfully traveled to join ISIS decreased from 32 in 2015 to seven in 2016.

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WHAT  
CYBERTERRORISM RISKS  
DO WE FACE?

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## Threat Low Despite “Kill Lists”

**T**errorist groups do not possess the cyber capability or intent to damage New Jersey’s critical infrastructure, but extremists’ growing use of encryption and the deep web makes it difficult to detect and disrupt plotting. In 2017, ideological hackers acting on behalf of, or inspired by, terrorist groups will continue to employ low-level cyber tactics against opportunistic targets—including, but not limited to, website defacements, malicious code injection, distributed denial-of-service attacks, and socially engineered account takeovers. These activities pose little threat to public safety.

The dark web is a subset of the “deep web,” the largest segment of the Internet that traditional search engines cannot retrieve; it includes password-protected forums and applications used for illicit communications. In July 2016, an 18-year-old conducted a mass shooting at a mall in Germany using a handgun purchased through an arms dealer on the deep web. Although this incident had no nexus to a foreign terrorist organization, it demonstrates the ease with which an individual who otherwise may not be able to legally acquire a firearm can connect with illegal sellers.

A substantial portion of the dark web also hosts illicit marketplaces, or “hidden services,” that offer unfettered access to narcotics, fraudulent government documents, and weaponry, including explosives and chemical precursors.

**The New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC) assesses that terrorists are increasingly using encrypted applications and the dark web to provide digital safe havens for communications, logistics, and finance.** These technologies present major challenges for homeland security and law enforcement in identifying and disrupting plots before they occur, as well as conducting follow-on investigations.



**Pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) hacking groups attracted considerable attention in 2016 by releasing two dozen “kill lists” containing thousands of US citizens’ personally identifiable information, including some 500 in New Jersey.** The NJCCIC, in coordination with federal partners, has informed the individuals in New Jersey and shared intelligence with other states on this threat. It is not aware of any incidents involving physical violence or additional online harassment against any of these individuals.

The activities of pro-ISIS hackers such as the United Cyber Caliphate and Cyber Caliphate Army dropped off in the second half of 2016 despite occasional releases of new lists, propaganda, and manuals with instructions on how to use the dark web and encrypted applications to avoid government detection.

In October 2016, the US Department of Justice charged 24-year-old Maryland resident Nelash Mohamed Das with the intent to kill a US service member whose name was on a “kill list” in 2015.

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**The NJCCIC assesses terrorists are increasingly using encrypted applications and the dark web to provide digital safe havens for communications, logistics, and financing.**

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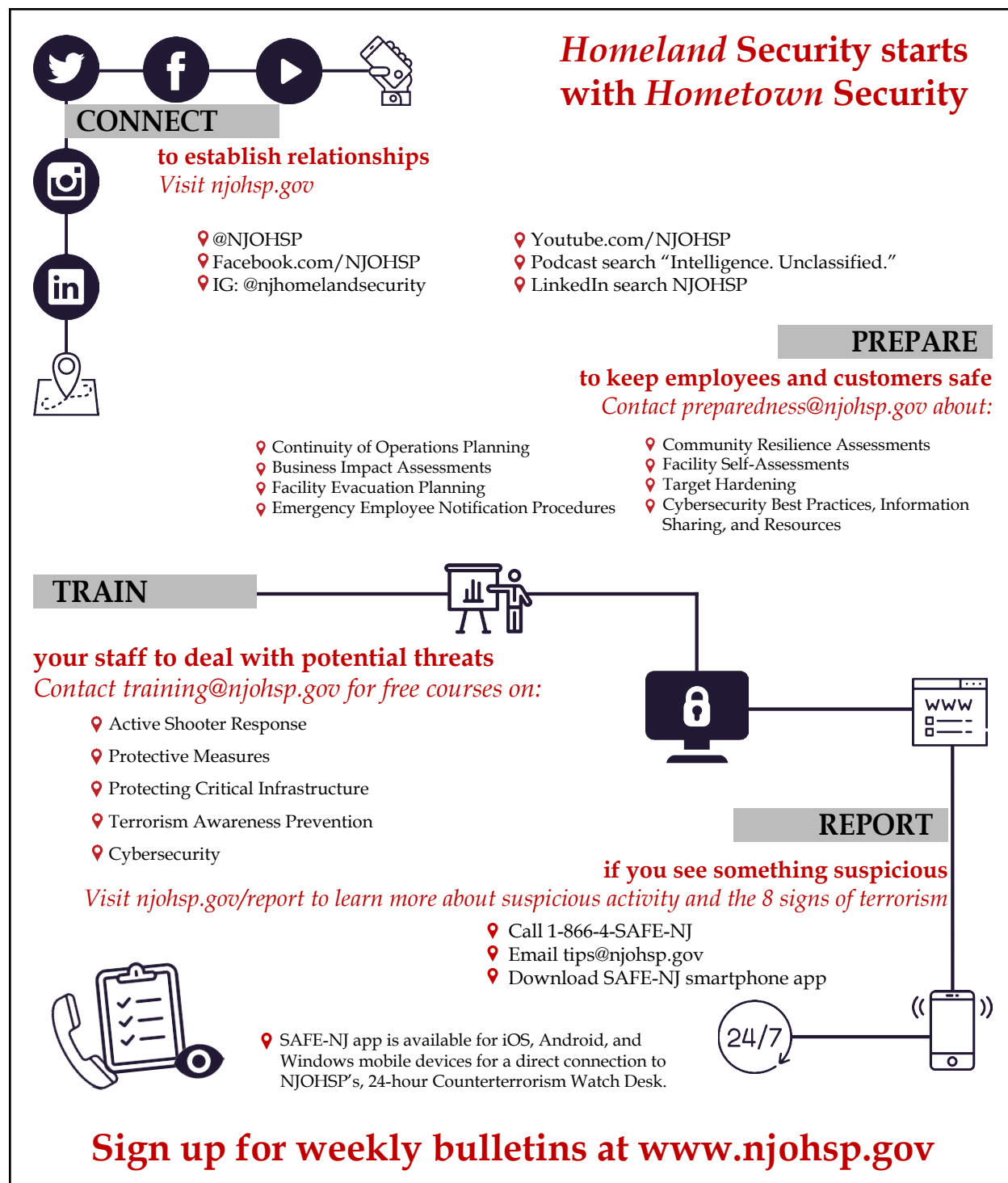
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# WHAT CAN NJOHSP Do For Me?

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## Security Starts With YOU

**N**JOHSP's Hometown Security Initiative is designed to train and educate Main Street owners and operators of facilities like restaurants, nightclubs, cafes, theaters, stores, and entertainment venues. Using the "Connect-Prepare-Train-Report" model, this initiative is intended to inform the public on global intelligence awareness, likely threat scenarios, protective security, and suspicious activity reporting. The program is being implemented statewide to increase community resilience, readiness, and overall security.



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# WHAT DID NJOHSP Do IN 2016?

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## Notable Deliverables

**T**his data includes the combined efforts of NJOHSP's four Divisions—Intelligence, Policy and Planning, Cybersecurity, and Administration—from July 2015 to June 2016.

Category	FY16	FY15	FY14
External Briefings	828	N/A	N/A
Written Publications	607	380	N/A
Weekly Recipients of NJOHSP Publications	8,352	3,100	N/A
In-Person Training and Exercises Delivered	257	186	203
NJLearn Training Completions <sup>a</sup>	96,752	76,223	91,720
Critical Infrastructure Assessments	136	78	N/A
NJCCIC Members	2,792	980	N/I
Webinars and Podcasts	40	13	N/A
<p><b>Key</b>  N/A - This metric was not tracked systematically.  N/I - New NJOHSP initiative.</p> <p><b>Footnotes</b>  <sup>a</sup>NJLearn is an NJOHSP-managed Learning Management System that develops and presents critical online training for sworn law enforcement and first responders in New Jersey.</p>			

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# How Does NJOHSP Define Terrorist Groups?

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### **Al-Qa'ida**

Al-Qa'ida is an Islamic extremist organization founded in 1988 by Usama Bin Ladin and other Arab foreign fighters who fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

### **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.

### **Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)**

AQIS is an Islamist extremist group that aims to fight the governments of Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka to establish an Islamic State.

### **Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)**

AQIM became al-Qa'ida's North Africa affiliate in 2006. AQIM was formerly known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, a splinter group of the Armed Islamic Group, both of which fought against Algeria's secular government.

### **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.

### **Anarchist Extremists**

Anarchist extremists advocate violence in furtherance of submovements such as anti-racism, anti-capitalism, anti-globalism, and environmental extremism.

### **Animal Rights Extremists**

The goal of animal rights extremists is to inflict economic damage on individuals or groups that believe all animals—human and non-human—have equal rights of life and liberty. Animal rights extremists are willing to conduct criminal activity to advance this ideology.

### **Anti-Abortion Extremists**

Anti-abortion extremists are individuals or groups who believe abortion is unethical and that violence is justified against people and establishments providing abortion services.

### **Anti-Government Extremists**

Anti-government extremists believe the US political system is illegitimate and force is justified to bring about change. This includes militia extremists and sovereign citizen extremists.

### **Black Separatist Extremists**

Black separatist extremists 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 the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in March 2015.

### **Environmental Extremists**

Environmental extremists view manmade threats to the environment as so severe that violence and property damage are justified to prevent further destruction.

### **HAMAS**

HAMAS, an acronym for Harakat al-Muqāwama al-Islāmiyya, or the “Islamic Resistance Movement,” was founded in 1987 by deceased Sheikh Ahmed Yassin as an offshoot of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood.

### **Hizballah**

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

### **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.

### **Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)**

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

### **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.

### **Militia Extremists**

Militia extremists 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.

### **Nusrah Front**

The Nusrah Front—al Qa'ida's affiliate in Syria, which is sometimes referred to as Levant Conquest Front or Jabhat Fateh al-Sham—is focused on overthrowing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

### **Race-Based Extremists**

Race-based extremists seek to establish the superiority of one racial or ethnic group over others. This includes white supremacist and black separatist extremists.

### **Single-Issue Extremists**

Single-issue extremists participate in a form of violent extremism which has its source in domestic political or economic issues. This includes animal rights extremists, environmental extremists, anti-abortion extremists, and anarchist extremists.

### **Sovereign Citizen Extremists**

Sovereign citizens throughout the United States view federal, state, and local governments as illegitimate.

### **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**

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

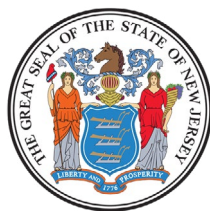
### **White Supremacist Extremists**

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

———— 2017 ————

# TERRORISM THREAT ASSESSMENT





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NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS