



JOINT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



18 October 2023

(U//FOUO) Potential for Violence in the United States Likely Heightened Surrounding the Israel–HAMAS Conflict

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This Joint Intelligence Bulletin highlights potential threats in the United States from a variety of threat actors in response to the HAMAS attacks on Israel on 7 October and subsequent activity in the region. This is an update to the 10 October FBI and DHS Public Safety Announcement and reflects this moment in a fluid and evolving situation. While the terrorism threat in the United States has remained heightened throughout 2023, these recent events have sharpened the focus of potential attacks on targeted individuals and institutions perceived as symbolic of or tied to the conflict. DHS, FBI, and NCTC advise federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government and law enforcement officials and private sector security partners to remain vigilant of this enduring threat.

(U//FOUO) Lone Offenders Likely Pose Greatest Threat in the Homeland

(U//FOUO) DHS, FBI, and NCTC assess that lone offenders inspired by, or reacting to, the ongoing Israel–HAMAS conflict pose the most likely threat to Americans, especially Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities in the United States.^a Since the 7 October attacks in Israel, we have observed an increase in threats to these communities, including reports of physical assaults, bomb threats, and online calls for mass casualty attacks. Longstanding tensions between Israelis and Palestinians resonate across a range of ideologies and grievances that have previously been used to justify violence against Jewish and Muslim communities. These tensions, coupled with the widespread sharing of graphic and disturbing content related to this conflict, increase the prospects for violence in the United States with little to no warning.

- » (U//FOUO) Over the last week, several individuals were involved in low-level clashes between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli ideological opponents at otherwise lawful protests nationwide, according to media reporting. Additionally, hoax bomb threats have targeted several synagogues across the United States—likely intended to disrupt services and intimidate congregants. On 14 October, an individual in Illinois reportedly stabbed and killed a six-year-old Palestinian-American child and severely wounded his

^a (U) NCTC joins those portions of this bulletin that concern international terrorism; general terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures; and threats posed by foreign violent extremists and those violent extremists they inspire.

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(U) All US person information has been minimized. For all other inquiries, please contact the Homeland Security Single Point of Service, Request for Information Office at DHS-SPS-RFI@hq.dhs.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.sgov.gov, DHS-SPS-RFI@dhs.ic.gov.

mother in an anti-Muslim attack, according to a DOJ press release, which is being investigated as a hate crime.

- » (U//FOUO) Violent extremists adhering to ideologies that endorse anti-Semitic or anti-Muslim narratives pose an increased threat to Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities and institutions in the United States. Since the attacks, some racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) have increased calls for violence on social media platforms, celebrating attacks on Jews and stating that attacks by HAMAS could serve as an inspiration for RMVEs in the West. Other violent rhetoric online, including statements made by some RMVEs and some militia violent extremists, has targeted Muslim communities.
- » (U//FOUO) HAMAS has not conducted or called for attacks in the United States, as the group historically has been focused on opposition to Israel rather than supporting or directing attacks in the West. However, the perceived success of HAMAS's terrorist attacks and US foreign policy responses may prompt homegrown violent extremists to conduct attacks against the Jewish or Israeli community or the US government without specific direction from HAMAS or other foreign terrorist organizations.

(U//FOUO) Foreign Terrorist Organizations Likely To Capitalize on Conflict To Encourage Attacks in the West

(U//FOUO) Other FTOs have called for attacks as the conflict has evolved, and we expect such calls likely will intensify should Israeli counterterrorism operations expand in the Gaza Strip. FTOs historically have framed US support for Israel as Western overreach in international conflicts and have exploited periods of heightened Israeli and Palestinian tensions to encourage supporters to conduct attacks. In addition, individuals acting on behalf of Iran or Lebanese Hizballah have historically engaged in plotting and preoperational activity against Jewish and US government targets, including in the United States.

- » (U//FOUO) After HAMAS commenced its attack on Israel, its media organization encouraged “brothers in the Islamic resistance” throughout the Muslim world to assist in HAMAS's ongoing attempt to defeat Israel. HAMAS's call reflects its efforts to portray this war as an Israeli–Palestinian war—not a conflict between HAMAS and Israel—probably to broaden its support base. On 13 October, al-Qa'ida media called for support to HAMAS through attacks against American bases, airports, battleships, and embassies in Muslim countries. Al-Qa'ida media also promoted previous messaging calling for the targeting of “all those involved in the aggression against Palestine.”
- » (U//FOUO) ISIS—an ideological opponent of HAMAS—has not issued official statements on the conflict, apart from sharing a previously released newsletter criticizing HAMAS, but ISIS supporters online have encouraged attacks targeting Israeli citizens and governments of countries in the region seen as aligning with Israel. In mid-October, a self-proclaimed ISIS supporter killed two Swedish citizens in Belgium, according to media reporting. Prior to the attack, he criticized the investigation of the stabbing of the Palestinian-American child in Illinois. ISIS likely will seek to further escalate the threat while avoiding activity that could be perceived as supporting HAMAS.

- » (U//FOUO) Since the conflict began, leaders from the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hizballah, and Iran-aligned militant groups have issued strong statements of support for HAMAS's attack on Israel. Hizballah called for a day of rage today in response to the hospital explosion in Gaza, coinciding with the US President's visit to Israel, which prompted demonstrations at US embassies in the Middle East. While we have not observed these groups seeking to incite violence or plot attacks in the Homeland in response to the conflict, in recent years, the US government has arrested or issued indictments for several individuals acting on behalf of the Government of Iran or Hizballah. These actors have plotted lethal attacks against individuals in the United States and conducted preoperational activities, such as surveillance indicative of planning for lethal attacks against Jewish facilities, government facilities, and Iranian dissident groups.

(U//FOUO) Cyber Threats Limited to Low-Level Attacks and Website Defacements

(U//FOUO) Since the onset of the conflict, various malicious cyber actors have called for action through cyber tactics for their respective causes predominantly through malicious cyber groups' social media. The primary observed activities are low-level distributed denial-of-service and website defacement activity by malicious cyber actors against both Israeli and Palestinian public-facing websites. On 10 October, a pro-Palestinian criminal hacking group known as Ghosts of Palestine called for others to join them in their "on-going" attacks against Israel and Europe and called for others to conduct likely cyber attacks against the United States as well.

(U) Factors That Could Change the Threat Landscape in the Homeland

(U//FOUO) FTO and lone offender reactions based on perceptions of US support to Israel could further escalate the threat to Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities in the United States and US government officials. As the conflict endures, graphic visuals will likely continue to circulate online and garner significant media attention, potentially acting as a catalyst for various violent actors who have shared and continue to share this kind of material.

(U//FOUO) Adversarial foreign actors, including nation-states like Iran, probably will seek to amplify mis- and disinformation online about the Israel–HAMAS conflict to deepen resentment and evoke strong emotional responses as the conflict evolves. Mis- and disinformation online have included doctored images, mislabeled images and video footage, inaccurate translations, and factually inaccurate content about the conflict. For example, individuals online have claimed that violence perpetrated by HAMAS against women and children was "fake" or never happened, and some online users claim the conflict is a "false flag," according to open-source reporting and an organization that monitors violent extremism online.

(U) Indicators

(U//FOUO) Due to the highly personal nature of radicalization and mobilization to violence, it is difficult to assess specific indicators that are indicative of US-based violent extremists' intent

to commit violence.^b We urge state and local authorities, as well as private sector security partners, to promptly report suspicious activities potentially related to violent extremist activity, including indications of possible online radicalization to violence and mobilization for attacks. While not all-encompassing, DHS, FBI, and NCTC have identified several possible signposts listed below that would likely be observable to law enforcement and community members indicating potential violence:

- » (U//FOUO) Explicit discussion and/or praise of tactics, techniques, and procedures associated with HAMAS's attack in online spaces commonly associated with or used by violent extremists to espouse their beliefs.
- » (U//FOUO) HAMAS or other violent extremist groups calling for global supporters to engage in violence in retaliation for US support to Israel.
- » (U//FOUO) HAMAS or other violent extremist groups releasing messaging issuing attack guidance in English.
- » (U//FOUO) HAMAS or other violent extremist groups releasing messaging issuing attack guidance on target selection, how to prepare for an attack, and other tactical attack planning.
- » (U//FOUO) US-based violent extremists seeking attack guidance.

(U) DHS, FBI, and NCTC also direct public safety partners to the unclassified booklet "US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators 2021 Edition," which includes additional possible indicators of mobilization to violence. These indicators apply to all ideologically motivated, US-based violent extremists.

(U) Related Products

(U//FOUO) For additional information regarding the Israel–HAMAS conflict, please refer to the below intelligence products:

- » (U//FOUO) Liaison Information Report, "Public Safety Notification Regarding the Situation in Israel," dated 10 October 2023
- » (U//FOUO) Public Service Announcement, "Situation in Israel," dated 10 October 2023

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U//FOUO) We encourage the use of the unclassified information sharing system eGuardian for reporting suspicious activity reports (SARs) to the FBI. eGuardian is accessible via the Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP). If the information is urgent in nature, then please contact your local FBI field office directly (if appropriate) and follow up with an eGuardian report. If you need a LEEP account, please navigate to the LEEP homepage at www.cjis.gov and select apply for an account. From within LEEP, navigate to LEEP Services and then select eGuardian and an eGuardian application page will be displayed. Further information about the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI) and eGuardian access can also be obtained at <https://www.dhs.gov/nsi>.

^b (U//FOUO) DHS, FBI, and NCTC define radicalization as the process through which an individual changes from a nonviolent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use unlawful violence as a method to affect societal or political change.

(U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response

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Homeland Security

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

Customer Feedback Form

Product Title: (U//FOUO) Potential for Violence in the United States Likely Heightened Surrounding the Israel–HAMAS ^{G+}

All survey responses are completely anonymous. No personally identifiable information is captured unless you voluntarily offer personal or contact information in any of the comment fields. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

1. Please select partner type: and function:

2. What is the highest level of intelligence information that you receive?

3. Please complete the following sentence: "I focus most of my time on:"

4. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's relevance to your mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's timeliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's responsiveness to your intelligence needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive planning and preparedness efforts, training, and/or emergency response operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiate a law enforcement investigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observe, identify, and/or disrupt threats | <input type="checkbox"/> Intiate your own regional-specific analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share with partners | <input type="checkbox"/> Intiate your own topic-specific analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate resources (e.g. equipment and personnel) | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop long-term homeland security strategies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reprioritize organizational focus | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not plan to use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Author or adjust policies and guidelines | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/> |

6. To further understand your response to question #5, please provide specific details about situations in which you might use this product.

7. What did this product not address that you anticipated it would?

8. To what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

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10. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback?

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