



(U) Wide-Ranging Domestic Violent Extremist Threat to Persist

(U) The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) assess that domestic violent extremists (DVEs)^a fueled by various evolving ideological and sociopolitical grievances pose a sustained threat of violence to the American public, democratic institutions, and government and law enforcement officials. Flashpoint events in the coming months may exacerbate these perceived grievances, further increasing the potential for DVE violence. DVEs adhering to different violent extremist ideologies have coalesced around anger at issues including perceived election fraud, as well as immigration and government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing on their varied perceptions of those issues. These factors, along with fluid conspiracy theories, have amplified longstanding DVE grievances, including perceptions of government and law enforcement overreach or oppression and shifts in US demographics and cultural values.

- (U) The mass shooting last month targeting Black people in Buffalo, New York, was allegedly perpetrated by a racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist (RMVE) driven by a belief in the superiority of the white race. The RMVE was charged with federal hate crimes and using a firearm to commit murder in June 2022. This attack underscores how RMVEs—who have been responsible for a majority of DVE-related deaths since 2010—pose a significant threat of lethal violence against civilians, particularly of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities.
- (U) The lethal threat from militia violent extremists (MVEs) remains elevated, primarily toward government and law enforcement personnel, as MVEs remain willing to use violence to redress perceived government overreach and other sociopolitical grievances, judging from an increase in MVE plotting, disruptions, and FBI investigations since 2020. Anarchist violent extremists (AVEs) present a threat of sporadic violent physical assaults and property crimes impacting the efficient operation of critical infrastructure; developments that heighten perceptions of inequality or social injustice might further embolden AVEs to commit acts of violence.
- (U) Several DVEs motivated by perceptions of fraud in the 2020 general election were arrested in 2021 and 2022 for plotting or threatening violence against federal, state, and local officials and political party representatives, highlighting the elevated threat posed to elected officials countrywide. In November 2021, a New York–based MVE was sentenced to 19 months in prison for threatening to assault and murder members of the US Congress.
- (U) A wide-ranging set of DVEs have shared their perceptions of government overreach on COVID-19 pandemic mitigation efforts and anger at government responses to immigration issues in person and online and have encouraged one another to act violently. Anger at the mitigation efforts of businesses and federal, state, and local governments motivated several DVE attacks, plots, and calls for violence against health care workers and mobile vaccine clinics in 2020 and 2021. In 2021, some DVEs visited the US-Mexico border with the intention of detaining those crossing into the United States.

^a(U) For the purpose of this assessment, DHS, FBI, and NCTC use the term DVE to refer to an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics do not constitute domestic violent extremism and is constitutionally protected. DHS, FBI, and NCTC apply this term as appropriate within the scope of their respective authorities.

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(U) DVEs carried out at least four lethal attacks in 2021—the same number as in 2020—killing 13 people. Additional potential DVE incidents that have occurred in 2022 remain under FBI investigation. The number of pending FBI domestic terrorism investigations grew from approximately 1,000 in the spring of 2020 to approximately 2,700 in late 2021, in part because of investigations related to the siege of the US Capitol on 6 January 2021. Since the beginning of 2010, DVEs adhering to various violent extremist ideologies have conducted at least 47 lethal attacks that have killed 152 people in the United States. These figures do not include lethal attacks classified as violent hate crimes rather than DVE attacks.

(U) Developments related to midterm elections, immigration, perceptions of government overreach or social injustice, and other flashpoint events will probably motivate some DVEs across ideologies to plot or attempt violence in the coming months. In the context of these events, some DVEs might promote or exploit the public prevalence of violent extremist narratives to encourage violence. DVE attackers and plotters are typically lone actors—individuals acting without the direct support of others—who plot or conduct attacks on soft targets using easily accessible weapons. The persistent difficulty of detecting threats from such actors underscores the value of the public's assistance in identifying people who might be mobilizing to violence and in reporting concerning behavior to authorities before violence occurs.

- (U) Heightened tensions surrounding the 2022 midterm election cycle will probably cause some DVEs to target political candidates, party offices, judges, election events, or poll workers because of their actual or perceived political affiliations, as several did in 2021. On 26 January 2021, FBI arrested a California-based MVE for allegedly threatening family members of a member of the US Congress and a journalist. The MVE was sentenced to three years in prison in December 2021.
- (U) Immigration-related developments, amplified by DVEs in violent extremist messaging, might spur DVEs to conduct planned or opportunistic violence. Historically, RMVEs—such as the Pittsburgh synagogue attacker in 2018 and the El Paso Walmart attacker in 2019—have conducted attacks motivated in part by immigration-related grievances, and MVEs have targeted perceived immigration-related threats to national security, including initiating armed border patrols with the intent of curbing illegal immigration, posing a potential risk to law enforcement and immigrants. AVEs have targeted US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities in opposition to US Government immigration policies.
- (U) Even if perceptions of government overreach related to COVID-19 mitigation measures subside, some DVEs will probably continue adhering to evolving anti-government and conspiracy narratives that they adopted during the pandemic and might use to justify violence. Some DVE adherents to QAnon conspiracy theories continue to violently target a shifting array of individuals and entities that they accuse of perpetrating or enabling child abuse. Such conspiracy theories have led to threats or acts of violence, including against businesses, US Government buildings, public officials, and the transportation sector that significantly impacted their operations.
- (U) New legislation or US Supreme Court rulings that exacerbate DVEs' grievances or deepen their animosity toward perceived ideological opponents, including on high-salience issues such as abortion and gun rights, might result in increased threats of violence from a range of DVEs. Law enforcement involvement in the deaths of DVEs or like-minded people might also lead to calls for violence. Additionally, in 2020, some DVEs exploited lawful gatherings after law enforcement-involved deaths of unarmed African-Americans to engage in violence against ideological opponents and other targets.

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(U) We assess that of all the DVE movements, RMVEs driven by a belief in the superiority of the white race continue to possess the most persistent and concerning transnational connections because adherents to this ideology are present throughout the West, frequently communicate with each other, and, at times, have inspired attacks. US-based RMVEs primarily forge connections with foreign counterparts online to network with like-minded individuals and deepen their commitment to RMVE causes. Many transnational, online RMVE networks have emerged since the mid-2010s, fostering a decentralized movement that often promotes violent extremism and encourages supporters to undertake violent action that is framed around the concept of leaderless resistance.

APPENDIX

(U) WIDE VARIETY OF DVE ACTORS THREATEN THE UNITED STATES

(U) We assess that the United States faces threats from a wide range of DVEs who seek to engage in ideologically motivated violence. This appendix gives an overview of the five DVE threat categories that the US Government uses: RMVE; anti-government or anti-authority violent extremism, which includes MVE, AVE, and sovereign citizen violent extremism (SCVE); “all other domestic terrorism threats” that do not fit into the other DVE threat categories, including violent extremists driven by political, personal, or conspiracy theory–related grievances, as well as involuntary celibate violent extremists (IVEs); abortion-related violent extremism; and animal rights or environmental violent extremism.

(U) Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism

(U) RMVEs Driven by Belief in the Superiority of the White Race Present Enduring Lethal Threat

(U) We assess that RMVEs who are driven by a belief in the superiority of the white race continue to pose the primary threat among DVEs of committing lethal violence against civilians, based on their ideology and attack history. These RMVEs advocate and commit violence in support of a transnational movement whose adherents believe that white people of European descent are superior to and threatened by minority populations, as well as by other whites whom they perceive as supporting these populations. Some of these RMVEs promote accelerationist thinking, which advocates committing violence to precipitate a large-scale conflict, often framed as a “race war,” in the United States and other Western democracies that these RMVEs believe will result in a white ethnostate.

- (U) The most recent such RMVE attack before the Buffalo shooting took place on 26 June 2021, when a now-deceased RMVE who allegedly used his belief in the superiority of the white race to justify violence conducted a shooting in Winthrop, Massachusetts, resulting in two deaths.
- (U) Since 2010, US-based RMVEs driven by a belief in the superiority of the white race have committed 17 lethal attacks that have killed a total of 77 people—slightly more than half of all fatalities from DVE attacks during that period. These RMVE attacks include the mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, in 2022; El Paso, Texas, in 2019; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2018; and Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015. Typical targets of these RMVEs include houses of worship, areas conducive to large gatherings, and people whom the attackers see as representative of those against whom they hold grievances.

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(U) RMVEs Motivated by Real or Perceived Racism and Injustice in American Society, the Desire for a Separate Black Homeland, and/or Violent Interpretations of Religious Teachings Will Probably Engage in Sporadic Violence

(U) RMVEs who are motivated by perceptions of racial injustice in American society, the desire for a separate Black homeland, and/or violent interpretations of religious teachings will probably continue to commit intermittent acts of violence. This subset of RMVEs has historically targeted those they perceive as representing oppression, including government officials, law enforcement, and white people, as well as individuals and locations associated with Judaism. These RMVEs conducted 11 lethal attacks from 2010 to 2021, resulting in 25 fatalities.

- (U) On 23 June 2021, an RMVE allegedly used his interpretations of Black Hebrew Israelite religious teachings to justify violence and shot to death a law enforcement officer in Daytona Beach, Florida. The suspect has been charged with capital murder and is awaiting trial.
- (U) In December 2019, an RMVE allegedly motivated by antisemitism and his interpretations of Black Hebrew Israelite religious teachings attacked the home of a Hasidic rabbi in New York during a Hanukkah celebration, wounding five people, one of whom later died. In the same month, two RMVEs with similar motivations fatally shot a local law enforcement officer at a cemetery in New Jersey and attacked a nearby kosher supermarket, killing three people and injuring several others. Both RMVEs were fatally wounded during an encounter with responding law enforcement officers.
- (U) RMVEs conducted attacks on law enforcement during the weeks after the officer-involved shooting deaths of two African Americans in Louisiana and Minnesota in July 2016. On 7 July 2016, a now-deceased RMVE motivated by incidents of actual or perceived police brutality ambushed and shot 11 law enforcement officers, killing five, in Dallas, Texas. On 17 July 2016, a now-deceased RMVE with similar motivations ambushed and shot six law enforcement officers, killing three, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

(U) Anti-Government or Anti-Authority Violent Extremism

(U) MVEs Pose Heightened Lethal Threat to Law Enforcement and Symbols of Government

(U) The lethal threat level from MVEs to law enforcement and government personnel will almost certainly remain elevated in the coming months because some of these actors are willing to use violence to redress perceived government overreach and other sociopolitical issues. Some MVEs will almost certainly continue to harbor grievances over their perceptions of fraud during the 2020 election and government measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some MVEs might also mobilize to violence in response to the enactment of any legislation that they perceive as restricting access to firearms, expanding immigration, or managing public land that MVEs might view as unacceptable infringements on civil liberties or harmful to the security of the United States.

- (U) In April 2021, FBI arrested an MVE in Texas who intended to bomb a commercial cloud service provider's servers under the belief that the data center provided services to federal agencies, including CIA and FBI. The MVE pleaded guilty to a malicious attempt to destroy a building with an explosive and was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison in October 2021.
- (U) In January 2021, FBI disrupted a plot by two suspected MVEs who were allegedly planning to bomb the state headquarters of a political party in Sacramento, California. Federal investigators discovered multiple pipe bombs and dozens of firearms at the home of one of the MVEs. The subjects pleaded guilty to multiple offenses and are awaiting sentencing.

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- (U) Dozens of probable MVEs were arrested for their involvement in the violent, unlawful entry of the US Capitol building on 6 January 2021.

(U) Most AVEs Will Probably Engage in Nonlethal Criminal Activity, Impact Law Enforcement Operations

(U) We assess that AVEs will continue to plot and potentially conduct sporadic attacks on critical infrastructure and federal, state, and local facilities, as well as violent physical assaults against their perceived ideological opponents. Perceptions of inequality or social injustices related to flashpoint events might further embolden AVEs to commit acts of violence. Target selection by AVEs—whether premeditated or opportunistic—will probably remain focused on people or institutions seen as representing authority, capitalism, and oppression, including perceived racism or fascism. Although AVEs have sometimes acted collectively, we assess AVEs are not organized at the countrywide level.

- (U) In January 2021, FBI arrested a Florida-based AVE after he issued a “call to arms” for like-minded individuals to join him with firearms to violently confront others who might gather at a lawful protest at the Florida Capitol earlier that month. In October 2021, the AVE was sentenced to 44 months in federal prison for communicating a threat to kidnap or injure others.
- (U) In August 2020, an individual who expressed views on social media consistent with AVE ideology fatally shot a man during an event with individuals of opposing ideologies in Portland, Oregon. This incident was the first known lethal attack in the United States by an AVE in more than 20 years. The AVE was subsequently killed after drawing a firearm when law enforcement attempted to arrest him.
- (U) In July 2019, a probable AVE set fire to a vehicle and threw incendiary devices at a building near a detention facility linked to ICE operations in Tacoma, Washington. He then engaged responding law enforcement officers with an AR-style rifle and was killed during the encounter.

(U) SCVEs Pose Sporadic Threat of Violence Against Law Enforcement and Government Personnel

(U) We assess that sovereign citizen violent extremists (SCVEs) will continue to pose a sporadic threat of violence against law enforcement and government personnel on the basis of SCVEs’ perceived rights and belief in their immunity from government authority and laws. In furtherance of these beliefs, SCVEs have committed a wide variety of property and financial crimes that have often brought them into conflict with law enforcement, sometimes resulting in violence. Law enforcement officers will probably remain SCVEs’ most frequent targets, with violence most likely to occur during law enforcement encounters, including traffic stops.

- (U) On 3 July 2021, 11 individuals, believed to be members of an armed organization that espouses sovereign citizen ideology, engaged in an hours-long armed standoff with Massachusetts State Police near Wakefield that was streamed live by the group’s spokesperson on a social media platform. The incident occurred after an attempted traffic stop on a vehicle driven by group members and had the potential to escalate to violence. After the standoff, the individuals were charged with multiple firearms-related violations. Group members’ statements before, during, and after the standoff have been consistent with sovereign citizen extremist ideology.
- (U) In February 2018, a probable SCVE opened fire on local law enforcement officers who were trying to serve a warrant at the violent extremist’s residence in Locust Grove, Georgia, for failure to appear in court. After the SCVE killed one police officer and wounded two sheriff’s deputies, law enforcement officers shot and killed him.

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**(U) All Other Domestic Terrorism Threats****(U) Other DVEs Pose Threat of Violence Because of Political Grievances, Conspiracy Theories**

(U) We assess that DVEs who mobilize to commit violence in response to partisan grievances and who do not fall under other DVE threat categories will pose a heightened threat to individuals in the 2022 midterm election cycle because of their actual or perceived political affiliation. These DVEs might target candidates, government officials, other civilians, and institutions with violence to try to redress their perceived grievances or advance their agendas. Conspiracy theories related to the 2020 general election will probably continue to contribute to the radicalization of some DVEs with partisan grievances and potentially be reinforced by their view that the Capitol breach on 6 January 2021 was a success.

- (U) In December 2021, a DVE motivated by partisan grievances who is awaiting trial was arrested en route to Washington, DC, after telling law enforcement officers that he would “do whatever it takes” to kill government leaders on his “hit list.” The DVE was found to have a rifle, ammunition, loaded magazines, body armor, and medical kits.
- (U) In September 2021, authorities arrested a DVE motivated by partisan grievances for throwing a Molotov cocktail at the offices of a political party in Austin, Texas. The subject pleaded guilty to one count of arson and was sentenced to six years in prison.
- (U) In June 2017, a now-deceased DVE injured several members of Congress, staffers, and responding officers after opening fire at a charity baseball event in Alexandria, Virginia.

(U) Conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic almost certainly contribute to the mobilization to violence of some DVEs who do not fall into the other threat categories. We assess that these DVEs pose an ongoing threat to government officials and critical infrastructure.

- (U) In March 2020, a DVE deliberately derailed a train that he was operating near the USNS Mercy hospital ship at the Port of Los Angeles to draw media attention to the ship’s presence. The DVE told law enforcement that he believed that the ship had an “alternate purpose” related to COVID-19 or an unspecified US Government takeover and that he wanted to “wake people up.” In April 2022, he was sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to committing a terrorist attack and other violence against railroad carriers and mass transportation systems.

(U) We assess that adherence to elements of the continuously evolving QAnon conspiracy theory—some of which are bolstered by the resonance of election fraud narratives—will contribute to the radicalization and mobilization to violence of a small number of DVEs, posing a threat to individuals and institutions that supporters of the conspiracy theory have prominently denounced. The participation of some self-identifying QAnon adherents in the breach of the US Capitol on 6 January 2021—who were arrested and charged with violent entry and disorderly conduct in a restricted building and obstruction of an official proceeding — underscores how some QAnon adherents can accept the legitimacy of violent action.

- (U) On 7 January 2021, a North Carolina–based, self-identified QAnon adherent was arrested by FBI in Washington, DC, and charged with interstate communication of threats after he brought firearms and ammunition into the city and threatened the Speaker of the House and DC Mayor. The DVE pleaded guilty and was sentenced to two years in federal prison.
- (U) On 8 January 2021, a probable DVE and self-identified QAnon adherent was arrested on charges of destroying government property after allegedly firing several rounds at a federal courthouse in Oregon. In November 2021, the DVE was sentenced to probation.

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(U) Some DVEs form uniquely personalized grievances that might also draw from established DVE movements and, on a limited basis, from other violent extremist ideologies, probably aided by the proliferation and accessibility of a wide range of DVE and other extremist content online, a trend we expect to continue in coming years.

- (U) On 21 June 2021, a now-deceased DVE conducted a shooting attack in Arvada, Colorado, killing two people. The preliminary investigation revealed that the alleged attacker's personalized ideology included a hatred of police stemming from perceptions of corruption among law enforcement agencies.
- (U) On 16 March 2021, a DVE with a personalized ideology related to his claimed sex and pornography addictions allegedly conducted shootings at spas near Atlanta, Georgia, killing eight people. The attacker was sentenced to life in prison for four murders to which he pleaded guilty and is awaiting trial on four counts of murder to which he pleaded not guilty.

(U) We assess that involuntary celibate violent extremists (IVEs) pose a persistent threat of violence against women, heterosexual couples, and others perceived as successful in sexual or romantic pursuits. IVEs motivated by grievances related to their belief that society unjustly denies them sexual or romantic attention have conducted three lethal attacks in the United States since 2014, mostly using firearms, that have resulted in 17 fatalities. The incel movement, which includes IVEs, has online participants in many Western countries, and at least four Canadian IVEs have conducted lone-actor attacks since 2016.

- (U) In July 2021, FBI arrested an IVE based on his alleged actions in planning an attack on women at a university in Ohio. The IVE allegedly wrote a manifesto describing his hatred of women and his desire to "slaughter" them. He was charged with illegal firearms possession and attempting to commit a hate crime and is awaiting trial.
- (U) In May 2020, a self-identified involuntary celibate shot and injured three people at an outdoor mall in Glendale, Arizona, before authorities arrested him. In March 2022, the IVE pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted first degree murder and two counts of assault with a deadly weapon.

(U) Abortion-Related Violent Extremism**(U) Abortion-Related Violent Extremists Might React to Ongoing Events**

(U) We assess that abortion-related violent extremist activity will probably increase in line with abortion-related legislative and legal debates, such as those surrounding the recent unauthorized disclosure of a draft opinion in the anticipated US Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Historically, abortion-related violent extremists motivated by pro-life beliefs have committed acts of violence, including at least 10 murders and dozens of bombings and arsons, all targeting abortion providers and facilities. Abortion-related violent extremists motivated by pro-choice beliefs—although historically less violent than pro-life abortion-related violent extremists—will probably pose a threat to individuals or critical infrastructure and will most often likely target organizations or people expressing pro-life views.

- (U) On 31 December 2021, a fire destroyed an unoccupied reproductive health clinic in Knoxville, Tennessee. Local investigators determined that the event was an arson attack by unknown perpetrators.
- (U) In September 2021, an individual from Oklahoma was arrested for making online threats targeting Texas lawmakers associated with state-level abortion restrictions. The individual pleaded guilty and is awaiting sentencing.

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- (U) On 3 January 2020, a DVE with a history of expressing pro-life beliefs online threw an incendiary device at the front window of a reproductive healthcare facility in Newark, Delaware, starting a fire that damaged the front porch and window. The subject pleaded guilty in February 2021 and was sentenced to 26 months in federal prison in March 2022.

(U) Animal Rights and Environmental Violent Extremism**(U) Animal Rights and Environmental Violent Extremists Primarily Target Critical Infrastructure**

(U) We assess that violent extremists supporting animal rights and environmental causes will continue to disrupt the operation of critical infrastructure to try to exact an economic toll on the industries they target. Most environmental violent extremist activity in recent years has opposed oil and natural gas infrastructure projects, particularly those near perceived ecologically sensitive habitats or waterways, while animal rights violent extremists primarily oppose large-scale farming or animal agriculture.

- (U) In November 2020, two environmental violent extremists in Whatcom County, Washington, were arrested and charged with impeding the operation of a railroad signal system by using a “shunt” across the railroad tracks, which disrupts the electrical current on the tracks and can disable safety features, potentially causing derailments or other accidents. A claim of responsibility followed a similar incident in early 2020, stating that extremists had carried out the shunting with the goal of preventing the construction of an oil pipeline across British Columbia. Both defendants were found guilty and sentenced to one year and to six months in prison, respectively.