



23 December 2016

(U//FOUO) **ISIL Supporters Continue Aspirational Calls for Attacks on Holiday Gatherings, Including Targeting Churches**

(U) Scope

((U//FOUO) This *Joint Intelligence Bulletin (JIB)* is intended to remind security planners and first responders to remain vigilant for indications of nefarious operational planning this holiday season, particularly given a group of self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq the Levant's (ISIL) supporters' recent aspirational message to target churches in the United States, Europe, and Canada. This *JIB* is provided by FBI, DHS and NCTC to support their respective activities and to assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government counterterrorism and law enforcement officials and private sector security partners in deterring, preventing, or disrupting terrorist attacks within the United States.

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(U) Key Judgments

(U//FOUO) On 21 December 2016, members of a pro-ISIL social media platform published a link to a website containing the names and addresses of churches in the United States and aspirationally called on its supporters to attack them during the holiday season, according to open-source reporting. The link contained publicly available information previously published in other forums. Additional posts associated with the 21 December 2016 publication of the link called for aspirational attacks on churches, hotels, coffee shops, streets, markets, and other public places in the United States, Canada, France, and the Netherlands. We assess this list may have been published to encourage attacks by homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) or as a means to intimidate or incite fear, but is likely not indicative of a specific, credible threat.*

- » (U//FOUO) Since 2014, ISIL and its supporters have used social media to release links to lists of potential targets in the United States and abroad. Additionally, ISIL supporters have repeatedly "doxed"—or released personally identifiable information (PII) with the intent to cause harm—thousands of US-based individuals, including US military members, federal employees, state and local government workers, law enforcement officials, and civilians. To date, the release of these lists have rarely inspired HVEs to conduct plotting—none of which resulted in a successful attack. We are not currently tracking any specific or credible threats targeting churches in the Homeland, including any of those listed in the link published on 21 December 2016; however, this list potentially provides HVEs with possible target ideas.† We will assess any specific threat to an identified religious institution in the United States.
- » (U//FOUO) ISIL's condemnation of Christianity as justification for violence against non-Muslims—as well as Muslim bystanders in the West—has been featured prominently in the group's official media. The 15th issue of ISIL's previous magazine *Dabiq*, released on 31 July 2016, featured an article entitled "Break the Cross," called for "non-believers" to convert to Islam, and ordered ISIL followers to "attack non-Muslims without delay." Although no US-based churches have been mentioned in official ISIL media, the group specifically identified French churches in its French-language media in the past, according to press reporting.

(U) Outlook

(U//FOUO) We urge state and local authorities, as well as private sector security partners, to promptly report suspicious activities related to threats to holiday gatherings and churches. We are monitoring all threats, regardless of specificity and credibility, related to the holiday season. We continue to assess, however, that HVEs pose the most likely near-term threat to the Homeland, probably by conducting small-scale and opportunistic attacks against civilian targets using small arms or weapons of opportunity, such as knives or vehicles. Recent events—including the 11 December 2016 suicide attack on a Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, Egypt,

* (U//FOUO) FBI, DHS and NCTC define an HVE as a person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically-motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization, but is acting independently of direction by a foreign terrorist organization. HVEs are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction from or influence from a foreign actor.

and the 22 December 2016 foiled multi-tactic plot in Melbourne, Australia, planned for Christmas Day against St. Paul's Cathedral and other prominent locations—underscore the need for heightened vigilance through the holiday season. As with similar threats, we are tracking the release of potential targets. We continue to work closely with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners to determine if there is any potential threat to public safety. The FBI, DHS and NCTC ask security stakeholders to maintain awareness of their surroundings and to report any suspicious activity to law enforcement.

(U) Indicators

(U//FOUO) Some observed behaviors that may be suspicious include Constitutionally protected activity. These behaviors should not be reported absent articulable facts and circumstances that support the source agency's suspicion that the observed behavior is not innocent, but rather reasonably indicative of criminal activity associated with terrorism. These include indicators of material support to terrorist groups, indicators of violent extremist radicalization, and signs of travel overseas with the intent of engaging in violence.*

(U) Past Behaviors Associated with Pre-Operational Surveillance and Testing of Security

- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious observation of or unusual questions to building maintenance or security personnel about security procedures;
- » (U//FOUO) Engaging in overtly suspicious actions to provoke and observe responses by security or law enforcement officers;
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious interest in entry points, peak days and hours of operation, security personnel, surveillance assets (including cameras), and access controls, such as alarms, barriers, doors, gates, or locks;
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious observation of security reaction drills or procedures, or multiple false alarms or fictitious emergency calls to same locations or similar venues;
- » (U//FOUO) Loitering, parking, or standing in the same area over multiple days with no reasonable explanation;
- » (U//FOUO) Unusual attention to or avoidance of surveillance cameras;
- » (U//FOUO) Attempts to disguise appearance from visit to visit (change in hair color, style of dress);
- » (U//FOUO) Interest, without justification, in obtaining site plans, ingress and egress routes, and information on employees or the public;
- » (U//FOUO) Garments not appropriate for weather/seasons;

* (U//FOUO) FBI and DHS 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 effect societal or political change.

- » (U//FOUO) Unusual behavior, such as staring at or quickly looking away from personnel or vehicles entering or leaving facilities or parking areas;
- » (U//FOUO) Discreet use of still cameras and video recorders or note taking or use of sketching materials, consistent with pre-operational surveillance, that would raise suspicion in a reasonable person;
- » (U//FOUO) Attempted or unauthorized access to rooftops or other potentially sensitive areas; and
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious observations of or questions about facility air conditioning, heating, and ventilation systems.

(U) Potential Indicators of Violent Extremist Radicalization or Mobilization

- » (U) Recognition of common indicators, combined with a fundamental understanding of recruitment and radicalization tactics, may allow for the early detection of those at risk and assist in intervention efforts.
- » (U//FOUO) Communicating with known or suspected foreign-based or US-based violent extremists using e-mail, social media platforms, or messaging applications;
- » (U//FOUO) New or increased advocacy of violence, including providing material support or recruiting others to commit criminal acts;
- » (U//FOUO) Consumption and sharing of media glorifying violent extremist acts in attempting to mobilize others to violence;
- » (U//FOUO) Active participation in, or encouraging visits to, violent extremist websites highlighting perceived Western atrocities to encourage others to engage in violence;
- » (U//FOUO) Advocating that their ideological, cultural, or national group requires violent defense from an external threat, combined with advocacy of violence;
- » (U//FOUO) Reports that a community member has initiated unexplained isolation, including broken contact with friends and family, unexplained self-initiated exit from school or work, combined with advocacy of violence;
- » (U//FOUO) Participation in paramilitary exercises and reconnaissance and surveillance activities in a manner that is reasonably indicative of pre-operational planning related to terrorism, particularly in conjunction with advocacy of violence;
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious training behavior that would arouse suspicion in a reasonable person, such as the targeting of effigies, mimicking specific operational conditions at gun ranges or gun shows, or practicing assault tactics at paintball facilities;
- » (U//FOUO) Use of cover terms to mask the true meaning of events or nefarious activities combined with active advocacy of violence;

- » (U//FOUO) Attempting to or successfully acquiring firearms or ammunition prohibited under federal, state, or local law;
- » (U//FOUO) Suspicious weapons purchases, such as attempted purchases by individuals providing inconsistent or suspect identification, refusal to fill out the appropriate documentation, or issuance of vague or cryptic warnings that are violent in nature during purchase;
- » (U//FOUO) Acquisition of suspicious quantities of weapons and ammunition, or materials that could be used to produce explosives such as hydrogen peroxide, acetone, gasoline, propane, or fertilizer;
- » (U//FOUO) Attempting to enlist in the US military or state and local law enforcement, or seeking employment in a correctional institution by individuals confirmed to be known or suspected terrorist matches in government counterterrorism screening databases;
- » (U//FOUO) Testing of operation response systems associated with commercial facilities may be indicated by a pattern of false alarms, equipment failures, or power outages; and
- » (U//FOUO) Inquiring about operations or security measures in publically accessible areas; using video/camera/observation equipment; or possessing maps, photos, or diagrams that are not related to their jobs.

(U//FOUO) **Relevant Production**

(U) I&A would like to highlight the following products that are relevant given the current situation:

- » (U//FOUO) “Germany: Vehicular Assault at Christmas Market Underscores Threat to Mass Gatherings and Open-Access Venues” (Intelligence Note, published 21 December 2016)
- » (U//FOUO) “Holiday Celebrations and the Presidential Inauguration Remain Attractive Targets for HVEs/Foreign Terrorist Organizations; Vigilance Encouraged” (Joint Intelligence Bulletin, published 18 November 2016)
- » (U//FOUO) New ISIL English-Language Magazine Adapting Narrative to Appeal for Western Attacks (Homeland Intelligence Today, published 21 December 2016)
- » (U//FOUO) “Vehicle Ramming: Simple, Effective Tactic” (Roll Call Release, published 12 September 2016)
- » (U//FOUO) “Church Attack in France Highlights the Threat to Faith-Based Religious and Cultural Institutions” (Intelligence Note, published 5 August 2016)
- » (U) “*Inspire* Magazine Sector Threat Focus Update” (NPPD Graphic, published August 2016)
- » (U//FOUO) “US Homegrown Violent Extremists Focusing More on Civilian Targets” (Joint Intelligence Bulletin, published 31 August 2016)

(U) DHS Hometown Security: Tools to Help Your Community Prepare

(U) DHS provides free tools and resources to communities because the Department recognizes that communities are the first line of defense in keeping the public safe and secure. The Department encourages businesses to Connect, Plan, Train, and Report. Applying these four steps in advance of an incident or attack can help better prepare businesses and their employees to proactively think about the role they play in the safety and security of their businesses and communities.

- » (U) Find more at <https://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security>

(U) Responding to Active Shooters and Improvised Explosive Devices

(U) To assist law enforcement in better understanding and responding to violent situations, active shooter resources are available on www.fbi.gov. Additional resources are available below.

- » (U) FBI Active Shooter Study: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-releases-study-on-activeshooter-incidents>
- » (U) DHS Active Shooter Resources: www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness
- » (U) Counter-IED information: <https://TRIPwire.dhs.gov>

(U) Report Suspicious Activity

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

(U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response

(U//FOUO) Information contained in this intelligence bulletin is for official use only. No portion of this bulletin should be released to the media, the general public, or over nonsecure Internet servers. Release of this material could adversely affect or jeopardize investigative activities.

(U) For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this document, please contact the FBI Counterterrorism Analysis Section by email at FBI_CTAS@ic.fbi.gov or the I&A Production Branch by e-mail at IA.PM@hq.dhs.gov.

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.3, HSEC-8.4, HSEC-8.5.3, HSEC-8.6.2.20



Product Title:

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?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
This product will enable me to make better decisions regarding this topic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product provided me with intelligence information I did not find elsewhere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. How did you obtain this product?

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

To help us understand more about your organization so we can better tailor future products, please provide:

Name: <input type="text"/>	Position: <input type="text"/>
Organization: <input type="text"/>	State: <input type="text"/>
Contact Number: <input type="text"/>	Email: <input type="text"/>



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