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A Joint Report by the Center on Extremism & Community Security Initiative

# Hate in the Empire State: Extremism & Antisemitism in New York, 2020-2021





#### **Our Mission**:

To stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.

# ABOUT THE CENTER ON EXTREMISM

The ADL Center on Extremism is the foremost authority on extremism, terrorism and hate, both foreign and domestic. We monitor extremism across the ideological spectrum. Our staff of investigators, analysts, researchers and technical experts strategically monitors, exposes and disrupts extremist threats—on the internet and on the ground. We provide resources, expertise and educational briefings that enable law enforcement officers, public officials and community leaders, as well as internet and technology companies to identify and counter emerging threats. Learn more about COE's work and the latest in the fight against extremism by visiting adl.org/coe.

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## ABOUT COMMUNITY SECURITY INITIATIVE

The Community Security Initiative (CSI) is a program created by the UJA-Federation of New York and Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY) in 2020 to help secure both the Jewish population and their institutions in the greater New York City region. CSI also serves as a security liaison between Jewish institutions and city, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in this capacity.



# COMMUNITY SECURITY INITIATIVE

A JOINT PROGRAM OF



We want all members of our community to enter synagogues, community centers, day schools, and other Jewish institutions feeling welcome and secure. That's why UJA invested in creating the Jewish Community Security Initiative, which is significantly enhancing the physical security of the approximately 2,000 Jewish institutions in the New York area.

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# Introduction

This report examines extremist and antisemitic trends and incidents across New York state during the twoyear time period from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021, and provides recommendations for combatting these threats. The ADL Center on Extremism (COE) and the Community Security Initiative (CSI), a project of UJA-Federation of NY and JCRC-NY, jointly researched and authored the report.

The last two years have seen a significant proliferation of hate incidents both nationwide and in New York State. These incidents have been rooted, in part, in widespread campaigns of disinformation and conspiracy theories, some of which have animated extremists and fueled antisemitism, resulting in unrest and violence, from the January 6, 2021 insurrection in Washington, D.C. to white supremacist activism to a spike in hate crimes and rising antisemitism.

In Buffalo, New York, a tragic manifestation of this phenomena occurred on May 14, 2022, when a gunman killed 10 people and injured 3 more inside a Tops supermarket. According to an online screed allegedly written by the shooter and posted before the attack, he espoused white supremacist, racist and antisemitic conspiracy theories and claimed his goal was to "spread awareness to my fellow whites about the real problems the West is facing," and "encourage further attacks that will eventually start the war that will save the Western world."

New groups that espouse the same conspiracies and intolerance, such as White Lives Matter, have formed, and already existing neo-Nazi and accelerationist groups have broadened their audience both online and in real-world activities. Other extremist groups such as Militia Groups and the Proud Boys have shifted their strategies to focus on the local level, disrupting school board meetings and even running for elected positions.

New York also leads the nation in antisemitic incidents, according to ADL's annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents. In 2021, the number of reported incidents increased 24% over 2020 numbers, rising from 336 to 416. This included 51 assaults motivated by anti-Jewish bias, the highest number ever recorded by ADL in New York. These numbers also include a spike in antisemitic incidents driven by extreme anti-Israel sentiments during the May 2021 Israel-Hamas war. During this time, incidents motivated by anti-Zionist sentiments included assault, arson threats, and harassment.

Given the rise in extremist threats across the country and the alarming number of antisemitic hate crimes lin New York in recent years, COE and CSI began collaborating in 2020 to specifically focus on the security needs of the Jewish communities of New York. In this capacity, the two organizations currently are monitoring and tracking antisemitism, hate and other types of violent extremism in New York and across the country.

# **Top Level Key Findings**

- There is a broad diversity of extremist threats in New York state emanating from the many groups and individuals who identify as anti-government extremists, militias, white supremacists and radical Islamists. Throughout 2020 and 2021, they have engaged in an array of activities, including: threatening local officials, funding terrorism, conducting cyber-attacks, organizing rallies, engaging in propaganda distributions and even committing violence.
- White supremacist propaganda distribution accounts for a large proportion of extremist-related incidents in New York. From January to December 2020, there was a total of 616 extremist and antisemitic incidents statewide, with cases of white supremacist propaganda distribution representing 50% of those incidents. While the number of propaganda drops decreased 31% from 308 in 2020 to 212 in 2021, New York State ranked 7th nationally in the number of white supremacist propaganda incidents in 2021. The highest distributors of this propaganda across both years were the virulently antisemitic and racist groups Patriot Front and New Jersey European Heritage Association. In 2021, a newly formed network of white supremacists, called White Lives Matter, was the third-highest leafleting perpetrator in the state.
- Hate crimes have more than doubled in New York City since 2020. According to NYPD data
  on confirmed hate crime incidents across the five boroughs of New York City, hate crimes
  increased 196% from 2020 (266 incidents) to 2021 (522 incidents). In both 2020 and 2021,
  the four communities most targeted in hate crimes incidents were the Jewish community,
  the Asian community, the LGBTQ+ community and the Black community.
- Antisemitic hate crimes continued to rise in New York over the last two years. According to NYPD data on confirmed hate crime incidents across the five boroughs, from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021, Jews were the most targeted group, with a total of 317 incidents committed against the Jewish community, accounting for 40% of hate crimes in the New York City during that time period. Total incidents increased 62% between 2020 (121 incidents) and 2021 (196 incidents). In 2020, anti-Jewish crimes across New York State accounted for the overwhelming majority of religiously motivated incidents, over 88% (182 of 206). Across all categories in 2020, hate crimes targeting the Jewish community accounted for 37.3% (182 of 488) of all hate crime incidents in New York State.
- New York leads the nation in antisemitic incidents, according to ADL's annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents. In 2021, incidents in the state accounted for 15% of total reported antisemitic incidents nationally and represented a 24% increase over 2020 numbers (416 vs 336). This included 51 assaults motivated by anti-Jewish bias, the highest number ever recorded by ADL in New York. It also includes antisemitic incidents motivated by extreme anti-Israel sentiments, including assault, arson threats, and harassment that took place during the May 2021 Israel-Gaza war.
- New York had the fourth highest number of people per state arrested for the Capitol
  insurrection. To date, 58 New York residents have been arrested and charged for their alleged
  participation in the January 6, 2021, insurrection in Washington, D.C. This includes avowed
  white supremacists, members of the anti-government Oath Keepers, Proud Boys and QAnon
  adherents. Additionally, a 2020 State Senate candidate and a current member of the Queens
  County District Council were arrested for their alleged participation.

# The Extremist Threat Landscape Across the U.S.

In recent years, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued National Terrorism Advisory Bulletins to highlight the domestic threats they deem most pressing. Since 2015, DHS has released two bulletins a year. However, in 2021, the department released four terrorism advisory bulletins, underscoring a uniquely heightened threat environment. In March 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a report specifically highlighting the increased threat posed by Domestic Violent Extremists (DVEs). This assessment stated that "racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) and militia violent extremists (MVEs) present the most lethal DVE threats" and are most likely to conduct mass casualty attacks.

In January 2022, DHS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) issued a Joint Intelligence Bulletin specifically detailing the "enduring nature of violent threats posed to Jewish communities." This bulletin, issued in the wake of a hostage situation that took place at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, highlighted the threat that violent extremists pose to Jewish institutions and other soft targets and the likelihood for copycat attacks to occur. An NYPD assessment of this incident noted "this high-profile incident will likely resonate with and continue to be exploited by foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), online Salafi-jihadist extremists, and racially/ethnically motivated violent extremists (REMVEs) that share antisemitic worldviews and regularly incite violence, perceiving Jewish houses of worship and the broader Jewish community as legitimate targets."

Against this backdrop, ADL and CSI researchers actively monitor and track many groups and individuals who identify as anti-government extremists, militias, white supremacists, radical Islamists, and antisemites across New York State. The breadth of their activities includes threatening local officials, funding terrorism, conducting cyber-attacks, organizing rallies, engaging in propaganda distributions and even committing violence. These groups have robust social media presences across both mainstream and fringe platforms.

From behind their computer screens, extremist individuals and groups recruit, radicalize and organize on both the national and local levels. They use message boards, chats and channels to share propaganda materials, engage in antisemitic conspiracy theorizing, promote violence, and plan in-person events. Media coverage of their incidents is used to boast of their perceived successes and further bolster their followings.

#### This report:

- Profiles key extremist groups and individuals in New York, providing details on organizations and activities that have taken place from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021.
- Analyzes the trends of hate crimes against marginalized groups in New York City, and
- Provides recommendations to elected officials, law enforcement, and the Jewish community.

## Who's Who – Extremist Movements Active in New York State

## White Supremacist Extremism

White supremacy is a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following key tenets: 1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may coexist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people.

As a full-fledged ideology, white supremacy is far more encompassing than simple racism or bigotry. Most white supremacists further believe that the white race is in danger of extinction due to a "great replacement" at the hands of a rising "flood" of non-white immigrants who are controlled and manipulated by Jews. To combat this, white supremacists believe that imminent action is needed to "save" the white race.

New York-based white supremacists most frequently spread their message through both coordinated and individual propaganda efforts. While the number of propaganda drops decreased 31% from 308 in 2020 to 212 in 2021, New York State ranked 7th in the number of white supremacist propaganda incidents in 2021. Both years, the most frequent perpetrators of propaganda incidents in New York were Patriot Front and New Jersey European Heritage Association. In 2021, a newly formed network of white supremacists, White Lives Matter, was the third highest distributor.

Groups or individuals put up stickers and flyers and hang banners to recruit members and promote their message, often targeting minority groups including Jews, Blacks, Muslims, non-white immigrants and the LGBTQ+ community. They frequently capitalize on current events and social unrest to promote their messages of hate, including around immigration issues, the COVID-19 pandemic and elections. These propaganda efforts give white supremacists the ability to maximize media and online attention, while limiting the risk of individual exposure, negative media coverage, arrests and public backlash that often accompanies more public events.

- November 2021 White supremacist Nick Fuentes staged an anti-vaccine mandate rally outside of Staten Island University Hospital. Fuentes travelled across the country to stage this event, exemplifying the national network white supremacists have created to promote their messages.
- May 2020 Joseph Miner was arrested after purchasing a cache of weapons in Queens, NY. Miner, an avowed white supremacist, pleaded guilty to purchasing the weapons illegally in order to prepare for a "racial holy war." He had a history of posting antisemitic and Nazi-glorifying content on social media, and celebrating the antisemitic stabbing attack in Monsey, NY that took place in December 2019.

#### New Jersey European Heritage Association:

Created in early 2018, the New Jersey European Heritage Association (NJEHA) is a small white supremacist group whose members see themselves as defenders of people of white European descent and white culture. Members hold the white supremacist worldview that unless immediate action is taken, the white race is doomed to extinction by a "rising tide of color" purportedly controlled and manipulated by Jews.



November 2020: NJEHA propaganda placed at the 9/11 Memorial Museum in Manhattan. Source: Telegram

The group believes its mission is to "wrest political, economic, and social control away from the hostile elite who have usurped power in America." To do this, followers are called on to "Reclaim America." The group espouses antisemitic, racist, and anti-immigrant rhetoric, propagandized in the form of flyers, stickers, banners, and social media posts.

NJEHA was responsible for 89 instances of propaganda distribution in New York in 2020, and 30 instances in 2021. Across both years, their rhetoric focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, the election, and the civil unrest around the country. Phrases popular in their recent propaganda include "Open borders is the virus," "black crimes matter," and "Antifa are Jewish Terrorists." They have attended antilockdown and election fraud protests across the country to distribute recruitment/propaganda materials.

Known members have current and former ties to racist skinhead organizations, the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement, other white supremacist groups and the White Lives Matter movement. Many of NJEHA's members or close associates organized and attended the neo-Nazi, antisemitic "Fash Bash 2019" celebrating Hitler's 130th birthday.

- July 2021 Gina Aversano, a Staten Island-based member of NJEHA, was arrested for distributing propaganda, including placing swastika stickers that read "We Are Everywhere." She allegedly was responsible for creating much of the group's propaganda materials.
- January 2021 A confederate flag was tied to the front doors of Manhattan's Museum of Jewish Heritage. The three perpetrators—two of whom have been identified distributing NJEHA propaganda in other instances—were two New York-based fascists and a neo-Nazi from Minnesota. In sharing this incident on social media, they captioned their post: "The time to fight against the ZOG is now!" ZOG is a white supremacist acronym for "Zionist Occupied Government," which reflects the common white supremacist belief that the U.S. government is controlled by Jews.
- June 2020 Approximately five individuals associated with NJEHA held a flash demonstration on an overpass in Lake Ronkonkoma. The group held banners that read, "Open borders spread disease" and "white lives matter."

#### **Patriot Front:**

Patriot Front is a white supremacist hate group whose members define themselves as American nationalists/fascists focused on preserving the U.S.'s European-American identity. They favor the expulsion of immigrants, people of color, Jews and Muslims as a means to "reclaim" the United States for white people.

Patriot Front is active online through social media channels including **Telegram**, Gab, Twitter, TikTok and private messaging servers like RocketChat. Offline, they are a national leader in white supremacist propaganda. Their aggressive propaganda campaigns include stickering, placing flyers, graffitiing, and dropping inflammatory banners on overpasses and covering up billboards. In addition to promoting their group in cities across the country, Patriot Front specifically targets college campuses with their content. While in 2020 they focused mainly on propaganda efforts, 2021 saw an increase in their staging flash demonstrations across the country.

According to ADL data, Patriot Front distributed propaganda in New York 164 times in 2021 and 212 times in 2020.

October 2020: Patriot Front stickers found in New Rochelle, NY. Source: Telegram





December 2021: An individual associated with WLM NY placed propaganda materials in Queens, NY. Source: Telegram

#### White Lives Matter Movement:

While "White Lives Matter" has been a white supremacist slogan for many years, the current White Lives Matter (WLM) network sprung up in March 2021, coalescing around the use of this phrase. WLM promotes a white supremacist worldview, advocating for raising "white racial consciousness" and the eventual formation of white ethnostates in North America, Europe and Australia. To promote their message, they encourage "pro-white activism" in the forms of rallies, propaganda distribution, and recruitment efforts.

During the first organized march in April 2021, in New York City, two WLM marchers made an appearance, one wearing a Siege mask, popular among white supremacists and neo-Nazis. The marchers were outnumbered by counter-protesters. Since this first public event, WLM New York has adjusted their efforts, focusing mainly on distributing propaganda materials to recruit members and share their message across the state, with stickers and flyers located from the Hudson Valley to Queens. However, a small number of individuals associated with WLM New York stage demonstrations monthly.

## **Proud Boys**

The **Proud Boys** are a right-wing extremist group with a violent agenda. They are primarily misogynistic, Islamophobic, transphobic and anti-immigration. Some members espouse white supremacist and antisemitic ideologies and/or engage with white supremacist groups. Proud Boys are known to attend public rallies and protests sporting black and yellow Fred Perry polo shirts, other black and yellow clothing and tactical vests. Members have been known to engage in violent tactics and several members have been convicted of violent crimes.

Nationally, Proud Boys members account for one of the highest numbers of extremist arrestees in relation to the January 6th insurrection, including three New Yorkers who belong to local Proud Boys chapters. Additionally, the Proud Boys latched on to anti-mask and anti-vaccine activism, attending, and at times disrupting, school board meetings as well as related protests and rallies.

There are nine chapters affiliated with the Proud Boys in New York, with the newest chapter created in early 2022. Local Proud Boys have staged flash demonstrations and have advertised and participated in protests against COVID-19 measures in multiple locations around the state.

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One of the first major instances of on-the-ground activity from the Long Island Proud Boys occurred in October 2021, when they joined a group of protesters marching along Montauk Highway carrying Proud Boys flags and playing loud music. In November 2021, a large group of Proud Boys participated in an "anti-mandate freedom rally" in Manhattan near Columbus Circle before marching through New York City along Central Park West. Several individuals were seen wearing Proud Boys' attire and Proud Boys flags were flown in the large crowd. Also in November 2021, approximately 20 members of the Proud Boys held a flash demonstration in Long Island, marching through Rockville Centre, allegedly to promote local businesses' right to stay open in the wake of COVID-19 mandates. The Proud Boys played loud music and waved flags. Proud Boys also handed out promotional flyers describing the group's tenets.

- August 2021 Queens resident Eduard Florea pleaded guilty to making social media threats, including threatening to kill then-incoming Georgia Senator Raphael Warnock. Florea, a supporter of the Proud Boys, posted "Warnok [sic] is going to have a hard time casting votes for communist policies when he's swinging [sic] with the fucking fish." He was found with more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition.
- June 2021 In a podcast episode titled "Terrorist Hate Group OR Good Guys? The Proud Boys EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW" co-host and New York State 2022 gubernatorial candidate Derrick Gibson interviewed Proud Boys members and stated, "I saw your bylaws. I agree with them 100 percent. I may as well be a Proud Boy myself." This interview highlights the mainstreaming of the Proud Boys in Conservative circles.
- April 2021 Matthew Greene, a Syracuse-based member of the Central New York chapter of the Proud Boys, was arrested for his involvement in the January 6th attack. Greene has since pleaded guilty to counts of conspiracy and obstruction of an official proceeding and stipulated to the entire Statement of Offense in the criminal action brought against him.
- January 2021 Two New York Proud Boys, Dominic Pezzola of Rochester, NY and William Pepe of Beacon, NY, were arrested for their alleged involvement in the January 6th insurrection. Both have been indicted for their role in the attack. Pezzola is alleged to have stolen a Capitol Police officer's riot shield and later used it to smash a window of the U.S. Capitol.

## **Anti-government Extremism & the Militia Movement**

Anti-government extremism is the term often used to describe a specific set of right-wing extremist movements and groups that share a conviction that part or all of the U.S. government has been taken over by a conspiracy and is therefore not legitimate. Under this precept, many anti-government extremists are a part of the militia movement. With a strong emphasis on paramilitary activity, the movement emerged in 1993-1994, quickly engaging in criminal activity—often centered around illegal weapons and explosives— and violence, including some murders and numerous terrorist plots. After a significant slump in the early 2000s, the militia movement experienced a second major growth spurt starting in 2008 that has resulted in continuous activity since then, including more crime and violence. Under New York state law, a private militia that attempts to activate itself for duty, outside of the authority of the state or federal government, is illegal.

New York-based anti-government extremists are responsible for threatening elected officials and government institutions, including participating in the January 6 insurrection. The state is also home to a handful of militia chapters, most notably the New York Watchmen and the Oath Keepers, who have engaged in violence as well as local and national protests, including against COVID-19 health measures.

They have also dabbled in antisemitic rhetoric and liaised with other extremist organizations.

- July 2021 Daniel Christmann, a Brooklyn-based former candidate for New York State Senate and one of the candidates who competed for the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination in 2020, was arrested for his participation in the January 6 insurrection. According to his social media, he identifies as a 3 percenter, an anti-government extremist militia group.
- January 2021 Queens-based Brendan Hunt was arrested for posting a video online titled "Kill Your Senators" and advocating for a violent overthrow of the U.S. government. Hunt, who worked as an analyst for the New York Court system, touted election conspiracy theories, called for "a public execution of pelosi aoc schumer etc [sic]" and posted that "It'd be funny if Pence got a nice fat bullet to the head." During his trial, evidence indicated that he espoused Nazi ideology as well.
- November 2020 Staten Island resident, Brian Maiorana, was arrested due to multiple death threats he posted on social media. After the November 2020 election, Maiorana posted "The carnage needs to come in the form of extermination of anyone that claims to be democrat...as well as their family members." In a subsequent post, he referenced the neo-Nazi publication The Turner Diaries in which a white supremacist guerrilla organization seeks to overthrow the U.S. government. He wrote "As the Jew Senator from Jew York said nothing is off the table. The Turner Diaries must come to life. We blow up the FBI building for real. All the alphabet agencies assassination will become the new normal now...that the electoral process is finished." Maiorana pleaded guilty to illegal gun possession.

#### New York Watchmen:

The New York Watchmen (NY Watchmen) is an anti-government organization, based in western New York. The group presents itself as a civil-defense, civic engagement, and community outreach organization. They purport to stand for 2nd Amendment rights and "freedom," and against cancel culture and the "radical left."

Though the NY Watchmen profess non-aggression and an intolerance for racism and hate, leaders as well as members have repeatedly shared white supremacist content on official and personal social media profiles. The NY Watchmen have engaged in political protests on a variety of far-right issues, as well as clashed with protesters from Antifa, Black Lives Matter and other putatively left-wing groups. NY Watchmen have been repeatedly seen armed in western New York.

NY Watchmen have ties to local political figures as well as extremist organizations, including the Proud Boys and one member who formerly belonged to the white supremacist group, Aryan Renaissance Society. Members of the group were also present at the January 6 Capitol insurrection, with one former member arrested for his activity.

- December 2020 Members of the New York Watchmen were involved in a physical altercation between protesters for and counterprotests against COVID-19 health restrictions in Niagara Square, NY, leaving one person with minor injuries.
- December 2020 New York Watchmen, wearing the group's logo and some in tactical gear, clashed with protesters in Tonowada, NY. A member of the Watchmen punched a protester, while others brandished metal weapons.



November 2020: New York Watchmen pose with Proud Boys in DC. Source: Instagram

#### **Oath Keepers:**

The Oath Keepers are a large but loosely organized national collection of right-wing anti-government extremists who are part of the militia movement, which believes that the federal government has been co-opted by a shadowy conspiracy that is trying to strip U.S. citizens of their rights.

Though the Oath Keepers will accept anyone as members, what differentiates them from other anti-government extremist groups is their explicit focus on recruiting current and former military, law lenforcement and first responder personnel. According to reports, over time the organization has successfully recruited active and former police and military personnel.

The website dedicated to the New York state chapters is largely inactive. However, at one point there were 10 chapters across New York, some of them led by former members of the police. According to a **recent leak of Oath Keeper membership data**, approximately 1,990 people signed up with the Oath Keepers using New York addresses, including active and former NYPD members, corrections officers and public officials. While this number does not necessarily indicate current New York membership or activity in the group, as people may have passed away, moved or signed up without engaging, the group's recruitment efforts in New York remain troubling.

- November 2021 Brett Wynkoop lost his bid to represent the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Park Slope, Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens on the New York City Council. According to media reports, Wynkoop has been a member of the Oath Keepers since 2013. He allegedly managed the domain for Oath Keepers NYC website and helped the group with various other technology issues.
- March 2021 Roberto Minuta was arrested in his tattoo parlor in Newburgh, NY due to his alleged involvement in the January 6th attack. He has since been indicted on charges that include seditious conspiracy.
- May 2020 The Oath Keepers' leader Stewart Rhodes attended an anti-lockdown protest outside of a fellow-Oath Keeper's tattoo parlor in Newburgh, NY. Rhodes has also been indicted on charges of seditious conspiracy for his alleged role in the January 6th attack.

## **Black Nationalist Extremism**

#### **Black Hebrew Israelites:**

While not all chapters of BHI are extremist or antisemitic in nature, the **Black Hebrew Israelite** (BHI) movement is a fringe religious movement that rejects widely accepted definitions of Judaism and asserts that people of color are the true children of Israel. Extremist adherents go further, asserting that Jews are liars and false worshipers of God, Jews have no right to Israel as a homeland, Jews purposely enslaved Black individuals to steal their identity, and that Jews are imposters or "fake Jews." Judaism is frequently referred to as the "Synagogue of Satan" by BHI followers.

New York chapters of extremist sects of BHI are in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem and Queens, as well as Albany, Mount Vernon, Rochester, Syracuse and other cities in New York State. The BHI sects Israel United in Christ (IUIC), the Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge (ISUPK) and the House of Israel (HOI) all have roots in New York and remain active in the region.

BHI chapters' common activities include street teaching and other public speaking events. They frequently post livestreams of their street and classroom teachings on social media, where they can reach a large number of followers. IUIC's headquarters in Mount Vernon has over 100K followers on YouTube, for example, while chapters in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens each have tens of thousands of followers.

In the most notable recent incident, adherents of the movement attacked a kosher supermarket in Jersey City, NJ in December 2019, fatally shooting three and injuring one. David Anderson and Francine Graham, the perpetrators of the attack, had links to a Harlem-based BHI sect called The Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ (ICGJC). Anderson and Graham deliberately targeted the Jewish market and Anderson posted antisemitic content to his social media prior to the attack.

#### Nation of Islam:

The Nation of Islam (NOI), the largest Black nationalist organization in the U.S., has maintained a consistent record of antisemitism and bigotry since its founding in the 1930s. During his 40-year tenure as the NOI's leader, Louis Farrakhan has built a legacy of divisiveness as one of the most prominent antisemites in America, frequently referring to Jews as the "Synagogue of Satan" and "fake Jews." Farrakhan has also espoused anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-white bigotry, as well as a range of conspiratorial beliefs.

NOI operates numerous local chapters—designated as numbered Muhammad Mosques or Study Groups across New York State: Albany (Study Group), Brooklyn (Muhammad Mosque No. 7C), Buffalo (Muhammad Mosque No. 23), Harlem (Muhammad Mosque No. 7) and Rochester (Study Group).

Some mainstream figures and groups, including elected officials and celebrities, have publicly supported NOI, focusing on the group's community-based efforts while overtly ignoring or minimizing the group's well-established hate-filled record. For example, in Rochester, Student Minister Kenneth Muhammad and the local Study Group were presented with a key to the city by Mayor Lovely Warren. Kenneth Muhammad also got involved in local politics in 2021; he ran what was ultimately a failed campaign for the Monroe County

Legislature, receiving the endorsement of the incumbent and being selected as the designated candidate for the Monroe County Democratic Committee. Additionally, Muhammad Mosque No. 7C in Brooklyn was among the dozens of groups honored by the non-profit organization UA3 Community First for their efforts during the pandemic to fight food insecurity.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, NOI leaders have publicly blamed Jews for the pandemic and peddled vaccine conspiracy theories, instructing their followers not to trust the "vaccine mafia." In October 2021, Student Minister Henry Muhammad and other local NOI members attended a protest against vaccine mandates held outside the Barclays Center, home of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets. Henry Muhammad spoke for a few minutes and was met by cheers from the crowd as he referenced Louis Farrakhan and reiterated NOI's opposition to the vaccine.

## Islamist Extremism

Islamist extremism is a highly rigid interpretation and a minority current within Islam which is hostile to other faiths (including other forms of Islam) as well as to secular forms of government. Islamist extremists often declare as infidels, apostates or hypocrites anyone who does not adhere to their restrictive version of Islam. Islamist extremists believe that governments should be based on their extremely hardline understanding of Sharia law in order to govern legitimately, and often advocate violence in order to shift society to this ideal. Islamist extremists additionally tend to hold antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ+, and misogynistic beliefs, and oppose modernity, tolerance and diverse beliefs.

While to our best knowledge there are no Islamist terrorist organizations active in New York State, foreign terrorist organizations such as AI-Qa'ida and ISIS serve as inspiration for homegrown violent extremists. Some individuals try to join ISIS on the battlefield or send funds to support the group. Others become indoctrinated by these groups' ideology and plan or attempt to commit attacks on U.S. soil. New York City landmarks are often featured in official and affiliated ISIS and AQ media outlets accompanied by threats of attack.

- December 2021 An ISIS-aligned media group, An-Najiyah Media Center, released a propaganda graphic showing hooded fighters with edged weapons and firearms against the backdrop of New York City's 5th Avenue up in flames. The poster included English text calling on followers to "Kill them like killing insects. Answer the call."
- November 2021 A pro-ISIS media group released a poster showing an armed ISIS fighter facing the Manhattan Bridge in New York City and the Arabic text: "The land will be ruled by Allah's shari'a sooner or later, with Allah's permission."
- March 2021 James Bradley, of the Bronx, and his wife were arrested at a seaport in New Jersey
  for attempting to travel to the Middle East to join and fight for ISIS. The pair had allegedly discussed
  conducting an attack against the U.S. Military Academy at West Point or another area university
  should they be unable to travel overseas.
- August 2020 Zachary Clark of Brooklyn, NY pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIS and distributing bomb-making instructions and ISIS propaganda. He provided specific instructions for conducting attacks in New York City, detailing bomb-making and knifing techniques.

 June 2020 – Inspired by ISIS ideology, Brooklyn-based Dzenan Camovic stabbed an NYPD officer in the neck, took the injured officer's gun to shoot the officer's partner in the hand, and then fired it at responding police officers, wounding a third officer. He repeatedly yelled, 'Allahu Akbar' during his attack, and subsequent investigations uncovered a significant amount of ISIS materials in his possession.

## QAnon

**QAnon** is a nebulous and wide-ranging conspiracy theory that is an amalgam of both novel and well-established theories, with marked undertones of antisemitism and xenophobia. In fact, the most popular QAnon influencer, GhostEzra, (Robert Smart, of Boca Raton, FL), is an open Nazi and Holocaust denier who praises Hitler, admires the Third Reich and decries the supposedly treacherous nature of Jews. The movement is scattershot and sprawling with anti-government elements, with adherents actively sowing distrust in democratic institutions. While not all QAnon adherents are inherently extremists, this is a dangerous theory that has inspired violent acts.

The QAnon theories are based on alleged intelligence provided by "Q," who is believed by QAnon adherents to be part of a team of military intelligence operatives and high-level civilian insiders. They assert that almost every president in recent American history up until Donald Trump has been a puppet put in place by a global cabal of power brokers focused on enriching themselves and maintaining their Satanic child-murdering sex cult. According to QAnon lore, this global elite, known as "The Deep State" or "The Cabal," controls not just world governments, but the banking system, the Catholic Church, the agricultural and pharmaceutical industries and the media and entertainment industry.

QAnon supporters have run for a handful of elected positions at the local, state, and federal levels. Notably, after an unsuccessful run for Congress in 2020, Antoine Tucker is currently running to represent New York in the U.S. Senate. According to media reports, he has tweeted "I am a Q Supporter," and he has posted QAnon imagery and slogans on his Facebook and Instagram.

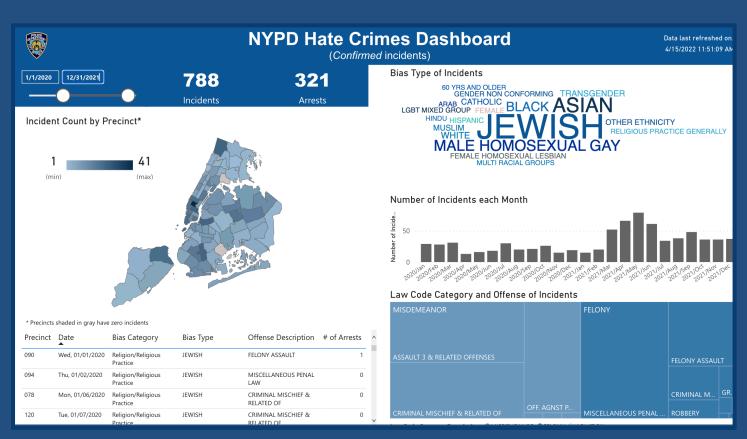
- May 2021 Amherst, NY resident Traci Sunstrum was arrested for her involvement in the January 6th Capitol insurrection. According to reports, she wore a QAnon hat as she entered the Capitol building.
- January 2021 Dominick Madden, of Brooklyn, NY, was arrested for his involvement in the January 6th Capitol insurrection. DOJ case documents indicate he was wearing a QAnon hoodie and shouting QAnon slogans in front of the Capitol building.
- April 2020 QAnon conspiracy theorist Jessica Prim, a resident of Peoria, Illinois, was arrested after driving erratically on Pier 86 in Manhattan, New York. She claimed to be looking for the U.S. Naval ship "Comfort," which she believed was holding children that had been rescued from traffickers. Prim also allegedly expressed her intent to assassinate Joe Biden, although Biden was not in New York at the time. Police found 18 knives in Prim's car. She was charged with criminal possession of a weapon and unlawful possession of marijuana.

# A Look at the Numbers – Hate in New York

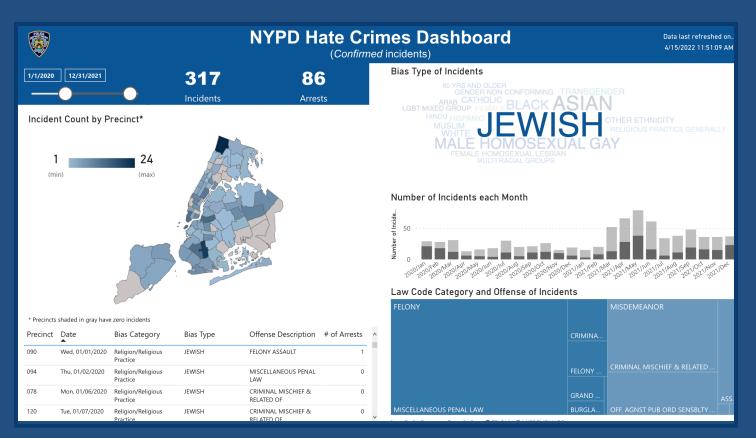
In January 2020, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security and National Counterterrorism Center jointly assessed that Domestic Violent Extremists (DVEs) and Racially/Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists (RMVEs) continue to pose a lethal threat to faith-based communities, particularly the Jewish community. A follow-up report issued in March 2021 indicated that "domestic violent extremists who are motivated by a range of ideologies and galvanized by recent political and societal events in the United States pose an elevated threat."

While not every group highlighted in the previous section is officially categorized as a DVE or RMVE group, the prevalence of these groups across the state comes at a time when there is an uptick in hate crimes perpetrated against minority communities in New York. Based on both statewide and New York City data, a myriad of minority groups has been targeted over the last two years. These groups include religious, ethnic and racial minorities as well as gender-based and age-based identity groups.

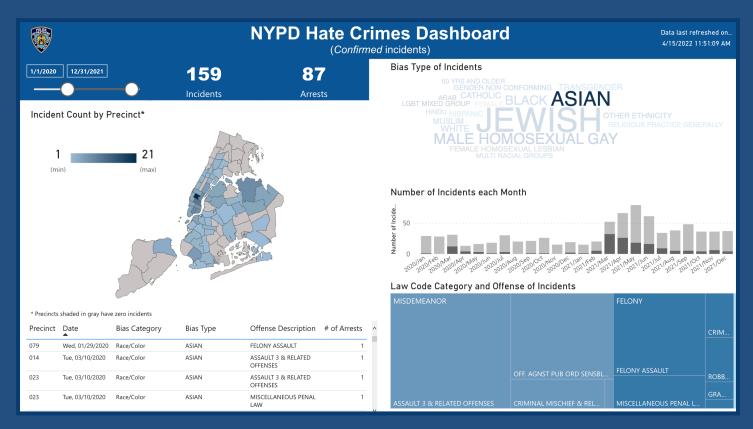
According to the annual New York State 2020 hate crime report, the most commonly reported bias motivations for hate crimes against individuals perpetrated across the state in 2020 were anti-Black (26.0%), anti-Jewish (21.5%), anti-Gay (male) (11.2%) and anti-Asian (10.3%). The most frequently reported bias motivations for hate crimes against property were anti-Jewish (50.6%) and anti-Black (26.4%). Based on hate crimes data collected by the NYPD for New York City, the same top four groups were the most targeted in both 2020 and 2021.



This data from the NYPD chart above highlights the variety of groups who have been victims of hate crimes in New York City.

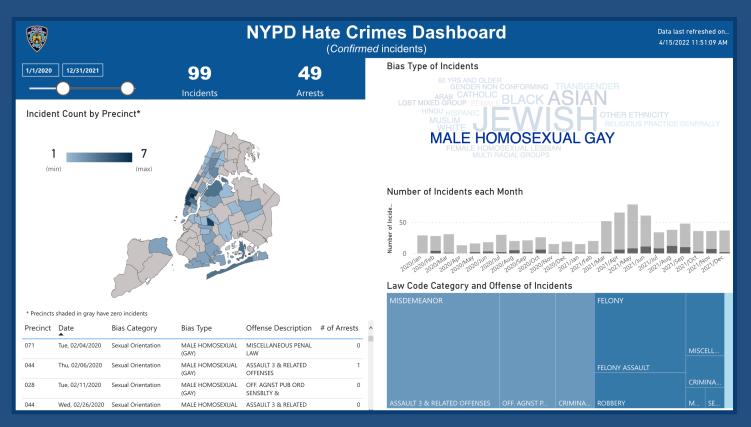


Reported incidents targeting the Jewish community increased 62% from 2020 to 2021, with 121 reported incidents in 2020 and 196 in 2021.

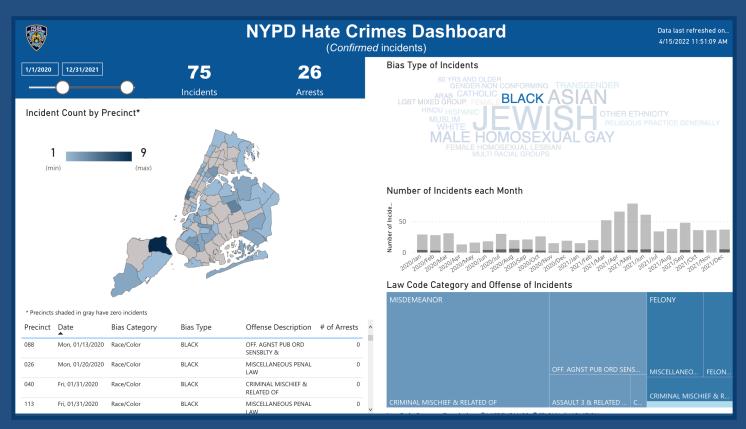


Reported incidents targeting the Asian community increased 368% from 2020 to 2021, with 28 reported incidents in 2020 and 131 in 2021.

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Reported incidents targeting the male LGBTQ+ community increased 154% from 2020 to 2021, with 28 reported incidents in 2020 and 71 in 2021.

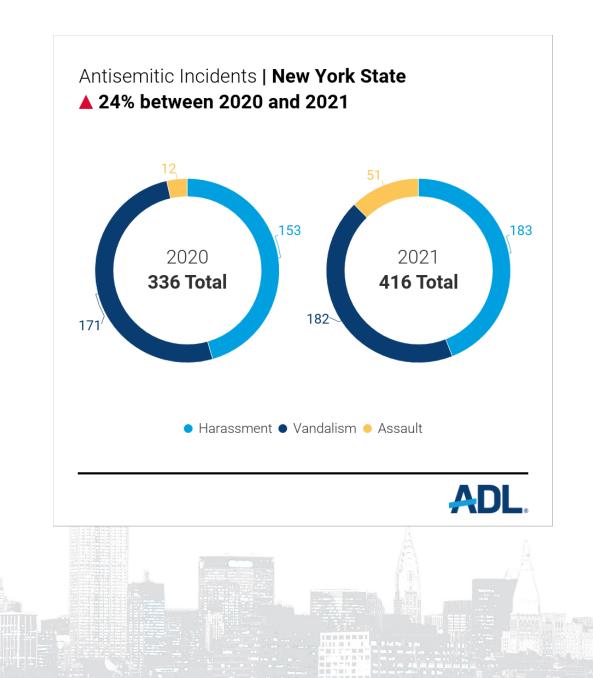


Reported incidents targeting the Black community increased 2.7% from 2020 to 2021, with 37 reported incidents in 2020 and 38 in 2021.

# Antisemitism on the Rise

Antisemitic hate crimes continued to rise in New York state over the last two years. According to the FBI's annual Hate Crime Statistics report, 55% of the reported religion-based hate crimes in 2020 targeted the Jewish community nationally. In New York State, hate crimes against Jews accounted for 88.3% of the religiously motivated incidents in 2020.

As noted in ADL's annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, 2021 marked the highest number of antisemitic incidents since tracking began in 1979, with more than 2,700 acts of assault, vandalism and harassment targeting Jews across America – a 34% increase over the 2020 numbers. As in 2020, New York led the nation in antisemitic incidents in 2021, accounting for 15% of the total reported data and representing 416 incidents. This is a 24% increase over the 336 reported in 2020. There were 62 reported incidents at Jewish institutions such as synagogues, Jewish community centers and Jewish schools in 2021, an increase of 41% from 2020. One hundred and sixty-one incidents involved a swastika and 51 incidents involved assault, the most ADL has ever recorded in New York State.



According to NYPD data on confirmed hate crimes, representing the five boroughs of New York City, from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021, Jews continue to be the most targeted group, with 40% of hate crimes committed against the Jewish community. Total incidents increased 61% between 2020 (121 incidents) and 2021 (196 incidents).

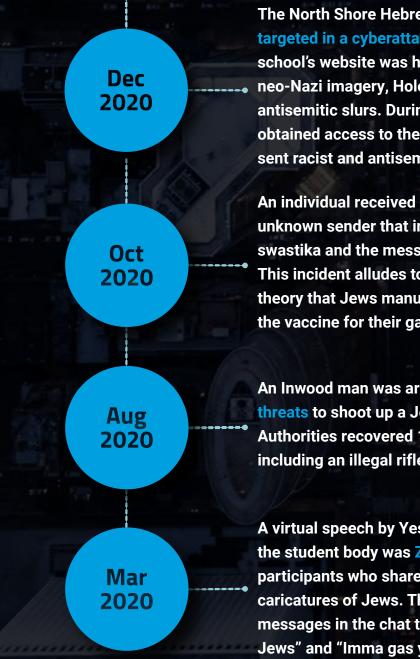
Against the backdrop of the Israel-Hamas conflict in May 2021, Jews in New York were the target of harassment and violence. With pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian protests occurring almost daily, instigators targeted Jews both at protests and afterwards. During this month, ASL & CSI documented 56 instances of harassment, vandalism or assault against Jews or Jewish institutions in New York.

One particularly violent assault involved the targeting of a 29-year-old Jewish man who emerged from the subway in Times Square wearing a yarmulke and was surrounded by multiple men who beat, kicked and pepper sprayed him. On the same day, just blocks away, one person was burned amid pro-Palestinian protests when two commercial grade fireworks were thrown from a car caravan as it wound its way through the heavily Jewish Diamond District cursing at and harassing passersby.

In another incident in Brooklyn, near the end of Shabbat in Borough Park, three individuals began harassing identifiably Jewish males, yelling "Free Palestine" and "Kill Jews" as they chased several victims. After unsuccessfully trying to enter a synagogue, the three perpetrators drove nearby and assaulted a Jewish individual after intimidating him and another person into saying "Free Palestine" and "Kill Jews."

# Key Antisemitic Incidents in the 2020s





The North Shore Hebrew Academy's website was targeted in a cyberattack in which the Great Neck school's website was hacked and defaced with neo-Nazi imagery, Holocaust references and antisemitic slurs. During the attack, the hackers obtained access to the faculty's email address and sent racist and antisemitic emails to students.

An individual received a text message from an unknown sender that included a meme with a swastika and the message: "Reject Jewish Poison." This incident alludes to the antisemitic conspiracy theory that Jews manufactured both COVID-19 and the vaccine for their gain.

An Inwood man was arrested for making terroristic threats to shoot up a Jewish summer camp. Authorities recovered 14 weapons in his home, including an illegal rifle.

A virtual speech by Yeshiva University's president to the student body was Zoombombed by unknown participants who shared images of Nazis and caricatures of Jews. The intruders also wrote messages in the chat that read: "Shut the fuck up Jews" and "Imma gas yall."

## Recommendations

To combat such a diverse threat landscape, it is clear that a whole-of-government approach is needed to address the threat of extremism and hate.

The framework that ADL has created – the PROTECT plan – is a comprehensive, seven-part framework to mitigate the threat posed by domestic extremism and domestic terrorism while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. Together, focusing on these seven categories can have an immediate and deeply significant impact in preventing and countering domestic terrorism – more so than any one action, policy or law – and can do so while protecting civil rights and liberties and ensuring that government overreach does not harm the same vulnerable people and communities that these extremists target.

- Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism: Elected officials and law enforcement, together with the Jewish community and other stakeholders, must create a formal prioritization mechanism – such as an office, strategy, or task force – to create and adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to preventing and countering domestic terrorism.
- Resource According to the Threat: Elected officials must ensure that the authorities and resources the government uses to address violent threats are proportionate to the risk of the lethality of those threats. In other words, allocation of resources must never be politicized but rather based on transparent and objective security concerns.
- Oppose Extremists in Government Service: Elected officials and law enforcement must stand united against extremist individuals serving in government. It is essential that all parties recognize the potential for harm when such individuals gain positions of power, whether it is in government, law enforcement, or the military.
- **Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures:** Elected officials, and law enforcement when appropriate, must not wait until after someone has become an extremist or a terrorist attack has happened to act. Effective and promising prevention measures exist,<sup>1</sup> which should be scaled. It is important that the Jewish community support such measures and encourage elected officials and law enforcement, when appropriate, to implement prevention measures.
- End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism: Elected officials must ensure that state laws and policies are updated to hold online platforms and individual perpetrators accountable for enabling hate, harassment, and extremism across the internet. ADL has released the REPAIR Plan to provide policymakers with a comprehensive framework to take meaningful action to decrease online hate and extremism.
- Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist Content: Elected officials should not overly empower law enforcement to be involved in every facet of online content, yet dangerous plotting must be illuminated for law enforcement if it crosses a criminal threshold. States should work with federal counterparts to create an independent non-profit organization to track online extremist content and make referrals to New York State law enforcement if and when criminal behavior in New York's jurisdiction is suspected.
- **Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups:** The threat of violent extremism is global, and many communities overseas are grappling with similar challenges. Elected officials and law enforcement should work with overseas counterparts whenever possible to create a global catalogue of best practices to counter the threat.

See, e.g., National Governors' Association: Preventing Targeted Violence <a href="https://www.nga.org/preventing-targeted-violence/">https://www.nga.org/preventing-targeted-violence/</a>

#### Additionally, elected officials, law enforcement and the Jewish community in New York State must:

### **Elected Officials:**

- Address the threat of domestic violent extremism: New York State's relevant offices ranging from law enforcement to policy to public health – should have dedicated offices, units, or teams capable of specializing in addressing domestic violent extremism issues. These offices should release public reports of the threat and their activities to address the threat, as well as engage in training – including anti-bias training – to ensure those taking action understand the nature of the threat and how biases can distract from an investigation or, at worst, infringe on civil liberties. This process should include coordination among offices, including those that investigate hate crimes and violations of civil liberties. No new surveillance or investigative authorities should be necessary; the State should use existing authorities but ensure that those carrying out their duties are focused specifically on the domestic violent extremism issue.
- Launch a Commission on Antisemitism: Antisemitism is at a historic high in the U.S. and is common throughout many ideologies that motivate hate incidents, hate crimes and domestic terrorism. The Governor should launch a Commission to best understand the threat across the lenses of civil rights, intelligence, and law enforcement and to create recommendations for comprehensive, whole-of-government responses to the challenge. The Commission should comprise of interagency representation and civil society members, including representatives from the Jewish community, to best offer insights from a community perspective.
- Increase & Expand Criteria for New York State Hate Crimes Grant Funding: We appreciate Governor Hochul's strong support for the current NYS Hate Crimes Grant Funding Program. However, due to the sharp rise in hate crimes, state officials should double the NYS Hate Crimes Grant Funding Program from \$25 to \$50 million and expand the eligibility criteria to mirror federal regulation, allowing all nonprofit organizations to be eligible. This would allow funding for approximately 1,000 new projects across the state.
- Ensure Effective Holocaust Education: Building on pending legislation, the New York State Education Department should be funded to enhance and expand how the Holocaust (and other genocides) is being taught in K-12 schools across the state, to ensure that students understand how hate and extremism can evolve from rhetoric to mass atrocities.
- **Display Political Courage:** Bi-partisan officials must use their bully pulpit to condemn antisemitism and extremism. It is vital that elected officials do their part to ensure that extremism has no place to be mainstreamed.
- **Prepare election officials for violent threats:** State officials involved in administering elections are increasingly under threat from domestic violent extremists. Those officials should be informed as to how to protect themselves and what to do if they are threatened. The State should focus carefully on election-motivated violent extremist threats during the 2022 election year, and use lessons learned to inform efforts in 2024 and beyond.

### Law Enforcement:

- Issue an annual threat report specific to domestic violent extremism: New York State should review domestic violent extremist threats – such as white supremacist terrorism and unlawful anti-government militias – and create a publicly sharable review of the threat, the risk factors that may have led to it, and what is being done to address it.<sup>2</sup>
- Create a temporary task force to review the threat of white supremacists within state law enforcement: Senior officials from law enforcement, policymaking, academia, and civil society should come together throughout a six-month period to determine how to review New York State law enforcement entities for those who may be sympathetic to domestic violent extremist causes. The review should include civil liberties protections and should result in a method for determining the insider threat and the extent to which state law prescribes remedies for the offenses that are discovered. The task force should use ADL's Toolkit on combatting extremism as a resource into executing this task.
- **Engage with stakeholders:** Among other activities, law enforcement should consistently attend ADL's Law Enforcement trainings to remain informed on extremism and antisemitism trends and tropes.

### Jewish Community:

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- Secure physical and online infrastructure: Have the Community Security Initiative (CSI) complete a physical security assessment for your institution(s). Also, connect with CSI's Cyber-Security Specialist to ensure your online infrastructure is secure.
- **Connect with your local law enforcement:** Community leaders should establish a relationship with local law enforcement and ensure they have your institution's blueprints on hand in case of any emergency.
- **Apply for Grant Funding:** Apply for both New York State's "Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes Program" and the federal Department of Homeland Security Nonprofit Security Grants. These grant programs are essential tools in protecting nonprofits, including houses of worship and other faith-based organizations. The grants can be used for training and equipment to secure facilities.
- Engage the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service: The Community Relations Service offers a program that provides a curriculum to educate local communities about how to prevent and respond to hate crimes targeting religious institutions and helps strengthen relationships between law enforcement and local faith communities.
- **Conduct Active Threat Training:** Coordinate with the Community Security Initiative to ensure your institution receives active threat training.
- **Report Incidents:** If antisemitism in your community occurs, report such incidents through ADL's online portal. It is vital that data on such incidents are as accurate as possible to drive appropriate prioritization of threats and funding to communities in need.
- Utilize Jewish Volunteer Communal Security: Consider utilizing and partnering with a Jewish volunteer communal security organization like the Community Security Service (CSS) to help protect your institution.

See, e.g. State of New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness. "2020 Terrorism Threat Assessment." https://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/analysis/2020-terrorism-threat-assessment

## ADL Leadership

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For additional and updated resources please see: www.adl.org

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## **Take Action**

### Antisemitic incidents are an all-too-common reality in our communities.

Join ADL to take action against antisemitism and fight hate for good.

#### **1. SPEAK UP**

**Report an Antisemitic, Bias or Discriminatory Incident.** We can't do this alone. Because of thousands of people like you who have reported incidents, we have been able to help communities across the country by reporting on trends, educating lawmakers and law enforcement and advocating for stronger protections from incidents and crimes. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of antisemitism, extremism, bias, bigotry or hate, please report it using our **incident form.** When you hear of an incident happening to a loved one, friend or community member, share with them that they can report the incident to ADL.

#### 2. SHARE FACTS

**Learn more about fighting antisemitism.** ADL has a variety of resources to help you learn more about the root causes of antisemitism and hate and share that information with others.

#### **3. SHOW STRENGTH**

Join us for Never Is Now | November 10, 2022 | NYC. In the midst of increasing incidents of hate across the world, now is the time to unite and act. Join us at ADL's Never Is Now, the world's largest annual summit on antisemitism and hate. Tackle crucial conversations, engage with extraordinary experts, leaders and visionaries and be inspired to take immediate action that will create lasting change in your community and beyond. Add your voice to the conversation this November at Never Is Now at the Javits Center in New York City. Register today!

Sign up at adl.org for our email newsletters to stay informed about events in our world and ADL's response.



## Featured Resources on this topic:



ADL H.E.A.T<sup>™</sup> Map

**Glossary Of Extremism** 

Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide

From a database of reports and resources on technology, extremism and more, visit ADL.org.



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