



Homeland
Security

March 29, 2022

The Honorable Ted Deutch
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Deutch:

Thank you for your May 28, 2021 letter to President Biden regarding the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act. Your letter was forwarded to the Department of Homeland Security for a response, and I apologize for the delay in responding.

We appreciate your call to swiftly implement the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and combat anti-Semitism. DHS recognizes that hate crimes and targeted violence, including vandalism, arson, threats, and harassment against Jewish communities, have lasting and far-reaching effects and we continue to work with urgency to prevent anti-Semitic targeted violence.

Domestic violent extremists motivated by a broad range of violent racial, ethnic, political, religious, anti-government, societal, or personal ideological beliefs and grievances, and often, a combination of these factors, continue to pose one of the most significant terrorist-related threats to the United States. Importantly, combatting and preventing all forms of terrorism and targeted violence is a critically important civil rights issue given that communities are often targeted because of their race or religion. This targeting can interfere with the exercise of civil rights and civil liberties, including the First Amendment right to freely practice one's faith. DHS recognizes the disproportionate impact of domestic violent extremism and targeted violence on the faith-based and other diverse communities. FBI hate crimes data from 2019 and 2020, for example, reflect that a staggering 62 and 55 percent, respectively, of religious-based hate crimes were motivated by anti-Jewish bias.

DHS is prioritizing combating all forms of terrorism and targeted violence, including through its efforts to support the first-ever [National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#). The DHS Equity Task Force, initially formed in the aftermath of the violent and fatal attacks targeting Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community members in the Atlanta area, has expanded its work to include domestic violent extremism-related concerns for other impacted communities — including Muslim, Jewish, and Black communities — and seeks to reduce barriers to access to Department resources. Further, since January 2021, DHS has taken several steps in this regard, including the following:

- Established a new [domestic terrorism branch](#) within the DHS Office of Intelligence & Analysis dedicated to producing sound, timely intelligence needed to counter domestic terrorism-related threats;
- Launched the [Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships \(CP3\)](#) to provide communities with [resources](#) and tools to help prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence;

- Designated domestic violent extremism as a “National Priority Area” within DHS’s [Homeland Security Grant Program](#) for the first time, resulting in at least \$77 million being spent on preventing, preparing for, protecting against, and responding to related threats nationwide;
- Provided \$180 million in funding to support target hardening and other physical security enhancements to non-profit organizations at high risk of terrorist attack through DHS’s [Nonprofit Security Grant Program](#) (NSGP) for which Secretary Mayorkas has called for a significant increase in funding;
- Increased efforts to identify and evaluate mis- dis- and mal-information ([MDM](#)), including false or misleading conspiracy theories spread on social media and other online platforms, that endorse violence; and,
- Enhanced collaboration with public and private sector partners – including U.S. critical infrastructure owners and operators – to better protect our cyber and physical infrastructure and increase nationwide cybersecurity resilience through the Department’s [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#).

Further, DHS has renewed its commitment to share timely and actionable information and intelligence to the broadest audience possible. Since January 2021, DHS’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) has convened more than 70 engagements with partners across every level of government, in the private sector, and local communities regarding emerging threats. Since last January, DHS also issued more than 95 intelligence products related to domestic violent extremism, including five National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) bulletins to contextualize the threat environment for the public and provide resources for how to stay safe. All of the Department’s efforts to combat all forms of terrorism and targeted violence are conducted in ways that protect privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties, and adhere to applicable laws.

DHS has also renewed its commitment to meaningfully engage with the diverse communities it serves to inform its policies, programs, and operations, including as it relates to our work to combat all forms of terrorism and targeted violence. We have convened several engagements with faith-based organizations and partners across every level of government to discuss the tools and resources needed to keep our communities safe. For example, DHS works with organizations such as the Secure Community Network (SCN), an organization dedicated to the safety and security of the Jewish community in North America, to share federal resources they can use in their outreach to stakeholders. Additionally, the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) convenes Digital Forums on Prevention with community, industry, and tech leaders to discuss sector-specific prevention efforts. A recent Digital Forum focused on the role of faith-based and affinity organizations in prevention efforts and included SCN, Anti-Defamation League, and the Sikh Coalition, among others. Through their Regional Prevention Coordinators, CP3 works with faith-based organizations across the country to prevent radicalization to violence.

We are also working to increase access to funding opportunities through DHS’s Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Nonprofit Security Grant Program. As part of this effort, we are coordinating across federal partners to bolster outreach and engagement with faith leaders, and other nonprofit stakeholders. FEMA is conducting targeted outreach with internal

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and external stakeholders to communicate the anticipated Fiscal Year 2022 preparedness grant policy and anticipated programmatic changes to ensure DHS is reaching under-represented communities, including diverse communities that have not previously applied for these programs and providing responsive information for a wide range of applicants about the application process.

Thank you again for your letter. The cosigners of your letter will receive separate, identical responses. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 447-5890.

Sincerely,



Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary

JEWISH INSIDER