



# US VIOLENT EXTREMIST MOBILIZATION INDICATORS 2021 DESK REFERENCE



## MOBILIZATION

1. Traveling, within the United States or abroad, to carry out or participate in violent extremist activity
2. Engaging in a threatening interaction or violently refusing to comply with law enforcement based on violent extremist ideology
3. Disseminating one's own martyrdom or last will video or statement (for example, a pre-attack manifesto or final statement)
4. Conducting a dry run of an attack or assault or attempting to gain proximity or access to targets
5. Identifying—in person or online—specific details of an intended violent activity, including target(s), time frames, and participant roles
6. Disposing of meaningful personal assets or belongings in an unusual manner, particularly with a sense of urgency or without regard for personal financial gain
7. Unusual goodbyes or post-death instructions

## PREPARATION

8. Communicating intent to engage in violence or a direct threat with justification for action, particularly if presented as necessary or inevitable, in person or online
9. Unusual building or testing of explosives, especially if tailored to a specific target
10. Planning or preparing to travel abroad to join violent extremist organizations, seek training, or engage in a conflict zone
11. Planning or preparing to travel within the United States to participate in violent extremist activity
12. Seeking or claiming religious, political, or ideological justification or validation for a planned violent act
13. Unusual purchase of military-style tactical equipment (for example, body armor or personal protective equipment) in a manner that raises suspicion of planning violence
14. Breaking away from a larger group or creating a more exclusive or operationally secure group to discuss or plan specific violent activity
15. Surveilling potential attack targets
16. Increased use of physical concealment tactics (for example, countersurveillance techniques, disposable phone) in support of planning a specific act of violence
17. Increased use of online concealment tactics (for example, deleting, hiding, or manipulating social media or other online accounts to misrepresent location or hide group membership, contacts, or activities) in support of planning a specific act of violence
18. Communicating directly with or seeking to develop a relationship with violent extremists, or being contacted directly by them, for suspected criminal purposes
19. Unusual efforts to obtain explosive precursors, especially illegally or surreptitiously
20. Acquisition of weapons or ammunition for suspected criminal purposes
21. Change in or initiation of physical or weapons training for suspected criminal purposes
22. Planning or pursuing suspicious travel activity (for example, unusual purchase of one-way tickets, false excuses for international travel, fraudulent passport application) in a manner that raises suspicion of potential violence

## MOTIVATION

23. Sending or receiving unexplained financial resources or equipment to/from violent extremists
24. Creating, joining, or implying membership/association—in person or online—with violent extremists for the purpose of furthering violent activity
25. Conducting research for target or tactic selection for violent acts (for example, acquiring blueprints, maps, schematics, or technical specifications)
26. Pursuing or exploiting jobs or personnel who provide sensitive access to enable violent acts (for example, critical infrastructure, the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, military)
27. Attempting to seek technical expertise (for example, in aviation, biology, chemistry, electronics) to enable planned violence
28. Professing intent to harm law enforcement if law enforcement takes action or statement of intent to harm others (typically ideological opponents) if confronted
29. Expressing desire or willingness to die for a violent extremist ideology
30. Threatening specific violence against a particular physical target, especially in response to current news reporting on political and legislative issues or other flashpoint events that speak to one's ideological concerns
31. Threatening violence toward specific individuals, including civilian, government, law enforcement, or military personnel
32. Producing, promoting, or extensively consuming violent extremist content online or in person, including violent extremist videos, narratives, media, and messaging for suspected criminal purposes
33. Posing with weapons and imagery associated with violent extremism in photos or videos, especially if paired with threats or expressed interest in carrying out violence against an ideological target for suspected criminal purposes
34. Expressing acceptance of violence as a necessary means to achieve ideological goals (for example, communicating a desire for revenge against ideological opponents) and saying that nonviolent means are ineffective or unavailable
35. Attempting to radicalize others—especially family members and peers—to violence
36. Praising, or researching to emulate, past successful or attempted attacks or attackers
37. Increasing or extreme adherence to conspiracy theories as a justification of violence against ideological targets
38. Engaging in outbursts or fights with or condemning behavior of family, peers, community, or authority figures while advocating violent extremist ideology
39. Adopting more than one violent extremist ideology
40. Rejecting nonviolent voices in favor of violent extremist ideologies
41. Changing vocabulary, style of speech, or behavior to reflect a hardened point of view or new sense of purpose associated with violent extremist causes, particularly after a catalyzing event
42. Isolating oneself from family and peers, particularly if citing violent extremist doctrine or ideology

Link to Booklet



(U) The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are committed to safeguarding the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and applicable law. It is therefore important to emphasize that many of the mobilization indicators included in this booklet may also relate to constitutionally protected activities. It is most important to look critically and contextually at the specific actions of the individual and their intent. Law enforcement action should never be taken solely based on constitutionally protected activities; on the apparent or actual race, age, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity of the subject; or on any combination of these factors. Individuals are encouraged to contact law enforcement if—based on these indicators and the situational context—they suspect an individual is mobilizing to violence or engaging in violent extremist activities.