



Homeland Security

Office of Intelligence and Analysis

REFERENCE AID

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(U//FOUO) **Terrorist Facilitation Activities in the Homeland: Key Categories and Examples**

(U//FOUO) Prepared by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). Coordinated with ICE, TSA, Department of the Treasury, DIA, FBI, FBI Operations, and NCTC.

(U) **Scope**

(U//FOUO) This Reference Aid provides state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) homeland security stakeholders with a typology—along with associated examples—of the terrorist facilitation activities that have been most commonly reported as taking place in the Homeland in order to assist in awareness, mitigation, and collection support efforts. This Reference Aid details activities that go beyond the provision of ideological support to a foreign terrorist organization (FTO)—a “sympathizer” does not meet the threshold for materially supporting an FTO or other violent extremist group—and, because it focuses exclusively on facilitation, this Reference Aid does not address activities that immediately precede an individual taking violent action.

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(U//FOUO) Identifying US-Based Terrorist Facilitation Activities

(U//FOUO) To improve homeland security stakeholders' understanding of the terrorist threat environment in the United States and to guide reporting efforts by DHS Component and SLTT partners, I&A convened Intelligence Community (IC) subject matter experts on Homeland-related terrorist activity and conducted a review of relevant reporting from the IC, state and local law enforcement, and open sources dating to 2011. Our analysis revealed that most identified US-based terrorist activity does not involve pre-operational activities conducted in preparation for an imminent attack; instead, most activities can be broadly defined as involving material support to terrorism, which we term facilitation. I&A grounded the wide range of reported terrorist facilitation activities into three major categories: financial support, logistical support, and providing access to and connections between known or suspected terrorists (KSTs).

(U//FOUO) I&A assesses that individuals engaged in terrorist facilitation tend to engage in a range of activities rather than to specialize in one, based on a body of reporting on a variety of incidents of terrorist facilitation—including government bulletins based on sworn indictments and court documents. As a result, investigators and homeland security stakeholders who are engaging in ascertaining or reporting one type of activity by a KST should be vigilant for indicators of other activities as well.

(U//FOUO) Any one of the activities described in this Reference Aid may be insignificant on its own and may only constitute a basis for reporting when observed in combination with other suspicious observed behaviors, particularly advocacy of violence. The described activities are not a concrete formula for identifying or predicting illegal, including violent extremist, conduct. Violent extremist behaviors change and require continual re-examination.

(U//FOUO) Further reporting on any of the key facilitation activities—when they are reasonably believed to be conducted on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group—will enhance homeland security stakeholders' shared understanding of patterns associated with US-based facilitation, including: which groups conduct which activities, regional variations in activities, baseline numbers of these activities occurring in the Homeland, and development of new or adapted tactics in response to disruption efforts.*† Many of these activities may appear purely

* (U) For more information on these three facilitation activity categories, please see the following sources:

- » (U) DHS; "(U) Collection Support Brief for Homegrown Violent Extremism"; October 2012.
- » (U) DHS; *Homeland Security Assessment*, IA-0176-11; 11 February 2011.
- » (U) DHS/NCTC; *Homeland Security Assessment*, IA-0108-13; 26 April 2013.
- » (U) DHS; *Homeland Security Note*, IA-0007-14; 16 October 2013.
- » (U//FOUO); DHS; *Roll Call Release*, "(U//FOUO) Fireworks as an Improvised Explosive Device Component"; dated 28 June 2013.
- » (U) DHS; *Homeland Security Assessment*, "(U) Notional Attack Scenarios Motivated by *Inspire Magazine*, An Ohio Perspective"; 13 November 2012.
- » (U//FOUO); DHS; *Roll Call Release*, "(U//FOUO) Identifying Homegrown Violent Extremists Before They Strike"; 8 October 2010.
- » (U); DHS; *Roll Call Release*, "(U) Mobilization of Violent Extremists in the United States"; 17 January 2012.

† (U//FOUO) SLTT partners should not take any action outside the normal course of their duties to collect information on protected or lawful activities, such as beginning an investigation solely based on the listed potential indicators. Activities should not be reported absent additional, articulable facts and circumstances that lead the analyst to believe the activity is reasonably indicative of facilitation of FTO or other violent extremist group activity.

criminal and for profit; further investigation, however, may reveal the involvement of KSTs or their associates. Recipients should consult the Information Sharing Environment Suspicious Activity Reporting (ISE-SAR) Functional Standard 1.5 for further guidance on the threshold for reporting.*

(U//FOUO) Some of the examples described below may be constitutionally protected activities and should not be reported in a SAR or ISE-SAR absent articulable facts and circumstances that support the source agency’s suspicion that the behavior observed is not innocent, but rather reasonably indicative of criminal activity associated with terrorism. Race, ethnicity, national origin, or religious affiliation should not be considered as factors that create suspicion (although these factors may be used as specific suspect descriptions).

(U//FOUO) Defining Facilitation

(U//FOUO) I&A defines terrorist facilitation as witting or unwitting participation in activities that support the capabilities or enhance the operations of an FTO, other violent extremist groups, or their violent ideologies, including: illicitly raising or laundering funds to finance terrorist group operations; logistical support, including transportation assistance, document fraud, immigration fraud, or procurement of material goods or documents; and providing access and connections to terrorist associates or enhanced technical skills. This Reference Aid uses a working definition of terrorist facilitation intended to provide common analytic terminology for DHS and SLTT partners who analyze and report on activities at the field level; it does not supersede the material support definition stipulated in 18 U.S.C §§ 2339A and 2339B.

(U//FOUO) Key Categories of US-Based Terrorist Facilitation

(U) Financial

Activity Type	Example
Fundraising on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Witting or unwitting: individual donations, use of charities, establishing or investment in businesses, purchasing property, loan sharking, solicitation of donations, narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting, exporting and reselling legitimate products in other regions, credit card fraud, and benefits fraud.
Laundering on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Narcotics trafficking; vehicle and vehicle parts exports; use of money service businesses; establishing or investment in businesses; and use of front companies, charities, and other organizations to transfer funds.
Smuggling on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Bulk cash (via human couriers and commodities shipments), vehicle and vehicle parts, precious metals and minerals, cigarettes, narcotics, and human trafficking.
Funds transfers on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Formal and informal transfer of funds via: money service businesses including hawalas, traditional banks, or wire transfer services; wiring funds; using stored value cards like gift cards or pre-paid debit cards; and bitcoins.
Racketeering on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Business and personal shakedown schemes and use of front organizations including houses of worship, charities, businesses, and community organizations.

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(U//FOUO) FTOs and other violent extremist groups rely upon a variety of methods to obtain or move funds to support operations and their personnel, families, and other facilitation activities. These methods may include: laundering illicit money and transferring funds through front organizations, directly soliciting and collecting funds, engaging in racketeering activity, and using legitimate businesses as sources of cash, as described in a body of open source and DHS reporting.

* (U) The ISE-SAR definition in the Functional Standard, v. 1.5 is a SAR that is reasonably indicative of criminal activity associated with terrorism.

- » (U) In August 2013, a USPER and a foreign national were arrested for providing and attempting to provide material support to three identified FTOs. The defendants allegedly sent thousands of dollars via legitimate money transfer services to FTOs operating in Iraq, Syria, and Somalia, according to open source reporting.
- » (U) In May 2013, two female USPERs were sentenced to 10 and 20 years in prison after being found guilty of providing material support to al-Shabaab. The two individuals set up a dedicated teleconference line—some of the calls featured al-Shabaab members asking for donations—to elicit financial support from callers for al-Shabaab. They also went door to door in their community in Minnesota to collect funds for the group, often using the ruse that they were collecting funds for orphans in Somalia, as described in open source reports.

(U) Logistical

Activity Type	Example
Transportation assistance on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Physically transporting individuals; funding travel of others; accompanying travel with others; human smuggling; establishing or exploiting travel agencies; and obtaining legitimate or illegal travel documents.
Procurement on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Acquisition or transportation of materials; equipment; weapons; military grade equipment such as night vision goggles; commercial communications devices; business licenses; illicit technology transfer to include communication equipment, computing and gaming equipment, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear equipment; foodstuffs; educational materials; vehicles; building materials; clothes/uniforms; medicine; dual-use explosives components such as pressure cookers, wiring, timers, and fireworks; identification documents; and certifications and licenses.
Document forgery on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Identification documents including drivers licenses, social security cards, and credit cards; travel documents including visas and passports; immigration fraud; benefits fraud; and marriage licenses.

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(U//FOUO) FTOs and other violent extremist groups often require equipment and technical capabilities for use in their home regions and may seek specialized expertise, enhanced capabilities, transportation assistance, document forgery and immigration fraud, and illicit and licit procurement of equipment.

(U//FOUO) Transportation assistance may involve bringing potential recruits to FTOs or other violent extremist groups' home regions or placing operatives in positions globally to assist the FTO or other violent extremist group to achieve its goals, according to a body of open source and DHS reporting. Immigration fraud also contributes to transportation assistance, according to a body of open source and DHS reporting.

(U//FOUO) Procurement activities may concern the acquisition of donations or services that are not monetary, such as clothing, technology and weaponry, and other ancillary items or services, as described in a body of open source and DHS reporting.

- » (U) In September 2013, a New York-based USPER was sentenced to 18 years in prison after pleading guilty to providing material support to al-Qa'ida. The USPER purchased supplies for the group, as described in open source reports and a Department of Justice press release.

- » (U) In May 2013, a Minneapolis-based USPER was sentenced to 20 years in prison after being convicted of providing material support to al-Shabaab. The USPER aided multiple individuals in traveling to Somalia to fight on behalf of al-Shabaab, according to open source reports and a US District Attorney's Office press release.

(U) Access and Connections

Activities	Examples
Guidance and networking on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Indoctrination to justify providing support for an FTO; tradecraft advice including travel security, communications security, online security, and navigating immigration and asylum processes; cultural awareness; serving as an intermediary between others and an FTO; and maintaining overseas connections with FTOs or other foreign fighters.
Special skills on behalf of an FTO or other violent extremist group	Translation, web services, social media, graphic design, publishing and distribution, document forgery, cultural awareness, and maintaining access to sensitive locations and information as an insider threat.

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(U//FOUO) FTO and other violent extremist group facilitators guide prospective members and link them with current personnel, thereby helping integrate new members into the violent ideology and activities of the group. These contacts can connect new members with existing—sometimes distant—leadership and help integration by providing technical and linguistic expertise, as well as guidance on navigating cultural or regional differences, as illustrated in a body of open source and DHS reporting.

- » (U) As of September 2013, a North Carolina-based USPER allegedly indicated he desired to help violent extremist fighters abroad through several avenues, including providing media support. The USPER was arrested in November 2013 for allegedly providing material support to an FTO, according to open source reporting.
- » (U) In August 2013, a Florida-based USPER was sentenced to 25 years in prison after being convicted of providing material support to the Pakistani Taliban. Among other acts, the USPER sent children from his madrasa in Pakistan to learn to kill and fight against Americans in Afghanistan, and provided another individual with contact information to reach Pakistani Taliban members abroad, as described in open source reporting and a Department of Justice press release.
- » (U) As of November 2012, four USPERs were charged with attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist group. One of the accused allegedly developed contacts with the Afghan Taliban and al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan and made arrangements for the other three to join him abroad, according to open source reporting and the Department of Justice's criminal complaint.

(U//FOUO) Potential Reporting Gaps

(U//FOUO) The following activities have not been reported to date, but we assess they are probably taking place in the Homeland based on the known skills and expertise of US-based KSTs and the current use of these activities to support non-terrorism related criminal enterprises. Any future reporting about these kinds of activities will inform assessments of terrorist material support in the Homeland.

- » (U//FOUO) Insider access to information or offices that FTOs or other violent extremist groups may use to exploit bureaucratic processes, like applying for immigration documents or benefits;
- » (U//FOUO) Cover activities intended to help hide potential operatives, such as by providing housing or alibis;
- » (U//FOUO) Cyber activities such as criminal hacking, falsifying virtual records, or releasing sensitive information;
- » (U//FOUO) Collaboration among multiple terror groups and their facilitators in the Homeland or collaboration between Homeland-based terror groups and their facilitators and transnational criminal organizations.

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//FOUO) This Reference Aid is based on a review of a wide body of reporting from open sources, government bulletins derived from sworn indictments and court documents, DHS Components (ICE and USCIS), and law enforcement. The majority of confidential law enforcement sources whose reporting was reviewed are described as at least reliable with good access. We have **high confidence** in our characterization of the categories we describe as encompassing the majority of known facilitation activities in the Homeland, as they are derived from a wide body of credible reporting. We have **less confidence** that the reviewed reporting comprehensively describes all potentially visible and reportable facilitation activities because the body of SLTT reporting on criminal activities with a possible nexus to terrorism is limited. Further reporting, particularly on KST involvement in cyber activities and cybercrimes as well as pertaining to the associations of KSTs who may be providing access and connections—as defined in this Reference Aid—would potentially elucidate a wider breadth of Homeland facilitation.

(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) Tracked by: HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.2.1, HSEC-8.3, HSEC-8.8

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