

Homeland
Security

INTELLIGENCE NOTE

3 June 2020

(U//FOUO) Violent Opportunists Continue to Engage in Organized Activities

(U//FOUO) Scope. This *Intelligence Note (IN)* provides information on violent opportunist activity amidst otherwise lawful protests. This *IN* is an update to “(U//FOUO) Some Violent Opportunists Probably Engaging in Organized Activities” released on 1 June 2020 and updated on 2 June 2020. This *IN* is intended to provide federal, state and local partners an overview of violent opportunist activity and does not supersede the previous versions and is intended to provide a 24-hour update of significant activities however examples prior to 2 June may be referenced. The information in this *IN* is current as of 3 June 2020.

(U//FOUO) We assess some violent opportunists may continue to target law enforcement officers, law enforcement facilities, and government facilities over the next 24 hours. Despite reports of peaceful protests in localized areas, we have continued to observe violent opportunists infiltrating legal protests to target law enforcement officers using a range of known and novel tactics. In addition, over the last 24 hours we have observed violent opportunists broaden the aperture of tactics and weapons used to target law enforcement. Decreases in lawful protest size and duration may reducing the limit openings for violent opportunists’ activity.

- » (U//FOUO) **Use of Weapons, Syringe:** Police in Orlando, Florida, arrested a violent opportunist during a lawful protest on the evening of 2 June for attempting to stab a law enforcement officer with a syringe. The individual was charged with attempted aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer with a deadly weapon. The contents of the syringe are unknown at this time.
- » (U//FOUO) **Counter Mobility-Caltrops/Improvised Road Spikes:** On 2 June, multiple caltrops—small, typically metal spiked weapons used to damage tires—were found by an employee in the parking lot of a major retail outlet in the suburbs south of Minneapolis, Minnesota. No suspects have been identified in connection with this incident. Caltrops are easily transportable and when used in this manner could be intended to puncture tires of responding emergency service vehicles or cause personnel injury.
- » (U//FOUO) **Pre-Operational Activity, Weapons Staging and Caches:** On 2 June A social media user claimed that bricks were being placed around the country for use as a weapon by violent opportunist during lawful protests. Prestaging normally innocuous material prior to a protest is an established tactic promoted in anarchist extremist literature.
- » (U//FOUO) **Vehicle Ramming:** A vehicle struck three police officers in Buffalo, New York—two Buffalo Police Officers and one NY State Trooper—on the evening of 1 June. The suspects are currently in custody—all have significant criminal history with no known violent extremist affiliations.
- » (U//FOUO) **Pre-Operational Activity, Improvised Incendiary Device and Hand Tools:** Police in Jacksonville, Florida, arrested a violent opportunist carrying a backpack containing a Molotov Cocktail/Improvised Incendiary Device on 31 May. The backpack also contained several paint-filled balloons possibly for use against vehicle windshields or police face shields to obscure their vision; a demolition hatchet possibly for use as a weapon, for damaging property.

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(U//FOUO) Indicators Associated with Potential Escalation to More Widespread Organized Violence

(U//FOUO) The following list of indicators may be indicative of violent opportunist efforts to plan and coordinate activities in support of attacks targeting law enforcement or the destruction of critical infrastructure. Some of the observed suspicious behaviors include constitutionally protected activities and should not be reported absent articulable facts and circumstances that supports a reasonable belief the observed behavior is itself, or when taken in context of other activities, is indicative of violent activities.

- » (U//FOUO) Pre-staging of potential weapons-of-opportunity or stolen vehicles at planned protest venues.
- » (U//FOUO) Increased reports of more lethal weapons—such as firearms—being used to target law enforcement officials at lawful protest activities.
- » (U//FOUO) Monitoring and reporting on law enforcement personnel, communications, and movements during planned protests without a reasonable explanation.
- » (U//FOUO) Transition from generic calls for violence to providing specific targeting or operational guidance.
- » (U//FOUO) Online planning of criminal activity or violence related to planned protests by individuals who lack ties to local communities.
- » (U//FOUO) Encouraging or redirecting planned protest activities away from major metropolitan areas to cities and municipalities with fewer law enforcement personnel.
- » (U//FOUO) Discovery of banners or other materials used to employ “Black Bloc” tactics for concealing identity or shielding activities from law enforcement scrutiny.
- » (U//FOUO) Reports of coordinated reconnaissance of planned protests venues prior to the event without a reasonable explanation.

(U) DHS Definitions

(U//FOUO) **Anarchist Extremists:** DHS defines anarchist extremists as groups or individuals who facilitate or engage in acts of unlawful violence as a means of changing the government and society in support of the belief that all forms of capitalism and corporate globalization should be opposed and that governing institutions are unnecessary and harmful to society.

(U//FOUO) **Domestic Violent Extremists:** The FBI and DHS define a domestic violent extremist (DVE) as an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

(U//FOUO) **Violent Opportunists:** DHS I&A defines violent opportunists as illicit actors who may or may not hold violent extremist ideological beliefs, but seek to exploit opportunities in non-violent protests to engage in unlawful violence against federal, state, or local government and law enforcement personnel or facilities, as well as other critical infrastructure, that either poses a danger to human life, threat of potential destruction of the critical infrastructure, or would be so disruptive as to endanger the minimal operations of state and local governments to respond. These actors may capitalize on violent extremist narratives often espoused by organized DVE movements, such as anarchist extremists or racially motivated violent extremists, to justify violent activities that may potentially destroy government critical infrastructure at the state, local and federal levels, and may attempt to incite others to violence to provide cover for their own illicit activities. Their primary motivations may be influenced by a variety of criminal objectives and goals.

(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

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.5, HSEC-8.6, HSEC-8.8, HSEC-8.10.

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//FOUO) This *IN* is based on media reporting and DHS field reporting. We have **medium** confidence in the underlying information obtained from DHS due to evolving situations on the ground and the press reporting given the evolving nature of these events. We have **high** confidence that material received from our state and local partners represents their best information at the time of dissemination.

(U//FOUO) We have **medium** confidence in our assessment, based on the uncorroborated and sporadic nature of some of the underlying reporting. Additional reporting regarding organized activities could strengthen this assessment.