

# Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2018

## **SPEAK OUT AGAINST HATE AND EXTREMISM – PARTICULARLY FROM THE FAR-RIGHT**

Public officials and law enforcement authorities must speak out against all manifestations of hate and extremism. For too long, policymakers have focused disproportionate attention on the threat of Islamist extremism – to the detriment of readiness to address many other security issues.

- While we must continue to address that threat, the time has come to recognize that far-right extremism is an ongoing, pervasive and consistent threat to innocent lives in America. The right to free speech is a core value that must be protected, honored and cherished. But the promotion of hate – and bias-motivated criminal activity – must be vehemently rejected.
- Federal, state and local officials must send a consistent and much stronger message that violent bigotry is unacceptable – and ensure that the FBI, the Justice Department and state and local law enforcement officials have the tools and resources they need to enforce relevant laws and vigorously investigate and prosecute hate crimes to the fullest extent of the law, while providing comfort and assistance to individual victims and community members.

## **ENACT LAWS TO FIGHT DOMESTIC TERRORISM**

Recognizing that far-right extremism is a major threat of this new era, the United States Congress should enact laws to focus specifically on domestic terrorism, including close examination of the utility of enacting a statute that explicitly recognizes and punishes domestic terrorism as a crime.

- Congress should also ensure that the executive branch is tracking and focusing on domestic terrorism through legislation like the current Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act. ADL would support legislation that calls upon the federal government to collect data on domestic terrorism and ensures training for law enforcement on best practices to combat domestic terrorism. Such a statute should focus on specific criminal acts and not cross the line to punishing First Amendment protected expression.

- The nature of domestic extremist movements is substantially different from the State Department-maintained listing of designated *foreign* terrorist organizations – and creating such a list would present potential constitutional issues under the First Amendment. ADL would not support the creation of a designated domestic terrorist organization list.

## **EXPAND DIALOGUE BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND TECH SECTOR**

In the last several years, civil society and the technology sector have partnered on a range of projects to adapt for the digital era. For example, ADL has been proud to be part of Twitter's Trust and Safety Council and to work with Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Twitter as members of our Problem-Solving Lab. ADL has worked with tech companies in a myriad of ways to help them improve their approach toward dealing with hate and extremism on their platforms. However, those efforts are still nascent.

- At the federal and state level, policymakers should work to fill the gaps in addressing the impact of technological advances. This includes addressing the offline consequences of online hate, pursuing genuine dialogue with the technology sector to better counter extremism online and work with tech companies to find solutions for emerging challenges.
- At the same time, tech companies have a responsibility to improve terms of service related to hate and extremism, to enforce them more effectively and to act more proactively to remove extremist content.

## **IMPROVE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL RESPONSES TO HATE CRIMES**

Every state should enact comprehensive, inclusive hate crime laws. Effective responses to hate violence by public officials and law enforcement authorities can play an essential role in deterring and preventing these crimes.

- Data must drive policy. The Department of Justice should incentivize and encourage state and local law

enforcement agencies to collect and report hate crimes data to the FBI more comprehensively, with special attention devoted to large underreporting among certain law enforcement agencies that either have not participated in the HCSA program at all or have incorrectly reported zero hate crimes.

- The Department of Justice must consider why victims of hate violence fail to report these crimes to the police. If marginalized or targeted community members – including immigrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community members, Muslims, Arabs, Middle Easterners, South Asians and people with limited language proficiency – cannot report, or do not feel safe reporting hate crimes perpetrated against them, law enforcement cannot effectively address these crimes, thereby jeopardizing the safety of all.

### **REFRAME PREVENTION STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO COUNTER FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM**

Congress and state legislatures should authorize and appropriate grants for research and services to better understand the drivers of extremist hate and fund evidence-based programming to counter it.

- There is no comprehensive strategy and program to counter violent extremism and the programming currently underway is minor and disproportionately focused on groups like ISIS – not nearly enough on the types of individuals on whom this report focuses.
- State, local and community leaders must create opportunities throughout the lifecycle of hate – from awareness to intervention to rehabilitation and victims services – in support of comprehensive, evidence-based and whole-of-society programs that counter all facets of hate and extremism.
- Non-profit and academic research driven efforts, working with tech companies and appropriate state and local government partners, can provide the critical boost that these prevention efforts need, while also avoiding misgivings held by some about the implications of an overly federalized effort.

- Recent ADL-supported programs that nurture these sorts of partnerships include the Mayors’ Compact to Combat Hate, Extremism, and Bigotry; the Strong Cities Network; and Communities Overcoming Extremism: The After Charlottesville Project.

### **PROMOTE ANTI-BIAS AND CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Recognizing the limits of legal responses to hate violence, Congress and the Department of Education should increase federal funding for promoting inclusive school climates, anti-bias education and hate crime prevention in schools.

- Schools should be directed to properly implement crafted anti-bullying, cyberbullying and harassment education and training initiatives. Every state has a bullying prevention law, but proactive measures must be taken to ensure implementation of the policies and programs required by these laws. And every elementary and secondary school should promote activities that celebrate our nation’s diversity and inclusivity – and regularly integrate anti-bias and anti-hate content into their curricula.

**Read the Full Report online:**

[www.adl.org/murderandextremism2018](http://www.adl.org/murderandextremism2018)

