

# ELECTION SECURITY



## COUNTERING ELECTION-MOTIVATED VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN 2020 AND BEYOND ADL'S PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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### 1. UTILIZE EXISTING RESEARCH AND EXPERTISE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE THREAT

ADL offers training and can help identify a range of resources that might fill gaps in a team's understanding of the threat extremists pose. ADL suggests that state and local leaders act in the near-term to:

- A. Rapidly inventory your locality's violent extremism expertise
- B. Share the [ADL HEAT Map](#) with your team and other policymakers
- C. Share the [ADL Hate Symbols Database](#) with local law enforcement
- D. Invite law enforcement to sign up for an ADL or partner training on understanding and/or identifying extremism and related disinformation

### 2. ENSURE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

Leadership must use the bully pulpit to promote hope over hate, equity over bigotry, promote truth over conspiracy, and otherwise use their positions to reduce proclivities to violence. ADL requests leaders:

- A. Issue bipartisan or non-partisan proclamations condemning violence and ensure election administration will be safe and secure
- B. Ask credible influencers to make similar statements, including urging community members to think before they click
- C. Create a transparency plan around political protests and share with the public how your administration plans on responding to extremist concerns

### 3. PRIORITIZE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SECTOR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Law enforcement must recognize its careful role in these challenging times – to promote its legitimacy by acting only when there is probable cause of a crime, but also ensuring the public that they will promote safety and security. After careful civil liberties consideration, ADL recommends that law enforcement:

- A. Raise the priority level of domestic violent extremism through February 2021
- B. Form a Task Force to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism to streamline coordination across the extremism, hate crimes, and election security elements in your state or locality
- C. Confirm your teams who are addressing these issues have points of contact for regional counterparts and know whom to contact

#### **4. INVEST IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FOR PREVENTION**

If someone has not committed a crime, but may be going down a violent and extremist path, social services and related resources may be a more appropriate course of action to prevent future violence. States and localities should consider:

- A. Establishing expertly trained call centers to field referrals and provide resources to individuals embracing violent extremist ideologies or conspiracy theories.

#### **5. PURSUE CREATIVE METHODS FOR MANAGING THREATS TO PUBLIC ORDER**

Many laws that may help advance security in unstable times may not be directly geared toward security, but closely related. For example, local officials could:

- A. Promote free speech by empowering protest, but maintain distance between protestors and counter-protestors
- B. Issue guidance to community members for flagging hateful or untrustworthy content through social media platforms
- C. Assess the gaps in resources to take on these initiatives and investigate whether gaps can be filled immediately

#### **6. EVALUATE AND COMMUNICATE HOW EXISTING STATE LAWS MAY PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND PROSECUTE PERPETRATORS AT PUBLIC GATHERINGS**

Existing laws may be sufficient to address violent and extremist threats. States should:

- A. Review your state's hate crime, domestic terrorism, and anti-paramilitary statutes, and proactively plan for scenarios in which such statutes might be enforced.
- B. Issue attorney general advisory opinions or public statements clarifying the applicability and enforceability of state anti-paramilitary and related statutes.
- C. Ensure law enforcement is directed to promote lawful protest, but be aware of public nuisance and related statutes.

#### **7. USE PERMITTING AND OTHER STRATEGIES TO MANAGE PUBLIC GATHERINGS AND PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

States should think creatively about how to empower protest while ensuring protestors are safe and that protests and counter-protests do not devolve into violence. States and localities should:

- A. Review, refine, and widely communicate permitting and other time, place, and manner restrictions in advance of potential protests.
- B. Review [Georgetown Law's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Prevention \(ICAP\) toolkit](#) on related issues to see how they may use those tools in gauging non-violent protest from security risk.