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## The ISIS Impact on the Domestic Islamic Extremist Threat: Homegrown Islamic Extremism 2009-2015

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Read the full comprehensive report, [The ISIS Impact on the Domestic Islamic Extremist Threat: Homegrown Islamic Extremism 2009-2015 \(PDF\)](#).

In 2015, [80 U.S. residents were linked](#) to terror plots and other activity motivated by Islamic extremist ideology. They were either arrested, charged or otherwise publicly identified for their involvement in crimes ranging from providing support, attempting to fund or traveling to join terrorist groups abroad, or planning or assisting in plots here at home.

This is a level of activity by U.S. residents inspired by foreign terrorist organizations never before seen. The 2015 numbers – up 180% from 2014 – are a result of a confluence of global trends, technological advances and the constant tide of terrorist messages and propaganda.

In 2015 for the first time, nearly as many Americans were killed by domestic Islamic extremists [as by white supremacists](#).

And the spike in arrests and violence does not seem to be confined to 2015. [In the first month of 2016](#), at least 6 U.S. residents were linked criminal activity motivated by Islamic extremist ideologies. Following on the heels of the record-

breaking number of terror related arrests in 2015, these new arrests further underscore the persistent nature of the threat.

Ongoing unrest in the Middle East, particularly in relation to the ongoing Syrian civil war, continued to provide opportunities for terrorist organizations to operate and gain strength. As in 2014, the majority of the U.S. residents linked to terror in 2015 supported the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also known as IS or ISIL), which is based in Syria and Iraq and has affiliates in a number of other countries including Egypt, Libya and Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, [ISIS](#) and other terrorist groups continue to take advantage of technology to mobilize followers, spread their messages and expand their influence worldwide. The internet and social media sites in particular, remain a pivotal element of the modern radicalization process. Online social interactions facilitate the spread of extremist messages – making them available to almost anyone, virtually anywhere – and create a climate where susceptible individuals are simultaneously targeted by recruiters and are able to develop remote networks that reinforce their burgeoning extremist allegiances.

Understanding the progression of U.S. residents engaged in activity motivated by Islamic extremist ideology can provide valuable insights into future security challenges.