

**“Meeting the Challenge of White Nationalist Terrorism at Home and abroad”
Chairman Ted Deutch Opening Statement
September 18, 2019**

In recent months and years, it has become apparent that white nationalist terrorism is a growing threat both here and abroad. Yet in order to solve this problem, we must first identify it.

Our government, intelligence services, and law enforcement agencies use multiple terms for white nationalist terrorism, including, “racially motivated extremists” and “white supremacist extremists,” among others.

When my subcommittee held a hearing with the State Department’s Counterterrorism Coordinator in July, he was unable to call this challenge by its name: white nationalist terrorism.

Tragically, this mounting threat reared its ugly head only three days later, in the horrific attack in El Paso, Texas that killed 22 people. In the last year, it led to other attacks, like at the Chabad Synagogue of Poway, just north of San Diego; at the al-Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Center in Christchurch, New Zealand; and at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

These attacks were preceded by, among others, a 2017 white nationalist terrorist attack at the Islamic Cultural Center of Quebec City that killed six; the 2015 terrorist attack at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston that killed nine; and the 2011 attacks by Anders Breivik that killed 77 people, principally at a political youth camp, in Norway.

While these acts of violence may appear disparate and random, the terrorists allegedly responsible for them demonstrably drew inspiration from one another. They share an ideology that asserts, among other beliefs, that white people and “white identity” in western countries are under siege by massive waves of immigration from non-white countries.

White nationalists also perpetuate conspiracy theories that claim that Jews control industries, governments, and other organizations through “shadow groups,” which allegedly pose a threat to “white civilization.”

White nationalists claim they are protecting the white race – and will use any means necessary to defend it against this supposed dispossession. This ideology helps explain why their targets include a wide array of people, from Latinx in Texas to Jews in Pennsylvania to Muslims in New Zealand to African-Americans in South Carolina and teenagers in Scandinavia.

The Internet serves as a platform for white nationalists to disseminate this twisted ideology and even broadcast these attacks. Technology enables interconnectivity between decentralized white nationalist terrorists, organizations, and networks, and presents challenges to law enforcement efforts to track, monitor, and disrupt planned violence.

White nationalist terrorism is a clear challenge to democratic governance, and its adherents espouse principles antithetical to both pluralistic values and to American ideals. It is also clear that the U.S. government – including the State Department – is not doing enough to counter white nationalist terrorism and to track the global nature of this threat.

We must learn more about how these movements recruit and radicalize and how they share ideas across networks, just as we seek to understand the interconnectivity of other threats. If we are to marginalize and isolate white nationalist terrorism, a whole of society effort is required, one that encompasses civil society and the private sector, as well as government.

This hearing is a chance for our Subcommittees to gain a greater understanding of how the domestic and international dimensions of white nationalist terrorism overlap, especially regarding ideology, motivations, uses of technology, and radicalization and recruitment.

White nationalist terrorism is not a Democratic or Republican problem. It is not just a domestic threat or solely an international challenge. I know we all take seriously the need to combat white nationalist terrorism, and I hope that our discussion today will help inform future efforts to meet this growing global challenge.

I'm working on legislation to address our strategy to combat this threat that, I hope and I'm confident, can be bipartisan.

I believe the insight and expertise of our witnesses will be an important contribution to our discussion going forward. I thank you for being here.