



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hearing Statement of Intelligence and Counterterrorism Chairman Max Rose (D-NY)**

### ***Meeting the Challenge of White Nationalist Terrorism at Home and Abroad***

**September 18, 2019**

For far too long, we have talked about the issue of domestic terrorism – especially the threat from white nationalist terrorists – in a vacuum, without recognition for its sweeping international ties and influence. By working with the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee charged with oversight of international terrorism, we are helping to change that narrative.

Thanks to our great civic partners, like the Anti-Defamation League - who I made sure we invited to testify here before us today - we have a more comprehensive understanding of threats to the U.S. Homeland. For example, their work has uncovered that white nationalist terrorists have killed more people in recent years than any other type of domestic extremist. We also know that 78% of extremist-related murders in the United States last year were attributed to those adhering to a white nationalist ideology. Their vigilance on this issue, and that of so many of our civic partners like ADL – has been integral for policy makers to better understand the extent of white nationalist terrorism today.

And largely, what we have seen is that this threat is not just a problem for the U.S. but also increasingly for our interests abroad and our allies. In April, The New York Times published an analysis showing that since 2011, approximately one-third of “white extremist killers” were inspired by similar attacks. The analysis detailed the expansive international connections between these terrorists. Unsurprisingly, it shined a light on the role social media has played as a catalyst for the spread of white nationalist propaganda to spread far and wide. White nationalism has been around for decades, even centuries in some form. While this is not new problem – but, we are facing a new iteration of this threat. This threat knows no boundaries. It doesn’t end at traditional borders, but in fact it tears across continents, through the web, and sadly inhabits many of our communities. Whether it is in Norway, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, or Wisconsin, California, New Mexico, Florida, Pennsylvania - I refuse to sit idly by as another house of worship, school, or festival is attacked by someone embracing white nationalist views.

As elected officials – especially those on our respective Committees – we have a duty to develop strategies, conduct investigations, and highlight threats so we can keep the American public safe. Working together as Democrats and Republicans is one way we can accomplish this important goal. Our Subcommittees coming together to do just that is a step in the right direction. We need to ensure that the Federal government is providing policy makers and the public with data on the threats to better understand the scope of the threat, how we are combating it, and inform future policy recommendations responsibly. That is why I am a proud original cosponsor of H.R. 3106, the Domestic and International Terrorism DATA Act, authored by the Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security. And we need to give law enforcement more tools to combat this threat. That is why I am a cosponsor of Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff’s bill to make domestic terrorism a federal crime. Law enforcement and prosecutors have supported the bill, arguing it fixes critical gaps and grants necessary tools to them so they can do their job.

We also need to make sure that law enforcement and intelligence agencies are taking this threat seriously. I am encouraged by the work of the NYPD in this sphere, as well as many other local and state police departments across the country. Federal partners must continue to provide necessary information sharing and support to local jurisdictions – whether through the UASI grants or other mechanisms. Working with our local partners is essential for a comprehensive approach to tackling this threat that is both international and domestic.

Lastly, as I have said before and will continue to say in the future, the technology companies have to step up their efforts to moderate violent extremist content, whether foreign or domestic, on their platforms. Recently I sent a letter to Facebook demanding they block links to vile content from the hateful site 8chan. Today I am pleased to announce Facebook has agreed and will no longer link content from the sections of 8chan that spread the despicable content peddled by terrorists. Congress must continue to ensure that public pressure is being placed on these companies to develop and disseminate counterterrorism tools as quickly as possible, in a transparent manner.

As we move forward, U.S. counterterrorism policy must have a holistic strategy to counter all terrorism threats, including white nationalism. This means seriously examining and reevaluating current policy to make sure our intelligence and law enforcement partners are able to address this threat. Finally, the State Department should to expand the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list to include violent international white supremacist groups. Today, if an American citizen swears allegiance to the Islamic State (or another Foreign Terrorist Organization on the list) and spreads their message of terror, there are several resources available to the Federal government. However, if that same American citizen swears allegiance to a white supremacist group based overseas and spreads their message of terror, the Federal government does not have access to the same tools. With that I thank the witnesses and the Members for being here today and look forward to making progress on this important issue.

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