

Far-right Violence in the United States: 1990-2013

Following the June 8, 2014 shootings in Las Vegas that resulted in the murders of two police officers and one civilian, START researchers compiled background information from the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) on ideologically motivated far-right violence in the United States, generally, and far-right extremist crimes related to law enforcement, specifically. In addition, information on ideologically motivated far-right suicide attacks is also presented, as preliminary reporting seems to indicate that the suspects were not expecting to live through their confrontation with law enforcement.

Although the ECDB includes crimes committed by individuals with varying ideologies, this report focuses exclusively on far-right violence and crime due to reports that the alleged perpetrators in Las Vegas were motivated by anti-government and white supremacist ideology. Should additional information about the ideological motivation for the attack confirm the initial reporting, this fact sheet may help to contextualize the event.

IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED FAR-RIGHT HOMICIDES

- Between 1990 and 2013, there were 155 ideologically motivated homicide events committed by far-right extremists in the United States. About 13 percent of these were anti-government in nature.
 - Including the Oklahoma City Bombing, which killed 168 individuals, far-right extremists killed 368 individuals during ideologically motivated homicide events between 1990 and 2013.
- 50 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty by far-right extremists between 1990 and 2013 in 33 separate incidents. More than two-thirds were killed during ideologically motivated attacks; the remaining officers were killed in non-ideological confrontations (e.g., while arresting an individual during a bank-robbery). In addition, corrections officers, private security guards, and a judge have been killed during ideologically motivated attacks.
- The two most common circumstances in which law enforcement officers are killed by far-right extremists are traffic stops (19%) and disturbance calls (19%).
- Excluding the Oklahoma City Bombing, ambushes of officers make up approximately 14 percent of all far-right homicide incidents of law enforcement personnel.
- Excluding the Oklahoma City Bombing, approximately 60 percent of the victims of ideologically motivated far-right violence were killed by perpetrators using firearms.
 - Close to 50 percent of these homicide incidents were perpetrated by more than one suspect.
- In five of the deadly attacks against law enforcement, evidence suggests that the offenders initiated their acts of violence with the expectation that they would not survive, as their actions would directly or indirectly lead to their own deaths.
- Since 1990, more than 30 far-right violent extremists have been killed by law enforcement during violent encounters.

RECENT EXAMPLES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED BY FAR-RIGHT VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

- In September 2012, Officer Youngstrom of the California Highway Patrol was shot during a traffic stop in Alamo, Calif. The offender, who was killed during the incident, has since been tied to the sovereign citizen movement.
- In August 2012, Deputy Sheriffs Triche and Nielson of the St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office were ambushed and killed while conducting an investigation in LaPlace, La. Suspects connected to the sovereign citizen movement were arrested and are awaiting trial. Two are charged with first degree murder, one with attempted murder, and others pleaded guilty to reduced but related charges.

- In May 2010, Officer Evans and Sergeant Paudert of the West Memphis Police Department were shot and killed while conducting a traffic stop in West Memphis, Ark. The suspects, a father and son who were tied to the sovereign citizen movement, were killed in a subsequent shootout with law enforcement.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The data presented here are drawn from the Extremist Crime Database (ECDB). The ECDB is the first-of-its-kind database and is a valuable resource for policymakers and researchers. The Extremist Crime Database is supported by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate, Resilient Systems Division and the Office of University Programs.

START's Extremist Crime Database includes a systematic collection of open-source data on financial and violent criminal behavior in the United States associated with far-right extremists, far-left extremists, and supporters of al-Qaida and associated movements.

The ECDB does not exclusively focus on terrorist attacks, rather it records criminal incidents committed by extremist groups or their supporters. These crimes vary in important ways, such as the level of violence perpetrated against victims, number of suspects involved and the motivations underlying each incident. For example, extremist crimes include ideologically and non-ideologically motivated homicides, financial crimes and cases involving foiled plots. The conduct of a criminal act is an inclusion criterion; individuals are not included in this dataset absent criminal activity. The use of broad ideological categories in this research does not suggest that an individual or group sharing one or more of the same beliefs is likely to be an extremist criminal.

Those interested in learning more about how the ECDB was built and its reliability & validity should please see:

Chermak, S.M., J.D. Freilich, W. Parkin & J.P. Lynch. 2012. American terrorism and extremist crime data sources and selectivity bias: An investigation focusing on homicide events committed by far-right extremists. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 28(1): 191-218.

Freilich, J.D., S.M. Chermak, R. Belli, J. Gruenewald & W.S. Parkin. 2014. Introducing the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB). *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26(2): 372-384.

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