



Faith-Based Security Advisory Council

Information Sharing Subcommittee

Faith-Based Security Advisory Council
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Homeland
Security

This publication is presented on behalf of the Faith-Based Security Advisory Council (FBSAC), Information Sharing Subcommittee, Chaired by Alberto Martinez and Vice-Chaired by Mayya Saab, to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Alejandro N. Mayorkas.



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INFORMATION SHARING SUBCOMMITTEE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Secretary of Homeland Security recognizes the distinct importance of timely two-way sharing of threat and security-related information with faith-based organizations. He views it as a priority for the protection of faith-based organizations and all members of the public.

In January 2023, the Secretary tasked the Faith-Based Security Advisory Council (FBSAC) to form a subcommittee on Information Sharing. This subcommittee's task was to develop recommendations on how to more efficiently and effectively share information to enhance the security and preparedness of places of worship, faith communities, and faith-based organizations. The Secretary specifically identified the following tasking:

- Review and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's information sharing to enhance the security and preparedness of places of worship, faith communities, and faith-based organizations. This includes recommendations for new information-sharing mechanisms, whether via existing information-sharing platforms or networks, or by creating a new process that will effectively communicate threat information and other relevant federal resources to faith communities of diverse backgrounds.

FRAMING

Intelligence sharing commonly refers to the exchange of classified and sensitive information related to threats, risks, and vulnerabilities that may affect security efforts. This information is shared with authorized personnel and agencies to support decision-making, operational planning, and response activities.

Information sharing, conversely, refers to the exchange of non-sensitive information related to security, such as best practices, lessons learned, and situational awareness. This information is shared to enhance collaboration, coordination, and mutual understanding between partners and stakeholders.

Both categories of information are crucial to better securing faith-based organizations. Though there have been improvements in information sharing practices, gaps remain. These gaps are articulated under the key observations section of this report and further expanded upon in the key findings section. Areas of improvement are articulated in the recommendations section.

METHODOLOGY

The subcommittee compiled its recommendations over five collaborative group sessions throughout April and May 2023, following a briefing period that extended from March 2023 to April 2023. Over the course of the entire 120-day period, the subcommittee met with

representatives, subject matter experts, and select leadership from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Intelligence & Analysis (I&A), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), with a goal of understanding and assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's information sharing as it relates to Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs).

The subcommittee reviewed the recommendations that came out of the 2022 DHS Intelligence Summit and the Homeland Security Advisory Council's (HSAC) Intelligence & Information Sharing Subcommittee Report and tailored these recommendations to DHS by focusing on the unique role, structure, and objectives of FBOs. Based on the input from experts, supplemental research, and the expertise and experience of its members, the subcommittee worked to identify substantive and meaningful recommendations to support and enhance DHS's information and intelligence sharing efforts with its FBO partners.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Remediating information sharing shortfalls was a principal recommendation of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, commonly known as the 9/11 Commission.
- While there have been significant improvements in the collection and analysis of threats, and terrorism-related information sharing across the intelligence community has greatly improved, there remain significant opportunities for improvement.
- Protecting the country from ever-evolving threats requires a strengthened homeland security enterprise that shares information across traditional organizational boundaries.
- The Department's effort to reflect on its own performance and identify areas for improvement as it relates to information sharing with all sectors, to include FBOs, is recognized and appreciated; the concern of this issue was evident in the discussions that occurred with DHS personnel and components.
- FBOs play a vital role in civil society and are an increasing target of violent extremists. As centers of civic life, they also represent a potential target for bad actors by virtue of what they symbolize, and what activities they undertake, or host.
- A more formal, clear, constructed, and uniform relationship between FBOs and DHS is required; multiple DHS components share information with the faith-based community, often in an uncoordinated and duplicative manner, making it difficult for FBOs to know with whom to communicate.
- Critically, FBOs have vastly different capacities, as do the communities they represent.

- Trust building is key to community-wide and inclusive adoption of two-way information sharing; not all FBOs view or receive such information sharing in the same manner. DHS should continue to develop and implement policies and guidance to ensure adherence to best practices relative to civil rights and civil liberties in the intelligence and information-sharing space.
- Successful information sharing models exist within the faith-based community, to include those that interact and work with other stakeholders; those models should be identified and best practices shared/elevated.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the purposes of this report, its findings, and recommendations, the subcommittee has considered both the sharing of intelligence and information with FBOs, with the understanding that the intelligence sharing is, or should be, almost exclusively a function of I&A as it pertains to DHS, while information sharing can be addressed by multiple DHS components. Information sharing most commonly includes I&A, CISA, the Office of Partnership and Engagement (OPE), and the DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which is based out of FEMA.

Key Finding #1: There is a need for DHS to identify, assess, and action past and current recommendations in the areas of intelligence and information-sharing, and to include an understanding as to why certain efforts were not implemented or what impediments prevented the same.

- **Recommendations:**
 - Adopt and fully implement recommendations two (2), three (3), eleven (11) and twelve (12) contained within the May 2012 Homeland Security Advisory Council Faith-based Security and Communications Advisory Committee (FBAC) report, and recommendations one (1), four (4), and five (5) contained within the December 2019 Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) report, Preventing Targeted Violence Against Faith-Based Communities (See Appendix 3: Past Recommendations on Faith-Based Security).
 - Adopt and fully implement the recommendations contained within the 2022 *DHS Intelligence Summit: Information Sharing in a Dynamic and Evolving Threat Environment* January 2023 Final Report. This will complement present Intelligence and Information Sharing (IIS) efforts, capitalize on the work undertaken through the Summit, and avoid duplicative efforts; and
 - Adopt and fully implement the recommendations made by the HSAC's Intelligence and Information Sharing Subcommittee in their Subcommittee Report finalized on March 16, 2023. These recommendations enable DHS Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) to efficiently share information and intelligence with key partners.

Key Finding #2: To achieve the National Preparedness Goal (NPG) set forth by the Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), DHS is critically reliant on FBOs; the faith-based community undertakes activities and actions as part of their daily operations that contribute to the overall NPG. These contributions span all five Mission Areas – prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery – and address many of the 32 Core Capabilities. While many sectors that play such a critical role are formally recognized as such, FBOs are not.

- **Recommendations:**

- Integrate FBOs into a separate critical sector under the auspices of the critical infrastructure sectors within the framework of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) as promulgated under Presidential Policy Directive 21; and
- When referencing key partners in documents, policies, and public comments, make an active effort to reference FBOs and non-profit organizations, such as is done with State, Local, Tribal, Territorial (SLTT), and private-sector partners.

Key Finding #3: There is a need for the Department to establish clear, effective, efficient, and accountable pathways for information sharing between the DHS offices and components and with FBOs.

- **Recommendations:**

- Move DHS's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships out of FEMA and consider placing it directly under the Secretary as a component of OPE with a Deputy Assistant Secretary as its lead;
- Clearly designate I&A as the lead for timely and relevant intelligence sharing with FBOs;
 - Example: Joint analytical and intelligence bulletin such as the National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS)
- Clearly designate CISA as the lead for information sharing on prevention and preparedness with FBOs;
 - Example: Mitigating Attacks on Houses of Worship Security Guide
- Encourage I&A, working with other DHS components like OPE and CISA, and external partners such as the FBI, to develop a written protocol intended for dissemination to FBO partners. The protocol should clearly outline and set expectations for the type of information, response, or other materials or assistance that they will receive from I&A when addressing a threat with nation-wide implications or following a critical incident, to include offering timely call and intelligence products;
- Proactively work to educate the community on the difference between threat intelligence and other sources of information – when referencing intelligence and/or information sharing in documents, policies, and public comments, make active efforts to define the difference between these terms; and

- Declassify, or make non-sensitive, timely and relevant information so it can be disseminated as widely as possible to the decentralized Faith-Based Community to protect against any identified or perceived threats.

Key Finding #4: There is a need for DHS to embrace nimbleness to adapt quickly to a changing, dynamic threat environment.

- **Recommendations:**

- Reenergize and enhance the identification and reporting of suspicious activity through the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative. This should include an external facing outreach and engagement effort with FBOs around the “See Something, Say Something®” campaign;
- Launch an awareness campaign about the role that Protective Security Advisors (PSAs) and Cyber Security Advisors (CSAs) can play in helping faith-based communities build their resiliency programs;
- Encourage Fusion Center partners to incorporate a faith-based mission and information sharing more fully with FBOs; and
- Continue encouraging, supporting, and partnering in the implementation and execution of FBO-centric Tabletop and Functional Exercises with a specific focus on issues of information sharing, response, and recovery. Such efforts should seek to incorporate local, state, and federal partners.

Key Finding #5: There is a need to assess, leverage, and bolster bi-directional communication with FBOs.

- **Recommendations:**

- Hold listening sessions made up of FBOs and representatives of faith-based communities, federal, and SLTT partners, and security practitioners serving their faith-based organizations to discuss gaps in information sharing and to further identify areas for improvement when it comes to reporting suspicious activity and incidents, and task the Department to report back to the Secretary or his designee, and the FBSAC;
- Assign points of contact in each fusion center to work with FBOs and non-profit organizations; and
- Include representatives of FBOs in the planning for the National Fusion Center Annual Training and other appropriate venues to initiate action around the mutual needs of FBOs and fusion centers.

Key Finding #6: There is a need to prioritize better outreach and information flow to FBOs that lack the capacity and resources to be privy to intelligence information in real time, particularly through technology solutions that enhance seamless sharing.

- **Recommendations:**
 - Work with the FBOs on methodology and best practices for an effective information sharing network. The Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), a secure portal for FBOs to share information, continues to be a non-user friendly and, thus, under-utilized tool;
 - Work with FBOs and other partners to develop a consistent, user-friendly mechanism or platform for managing and promoting information sharing during times of steady state (strategic) and in response to critical incidents (tactical); and
 - Consider the development of a customer centric and user-friendly app that can be accessed from anywhere at any time for information sharing. Such an effort is likely to improve the accessibility and usability of information resources and threat intelligence shared by DHS. This app should be considered as a replacement for HSIN. It is noted by the subcommittee that the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) developed a customer-centric and user-friendly that has since been pulled. It is unclear to the subcommittee why the app was pulled. The app may serve as a good example for DHS to consider.

CONCLUSION

The Information Sharing Subcommittee has outlined seven key findings and several recommendations. This subcommittee's efforts included the review of recommendations from prior iterations of the FBSAC in 2012 and 2019. Many of those recommendations remain relevant, and unactioned and unaddressed.

The Department's effort to reflect on its own performance and identify areas for improvement is recognized and appreciated; the concern of this issue was evident in the discussions that occurred with DHS personnel and components. While there have been significant improvements in the collection and analysis of threats, and terrorism-related information sharing across the intelligence community has greatly improved, there remain significant opportunities for improvement. Notably, protecting the country from ever-evolving threats requires a strengthened homeland security enterprise that shares information across traditional organizational boundaries.

FBOs have vastly different capacities, as do the communities they represent that play a vital role in civil society. They are an increasing target of violent extremists and represent a potential target for bad actors by virtue of what they symbolize. A more formal, clear, constructed, and uniform relationship between FBOs and DHS is required.

APPENDIX 1: TASKING LETTER

MEMORANDUM FOR: Kiran Kaur Gill
Chair, Faith-Based Security Advisory Council

CC: Julie Schonfeld
Vice Chair, Faith-Based Security Advisory Council

FROM: Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary

SUBJECT: New Faith-Based Security Advisory Council Subcommittees and Taskings

I respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Faith-Based Security Advisory Council (FBSAC) form three subcommittees to provide findings and recommendations in these critical areas of the Department's work:

1. How the Department can more efficiently and effectively share information to enhance the security and preparedness of places of worship, faith communities, and faith-based organizations.
2. How the Department can most effectively and appropriately share resources that meet the needs of diverse faith-based organizations and communities, including remedying challenges to applying for DHS grants.
3. How the Department can build trust and resilience with faith community stakeholders.

These subjects are described in greater detail below. My staff will follow up with you shortly regarding formation of the subcommittees.

I request that the FBSAC submit its findings and key recommendations to me no later than 120 days from the date of this memorandum, consistent with applicable rules and regulations.

Thank you for your work on these important matters, your service on the FBSAC, and your dedication to securing our homeland.

Information Sharing

To protect faith-based organizations and all members of the public, we must prioritize timely two-way sharing of threat and security-related information with faith-based organizations.

This subcommittee is tasked to:

Review and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's information sharing to enhance the security and preparedness of places of worship, faith communities, and faith-based organizations. This includes recommendations for new information-sharing mechanisms, whether via existing information-sharing platforms or networks, or by creating a new process that will effectively communicate threat information and other relevant federal resources to faith communities of diverse backgrounds.

DHS Grants and Resources

Following the hostage situation at the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, I called for an increase in funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). This program provides essential resources to help protect nonprofit organizations at risk of terrorist attacks. In Fiscal Year 2022, Congress provided \$250 million for the NSGP, an increase of \$70 million from the prior year. For Fiscal Year 2023, Congress increased the NSGP funding to \$305 million, a 22% increase on Fiscal Year 2022. These increases allowed more nonprofit organizations across the nation to make physical security enhancements to help protect against attacks. These increases also enable DHS to expand participation in this critical program and increase our support to historically marginalized communities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in an effort to build capacity and address an evolving threat environment. One of my priorities is to ensure equity in all DHS grant awards.

This subcommittee is tasked to:

- a. Provide recommendations for how the Department can most effectively and appropriately address challenges to applying for DHS grants for which faith-based organizations are eligible, as well as how best these grants can meet the needs of faith-based organizations, and;
- b. In addition to relevant DHS grants, provide recommendations for how the Department's existing resources can better meet the needs of diverse faith-based organizations and communities. This includes recommendations for the development and implementation of specific best practices to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from acts of targeted violence or terrorism, major disasters, cyberattacks, or other threats or emergencies while preserving individual privacy and civil rights and civil liberties.

Building Partnerships

DHS is defined by its partnerships—not only with law enforcement, emergency responders, and our international partners, but also with the diverse communities we serve. To protect the homeland, we must have strong relationships with these communities and work in partnership to build strong, resilient communities.

This subcommittee is tasked to:

Provide recommendations for how the Department can build trust with faith community stakeholders to better understand their concerns, including real or perceived threats from violent actors or groups, and empower local leaders to mobilize resources to mitigate and respond to threats.

APPENDIX 2: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS AND OTHER WITNESSES

Marcus Coleman	Director	DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Tamara Hutchinson	Director	Private Sector Engagement, DHS Office of Intelligence & Analysis
Susan Schneider	Chief	Active Assailant Security Branch, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Michael Stewart	Program Director	Commercial Facilities Sector, Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), CISA

APPENDIX 3: PAST RECOMMENDATIONS ON FAITH-BASED SECURITY

Recommendation	Report Year (Recommendation #)
<p>Designate a senior-level, full-time Point-of-Contact (POC) between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FBOs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create Fusion Center POC for FBOs. • 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create this role at the Assistant Secretary level or higher. DHS should also recommend the creation of an FBO working group within the National Security Council to formulate policy for securing houses of worship. 	<p>2012 (Rec. 2) 2019 (Rec. 1)</p>
<p>Support additional infrastructure to share security information with FBOs beyond the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DHS should work with FBOs to set information-sharing SOPs and best practices 	<p>2012 (Rec. 3)</p>
<p>Train and monitor PSAs to engage and work closely with faith-based communities on infrastructure protection, training, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design requirements for PSAs and seek additional funding from Congress to expand the program as appropriate 	<p>2012 (Rec. 11) 2019 (Rec. 4)</p>
<p>Standardize Fusion Center training and organization with regards to FBO outreach and security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Fusion Centers and FBOs to educate each other on their respective roles and responsibilities • 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure Fusion Centers have uniform training and guidance for proactive outreach to houses of worship in their area of responsibility ○ Emphasize linkage between Fusion Centers and FBOs 	<p>2012 (Rec. 12) 2019 (Rec. 5)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Evaluate Fusion Centers' efforts on FBO security and identify area for improvement○ Ensure transparency in Fusion Center procedures and guidelines	
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