

## Community Awareness Briefing

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**Talking Points:**

As you can see from these pictures, violent extremists come from all types of backgrounds; there is no one profile.

## Why are we here?

We want to talk about violent extremism, which takes many forms

We want to build awareness of how people become radicalized and mobilized to violence

We want to ensure our communities are protected

And, most importantly, we need your help

### **Talking Points:**

We have been invited to provide an awareness briefing that enables you to understand violent extremism in all its forms. We are here to inform you about what steps can be taken to protect our youth and decrease vulnerabilities so we can ultimately prevent recruitment.

Our role, as members of the federal government, is to raise awareness so that should something happen in your communities, you – as bystanders - know what it is and how to respond.

The importance of bystanders in prevention is widely accepted in all forms of criminal and ideologically driven violent acts. It is seen in everything from preventing bullying and gang violence, to preventing terrorist recruitment.

Related to homegrown violent extremism, we've actually crunched the data on this. In the more than 80 percent of cases involving homegrown violent extremists, people in the community—whether peers or family members or authority figures or even strangers—had observed warning signs that a person was becoming radicalized to violence. However, in less than 50 percent of these cases someone intervened—an intervention that could have saved these

kids.

**We are here to ensure you are equipped so that should you see something, you will know what to do.**

**We want to emphasize that our intention is to empower communities such as yourselves by imparting you all with information in the hopes that it prevents radicalization and mobilization to violence.**

**The fact is that we, as members of the federal government, often only get involved after things have gone wrong. After something illegal has occurred. By that point, it is often too late. Communities have the ability to get involved at a much earlier stage when there is a window of opportunity to prevent an individual from progressing down the path toward committing illegal acts.**

**Communities are invaluable partners in prevention and intervention.**

**Community members who observe concerning behavior can act within that window of opportunity before anything illegal takes place, and work to provide services or design an intervention for the individual.**

**Sourcing:** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/16/remarks-assistant-president-homeland-security-and-counterterrorism-lisa->

We are here because ...



**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: In this video, we show why we are here from the perspective of someone personally and directly affected by violent extremism: a mother. This video features a statement by Mohammed Khan's mother Zarine Khan (USPER) after her son was charged with material support to ISIL.

- In October 2015, while his parents slept, Mohammed Khan (USPER), 19, quietly fled his home in Chicago along with his 18-year-old brother and 17-year-old sister to join ISIL. They were detained at O'Hare International Airport.
- When the agents showed up at the family home, their mother thought her kids were asleep in their rooms.

We are here to ensure this doesn't happen again to another mother, father, or you.

**Sourcing:**

**FBI Press Release:** <http://www.fbi.gov/chicago/press-releases/2015/federal-grand-jury-indicts-mohammed-hamzah-khan-for-allegedly-attempting-to-support-terrorism-overseas>

**Criminal indictment:**

[http://www.justice.gov/usao/iln/pr/chicago/2015/pr0109\\_01a.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/usao/iln/pr/chicago/2015/pr0109_01a.pdf)

**Zarine Khan (USPER) public statement, released to the press.**

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/bolingbrook/ct-terrorism-parents-speak-out-met-20150113-story.html>

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/three-american-teens-recruited-online-are-caught-trying-to-join-the-islamic-state/2014/12/08/8022e6c4-7afb-11e4-84d4-7c896b90abdc\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/three-american-teens-recruited-online-are-caught-trying-to-join-the-islamic-state/2014/12/08/8022e6c4-7afb-11e4-84d4-7c896b90abdc_story.html)

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/10/07/us/who-is-mohammed-hamzah-khan/>

<http://abc7chicago.com/news/bolingbrook-teen-pleads-not-guilty-to-isis-terror-charge/473194/> <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Mohammed-Hamzah-Khan-281283631.html> <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/01/09/chicago-mohammed-hamzah-khan-indicted-material-support-islamic-state/21498415/>

## Violent Extremism

*A wide range of violent extremist groups*

- Neo-Nazis & White Supremacists
- Animal Rights & Eco-terrorists
- Black Separatist Extremism
- Militia Extremism & Sovereign Citizens
- Al-Qa'ida & ISIL-inspired Extremism



**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: What is violent extremism and what does it look like?

**Violent extremism is a particular form of violence that is motivated by an ideology.**

**Violent Extremism takes many forms, from international terrorist organizations to domestic terrorist groups.**

The images below all demonstrate some type of violent extremism inspired by a different ideology.

**Image 1:** The Animal Liberation Front conducting a raid in 2004 of a farm which raised hens for eggs.

**Image 2:** The mass shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston perpetrated by USPER Dylann Roof.

**Image 3:** The Earth Liberation Front allegedly attacked the 2007 Seattle Street of Dreams and burned down five multi-million dollar eco-friendly houses, calling them "McMansions".

The U.S. Government understands there is a wide range of threats from violent

extremism and our concern is not solely on the al-Qaeda or ISIL-inspired varieties. There are other types of violent extremists—such as those listed here—who commit violence in this country and are of significant concern to law enforcement. However, we are here today to talk about the al-Qaeda / ISIL-inspired varieties.

ISIL recruitment and mobilization is a concerning trend the U.S. Government sees growing. In 2015, 80 U.S. residents were linked to terror plots and other activity motivated by Al Qaeda and ISIL inspired extremism, the most ever recorded, and up 180% from 2014. (In 2014 there were 44 cases.) The vast majority acted in support of ISIS.

**Sourcing:**

[http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/CR\\_4473\\_HomegrownExtremismReport-2009-2015\\_web-2.pdf](http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/CR_4473_HomegrownExtremismReport-2009-2015_web-2.pdf)

[https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2009/september/domterror\\_090709](https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2009/september/domterror_090709)

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/14/politics/justice-department-domestic-terror-council/>

[http://www.animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/photos\\_videos/dudeinshed.jpg](http://www.animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/photos_videos/dudeinshed.jpg)

[http://blog.oregonlive.com/breakingnews/2008/03/huge\\_fire\\_consumming\\_woodinville.html](http://blog.oregonlive.com/breakingnews/2008/03/huge_fire_consumming_woodinville.html)

Why would someone join a violent extremist group?

**Ideological      Personal      Sociopolitical**

**Group      Community**

In the United States, thoughts are protected, no matter how extreme,  
Someone could have some or all of these factors and not radicalize to violence  
No single factor leads to radicalization

**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: Why would someone want to join a violent extremist group and what drives it?

**Definition:** Radicalization refers to the process by which individuals come to accept a violent extremist narrative and conclude that non state violence and their participation in it is necessary and justified to affect political or societal change.

- Radicalization is not a linear process. It involves the interplay of personal, group, community, sociopolitical, and ideological factors.
- No single factor accounts for why one individual radicalizes while another does not.
- These factors can be both positive and negative. For instance, a personal desire to belong and make a difference in society can be a motivating factor for radicalization and so can a desire for revenge.

**Ideological factors** – Think about this as your moral compass.

Ideology provides individuals an interpretive framework for the world and life events as well as a set of values, beliefs, and goals for a movement or social entity. It also

**establishes the rationale for individual and collective action.**

- This is often present at some point in the radicalization process but, contrary to the common belief, it is not *always* a main driver.

**Personal factors** – These are things that might make a person vulnerable.

Personal factors can include:

- **Personal needs** (such as a need for belonging and purpose,);
- **Personal context** including anxiety, frustration, humiliation, desire for revenge, traumatic experience, and developmental and life-history events;
- **Triggering personal events** such as losing a job or perceived discrimination.

(At the personal level, vulnerability to radicalization and the pursuit of violence depend on an interaction of personality traits – enduring individual characteristics, drivers, and needs – and the contextual and situational factors in a person's life.)

**Sociopolitical factors** – Political and societal level conditions, events, and grievances can help drive an individual to seek an ideological explanation or reinforce existing beliefs. Sociopolitical factors come in a variety of forms and can be specific or nonspecific, for example, anger at US foreign policy toward a particular country or conflict or frustration with the political, economic, or conflict situation in their home country or primary ethnic group. Sociopolitical factors include:

- Broad common grievances;
- Aggression against and oppression of Muslims by non-Muslims;
- Western economic exploitation;
- Western attack on Islamic values.

**Group factors** – Think about this as peer pressure. Group dynamics consist of:

- Emphasizing a collective identity;
- Creating an echo chamber;
- Dehumanizing opponents.

(Group factors are a driving force in the radicalization and mobilization of most individuals who pursue terrorist violence. Group affiliations often evolve from preexisting relationships. )

**Community factors** – Select characteristics of communities have been shown to encourage individuals and groups that support terrorist to emerge. When grievances, both real and perceived, are combined with insularity, isolation, and a lack of trust in societal and political institutions, they can create the conditions that encourage a small minority to adopt a radical and even violent ideology.

- Community factors are especially salient in some diaspora communities whose members may experience socioeconomic pressures and discrimination in the broader society.
- Such factors often are aggravated by charismatic ideologues who manipulate

perceptions to exacerbate feelings of threat and encourage the development of a siege mentality.

- Community factors can include: (1) Religious discrimination; (2) Tensions with law enforcement; (3) Weak civil society and mistrust of government; and (4) Insularity and isolation.

(Radicalization is often fueled by grievances which can be local or global. We have also found that personal experience is not necessary for an individual to feel aggrieved by a particular incident or issue. For instance, treatment of refugees, or anti-Islamic rhetoric can add to grievances that aren't necessarily personally experienced but affect a group to which an individual feels strong ties.)

(We differentiate between this process and the **Mobilization** process which refers to the process by which radicalized individuals take action to prepare for or engage in violence or material support for violence to advance their cause. Violence occurs when the individual mobilizes to action. )

**It is important to note a few caveats:**

- (1) No single factor leads to radicalization**
- (2) Most people who radicalize do not mobilize**
- (3) A person may have some or all of these factors and not become violent**
- (4) Therefore, there is no profile of an individual who will radicalize or mobilize.**

(Distinguishing differences between the processes of radicalization and mobilization is important because radicalization focuses on a person's thoughts and speech, which are likely to be protected under the First Amendment and therefore not illegal. On the other hand, mobilization deals with behavior in preparation for violent action, which, although it may involve acts guaranteed by the Constitution or federal law, is more likely to constitute illegal conduct that is the proper basis for law enforcement investigation.)

**Sourcing:** NCTC Product, "Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer," June 2012  
**(UNCLASSIFIED)**

## All Violent Extremist Groups:

- Look for vulnerabilities
- Focus on grievances
- Provide a community of interest
- Promote violent action as the solution
- Hold a black and white narrative

### **Talking points:**

Tee-up: Regardless of ideology, all violent extremists share similar ways of attracting recruits and appealing to our youth. While these groups may have completely different agendas and beliefs, they have several similarities:

#### **Look for vulnerabilities:**

- Perhaps a teen being bullied at school or missing a parental figure in their life;
- Adolescents are especially vulnerable developmentally because they haven't fully developed their higher level reasoning;

#### **Focus on grievances:**

- Feeling upset with local community or other perceived or real political injustice;

#### **Provide a community of interest:**

- Perhaps in a local center in the community, or more likely, it could be an online community such as a micro-blog, Facebook, or other social media network;
- Youth especially need a sense of belonging, according to developmental

theorists;

**Promote a violent action as solution**

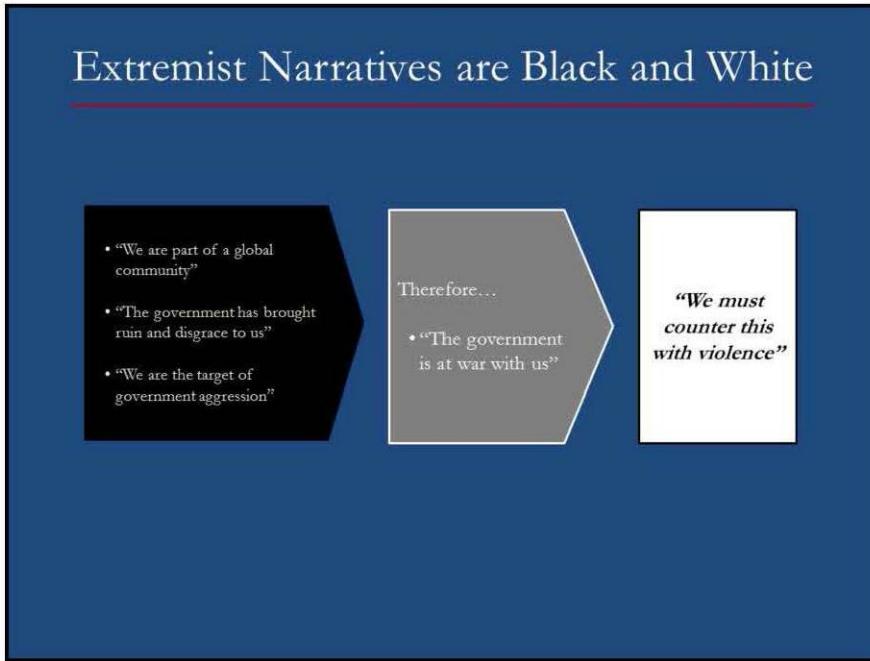
**-Violent action is the only effective solution, highlighted as a duty;**

**Hold a black and white narrative**

**-The group will reduce the situation down to make someone feel they have no other choice but to act. There is no critical thinking or nuance but rather an "us versus them" point of view.**

**Sourcing:**

**NCTC Product, "Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer," June 2012 (UNCLASSIFIED)**



**Talking Points:**

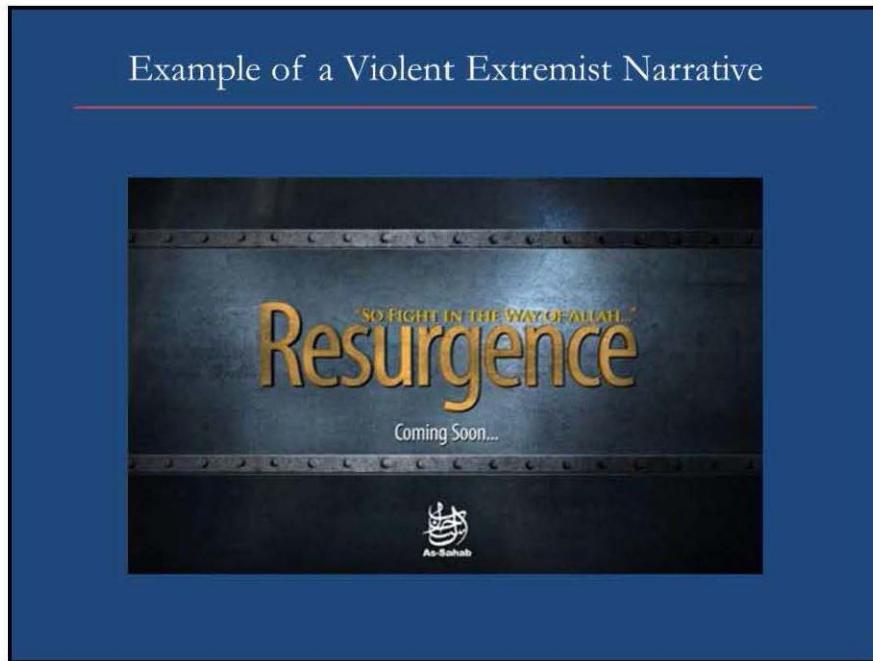
Tee-up: Violent extremist narratives often build off of real or perceived problems in society, many of which have mass appeal, but their solution is the outlier.

All violent extremist narratives are simplistic but you can always find three key parts:

- They identify a problem;
- They identify an enemy who created the problem;
- They encourage violence as the only solution.

The violent extremist narrative creates and justifies the logic that extremists use to continue espousing hatred, and ultimately violence by dehumanizing the "other" and positioning them as an "enemy."

**Source:** NCTC Product, "The Structure of Violent Extremist Ideologies" Feb 2012  
(UNCLASSIFIED)



**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: This short video provides an example of this type of violent extremist narrative.

**Ask the Audience:**

- What stands out to you from this video?
- What language is it in?
  - Why is it in English, who are they trying to target?
- Does anyone recognize the speech that they used? (Discuss how this came from a 1965 Malcolm X speech.)
- Has anyone seen this type of video, which matches it in production quality, from other types of violent extremist groups?

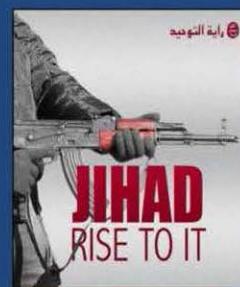
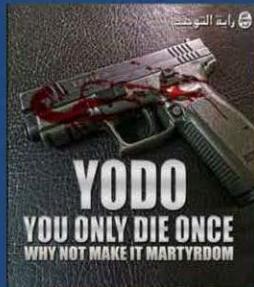
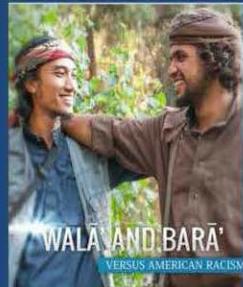
(This English language video was created by al-Qa'ida in March 2014 as a promotional video for a new English language magazine called "Resurgence." It is sophisticated both in its media quality as well as in its content. This video represents how much terrorist media exploits grievances, using compelling images, to convince audiences it is justified in using violence. It uses a 1965 Malcolm X speech – to justify violence including the quote "talk the language that they understand" — with images of U.S.

soldiers, militants, a purported attack on a U.S. base in Afghanistan and the Boston Marathon bombings. It presents the U.S. as a ruthless and aggressive enemy to be fought, and uses the words of an American activist—Malcolm X—to justify violent struggle. )

**Sourcing:** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/10687163/Al-Qaeda-unveils-new-magazine-aimed-at-Western-jihadis.html>  
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/mar/10/al-qaeda-launch-english-language-web-magazine-resu/>

## ISIL's Messaging Effort

*Largest online effort of any terrorist group*



### Talking Points:

Tee-up: How and where would our kids see these sorts of violent messages?

- The use of social media by violent extremists has intensified in the past year with the rise of ISIL. ISIL has a keen sense of how to attract their target demographics, keep them engaged, and spread their messaging and news via social media to highly interested individuals.
- For the first time ever, foreign fighters are using social media to document their activities in real time. These accounts spread real-time information from the battlefield, publish links to new videos and official statements; and share photographs of battles, equipment, and meetings.
- There are also question-and-answer sessions, chats, pictures, and videos on a variety of platforms.
- ISIL has also done a good job of framing their messaging using cultural references to promote themselves, as evidenced by the pictures highlighted.

### Sourcing:

<http://www.clarionproject.org/docs/Issue%2011%20-%20From%20the%20battle%20of%20Al-Ahzab%20to%20the%20war%20of%20coalitions.pdf>

<http://icsr.info/2014/04/icsr-insight-inspires-syrian-foreign-fighters/>  
[http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/29/a-dutch-jihadist-in-syria-speaks-and-blogs/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=1](http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/29/a-dutch-jihadist-in-syria-speaks-and-blogs/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/06/ISIS-iraq-twitter-social-media-strategy/372856/> <https://pando.com/2013/11/29/forget-snapchat-and-whatsapp-for-a-second-kik-is-the-dark-horse-of-the-internet/>  
<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/09/23/instagram-hits-400-million-users-beating-twitter.html>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jjcolao/2014/01/06/the-inside-story-of-snapchat-the-worlds-hottest-app-or-a-3-billion-disappearing-act/>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10658647/What-is-Telegram-the-new-WhatsApp.html>  
<http://techcrunch.com/2015/09/21/telegram-now-seeing-12bn-daily-messages-up-from-1m-in-february/>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10658647/What-is-Telegram-the-new-WhatsApp.html>  
<http://safety.ask.fm/ask-fm-guide-for-law-enforcement-requests/>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/31249209/askfm-owners-considered-shutting-down-social-network>  
<https://about.twitter.com/company>

## ISIL's Messaging Effort

*Largest online effort of any terrorist group*



### Ask the audience:

- Who here has a Facebook or knows what it is?
- Now, who has a Telegram account or knows what that is?
- What about justpaste.it?

**NOTE:** All of these social networking tools and apps are free. Some may have additional capabilities for which users pay but because they are all free they are very accessible to users, especially children.

**BACKGROUND:** Below is a breakdown of all the social media websites listed on this slide:

### ***Encrypted Apps:***

**Wickr:** Messenger app with free end- to-end encrypted text, picture and voice messenger in which users can make messages available for as little as one second to four days.

**Surespot:** Messenger app that uses end-to-end encoding software to encode messages that cannot be read without users sharing a “key” with their intended recipient.

**Telegram:** Cross-platform messenger app developed in Germany that enables users to message contacts whom which they have shared their contact information. Users can chat with individuals or groups and send messages that will self-destruct after a

**specified time. The app contains enhanced security measures which make messages and senders less easy to track. In September 2015 it reported 12 billion messages were being sent daily.**

**Whatsapp:** Cross-platform mobile messaging app that does not charge users. Utilizes internet connections to send video, picture, and text messages in private and group messages.

***Non-encrypted Apps:***

**Facebook:** Social networking site that enables users to connect with contacts through posting pictures, statuses, and reposting articles. It has both private and public messaging capabilities but does not encrypt messages like some of the others on this list.

**Klk:** Smartphone cross-platform messenger app developed in Ontario, Canada that also includes a built in browser. Has over 150 million registered users.

**YouTube:** Video hosting website with public messaging capabilities.

**Instagram:** Photo editing and sharing app that allows users to use photo filters to edit their pictures before sharing them on the Instagram website and other social media websites both privately and publically. The app has over 400 million users. (The app is owned now by Facebook.)

**Snapchat:** A private and public image sharing app that allows users to specify the time a recipient can view a picture, or snap, and message before it disappears. An estimated 50 million people use the app with a median age of 18 years old.

**Tango:** Cross-platform mobile messaging app that allows users to send text and picture messages as well as complete video and voice calls using their cellular network. Also enables users to "find friends" by GPS location reporting in the "people nearby" feature. Users can follow "channels" to browse content.

**Tumblr:** Public and private microblog platform and social networking website with over 260 million different blogs. Users can post multimedia and follow other user's blogs and posts.

**Flickr:** Online photo management and sharing app that lets users upload an unlimited number of photos and either share privately or publically through email, RSS feeds, and the Flickr website. Operates on smartphones as well as computers and has over 92 million registered members.

**Viber:** A multi-platform messaging app that enables users to use text and photo messaging as well as location-sharing and calls with other Viber users. This app is popular for its encrypted system that lets users send messages without threat of outside monitoring. It has more than 400 million users who are primarily based in the Middle East, Europe, and South America.

**Ask.fm:** An online social network that enables users to post questions to each other and then answer them in both an anonymous and attributed manner. As of March

2015 the website had 150 million monthly users.

**Twitter:** A popular social media website that lets users publically and privately share posts of 140 characters or less as well as short videos, called "vines". The website has 316 million active monthly users and an average of 500 million tweets are sent per day in over 35 languages.

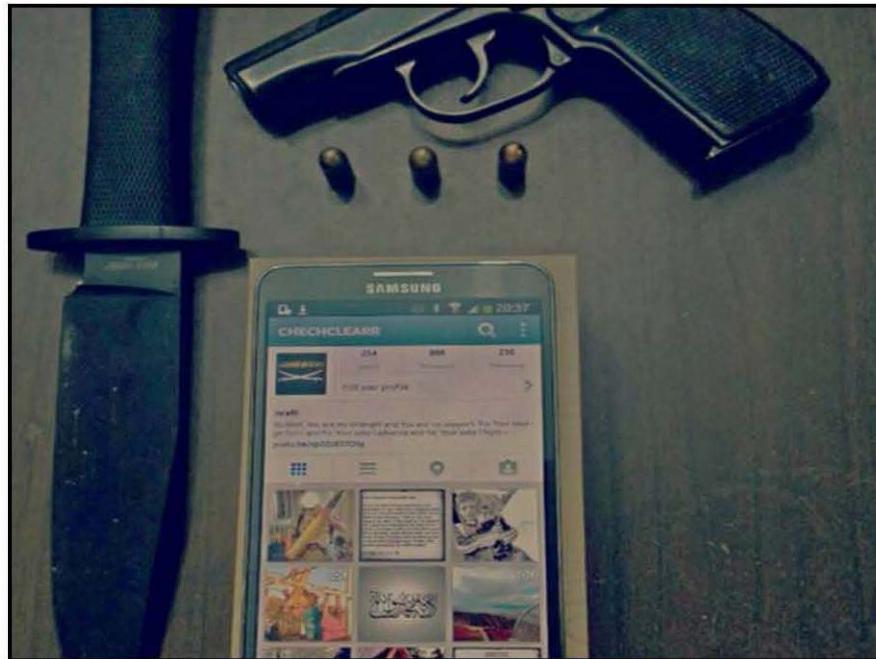
**Justpaste.it:** A website that enables users to paste pictures and text and distribute the link. This easy-to-use website supports pictures, text, and video and can be accessed on phone or computer.

**Sourcing:**

<http://www.aol.com/article/2015/08/25/wickr-is-the-fort-knox-of-secure-messaging-apps/21227089/>  
<http://www.clarionproject.org/docs/Issue%2011%20-%20From%20the%20battle%20of%20AI-Ahzab%20to%20the%20war%20of%20coalitions.pdf>  
<http://icsr.info/2014/04/icsr-insight-inspires-syrian-foreign-fighters/>  
[http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/29/a-dutch-jihadist-in-syria-speaks-and-blogs/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=1](http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/29/a-dutch-jihadist-in-syria-speaks-and-blogs/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/06/ISIS-iraq-twitter-social-media-strategy/372856/> <https://pando.com/2013/11/29/forget-snapchat-and-whatsapp-for-a-second-kik-is-the-dark-horse-of-the-internet/>  
<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/09/23/instagram-hits-400-million-users-beating-twitter.html>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jjcolao/2014/01/06/the-inside-story-of-snapchat-the-worlds-hottest-app-or-a-3-billion-disappearing-act/>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10658647/What-is-Telegram-the-new-WhatsApp.html>  
<http://techcrunch.com/2015/09/21/telegram-now-seeing-12bn-daily-messages-up-from-1m-in-february/>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<https://instagram.com/about/faq/>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10658647/What-is-Telegram-the-new-WhatsApp.html>  
<http://safety.ask.fm/ask-fm-guide-for-law-enforcement-requests/>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/31249209/askfm-owners-considered-shutting-down-social-network>  
<https://about.twitter.com/company>

**Legal:** The intent of this slide is to demonstrate how readily available social media outlets are being used for terrorist purposes. DSOP has deemed these USPERs

**necessary to understand the information. NCTC Legal concurs.**



**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: This picture is taken from a Tumblr account of a Dutch foreign fighter, which had a caption "Tools of Jihad."

This snapshot shows how ISIL sees the media as important as actual weapons such as the knife and gun. It also shows us that every ISIL fighter is also a recruiter.

**Sourcing:** <http://checkclear.tumblr.com/>

**Talking points:**

**Tee-up:** With the use of social media, recruiting online is an increasingly interactive process, not just one-sided. ISIL and its supporters follow a specific and time tested strategy for luring people into their group and indoctrinating them, similar to other types of predators who lure youth online.

**Target a certain audience:** ISIL targets youths who are vulnerable and searching for meaning in their life. The target audiences are both religious and non-religious people.

- Isolation enhances vulnerability.

**Start with building trust:** Building friendship allows ISIL recruiters to create a sense of belonging for youths.

- Giving gifts and making promises for the future creates a sense of trust.
- Exploiting hardships in the youth's life allows the ISIL recruiter to draw the youth away from their other social circles.

**Then introduce violent extremist views:** Once trust has been built ISIL recruiter will

introduce violent extremist views and, through various propaganda, justify the use of violence.

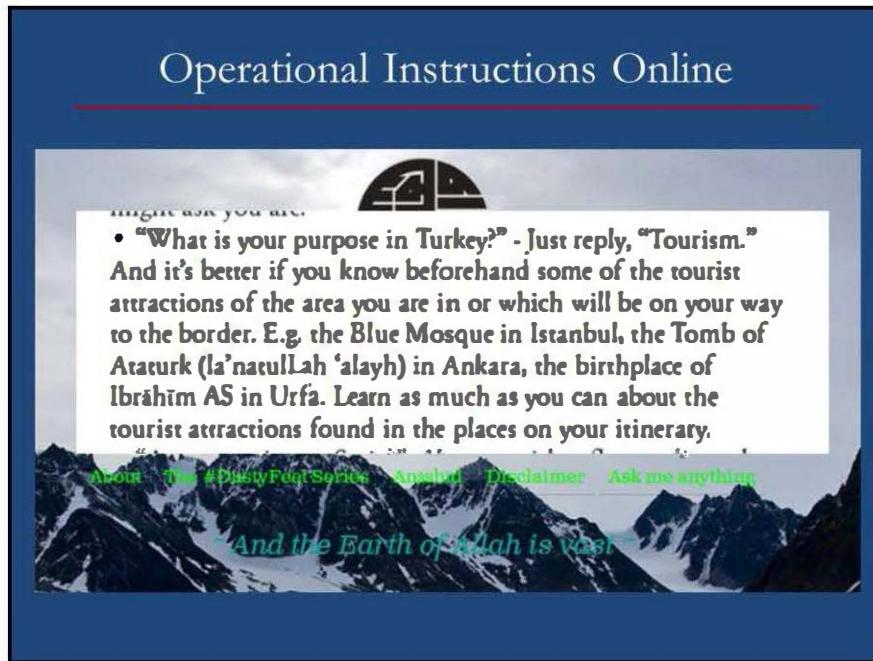
- Will call the youth to action and press upon them the need to act to defend certain ideologies or groups.
- Recruiters paint a picture of "The Caliphate" as a place of safety and piety and oppose all contradicting evidence as Western propaganda.

**Ask.fm:** One of the most commonly used sites by ISIL recruiters is Ask.fm. ASK.fm is a social media app that allows users to anonymously post questions and receive answers from other anonymous users.

- Users can easily connect and receive information from anonymous ISIL supporters or fighters on the ground.
- Individuals come here to ask questions about traveling to Syria that are anonymous.
- When questions get specific, however, they get told "Message me on Kik or Telegram" which is a secure site to answer more specific operational questions.

**Sourcing:**

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/15/facebook-jihadis-action-syria-terror>  
<http://europe.newsweek.com/isis-using-paedophile-grooming-tactics-lure-young-jihadi-brides-314140?rx=us>  
<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-manual-al-qaeda-and-now-isis-use-to-brainwash-people-online-2015-7#ixzz3fcDqx2IY>  
[http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?\\_r=1&referrer=](http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?_r=1&referrer=)  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/01/journey-to-jihad>



#### **Talking Points:**

Tee-up: Social media also allows extremists to easily distribute operational instructions. One of the chief concerns regarding fighters travelling to Syria is the ease with which they can get there.

The picture highlights an example – the “Dusty Feet” Blog, a blog posted on Tumblr which outlined how to travel to Turkey and then cross the border into Syria.

- Even after Tumblr took down the blog, others had reblogged it on their pages and therefore its information will never be completely unavailable to youth. Others continue to post original content, which is modeled after Dusty Feet.

Unlike other countries that have had foreign fighters, entry into Syria has been made easier due to the unrest in Iraq and the numerous facilitators in Turkey.

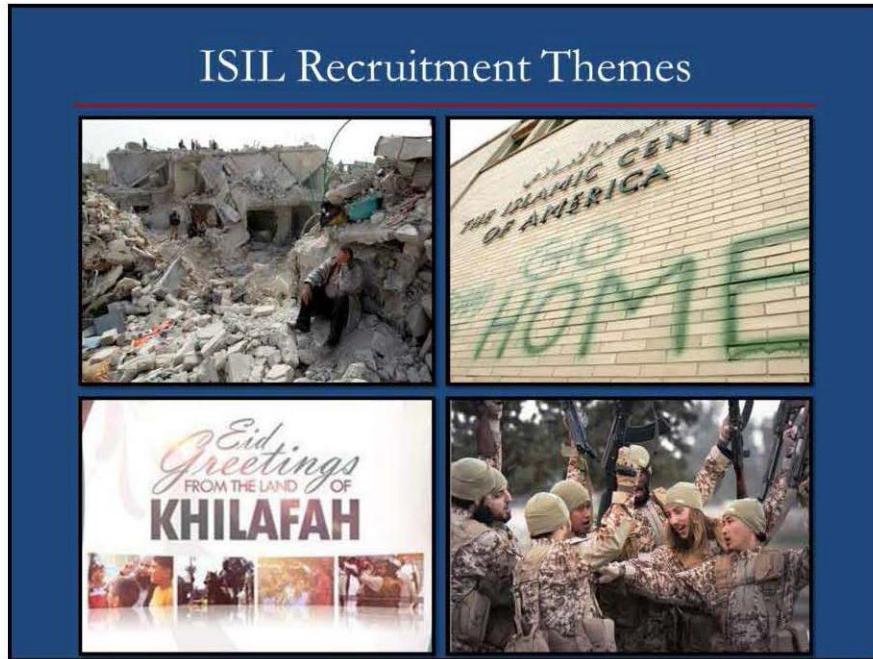
- ISIL supporters have posted very detailed directions on how to get to Syria via social media and micro blogging websites.

- There are multiple blogs and at least 12 e-books (some are 70 pages long) that explicitly provide operational instructions for how to get through Turkish security and answer their questions, how to look inconspicuous, how to cross into Syria by foot, what to pack to remain unsuspicious, how to be prepared to fight, and how to get in shape before the journey. These also provide quotes from religious texts to justify fighting.
- Youth, some as young as 15 years old, with absolutely no travel experience have been able to use the directions online in order to travel to Syria.
- These blogs are very easy to find online.

**Sourcing:**

<http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/TSG-Foreign-Fighters-in-Syria.pdf>

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/FBI-Terror-plot-suspect-planned-mosque-attack-to-5367722.php>



**Talking points:**

Tee-up: There are four main themes ISIL uses in enticing recruits to join their efforts:

Humanitarian concerns: ISIL focuses on the plight of Syrians under the Assad regime, as well as the general suffering of Muslim communities around the world. They also focus on civilian causalities of Western military action, although often they embellish or outright lie.

- They request people with medical skills, both men and women, to come to be nurses and doctors to help.

Anti-Islamic sentiment: ISIL uses occurrences of anti-Muslim sentiment, via public statements by official figures and/or actual physical attacks on individuals or Muslim institutions, to prove their claim that the West is against Islam.

State building: A theme that is particular to ISIL is the idea of building up a legitimate state or Caliphate. This narrative leverages feelings of economic disenfranchisement and social exclusion of Muslim communities in the West to promote the caliphate as a place where they have a purpose and are part of a broader transnational movement.

- Their messaging portraying the group's combat successes and governance

efforts probably has helped convince prospective Western travelers of the legitimacy of ISIL's goals and the benefits of living in ISIL's self-declared Caliphate.

- ISIL's English-language Dabiq magazine often highlights the group's supposed military victories and depicts ISIL members running prosperous markets, distributing food to the needy, and taking care of orphans, among other state-like activities.
- Fighters also advertise their accommodations, food, and lifestyle in Syria, probably to excite Western audiences and convince them of the alleged normalcy of life in ISIL-controlled territory.
- Their messaging calls for recruits to travel to serve as teachers, gym instructors, chefs, religious teachers, media managers, and more in order to continue to build the caliphate.
- The magazine and recruiters also emphasize the variety of roles undertaken by women in building the new state.
- Since March 2014 14% of the individuals arrested on ISIL related charges in the US were women. ISIL's message of state building tries to reach both sexes.
  - (This is in stark contrast to the 6 women out of 115 individuals of various terrorist affiliations arrested in the US from 2008 to 2013.)
- Videos from ISL show images of international children flourishing in Syria, which is meant to recruit families to the caliphate.

**Adventure:** Thrill seeking is a big motivator for individuals going abroad. There is growing number of individual who are going to Syria/Iraq looking for an adventure, to fight and be a warrior/hero, or simply to engage in violence, and do not necessarily do so for ideological reasons.

**Sourcing:** [http://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/read/syrian-jihadist-selfies-tell-us-a-lot-about-their-war](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/syrian-jihadist-selfies-tell-us-a-lot-about-their-war)

<http://www.infowars.com/islamic-state-releases-eid-greetings-video-purporting-to-show-foreign-fighters>

### Example of ISIL Propaganda



#### Talking Points

Tee-up: The themes of ISIS propaganda are often voiced by peers, who studies have shown are the most influential voices for youth. For example, we have here an ISIL propaganda video that has gone viral and that features the Australian teenager, Abdullah Elmir, who was 17 when he traveled to Syria. Within the first four months, he was featured in an ISIS propaganda video. Since then, Abdullah has appeared in a multiple other videos. In December 2015 he is believed to have been killed in an airstrike.

**[Note for presenter: Briefly introduce this slide, then play it, and then ask the audience the questions listed below.]**

**Ask the audience:**

- What stands out to you about this video?
- What do you think a teenager sees when they watch this video?
- What is the reality of the situation? Do you think he is in charge after 3 months with ISIL?

**Background information for the video:**

- Abdullah — identified as “Abu Khaled from Australia” — stands clutching an

assault rifle while delivering a 90-second speech with between 70 and 100 heavily armed fighters stand behind him. He claims the group will eventually take control of the US and UK, and directs a threat to Tony Abbott that Islamic State will also take its fight to Australian shores.

- Themes: Us vs them; Warped religious overtones; Sense of belonging; greater cause; heroism.
- While this video may appear fake and staged, youth seem to be genuinely affected by it. Elmir was traveling with a friend who didn't make it to Syria, but was interceded by his father and is now back at school in Australia. When he saw this video, he didn't think it was fake but instead expressed admiration.

**Sourcing:** <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-21/australian-is-fighter-threatens-tony-abbott-in-video/5830040>



#### Talking Points:

Tee-up: While in the 80s through the 2000's, the main profile of foreign fighters was older white men. Now, that profile has changed, including an increasing amount of minors, young adults, and females. This slide focuses on ISIL's recruitment of children under the age of 18.

**1) UK - Khadiza Sultana, 16, Shamima Begum, 15, and Amira Abase, 15:** Three girls from London who left together to travel to Syria. They were from successful middle class families and were doing well in school. Their example emphasizes that those who become foreign fighters aren't just the disenfranchised and economically disadvantaged. Some of the primary drivers in their cases were:

- Personal: one of the girl's mother died from cancer; all struggled with identity issues.

- **Community:** all come from a community in East London that in general appears to be struggling with what it means to be Muslim and British.
- **Group:** group think and peer pressure was big for these girls; in one post, one was shaming the others. They also had a friend who had gone months before them successfully, given them more confidence and desire to follow in her footsteps.

**2) Australia -Abdullah Elmir, 17:** returning back to the example from before, Elmir is another example of a minor who was drawn into ISIL. Let's explore a little what he was like before he created that video.

- Elmir went to school at East Hills Boys High School in Western Sydney and was a quiet student who liked video games. He had a job at the butcher shop. He was the son of an Australian-born mother and Lebanese-born father and grew up in Western Sydney. Elmir came from a good Lebanese-Australian family who did not hold extreme religious views. He had a love of theatre and last year, wrote about looking forward to more great performances.
- In June, Abdullah told his family that he was going on a fishing trip with a friend. Shortly afterwards, he admitted to his family that he was in Turkey and about to "cross the border". He was traveling with another teen, a 16 yr-old named Feiz, but Feiz's family intercepted him in Istanbul and convinced him to travel with him to Lebanon where he was counselled. The father of Feiz has said that his son is now back at school and settling back into his life.
- Personal & Ideological: as we saw in his propaganda video, Elmir was really drawn by a desire to be a hero and a sense of adventure.

**3)Sweden - Marilyn Nevalainen, 15**

- Born and raised in Sweden and was raised by foster parents.
- Dropped out of school at 14.
- Left for Syria at 15 with her boyfriend, who had convinced her to travel with him to join ISIL after watching videos online.
- Left Sweden by telling her foster parents that her biological parents had allowed her to go to Stockholm for a trip.
- Traveled to Syria via train and bus, in order to cross borders without a passport.
- While in Syria, she messaged her mother saying, "I'm going to die in a bombing or they're going to beat me to death or I'm going to kill myself mum, really, I don't

have the strength to go on."

- Has since been rescued by Kurdish forces and has stated that she "didn't know what ISIS meant or Islam was".
- Returned to Sweden with the child she gave birth to while in Syria.

**4) Australia - Jake Bilardi, 17 (traveled at 17 and died at the age of 18)**

- Born and raised in Australia and was the youngest of six children.
- Parents divorced and then mother died of cancer. He became withdrawn and spent most of his time alone in his room.
- Was said to be a "math genius who dreamed of becoming a political journalist".
- Prolific user of Yahoo Questions, a social media website where users post questions to be answered by viewers.
- Initially tried to join groups other than ISIL but once he began speaking with members online he decided to join.
- Traveled to Syria and then Iraq. Following this, Australia canceled his passport.
- Became a suicide bomber for ISIL in Iraq.
- His father stated that "The buck stops with me. He was my son, I knew something wasn't right".

**5) Austria - Samra Kesinovic, 16, and Sabina Selimovic, 15: Samra and Sabina were two average teenage girls growing up in Austria. You would expect them doing average teenage things — so it might come as a surprise to learn they ran away from home in April to join ISIL.**

- Samra and Sabina both come from Bosnia refugee families who settled in Austria during the 1990s. They both converted to Islam and began trying to convert their friends.
- According to the head of their school, they were suspected to be behind vandalism incidents in which tables and walls had the words 'I love Al Qaeda' written on them.
- Before they disappeared, the teens informed friends that they were headed for Syria. Soon thereafter, they posted images of themselves holding AK47s surrounded by armed men on social media.
- In September, they relayed a message to loved ones that they wish to escape. Sabina was killed in an attack and in November, Samra was reportedly "beaten to death" while attempting to flee Raqqa.

**Sourcing:** <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/terror/australian-teen-abdullah-elmir-is-new-public-face-of-islamic-state/story-fnpdbcnu->

1227097275395?nk=cde078974f2bfa3e39a77714d946e1b0  
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-teen-jihadist-abdullah-elmir-in-second-is-video-as-school-parents-share-concerns-20141028-11cpsg.html#ixzz3HS5jpgna>  
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-teen-jihadist-abdullah-elmir-in-second-is-video-as-school-parents-share-concerns-20141028-11cpsg.html#ixzz3HS6GQgSJ>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11179934/Australian-teenager-in-Isil-video-an-idiot-says-family.html>  
[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2749939/The-British-jihadi-bride-hell-bent-murder-whining-lost-cat-Terror-twin-tweets-fears-missing-kitten-posting-pictures-holding-AK47.html#ixzz3HS1vpAug](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/news/nsw/bankstown-butcher-now-a-killer-in-waiting-jihadist-abdullah-elmir-worked-at-a-butcher-in-bankstown/story-fni0cx12-1227100409185?nk=e7bd28a0c9ad18313a529f3957daedf2)  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2749939/The-British-jihadi-bride-hell-bent-murder-whining-lost-cat-Terror-twin-tweets-fears-missing-kitten-posting-pictures-holding-AK47.html#ixzz3HS1vpAug\>  
<http://nypost.com/2014/09/10/gun-wielding-austrian-teens-tried-to-join-ISIL-recruit-others/>  
<http://m.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/the-teenage-fans-of-ISIL/381736/>  
<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/522671/Islamic-State-Samra-Kesinovic-Sabina-Selimovic>  
<http://www.ryot.org/photos-samra-kesinovic-sabina-selimovic-ISIL-poster-girls-runaways/807773>  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3331846/Teenage-Islamist-poster-girl-fled-Austria-join-ISIS-beaten-death-terror-group-trying-escape-Syria.html>  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/25/marilyn-nevalainen-case-highlights-swedish-move-to-end-extremism>  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3461806/Swedish-15-year-old-rescued-ISIS-claims-travelled-EIGHT-countries-pregnant-join-jihadi-boyfriend-despite-not-knowing-Islam-is.html>  
<http://www.thenational.ae/world/europe/im-going-to-die-swedish-girl-tells-of-life-under-isil>  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3341167/Jihadi-Jake-Bilardi-pictured-ISIS-fighters-smirking-poses-assault-rifle.html>  
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/13/asia/australia-isis-bilardi-blog/>



**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: The cases we just discussed were of individuals from outside the US, but now we turn to the instances of minors and females from within the United States.

**Adnan Abdihamid Farah - 19, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

- Parents confiscated his passport when it arrived in the mail.
- Mother stopped him and his brother from traveling when they told her they were planning on going to Chicago.
- Conspired with his six friends to leave to Syria together. (Five were arrested and one successfully made it to Syria.)
- Posted jihadist images on social media, including a banner picture of Anwar al-Awlaki.
- Attempted to leave the US and was detained at JFK after taking a bus from Minneapolis to New York in November 2014.
- Arrested April 2015 in Minneapolis.
- Mother stated, "The kids, they have a beautiful life so I did not see anything for

the problem."

- A fellow student at his college said, "I was shocked. These guys, there are a good group of people. You'd never think they would do something like that."

**Abdella Ahmad Tounisi- 18, Aurora, Illinois:**

- Obtained a P.O. Box to which he had his new US passport sent.
- Expressed his views about supporting violent jihad at his mosque and was confronted by his religious leaders.
- Changed his mind about placing a bomb outside a public place after a religious leader told him it was wrong.
- Decided to travel to Syria instead.
- Arrested at Chicago O'Hare International Airport in April 2013 while allegedly seeking to fly to Turkey to join Jabhat al-Nusra.
- Previous to his arrest, he had no criminal history.
- His father stated, "My kid is an idealist. He is the type of kid that would actually give you the shirt off his back. His manners – he is soft spoken. He is petite... he never carried a gun in his life." "This is just a bad dream."

**Shannon Conley - 19, Arvada, Colorado**

- Trained and worked as a nurse's aide in Colorado
- Received military training in a U.S. Army Explorers camp in Texas
- Met a man online, who claimed to be a Tunisian Member of ISIL, and became romantically involved
- FBI agents worked with her family to try to dissuade her from taking part in violence
- Arrested at Denver International Airport on her way to Syria in 2014.

**Nicholas Teausant - 20, Acampo, California**

- U.S. citizen from Lodi, California
- Moved with his family often as a child. He attended 13 schools between kindergarten and college.
- Converted to Islam when he met a young Muslim woman who he wanted to have a relationship with. She did not share his feelings.
- Became interested in ISIL online after seeing what the Syrian government was

doing to its people.

- Created an ask.fm account to discuss fighting in Syria.
- Downloaded articles online about how to get to Syria
- Told his mother he was going on a skiing trip to Canada as a ruse to leave the country
- Arrested in Washington State while trying to cross the border via bus in 2014.
- Pleaded guilty to providing material support to ISIL in 2015.

**Mohammed Hamzan Khan - 19, Bolingbrook, Illinois:**

- Arrested at Chicago O'Hare International Airport in October 2014.
- Left a note for his family when he left for the airport cautioning his family not to call the authorities because it would "jeopardize" the family's safety.
- Was described by his college classmates as "kind, open-minded, and very book smart". His friend stated, "As far as any hints of him doing anything like this, he never shared any type of stuff like that. It's really shocking to hear."
- Inside his home investigators found several pro-ISIL writings and drawings.

**Jaelyn Delshaun Young- 19, Vicksburg, Mississippi**

- Daughter of Vicksburg police officer, cheerleader, member of her school's homecoming court, and honors graduate from Warren Central High School
- Was currently enrolled in college and studying chemistry
- Recently converted to Islam
- Letters were found in which she wrote that she hoped to see the number of ISIL followers grow and she posted her support of the Chattanooga shooting on social media.
- Planned to travel to Syria under the guise of a honeymoon with Muhammad Dakhllalla, her new husband.
- Arrested August 8, 2015 at the Golden Triangle Regional Airport in Mississippi, which Young selected as the beginning of her and her husband's trip because of her doubts in the security of the small airport.

**Muhammad Dakhllalla - 22, Vicksburg, Mississippi**

- Graduated from college with a Bachelor's in psychology and had planned on attending graduate school.
- Son of an Imam of a local mosque

- Planned to travel to Syria with his new wife, using their honeymoon as cover story.
- Arrested with his new wife on August 8, 2015 at Golden Triangle Regional Airport.
- Relatives stated they were "absolutely stunned" and said that "It's like having a two-by-four right between the eyes".

**Ariel Bradley - 30, Chattanooga, Tennessee**

- Grew up outside of Chattanooga in a poor evangelical Christian family.
- Ran away from home when she was a teenager and bounced from relationship to relationship and religion to religion.
- Drank heavily and smoked cigarettes and marijuana.
- Developed a crush on a Muslim patron of the pizza shop she worked at and converted to Islam. (The patron and Ariel never dated.)
- Met an ISIL supporter online, began corresponding via WhatsApp, and traveled to Sweden to marry him.
- Ultimately traveled with her husband and their two children to Syria where she posts about her life in Raqqa on Instagram and Twitter.

**Sourcing:**

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2015/04/22/agents-some-in-minnesota-lost-multiple-sons-to-extremists/>

<http://www.startribune.com/6-facing-terror-charges-over-isil-plans-don-t-fit-stereotypes/301625671/>

**United States District Court Northern District of Illinois Eastern Division, United States of America V. Abdella Ahmad Tounsi, Plea Agreement**

<http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2013/04/22/federal-suspects-father-my-son-is-no-terrorist/>

<http://www.vocativ.com/world/isis-2/munther-omar-saleh-queens-college-isis-pokemon/>

<http://www.newsday.com/news/new-york/munther-omar-saleh-fareed-mumuni-charged-with-supporting-islamic-state-prosecutors-say-1.10731131>

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/feds-halt-isis-supporter-new-york-bomb-plot-article-1.2260244>

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/bolingbrook-plainfield/chi-feds-bolingbrook-man-facing-terrorism-charges-20141006-story.html>

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/bolingbrook-plainfield/chi-feds-bolingbrook->

[man-facing-terrorism-charges-20141006-story.html](#)  
<http://www.cnn.com/2014/10/07/us/who-is-mohammed-hamzah-khan/index.html>  
<http://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2015/08/12/timeline-what-do-we-know-jaelyn-young-and-muhammad-dakhllalla/31535681/>  
[http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/08/mississippi\\_residents\\_accused.html](http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/08/mississippi_residents_accused.html)  
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/12/us/mississippi-couple-isis/>  
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/ellievhall/woman-journey-from-chattanooga-to-isis#.ItWEDyjeR>

**LEGAL:** These individuals all traveled to conflict zones and were stopped at the airport. The intent of this slide is to open the aperture of the audience to demonstrate that there is no single profile for an individual who attempts to become a foreign fighter. All of these individuals have been charged with material support to terrorism. These identities have been deemed necessary to understand the information. For these reasons, Legal clears.

## Case Study: Hoda Muthana

- Age 20 - from Hoover, Alabama
- Quiet and reserved, surprised former classmates
- Continues to actively recruit online for ISIL



### Talking Points:

Tee-up: Our next story is of Hoda Muthana who was a student at the University of Alabama - Birmingham when she left in November 2014 for Syria.

Like many parents we talk to, Hoda's parents were shocked to learn that she had any sympathies for ISIL let alone was planning to drop out of school and leave her family to support them. To understand how this happened let's take a look at her radicalization trajectory.

- Hoda is one of five children and the youngest daughter. Her parents, are naturalized U.S. citizens who fled Yemen in 1992 for a better life in the US. All of the children were born in the United States.
- In the fall of 2013, she secretly set up a Twitter account and, over time, gained thousands of followers. Online, she "met" known ISIL members and supporters and we believe she became radicalized via her interactions with these extremists

- on the Internet, specifically through Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
- She started watching scholars lecture about Islam on YouTube. These internet scholars influenced her faith more than her local religious influences.
- She isolated herself from all of her friends and community members. She didn't want to associate with anyone who didn't share her interpretation of Islam, an interpretation that she said demanded every Muslim move to ISIS-controlled territory.
- Hoda's travel to Syria, was conducted through many elaborate steps. She renewed her passport without her parent's knowledge. She used her college tuition money to pay for her plane ticket. "I signed up for classes and withdrew [from] them immediately so I could get a check back," she said. People she had met online helped her with the planning.
- From Syria she has directly called for homeland attacks and has actively shamed people to take action.
- At different points in Hoda's path there were missed opportunities for intervention from family members and friends who noticed significant behavior changes before she left.

**Sources:** <http://www.buzzfeed.com/elliehall/gone-girl-an-interview-with-an-american-in-isis#.wbWb1NpDM1>

[http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2015/04/meet\\_hoda\\_muthana\\_the\\_quiet\\_gi.html](http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2015/04/meet_hoda_muthana_the_quiet_gi.html)

## Case Study: Moner Mohammad Abusalha

- Age 22 - from Vero Beach, Florida
- Outgoing and funny, loved basketball
- First American suicide bomber in Syria



### Talking Points:

Tee-up: Our next story is a little different. Now we explore the story of a young kid who grew up wanting nothing and over time due to negative influences became lost and eventually the first American suicide bomber in Syria. To understand his path to understand how this happened let's take a look at his radicalization trajectory.

- Moner grew up in Vero Beach, FL, outside Miami in a gated-community.
- Went to Sebastian River HS and played basketball, where his teammates described him as "funny" and "outgoing".
- His Facebook® page stated he liked basketball, football, the Miami Heat, and Eggo waffles.
- Moner started having problems in high school where he got in fights when kids picked on him because his mother wore a veil. He bounced around between a few different schools and eventually his mom worked with him to get him

through high school.

- After high school he had a hard time holding down a job and eventually moved in with an individual that introduced him to a violent ideology and we believe was key to his radicalization.
- Soon after, Moner told his family he was traveling to Jordan to study nursing but a video of him was later released online which showed him blowing up 16 tons of explosives at a regime checkpoint, killing a number of soldiers.
- His video was used for recruitment, specifically targeting English speakers.

**Sources:**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/04/us/friends-of-monter-mohammad-abusalha-saw-no-indications.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/04/us/friends-of-monter-mohammad-abusalha-saw-no-indications.html?_r=0)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/01/us/Moner-Mohammad-Abusalha-Vero-Beach-Florida-Syria.html>

**Legal:** This USPER is deceased. No objection to including.



**Talking points:**

Tee-up: Here are clips from a video of Moner discussing why he left America and joined a terrorist group.

**[Note for presenter: Briefly introduce this slide, then play it, and then ask the audience the questions listed below.]**

**Ask the Audience:**

- What stands out to you from this video?
- What do you think youth see when they watch this video? Can they relate to any of the things he mentioned?
- What is the reason ISIL would release this video? *(To recruit more youths.)*

**Source:** <http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000003029549/video-of-us-bomber-moner-mohammad-abusalha-in-syria.html>

**Legal:** This USPER is deceased. No objection to including.

How could this have been prevented?



**[Note to presenter: This slide is meant to demonstrate how there were multiple points in Moner's life in which multiple people could have intervened or called for help.]**

**Talking Points:**

Tee-up: There were several points along his path from confused teen to suicide bomber where he could have been diverted from the process. Let's go through his trajectory, from the time he was a young teenager, like any other kid, growing up in Florida, to the point where he decided to travel to Syria and join ISIL. In that timeframe, he showcased numerous vulnerabilities that could have been addressed by a variety of peers, authority figures, school counselors, and others.

**• Adolescent Angst:**

- He was a normal teen, who liked playing basketball and video games. He also experienced normal adolescent angst, all pretty normal developmental challenges for teenagers. This is usually a time when all teens experience a

heightened drive for a distinct identity, meaning, adventure, and belonging. If not addressed, they can increase one's vulnerability to violent extremism as a possible solution to these questions.

- **Identity Issues:**
  - Moner was a second generation immigrant, born in Florida to a Palestinian father from Jordan and an American mother who converted. Immigrants are particularly susceptible to recruitment probably because of their heightened struggle with identity issues, integration, and feelings of exclusion and marginalization. He was once thrown out of school for fighting, spurred on by kids making fun of his mother's hijab. It appears Moner tried to fit in, but eventually grew tired of life in America and started to want to live in an Arabic-speaking country.
- **Loss of old social network:**
  - Moner dropped out of high school during his junior year and lost touch with school social groups and friends. He also couldn't hold a job. His mother kept forcing him to go back to school, but he kept dropping out again.
- **Exposure to extremist propaganda:**
  - He moved in to live with a new friend, who held violent extremist views. During this time, friends say he also dramatically changed his dress and behavior, becoming more conservative. He also started watching violent extremist videos with his friend online.

Shortly thereafter, Moner left for Syria.

**Sourcing:**

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000003029549/video-of-us-bomber-monter-mohammad-abusalha-in-syria.html>  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/04/us/friends-of-monter-mohammad-abusalha-saw-no-indications.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/04/us/friends-of-monter-mohammad-abusalha-saw-no-indications.html?_r=0)  
<http://www.businessinsider.com/an-american-suicide-bomber-describes-his-journey-to-syria-2014-8>  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/american-suicide-bomber-in-syria-raises-fears-for-us/2014/06/02/30a6ab8a-ea82-11e3-93d2-edd4be1f5d9e\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/american-suicide-bomber-in-syria-raises-fears-for-us/2014/06/02/30a6ab8a-ea82-11e3-93d2-edd4be1f5d9e_story.html)  
<http://www.businessinsider.com/heres-what-made-4-americans-become-jihadists-2014-9>  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?ref=world&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?ref=world&_r=0)

**Legal:** This USPER is deceased. No objection to including.

## What can your community do?

- Create community-based intervention programs
- Develop local programs based on gang-prevention methods
- Host community awareness events
- Challenge the violent extremist narrative

### **Talking points:**

Tee-up: In each of the cases presented today, there was a window of opportunity to intervene, and in this space, the role of the community is key.

We can learn from intervention approaches in other situations, such as gang prevention. CVE intervention aims to use the same principles and we can make real progress by adapting the kinds of programs we are using in non-counterterrorism areas for our needs.

Some examples of successful community-based intervention programs include:

- Montgomery County, MD, where communities and law enforcement are collaborating to bring together faith-based leaders, as well as education and mental health officials to help at-risk youth. [Permission granted by the WORDE organization to talk about their work for the CAB]
- Also, the Muslim Public Affairs Council released their Safe Spaces Initiative, which is essentially a guide for community centers on how to deal with violent extremism in their communities using a phased approach of prevention,

intervention, and ejection. [Permission granted by MPAC to talk about their work for the CAB]

Some examples of gang-prevention programs include:

- The Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program is a school-based gang-prevention curriculum that has demonstrated evidence of effectiveness. Law enforcement officers offer middle school students a 13-week curriculum that describes the danger of gang involvement. The lesson content emphasizes cognitive-behavioral training, social skills development, refusal skills, and conflict resolution. The GREAT program also offers an elementary school curriculum, a summer program, and training for families ([www.great-online.org](http://www.great-online.org)).
- It employs strategies and services including:
  - Providing a center for youth recreation
  - Providing a center for referrals for services
  - Providing interpersonal skills training to students to help resolve conflicts
  - Strengthening families
  - Providing training for school resource officers in mediating conflicts
  - Providing training for gang awareness training for school personnel, parents, and students

**Sourcing:**

<http://www.worde.org/programs/the-montgomery-county-model/>

<http://www.mpac.org/safespaces/>

<https://www.ncirs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/231116.pdf>

## What can YOU do?

- Stay safe online
- Have open communication
- Look for behavior changes
- Know your resources

### **Talking points:**

Tee-up: You are also key to protecting our youth from being preyed upon by extremists. What can you do?

The above actions may seem simple and obvious but they can actually make a real difference. (See below success story which can be paraphrased for presenting.)

• In Washington State a girl who is being called “Alex” lives with her grandparents.

• She began talking to people who directly identified themselves as members of the Islamic State while searching for information about the situation surrounding the beheading of James Foley.

- Several people began to send her gifts including a \$200 gift card to an Islamic bookstore.
- A man began to send her scarves as well as books and pamphlets about Islam that were extreme in their ideology.
  - He also told her not to go to her local mosque, as they could not

provide her with correct teachings because they had posted a statement disavowing the Islamic State on their mosque's website.

- Over the course of three months he began to pressure her to do more and more extreme things, culminating in trying to get her to travel with her little brother to Austria, where the man would introduce Alex to a Muslim man who was willing to marry her.
- Her grandmother found out about this man after noticing that Alex was staying up late every night on the computer and receiving strange packages. She tried to intervene.
  - After Alex protested the grandmother took it upon herself to directly engage the man on Skype and told him to stop talking to her granddaughter. Alex still logs on to Skype and the matter is not completely resolved but her grandmother is trying to keep a watchful eye on her.
- Awareness of Alex's online tools and habits allowed her grandmother to recognize warning signs and stop Alex from departing to Austria for probable onward travel to Syria.

**Sourding:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html?_r=0)