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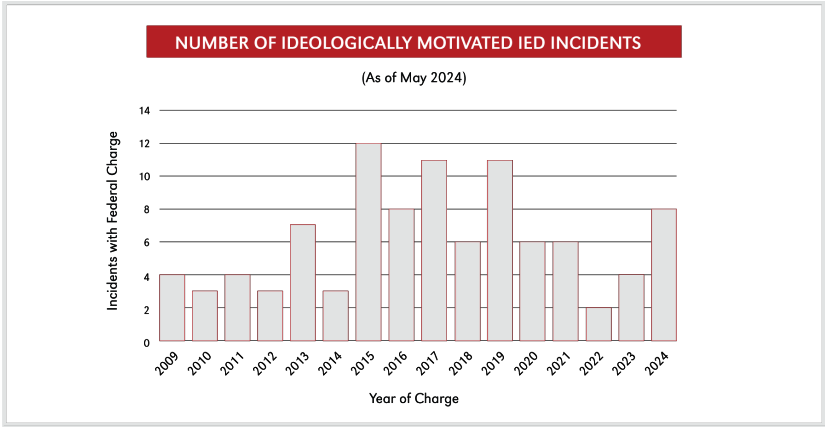
Understanding Terrorist Use of Explosives in the United States

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remain a weapon of choice for terrorists and violent extremists, presenting a sustained threat to U.S. homeland security. Using public court records pertaining to U.S. federal charges, NCITE researchers have counted 98 incidents occurring from January 2009 through May 2024 in which individuals motivated by a violent extremist ideology plotted or attempted an IED within the United States.

A close look at the data reveals an evolving threat landscape. Within the first five months of 2024, ideologically motivated IED incidents had already reached a five-year annual high. Analysis of the data indicates that U.S.-based violent extremists see value in using IEDs against a wide range of local targets, especially critical infrastructure and crowded spaces. Moreover, as a tactical instrument, the IED is appealing to would-be attackers across the violent extremist ecosystem.



DEFENDANT PROFILE

6

Female

92

Male

DEFENDANT PROFILE

Typical age of defendant is 28.

Youngest



15



28

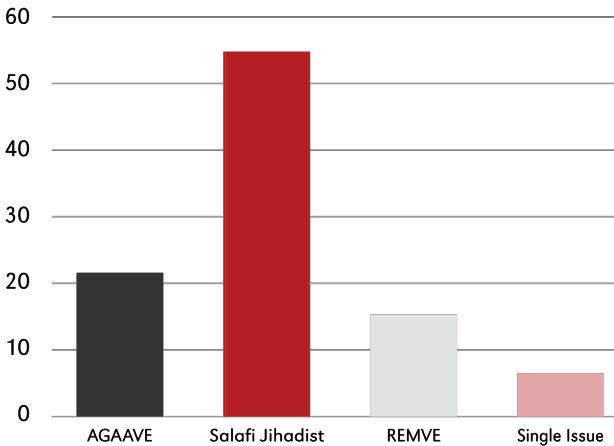
Oldest



75

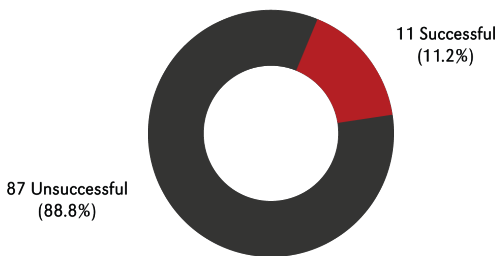
(In 83% of recorded incidents, the attacker works alone.)

IED INCIDENTS BY IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATION

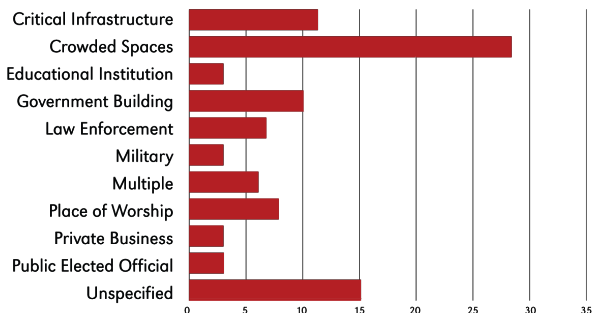


AVERAGE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS PER YEAR AND RATE OF SUCCESS

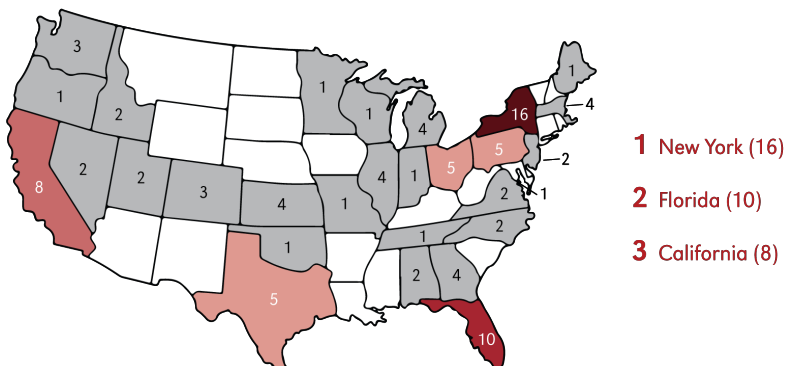
There are approximately 6.5 incidents per year on average.



IED INCIDENTS BY TARGET TYPE



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF IED INCIDENTS



ABOUT THE DATA

The data used in this report were compiled from public sources, including court records and news media reports, and are limited to IED incidents identified in federal charges initiated between January 1, 2009 and May 31, 2024. The incidents in the dataset capture only federal charges and do not include: incidents in which direct attribution is unclear, criminal IED incidents not clearly associated with an ideological motivation, bomb threats and hoax explosive devices, federal investigations that did not result in a charge, or relevant cases in which relevant court documentation remain sealed. Thus, the data paint a reasonably representative but non-exhaustive picture of the terrorist IED threat to U.S. homeland security.

ABOUT NCITE

The National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center, or NCITE, is a research consortium focused on counterterrorism and targeted violence prevention. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as a Center of Excellence. Based at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, NCITE includes 50+ researchers at partner institutions across the U.S. and Europe.

GRANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND DISCLAIMER

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