



Program
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Jihadism Trends in 2024: Cases and Patterns in Review

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The tragic New Year's Day 2025 attack in New Orleans, where a man drove a pickup truck into a crowd on Bourbon Street, killing 15 and injuring 35 others, highlighted the persistence and evolution of jihadist threats.

The incident reflects how ISIS, despite its territorial losses and leadership disruptions, remains a potent source of inspiration for violence. The group's resilience lies in its ability to reinvent itself, shaping its message to resonate with a new generation of lone actors. By projecting a narrative of relevance and adaptability, ISIS has ensured its ideology continues to motivate supporters in the West, fueling both sophisticated and opportunistic attacks.

Moreover, the incident comes on the heels of indications of an uptick in jihadist activity in the United States. Law enforcement interventions thwarted several homegrown plots and charged 10 individuals for alleged criminal conduct related to ISIS. These cases underscore the persistent threat of global jihadist networks. Indeed, even as operational tactics and recruitment strategies of extremist groups continue to evolve, many of the foundational elements of the jihadist threat remain remarkably consistent in the post-Caliphate era. Understanding these 2024 trends is critical, as they establish a foundation for identifying patterns and anticipating the evolution of potential threats. By analyzing the past year's activities, one gains insights into the mechanisms of radicalization, recruitment, and adaptation that jihadist groups employ, offering a clearer perspective on emerging challenges.

2024 in Numbers:

- 10 cases of jihadist-related activities were recorded in the United States in 2024.
- 9 individuals (90%) were male.
- 9 individuals (90%) were U.S. citizens.
- 2 individuals (20%) were aged 18 or younger.
- 5 individuals (50%) were between 20 and 29 years old.
- 3 individuals (30%) were aged 30 or older.
- None of the individuals had military backgrounds.

Analysis of Cases

The criminal cases brought against ISIS supporters in 2024 highlight a diverse range of profiles and operational patterns, ranging from homegrown lone actor attack plots to attempted travelers seeking to join ISIS affiliates abroad. These categories reflect the predominant methods by which jihadist groups continue to recruit, finance, and mobilize individuals toward violent action.

Recruitment and travel remained significant aspects of jihadist strategies in 2024. Individuals attempted to leave the United States to join ISIS abroad, illustrating the enduring allure of the group's global narrative despite the loss of the territorial caliphate. For instance, Michael Sam Teekaye, Jr., based in Hanover, Maryland, was arrested at Baltimore Washington International Airport on October 14 for allegedly planning to travel to Somalia to provide material support to ISIS. According to court records, Teekaye was also prepared to carry out a domestic attack if the travel failed. Similarly, Syed Aman's case demonstrated the logistical preparations undertaken by radicalized individuals. On November 5, Aman was arrested at JFK Airport, where he was about to board a flight to Qatar with the alleged destination being the Islamic State in Syria. He also reportedly provided financial support to a suspected ISIS operative. A more dated case is that of Harafa Hussein Abdi who had allegedly joined ISIS in Somalia in 2015. There, he trained with weapons and worked on ISIS propaganda. In January 2017, Abdi sent an audio message to multiple people inciting violence, such as shootings and bombings in New York City. After disputes, he left the group in 2017, was jailed by ISIS, escaped, and was later captured by law enforcement in East Africa.

Cases involving **financial and logistical support** highlighted the enduring ability of jihadist groups to tap into global support networks to sustain their operations. Mohammed Azharuddin Chhipa's activities exemplify the sophistication of this trend. Chhipa raised money through social media to support ISIS in Syria, from at least October 2019 through October of 2022. Specifically, he wanted to help female ISIS members escape from prisons and support ISIS fighters. A British-born co-conspirator residing in Syria provided aid to Chhipa. Their network would receive electronic transfers which Chhipa would convert into cryptocurrency before sending the funds – more than \$185,000 - to Turkey, where it was then smuggled into Syria. Similarly, in Houston, Anas Said, charged in November 2024, allegedly engaged in propaganda dissemination while supporting ISIS monetarily, blending ideological promotion with resource mobilization.

Additionally, Erald Alimehmeti further demonstrated the integration of logistical and operational roles. After moving to Albania from the Bronx in 2014, Alimehmeti served prison time for weapons offenses. Upon his return to the U.S., he allegedly used encrypted platforms to discuss planning attacks, praised ISIS leaders, and shared pro-ISIS propaganda. He also distributed instructions for making explosives and

engaged in tactical training. These examples show how financial enablers act as critical nodes within jihadist support networks, often bridging ideological and operational functions.

Lone actors on US soil remained one of the most concerning domestic threat vectors for jihadist terrorism in 2024. Inspired by online propaganda and often without any direct connection to known ISIS operatives, homegrown violent extremists in the United States planned numerous attacks. In Idaho, Alexander Scott Mercurio was arrested on April 6. He had allegedly pledged allegiance to ISIS and plotted to attack local churches with firearms and knives. Another lone actor example is the case involving Nasir Ahmad Tawhedi, in Oklahoma City. In October, Tawhedi allegedly conspired to conduct an attack on Election Day on behalf of ISIS. The same month, Marvin Aneer Jalo's case in Phoenix was particularly alarming. At just 17 years old, Jalo allegedly ISIS-inspired, planned an attack on a Pride festival using a drone laden with explosives, reflecting the continued vulnerability of youth to jihadist ideologies.

The **involvement of women in jihadist activities** has also persisted. A notable example is the case of Halima Salman, who in 2016 fled New York to join ISIS in Syria. Between 2017 and 2019, she served as a member of ISIS's Nusaybah unit. During this time, she received military training and played an operational role in the group's activities. Before being repatriated to the U.S., Halima was interviewed by FBI agents in a detention center in Syria, where she denied receiving training, despite the evidence.

Despite decreasing media coverage in recent years, the spate of ISIS-related arrests in 2024 underscores the enduring threat of jihadist terrorism in the homeland, as the beginning of 2025 has already witnessed. Notably, global flashpoints including the Middle Eastern conflict serve as powerful radicalizing influences for a concerning segment of young Americans. While many of the traditional ideological justifications continue to inspire homegrown violent extremists, an increasing number of cases demonstrates the prominence of "salad-bar" extremism in the modern landscape, where individuals selectively embrace ideological, financial, or logistical elements from various extremist ideologies—tailoring their support to suit personal grievances or motivations.



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