



TLP:WHITE

## 2021 Hostile Events Preparedness (HEPS) Workshop Exercise Series Findings Brief

11 January 2022

### About the Workshop Series

In 2021, faith-based organizations continue to try to better understand their threat environment and what responsible security measures might be taken. While each place of worship will need to create a preparedness plan that best suits its individual resources, culture, and comfort level, there are concrete steps Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) can take to enhance security.

The 2021 Hostile Event Preparedness (HEPS) Workshop Series provided a forum for faith-based and charity organizations to enhance their threat awareness and preparedness relating to potential physical attacks at their facilities. The use of a hostile events scenario was used to provide participants an opportunity to interact with one another through a facilitated discussion, and to identify best practices, opportunities for improvement, and salient points of concern. [Learn more about the workshop objectives.](#)

### About This Document

To benefit the Faith-Based Community, FB-ISAO produced the 2021 HEPS Workshop Series After Action Report, with the purpose of aggregating findings accrued during workshop series discussions and observations. This document, the Series' Final Findings Report Brief, is a high-level overview that provides the top four best practices revealed during the workshop series.

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## Stakeholder Participation Snapshot

2021 HEPS Workshops Locations						
Location	Type	Duration	Date(s)	Participants		
				FBO	Exercise Observers, Staff and Subject Matter Experts	Total
Western PA	Virtual	Three-day (3 hr. per)	08-10 March	44	20	64
Central PA	Virtual	Three-day (3 hr. per)	20-22 April	41	24	65
Eastern PA	Virtual	Three-day (3 hr. per)	01-03 June	42	23	65
MN	Virtual	Three-day (3 hr. per)	05-07 October	33	7	40

## Opportunities for Improvement and Recommendations

- Hostile events such as active shooter incidents, workplace violence, workplace attacks, lone actors, and low-tech terrorism may be long planned by the attacker. Attackers may have agendas fostered by perceived wrongs by society, or even harbored against a particular congregation or people within a congregation i.e., a personal grievance with a congregant. A variety of means, weapons, and tactics might be used in attacks and no single method of preparedness or response can rise to the top in the preparedness cycle.
  - **Recommendation: Continual assessment of the changing threat landscape**
- Religious institutions are in many ways a first point of contact for those with mental health issues. Such attacks may be nearly spontaneous, making it all the more difficult to predict.
  - **Recommendation: Training security teams to identify and mitigate possible hostile threats needs to be an on-going effort**
- Faith Leaders can help greatly in attempting to keep religious institutions safe from attacks by actively collaborating with Law Enforcement, other Faith Based Organizations, and information sharing networks.
  - **Recommendation: Participating in trusted and organized local community groups can further information sharing**
- No single “best practice” of preparedness or response can be clearly demonstrated as each FBO is somewhat unique. It is possible that there might be many right approaches that demand attention. Sharing best practices across the wider faith-based community was noted as the best way to find commonality and determine approaches that faith leaders can use to better prepare and respond to potential hostile events.
  - **Recommendation: FB-ISAO’s collaborative workspace allows security focused personnel to learn from each other and to find those many right answers**

### Want More Information?

For a full list of best practices, as well as areas of improvement and enduring challenges noted by workshop participants, consult the FB-ISAO 2021 Hostile Events Preparedness (HEPS) Workshops Exercise Series After Action Report. To obtain a copy of the report, contact FB-ISAO at [info@faithbased-isao.org](mailto:info@faithbased-isao.org).

If interested in hosting or participating in one of our future workshops, contact FB-ISAO’s Executive Director, Mayya Saab at [mayya@faithbased-isao.org](mailto:mayya@faithbased-isao.org).