

Volume 4, Issue 2

February 2022

[FB-ISAO Current Threat Level](#)

FB-ISAO Physical Threat Level:

ELEVATED

FB-ISAO has assessed the general Physical Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations as “SEVERE.” As per FB-ISAO’s definitions of the Physical Threat Levels, “SEVERE” means that an event is highly likely.

Please note that the Pandemic Threat Level has been lowered to **ELEVATED**.

FB-ISAO Cyber Threat Level:

Guarded

FB-ISAO has assessed the general Cyber Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations as “GUARDED.” As per FB-ISAO’s definitions of the Cyber Threat Levels, “GUARDED” means FB-ISAO is unaware of any specific events, but a general risk of incidents exists.

Stories

[Hostage Incident in Colleyville, Texas, Page 1](#)

[Community Heroes and Champions, Page 2](#)

[Spotlight: Taking Stock of 2021, Page 2](#)

[Upcoming Events, Page 2](#)

FB-ISAO Newsletter

Hostage Incident in Colleyville, Texas

On 15 January, an armed British national [took four hostages](#), including a Rabbi at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas. The incident began at approximately 10:40 a.m. local time during a livestreamed morning service. Local police immediately responded and ultimately the FBI was called in to begin negotiations. Like many hostile events, there were competing press reports and information about the threat actor to include identity and motivation. After several hours of negotiations, the situation was resolved when the captives escaped, and the threat actor was neutralized by the FBI SWAT team.

Attacks on faith-based organizations occur much too frequently as cited in the [Mitigating Attacks on Houses of Worship Security Guide](#). The guide was published by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security (CISA) Agency in December of 2020 and notes, “CISA observed a significant spike in incidents of targeted violence in 2012 and a discernible increase in the number of incidents between 2015 and 2019. As a result of these 37 incidents, 64 people lost their lives and 59 people suffered injuries.”

The incident at Colleyville Texas will be a learning and teaching moment as were other attacks at houses of worship such as when 26 people were killed and 20 wounded at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas and when 11 people were killed and six others wounded, including four responding law enforcement officers, at the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Co-Chair of the FB-ISAO [Operational Resilience Group](#) developed the Colleyville Synagogue H&B TimeLine and Pre-Incident Activity Report which will surely contribute to the teaching and learning from this incident. To request copies of the document, the community can write to info@faithbased-isao.org. The February Monthly Threat Brief will be a discussion of the Colleyville hostage incident. Register for the MTB [here](#).

The incident at the Beth Israel Congregation in Colleyville, Texas serves as a reminder that the size of the event does not matter for some threat actors. While there is always an increased risk when large groups gather, small scale events can be just as easily targeted. In addition to this incident, in which four people were in attendance, consider the following:

- Charleston Church Shooting in 2015 occurred during a small group bible study.
- Five people were injured at a Rabbi’s house when a threat actor entered the house and blocked participants from leaving at the conclusion of a Hannukah celebration in 2019.

What this means is that security must be considered in all such instances, no matter how big or small.

In the past few weeks, federal and local law enforcement agencies from the FBI to DHS to local PD reached out to the community of faith and re-affirmed their commitments to helping faith-based organizations with developing, improving and exercising their security plans. A good place to start is on the [CISA Houses of Worship Page](#).



It is estimated that there are over 350,000 faith-based facilities in the United States. Their preparedness posture varies from excellent to undeveloped. A recent [CNN](#) post noted that faith-based communities will likely remain targets for violence, urging state and local partners to evaluate their security postures for mass gathering events and at houses of worship. Faith-based organizations would do well in adopting a “when” not an “if” approach to preparedness, security, and resilience. The FB-ISAO team is always ready to help.

FB-ISAO Advisory Board

Get to Know the Board of Advisors

Contact Us

Company Name

FB-ISAO

Email

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Website

www.faithbased-isao.org

Not Yet a Member of FB-ISAO?

[How to join...](#)

Not Yet on FB-ISAO Slack - You Need to Be!

[Write to membership](#)

Upcoming FB-ISAO Events

Community Meeting	10 February 2022
Monthly Threat Brief	22 February 2022
Cyber Road Show	TBD

Community Heroes and Champions

Recently, we transitioned to a new report distribution platform, CSAP. We are glad to see steady adoption of the new platform. We also transitioned to a new membership management platform. We are now using Little Green Light to manage our membership. This change will be largely transparent to members except when it is time to renew memberships. As you know, each year, members are asked to update their profile and renew their membership with FB-ISAO.

With this transition, the team thought it appropriate to consider changes to our membership names. Why is that - you ask? Well, our members at our former 'Standard' level of membership are acting in the capacity of community Champions as they are bringing communities together in Information Sharing Communities. And our former 'Professional' level members are acting in the capacity of community Heroes because they are leading initiatives in various Working Groups that not only benefit their individual facilities but the overall preparedness of other facilities and thus the community as a whole. It seems appropriate to give those folks the recognition, by way of appropriately named membership levels they deserve!

Champions and Hereos!

Going forward, our former 'Basic' level of membership will be referred to as our Affiliate program. As you have come to expect, our Law Enforcement and Government partners are encouraged to join FB-ISAO at no cost to them. That membership program is unchanged.

To learn more about our membership programs, please refer to our [membership page](#) and watch this [short video](#). The next time you are asked to renew your membership, consider joining your fellow community Champions and Heroes!



Spotlight: Taking Stock of 2021

We accomplished a lot in 2021 but we have more work to do! Please take a minute to read our report "Looking Back to 2021 and Looking Forward to 2022" which highlights:

- Select Accomplishments from 2021
- A Sector Snapshot
- Member Engagement
- A Look Ahead to 2022

The faith-based sector is, and will always be, fragmented due to the multitude of religions and denominations within those religions, however, more and more faith-based organizations are recognizing the need to band together locally to enhance their individual and collective threat posture. Inter-faith community meetings are a common occurrence. Law Enforcement partners are being included in these events so that there is greater cooperation between inter-faith groups and their partners.

From the report, our biggest achievement has been getting our members to have conversations with one another. These conversations have been teaching and learning moments for those who participated. We hope to encourage many more member conversations - to provide our members with the ability to find those many right answers and to be the force multipliers that they are. In 2022 we will continue to host our Monthly Threat Briefs. We will also hold Community Meetings, the Cyber Road Show and Hostile Event Preparedness Workshops and many more programs.