FB-ISAO
FAITH-BASED INFORMATION SHARING & ANALYSIS ORGANIZATION

Monthly Newsletter

November 2026
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TLP:CLEAR

FB-ISAO Current Threat Level

FB-ISAO Physical Threat Level: SEVERE

FB-ISAO Physical Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations: "**SEVERE**."

FB-ISAO's definition of the Physical Threat Level, " **SEVERE** " means FB-ISAO is unaware of any specific events. Still, there is a concern that an event is highly likely.

FB-ISAO Cyber Threat Level: ELEVATED

FB-ISAO has assessed the general Cyber Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations as "ELEVATED."

FB-ISAO's definition of the Cyber Threat Levels, "ELEVATED" means FB-ISAO is unaware of any specific events. Still, there is a concern that an event is more likely than normal.

Board of Directors

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The Growing Drone Threat



Faith-Based Organizations and critical infrastructure organizations face a growing and diversified drone threat. Hostile nation states, violent extremists, cartels, and criminals are all increasingly employing drones for hostile surveillance, kinetic attacks, and potentially cyber attacks. Overflights and downed drones are becoming routine, and explosive-laden drones are a particular concern. Drones are cheap, easy to operate, and hard to detect, and they have already been used in plots and attacks against energy facilities, airports, military sites, and police stations.

Unauthorized drone activity near Houses of Worship could provide various threat actors, including foreign intelligence services and violent extremists, with opportunities to collect imagery or other information to plan future attacks or facilitate other malicious objectives, according to an FBI report. Drones have been employed, for instance, by financially motivated criminals to surveil utility facilities and support the execution of robberies. Two cases highlight the risk of suspicious drone overflights. In November 2024, a domestic violent extremist—who espoused neo-Nazism, white supremacist ideology, and accelerationist objectives—was arrested and charged in federal court for attempting to destroy an electric substation in Nashville by using an explosive-laden drone he built by following detailed instructions online and weaponized with commercially available material. In October 2024, a teenager in Arizona was arrested and charged for allegedly plotting an Islamic State-inspired attack involving a drone. The radicalized teenager reportedly sought to build an explosive-laden drone and use it to attack a LGBTQ pride parade.

To help reduce risk, Houses of Worship could:

- Coordinate with the FAA and relevant federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities to identify applicable drone operating restrictions and Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs). When appropriate, install clearly visible “Drone Restricted Zone” or “No Drone Zone” signage at special events.
- Train security personnel and relevant staff to recognize, document, and report suspicious drone activity, including flight characteristics, location, time, direction of travel, aircraft description, and available Remote ID or registration information.
- Establish procedures for promptly reporting suspicious or unauthorized drone activity near sensitive facilities or operations to security personnel, law enforcement, and first responders.

Fire As A Weapon: Protecting Our House of Worship



Fire is one of the oldest threats to houses of worship, and one of the most persistent. A 2015 Pew Research study found that about half of 4,705 fires at houses of worship over 20 years were set on purpose. Arson takes little skill, yet it can destroy in minutes what took generations to build.

Faith-Based communities face arson from extremists, hate-motivated groups and individuals, and from damage that can spread when protests happen nearby.

Two recent cases show the danger is real. On January 10, 2026, an arsonist set the Beth Israel Congregation synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi, on fire, in the pre-dawn hours of Shabbat. A 19-year-old was arrested and pleaded not guilty to federal and state arson charges. On August 21, fire destroyed the former Friendship Baptist Church on Cleveland's East Side. The building was constructed in 1894 as Temple Tifereth Israel and served as a gathering place during the civil rights movement. A 19-year-old now faces a felony arson charge. Court records say he and two friends went into the vacant church to take part in a social media trend, and the fire caused more than $750,000 in damage.

A fire doesn't need a hateful motive to destroy a sacred space, and vacant or unsecured buildings are especially at risk. Preparation makes a difference. Drawing on the Department of Homeland Security's "Fire as a Weapon" action guide, below are some recommended actions for House of Worship:

- Invite the local fire department to walk through the building and point out hazards.
- Name fire marshals to lead the response if a fire breaks out.
- Write down evacuation routes, meeting places and contact lists, plus a plan for carrying on if the building is lost.
- Train staff and volunteers, and hold regular fire drills, both announced and unannounced.

Treating arson as a real threat and planning for it can help our facilities and people stay safe.

Spotlight: FB-ISAO Interim Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the FB-ISAO wants our members to know that Jen Walker stepped down as Executive Director of FB-ISAO, effective October 30, 2026. On behalf of the entire community, we thank Jen for her dedication and for all she has contributed to our mission of helping faith-based organizations stay safe and informed.

During this transition, Mayya Saab will serve as Interim Executive Director while the Board determines next steps, and we will share more in the coming weeks and months. Our information sharing, alerts, and member resources will continue without interruption.

If you have questions, please contact Mayya at mayya@faithbased-isao.org.
Thank you for your continued trust and participation in FB-ISAO.

Thank you for sharing this newsletter with a friend!