

(U//FOUO) Patriot Front Activity in Vermont (2019-2020)**(U) First Amendment Acknowledgement**

(U//FOUO) The Vermont Intelligence Center (VIC) recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. The VIC safeguards these first amendment rights, and reports on only those activities where the potential use of rhetoric and/or propaganda by white supremacist or racially motivated violent extremists could be used to incite acts of violence or criminal activity. Additionally, the potential criminality exhibited by certain members of a group does not negate the constitutional rights of the group itself or its law-abiding participants to exercise their individual liberties under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Unless specifically noted, the reporting in this product originated from subjects whose affiliation and credibility are unknown and are included for the purpose of providing broad trends, behavior and situational awareness for federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial counterterrorism and law enforcement officials and private sector security partners.

(U) Executive Summary

(U) The VIC has received reporting on Patriot Front activity from law enforcement since 2019. Patriot Front is a white supremacist group that is active in Vermont and continues to display their propaganda throughout the state. Reported incidents in Vermont are much higher than that of other New England states with larger populations. Reported incidents to the VIC, as well as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), show intelligence gaps that need to be addressed before the actual impact of Patriot Front activity can be addressed.

(U) Background

(U) Patriot Front is a white supremacist, neo-Nazi, nationalist hate group that formed in August 2017 and is led by Thomas Rousseau. The group split from Vanguard America (VA), another white supremacist group, in August 2017. This was several months after VA participated in a white supremacist rally on the capitol steps in Austin, Texas. Both Rousseau, as the Texas VA leader, and Dillon Hopper, as the VA national leader, spoke during the event. During their speeches, it was alleged that Rousseau had led people to believe that he was VA's leader and that his speech further confused people about the group's true leader. Just a few weeks later, Rousseau led several dozen VA Texas members and associates at the August 12th "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. During this rally, an alleged VA member drove his vehicle into a group of counter protestors, killing one and injuring 19 others. While Hopper faced the fall out of the mass casualty event and isolated himself, Rousseau seized the opportunity and rebranded the VA's bloodandsoil.org as the patriotfront.us website. He has been the face of Patriot Front ever since.

(U) Patriot Front's motto is "Reclaim America." Their activism typically consists of posting flyers, banners, and stickers; spray painting logos and symbols; or performing acts of public service such as cleaning up parks to gain public trust. The groups also take part in "flash mobs" and torch marches/demonstrations. Nearly all their activities are carried out with the intent to maximize propaganda value. Patriot Front propaganda has been seen across the United States and the District of Columbia.





(U) Figure 1: Picture of the Patriot Front logo and examples of propaganda. Source: VIC and Open Source.

(U) Reporting

(FOUO) The VIC reports Patriot Front incidents to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) after receiving them from law enforcement. There has been an increase in Patriot Front propaganda reported to the VIC. In 2019, the VIC received less than five reports of Patriot Front propaganda. In comparison, as of July 14, 2020, the VIC received nearly three times as many reports of Patriot Front propaganda. It should be noted that this only encompasses the incidents that have been reported to the VIC and does not represent every incident occurring in Vermont.

(U) The ADL receives reports of and investigates white supremacist propaganda events across the country. The ADL received approximately 142 reports of Patriot Front propaganda in Vermont between 2019 and May 31, 2020.

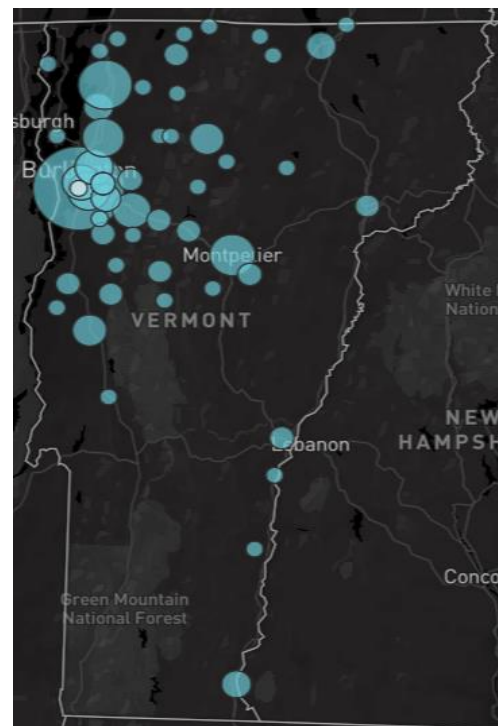
(U) Vermont Activity

(FOUO) In August 2017, a Vermont resident attended the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia and has since been linked to Patriot Front activity in Vermont.

(FOUO) The first report of Patriot Front propaganda in Vermont was in 2019. Patriot Front propaganda displayed in Vermont is primarily stickers which are usually affixed to street signs and poles, however, in one instance in July 2020, a Patriot Front logo and symbol were spray-painted onto the Waterbury Dam in Waterbury, VT.

(FOUO) The following Patriot Front incidents were reported to the VIC and occurred either before or after a racial injustice gathering that took place in that area:

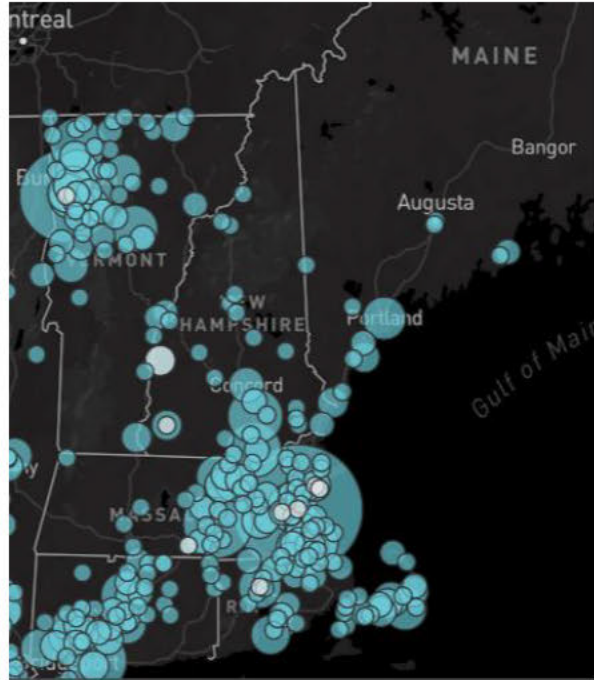
- (FOUO) In May 2020, Patriot Front propaganda was reported in Montpelier, VT.
- (FOUO) Between May 2020 and June 2020, Patriot Front propaganda was reported four times in Hinesburg, VT.
- (FOUO) In June 2020, Patriot Front propaganda was reported in Essex, VT.
- (FOUO) In June 2020, Patriot Front propaganda was reported in Duxbury, VT.



(U) Figure 2: Heat Map of reported Patriot Front incidents and their locations to the ADL in 2019 and 2020. Source: ADL

(U) New England Activity

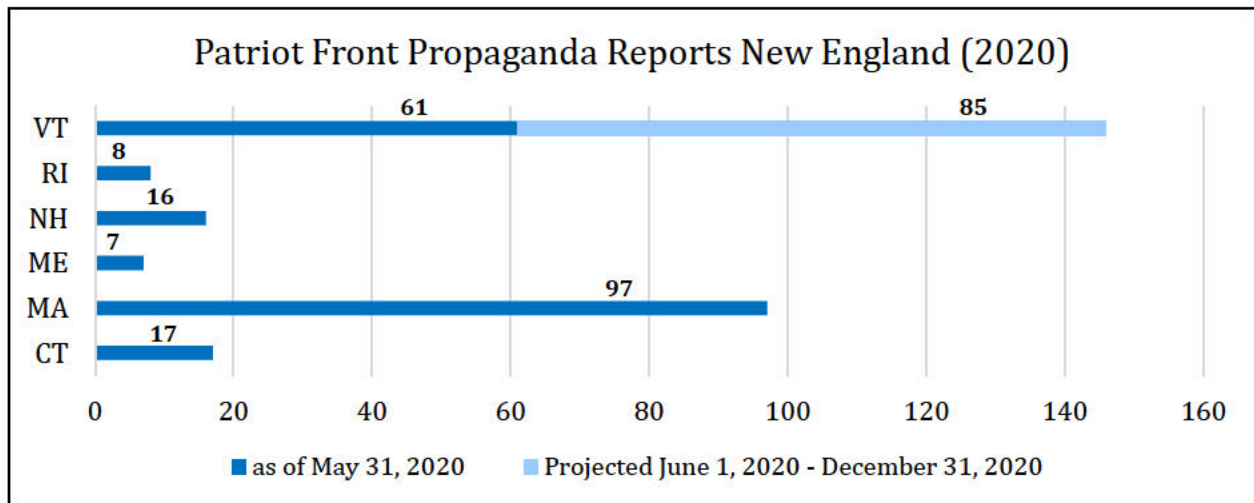
(U) According to the ADL, Vermont’s Patriot Front incidents are significantly higher than that of New England states with larger populations. Between 2019 and May 31, 2020, the ADL received 142 reports of Patriot Front activity in Vermont, which has a population of approximately 624,000 (1:4,394 per capita). In comparison, Connecticut had a reported 78 incidents with a population of 3.58 million (1:45,897 per capita). Massachusetts had a reported 244 incidents, with a population of 6.85 million (1:28,073 per capita). Maine had a reported 20 incidents, with a population of 1.33 million (1:66,500 per capita). New Hampshire had reported 40 incidents, with a population of 1.34 million (1:33,500 per capita) and Rhode Island had a reported 16 incidents, with a population of 1.05 million (1:65,625).



(U) Figure 3: Heat Map of reported white supremacist propaganda incidents in 2019 and 2020, in New England. Source: ADL

(U) Outlook

(U) The VIC has seen an increase in reported Patriot Front incidents from 2019 to 2020. This increase may be due in part to civil unrest across the country and in Vermont. While racial injustice gatherings continue to occur, the number of reported Patriot Front incidents may increase.



(U) Figure 4: Bar Chart showing the number of reported Patriot Front incidents as of May 31, 2020, by New England State, and the projection for Vermont by the end of 2020. Source: VIC, ADL

(U) Intelligence Gaps

(FOUO) The Vermont Intelligence Center's (VIC) source for reporting of Patriot Front incidents comes from Vermont law enforcement. In comparison, ADL obtains reports from law enforcement, news media, citizen complaints and social media. As of July 14, 2020, the VIC received more than 10 reports of Patriot Front activity. As of May 31, 2020, the ADL received 61 reports of Patriot Front activity. Due to the significant gap in Patriot Front activity being reported to the VIC, the VIC has identified several intelligence gaps in source reporting:

- (U) Incidents not being prosecuted or failing to meet state or federal statute.
- (U) The public may not recognize Patriot Front incidents as white supremacist/neo-Nazi propaganda.
- (U) The public and press reporting white supremacist events to the ADL rather than Vermont law enforcement.
- (U) The public not utilizing the See Something Say Something™ anonymous tip line.

(U) Conclusion

(U) With the increase in Patriot Front activity in Vermont from 2019 to 2020, the intelligence gaps noted above will be addressed by the VIC to ensure proper reporting of Patriot Front and white supremacist activity. To do so, the VIC will continue to work with the ADL to educate Vermont law enforcement and the public on Patriot Front and white supremacist activity. The VIC will engage the public and media on how to report Patriot Front activity to law enforcement and through See Something, Say Something™. When these necessary actions are completed, it will improve awareness of Patriot Front and white supremacist activity in Vermont.

(U) Definitions

(U) The FBI, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) defines a racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist as threats involving the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from bias-often related to race or ethnicity-held by the actor against others, including a given population group.

(U) A White Supremacist is defined as a person who believes that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races.

(U) A hate crime is defined as any crime committed in Vermont that is maliciously motivated by the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, ancestry, age, service in the armed forces of the United States, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. The perpetrator can receive additional penalties at sentencing. Prosecutors can seek increased penalties for hate crimes, including longer jail sentences and higher fines.

(U) In Vermont, under Title 23, Vermont Statutes Annotated Section 1455, a hate-motivated crime is committed by a person whose conduct is maliciously motivated by the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, service in the U.S. Armed Forces, disability as defined by Title 21 Vermont Statutes Annotated Section 495d(5), sexual orientation, or gender identity.

(U) In the United States, under Title 18, U.S. Code 249, a hate crime act is committed when whoever, whether or not acting under the color of law, willfully causes bodily injury to any person or, through the use of fire, a firearm, a dangerous weapon, or an explosive or incendiary device, attempts to cause bodily injury to any person, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin of any person.

