

## Terrorist Commemorative Messaging Encourages Attacks

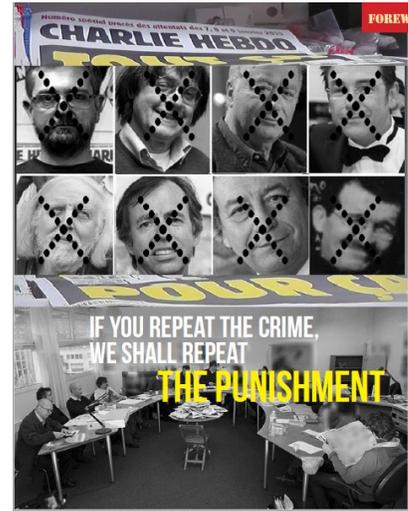
In September 2020, al-Qa'ida published an English-language translation of its 3rd edition of *One Ummah* magazine featuring a new foreword threatening *Charlie Hebdo* staff members for republishing its cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Awareness of terrorist messaging, particularly those around significant dates, can help identify and assess possible threats. Although terrorist operational readiness typically dictates the timing and targets of planned terrorist attacks, commemorations remain targets because of their iconic or psychological value. Alternatively, opportunistic attacks have limited pre-attack indicators, given these attacks occur with little to no warning. Evaluating terrorist commemorative messaging is important as a preventative measure.

**CONSIDERATIONS:** The following considerations—which may also represent Constitutionally protected activity—may assist in developing effective mitigation strategies and response protocols to terrorist messaging. Evaluate instances without a reasonable alternative explanation while considering the totality of the circumstances, additional indicators, or observed behaviors reasonably indicative of terrorism before reporting as suspicious activity.

- Use a methodical process to handle terrorist messaging: identify, document, analyze, evaluate, report, and respond with an appropriate security posture.
- Assess the messaging: What is being said? (statement, violence, legitimacy of threat, ideological goals); Who is saying it? (author, verification of account, recycled or repurposed content, shared or live post); What are the potential effects? (likelihood of danger or threat, tactic or target, message meaning)
- Use cyber security precautions when collecting Internet data (taking a screenshot vs. downloading content) in case of malicious code.
- Establish organizational policies and procedures for handling online terrorist messaging.

### RESOURCES:

- **International Association of Chiefs of Police Technology and Social Media Resources:** <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/technology-and-social-media>
- **National Domestic Communications Assistance Center (NDCAC):** <https://ndcac.fbi.gov/>
- **Real-Time Open Source Analysis (ROSA) Guide:** <https://it.ojp.gov/GIST/1200/Real-Time-and-Open-Source-Analysis--ROSA--Resource-Guide>



From the *One Ummah* article

In September 2020 and in direct response to the republication of the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons, a 25-year-old Pakistani man conducted an attack with a meat cleaver outside the former Paris offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, injuring two. There is no evidence that terrorist messaging motivated the attack.



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14 OCTOBER 2020  
AUTHORED BY NCTC, DHS, FBI



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