



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF
KASHYAP PATEL
DIRECTOR
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE

AT A HEARING ENTITLED
“OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION”

PRESENTED
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

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Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to discuss the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—our current operations, the priorities driving them, and the threat landscape confronting the country. Each day, the men and women of the FBI are making a real impact in communities across the Nation, tackling some of the most complex national security and criminal threats we face with perseverance, professionalism, and integrity—sometimes at the greatest of costs.

Keeping Americans safe at home and abroad is a no-fail mission. Our work to combat violent crime, gangs, cartels, fentanyl, terrorism, cyber threats, fraud, spies and a myriad of other threats has never been more important. The FBI’s priorities are to crush violent crime, defend the Homeland, rebuild public trust, and ensure fierce organizational accountability.

Under President Trump’s leadership, law and order is back and America is safe again. Our Nation’s law enforcement now has a president who supports them and lets them do their jobs to protect the American people, and as a result, in less than two years, crime nationwide is down to historic lows and communities are protected again – not criminals.

Violent Crime

The FBI’s continued and dedicated focus on combatting violent crime has led to historic results. Since January 2025, the FBI has captured nine of its Top Ten most wanted fugitives, made close to 54,000 violent crime arrests, a 90% increase from the previous 18 months, disrupted over 31,000 gangs and criminal enterprises, a 30% increase, and seized over 3,200 kilograms of fentanyl, an 8% increase and enough lethal doses to potentially kill over 247 million Americans. The FBI has had many successful violent crime initiatives so far this year, to include Operation New Dawn in Illinois, Operation Southern Star in Alabama, Operation Gangsta’s Paradise in California, and Operation Spring Cleaning in Alabama and Missouri. Together, these initiatives have led to the arrest of nearly 200 violent offenders, and a significant number of seizures of firearms, drugs, and money.

The FBI's partnerships are key force multipliers, with over 550 unique task forces and over 6,000 members to tackle violent crime threats. In cities where crime is higher than the national rate, the FBI is sending Violent Crime Rapid Deployment Teams consisting of agents and intelligence personnel nationwide to surge resources to cities that need them most, and since January of this year, these teams have arrested over 600 subjects and seized over 250 firearms. Specifically, Operation Summer Heat was a multi-agency effort to make our communities safer across the Nation. It resulted in 7,617 violent crime arrests, 725 arrests of predators committing violent crimes against children, 3,279 drug seizures- including 436 kg of Fentanyl and 55,772 kg of Cocaine, and 2,451 weapons recovered. Specifically, in Louisiana, we saw a 56% decrease in homicide rates in New Orleans and a 42% decrease in homicide rates in Baton Rouge. In Memphis under the Memphis Safe Task Force, FBI surged personnel who participated in over 2,800 arrests. In one year of FBI and law enforcement partner efforts, under the leadership of President Trump, Memphis has seen a 26% decrease in homicides, a 22% decrease in aggravated assault, a 31% decrease in robberies, and a 48% decrease in carjackings. This is what happens when you let cops be cops.

Safeguarding children sits at the very top of the Bureau's priorities. Violent crimes against children such as financially motivated sextortion, Sadistic Online Exploitation, and AI-generated content are ushering in a host of new actors spread globally, who are committed to exploiting children and thwarting the FBI's efforts to capture them. Since January 2025, the FBI identified and/or located over 11,000 child victims, a 21% increase from the previous 18 months and arrested over 5,000 child predators and human traffickers, a 13% increase.

To specifically combat violent crimes against children, the FBI has over 90 Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Forces, which hosts over 90 task force officers, including over 90 international TFOs from over 60 countries. The FBI has efforts like the Innocence Lost National Initiative to address the growing issue of children recruited into commercial sex trafficking by going after the resources of those criminal enterprises that are exploiting children. Additionally, the FBI's four dedicated surges this year—Operation Restore Justice, Operation Enduring Justice, Operation Relentless Justice, and Iron Pursuit—have led to the arrest of over 1,000 predators this year. In February 2026, under my tenure, the FBI also joined Europol's EMPACT initiative, Operation Global Chain, as the first US Agency to formally participate. In 2026, this annual weeklong global human trafficking interdiction event resulted in 1,024 arrests, including 334 human trafficking arrests, 2,070 victims and potential victims identified, 465 new investigations opened, and 80 cases of document fraud detected worldwide.

Under my leadership, the FBI has put unprecedented attention on combatting violent crime, gangs, and criminal enterprises that have exploited Tribal lands and communities. We have launched a series of initiatives and coordinated operations, such as Voices Not Forgotten, a new initiative intended to generate new public tips to help close unsolved Indian Country investigations; Operation Steadfast Promise, a sustained commitment to address violent crime and improve public safety in Indian country, resulting in 890 new opened cases, over 450 arrests, over 130 child victims identified or located, and over 1,300 weapons seized; Operation Not Forgotten, an initiative to surge investigative, intelligence, and victim services support to field offices working Indian Country investigations; Operation Ballistic Backlog, designed to develop actionable leads on unresolved cases by testing and processing the backlog of seized firearms;

and Operation Trusted Trails, initiated to disrupt criminal organizations and gang networks that are flooding Indian Country with drugs and violence, spanning 14 states and 31 Indian reservations.

The FBI has over 4,400 open investigations and over 300 full-time employees dedicated to making Tribal communities safer. In the last 18 months alone, the FBI has seized nearly 13 kilograms of cocaine and 123 kilograms of methamphetamine in Indian Country. The FBI continues to strengthen partnerships with Tribal law enforcement and communities through our 30 Safe Trails Task Forces, two of which were established under my tenure, spanning 16 FBI field offices where violent crime, drug trafficking, fraud, and public corruption in Indian Country are rampant. Since being sworn in, I have attended over 18 tribal events, including unveiling the Billings Field Office in December 2025 to further strengthen Tribal partnerships in Montana's Indian Country.

Cartels

Pursuant to President Trump's Executive Order 14159, "Protecting the American People Against Invasion," the FBI joined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in co-leading 59 Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) nationwide, with a combined roster of more than 9,000 Federal agents, Task Force Officers (TFOs), and analysts. The HSTFs bring together over 20 federal agencies and 440 state, local, and international law enforcement partners in a whole-of-government model. The creation of the HSTF represents the partnership, combining federal, state, and local resources and integrating U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) and Department of War (DoW) information into a whole-of-government approach to dismantle the most prolific TOC-FTOs operating globally. The Administration's foreign terrorist organization (FTO) designations are an example of how the government is more united than ever. The FBI – which has unique authorities and tools available to us to counter both violent crime and terrorism – is empowered to use counterterrorism tools to combat cartels and gangs, who are terrorizing our communities.

Since the establishment of the FTO designations of cartels, the FBI has over 2,200 ongoing investigations related to the 22 designated cartels and transnational gangs, and since January 2026, the FBI has made over 1,300 arrests. To illustrate the power of the FTO designations and the HSTFs, from August 25 to October 7, 2025, HSTF participating agencies surged in a unified approach to combat Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) in the United States and around the world. Those surge efforts resulting in 400 operations, 3,266 federal arrests, 91 metric tons of drug seizures, 1,067 weapons seized, and over \$3.2 million in seized U.S. currency.

Fraud and Scams

The FBI is aggressively working to address the fraud and scam activities impacting Americans, much of which is being conducted by actors virtually and overseas. The FBI is a key leader supporting Executive Order 14390, "Combating Cybercrime, Fraud, and Predatory Schemes Against American Citizens," which mandates a whole-of-government approach to prevent, disrupt, and dismantle Cyber-Enabled Fraud actors, scam compounds, and the TCOs operating them. The FBI is coordinating efforts to support the mission with personnel embedded

in the HSTF National Coordination Center (NCC), HSTF investigative squads around the country, as well as forward-deployed Law Enforcement Attaché Offices.

On June 4, 2026, the FBI created the Most Wanted Fraudsters list to publicly identify individuals charged with defrauding the American people. Within two months of launching the list, the FBI arrested four subjects across three continents. Other efforts to combat fraud include Take a Beat to raise public awareness, our IC3 Recovery Asset Team who work directly with financial institutions to freeze fraudulent wire transfers, Operation Level Up which uses sophisticated techniques to identify victims who are actively being defrauded, increased foreign engagement to combat the global nature of modern fraud with over 60 countries, and fortifying relationships with the private sector.

Additionally, the FBI launched Operation Blackout, a global campaign to identify, disrupt, and dismantle large-scale international scam compounds and the criminal networks that operate them. This year the campaign resulted in more than \$15 billion in seized illicit assets, arrests of over 300 individuals, and significant disruption of criminal infrastructure, including the disabling of internet terminals used by scam syndicates across Southeast Asia and the Middle East. In April 2026, the FBI—working with partners in Dubai and China—executed the largest FBI-led scam compound takedown in history. Nine compounds were raided, over 300 individuals arrested, and thousands of devices were seized.

Counterterrorism

For more than a century, the FBI has occupied a critical role in defending the Homeland from terrorism threats. Domestic terrorists motivated by a range of ideologies exploit a variety of popular social media platforms, smaller websites with targeted audiences, and encrypted chat applications. They leverage these platforms to recruit, plan and garner support, and disseminate materials encouraging radicalization and mobilization to violence. The greatest domestic violent extremism threats we currently face is from anti-authority violent extremists (AGAAVE), nihilistic violent extremists (NVEs), and racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (REMVE). NVEs, threat actors driven by hostility toward society and a desire to destabilize it through chaos and destruction, pose a growing threat—with about an 85% increase in cases just this year.

The FBI remains committed to protecting the public from domestic terrorism as reflected in the recent disruption of eight extremists who were plotting an attack on government officials and others at the UFC Freedom 250 event in Washington, DC; securing a combined 450-year sentence for eight North Texas Antifa cell operatives who rioted and used weapons and explosives to attack law enforcement and federal facilities at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center; and the arraignment of the first minor charged under the Juvenile Delinquency Act (JDA) for child sexual exploitation and CSAM distribution in an NVE case.

In September 2025, President Trump signed National Security Presidential Memorandum-7 (NSPM-7), directing the FBI and our Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) to coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to investigate, prosecute, and disrupt entities and individuals engaged in acts of political violence and intimidation designed to suppress lawful political activity or obstruct the rule of law. As a result, the FBI now oversees the recently

created NSPM-7 Joint Mission Center (JMC), which is composed of personnel from 10 agencies possessing counterterrorism and criminal operations and analytic expertise. The JMC is actively working to counter domestic terrorism and organized political violence by integrating intelligence, operational support, and financial analysis to proactively identify networks and prosecute domestic terrorists and related criminal actors. In total, JMC efforts to date have resulted in over 200 total arrests and more than 250 indictments or judicial complaints. The FBI has also created the NVE Fusion Cell, a centralized, cross-programmatic entity where our counterterrorism and violent crimes against children experts are co-located to tackle the growing threat, and work with FVEY and EU partners to disrupt and dismantle networks in the United States and abroad.

International terrorists continue to pose one of the most immediate threats to the Homeland. The greatest international terrorism threat we currently face is from homegrown violent extremists (HVE). HVEs inspired by violent extremist ideologies aspire to carry out attacks in the United States or travel overseas to participate in terrorist activity. Meanwhile, the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) continues to seek direct confrontation with the United States and will exploit any opportunity to attack the Homeland or our interests. Al-Qa'ida senior leadership and its affiliates continue to issue statements and publish media calling for attacks against the United States, some of which include guidance on how to acquire materials and ways to conduct attacks. Similarly, Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) also threatens U.S. officials and encourage lone actor attacks. The FBI continues to monitor the Government of Iran's intent to pursue violent efforts within the United States. In recent years, we have disrupted multiple Iranian plots targeting U.S. officials and activists living in the United States. The FBI's Iran Threats Mission Center—a cross-programmatic effort between the FBI's Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence and Espionage, and Cyber Divisions—has been working to synchronize intelligence and operations to increase our understanding of the Iranian threat, in line with the President's direction in National Security Presidential Memorandum-2.

Our Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) continue to aggressively work to prevent terrorist attacks on the Homeland; stationed in all 56 field offices and composed of federal, state, and local law enforcement working together under one roof to combat the threats from a variety of groups, including Iranian proxies. The most significant demonstration of the FBI's dedication to protecting the Homeland from international terrorism threats was through the four major disruptions accomplished all within December 2025 around the holiday season—the Turtle Island Liberation Front Attack in which the FBI arrested four members of a far-left, anti-capitalist, anti-government group who were organizing a New Year's Eve bombing plot targeting U.S. businesses across Southern California; the arrest and disruption of an ISIS sympathizer in Texas, who was intending to provide bombmaking material to a foreign terrorist organization; the disruption of an individual in North Carolina who allegedly wanted to be a soldier for ISIS and made plans to commit a violent, ISIS-inspired, mass casualty attack on New Year's Eve; and the arrest of an individual in Pennsylvania who had been researching ISIS propaganda to use in an explosives attack campaign.

So far in 2026, the FBI has had 1,900 domestic terrorism cases and made 240 arrests, as well as 2,600 international terrorism cases and 109 arrests. Just within the first 18 months under my leadership, the FBI has had over 2000 foreign terrorist organization (FTO) designation-related investigations, more than 4,200 FTO-related arrests, which is a 42% increase, 55 FTOs

dismantled, which is a 96% increase, over 1,145 arrests of counterterrorism subjects, a 3% increase, more than 386 firearms seized, 392 counterterrorism convictions, a 3% increase, and 1,097 disruptions, a 19% increase, over 500 pending nihilistic violent extremism cases, which is a 41% increase; all of which are increases from the 18 months prior. (*Note: FTO stats include counterterrorism FTOs and transnational criminal organization FTOs.*)

The FBI continues to anchor the national counter-unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS) effort. Through our National C-UAS Training Center in Huntsville, Alabama, we have certified hundreds of state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners against a shared national standard and those officers worked roughly 80% of the operational hours across World Cup counter-drone missions. Over the course of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, FBI deployed 5,000 personnel, conducted over 300,000 background checks, seized over 700 drones, and supported 104 matches with approximately 6.8 million attendees. More than a year of preparation made that possible, and it positions the FBI well for what is ahead with the 2028 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California.

Cyber

Cyber espionage, theft, and outright attack from both nation-states and criminal groups continue to escalate against the United States. Increasingly, state actors make common cause with financially driven hackers, producing a blended threat that the FBI—uniquely holding both criminal and intelligence authorities—is built to counter. This is not just an abstract problem. Ordinary Americans feel it directly through identity theft, hijacked accounts, business email compromise, and cyberstalking. In 2025, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) received over 1 million complaints which documented overall cybercrime losses of nearly \$21 billion. IC3 reports by victims reflect almost \$57 million in ransomware losses so far in 2026. The rise of cryptocurrencies enables these criminal actors to acquire tools, collaborate, and launder their proceeds in new and challenging ways that are outside the regulatory framework.

The People's Republic of China (PRC), and in particular the operators that grew out of the publicly tracked Salt Typhoon campaign, keep pressing to breach telecommunications infrastructure and other critical networks. Alongside CISA, NSA, and industry, the FBI has dismantled a number of persistent-access operations aimed at both government and private systems. Other adversaries—the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, and Russia—remain active in cyber espionage, in enabling ransomware, and in pre-positioning on U.S. critical infrastructure for use in a future crisis or conflict.

The FBI's Cyber Strategy is in full alignment with the Administration's Cyber Strategy for America, specifically focused on four of the six pillars: Shape Adversary Behavior, Secure Critical Infrastructure, Sustain Superiority in Critical and Emerging Technologies, and Build Talent and Capacity. Through this strategy, the FBI imposes costs on cyber adversaries through unique authorities, world-class capabilities, and enduring partnerships. Human and technical resources enable the FBI and our partners to defend networks, attribute malicious activity, sanction bad behavior, and attack adversaries overseas. The FBI has also elevated the leadership, engagement, and coordination assets of the FBI-led, multiagency National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force (NCIJTF), creating new mission centers based on key cyber threat areas.

In support of President Trump’s Executive Order 14390, “Combating Cybercrime, Fraud, and Predatory Schemes Against the American People,” and the National Cyber Strategy, Operation Riptide demonstrated the impact of sustained, coordinated action, including participating with our partners in 13 joint sequenced operations, making over 200 arrests, freezing/seizing over \$23 million in illicit cryptocurrency and other funds, and initiating the return of \$31 million in virtual assets stolen by North Korean cybercriminals. The FBI has also launched Operation Winter SHIELD, a first-of-its-kind 60-day campaign to drive measurable progress across industry, government, and critical infrastructure. All 56 field offices were engaged in the campaign and conducted over 600 engagements across 14 critical infrastructure sectors.

So far in 2026, the FBI has made 152 cyber arrests, which is a 9% increase; had its cases support the return of 184 indictments resulting in 86 convictions; has taken significant action in the fight against ransomware, resulting in 9 ransomware convictions, which is an 800% increase, 35 ransomware charges, which is a 192% increase, 333 ransomware cases, which is a 17% increase; has disrupted 224 malicious cyber operations, which is an 8% increase; and has dismantled 13 Business Email Compromised networks, criminal enterprises, and criminal marketplaces and forums; all of which are increases from the same time in 2025. Just within the first 18 months under President Trump’s and my leadership, the FBI had \$1.03 billion in attempted theft thwarted by the FBI’s Recovery Asset Team, which is a 16% increase, \$273 million in illicit cybercriminal funds seized or frozen, over 3,000 criminal domains shut down, 50 cyber actors extradited, which is a 32% increase, 497 hackers charged with crimes, which is a 6% increase, and 34 cybercriminal enterprises dismantled, which is a 21% increase; all of which are increases from the 18 months prior.

Counterintelligence

Counterintelligence operations against Nation-state adversaries mitigate grievous risk to U.S. national security. U.S. adversaries, including Russia, the PRC, and Iran continue to undermine our core institutions, and they are becoming more aggressive and more capable. Our adversaries target U.S. national defense information, attempt to recruit former or current federal employees and military members to obtain sensitive information, gain insight into decision making, create vectors for foreign malign influence, and undermine U.S. intelligence operations. Guarding against the intelligence services of hostile states is indispensable to national security. Russia, the PRC, and Iran are all working to erode our institutions, and each is growing bolder and more capable. They pursue our defense secrets, court current and former federal and military personnel for access, seek to shape our decisions, open channels for foreign malign influence, and try to blunt our own intelligence work. It is also hard to overstate the economic-espionage threat from the PRC. We have open investigations in all 56 field offices, and we are making real headway defending American breakthroughs in semiconductors, biotechnology, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence.

The FBI’s National Counterintelligence Task Force (NCITF) and multiple FBI-led, field-based Counterintelligence Task Forces (CITFs) drive a whole-of-government approach to addressing counterintelligence matters, combining the authorities of the Intelligence Community with our Federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners. The FBI also continues to facilitate robust engagements with the private sector to aid us in understanding and

mitigating risks to critical infrastructure and to protect our intellectual property from adversaries. Additionally, as we approach the midterm elections, the FBI remains committed and will continue to thoroughly investigate election crimes and credible threats to local, state, and federal election officials and infrastructure across the country.

So far in fiscal year 2026, the FBI has made 72 counterintelligence-related arrests, a 9% increase over this period in fiscal year 2025; and has removed over 80 foreign intelligence actors from the United States, a 125% increase since fiscal year 2025. Just within the first 18 months under my leadership and President Trump's, the FBI has made over 130 overall counterintelligence arrests, which is a 52% increase, 60 PRC related arrests, an 88% increase, 25 Global arrests, a 25% increase, 17 Iran related arrests, a 55% increase, 29 Russia related arrests, a 26% increase, and close to 400 counterintelligence and espionage disruptions; all of which are increases from the 18 months prior. Over the past year we also charged seven Chinese researchers with trying to smuggle biological material into the country, five of whom have since been deported.

The FBI remains aggressive in the counterintelligence space, which has been demonstrated through some of our recent successes. In February, the FBI arrested a former U.S. Air Force pilot accused of supplying unauthorized defense information to Chinese military aviators—a betrayal that put both our service members and our national security at risk. This January, the FBI assisted in securing its first AI-related theft of trade secrets conviction, against a Google engineer who attempted to funnel trade-secret AI technology to China. The FBI had several different cases where we disrupted various individuals who were circumventing export control laws to sell advanced U.S. technology, research and military-grade weapons and ammunition to Russia and Iran, respectively.

Reforms, Accountability, and Transparency

Title VII of FISA, which has been a keystone in maintaining the security of the American people through irreplaceable intelligence since Congress first enacted it in 2008, lapsed earlier this year. Therefore, the FBI reiterates the need to reauthorize Title VII of FISA, including Section 702, before November 20. As you know, Section 702 enables the government to target foreigners abroad through judicially-approved procedures and is critical to assessing the threats by both nonstate actors—like drug cartels poisoning thousands of Americans and cyber actors targeting our critical infrastructure—and state adversaries. This critical national security tool cannot be replaced by other legal authorities or open-source investigative tools and methods. The FBI has implemented approximately the 56 reforms as required by Congress under RISAA. During my tenure, we have improved our query standard compliance rate from 82% in 2020, to higher than 99% in 2025, implemented a continuous double audit – one by FBI's Office of Internal Audits and one by DOJ, cut user access to the FISA 702 database data by 50%, further restricted US Person Queries approvals to attorneys only, and terminated employees who have intentionally misused the FISA 702 database. We remain committed to being transparent with Congress on our use of FISA Section 702.

We recognize our obligation to keep Congress fully informed of our work to ensure this FBI is transparent and accountable to the American people. Since January 2025, we have delivered over 47,000 pages of documents to various congressional oversight committees with

jurisdiction over the FBI on a myriad of topics, including more than 17,033 pages of productions to this Committee alone.

In conclusion, the threats we face as a Nation have never been greater or more diverse and the expectations placed on the FBI have never been higher. The members of this committee are important partners in our fight against every threat out there – and in our efforts to build trust and credibility.

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.