



## Portland Police Bureau Report to City Council on the Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) - 2021

On May 8, 2019, the Portland City Council adopted Resolution 37424 (As Amended)<sup>i</sup> (referred to herein as “resolution”), Establish Parameters of Cooperation between Portland Police Bureau (PPB) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Joint Terrorism Task Force (FBI JTTF)<sup>ii</sup>.

The resolution states, in part, that by the end of January, a report to City Council shall contain the following information:

- The frequency with which the FBI’s Special Agent in Charge requested the assignment of PPB CIU officers for an investigation;
- The number of cases that were referred to the PPB by the FBI;
- The number of cases that were referred to the FBI by the PPB; and,
- The nature of closed cases referred to the PPB by the FBI, including the demographics of persons investigated; and, the disposition of those cases.

### Overview

The mission of the Portland Police Bureau<sup>iii</sup> is to reduce crime and the fear of crime. The PPB works with all community members to preserve life, maintain human rights, protect property and promote individual responsibility and community commitment.

The parameters of cooperation between the PPB and the FBI JTTF, as defined in the resolution, are consistent with this mission statement.

After passage of the resolution and as required by the resolution, the PPB created Directive 750.00, Bureau Cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Joint Terrorism Task Force.<sup>iv</sup> This directive, made effective January 2, 2020, is consistent with the resolution and all PPB officers are required to read and sign their acknowledgement of this directive. This directive is subject to annual public review, with outreach to City Council offices to solicit additional feedback.

On January 12, 2021, all PPB CIU members attended annual refresher training with a member of the Portland City Attorney’s Office to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws. This training is required as part of the resolution. On February 4, 2020, the City Attorney’s Office sent a letter to the Oregon Department of Justice to confer on whether or not there were any legal issues



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with PPB officers working with the JTTF, based on changes to state or federal law. The Oregon Department of Justice responded in writing, stating, "The Oregon Department of Justice is prohibited by ORS 180.060 (3) from providing legal advice to an entity which is not the State of Oregon. We believe that conferring with the City of Portland on the legal question posed would be providing legal advice to the City of Portland. For this reason, consistent with ORS 180.060 (3), DOJ must respectfully deny your request."

The City Attorney's Office has advised the PPB CIU that they are not aware of any changes in state or federal law that would preclude them from legally working with the JTTF in any capacity.

## **2021 Statistical and Information Report to City Council**

Presented below are the four areas required to be presented in this annual report:

### **The frequency with which the FBI's Special Agent in Charge (SAC) requested the assignment of PPB CIU officers for an investigation**

The FBI SAC requested the assignment of PPB CIU officers for criminal investigations three times in 2020, covering a total of six (6) cases. These cases remain open investigations.

### **The number of cases that were referred to the PPB by the FBI:**

In 2020, the FBI JTTF referred four (4) cases to the PPB. In accordance with the resolution, these cases were shared with the PPB CIU for review and investigative action, which is summarized in later paragraphs.

### **The number of cases that were referred to the FBI by the PPB**

In 2020, PPB CIU referred six (6) cases to the FBI JTTF for review. The nature of these cases included threats to public officials; threats of targeted violence; and, a bomb threat. PPB officers took initial reports and conducted preliminary investigation. The demographic information about all the involved subjects were white males.<sup>v</sup> One of these cases, a bomb threat, resulted in an arrest in Seattle, Washington.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Nature of Closed Cases Referred to the PPB by the FBI (including demographics of persons investigated; and the disposition of those cases)**

The following outlines each case referred to the PPB by the FBI that fits the described criteria:



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## **Case 1<sup>vii</sup>**

Report of person affiliated with an anarchist extremist group targeting a person affiliated with a racially motivated violent extremist group for potential violence.

White Male (identified)

Case Closed – No Credible Threat Information Located - Not a Criminal Offense

## **Case 2<sup>viii</sup>**

Report of person expressing racially motivated violent extremist ideology online and expressing a desire to acquire parts for an assault rifle and tactical gear.

White Male (identified)

Case Closed – Subject Interviewed - Not a Criminal Offense

## **Case 3<sup>ix</sup>**

Report of person expressing desire to manufacture tear gas, burn solutions, and smoke bombs.

White Male (identified)

Case Closed – Subject Interviewed – Not a Criminal Offense

## **Case 4<sup>x</sup>**

Report of information regarding an assault that occurred during a protest in Downtown Portland.

White Males (two suspects – identified)

Case Closed – Information already known by Portland Police Bureau detectives - Arrests

## **Case(s) from Previous Year**

The 2020 JTTF report had one case (Case 10) that was open at the end of the year. That case remains open with another jurisdiction and may be included in the 2022 JTTF report.

## **PPB Oversight and Improving Processes in 2021**

The Chief of Police or the Deputy Chief serves as the liaison to the FBI JTTF may be granted the appropriate security clearance by the FBI to allow for full oversight of any investigation and case review referred to or from the FBI. The CIU sergeant maintains a security clearance for full oversight. PPB CIU officers that could be assigned to an FBI investigation are subject to all relevant federal, state, and local laws; all PPB directives (policies); and relevant federal regulations. Violation of any of these



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could prompt an investigation resulting in discipline up to and including termination. Legal violations could also result in a criminal investigation and prosecution.

The Chief of Police regularly communicates with the CIU supervisor to review any and all information related to information referred to or from the FBI JTTF to ensure continued compliance with the spirit and letter of the resolution.

The PPB will also review all feedback after the delivery of this report and work to incorporate constructive changes where applicable and appropriate to the 2022 report.

## **Conclusion**

Protecting the City of Portland and those who live, work, pray, play, and visit is the responsibility of the PPB; however, the PPB cannot do it alone and works with other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to investigate threats to life, including hate crimes, and suspected cases of terrorism.

Threats to life, hate crimes, and terrorism (both domestic and international) are a national and global challenge that require coordination and information sharing between law enforcement agencies. Identifying those planning to commit a criminal act, and more specifically an act of terrorism, and employing interdiction strategies to prevent an attack, is a top priority.

The COVID-19 pandemic that began in early-2020, combined with racial justice events and civil unrest that followed the homicide of George Floyd in Minneapolis, led to an increase in extremist rhetoric<sup>xi</sup> and violence in the United States, including Portland. This trend seems likely to continue into 2021, given the current state of the pandemic and political and social division in the United States. The threat of domestic terrorism, particularly that of racially motivated violent extremists and politically motivated violent extremists, is a significant and growing concern both within law enforcement and the communities we serve. Additionally, the threat of targeted violence by lone actors, also known as a lone wolf attack<sup>xii</sup>, and attacks on critical infrastructure, like rail lines or telecommunications<sup>xiii</sup>, remain an ongoing concern.

A December 21, 2020, article in *The Washington Post* titled, "2020 Appears to be a Good Year for Counterterrorism," highlighted that there were no foreign terror organization attacks in the United States in 2020 and, "despite the grim headlines, the actual number of deaths from white supremacists and other domestic terrorists is small."<sup>xiv</sup>



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While this is indeed good news, there were a number of incidents in 2020 (and early 2021) that were significant and potentially linked to domestic and international terrorism, including the plot to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer; the storming of the United States Capitol Building<sup>xv</sup>; shootings and violence during social justice protest events (including Portland)<sup>xvi</sup>; a plot by white supremacists to attack the US power grid<sup>xvii</sup>; and, the indictment of a Portland-area man for producing and disseminating propaganda which encouraged attacks and sought recruits on behalf of ISIS.<sup>xviii</sup>

A December 29, 2020, article by the *Associated Press* titled, "In a Year of Pain, One Silver Lining: Fewer Mass Shootings," highlighted the good news that 2020 saw a dramatic drop in mass shootings.<sup>xix</sup> According to the story, experts believe the drop is linked to the public lockdowns during the pandemic, which limited large groups of people gathering in schools, workplaces, and public areas. At some point in 2021, it is likely that people will begin to return to regular activities and gatherings, which may result in a return of these horrible acts of targeted, mass violence.

The PPB, and our law enforcement and community partners, must continue to work to assess and investigate these threats to life, hate crimes, and acts of terrorism, and work to interdict and prevent violence from occurring in our communities.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/732572>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/portland/news/stories/portland-fbis-joint-terrorism-task-force-jtff-111318>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/750902>

<sup>v</sup> This summary, while not specifically required by the resolution, is being provided in the interests of transparency.

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdwa/pr/seattle-man-arrested-making-bomb-threat-portland-oregon-police-precinct>

<sup>vii</sup> PPB Case #20-800266

<sup>viii</sup> PPB Case #20-800407

<sup>ix</sup> PPB Case #20-188852

<sup>x</sup> PPB Case #800837

<sup>xi</sup> <https://institute.global/policy/snapshot-how-extremist-groups-are-responding-covid-19-11-june-2020>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://cbsn.ws/34SnhMq>

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://wapo.st/2X6yVPT>

<sup>xiv</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/12/21/2020-appears-be-good-year-counterterrorism/>

<sup>xv</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/06/us/washington-dc-protests>

<sup>xvi</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/US/deaths-connected-protests-story-complicated/story?id=72724790>

<sup>xvii</sup> <https://www.cbs42.com/news/national/fbi-white-supremacists-plotted-attack-on-us-power-grid/>

<sup>xviii</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/oregon-case-reflects-extremists-online-presence-74863970>

<sup>xix</sup> <https://bit.ly/2WVQQIL>