

Terrorism and Targeted Violence (T2V) in the United States: Database Overview

OVERVIEW

This research brief provides an overview of 1,306 terrorism and targeted violence crimes that were committed in the United States from January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024. The data for this brief come from the forthcoming Terrorism and Targeted Violence (T2V) in the United States database, which includes comprehensive information on foiled, failed, and successful attacks in the U.S. and its territories that were designed to have a significant impact on public safety or the security of critical infrastructure and key resources. The T2V data include terrorism events, premeditated hate crimes, school-based targeted violence, workplace targeted violence, and public mass violence events that were motivated by personal grievances. This brief provides descriptions of the key concepts and inclusion criteria that are used to compile the T2V data. The brief also provides general statistics on the number of terrorism and targeted violence events and their corresponding casualties that occurred from the start of 2023 through the end of July 2024.

KEY TERMS¹

► **Targeted Violence** The T2V project uses the definition of targeted violence found in the Department of Homeland Security's 2019 Strategic Framework: "Any incident of violence that implicates homeland security and/or U.S. Department of Homeland Security activities, and in which a known or knowable attacker selects a particular target prior to the violent attack. Unlike terrorism, targeted violence includes attacks otherwise lacking a clearly discernible political, ideological, or religious motivation, but that are of such severity and magnitude as to suggest an intent to inflict a degree of mass injury, destruction, or death commensurate with known terrorist tactics. In the Homeland, targeted violence has a significant impact on the safety and security of our communities, schools, places of worship, and other public gatherings."²

► **Successful Attack** Premeditated attacks in which the perpetrators successfully deployed weapons (e.g., explosive devices were detonated, or shots were fired).

► **Failed Attack** Premeditated violent attacks in which the perpetrators failed to successfully deploy weapons due to technical malfunctions or operational errors.

► **Foiled Plot** Premeditated plots to commit violent attacks or property crimes that were interrupted by law enforcement during their planning stages.

► **Terrorism** The T2V project used the Global Terrorism Database (GTD)'s definition of terrorism: "The threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a nonstate actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation."³

► **Premeditated Hate Crime** The T2V data include hate crimes that meet the FBI's definition of hate crime: "criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity."⁴ However, T2V also requires clear evidence that the perpetrators of the crimes selected their targets *before* committing the attacks.

► **Public Mass Violence** A violent plot or attack in which the perpetrator(s) intended to harm, or successfully harmed, four or more victims because of a personal grievance unrelated to a political ideology, hate or bias, or the dynamics present in a workplace or school.

► **Other Targeted Violence** A plot or attack in which the perpetrators intended to damage, or successfully damaged, critical infrastructure, or intended to harm, or successfully harmed, three or less victims because of a personal grievance unrelated to a political ideology, hate or bias, or the dynamics present in a workplace or school.

¹ Crimes in the data can be classified according to multiple event types (e.g., an event can be both an act of terrorism and a premeditated hate crime).

² https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plcy_strategic-framework-counterterrorism-targeted-violence.pdf

³ <http://apps.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>

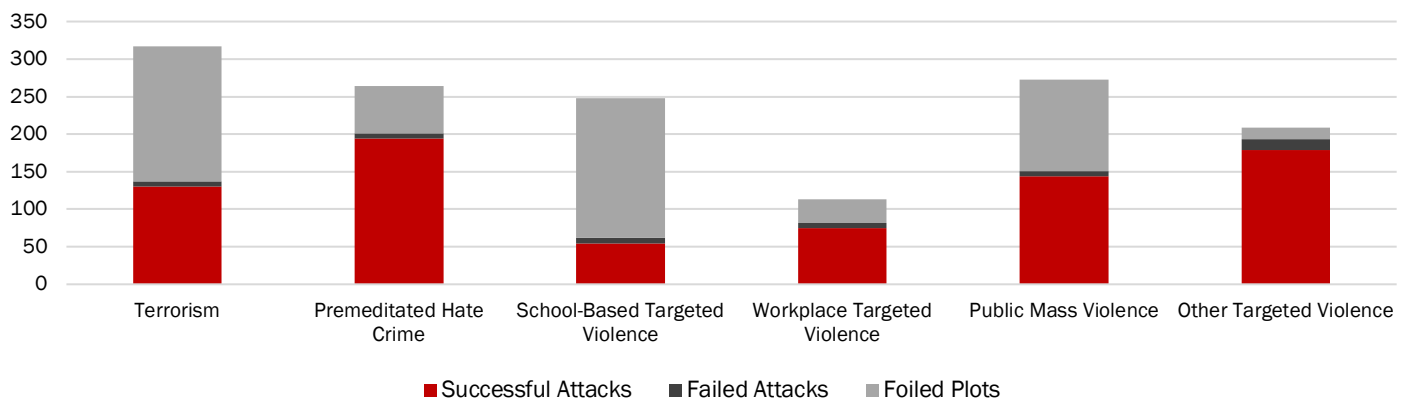
INCLUSION CRITERIA

- ▶ The T2V database includes successful, failed, and foiled events that meet the following inclusion criteria:
 - A premeditated act that is dangerous to, or potentially dangerous to, human life or the security of critical infrastructure or key resources and involves a degree of planning and a target;
 - Is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any subdivision of the United States;
 - Is intended to intimidate, coerce, or otherwise impact a broader population beyond the target(s) of the immediate act or to generate publicity for the perpetrator and/or their grievances;
 - And occurs within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.
- ▶ The T2V data include terrorism events, premeditated hate crimes, targeted violence occurring in school and workplace settings, public mass violence, and other forms of property crimes and low casualty violence motivated by personal grievances that impact public safety and critical infrastructure.
- ▶ The T2V data do not include events linked to gang activity, organized crime, prison violence, interpersonal or intimate partner violence, crimes with a purely financial motive, or hate crimes that were spontaneous or otherwise unplanned by the perpetrator prior to the event.
- ▶ However, the database *does* include interpersonal or intimate partner violence when the perpetrator of the attack deliberately targets other people in their proximity with whom they had no previous relationship (e.g., an interpersonal dispute that was a precursor event to a mass shooting).
- ▶ For foiled plots to be included in the data, there must be evidence that the perpetrator(s) had identified a potential target or targets for the attack and engaged in at least one mobilization activity in preparation for committing the crime. This could include acquiring a weapon or the components necessary to assemble a weapon, surveilling a target, raising funds for the attack, recruiting others to participate in the attack, or writing a manifesto or preparing other legacy tokens to be released prior to, or discovered after, an attack.
- ▶ Threats that do not involve at least one mobilization indicator or are described as “hoaxes” or “not credible” by reliable sources are not included in T2V even if they resulted in criminal charges.
- ▶ All data for T2V are compiled using public sources, including high quality news accounts and public court records. The data discussed in this brief are preliminary and subject to change.

SUMMARY OF T2V OUTCOMES BY EVENT TYPE

Terrorism and Targeted Violence Events by Outcome

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



- ▶ There were 1,306 terrorism and targeted violence incidents in the United States that qualified for inclusion in the T2V database from January 1, 2023, to July 31, 2024.
- ▶ This is an average of 68.7 terrorism and targeted violence incidents per month, or 2.26 events per day, over the 19-month period under review.
- ▶ Considering all incidents in the T2V data, the most common outcomes during this period were successful attacks (55.1% of cases) and foiled plots (41.3% of cases). Failed attacks were rare, occurring just 3.6% of the time.
- ▶ The only types of incidents in the T2V data during this period that were more likely to result in foiled plots than successful attacks were school-based targeted violence and terrorism events.

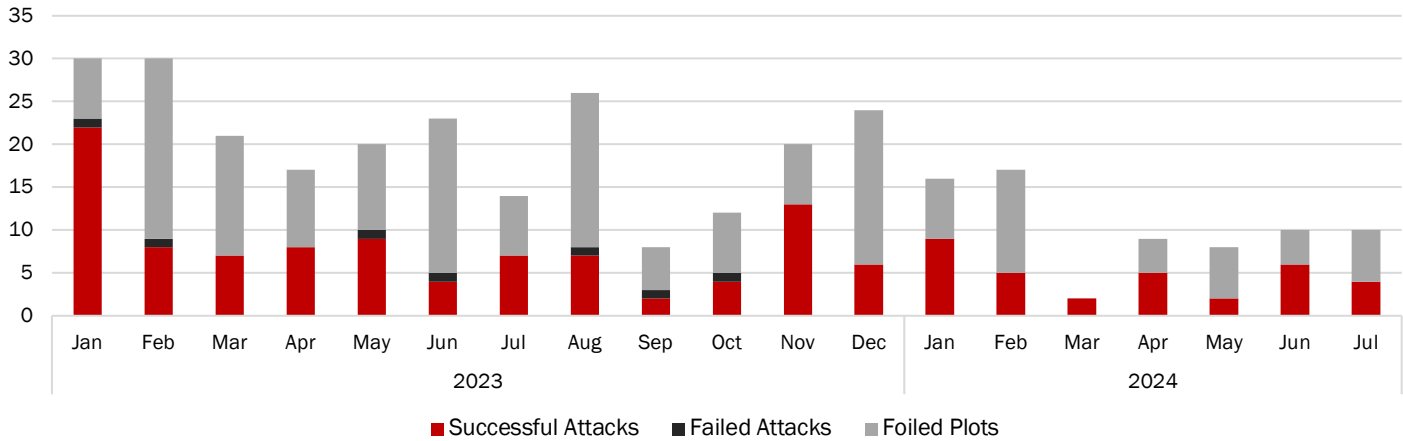
- ▶ During the period under review, 271 victims were killed and 477 were injured in terrorism and targeted violence events in the United States.
- ▶ In addition to these casualties, 61 perpetrators died as a result of their actions, and 29 others were injured.

- ▶ The deadliest incident during this period was a coordinated series of two mass shootings in Maine in October 2023 that resulted in 18 victim deaths and 13 injuries.

TERRORISM

Terrorism Events

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



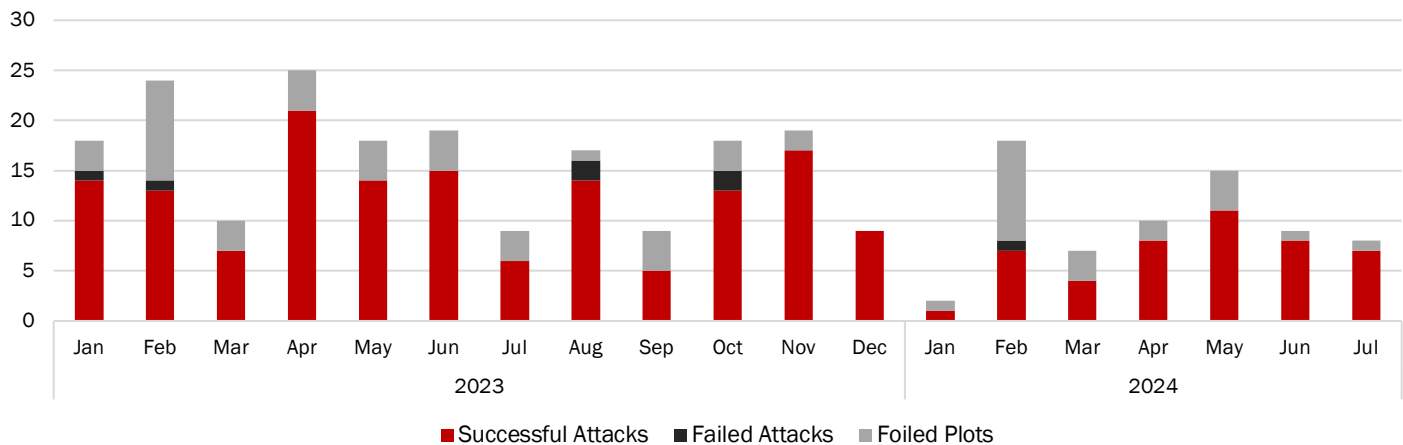
- ▶ From January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, 317 incidents in the T2V data were categorized as terrorism—an average of approximately 17 events per month.
- ▶ These events resulted in 41 victim deaths and 66 victim injuries.
- ▶ Twelve perpetrators were killed these events, and one other was wounded.
- ▶ Overall, terrorism incidents are more likely to be foiled (56.8%) than to result in successful attacks (41%). Only 2.2% of terrorism incidents during this period are coded as failed attacks.

- ▶ While most terrorism cases in the T2V data are coded as foiled plots, January 2023 had a noticeably higher proportion of successful terrorist incidents than other months in the data. Some of this is attributable to a relatively high proportion of incidents committed by a small set of perpetrators.
- ▶ For example, of the 22 successful terrorism incidents in January 2023, 36.4% of cases were committed by two unrelated actors: 1) an individual who committed a spree of attacks on the same day and 2) a group of co-offenders who perpetrated several crimes at different times during the month.

PREMEDITATED HATE CRIMES

Premeditated Hate Crimes

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



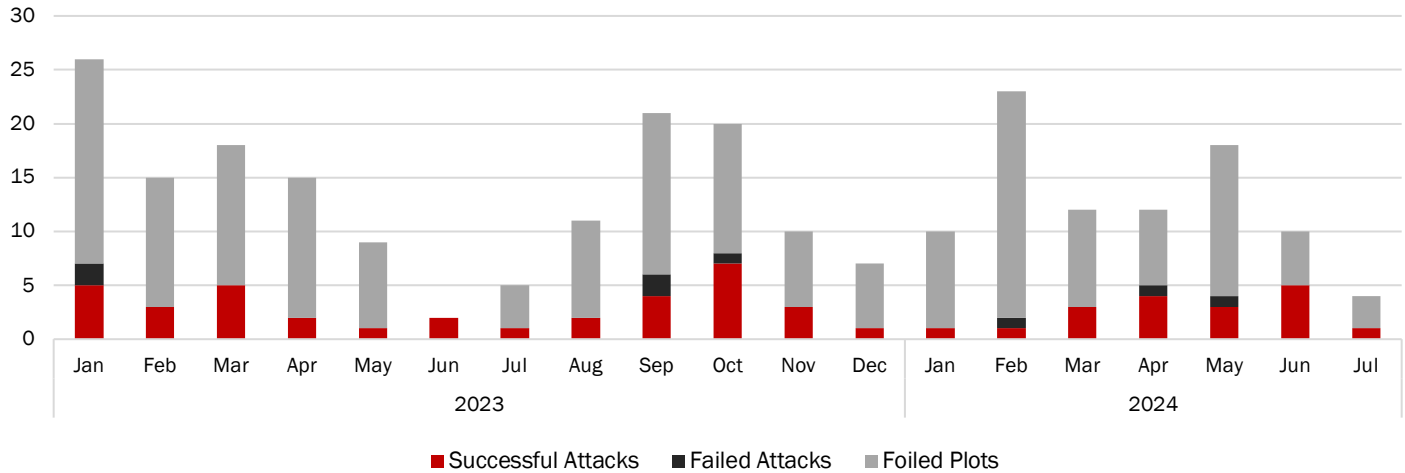
- ▶ From January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, there were 264 incidents categorized as premeditated hate crimes in the T2V data—an average of approximately 14 incidents per month.
- ▶ These events resulted in 51 victim deaths and 136 victim injuries. Five perpetrators were wounded due to their actions, and three were killed.

- ▶ Cases categorized as premeditated hate crimes have a high rate of success, with 73.5% resulting in successful attacks.
- ▶ Just under 25% of premeditated hate crime cases were foiled, and only 2.7% failed during an attack attempt.
- ▶ This holds across time, with successful premeditated hate crimes outpacing foiled and failed incidents in all but two months in the T2V data (January 2024 and February 2024).

SCHOOL-BASED TARGETED VIOLENCE

School-Based Targeted Violence Events

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



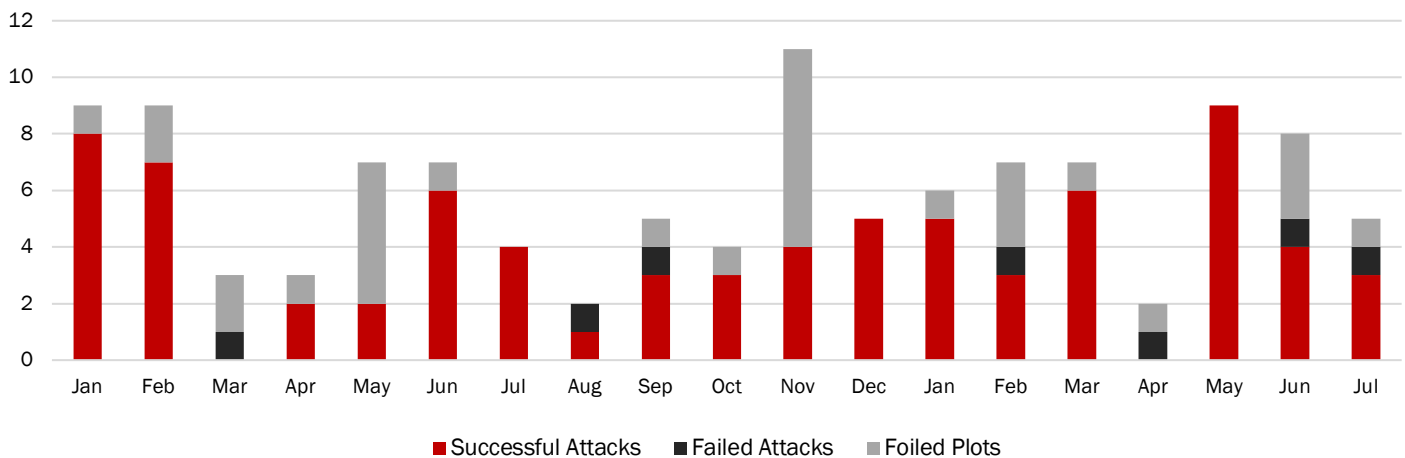
- ▶ From January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, there were 248 incidents categorized as school-based targeted violence in the T2V data—an average of 13 incidents per month.
- ▶ These attacks resulted in 19 victim deaths and 64 victim injuries. Seven perpetrators were killed due to their crimes, and two were injured.
- ▶ A large majority of these cases—75%—were foiled before an attack attempt could occur, and 3.2% of school-based

- targeted violence incidents failed during an attempted attack.
- ▶ Despite a high overall failure rate, 54 school-based targeted violence incidents (an average of almost three per month) resulted in successful attacks.
- ▶ This suggests that these types of incidents continue to pose a significant public safety risk.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace Targeted Violence Events

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



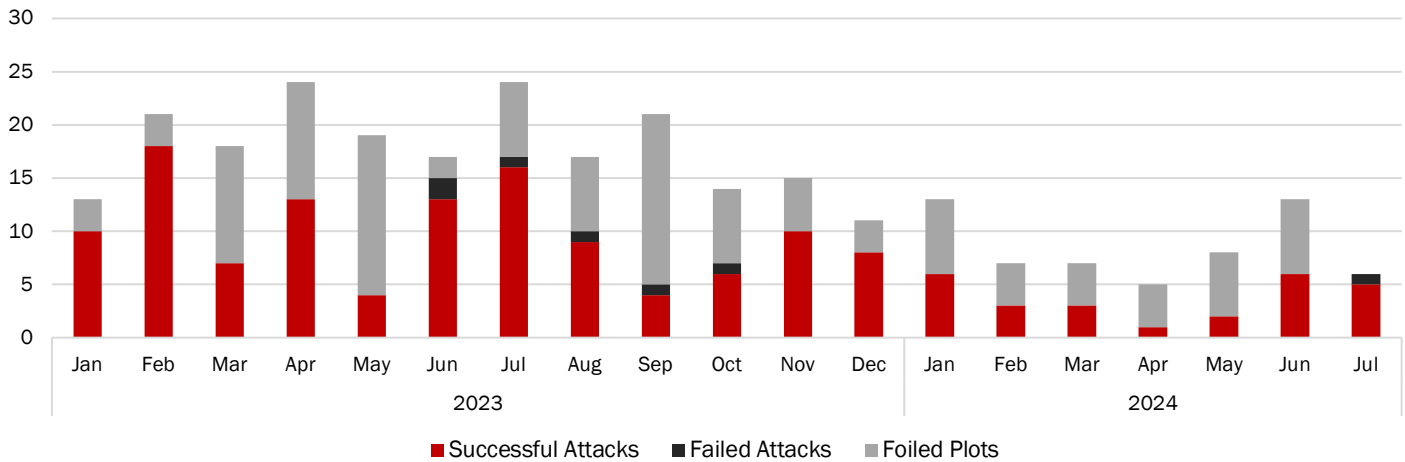
- ▶ During the 19 months from January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, 113 workplace targeted violence events occurred in the United States—an average of approximately six incidents per month.
- ▶ These incidents resulted in 50 victim fatalities, 40 victim injuries, 14 perpetrator deaths, and two perpetrator injuries.

- ▶ Incidents in the T2V data categorized as workplace targeted violence events had high success rates, with over 66% of these cases resulting in successful attacks.
- ▶ Only 27.4% of these incidents were foiled, and just 6.2% of attempted workplace targeted violence attacks failed.

PUBLIC MASS VIOLENCE

Public Mass Violence Events

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



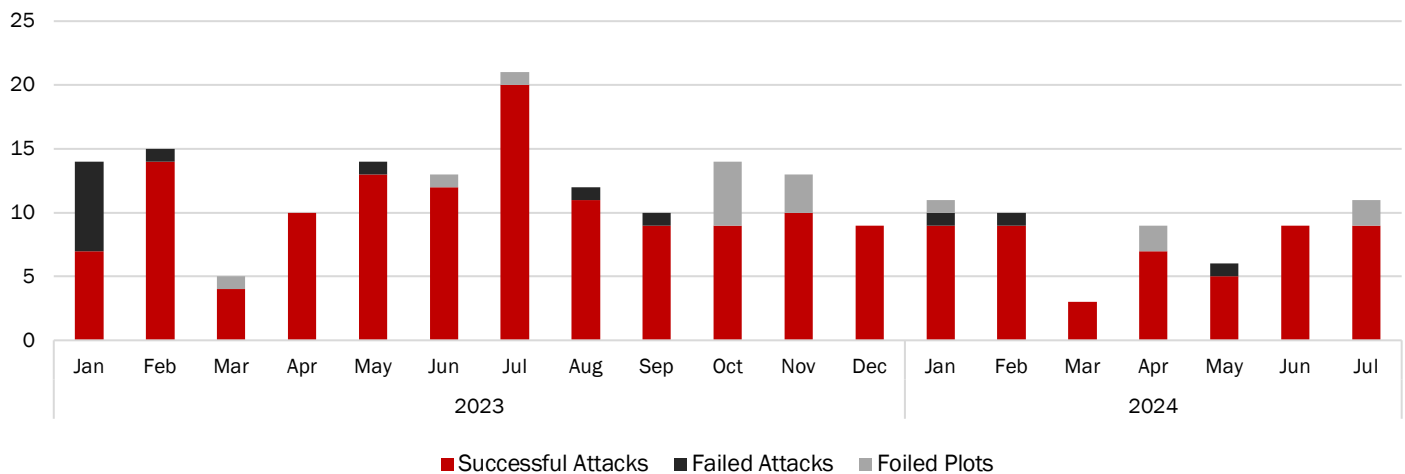
- ▶ From January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, the T2V data included 273 events categorized as public mass violence incidents—an average of 14 events per month.
- ▶ Public mass casualty attacks were the most lethal incident type during this period, resulting in 106 victim deaths and 183 victim injuries. In addition to the casualties, 24 perpetrators were killed due to their crimes, and 11 were wounded.

- ▶ Most public mass casualty attacks resulted in successful attacks (52.7%), though a sizable proportion (44.7%) were foiled.
- ▶ Consistent with other targeted violence incidents in the T2V data, failed public mass violence attacks were rare, accounting for just 2.6% of incidents in this category.

OTHER TARGETED VIOLENCE

Other Targeted Violence Events

January 1, 2023-July 31, 2024



- ▶ From January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, the T2V data included 209 incidents categorized as other targeted violence events—an average of 11 incidents per month.
- ▶ These incidents resulted in 30 victim deaths, 34 victim injuries, five perpetrator deaths, and nine perpetrator injuries.
- ▶ Incidents categorized as other types of targeted violence are typically property crimes targeting critical infrastructure and tend to be low casualty in nature.
- ▶ These incidents also have the highest success rate in the T2V data, with almost 86% resulting in successful attacks. Just 7.7% of other targeted violence incidents were foiled, and only 6.7% failed.

IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ The preliminary T2V data presented here spans 19 months, from January 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024. During that time, 1,306 terrorist and targeted violence incidents occurred in the United States—a sizable figure that averages to nearly 69 incidents per month.
- ▶ These incidents had a notable impact on public safety, resulting in 271 victim deaths and 477 victim injuries over the 19 month period under review.
- ▶ While certain types of targeted violence, such as terrorist incidents or violence in schools, are more likely to be foiled by law enforcement before an attack can be attempted, the T2V data show that, in aggregate, the most likely outcome of a targeted violence event is a successful attack (719 incidents out of 1,306, or 55.1% of cases).
- ▶ By contrast, failed attacks were the least likely outcome across all incident types in the T2V data. Indeed, only 47 of the 1,306 incidents (3.6%) in the data are coded as attack attempt failures. This indicates that when terrorism and targeted violence plots do not succeed, it is overwhelmingly due to disruption by law enforcement or bystander interventions rather than perpetrator error.
- ▶ Overall, these preliminary findings from the T2V data highlight the scale of terrorism and targeted violence in the United States and illustrate their continued impact on public safety and critical resources.

ABOUT T2V

The terrorism and targeted violence (T2V) in the United States database is a project housed at the University of Maryland that seeks to provide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers with comprehensive data on violent events occurring in the United States and its territories that are designed to have a significant impact on public safety and/or the security of critical infrastructure and community services. The database includes successful, failed, and foiled events that meet the following inclusion criteria:

- ▶ An act that is dangerous to, or potentially dangerous to, human life or the security of critical infrastructure or key resources;
- ▶ Is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any subdivision of the United States;
- ▶ Is intended to intimidate, coerce, or otherwise impact a broader population beyond the target(s) of the immediate act or to generate publicity for the perpetrator and/or their grievances;
- ▶ And occurs within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

The T2V data include terrorism events, premeditated hate crimes, targeted violence occurring in school and workplace settings, public mass violence motivated by personal grievances, and other forms of violence that impact public safety and that of critical infrastructure. Mass violent events are defined as attacks that are designed to result in, or resulted in, the death or injury of four or more victims. The T2V data do not include events linked to gang activity, organized crime, interpersonal or intimate partner violence, crimes with a purely financial motive, or hate crimes that were spontaneous or otherwise unplanned by the perpetrator prior to the event. For foiled plots to be included in the data, there must be evidence that the perpetrator(s) had identified a potential target or targets for the attack and engaged in at least one mobilization activity in preparation for committing the crime. This could include acquiring a weapon or the components necessary to assemble a weapon, surveilling a target, raising funds for the attack, recruiting others to participate in the attack, or writing a manifesto or preparing other legacy tokens to be released prior to, or discovered after, an attack. Threats that do not involve at least one mobilization indicator or are described as “hoaxes” or “not credible” are not included in T2V even if they resulted in criminal charges. All data for T2V are compiled using public sources, including high quality news accounts and public court records. The data discussed in this brief are preliminary and subject to change.

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