



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on July 28, 2014

## Feds Often Create Terror Threats, Study Finds

The U.S. government often manufactures and creates the alleged “terrorism threats” it purports to be fighting, in some cases even prodding mentally challenged dupes into bogus “plots” that authorities concocted in the first place, according to a [newly released report](#) highlighting the troubling practices. Perhaps the most outrageous finding: Almost every high-profile domestic terror case across America since the September 11 attacks featured the “direct involvement” of government agents or informants. In some cases, virtually the entire “terrorism” plot — from start to finish — was actually led and financed by government operatives.



Also alarming, the investigation found, are routine violations of constitutionally protected rights such as due process and fair treatment amid the never-ending and increasingly domestic-oriented terror war. From the use of “secret evidence” and anonymous juries to schemes that border on “entrapment,” the report suggests that U.S. terror policies are officially out of control. The authors of the report said the controversial tactics may even be putting national security at risk by diverting law enforcement and other resources from real threats.

The 214-page report, dubbed “[Illusion of Justice: Human Rights Abuses in US Terrorism Prosecutions](#),” focused specifically on more than two dozen federal terror cases. As part of the probe, the non-profit Human Rights Watch and Columbia Law School’s Human Rights Institute examined all elements of the 27 cases, from initiation of the federal investigations to eventual sentencing and even the conditions of confinement after conviction. Their findings, unveiled last week, paint a troubling picture of the U.S. “terror” apparatus, its human-rights implications, and the direction in which it is all going.

The human rights-focused investigators found numerous concerns in all aspects of the process, including what they called “overly aggressive” sting operations and “unnecessarily restrictive” conditions in prison. Many of the examples highlighted in the report are truly shocking — even to the judges presiding over the cases. For example, in the “Newburgh Four” case, the judge slammed the government’s tactics, saying it “came up with the crime, provided the means, and removed all relevant obstacles.” Authorities made a terrorist out of a man “whose buffoonery is positively Shakespearean in scope,” the judge added in his stinging rebuke.

Since the September 11, 2001, attacks on U.S. soil, there have been some 500 terrorism-related cases in federal courts. “This is a number that sounds really big, and it makes it sound like Americans are being kept safe from terrorism attacks,” [explained](#) Andrea Prasow, deputy Washington director for Human Rights Watch. “But we found that in a lot of these cases, people were prosecuted who never would have committed a terrorist attack in the first place, if it weren’t for the involvement of the FBI.”

*The New American* has also [documented more than a few similar cases in recent years](#). Among the myriad examples: [Duping mentally ill Muslims](#) into [agreeing to help with fake government-orchestrated](#)



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[terror plots](#), providing [fake “bombs” and convincing a group of young anarchists to plant them on a bridge](#), and countless more. In press releases announcing arrests and prosecutions, authorities regularly boast about the fact that the “terrorists” it arrests were actually prodded and led into the scheme by government agents and informants. Sometimes the dupes are even offered taxpayer money.

The latest report offers more evidence that the problem has become widespread. “Americans have been told that their government is keeping them safe by preventing and prosecuting terrorism inside the U.S.,” continued Prasow, who also served as one of the authors of the new report. “But take a closer look and you realize that many of these people would never have committed a crime if not for law enforcement encouraging, pressuring, and sometimes paying them to commit terrorist acts.”

Of the terror-related cases prosecuted since 9/11, the plurality of convictions came from so-called “material support” charges, the report found. Those normally stem from offering any sort of assistance, which can even include advice, to a proscribed organization or individual. Among the more outrageous examples highlighted in the human-rights investigation and [subsequent news reports](#) was a man initially accused of providing “military gear” to al-Qaeda. It turned out to be waterproof socks in his luggage.

Especially vulnerable, according to the human-rights report, are Muslims in the United States. The report suggests that the authorities have been burning bridges with the Islamic community in their zeal to uncover or invent terror plots; even employing troubling tactics such as paying mentally ill dupes to engage in fake terrorism schemes concocted by government officials from the start. Despite prohibitions on outright entrapment, the human-rights investigators also found that the legal burden of proving it means U.S. courts are often going along with the dubious tactics.

“The U.S. government should stop treating American Muslims as terrorists-in-waiting,” Prasow continued in a statement about the findings. “The bar on entrapment in U.S. law is so high that it’s almost impossible for a terrorism suspect to prove. Add that to law enforcement preying on the particularly vulnerable, such as those with mental or intellectual disabilities, and the very poor, and you have a recipe for rampant human rights abuses.”

As *The New American* magazine has documented, Muslims are not the only ones in the crosshairs. In fact, in recent years, the federal government has become increasingly brazen in [labeling everyday Americans — veterans, conservatives, libertarians, pro-life activists, and more](#) — as [potential terror threats merely for their political views](#). Under the Obama administration, those trends have accelerated quickly, with numerous departments already exposed for officially painting a target on the backs of tens of millions of innocent Americans. Today, [top U.S. officials openly admit to murdering “suspected militants” who have never been charged with a crime](#).

“Far from protecting Americans, including American Muslims, from the threat of terrorism, the policies documented in this report have diverted law enforcement from pursuing real threats,” Prasow added. “It is possible to protect people’s rights and also prosecute terrorists, which increases the chances of catching genuine criminals.” Other experts, including constitutional scholars, have documented similar problems with terror-war tactics.

The federal government, on the other hand, defended U.S. policies in response to the accusations in the report. “The Department of Justice has been a steadfast ally of our nation’s civil rights groups for decades,” DOJ spokesman Marc Raimondi was quoted as saying by the *Washington Post*. “The report itself acknowledges that the legal process used in the cases it highlighted is not only lawful but is also



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specifically approved by federal judges.... We do not and cannot target individuals solely for engaging in activities protected by the First Amendment, which includes free speech and religion.”

Assistant Director Michael Kortan with the FBI Office of Public Affairs claimed the Bureau’s use of informants and undercover agents was legal, important to keeping America “safe,” and already subject to what he called “rigorous oversight.” He also denied suggestions in the new report that the federal government was deploying infiltrators into communities without any evidence of wrongdoing. “The FBI does not target individuals or groups on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion and engages in outreach with diverse communities to combat all criminal activity, including terrorism,” Kortan said.

Among other recommendations, Human Rights Watch said the use of “informants” by the FBI should be restricted and subject to “robust” oversight. Prosecutors should also stop charging people with “material support to terrorism” based on activities “protected under freedom of expression principles,” it added. Finally, in response to troubling findings surrounding prison conditions, the report recommended ensuring “humane” conditions, including an end to subjecting prisoners to prolonged periods of solitary confinement.

*Photo: AP Images*

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