

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**AS GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE WORLD GRAPPLE WITH AN EMBOLDENED VIOLENT FAR-RIGHT,  
EXPERTS ASSESS THE ROLE OF SANCTIONS IN RESPONDING TO THE THREAT**

*A new publication from The Soufan Center looks at the impact of sanctions, drawing on recent trends and lessons learned from existing sanctions regimes across the ideological spectrum*

**[LINK TO BRIEFING SERIES](#)**

**(New York, NY – July 28, 2022)** [Deterrence and Denial: The Impact of Sanctions and Designations on Violent Far Right Groups](#), a new series of analytical papers from The Soufan Center, presents an in-depth look at the current and future roles of sanctions and proscriptions in addressing violent far-right terrorism. The series of *Issue Brief* papers examines key trends in the violent far-right movement and considers the applicability of sanctions; examines lessons learned from global sanctions regimes targeting al-Qaeda and ISIS; and reviews lessons learned to date from measures taken by states against far-right terrorism, primarily in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

“The United States is facing a real and credible threat from domestic terrorism,” explains The Soufan Center’s executive director Naureen Chowdhury Fink. “We have witnessed a series of devastating attacks in the name of this violent ideology and this wave of violence is unlikely to abate in the near future. The United States, United Kingdom, and our allies need to step up their response. We do not have to start from scratch, we can move quickly using existing policy instruments. That is the conclusion from our most recent research.”

**Legal, political, and operational impacts**

Each of the *Issue Briefs* in this series examines a different dimension of the challenge of addressing far-right terrorism through sanctions.

In reviewing lessons learned from the United Nations’ 1267 counterterrorism sanctions regime against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), TSC Senior Research Fellow [Colin P. Clarke writes](#) that sanctions were able to target those groups given their funding and operational structures, but were also able to adapt and innovate in response to counterterrorism measures imposed on them. States can learn from this and ensure that the next iterations of sanctions on any terrorist groups be similarly flexible and responsive. Further, since the right-wing terrorism threat is likely to be more prominent in North America, Europe, and Oceania—though it certainly exists elsewhere—there may be a need for different formats of international and multilateral cooperation.

TSC Research Fellow [Mollie Saltskog identifies](#) key trends in the violent far-right movement and considers the applicability of sanctions measures. Macro-level observations of the movement include: a diffuse and non-formalized network with dense online connections; a limited reliance on traveling and in-person organization; and a prevalence of low-complexity, low-tech, and copy-paste attacks. The diffuse command

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and control structures of the movement, increasingly young membership, and reliance on individual actions, can complicate the application of sanctions, highlighting the importance of utilizing additional policy tools and responses.

Canada and the United Kingdom have led the way among “Five Eye” countries in applying sanctions measures to far-right terrorists. TSC Senior Research Fellow [Jason Blazakis examines](#) how the countries comprising this intelligence alliance—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States—have each made use of sanctions. Specifically, he notes how these countries should measure the effectiveness of their designation regimes by examining how terrorist listings are being operationalized in each of their states respectively—and as a collective group. The United States specifically, and especially in contrast to its Canadian and British counterparts, has not been able to benefit from powerful signaling and normative benefits often associated with the deployment of designations against violent far-right actors.

TSC Senior Visiting Fellow [Jessica Davis presents](#) a detailed case study of Canada’s efforts listing violent far-right extremist groups. Her *Issue Brief* examines the primary impacts, which are largely financial in nature and target the listed entities directly; the secondary impacts, which likely enable other aspects of government response such as investigation and analysis; and the tertiary impacts, which allow the government to share information with Canadians, and essentially signal threat and soft prioritization. In the Canada case study there is little concrete evidence of the effectiveness and outcome of listings, largely because of the lack of metrics to assess implementation.

“As the terrorism threat environment becomes more dynamic, especially in the United States and beyond, these analyses and recommendations highlight for policymakers and practitioners the advantages and potential shortcomings of sanctions as one important tool in the arsenal against transnational far-right terrorism,” concludes Ms. Fink.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Soufan Center, with the support of the [Airey Neave Trust](#), is undertaking a project to deepen understanding about the impact of sanctions and proscriptions on terrorist groups, with a focus on violent far-right actors. Through research, interviews, and consultations with key stakeholders, the project will assess whether the measures taken by several states—in particular, the U.K., Canada, and other Five Eyes partners—have had the desired impacts. The series of publications forms a part of this project and a webinar to launch the papers and discuss the recommendations on these issues is organized on July 28, 2022, and will be available to [watch via our website](#). Learn more about the project [here](#).

### ABOUT THE SOUFAN CENTER (TSC)

Based in New York, The Soufan Center (TSC) is an independent non-profit center offering research, analysis, and strategic dialogue on global security challenges and foreign policy issues, with a particular focus on counterterrorism, violent extremism, armed conflict, and the rule of law. Please contact Stephanie Foggett with any media inquiries or interview requests: [stephanie.foggett@thesoufancenter.org](mailto:stephanie.foggett@thesoufancenter.org).

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