

21 May 2025

Members  
National Security Board

## Renewal of Terrorist Designations: The Base and the American Proud Boys

---

### Purpose

1. This paper recommends the National Security Board recommends to the Prime Minister that they renew the terrorist designations of The Base and the American Proud Boys.

### Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the National Security Board (NSB):
  - a) **agree** to recommend to the Prime Minister that he renew the designation of The Base and the American Proud Boys as terrorist entities under section 35(2) of the TSA;
  - b) **agree** that on behalf of the NSB, the Chair provide a briefing note to the Prime Minister for him to make a final decision on the renewal of the terrorist entity designation of The Base and the American Proud Boys prior to 20 June 2025.
  - c) **forward** the attached assessments for The Base and the American Proud Boys to the Prime Minister for consideration.

### Factors for NSB consideration of designation recommendations

3. The decision to renew designation falls within the statutory discretion of the Prime Minister. As outlined in Annex One, the designation of a terrorist entity must be made within three years of initial designation or renewal, and upon designation immediately imposes a number of penalties intended to limit terrorist activity.
4. A Statement of Case is attached for each entity and provides the formal legal assessment that the statutory criteria for designation under the TSA has been met (**Attachments B, and C**).
5. The TDWG also consider that the renewal of the designations of TB and APB is consistent with the relevant factors identified by Cabinet in CAB Min (03) 34/15A and DES Min (10) 2/5.
6. Once the statutory threshold has been established, in determining whether to advise the Prime Minister to exercise his discretion to renew TB and APB, NSB must weigh other relevant considerations including those agreed by Cabinet in DES Minute (10) 2/5. These considerations are:
  - a) the need for New Zealand to contribute to the international security environment by preventing activities such as the recruiting, harbouring, participating in, or financing of terrorist entities that fall outside the scope of the UN listing process;

- b) the threat posed by the entity to New Zealand, New Zealanders, or New Zealand interests, including those offshore;
  - c) the entity's New Zealand or regional presence, or links with New Zealanders; and
  - d) the nature and scale of the entity's involvement in terrorist acts or support activity.
7. A summary of the TDWG's analysis is provided below.

**The Base – renewal of designation is recommended**

- 8. The Base (TB) is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, misogyny, and the belief in an impending race war, (refer **Attachment B** for Statement of Case).
- 9. The TDWG has concluded that TB meets the statutory criteria for renewal and recommends its designation is renewed.
- 10. The Cabinet considerations relevant to the designation of TB as a designated terrorist entity are:

s6(a)

*The nature and scale of TB involvement in terrorist acts or support activity*

- 13. TB has been highly active in the period since last renewal and has expanded from a primarily US-based entity to a trans-national presence made of up of largely autonomous cells of violent extremists.
  - a) Arrests have been observed internationally and have likely acted to prevent harm to members of the public and others by TB members.
  - b) It is a reasonable assumption that, left unchecked, TB could expand to pose a threat to New Zealand, New Zealanders or New Zealand's interests.

**The American Proud Boys – renewal of designation is recommended**

s9(2)(h)

s9(2)(h)

*The APB continue to be active*

17. On balance, there are reasonable grounds to believe that further terrorism on the part of the American Proud Boys (APB) is possible. The TDWG has therefore concluded that APB meets the statutory criteria for renewal and recommends its designation is renewed.
18. APB is an ideologically fascist men's organisation predominantly active in the US. The APB have adopted a violent extremism version of conservatism that actively targets ideological outgroups, and the LGBTQ community. The group is quick to endorse violence against political opponents (refer **Attachment C** for Statement of Case).
19. In 2022 the national leadership of the APB was imprisoned for sedition in the US. This muted APB activity and violence during the Biden Administration compared to the years leading up to s6(a) of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Despite the absence of its leadership, between 2022 and January 2025 the APB continuously made threats of violence toward ideological targets (including the presentation of weapons and deliberate intimidation of 'opponents'), and continued to rally in locations across the US. The commutation of the sentences against the APB national leadership in January 2025 has allowed the leadership to resume control of the organisation.
20. Expert commentators have expressed concern about the release of APB leadership, in particular the possibility that the APB will conduct extremist violence against perceived opponents which broadly encompasses the US 'left'.
21. The Cabinet considerations relevant to the designation of APB as a designated terrorist entity are:

s6(a)

*The nature and scale of APB involvement in terrorist acts or support activity*

24. The TDWG has not documented any APB activity that immediately qualified as terrorist activity under s 22 of the TSA. However, careful analysis of all available information about the entity has established that there are reasonable grounds to believe that APB would have conducted terrorist activity were it not for the suppression of the entity's intent and behaviour caused by imprisonment of APB leadership.

s6(a)

s6(a)

A large grey rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the page content below the 's6(a)' label.


### **Financial implications**

27. If the designations of TB and APB are renewed, the Attorney-General can apply for a forfeiture order for any specified property that is controlled or owned by the designated entity. Designation also aims to prevent financing of a terror activity by prohibiting dealing with an entity's property or financing the entity. It also requires any financial institution or person who suspects any property is owned by the entity to report the existence of the property to the Commissioner of the Police.

### **Bill of Rights, Human Rights and Privacy Act implications**

28. A decision to designate an entity as a terrorist entity under TSA s 22(1) involves the exercise of discretion. Accordingly, by law, the Prime Minister must consider whether any limitations to rights recognised in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) that might result from designation can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

s9(2)(h)

A large grey rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the page content below the 's9(2)(h)' label.

30. This paper does not raise any Privacy Act implications.

---

<sup>1</sup> This analysis follows the test set out by the Supreme Court in *Hansen v R* [2007] NZSC 7.

## Statutory and policy requirements

31. Meeting the statutory conditions is a primary requirement of any case for designation under the TSA. This is essentially a legal question on which Crown Law Office and NZDF (Legal) provide advice.
32. Designations are subject to judicial review under TSA s 33, which can be triggered by any person with standing. This includes a member of the group if the group is designated, a lawyer on their behalf, or by a third party.
33. Likewise, a party with an interest in the designation or the entity itself could request revocation of the designation almost immediately after the gazetting of the Prime Minister's decision.

## Consultation

34. This paper has been developed in consultation with the TDWG member agencies; New Zealand Police, DPMC, NZDF, Crown Law Office, MFAT, and CTAG.

## Contacts

35. Primary: s6(a) [REDACTED] Chair Terrorism Designation Working Group, NZ Police  
E: s9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

## Annex 1: Background to the Designation of Terrorist Entities in New Zealand

36. Under the TSA, entities listed by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), 2253 (2015) and 1988 (2011) Committees (the UN 1267 and 1988 Committees) are automatically designated as terrorist entities in New Zealand. The UN list comprises of Al-Qaida, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Taliban and associated individuals and entities.
37. UNSCR 1373 leaves it to Member States to identify other entities against which they should act. The TSA gives New Zealand the ability to designate non-UN-listed entities where there are reasonable grounds to believe they have knowingly planned, carried out, or knowingly participated in the planning or carrying out, of one or more terrorist acts.
38. Under s 22(1) of the TSA, the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts.
39. Section 29B(1) of the TSA states that any designation made under s 22 of the TSA will expire 3 years after the date on which it takes effect unless it is renewed by an order under TSA s 29B(2) or (3). If a designation is allowed to expire it must be published in the Gazette as soon as practicable (TSA s 29D(1)(a)), and all reasonable steps must be taken to inform the entity or its representative in New Zealand (TSA s 29(1)(b)).
40. Under TSA s 23(c) of the TSA, an entity whose designation has expired can be designated in the future if the entity returned to conducting terrorist activity.<sup>2</sup>
41. The TDWG manages the creation of advice for the Prime Minister on the designation of non-UN-listed terrorist entities in support of UNSCR 1373. The TDWG is chaired by New Zealand Police and includes officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the National Security Policy Directorate), New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), Crown Law Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), and the Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG).<sup>3</sup>
42. If an entity is designated under the TSA, it becomes an offence under New Zealand law to deal with the entity's property, financial, or related services, or to provide it with property, funds, or material support. It is also an offence to knowingly recruit for a group that is a designated entity, or participate in such a group for the purpose of enhancing its ability to carry out a terrorist act. Membership of a designated entity is not an offence in New Zealand.

---

<sup>2</sup> The TSA is specific in stating that the information must be significantly different from the information on which the earlier designation was based.

<sup>3</sup> The Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG) is an inter-agency group hosted and led within the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service. The group gives independent assessments to government agencies about threats to New Zealand, New Zealanders, and New Zealand's interests abroad. CTAG is made up of analysts from NZSIS and other government agencies, including: New Zealand Police, New Zealand Defence Force, Government Communications Security Bureau, the Civil Aviation Authority and Aviation Security Service, and the Department of Corrections.

## **Attachment B**

### **STATEMENT OF CASE TO RENEW THE DESIGNATION OF THE BASE AS A TERRORIST ENTITY**

#### **PURPOSE**

1. This paper sets out the case demonstrating The Base (also known as TB) meets the statutory criteria for the renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity within New Zealand pursuant to the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (TSA).

#### **STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER**

2. This paper sets out updated information about TB's continued involvement in terrorist activity and covers any relevant changes or developments to the organisation since its original designation in 2022,<sup>1</sup> including TB's objectives, structure, weapons and tactics and includes recent attacks which meet the definition of a terrorist act under the TSA.
3. This updated information, together with the information contained in the original designation paper, provide the basis for the conclusion that TB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under the TSA.

#### **STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA**

4. Section 29B of the TSA provides that a designation of a terrorist entity expires three years after the date of designation unless it is earlier revoked, or renewed by the Prime Minister. The original designation is made pursuant to s 22 of the TSA, which provides that the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts. Carrying out a terrorist act includes the planning, preparation, or credible threat to carry out the act, whether it is actually carried out or not (s 5A(a) and (b)) and also includes an attempt to carry out the act (s 5A(c)).
5. The Prime Minister may renew that designation for a further three years under s 29B(2) if satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 for the entity to be designated under that section.
6. Before the expiry of an order made under s 29B(2), the Prime Minister may make another order under s 29B(3) renewing the designation concerned for a further three years. The Prime Minister may make any number of orders under s 29B(3) in respect of the same designation (s 29B(5)).

#### **CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES**

7. This paper has been prepared using open or unclassified sources that have a reputation for careful and unbiased reporting. These include The Guardian, BBC News, the Australian Broadcasting Company, The New York Times, Rolling Stone Magazine, Politico, The Nation, and CBC News (Canada).
8. A range of think tanks were referred to including The Southern Poverty Law Centre, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, The Counter Extremism Project, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Australian National Security, and the Combatting Terrorism Centre.

9. A range of regional news sources were also referred to including The Informant, Vox, Winnipeg Free Press, The Age, ABC12 News, MLive, Mining Gazette, Journal Times, The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Dutch News, Fox 2 Detroit, The Washington Post, and Northwest Georgia news.
10. Other sources utilised include VICE News, The Teller Report, the Floyd County Police Dept, RTL Today, 7 News, and The US Department of Justice.

### **EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA**

11. Since initial designation in 2022 TB has not committed acts that qualify as a terrorist act under the TSA. However, TB has continued their adherence to white-identity motivated extremism, and has continued recruitment drives in countries including Australia. During the US election they became visibly active on the internet as they attempted to find a stateside leader with the promise of a \$1200 monthly salary.
12. In 2023 and 2024, TB posted photos of members and propaganda activity allegedly occurring in France, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Sweden, and Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

### **Continued involvement in potential terrorist activity**

#### *Ongoing recruitment drives*

13. On August 20, 2024, Dutch police arrested three individuals - ages 16, 18, and 26 - on suspicion of belonging to TB. The suspects allegedly attempted to convince people across chat groups to commit terrorist crimes.<sup>3</sup>
14. In September 2024, Italian authorities apprehended two individuals, ages 18 and 20, for their involvement in a Telegram-based Russian accelerationist network linked to TB known as Aast. One of the suspects has developed a substantial online network of connections with other users associated with supremacist groups. The suspect seeks to enhance his standing within these circles by disseminating accelerationist propaganda and committing local crimes, which he later shares with the group administrators. The investigation into the other suspect revealed his strong ties to the Aast network, where he serves as an active administrator and has even been named the new leader following the reported arrest of the group's previous head.<sup>4</sup>
15. In October 2024, open-source media identified a propaganda video posted to Russian-owned site 'Rutude' which encouraged recruitment into TB cells in the USA. The video made statements attempting to highlight the perceived positives of an insurgency against the US Government. The article calls attention to a recent shift in TB migrating much of its online content to Russian-owned sites and services.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Continuing direct action*

16. In May 2022, ex-TB leader Justen Watkins was sentenced to four years in prison after spending years preparing for a "race war". He had planned to kill Police and minorities, and to attack the VICE headquarters. Watkins and his associates Thomas Denton and Tristan Webb had plans to build a fortified compound to launch a "race war" via a mass attack. Watkins took part in, and instructed training, to enhance his associate's tactical capabilities and firearms proficiencies. He also hosted "hate camps" for members of TB and other likeminded individuals.<sup>6</sup>
17. On June 4, 2024, TB member Nathan Weeden was sentenced to 26 months in prison and three years under supervised release for conspiring to harm individuals exercising their rights, and

intentionally vandalizing religious property due to its racial or ethnic affiliation. Weeden and his co-conspirators targeted Black and Jewish individuals, in addition to vandalizing Temple Jacob (a synagogue), with swastikas and symbols linked to TB. His co-conspirators, Richard Tobin and Yousef Barasneh, previously pleaded guilty to federal conspiracy charges in connection to the same incident.

*Ongoing adherence to violent extremist ideology*

18. Also on 4 June 2024, Rinaldo Nazzaro posted statements to social media encouraging a violent armed revolution as means to create a separate “ethnostate” within the US. Nazzaro claimed “Nothing Is Mightier Than The Sword.”, and that change would only be secured through the use of force. Nazzaro proposed violent action as the only viable way to “achieve the 14 Words”, stating that he and his followers need the ability to dictate how society is ruled. He further stated that: “Barring separatism, all we can really do is wait for Collapse and hope we’ll be adequately prepared to take advantage of it.”<sup>7</sup>
19. On 3 June 2020, National Guard/TB member, Francis Harker and an associate discussed “interrupting an unjust stop” by trapping law enforcement at a shopping mall in Virginia. Harker obtained a semi-automatic rifle the same day as that discussion and a handgun the following year. During a November 2021 search of Harker’s home in Norfolk, Virginia, the FBI found firearms, illegal drugs and a backpack containing components for several Molotov cocktails. Also located were violent/anti-police/pro-Nazi and white supremacist content on Harker’s social media accounts.<sup>8</sup>
20. On 18 December 2021, a member of TB was accused of a white supremacist murder plot on an inmate at the Floyd County Jail. Michael John Helterbrand was arrested in January 2020 on charges involving conspiracy to commit murder and participation in a criminal gang (the Ghostface Gangsters). Once jailed, he and six other Ghostface Gangsters attacked and sexually assaulted a man in the jail. An FBI affidavit filed in the case stated that Helterbrand, along with two others from the assault were involved in TB.<sup>9</sup>
21. In November 2023, a major operation coordinated by Europol and Eurojust arrested five individuals and interrogated seven more for their suspected involvement in TB.<sup>10</sup> The operation was conducted in Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, and Romania. The individuals were allegedly responsible for disseminating violent extremist propaganda, recruitment of new members, and sharing manuals for 3D-printed weapons. Some of the suspects had already written a manifesto, had access to weapons, and were considered at risk of launching imminent action.<sup>11</sup>

### **Ideology and Objectives**

22. The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.<sup>12</sup>

### **Organisation and Structure**

23. Based in Russia, Nazzaro serves as the face of the group. Nazzaro stepped down from formal leadership in 2020, after which the group was briefly led by US national Justen Watkins. Watkins was eventually sentenced to four years in prison in May 2022 after the discovery of plans kill police and minorities, and to destroy VICE headquarters.<sup>13</sup>

24. Nazzaro continues to engage with TB as a figure head, and in August 2024 posted to his personal Telegram account seeking a stateside leader to replace Watkins.<sup>14</sup>
25. Instead of a hierarchy, TB mainly operates under the 'leaderless resistance' model. This model advocates forming two-to-three person cells to commit acts of violence and train together independently.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, co-ordination appears to occur across open and encrypted social media platforms.<sup>16</sup>
26. Since designation in 2022 TB has developed a transnational presence. Reporting indicates individuals suspected of TB membership and plots of violence has been observed across Europe, with arrests in various European countries.<sup>17</sup> Both Nazzaro and the official Telegram account of TB have encouraged Europeans to join the group, with photos posted indicating recruitment of members and propaganda activity occurring across Europe.<sup>18</sup> This growing presence is reported to have influenced the European Union to add TB to the EU Terrorist List on 26 July 2024.<sup>19</sup>
27. TB's total membership is unknown. Its primary web forum reportedly has 45 members.<sup>20</sup>

### **Weapons, Tactics and Capability**

28. A key goal of TB is to train a cadre of extremists capable of accelerationist violence. Nazzaro has repetitively counselled members online about violence, the acquisition of weapons, and actions to accelerate the collapse of the US government and survive the subsequent period of chaos and violence. In support of this objective, Nazzaro ensures the group maintain a large database of PDFs that explore a wide range of terrorist tactics, how to construct weapons (including weapons of mass destruction), survivalist techniques, and ideological texts.<sup>21</sup>
29. TB seeks to recruit members with existing capabilities in self-defence, outdoor skills, and specifically current/former members of the armed forces.<sup>22</sup>
30. While discussion and possession of weapons is commonplace within TB's social media activity, the overall real-world capability of members with firearms is unknown. Members are known to have attended paramilitary training camps (which is not illegal in many parts of the US), and some members are known to have military experience, but the translation of this training and experience into actions has never been applied.
31. TB has also used the meme-generating website iFunny to create propaganda memes and post videos, which has sparked interest from some of iFunny's users. Memes often includes emails or QR codes with which users can get in touch with a recruiter.<sup>23</sup>

### **LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT (LOAC)**

32. The activities and operations of TB described above have not been undertaken in an area or at a time of recognised armed conflict. Accordingly, the exemption under section 5(4) of the TSA has no application.

### **CONCLUSION**

33. On the evidence set out above, this paper concludes that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 of the TSA for TB to be designated under that section.
34. Since its designation in June 2022, TB has continued to carry out activities which meet the definition of terrorist acts in ss 5 and 5A of the TSA (paragraphs 16, 17, and 19) including

planning, threatening and attempting attacks. Accordingly, given there are still reasonable grounds to believe TB has knowingly carried out terrorist acts as set out in s 22 of the TSA, TB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under s29B.

35. The designation must be renewed by 20 June 2025 to be effective.

Proactively Released

<sup>1</sup> The statement of case, dated 20 July 2014 can be accessed at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/statement-of-case-the-base-terrorist-entity-20-june-2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 04/11/2024.

<sup>3</sup> (05/09/2024) "Dutch teen, two men in custody for membership to right-wing extremist terrorist group", *NL Times*, accessed via <https://nltimes.nl/2024/09/05/dutch-teen-two-men-custody-membership-right-wing-extremist-terrorist-group> on 06/11/2024.

<sup>4</sup> (06/09/2024) "Two members of the neo-Nazi and supremacist group AAST arrested", *Italian State Police*, accessed via <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/1666daef041bf84276459814> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>5</sup> (28/10/2024) "Neo-Nazi group the Base found a safe space to recruit Americans: the Russian internet", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/oct/28/neo-nazi-the-base-recruitment-russia> on 13/01/2025

<sup>6</sup> (24/05/2022) "Neo-Nazi Leader planned attacks on Minorities, Media and Cops", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-leader-planned-attacks-on-cops-and-media-court-docs-show/> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>7</sup> NYPD Weekly Terrorism Brief #23

<sup>8</sup> (25/07/2022) "Former member or the NG sentenced for possessing firearm while engaging in violent extremist online discussion" *United States Attorney's Office*, accessed via <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/former-member-national-guard-sentenced-possessing-firearm-while-engaging-violent> on 08/11/2024.

<sup>9</sup> (24/02/2021) "Inmate accused in white supremacist murder", *Rome News*, accessed via [https://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/inmate-accused-in-white-supremacist-murder-plot-among-seven-gang-members-who-face-additional-charges/article\\_af0331fc-76b1-11eb-8bc9-0bb92a0b819f.html](https://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/inmate-accused-in-white-supremacist-murder-plot-among-seven-gang-members-who-face-additional-charges/article_af0331fc-76b1-11eb-8bc9-0bb92a0b819f.html) on 08/11/2024.

<sup>10</sup> (11/11/2023) "Five right-wing terrorists arrested throughout Europe with the support of Eurojust and Europol", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 13/02/2025

<sup>11</sup> (26/07/2024) "The base, and the basis for listing far-right terror groups", *ICCT*, accessed via <https://www.icct.nl/publication/base-and-basis-listing-far-right-terror-groups> on 07/11/2024.

i. (11/11/2023) "Five right-winged terrorists arrested throughout Europe", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 08/11/2024.

<sup>12</sup> (16/01/2020) "The Base", *ADL*, accessed via <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/base> on 17/02/2025.

<sup>13</sup> (24/05/2022) "Neo-Nazi Leader planned attacks on Minorities, Media and Cops", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-leader-planned-attacks-on-cops-and-media-court-docs-show/> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>14</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US Neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 13/01/2025

<sup>15</sup> (8/10/20) Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, and Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>16</sup> (8/10/2020) Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, and Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america> on 07/11/2024.

i. (16/08/2019) Ryan Thorpe, "Homegrown hate", *Winnipeg Free Press*, accessed via <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/homegrown-hate-547510902.html> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>17</sup> (11/11/2023) "Five right-winged terrorists arrested throughout Europe", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 13/01/2025

<sup>18</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US Neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 13/01/2025

<sup>19</sup> (05/11/2024) "The Base", *Counter Terrorism Project*, accessed via <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>20</sup> (22/09/2024) "The Base", *Australian National Security*, accessed via <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/the-base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>21</sup> (17/08/2019) Mack Lamoureux and Ben Makuch, "Militant Neo-Nazi Group Actively Recruiting Ahead of Alleged Training Camp", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/bjwx55/militant-neo-nazi-group-actively-recruiting-ahead-of-alleged-training-camp> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>22</sup> (05/11/2024) "The Base", *Counter Terrorism Project*, accessed via <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>23</sup> 14/11/2019 "Neo-Nazi Terror groups are using IFunny to recruit", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-terror-groups-are-using-ifunny-to-recruit/> on 05/11/2024.

## STATEMENT OF CASE TO RENEW THE DESIGNATION OF THE AMERICAN PROUD BOYS AS A TERRORIST ENTITY

### PURPOSE

1. This paper sets out the case demonstrating The American Proud Boys ('Proud Boys, 'APB') meets the statutory criteria for the renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity within New Zealand pursuant to the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (TSA).


### STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER

2. This paper sets out updated information about the APB's continued involvement in terrorist activity and covers any relevant changes or developments to the organisation since its original designation in 2022,<sup>1</sup> including APB's objectives, structure, weapons and activities.
3. This updated information, together with the information contained in the original designation paper, provide the basis for the conclusion that APB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under the TSA.

### STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA

4. Section 29B of the TSA provides that a designation of a terrorist entity expires three years after the date of designation unless it is earlier revoked, or renewed by the Prime Minister. The original designation is made pursuant to s 22 of the TSA, which provides that the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts. Carrying out a terrorist act includes the planning, preparation, or credible threat to carry out the act, whether it is actually carried out or not (s 5A(a) and (b)) and also includes an attempt to carry out the act (s 5A(c)).
5. The Prime Minister may renew that designation for a further three years under s 29B(2) if satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 for the entity to be designated under that section.
6. Before the expiry of an order made under s 29B(2), the Prime Minister may make another order under s 29B(3) renewing the designation concerned for a further three years. The Prime Minister may make any number of orders under s 29B(3) in respect of the same designation (s 29B(5)).

s9(2)(h)



s9(2)(h)



**CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES**

10. This paper has been prepared using open or unclassified sources which have a reputation for careful and unbiased reporting. These include Reuters, The Associated Press, CNN, The Washington Post, and BCC News.
11. A range of think tanks were referred to including Southern Poverty Law Centre, Armed Conflict Locations & Event Data (ACLED), and Just Security.
12. A range of regional news sources were also referred to including Voice of America, Fox 5, USA Today, The Minnesota Star Tribune, VICE, 6 NEWS, and the Salt Lake City Tribune.
13. Other sources utilised include Rise to Peace Blog.

## EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA

### Recent history and developments

14. Information indicates that while there is an absence of terrorist acts as per s 5 TSA in the past three years (which includes planning, preparation, or credible threats to carry out a terrorist act), elements associated with the APB continue to operate throughout the USA. Despite the imprisonment of the key leadership of the APB in 2023 acting to limit violent extremism, during the period between the imprisonment and the commutation of 14 sentences in January 2025 the APB was fractured, factional, and in disarray.
15. While the arrest, conviction, and sentencing of key leadership of the APB for sedition acted to suppress nationally-coordinated APB behaviour, members have continued to demonstrate adherence to extremism, and continue to use threats of violence against targets including LGBTQ people, pro-abortion activists, and a mythologised 'Antifa'.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the adoption of gay and trans people as a unifying and primary target for mobilisation of APB members has accelerated since 2022, and is used by the group to maintain relevance within the identity-motivated violent extremist ecosystem.<sup>4</sup>
16. Considering the willingness of members to deploy violence against ideological targets (see Ideology and Objectives, below), the possibility remains that were it not for the suppressing effect provided by the imprisonment of the APB leadership, the organisation would have continued to undertake terrorist activity.
17. The January 2025 commutation of the sentences of the senior leadership of the APB convicted of sedition led to the release of these leaders. Since their release these leaders have carefully qualified their language, but have openly spoken of retribution against law enforcement and judicial officials they perceive as responsible for their imprisonment.<sup>5</sup> This use of guarded language is consistent with crypto-fascism and the modus operandi of the APB at the time of its designation in 2022 and reflects expert warnings that the group could “usher in a new wave of right-wing extremism”.<sup>6</sup>
18. Specific actions by the APB against ideological targets of the organisation since their last designation are provided below.

### Continued involvement in violent extremism

#### *Threats of Violence*

19. On 22 February 2025 Enrique Tarrío, leader of the APB, accessed a conference centre and confronted a group of police officers who had defended the Capitol building during the 6 January attack.<sup>7</sup> During the confrontation one of the officers is reported to have said to Tarrío, “You’re a traitor to this country”. The following day, what was regarded as a credible bomb threat was made to the conference centre targeting a range of public figures, and especially the officer who called Tarrío a traitor.<sup>8</sup> On the Friday before the confrontation with the officer, Tarrío was arrested and briefly detained for a “simple assault” on a protestor outside the Capitol.<sup>9</sup>
20. On 19 November 2022, a violent confrontation occurred between protesters and eight alleged members of APB outside a white nationalist conference in Tennessee, USA. The alleged members of the APB arrived in clothing and symbols associated with the group, advancing on protestors, and confronting them with verbal abuse and homophobic slurs. In one incident, a

protestor was hit on the head with an expandable metal baton by one of the alleged members. At least two of the members of the APB were reported to have been armed.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Harassment of LGBTQ people*

21. On 26 June 2022, APB members attended outside a public library in Nevada clad in uniform to protest a “drag queen story hour” (a ‘Drag event’). They held signs accusing participants of grooming children, and one member allegedly approached the building with a gun, causing a number of patrons to flee inside.<sup>11</sup>
22. On 20 January 2023, five APB members protested a Drag event at a tea shop in Salt Lake City, Utah. It was reported at least one member carried a semi-automatic rifle and a handgun. Police attended the demonstration, spoke with APB members regarding the firearms, and instructed them to remain peaceful.<sup>12</sup>
23. On 18 February 2023, a group of APB members disrupted a Drag event at a bookstore in Silver Spring, Maryland. APB members confronted volunteers of the event, yelling verbal abuse and engaging in physical altercations.<sup>13</sup>
24. On 11 March 2023, APB members joined other extremist groups including Patriot Front and White Lives Matter in protesting a Drag event in Wadsworth, Ohio. Verbal abuse and white-identity slogans/flags were observed, and near the end of the demonstration reports of violence and brandishing of non-lethal weapons were noted.<sup>14</sup>
25. On 8 July 2023, approximately 55 APB members attended a Drag event at a bookstore in Chaska, Minnesota. The group held banners and signs espousing conspiracy beliefs and anti-LGBTQ narratives, while shouting similar messaging to the gathered crowds.<sup>15</sup>
26. On 7 October 2023, an estimated dozen APB members showed up at the end of a Pride celebration in Knoxville, Tennessee. Video footage on social media shows APB members wearing tactical gear engaging in heated confrontations with pro-LGBTQ activists.<sup>16</sup>
27. In November 2023, an investigation by the FBI and Knoxville Police Department in Tennessee occurred after an anti-trans banner and Proud Boy stickers were left at the Knox Pride centre.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Ideology and objectives**

28. The APB have shifted their ideological objectives since 2022. Following the Capitol riot and in absence of leadership, the APB mobilised around specific issues topical within the far-right political spectrum. Of greatest note there was an observed increase in APB efforts to appear at abortion related demonstrations and LGBTQ events such as Pride month.<sup>18</sup>
29. There is however some ideological continuity. Court documents released in 2023 indicated members of the APB still adhere to ‘western chauvinism’, and they actively encourage veneration of ‘traditional roles’ for women (i.e. ‘the housewife’). APB have adopted an extremist combination of these positions that is ideologically grounded in fascism.<sup>19</sup>
30. The APB continue to uphold violence against opponents as an acceptable solution to solving political disputes (see Weapons, Tactics, and Capability below) against ideological opponents such as “democrats”, feminists, transgender activists, and other opposing individuals. A nationally representative survey from 2022 for example identified that 23% of Proud Boy supporters said that violence “to stop who do not share my beliefs from voting” was justifiable,

nearly 30% thought violence justified to advance a political objective, and 20% would be willing to kill to advance a political objective.<sup>20</sup>

31. APB readily embrace and are unified in being directly and deliberately opposed to the liberalisation of US society, the diversification of the US population, and their fear of a demonised political 'Left'. The APB see themselves as defending an idealised perception of 'The West' and 'Western' values, but are in practice railing against politically liberal values and the ongoing diversification of US society.
32. This reactionary political position allows the APB to self-characterise and target 'outsiders' as the enemies of the US. More importantly, and as was demonstrated on 6 January 2021, this provides justification for the APBs' political violence against those they perceive as ideological opponents and targets.<sup>21</sup>

### **Organisation and structure**

33. Since the 6 January 2021 Capitol riot, founding leader Enrique Tarrío<sup>22</sup> and four other members were convicted in federal court of seditious conspiracy, and were sentenced to 15 or more years in prison. An additional 95 members and associates were charged with participation in the violence.<sup>23</sup>
34. During the imprisonment of their leadership the APB appears to have adopted a decentralised model, chapters adopting greater self-government across at least 40 states, and minimal central co-ordination. Members of the APB claim the chapters are largely independent of one another, and have banned communications with the media. In an apparent attempt to maintain the cohesion of the entity, founding leader Gavin McInnes (who announced his resignation in 2018) continues to remain involved with the group as a mediating influence.<sup>24</sup>
35. On 20 January 2025, 5 members of the APB guilty of seditious conspiracy had their sentences commuted.<sup>25</sup> There is evidence of some contestation within the APB for leadership since Tarrío's release, with factions forming in different US regions each claiming to be the 'true' APB.<sup>26</sup>

### **Weapons, tactics and capability**

36. A key feature of APB activity known to appeal to members is the impression the group self-promotes of taking direct action against perceived threats to white nationalism (and the supremacy of whites in the US).
37. Since designation the APB have not been observed using lethal force, i.e. firearms, during their routine instigation of violence against ideological opponents, but media reporting indicates ongoing possession of firearms during protest events by APB members. Inter-personal physical violence is however extremely common, and the APB have a history of inciting, supporting, and praising violence under the guise of 'self-defence'.<sup>27</sup>
38. APB tactics are typically characterised by appearance in numbers at target events and the subsequent instigation of violence such as brawling. Weapons deployed during these actions are typically non-lethal and can include 'bear mace' (an extremely strong type of pepper spray), batons, clubs, and/or paintball guns.<sup>28</sup> In one instance, an APB member allegedly possessed a hatchet on their person at a protest event.<sup>29</sup>

**LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT (LOAC)**

39. The activities and operations of APB described above have not been undertaken in an area or at a time of recognised armed conflict. Accordingly, the exemption under section 5(4) of the TSA has no application.

**CONCLUSION**

40. Careful analysis of all available information about the APB has established that there are reasonable grounds to believe that APB would have conducted terrorist activity were it not for the suppression of the entity's intent and behaviour caused by imprisonment of APB leadership. On the evidence set out above, this paper concludes that there are still reasonable grounds to believe as set out in s 22 of the TSA for APB to be designated under that section.

41. The designation must be renewed by 20 June 2025 to be effective.

<sup>1</sup> The statement of case, dated 20 June 2022 can be accessed at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/statement-of-case-the-american-proud-boys-terrorist-entity-20-june-2022.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> (R) Crown Law reference ATT114/1367 dated 29 June 2012.

<sup>3</sup> 'Antifa' is an abbreviation for 'anti-fascist activists'. This type of activist was a permanent bete noir of the APB during the first Trump administration.

<sup>4</sup> (14 December 2023) "Riding the Tide: The Shifting Identity of the Proud Boys Since the Capitol Riot" *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data* accessed via <https://acleddata.com/2023/12/14/riding-the-tide-the-shifting-proud-boys-identity-since-the-capitol-riot/> on 13/02/2025

<sup>5</sup> (24/01/2025) "Proud Boys leader thanks Trump for January 6 pardon and vows revenge", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/24/trump-pardon-proud-boys-enrique-tarrio> on 12/02/2025.

<sup>6</sup> (17/10/2024) "Proud Boys Threat Assessment: From the Planning of January 6th to Future Scenarios" *Just Security*, accessed via <https://www.justsecurity.org/103956/proud-boys-threat-assessment/> on 30/10/2024.

<sup>7</sup> (22/02/2025) "Enrique Tarrio follows and insults officers who defended US Capitol on January 6", *The Guardian*, accessed via <http://theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/22/enrique-tarrio-capitol-police> on 1/04/2025

<sup>8</sup> (23/02/2025) "Political conference in DC interrupted by death threats against speakers critical of Trump", *CNN*, Accessed via <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/02/23/politics/principles-first-washington-dc-threats/index.html> on 01/04/2025.

i. (22/02/2025) "Enrique Tarrio follows and insults officers who defended US Capitol on January 6", *The Guardian*, accessed via <http://theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/22/enrique-tarrio-capitol-police> on 1/04/2025

<sup>9</sup> (23/02/2025) "Political conference in DC interrupted by death threats against speakers critical of Trump", *CNN*, Accessed via <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/02/23/politics/principles-first-washington-dc-threats/index.html> on 01/04/2025.

<sup>10</sup> (20/11/2022) "Presumed Proud Boys Attack Protestors Outside White Nationalist Conference", *The Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed via <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/11/20/presumed-proud-boys-attack-protesters-outside-white-nationalist-conference> on 14/01/2025.

<sup>11</sup> (13/07/2022) "Proud Boys Aid the Right-Wing Assault on the LGBTQ Community and Reproductive Justice", *The Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed via <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/07/13/proud-boys-aid-right-wing-assault-lgbtq-community-and-reproductive-justice> on 13/01/2025.

<sup>12</sup> (21/01/2023) "Proud Boys protest all-ages drag show at Tea Zaanti", *The Salt Lake Tribune*, accessed via <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2023/01/21/proud-boys-protest-all-ages-drag/> on 16/01/2025.

<sup>13</sup> (21/02/2023) "Montgomery police to patrol drag story hours after Proud Boys protest", *The Washington Post*, accessed via <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/02/21/maryland-drag-queen-story-hour-proud-boys/> on 16/01/2025.

i. (20/02/2023) "Proud Boys protest Drag Story Hour at Silver Spring bookstore", *Fox 5*, accessed via <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/proud-boys-protest-drag-story-hour-at-silver-spring-bookstore> on 16/01/2025.

<sup>14</sup> (14/03/2023) "Nazi salutes, pepper spray and pistols: Ohio drag event devolves into an extremist melee", *USA Today*, accessed via <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/03/14/drag-storyelling-in-wadsworth-ohio-devolves-into-extremist-fight/11465959002/> on 16/01/2025.

<sup>15</sup> (08/07/2023) "Supporters flock to Chaska kids store for drag queen event", *The Minnesota Star Tribune*, accessed via <https://www.startribune.com/supporters-flock-to-chaska-kids-store-for-drag-queen-event/600288313> on 16/01/2025.

<sup>16</sup> (05/01/2024), "Headed Into Election Year, Proud Boys Appear to Be on Decline", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/headed-into-election-year-proud-boys-appear-to-be-on-decline/> on 16/01/2025.

<sup>17</sup> (13/11/2023) "Threatening banner left at Knox Pride Center sparks investigation with FBI, police", *6 News*, accessed via <https://www.wate.com/news/top-stories/threatening-banner-left-at-knox-pride-center-sparks-investigation-with-fbi-police/> on 16/01/2025.

<sup>18</sup> (14/12/2023) "Riding the Tide: The Shifting Identity of the Proud Boys Since the Capitol Riot", *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLEED)*, accessed via <https://acleddata.com/2023/12/14/riding-the-tide-the-shifting-proud-boys-identity-since-the-capitol-riot/> on 14/01/2025.

<sup>19</sup> (03/06/2024) "The Proud Boys are back: How the far-right group is rebuilding to rally behind Trump", *Reuters*, accessed via <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-election-proudboys/> on 14/01/2025.

<sup>20</sup> (20/09/2024) "Opinion: Don't underestimate threats of violence from Proud Boys and other right-wing groups", *LA Times*, accessed via <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-09-20/proud-boys-trump-violence-authoritarian> on 24/2/2025.

<sup>21</sup> (06/05/2023) "Opinion: This is the verdict the Proud Boys fear most", *CNN*, accessed via <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/05/06/opinions/proud-boys-verdict-democracy-threat-glick-lewis/index.html> on 14/01/2025.

i. (26/05/2020) "Swiping Right: The Allure of Hyper Masculinity and Cryptofacism for Men Who Join the Proud Boys", *International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT)*, accessed via <https://icct.nl/publication/swiping-right-allure-hyper-masculinity-and-cryptofacism-men-who-join-proud-boys> on 14/01/2025.

<sup>22</sup> (05/05/2023) "Proud Boy's Tarrio guilty of Jan.6 seditious conspiracy", *Associated Press News*, Accessed via <https://apnews.com/article/jan-6-enrique-tarrio-seditious-conspiracy-trial-f8738f17552cda21ecf6d89504da2a0e> on 13/01/2025.

<sup>23</sup> (17/10/2024) "Proud Boys Threat Assessment: From the Planning of January 6th to Future Scenarios", *Just Security*, accessed via <https://www.justsecurity.org/103956/proud-boys-threat-assessment/> on 16/01/2025

i. (03/06/2024) "The Proud Boys are back: How the far-right group is rebuilding to rally behind Trump", *Reuters*, accessed via <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-election-proudboys/> on 13/01/2025.

<sup>24</sup>(03/06/2024) "The Proud Boys are back: How the far-right group is rebuilding to rally behind Trump", *Reuters*, accessed via <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-election-proudboys/> on 14/01/2025.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> (13/06/2022) "Who are the Proud Boys?", *Rise to Peace*, accessed via <https://www.risetopeace.org/2022/06/13/who-are-the-proud-boys/risetopeace/> on 15/01/2025.

<sup>28</sup> (15/08/2019) E.J. Dickson, "Are the Proud Boys Done or Are They Just Getting Started?", *Rolling Stone*, accessed via <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/proud-boys-antifa-attack-trump-rally-2020-election-862538/> on 18/07/2021.

<sup>29</sup> (20/11/2022) "Presumed Proud Boys Attack Protestors Outside White Nationalist Conference", *The Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed via <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/11/20/presumed-proud-boys-attack-protesters-outside-white-nationalist-conference> on 14/01/2025.

# Meeting Minutes—National Security Board

<b>Date</b>	21 May 2025																		
<b>Location</b>	Level 4, Defence House	<b>Time</b>	11:10 am- 12:00pm																
<b>Attendees</b>	<p><b>Chair:</b> Ben King, DPMC</p> <p><b>Members:</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>Bede Corry, MFAT</td> <td>Ruth Fairhall, MoT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carolyn Tremain, MBIE</td> <td>Bridget White, ED NSG, DPMC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christine Stevenson, NZCS</td> <td>Richard Chambers, NZP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tony Davies, NZDF</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Attending for member:</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>Richard Schmidt, MoD</td> <td>s6(a) NZSIS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>s6(a) GCSB</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>Ian Rennie, TSY</td> <td>Andrew Clark, GCSB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brook Barrington, MoD</td> <td>Andrew Hampton, NZSIS</td> </tr> </table>			Bede Corry, MFAT	Ruth Fairhall, MoT	Carolyn Tremain, MBIE	Bridget White, ED NSG, DPMC	Christine Stevenson, NZCS	Richard Chambers, NZP	Tony Davies, NZDF		Richard Schmidt, MoD	s6(a) NZSIS	s6(a) GCSB		Ian Rennie, TSY	Andrew Clark, GCSB	Brook Barrington, MoD	Andrew Hampton, NZSIS
Bede Corry, MFAT	Ruth Fairhall, MoT																		
Carolyn Tremain, MBIE	Bridget White, ED NSG, DPMC																		
Christine Stevenson, NZCS	Richard Chambers, NZP																		
Tony Davies, NZDF																			
Richard Schmidt, MoD	s6(a) NZSIS																		
s6(a) GCSB																			
Ian Rennie, TSY	Andrew Clark, GCSB																		
Brook Barrington, MoD	Andrew Hampton, NZSIS																		
<b>In attendance</b>	<p>Sean Bolton, Executive Director, RSGG  Nicky Eaton, Director National Risk, RSGG  Marika Hughes, Director Strategic Crisis Management Unit, RSGG  Kathrine Wigley, Chief Advisor to the CE  Kevin Moar, Director, National Security Policy, NSG  Jane Neilson, Principal Advisor Governance, RSGG  Greg Mitchell-Kouttab, Acting Manager, NSG  Rosie Gallagher, Senior Advisor, NSG</p>																		

## Item 1: Agency updates

1. The Chair opened the NSB portion of the 21 May meeting.

**Note:** These minutes should be read in conjunction with the 21 May 2025 joint NSB and NHB meeting minutes.

[Not in Scope]

Proactively Released

[Not in Scope]

### **Item 3: Terrorist Designations**

---

14. The Chair thanked TDWG agencies for the clear advice on the proposals to redesignate *The Base* and the *American Proud Boys*. He invited Commissioner Chambers to provide opening remarks.

15. Commissioner Chambers noted the two entities clearly meet statutory threshold for renewal. Canada has also designated both entities.

s6(a)

17. Bridget White added there has already been media interest in these cases and supported that the case to redesignate was strong. The Chair confirmed the support of members.
18. The board:
  - a. **Agreed** to recommend to the Prime Minister that he renew the designation of *The Base* and the *American Proud Boys* as terrorist entities under section 35(2) of the TSA.
  - b. **Agreed** that on behalf of the NSB, the Chair provide a briefing note to the Prime Minister for him to make a final decision on the renewal of the terrorist entity designation of *The Base* and the *American Proud Boys* prior to 20 June 2025.
  - c. **Agreed** to forward the attached assessments for *The Base* and the *American Proud Boys* to the Prime Minister for consideration.

#### **Item 4: Any Other Business**

---

19. The Board approved the 9 April NSB minutes.
20. The Chair closed the meeting at 12:00pm.



# Briefing

## Terrorist Designations: Renewal of The Base and the American Proud Boys as terrorist entities

To: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister

Date	30/05/2025	Priority level:	Routine
------	------------	-----------------	---------

### Purpose

1. This briefing recommends you renew the designations of The Base and the American Proud Boys as terrorist entities under the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (the Act).

### Recommendations


2. It is recommended you:

1. **note** the designations for The Base and the American Proud Boys will automatically expire on 20 June 2025, unless revoked or renewed by you, in your capacity as Prime Minister, prior to expiry;
2. **note** that The Base and the American Proud Boys continue to meet the statutory criteria for designation as terrorist entities under the Act, based on advice set out in this paper and the Statements of Case for each group (**Attachments C and D**);
3. **note** the Chair of the National Security Board (NSB), on behalf of NSB, recommends the designations for The Base and the American Proud Boys be renewed;
4. **agree** to renew the designation for The Base;
5. **agree** to renew the designation for the American Proud Boys;
6. **note** that in making these decisions you are required to consider New Zealand Bill of Rights Act implications, and that Crown Law Office advice has been provided to support you (**Attachment B**); and

YES / NO

YES / NO

7. **sign** the letters to the Commissioner of Police (**Attachment E**) and the Intelligence and Security Committee (**Attachment F**) to inform them of your decision. **YES / NO**


<b>Bridget White</b> <b>Executive Director</b> <b>National Security Group</b>
28/05/2025
Mobile phone: s9(2)(a) <span style="background-color: grey; color: grey;">[REDACTED]</span>

<b>Rt Hon Christopher Luxon</b> <b>Prime Minister</b>
...../...../.....

Proactively Released

## **An entity needs to meet the statutory criteria for designation as a terrorist entity**

---

3. To be designated as a terrorist entity, section 22 of the Act requires that you, in your capacity as Prime Minister, believe on reasonable grounds that the entity has:
  - knowingly carried out, or;
  - knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts.
4. Section 29B provides that designations made under the Act expire every three years, unless renewed or revoked by the Prime Minister. To renew a designation, the Prime Minister must be satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds to believe the section 22 test is met.
5. General procedural, Cabinet and legal considerations that apply in relation to making any designation are set out in **Attachment A**.
6. A designation under New Zealand legislation freezes the assets of terrorist entities and makes it a criminal offence to materially support the activities of the designated terrorist entity, or to provide or collect funds for use by a designated entity. Designation of an entity under the Act also gives effect to New Zealand's international counter terrorism obligations.
7. The Base and the American Proud Boys were designated in 2022. Their designations will expire on 20 June 2025.

## **NSB recommends renewing the terrorist designation for The Base**

---

8. The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.
9. **NSB has examined the evidence for redesignating The Base and the Board recommends the designation is renewed.** The Base meets the statutory criteria for renewal, as outlined in the Statement of Case (**Attachment C**).
10. The Base has been highly active in the period since last renewal and has expanded from a primarily United States (US)-based entity to a trans-national presence made up of largely autonomous cells of violent extremists. Due to a growing European presence, the European Union (EU) added The Base to the EU Terrorist List in 2024. Arrests have been observed internationally and have likely prevented harm to members of the public and others by The Base members.
11. The Base is also currently designated by partners including Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

## **NSB recommends renewing the terrorist designation for the American Proud Boys**

---

12. The American Proud Boys is an ideologically fascist organisation predominantly active in the US. The American Proud Boys has adopted a violently extreme right-wing populism that actively targets ideological outgroups, including the LGBTQ community. The group is quick to endorse violence against perceived political opponents.
13. **NSB has examined the evidence for redesignating the American Proud Boys, and the Board recommends that the designation is renewed.** The American Proud Boys meets the statutory criteria for renewal, as outlined in the Statement of Case (**Attachment D**).
14. In 2022 the national leadership of the American Proud Boys was imprisoned for sedition in the US. This muted activity and violence during the Biden Administration, when

compared to the years leading up to the American Proud Boys' role in s6(a) of 6 January 2020. Despite the absence of its key leaders the American Proud Boys continued to make threats of violence toward ideological targets. The American Proud Boys has continued to rally in locations across the US and has appeared (often armed) to intimidate meetings or protests carried out by those they see as 'opponents'.

15. s6(a) formerly imprisoned leaders to resume control of the organisation.
16. Expert commentators have expressed concern about the release of American Proud Boys leadership, in particular the possibility that the American Proud Boys will conduct extremist violence against perceived opponents which broadly encompasses the US 'left'.
17. The American Proud Boys is also currently designated by Canada.

### **New Zealand Bill of Rights Act considerations**

18. A decision to designate a terrorist entity requires you to exercise your discretion and, in doing so, consider whether any limits on rights recognised in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

s9(2)(h)

### **Communications, media and public interest**

20. The only legal requirement for an announcement of a designation renewal and expiry is that it must be publicly notified in the *New Zealand Gazette* as soon as practicable after the decision. The New Zealand Police would then update its website with unclassified versions of the Statements of Case, as is standard procedure<sup>1</sup>. Once the designation is gazetted, media are likely to become aware of it.
21. We do not anticipate any significant interest or queries regarding the redesignation of The Base.

***There may be some interest in the redesignation of the American Proud Boys,***

s6(a)

22. DPMC has already received a media query about whether the Proud Boys will be redesignated.

s6(a)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

<sup>1</sup> The Restricted and Legally Privileged sections of the Statements of Case will be redacted in the publicly-available versions.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

26. As the entity has met the statutory test, New Zealand has strong rationale for continuing the designation. Not renewing the designation may also spark public commentary, as the American Proud Boys continues to espouse violent rhetoric.

### Next steps

27. A letter to the Commissioner of Police confirming your agreement to renew the designations of The Base and the American Proud Boys is attached to this briefing (**Attachment E**). Upon receipt of this letter, the New Zealand Police will publish the decisions in the *New Zealand Gazette*, as required under section 23 of the Act. If you do not renew any of the designations on or before 20 June 2025 those designations will lapse automatically.

28. Under the Act, designation renewals are required to be reported to the Intelligence and Security Committee. **Attachment F** provides a letter to the Committee, confirming that the renewals have been made.

29. We will be providing further advice over the next four months, subject to NSB approval, on seven further renewals and potentially the designation of two new entities.

Attachments:	Title	Security classification
<b>Attachment A:</b>	Procedural and legal considerations for terrorist designations	RESTRICTED
<b>Attachment B:</b>	Crown Law Office Advice: New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 considerations	RESTRICTED and LEGALLY PRIVILEGED
<b>Attachment C:</b>	Statement of Case: The Base	RESTRICTED
<b>Attachment D:</b>	Statement of Case: The American Proud Boys	RESTRICTED
<b>Attachment E:</b>	Draft letter to the Commissioner of Police	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Attachment F:</b>	Draft letter to the Intelligence and Security Committee	UNCLASSIFIED

## **Attachment A: Procedural and legal considerations for terrorist designations**

---

### **The Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (the Act)**

1. Entities listed by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), 2253 (2015) and 1988 (2011) Committees (the UN 1267 and 1988 Committees) are automatically designated as terrorist entities in New Zealand under the Act. The UN lists comprise of Al-Qaida, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the Taliban, and associated individuals and entities.
2. UNSCR 1373 requires Member States to identify other entities against which they should act. The Act gives New Zealand the ability to designate non-UN-listed entities of any group or individual where there are reasonable grounds to believe they have knowingly planned, carried out, or participated in the planning or carrying out, of one or more terrorist acts.
3. Under section 22(1) of the Act, the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts.
4. If an entity is designated under the Act, it becomes an offence under New Zealand law to deal with the entity's property, financial, or related services, or to provide it with property, funds, or material support. The Attorney-General can apply for a forfeiture order for any specified property that is controlled or owned by a designated entity in New Zealand. It also requires any financial institution or person who suspects any property is owned by either entity to report the existence of the property to the Commissioner of Police.
5. It is also an offence to knowingly recruit for a group that is a designated entity or participate in such a group for the purpose of enhancing its ability to carry out a terrorist act. Neither simple membership of a designated entity nor expressions of support for a designated entity is an offence in New Zealand.
6. Designations can be subject to judicial review as acknowledged by section 33 of the Act, which can be triggered by any person with standing. This includes a member of the group if the group is designated, a lawyer on their behalf, or by a third party. Likewise, a party with an interest in the designation or the entity itself could request revocation of the designation.
7. A designation as a terrorist entity made under section 22(1) automatically expires after three years unless revoked or renewed by the Prime Minister prior to this time. In accordance with section 29B(3) of the Act, designations may be renewed, prior to their expiry date, for a further three years if the Prime Minister believes that reasonable grounds exist, as set out in section 22, for an entity to be designated.

### **The statutory test and Cabinet mandate considerations**

8. Statements of Case provide the formal legal assessment that the statutory criteria for designation under the Act has been met.
9. For new designations, the Prime Minister is required under the Act to consult the Attorney-General about any proposed designation. Designation renewals are required under the Act to be reported to the Intelligence and Security Committee
10. Once the statutory threshold has been established, in determining whether to advise the Prime Minister to exercise his discretion to designate, the National Security Board (NSB) must weigh other relevant considerations including those agreed by Cabinet in DES Minute (10) 2/5. These considerations are:
  - the need for New Zealand to contribute to the international security environment by preventing activities such as the recruiting, harbouring, participating in or financing of terrorist entities that fall outside the scope of the UN listing process;

- the threat posed by the entity to New Zealand, New Zealanders, or New Zealand interests, including offshore;
- the entity's New Zealand or regional presence, or links with New Zealanders; and
- the nature and scale of the entity's involvement in terrorist acts or support activity.

**Process for assessing and confirming terrorist designations**

11. The Terrorist Designations Working Group (TDWG) manages the process for advising NSB on the designation of non-UN-listed terrorist entities in support of UNSCR 1373. The TDWG is chaired by New Zealand Police and includes officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, New Zealand Defence Force, Crown Law Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG) is an inter-agency group hosted and led within the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS). The group gives independent assessments to government agencies about threats to New Zealand, New Zealanders, and New Zealand's interests abroad. CTAG is made up of analysts from NZSIS and other government agencies, including: New Zealand Police, New Zealand Defence Force, Government Communications Security Bureau, the Civil Aviation Authority and Aviation Security Service, and the Department of Corrections.

Proactively Released

## Attachment C

### STATEMENT OF CASE TO RENEW THE DESIGNATION OF THE BASE AS A TERRORIST ENTITY

#### PURPOSE

1. This paper sets out the case demonstrating The Base (also known as TB) meets the statutory criteria for the renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity within New Zealand pursuant to the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (TSA).

#### STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER

2. This paper sets out updated information about TB's continued involvement in terrorist activity and covers any relevant changes or developments to the organisation since its original designation in 2022,<sup>1</sup> including TB's objectives, structure, weapons and tactics and includes recent attacks which meet the definition of a terrorist act under the TSA.
3. This updated information, together with the information contained in the original designation paper, provide the basis for the conclusion that TB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under the TSA.

#### STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA

4. Section 29B of the TSA provides that a designation of a terrorist entity expires three years after the date of designation unless it is earlier revoked, or renewed by the Prime Minister. The original designation is made pursuant to s 22 of the TSA, which provides that the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts. Carrying out a terrorist act includes the planning, preparation, or credible threat to carry out the act, whether it is actually carried out or not (s 5A(a) and (b)) and also includes an attempt to carry out the act (s 5A(c)).
5. The Prime Minister may renew that designation for a further three years under s 29B(2) if satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 for the entity to be designated under that section.
6. Before the expiry of an order made under s 29B(2), the Prime Minister may make another order under s 29B(3) renewing the designation concerned for a further three years. The Prime Minister may make any number of orders under s 29B(3) in respect of the same designation (s 29B(5)).

#### CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES

7. This paper has been prepared using open or unclassified sources that have a reputation for careful and unbiased reporting. These include The Guardian, BBC News, the Australian Broadcasting Company, The New York Times, Rolling Stone Magazine, Politico, The Nation, and CBC News (Canada).
8. A range of think tanks were referred to including The Southern Poverty Law Centre, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, The Counter Extremism Project, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Australian National Security, and the Combatting Terrorism Centre.

9. A range of regional news sources were also referred to including The Informant, Vox, Winnipeg Free Press, The Age, ABC12 News, MLive, Mining Gazette, Journal Times, The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Dutch News, Fox 2 Detroit, The Washington Post, and Northwest Georgia news.
10. Other sources utilised include VICE News, The Teller Report, the Floyd County Police Dept, RTL Today, 7 News, and The US Department of Justice.

### **EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA**

11. Since initial designation in 2022 TB has not committed acts that qualify as a terrorist act under the TSA. However, TB has continued their adherence to white-identity motivated extremism, and has continued recruitment drives in countries including Australia. During the US election they became visibly active on the internet as they attempted to find a stateside leader with the promise of a \$1200 monthly salary.
12. In 2023 and 2024, TB posted photos of members and propaganda activity allegedly occurring in France, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Sweden, and Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

### **Continued involvement in potential terrorist activity**

#### *Ongoing recruitment drives*

13. On August 20, 2024, Dutch police arrested three individuals - ages 16, 18, and 26 - on suspicion of belonging to TB. The suspects allegedly attempted to convince people across chat groups to commit terrorist crimes.<sup>3</sup>
14. In September 2024, Italian authorities apprehended two individuals, ages 18 and 20, for their involvement in a Telegram-based Russian accelerationist network linked to TB known as Aast. One of the suspects has developed a substantial online network of connections with other users associated with supremacist groups. The suspect seeks to enhance his standing within these circles by disseminating accelerationist propaganda and committing local crimes, which he later shares with the group administrators. The investigation into the other suspect revealed his strong ties to the Aast network, where he serves as an active administrator and has even been named the new leader following the reported arrest of the group's previous head.<sup>4</sup>
15. In October 2024, open-source media identified a propaganda video posted to Russian-owned site 'Rutude' which encouraged recruitment into TB cells in the USA. The video made statements attempting to highlight the perceived positives of an insurgency against the US Government. The article calls attention to a recent shift in TB migrating much of its online content to Russian-owned sites and services.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Continuing direct action*

16. In May 2022, ex-TB leader Justen Watkins was sentenced to four years in prison after spending years preparing for a "race war". He had planned to kill Police and minorities, and to attack the VICE headquarters. Watkins and his associates Thomas Denton and Tristan Webb had plans to build a fortified compound to launch a "race war" via a mass attack. Watkins took part in, and instructed training, to enhance his associate's tactical capabilities and firearms proficiencies. He also hosted "hate camps" for members of TB and other likeminded individuals.<sup>6</sup>
17. On June 4, 2024, TB member Nathan Weeden was sentenced to 26 months in prison and three years under supervised release for conspiring to harm individuals exercising their rights, and

intentionally vandalizing religious property due to its racial or ethnic affiliation. Weeden and his co-conspirators targeted Black and Jewish individuals, in addition to vandalizing Temple Jacob (a synagogue), with swastikas and symbols linked to TB. His co-conspirators, Richard Tobin and Yousef Barasneh, previously pleaded guilty to federal conspiracy charges in connection to the same incident.

*Ongoing adherence to violent extremist ideology*

18. Also on 4 June 2024, Rinaldo Nazzaro posted statements to social media encouraging a violent armed revolution as means to create a separate “ethnostate” within the US. Nazzaro claimed “Nothing Is Mightier Than The Sword.”, and that change would only be secured through the use of force. Nazzaro proposed violent action as the only viable way to “achieve the 14 Words”, stating that he and his followers need the ability to dictate how society is ruled. He further stated that: “Barring separatism, all we can really do is wait for Collapse and hope we’ll be adequately prepared to take advantage of it.”<sup>7</sup>
19. On 3 June 2020, National Guard/TB member, Francis Harker and an associate discussed “interrupting an unjust stop” by trapping law enforcement at a shopping mall in Virginia. Harker obtained a semi-automatic rifle the same day as that discussion and a handgun the following year. During a November 2021 search of Harker’s home in Norfolk, Virginia, the FBI found firearms, illegal drugs and a backpack containing components for several Molotov cocktails. Also located were violent/anti-police/pro-Nazi and white supremacist content on Harker’s social media accounts.<sup>8</sup>
20. On 18 December 2021, a member of TB was accused of a white supremacist murder plot on an inmate at the Floyd County Jail. Michael John Helterbrand was arrested in January 2020 on charges involving conspiracy to commit murder and participation in a criminal gang (the Ghostface Gangsters). Once jailed, he and six other Ghostface Gangsters attacked and sexually assaulted a man in the jail. An FBI affidavit filed in the case stated that Helterbrand, along with two others from the assault were involved in TB.<sup>9</sup>
21. In November 2023, a major operation coordinated by Europol and Eurojust arrested five individuals and interrogated seven more for their suspected involvement in TB.<sup>10</sup> The operation was conducted in Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, and Romania. The individuals were allegedly responsible for disseminating violent extremist propaganda, recruitment of new members, and sharing manuals for 3D-printed weapons. Some of the suspects had already written a manifesto, had access to weapons, and were considered at risk of launching imminent action.<sup>11</sup>

### **Ideology and Objectives**

22. The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.<sup>12</sup>

### **Organisation and Structure**

23. Based in Russia, Nazzaro serves as the face of the group. Nazzaro stepped down from formal leadership in 2020, after which the group was briefly led by US national Justen Watkins. Watkins was eventually sentenced to four years in prison in May 2022 after the discovery of plans kill police and minorities, and to destroy VICE headquarters.<sup>13</sup>

24. Nazzaro continues to engage with TB as a figure head, and in August 2024 posted to his personal Telegram account seeking a stateside leader to replace Watkins.<sup>14</sup>
25. Instead of a hierarchy, TB mainly operates under the 'leaderless resistance' model. This model advocates forming two-to-three person cells to commit acts of violence and train together independently.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, co-ordination appears to occur across open and encrypted social media platforms.<sup>16</sup>
26. Since designation in 2022 TB has developed a transnational presence. Reporting indicates individuals suspected of TB membership and plots of violence has been observed across Europe, with arrests in various European countries.<sup>17</sup> Both Nazzaro and the official Telegram account of TB have encouraged Europeans to join the group, with photos posted indicating recruitment of members and propaganda activity occurring across Europe.<sup>18</sup> This growing presence is reported to have influenced the European Union to add TB to the EU Terrorist List on 26 July 2024.<sup>19</sup>
27. TB's total membership is unknown. Its primary web forum reportedly has 45 members.<sup>20</sup>

### **Weapons, Tactics and Capability**

28. A key goal of TB is to train a cadre of extremists capable of accelerationist violence. Nazzaro has repetitively counselled members online about violence, the acquisition of weapons, and actions to accelerate the collapse of the US government and survive the subsequent period of chaos and violence. In support of this objective, Nazzaro ensures the group maintain a large database of PDFs that explore a wide range of terrorist tactics, how to construct weapons (including weapons of mass destruction), survivalist techniques, and ideological texts.<sup>21</sup>
29. TB seeks to recruit members with existing capabilities in self-defence, outdoor skills, and specifically current/former members of the armed forces.<sup>22</sup>
30. While discussion and possession of weapons is commonplace within TB's social media activity, the overall real-world capability of members with firearms is unknown. Members are known to have attended paramilitary training camps (which is not illegal in many parts of the US), and some members are known to have military experience, but the translation of this training and experience into actions has never been applied.
31. TB has also used the meme-generating website iFunny to create propaganda memes and post videos, which has sparked interest from some of iFunny's users. Memes often includes emails or QR codes with which users can get in touch with a recruiter.<sup>23</sup>

### **LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT (LOAC)**

32. The activities and operations of TB described above have not been undertaken in an area or at a time of recognised armed conflict. Accordingly, the exemption under section 5(4) of the TSA has no application.

### **CONCLUSION**

33. On the evidence set out above, this paper concludes that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 of the TSA for TB to be designated under that section.
34. Since its designation in June 2022, TB has continued to carry out activities which meet the definition of terrorist acts in ss 5 and 5A of the TSA (paragraphs 16, 17, and 19) including

planning, threatening and attempting attacks. Accordingly, given there are still reasonable grounds to believe TB has knowingly carried out terrorist acts as set out in s 22 of the TSA, TB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under s29B.

35. The designation must be renewed by 20 June 2025 to be effective.

Proactively Released

<sup>1</sup> The statement of case, dated 20 July 2014 can be accessed at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/statement-of-case-the-base-terrorist-entity-20-june-2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 04/11/2024.

<sup>3</sup> (05/09/2024) "Dutch teen, two men in custody for membership to right-wing extremist terrorist group", *NL Times*, accessed via <https://nltimes.nl/2024/09/05/dutch-teen-two-men-custody-membership-right-wing-extremist-terrorist-group> on 06/11/2024.

<sup>4</sup> (06/09/2024) "Two members of the neo-Nazi and supremacist group AAST arrested", *Italian State Police*, accessed via <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/1666daef041bf84276459814> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>5</sup> (28/10/2024) "Neo-Nazi group the Base found a safe space to recruit Americans: the Russian internet", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/oct/28/neo-nazi-the-base-recruitment-russia> on 13/01/2025

<sup>6</sup> (24/05/2022) "Neo-Nazi Leader planned attacks on Minorities, Media and Cops", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-leader-planned-attacks-on-cops-and-media-court-docs-show/> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>7</sup> NYPD Weekly Terrorism Brief #23

<sup>8</sup> (25/07/2022) "Former member or the NG sentenced for possessing firearm while engaging in violent extremist online discussion" *United States Attorney's Office*, accessed via <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/former-member-national-guard-sentenced-possessing-firearm-while-engaging-violent> on 08/11/2024.

<sup>9</sup> (24/02/2021) "Inmate accused in white supremacist murder", *Rome News*, accessed via [https://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/inmate-accused-in-white-supremacist-murder-plot-among-seven-gang-members-who-face-additional-charges/article\\_af0331fc-76b1-11eb-8bc9-0bb92a0b819f.html](https://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/inmate-accused-in-white-supremacist-murder-plot-among-seven-gang-members-who-face-additional-charges/article_af0331fc-76b1-11eb-8bc9-0bb92a0b819f.html) on 08/11/2024.

<sup>10</sup> (11/11/2023) "Five right-wing terrorists arrested throughout Europe with the support of Eurojust and Europol", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 13/02/2025

<sup>11</sup> (26/07/2024) "The base, and the basis for listing far-right terror groups", *ICCT*, accessed via <https://www.icct.nl/publication/base-and-basis-listing-far-right-terror-groups> on 07/11/2024.

i. (11/11/2023) "Five right-winged terrorists arrested throughout Europe", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 08/11/2024.

<sup>12</sup> (16/01/2020) "The Base", *ADL*, accessed via <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/base> on 17/02/2025.

<sup>13</sup> (24/05/2022) "Neo-Nazi Leader planned attacks on Minorities, Media and Cops", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-leader-planned-attacks-on-cops-and-media-court-docs-show/> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>14</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US Neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 13/01/2025

<sup>15</sup> (8/10/20) Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, and Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>16</sup> (8/10/2020) Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, and Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america> on 07/11/2024.

i. (16/08/2019) Ryan Thorpe, "Homegrown hate", *Winnipeg Free Press*, accessed via <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/homegrown-hate-547510902.html> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>17</sup> (11/11/2023) "Five right-winged terrorists arrested throughout Europe", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 13/01/2025

<sup>18</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US Neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 13/01/2025

<sup>19</sup> (05/11/2024) "The Base", *Counter Terrorism Project*, accessed via <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>20</sup> (22/09/2024) "The Base", *Australian National Security*, accessed via <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/the-base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>21</sup> (17/08/2019) Mack Lamoureux and Ben Makuch, "Militant Neo-Nazi Group Actively Recruiting Ahead of Alleged Training Camp", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/bjwx55/militant-neo-nazi-group-actively-recruiting-ahead-of-alleged-training-camp> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>22</sup> (05/11/2024) "The Base", *Counter Terrorism Project*, accessed via <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>23</sup> 14/11/2019 "Neo-Nazi Terror groups are using IFunny to recruit", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-terror-groups-are-using-ifunny-to-recruit/> on 05/11/2024.

## STATEMENT OF CASE TO RENEW THE DESIGNATION OF THE AMERICAN PROUD BOYS AS A TERRORIST ENTITY

### PURPOSE

1. This paper sets out the case demonstrating The American Proud Boys ('Proud Boys, 'APB') meets the statutory criteria for the renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity within New Zealand pursuant to the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (TSA).


### STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER

2. This paper sets out updated information about the APB's continued involvement in terrorist activity and covers any relevant changes or developments to the organisation since its original designation in 2022,<sup>1</sup> including APB's objectives, structure, weapons and activities.
3. This updated information, together with the information contained in the original designation paper, provide the basis for the conclusion that APB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under the TSA.


### STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA

4. Section 29B of the TSA provides that a designation of a terrorist entity expires three years after the date of designation unless it is earlier revoked, or renewed by the Prime Minister. The original designation is made pursuant to s 22 of the TSA, which provides that the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts. Carrying out a terrorist act includes the planning, preparation, or credible threat to carry out the act, whether it is actually carried out or not (s 5A(a) and (b)) and also includes an attempt to carry out the act (s 5A(c)).
5. The Prime Minister may renew that designation for a further three years under s 29B(2) if satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 for the entity to be designated under that section.
6. Before the expiry of an order made under s 29B(2), the Prime Minister may make another order under s 29B(3) renewing the designation concerned for a further three years. The Prime Minister may make any number of orders under s 29B(3) in respect of the same designation (s 29B(5)).

s9(2)(h)



s9(2)(h)



**CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES**

10. This paper has been prepared using open or unclassified sources which have a reputation for careful and unbiased reporting. These include Reuters, The Associated Press, CNN, The Washington Post, and BCC News.
11. A range of think tanks were referred to including Southern Poverty Law Centre, Armed Conflict Locations & Event Data (ACLED), and Just Security.
12. A range of regional news sources were also referred to including Voice of America, Fox 5, USA Today, The Minnesota Star Tribune, VICE, 6 NEWS, and the Salt Lake City Tribune.
13. Other sources utilised include Rise to Peace Blog.

## EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA

### Recent history and developments

14. Information indicates that while there is an absence of terrorist acts as per s 5 TSA in the past three years (which includes planning, preparation, or credible threats to carry out a terrorist act), elements associated with the APB continue to operate throughout the USA. Despite the imprisonment of the key leadership of the APB in 2023 acting to limit violent extremism, during the period between the imprisonment and the commutation of 14 sentences in January 2025 the APB was fractured, factional, and in disarray.
15. While the arrest, conviction, and sentencing of key leadership of the APB for sedition acted to suppress nationally-coordinated APB behaviour, members have continued to demonstrate adherence to extremism, and continue to use threats of violence against targets including LGBTQ people, pro-abortion activists, and a mythologised 'Antifa'.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the adoption of gay and trans people as a unifying and primary target for mobilisation of APB members has accelerated since 2022, and is used by the group to maintain relevance within the identity-motivated violent extremist ecosystem.<sup>4</sup>
16. Considering the willingness of members to deploy violence against ideological targets (see Ideology and Objectives, below), the possibility remains that were it not for the suppressing effect provided by the imprisonment of the APB leadership, the organisation would have continued to undertake terrorist activity.
17. The January 2025 commutation of the sentences of the senior leadership of the APB convicted of sedition led to the release of these leaders. Since their release these leaders have carefully qualified their language, but have openly spoken of retribution against law enforcement and judicial officials they perceive as responsible for their imprisonment.<sup>5</sup> This use of guarded language is consistent with crypto-fascism and the modus operandi of the APB at the time of its designation in 2022 and reflects expert warnings that the group could “usher in a new wave of right-wing extremism”.<sup>6</sup>
18. Specific actions by the APB against ideological targets of the organisation since their last designation are provided below.

### Continued involvement in violent extremism

#### *Threats of Violence*

19. On 22 February 2025 Enrique Tarrío, leader of the APB, accessed a conference centre and confronted a group of police officers who had defended the Capitol building during the 6 January attack.<sup>7</sup> During the confrontation one of the officers is reported to have said to Tarrío, “You’re a traitor to this country”. The following day, what was regarded as a credible bomb threat was made to the conference centre targeting a range of public figures, and especially the officer who called Tarrío a traitor.<sup>8</sup> On the Friday before the confrontation with the officer, Tarrío was arrested and briefly detained for a “simple assault” on a protestor outside the Capitol.<sup>9</sup>
20. On 19 November 2022, a violent confrontation occurred between protesters and eight alleged members of APB outside a white nationalist conference in Tennessee, USA. The alleged members of the APB arrived in clothing and symbols associated with the group, advancing on protestors, and confronting them with verbal abuse and homophobic slurs. In one incident, a

protestor was hit on the head with an expandable metal baton by one of the alleged members. At least two of the members of the APB were reported to have been armed.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Harassment of LGBTQ people*

21. On 26 June 2022, APB members attended outside a public library in Nevada clad in uniform to protest a “drag queen story hour” (a ‘Drag event’). They held signs accusing participants of grooming children, and one member allegedly approached the building with a gun, causing a number of patrons to flee inside.<sup>11</sup>
22. On 20 January 2023, five APB members protested a Drag event at a tea shop in Salt Lake City, Utah. It was reported at least one member carried a semi-automatic rifle and a handgun. Police attended the demonstration, spoke with APB members regarding the firearms, and instructed them to remain peaceful.<sup>12</sup>
23. On 18 February 2023, a group of APB members disrupted a Drag event at a bookstore in Silver Spring, Maryland. APB members confronted volunteers of the event, yelling verbal abuse and engaging in physical altercations.<sup>13</sup>
24. On 11 March 2023, APB members joined other extremist groups including Patriot Front and White Lives Matter in protesting a Drag event in Wadsworth, Ohio. Verbal abuse and white-identity slogans/flags were observed, and near the end of the demonstration reports of violence and brandishing of non-lethal weapons were noted.<sup>14</sup>
25. On 8 July 2023, approximately 55 APB members attended a Drag event at a bookstore in Chaska, Minnesota. The group held banners and signs espousing conspiracy beliefs and anti-LGBTQ narratives, while shouting similar messaging to the gathered crowds.<sup>15</sup>
26. On 7 October 2023, an estimated dozen APB members showed up at the end of a Pride celebration in Knoxville, Tennessee. Video footage on social media shows APB members wearing tactical gear engaging in heated confrontations with pro-LGBTQ activists.<sup>16</sup>
27. In November 2023, an investigation by the FBI and Knoxville Police Department in Tennessee occurred after an anti-trans banner and Proud Boy stickers were left at the Knox Pride centre.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Ideology and objectives**

28. The APB have shifted their ideological objectives since 2022. Following the Capitol riot and in absence of leadership, the APB mobilised around specific issues topical within the far-right political spectrum. Of greatest note there was an observed increase in APB efforts to appear at abortion related demonstrations and LGBTQ events such as Pride month.<sup>18</sup>
29. There is however some ideological continuity. Court documents released in 2023 indicated members of the APB still adhere to ‘western chauvinism’, and they actively encourage veneration of ‘traditional roles’ for women (i.e. ‘the housewife’). APB have adopted an extremist combination of these positions that is ideologically grounded in fascism.<sup>19</sup>
30. The APB continue to uphold violence against opponents as an acceptable solution to solving political disputes (see Weapons, Tactics, and Capability below) against ideological opponents such as “democrats”, feminists, transgender activists, and other opposing individuals. A nationally representative survey from 2022 for example identified that 23% of Proud Boy supporters said that violence “to stop who do not share my beliefs from voting” was justifiable,

nearly 30% thought violence justified to advance a political objective, and 20% would be willing to kill to advance a political objective.<sup>20</sup>

31. APB readily embrace and are unified in being directly and deliberately opposed to the liberalisation of US society, the diversification of the US population, and their fear of a demonised political 'Left'. The APB see themselves as defending an idealised perception of 'The West' and 'Western' values, but are in practice railing against politically liberal values and the ongoing diversification of US society.
32. This reactionary political position allows the APB to self-characterise and target 'outsiders' as the enemies of the US. More importantly, and as was demonstrated on 6 January 2021, this provides justification for the APBs' political violence against those they perceive as ideological opponents and targets.<sup>21</sup>

### **Organisation and structure**

33. Since the 6 January 2021 Capitol riot, founding leader Enrique Tarrío<sup>22</sup> and four other members were convicted in federal court of seditious conspiracy, and were sentenced to 15 or more years in prison. An additional 95 members and associates were charged with participation in the violence.<sup>23</sup>
34. During the imprisonment of their leadership the APB appears to have adopted a decentralised model, chapters adopting greater self-government across at least 40 states, and minimal central co-ordination. Members of the APB claim the chapters are largely independent of one another, and have banned communications with the media. In an apparent attempt to maintain the cohesion of the entity, founding leader Gavin McInnes (who announced his resignation in 2018) continues to remain involved with the group as a mediating influence.<sup>24</sup>
35. On 20 January 2025, 5 members of the APB guilty of seditious conspiracy had their sentences commuted.<sup>25</sup> There is evidence of some contestation within the APB for leadership since Tarrío's release, with factions forming in different US regions each claiming to be the 'true' APB.<sup>26</sup>

### **Weapons, tactics and capability**

36. A key feature of APB activity known to appeal to members is the impression the group self-promotes of taking direct action against perceived threats to white nationalism (and the supremacy of whites in the US).
37. Since designation the APB have not been observed using lethal force, i.e. firearms, during their routine instigation of violence against ideological opponents, but media reporting indicates ongoing possession of firearms during protest events by APB members. Inter-personal physical violence is however extremely common, and the APB have a history of inciting, supporting, and praising violence under the guise of 'self-defence'.<sup>27</sup>
38. APB tactics are typically characterised by appearance in numbers at target events and the subsequent instigation of violence such as brawling. Weapons deployed during these actions are typically non-lethal and can include 'bear mace' (an extremely strong type of pepper spray), batons, clubs, and/or paintball guns.<sup>28</sup> In one instance, an APB member allegedly possessed a hatchet on their person at a protest event.<sup>29</sup>

**LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT (LOAC)**

39. The activities and operations of APB described above have not been undertaken in an area or at a time of recognised armed conflict. Accordingly, the exemption under section 5(4) of the TSA has no application.

**CONCLUSION**

40. Careful analysis of all available information about the APB has established that there are reasonable grounds to believe that APB would have conducted terrorist activity were it not for the suppression of the entity's intent and behaviour caused by imprisonment of APB leadership. On the evidence set out above, this paper concludes that there are still reasonable grounds to believe as set out in s 22 of the TSA for APB to be designated under that section.

41. The designation must be renewed by 20 June 2025 to be effective.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> The statement of case, dated 20 June 2022 can be accessed at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/statement-of-case-the-american-proud-boys-terrorist-entity-20-june-2022.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> (R) Crown Law reference ATT114/1367 dated 29 June 2012.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Antifa' is an abbreviation for 'anti-fascist activists'. This type of activist was a permanent bete noir of the APB during the first Trump administration.
- <sup>4</sup> (14 December 2023) "Riding the Tide: The Shifting Identity of the Proud Boys Since the Capitol Riot" *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data* accessed via <https://acleddata.com/2023/12/14/riding-the-tide-the-shifting-proud-boys-identity-since-the-capitol-riot/> on 13/02/2025
- <sup>5</sup> (24/01/2025) "Proud Boys leader thanks Trump for January 6 pardon and vows revenge", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/24/trump-pardon-proud-boys-enrique-tarrio> on 12/02/2025.
- <sup>6</sup> (17/10/2024) "Proud Boys Threat Assessment: From the Planning of January 6th to Future Scenarios" *Just Security*, accessed via <https://www.justsecurity.org/103956/proud-boys-threat-assessment/> on 30/10/2024.
- <sup>7</sup> (22/02/2025) "Enrique Tarrio follows and insults officers who defended US Capitol on January 6", *The Guardian*, accessed via <http://theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/22/enrique-tarrio-capitol-police> on 1/04/2025
- <sup>8</sup> (23/02/2025) "Political conference in DC interrupted by death threats against speakers critical of Trump", *CNN*, Accessed via <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/02/23/politics/principles-first-washington-dc-threats/index.html> on 01/04/2025.
- i. (22/02/2025) "Enrique Tarrio follows and insults officers who defended US Capitol on January 6", *The Guardian*, accessed via <http://theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/22/enrique-tarrio-capitol-police> on 1/04/2025
- <sup>9</sup> (23/02/2025) "Political conference in DC interrupted by death threats against speakers critical of Trump", *CNN*, Accessed via <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/02/23/politics/principles-first-washington-dc-threats/index.html> on 01/04/2025.
- <sup>10</sup> (20/11/2022) "Presumed Proud Boys Attack Protestors Outside White Nationalist Conference", *The Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed via <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/11/20/presumed-proud-boys-attack-protesters-outside-white-nationalist-conference> on 14/01/2025.
- <sup>11</sup> (13/07/2022) "Proud Boys Aid the Right-Wing Assault on the LGBTQ Community and Reproductive Justice", *The Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed via <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/07/13/proud-boys-aid-right-wing-assault-lgbtq-community-and-reproductive-justice> on 13/01/2025.
- <sup>12</sup> (21/01/2023) "Proud Boys protest all-ages drag show at Tea Zaanti", *The Salt Lake Tribune*, accessed via <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2023/01/21/proud-boys-protest-all-ages-drag/> on 16/01/2025.
- <sup>13</sup> (21/02/2023) "Montgomery police to patrol drag story hours after Proud Boys protest", *The Washington Post*, accessed via <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/02/21/maryland-drag-queen-story-hour-proud-boys/> on 16/01/2025.
- i. (20/02/2023) "Proud Boys protest Drag Story Hour at Silver Spring bookstore", *Fox 5*, accessed via <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/proud-boys-protest-drag-story-hour-at-silver-spring-bookstore> on 16/01/2025.
- <sup>14</sup> (14/03/2023) "Nazi salutes, pepper spray and pistols: Ohio drag event devolves into an extremist melee", *USA Today*, accessed via <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/03/14/drag-storyelling-in-wadsworth-ohio-devolves-into-extremist-fight/11465959002/> on 16/01/2025.
- <sup>15</sup> (08/07/2023) "Supporters flock to Chaska kids store for drag queen event", *The Minnesota Star Tribune*, accessed via <https://www.startribune.com/supporters-flock-to-chaska-kids-store-for-drag-queen-event/600288313> on 16/01/2025.
- <sup>16</sup> (05/01/2024), "Headed Into Election Year, Proud Boys Appear to Be on Decline", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/headed-into-election-year-proud-boys-appear-to-be-on-decline/> on 16/01/2025.
- <sup>17</sup> (13/11/2023) "Threatening banner left at Knox Pride Center sparks investigation with FBI, police", *6 News*, accessed via <https://www.wate.com/news/top-stories/threatening-banner-left-at-knox-pride-center-sparks-investigation-with-fbi-police/> on 16/01/2025.
- <sup>18</sup> (14/12/2023) "Riding the Tide: The Shifting Identity of the Proud Boys Since the Capitol Riot", *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLEDD)*, accessed via <https://acleddata.com/2023/12/14/riding-the-tide-the-shifting-proud-boys-identity-since-the-capitol-riot/> on 14/01/2025.
- <sup>19</sup> (03/06/2024) "The Proud Boys are back: How the far-right group is rebuilding to rally behind Trump", *Reuters*, accessed via <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-election-proudboys/> on 14/01/2025.
- <sup>20</sup> (20/09/2024) "Opinion: Don't underestimate threats of violence from Proud Boys and other right-wing groups", *LA Times*, accessed via <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-09-20/proud-boys-trump-violence-authoritarian> on 24/2/2025.
- <sup>21</sup> (06/05/2023) "Opinion: This is the verdict the Proud Boys fear most", *CNN*, accessed via <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/05/06/opinions/proud-boys-verdict-democracy-threat-glick-lewis/index.html> on 14/01/2025.
- i. (26/05/2020) "Swiping Right: The Allure of Hyper Masculinity and Cryptofacism for Men Who Join the Proud Boys", *International Centre for Counter Terrorism (ICCT)*, accessed via <https://icct.nl/publication/swiping-right-allure-hyper-masculinity-and-cryptofacism-men-who-join-proud-boys> on 14/01/2025.
- <sup>22</sup> (05/05/2023) "Proud Boy's Tarrio guilty of Jan.6 seditious conspiracy", *Associated Press News*, Accessed via <https://apnews.com/article/jan-6-enrique-tarrio-seditious-conspiracy-trial-f8738f17552cda21ecf6d89504da2a0e> on 13/01/2025.
- <sup>23</sup> (17/10/2024) "Proud Boys Threat Assessment: From the Planning of January 6th to Future Scenarios", *Just Security*, accessed via <https://www.justsecurity.org/103956/proud-boys-threat-assessment/> on 16/01/2025
- i. (03/06/2024) "The Proud Boys are back: How the far-right group is rebuilding to rally behind Trump", *Reuters*, accessed via <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-election-proudboys/> on 13/01/2025.
- <sup>24</sup>(03/06/2024) "The Proud Boys are back: How the far-right group is rebuilding to rally behind Trump", *Reuters*, accessed via <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-election-proudboys/> on 14/01/2025.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> (13/06/2022) "Who are the Proud Boys?", *Rise to Peace*, accessed via <https://www.risetopeace.org/2022/06/13/who-are-the-proud-boys/risetopeace/> on 15/01/2025.
- <sup>28</sup> (15/08/2019) E.J. Dickson, "Are the Proud Boys Done or Are They Just Getting Started?", *Rolling Stone*, accessed via <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/proud-boys-antifa-attack-trump-rally-2020-election-862538/> on 18/07/2021.
- <sup>29</sup> (20/11/2022) "Presumed Proud Boys Attack Protestors Outside White Nationalist Conference", *The Southern Poverty Law Centre*, accessed via <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/11/20/presumed-proud-boys-attack-protesters-outside-white-nationalist-conference> on 14/01/2025.

## Attachment E

XX June 2025

Richard Chambers  
Commissioner of Police  
Wellington

### **Renewal of the terrorist designation of two entities under the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002**

Pursuant to section 29B of the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002, I renew the designations of The Base and the American Proud Boys.

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
**Prime Minister**

Proactively Released

## Attachment F

XX June 2025

Members  
Intelligence and Security Committee  
**PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Dear Colleagues

### **Renewal of two entities under The Terrorism Suppression Act 2002**

I write to inform you of my recent decision to renew the designations of two terrorist entities under Section 29B(2) of the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (the Act). I am required by Section 29B(4) of the Act to inform you of my decision to renew designations.

The groups are The Base and the American Proud Boys.

- The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.
- The American Proud Boys is an ideologically fascist organisation predominantly active in the United States. The American Proud Boys has adopted a violently extreme right-wing populism that actively targets ideological outgroups, including the LGBTQ community. The group is quick to endorse violence against perceived political opponents.

A designation under New Zealand legislation freezes the assets of terrorist entities and makes it a criminal offence to materially support the activities of the designated terrorist entity, or to provide or collect funds for use by a designated entity. This includes dealing with the property of the designated terrorist entity or making property or financial services available to the entity.

Notice of my decision was recently given in the New Zealand Gazette. Overseas posts and international partners have been informed.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
**Prime Minister**

**From:** Ben King [DPMC] <Ben.King@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 June 2025 12:52 pm  
**To:** Bridget White [DPMC] <Bridget.White@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Cc:** Kathrine Wigley [DPMC] <kathrine.wigley@dpmc.govt.nz>  
**Subject:** Designations: The Base and Proud Boys

~~RESTRICTED~~ UNCLASSIFIED

Good afternoon

As discussed, I took the opportunity last night to once again read the Statements of Case attached to the recommendation to the Prime Minister for The Base and the Proud Boys.

I read each statement carefully, reviewed against the criteria outlined in s22 of the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002, which requires us to believe, on reasonable grounds that the entity has either (a) knowingly carried out, or (b) knowingly participated in the carrying out of one or more terrorist acts.

I acknowledge that the statements of case have been considered, and endorsed by, the National Security Board.

However, I wanted to have one last look at the assessments before I finally recommended a course of action to the Prime Minister, ahead of the deadline for renewal/redesignation (on 18 June 2025). That's because designating any entity as a terrorist entity is a significant step, and it's important we maintain the integrity of the system.

When I had another read of the cases last evening, carefully testing the evidence against the s22 criteria, I felt the case for designating The Base was very strong, and I thought it therefore fully justified to continue recommending to the Prime Minister that he should designate the entity.

My review of the case for the Proud Boys, however, left me with questions about whether the evidence was sufficient to meet the test. The case, in my view, rests on judgements around intent, and what might have happened if the leadership were not incarcerated. I was not convinced, on a final read, that the Statement of Case met the test required by the Act.

I want to be clear that Proud Boys is a distasteful, disruptive and corrosive organisation, and that it's tactics and methods are well beyond the pale. But I think we require further work and reflection on the evidence base, which will feed into advice for the Prime

Minister's consideration.

I would therefore like to proceed on the following basis:

- I have recommended to the Prime Minister that he should proceed with his consideration of re-designating The Base;
- I have recommended to the Prime Minister that he should not proceed with re-designating the Proud Boys; and
- This message requests that you work with NZ Police to do a zero-based assessment of the Proud Boys under the TSA, considering the full base of evidence to determine whether we would recommend a designation on the evidence before us today.

I accept this will take more time for consideration of the Proud Boys and it means the current designation will lapse. But given the seriousness of a terrorist designation, this is a step which I judge to be the most prudent course of action.

Nga mihi

Ben

---

**Ben King** ([he/him](#))

Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet | Chief Executive  
Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua

M: s9(2)(a)

E: [ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz)

Executive Assistant: Gill Lockhart

M: s9(2)(a)

E: [gill.lockhart@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:gill.lockhart@dpmc.govt.nz)

## Item 5

**From:** Ben King [DPMC] <[Ben.King@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Ben.King@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 June 2025 10:01 am  
**To:** NationalSecurityBoardMembers <[NationalSecurityBoardMembers@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:NationalSecurityBoardMembers@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Cc:** Bridget White [DPMC] <[Bridget.White@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:Bridget.White@dpmc.govt.nz)>; Kathrine Wigley [DPMC] <[kathrine.wigley@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:kathrine.wigley@dpmc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** TSA Designations: American ProudBoys

~~RESTRICTED~~ UNCLASSIFIED

Kia ora NSB colleagues

You will recall NSB recently endorsed the TDWG advice for the renewal of The Base and the American ProudBoys.

Following NSB, I reread the Statements of Case attached to the recommendation to the PM and considered the case remained strong for The Base, but less so for the American ProudBoys.

I read each statement carefully, and reviewed them against the criteria outlined in s22 of the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002, which “requires us to believe, on reasonable grounds that the entity has either knowingly carried out, or knowingly participated in the carrying out of one or more terrorist acts”.

I recommended to the PM that he redesignate The Base as a terrorist entity, to which he agreed. I decided not to recommend redesignating the American ProudBoys for renewal. I was not convinced, on a final read, that the Statement of Case met the test required by the Act. I have instead asked for officials to undertake the full process to consider designating them. This will require the TDWG to consider new information over time to see if the criteria outlined in s22 are met.

I am happy to discuss at NSB next week.

Nga mihi,

Ben

---

**Ben King** ([he/him](#))

Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet | Chief Executive

Te Tumu Whakarae mō Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua

M: [s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

E: [ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:ben.king@dpmc.govt.nz)

Executive Assistant: Gill Lockhart

M: [s9\(2\)\(a\)](#)

E: [gill.lockhart@dpmc.govt.nz](mailto:gill.lockhart@dpmc.govt.nz)

Proactively Released



# Briefing

## Terrorist Designation: Renewal of The Base as a terrorist entity

To: Rt Hon Christopher Luxon, Prime Minister

Date	17/06/2025	Priority level:	Routine
------	------------	-----------------	---------

### Purpose

1. This briefing recommends you renew the designation of The Base as a terrorist entity under the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (the Act).

### Recommendations

2. It is recommended you:

1. **note** the designation for The Base will automatically expire on 18 June 2025, unless revoked or renewed by you, in your capacity as Prime Minister, prior to expiry;
2. **note** that The Base continues to meet the statutory criteria for designation as a terrorist entity under the Act, based on advice set out in this paper and the Statement of Case (**Attachment C**);
3. **note** the Chair of the National Security Board (NSB), on behalf of NSB, recommends the designation for The Base be renewed;
4. **agree** to renew the designation for The Base;
5. **note** that in making this decision you are required to consider New Zealand Bill of Rights Act implications, and that Crown Law Office advice has been provided to support you (**Attachment B**); and

YES / NO



## **An entity needs to meet the statutory criteria for designation as a terrorist entity**

---

3. To be designated as a terrorist entity, section 22 of the Act requires that you, in your capacity as Prime Minister, believe on reasonable grounds that the entity has:
  - knowingly carried out, or;
  - knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts.
4. Section 29B provides that designations made under the Act expire every three years, unless renewed or revoked by the Prime Minister. To renew a designation, the Prime Minister must be satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds to believe the section 22 test is met.
5. General procedural, Cabinet and legal considerations that apply in relation to making any designation are set out in **Attachment A**.
6. A designation under New Zealand legislation freezes the assets of terrorist entities and makes it a criminal offence to materially support the activities of the designated terrorist entity, or to provide or collect funds for use by a designated entity. Designation of an entity under the Act also gives effect to New Zealand's international counter terrorism obligations.
7. The Base was designated in 2022. The designation will expire on 18 June 2025.

## **NSB recommends renewing the terrorist designation for The Base**

---

8. The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.
9. **NSB has examined the evidence for redesignating The Base and the Board recommends the designation is renewed.** The Base meets the statutory criteria for renewal, as outlined in the Statement of Case (**Attachment C**).
10. The Base has been highly active in the period since last renewal and has expanded from a primarily United States (US)-based entity to a trans-national presence made up of largely autonomous cells of violent extremists. Due to a growing European presence, the European Union (EU) added The Base to the EU Terrorist List in 2024. Arrests have been observed internationally and have likely prevented harm to members of the public and others by The Base members.
11. The Base is also currently designated by partners including Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

## **New Zealand Bill of Rights Act considerations**

---

12. A decision to designate a terrorist entity requires you to exercise your discretion and, in doing so, consider whether any limits on rights recognised in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

s9(2)(h)

## **Communications, media and public interest**

---

14. The only legal requirement for an announcement of a designation renewal and expiry is that it must be publicly notified in the *New Zealand Gazette* as soon as practicable after

the decision. The New Zealand Police would then update its website with unclassified versions of the Statement of Case, as is standard procedure<sup>1</sup>. Once the designation is gazetted, media are likely to become aware of it.

15. We do not anticipate any significant interest or queries regarding the redesignation of The Base.

### Next steps

16. A letter to the Commissioner of Police confirming your agreement to renew the designation of The Base is attached to this briefing (**Attachment D**). Upon receipt of this letter, the New Zealand Police will publish the decision in the *New Zealand Gazette*, as required under section 23 of the Act.

17. Under the Act, designation renewals are required to be reported to the Intelligence and Security Committee. **Attachment E** provides a letter to the Committee, confirming that the renewal has been made.

18. We will be providing further advice over the next four months, subject to NSB approval, on seven further renewals and potentially the designation of two new entities.

Attachments:	Title	Security classification
<b>Attachment A:</b>	Procedural and legal considerations for terrorist designations	RESTRICTED
<b>Attachment B:</b>	Crown Law Office Advice: New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 considerations	RESTRICTED and LEGALLY PRIVILEGED
<b>Attachment C:</b>	Statement of Case: The Base	RESTRICTED
<b>Attachment D:</b>	Draft letter to the Commissioner of Police	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Attachment E:</b>	Draft letter to the Intelligence and Security Committee	UNCLASSIFIED

<sup>1</sup> The Restricted and Legally Privileged sections of the Statements of Case will be redacted in the publicly-available versions.

## **Attachment A: Procedural and legal considerations for terrorist designations**

---

### **The Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (the Act)**

1. Entities listed by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), 2253 (2015) and 1988 (2011) Committees (the UN 1267 and 1988 Committees) are automatically designated as terrorist entities in New Zealand under the Act. The UN lists comprise of Al-Qaida, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the Taliban, and associated individuals and entities.
2. UNSCR 1373 requires Member States to identify other entities against which they should act. The Act gives New Zealand the ability to designate non-UN-listed entities of any group or individual where there are reasonable grounds to believe they have knowingly planned, carried out, or participated in the planning or carrying out, of one or more terrorist acts.
3. Under section 22(1) of the Act, the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts.
4. If an entity is designated under the Act, it becomes an offence under New Zealand law to deal with the entity's property, financial, or related services, or to provide it with property, funds, or material support. The Attorney-General can apply for a forfeiture order for any specified property that is controlled or owned by a designated entity in New Zealand. It also requires any financial institution or person who suspects any property is owned by either entity to report the existence of the property to the Commissioner of Police.
5. It is also an offence to knowingly recruit for a group that is a designated entity or participate in such a group for the purpose of enhancing its ability to carry out a terrorist act. Neither simple membership of a designated entity nor expressions of support for a designated entity is an offence in New Zealand.
6. Designations can be subject to judicial review as acknowledged by section 33 of the Act, which can be triggered by any person with standing. This includes a member of the group if the group is designated, a lawyer on their behalf, or by a third party. Likewise, a party with an interest in the designation or the entity itself could request revocation of the designation.
7. A designation as a terrorist entity made under section 22(1) automatically expires after three years unless revoked or renewed by the Prime Minister prior to this time. In accordance with section 29B(3) of the Act, designations may be renewed, prior to their expiry date, for a further three years if the Prime Minister believes that reasonable grounds exist, as set out in section 22, for an entity to be designated.

### **The statutory test and Cabinet mandate considerations**

8. Statements of Case provide the formal legal assessment that the statutory criteria for designation under the Act has been met.
9. For new designations, the Prime Minister is required under the Act to consult the Attorney-General about any proposed designation. Designation renewals are required under the Act to be reported to the Intelligence and Security Committee
10. Once the statutory threshold has been established, in determining whether to advise the Prime Minister to exercise his discretion to designate, the National Security Board (NSB) must weigh other relevant considerations including those agreed by Cabinet in DES Minute (10) 2/5. These considerations are:
  - the need for New Zealand to contribute to the international security environment by preventing activities such as the recruiting, harbouring, participating in or financing of terrorist entities that fall outside the scope of the UN listing process;

- the threat posed by the entity to New Zealand, New Zealanders, or New Zealand interests, including offshore;
- the entity's New Zealand or regional presence, or links with New Zealanders; and
- the nature and scale of the entity's involvement in terrorist acts or support activity.

#### **Process for assessing and confirming terrorist designations**

11. The Terrorist Designations Working Group (TDWG) manages the process for advising NSB on the designation of non-UN-listed terrorist entities in support of UNSCR 1373. The TDWG is chaired by New Zealand Police and includes officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, New Zealand Defence Force, Crown Law Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The Combined Threat Assessment Group (CTAG) is an inter-agency group hosted and led within the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS). The group gives independent assessments to government agencies about threats to New Zealand, New Zealanders, and New Zealand's interests abroad. CTAG is made up of analysts from NZSIS and other government agencies, including: New Zealand Police, New Zealand Defence Force, Government Communications Security Bureau, the Civil Aviation Authority and Aviation Security Service, and the Department of Corrections.

Proactively Released

## Attachment C

### STATEMENT OF CASE TO RENEW THE DESIGNATION OF THE BASE AS A TERRORIST ENTITY

#### PURPOSE

1. This paper sets out the case demonstrating The Base (also known as TB) meets the statutory criteria for the renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity within New Zealand pursuant to the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (TSA).

#### STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER

2. This paper sets out updated information about TB's continued involvement in terrorist activity and covers any relevant changes or developments to the organisation since its original designation in 2022,<sup>1</sup> including TB's objectives, structure, weapons and tactics and includes recent attacks which meet the definition of a terrorist act under the TSA.
3. This updated information, together with the information contained in the original designation paper, provide the basis for the conclusion that TB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under the TSA.

#### STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA

4. Section 29B of the TSA provides that a designation of a terrorist entity expires three years after the date of designation unless it is earlier revoked, or renewed by the Prime Minister. The original designation is made pursuant to s 22 of the TSA, which provides that the Prime Minister may designate an entity as a terrorist entity if the Prime Minister believes on reasonable grounds that the entity has knowingly carried out, or has knowingly participated in the carrying out of, one or more terrorist acts. Carrying out a terrorist act includes the planning, preparation, or credible threat to carry out the act, whether it is actually carried out or not (s 5A(a) and (b)) and also includes an attempt to carry out the act (s 5A(c)).
5. The Prime Minister may renew that designation for a further three years under s 29B(2) if satisfied that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 for the entity to be designated under that section.
6. Before the expiry of an order made under s 29B(2), the Prime Minister may make another order under s 29B(3) renewing the designation concerned for a further three years. The Prime Minister may make any number of orders under s 29B(3) in respect of the same designation (s 29B(5)).

#### CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES

7. This paper has been prepared using open or unclassified sources that have a reputation for careful and unbiased reporting. These include The Guardian, BBC News, the Australian Broadcasting Company, The New York Times, Rolling Stone Magazine, Politico, The Nation, and CBC News (Canada).
8. A range of think tanks were referred to including The Southern Poverty Law Centre, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, The Counter Extremism Project, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Australian National Security, and the Combatting Terrorism Centre.

9. A range of regional news sources were also referred to including The Informant, Vox, Winnipeg Free Press, The Age, ABC12 News, MLive, Mining Gazette, Journal Times, The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Dutch News, Fox 2 Detroit, The Washington Post, and Northwest Georgia news.
10. Other sources utilised include VICE News, The Teller Report, the Floyd County Police Dept, RTL Today, 7 News, and The US Department of Justice.

### **EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DESIGNATION RENEWAL UNDER THE TSA**

11. Since initial designation in 2022 TB has not committed acts that qualify as a terrorist act under the TSA. However, TB has continued their adherence to white-identity motivated extremism, and has continued recruitment drives in countries including Australia. During the US election they became visibly active on the internet as they attempted to find a stateside leader with the promise of a \$1200 monthly salary.
12. In 2023 and 2024, TB posted photos of members and propaganda activity allegedly occurring in France, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Sweden, and Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

### **Continued involvement in potential terrorist activity**

#### *Ongoing recruitment drives*

13. On August 20, 2024, Dutch police arrested three individuals - ages 16, 18, and 26 - on suspicion of belonging to TB. The suspects allegedly attempted to convince people across chat groups to commit terrorist crimes.<sup>3</sup>
14. In September 2024, Italian authorities apprehended two individuals, ages 18 and 20, for their involvement in a Telegram-based Russian accelerationist network linked to TB known as Aast. One of the suspects has developed a substantial online network of connections with other users associated with supremacist groups. The suspect seeks to enhance his standing within these circles by disseminating accelerationist propaganda and committing local crimes, which he later shares with the group administrators. The investigation into the other suspect revealed his strong ties to the Aast network, where he serves as an active administrator and has even been named the new leader following the reported arrest of the group's previous head.<sup>4</sup>
15. In October 2024, open-source media identified a propaganda video posted to Russian-owned site 'Rutude' which encouraged recruitment into TB cells in the USA. The video made statements attempting to highlight the perceived positives of an insurgency against the US Government. The article calls attention to a recent shift in TB migrating much of its online content to Russian-owned sites and services.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Continuing direct action*

16. In May 2022, ex-TB leader Justen Watkins was sentenced to four years in prison after spending years preparing for a "race war". He had planned to kill Police and minorities, and to attack the VICE headquarters. Watkins and his associates Thomas Denton and Tristan Webb had plans to build a fortified compound to launch a "race war" via a mass attack. Watkins took part in, and instructed training, to enhance his associate's tactical capabilities and firearms proficiencies. He also hosted "hate camps" for members of TB and other likeminded individuals.<sup>6</sup>
17. On June 4, 2024, TB member Nathan Weeden was sentenced to 26 months in prison and three years under supervised release for conspiring to harm individuals exercising their rights, and

intentionally vandalizing religious property due to its racial or ethnic affiliation. Weeden and his co-conspirators targeted Black and Jewish individuals, in addition to vandalizing Temple Jacob (a synagogue), with swastikas and symbols linked to TB. His co-conspirators, Richard Tobin and Yousef Barasneh, previously pleaded guilty to federal conspiracy charges in connection to the same incident.

*Ongoing adherence to violent extremist ideology*

18. Also on 4 June 2024, Rinaldo Nazzaro posted statements to social media encouraging a violent armed revolution as means to create a separate “ethnostate” within the US. Nazzaro claimed “Nothing Is Mightier Than The Sword.”, and that change would only be secured through the use of force. Nazzaro proposed violent action as the only viable way to “achieve the 14 Words”, stating that he and his followers need the ability to dictate how society is ruled. He further stated that: “Barring separatism, all we can really do is wait for Collapse and hope we’ll be adequately prepared to take advantage of it.”<sup>7</sup>
19. On 3 June 2020, National Guard/TB member, Francis Harker and an associate discussed “interrupting an unjust stop” by trapping law enforcement at a shopping mall in Virginia. Harker obtained a semi-automatic rifle the same day as that discussion and a handgun the following year. During a November 2021 search of Harker’s home in Norfolk, Virginia, the FBI found firearms, illegal drugs and a backpack containing components for several Molotov cocktails. Also located were violent/anti-police/pro-Nazi and white supremacist content on Harker’s social media accounts.<sup>8</sup>
20. On 18 December 2021, a member of TB was accused of a white supremacist murder plot on an inmate at the Floyd County Jail. Michael John Helterbrand was arrested in January 2020 on charges involving conspiracy to commit murder and participation in a criminal gang (the Ghostface Gangsters). Once jailed, he and six other Ghostface Gangsters attacked and sexually assaulted a man in the jail. An FBI affidavit filed in the case stated that Helterbrand, along with two others from the assault were involved in TB.<sup>9</sup>
21. In November 2023, a major operation coordinated by Europol and Eurojust arrested five individuals and interrogated seven more for their suspected involvement in TB.<sup>10</sup> The operation was conducted in Belgium, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, and Romania. The individuals were allegedly responsible for disseminating violent extremist propaganda, recruitment of new members, and sharing manuals for 3D-printed weapons. Some of the suspects had already written a manifesto, had access to weapons, and were considered at risk of launching imminent action.<sup>11</sup>

### **Ideology and Objectives**

22. The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.<sup>12</sup>

### **Organisation and Structure**

23. Based in Russia, Nazzaro serves as the face of the group. Nazzaro stepped down from formal leadership in 2020, after which the group was briefly led by US national Justen Watkins. Watkins was eventually sentenced to four years in prison in May 2022 after the discovery of plans kill police and minorities, and to destroy VICE headquarters.<sup>13</sup>

24. Nazzaro continues to engage with TB as a figure head, and in August 2024 posted to his personal Telegram account seeking a stateside leader to replace Watkins.<sup>14</sup>
25. Instead of a hierarchy, TB mainly operates under the 'leaderless resistance' model. This model advocates forming two-to-three person cells to commit acts of violence and train together independently.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, co-ordination appears to occur across open and encrypted social media platforms.<sup>16</sup>
26. Since designation in 2022 TB has developed a transnational presence. Reporting indicates individuals suspected of TB membership and plots of violence has been observed across Europe, with arrests in various European countries.<sup>17</sup> Both Nazzaro and the official Telegram account of TB have encouraged Europeans to join the group, with photos posted indicating recruitment of members and propaganda activity occurring across Europe.<sup>18</sup> This growing presence is reported to have influenced the European Union to add TB to the EU Terrorist List on 26 July 2024.<sup>19</sup>
27. TB's total membership is unknown. Its primary web forum reportedly has 45 members.<sup>20</sup>

### **Weapons, Tactics and Capability**

28. A key goal of TB is to train a cadre of extremists capable of accelerationist violence. Nazzaro has repetitively counselled members online about violence, the acquisition of weapons, and actions to accelerate the collapse of the US government and survive the subsequent period of chaos and violence. In support of this objective, Nazzaro ensures the group maintain a large database of PDFs that explore a wide range of terrorist tactics, how to construct weapons (including weapons of mass destruction), survivalist techniques, and ideological texts.<sup>21</sup>
29. TB seeks to recruit members with existing capabilities in self-defence, outdoor skills, and specifically current/former members of the armed forces.<sup>22</sup>
30. While discussion and possession of weapons is commonplace within TB's social media activity, the overall real-world capability of members with firearms is unknown. Members are known to have attended paramilitary training camps (which is not illegal in many parts of the US), and some members are known to have military experience, but the translation of this training and experience into actions has never been applied.
31. TB has also used the meme-generating website iFunny to create propaganda memes and post videos, which has sparked interest from some of iFunny's users. Memes often includes emails or QR codes with which users can get in touch with a recruiter.<sup>23</sup>

### **LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT (LOAC)**

32. The activities and operations of TB described above have not been undertaken in an area or at a time of recognised armed conflict. Accordingly, the exemption under section 5(4) of the TSA has no application.

### **CONCLUSION**

33. On the evidence set out above, this paper concludes that there are still reasonable grounds as set out in s 22 of the TSA for TB to be designated under that section.
34. Since its designation in June 2022, TB has continued to carry out activities which meet the definition of terrorist acts in ss 5 and 5A of the TSA (paragraphs 16, 17, and 19) including

planning, threatening and attempting attacks. Accordingly, given there are still reasonable grounds to believe TB has knowingly carried out terrorist acts as set out in s 22 of the TSA, TB meets the legal criteria for renewal of its designation as a terrorist entity under s29B.

35. The designation must be renewed by 20 June 2025 to be effective.

Proactively Released

---

<sup>1</sup> The statement of case, dated 20 July 2014 can be accessed at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/statement-of-case-the-base-terrorist-entity-20-june-2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 04/11/2024.

<sup>3</sup> (05/09/2024) "Dutch teen, two men in custody for membership to right-wing extremist terrorist group", *NL Times*, accessed via <https://nltimes.nl/2024/09/05/dutch-teen-two-men-custody-membership-right-wing-extremist-terrorist-group> on 06/11/2024.

<sup>4</sup> (06/09/2024) "Two members of the neo-Nazi and supremacist group AAST arrested", *Italian State Police*, accessed via <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/1666daef041bf84276459814> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>5</sup> (28/10/2024) "Neo-Nazi group the Base found a safe space to recruit Americans: the Russian internet", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/oct/28/neo-nazi-the-base-recruitment-russia> on 13/01/2025

<sup>6</sup> (24/05/2022) "Neo-Nazi Leader planned attacks on Minorities, Media and Cops", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-leader-planned-attacks-on-cops-and-media-court-docs-show/> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>7</sup> NYPD Weekly Terrorism Brief #23

<sup>8</sup> (25/07/2022) "Former member or the NG sentenced for possessing firearm while engaging in violent extremist online discussion" *United States Attorney's Office*, accessed via <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/former-member-national-guard-sentenced-possessing-firearm-while-engaging-violent> on 08/11/2024.

<sup>9</sup> (24/02/2021) "Inmate accused in white supremacist murder", *Rome News*, accessed via [https://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/inmate-accused-in-white-supremacist-murder-plot-among-seven-gang-members-who-face-additional-charges/article\\_af0331fc-76b1-11eb-8bc9-0bb92a0b819f.html](https://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/inmate-accused-in-white-supremacist-murder-plot-among-seven-gang-members-who-face-additional-charges/article_af0331fc-76b1-11eb-8bc9-0bb92a0b819f.html) on 08/11/2024.

<sup>10</sup> (11/11/2023) "Five right-wing terrorists arrested throughout Europe with the support of Eurojust and Europol", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 13/02/2025

<sup>11</sup> (26/07/2024) "The base, and the basis for listing far-right terror groups", *ICCT*, accessed via <https://www.icct.nl/publication/base-and-basis-listing-far-right-terror-groups> on 07/11/2024.

i. (11/11/2023) "Five right-winged terrorists arrested throughout Europe", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 08/11/2024.

<sup>12</sup> (16/01/2020) "The Base", *ADL*, accessed via <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/base> on 17/02/2025.

<sup>13</sup> (24/05/2022) "Neo-Nazi Leader planned attacks on Minorities, Media and Cops", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-leader-planned-attacks-on-cops-and-media-court-docs-show/> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>14</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US Neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 13/01/2025

<sup>15</sup> (8/10/20) Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, and Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>16</sup> (8/10/2020) Mack Lamoureux, Ben Makuch, and Zachary Kamel, "How One Man Built a Neo-Nazi Insurgency in Trump's America", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7g9kb/how-one-man-built-a-neo-nazi-insurgency-in-trumps-america> on 07/11/2024.

i. (16/08/2019) Ryan Thorpe, "Homegrown hate", *Winnipeg Free Press*, accessed via <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/homegrown-hate-547510902.html> on 07/11/2024.

<sup>17</sup> (11/11/2023) "Five right-winged terrorists arrested throughout Europe", *Europol*, accessed via <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol> on 13/01/2025

<sup>18</sup> (06/08/2024) "Revealed: US Neo-Nazi terror group aims to revive activities ahead of election", *The Guardian*, accessed via <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/us-neo-nazi-base-election-rinaldo-nazzaro> on 13/01/2025

<sup>19</sup> (05/11/2024) "The Base", *Counter Terrorism Project*, accessed via <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>20</sup> (22/09/2024) "The Base", *Australian National Security*, accessed via <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/what-australia-is-doing/terrorist-organisations/listed-terrorist-organisations/the-base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>21</sup> (17/08/2019) Mack Lamoureux and Ben Makuch, "Militant Neo-Nazi Group Actively Recruiting Ahead of Alleged Training Camp", *VICE News*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/bjwx55/militant-neo-nazi-group-actively-recruiting-ahead-of-alleged-training-camp> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>22</sup> (05/11/2024) "The Base", *Counter Terrorism Project*, accessed via <https://www.counterextremism.com/supremacy/base> on 05/11/2024.

<sup>23</sup> 14/11/2019 "Neo-Nazi Terror groups are using IFunny to recruit", *VICE*, accessed via <https://www.vice.com/en/article/neo-nazi-terror-groups-are-using-ifunny-to-recruit/> on 05/11/2024.



**Attachment D**

**RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON  
PRIME MINISTER**

17 June 2025

Richard Chambers  
Commissioner of Police  
Wellington

**Renewal of the terrorist designation of The Base under the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002**

Pursuant to section 29B of the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002, I renew the designation of The Base.

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
**Prime Minister**

Proactively Released



Attachment E

RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON  
PRIME MINISTER

17 JUN 2025

Members  
Intelligence and Security Committee  
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Dear Colleagues

**Renewal of a terrorist entity under The Terrorism Suppression Act 2002**

I write to inform you of my recent decision to renew the designations of a terrorist entity under Section 29B(2) of the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 (the Act). I am required by Section 29B(4) of the Act to inform you of my decision to renew designations.

The group is The Base.

- The Base is a white supremacist and neo-Nazi militant accelerationist paramilitary group, and advocates for the violent overthrow of existing governments to establish white ethnostates. Their ideology is rooted in extreme racism, antisemitism, and the belief in an impending race war.

A designation under New Zealand legislation freezes the assets of terrorist entities and makes it a criminal offence to materially support the activities of the designated terrorist entity, or to provide or collect funds for use by a designated entity. This includes dealing with the property of the designated terrorist entity or making property or financial services available to the entity.

Notice of my decision was recently given in the New Zealand Gazette. Overseas posts and international partners have been informed, and the decision is consistent with the approach taken by our major security partners.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon  
Prime Minister